

# FOOD CONSUMPTION OF CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS IN SPAIN

**Jiayi Lin**

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DOCTORAL THESIS

**Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists  
in Spain**

**Jiayi Lin**

2017



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2017

Joint PhD Program in Tourism

Supervisor: Jaume Guia Julve PhD (University of Girona)

Co-supervisor: Honggang Xu, PhD (Sun Yat-sen University)

Thesis delivered to obtain the doctoral degree by the University of Girona

El Dr. Jaume Guia Julve, de Universitat de Girona,

DECLARO:

Que el treball titulat *Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain*, que presenta *Jiayi Lin* per a l'obtenció del títol de doctor/a, ha estat realitzat sota la meua direcció [i que compleix els requisits per poder optar a Menció Internacional (feu-ho constar només si escau)].

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## Thesis format

This thesis is as a compendium of publications, which includes research articles previously accepted or sent to publish according to the complete references of the following publications, including the co-authors, and constitute the nucleus of the thesis, as well as its indications of quality.

### Article 1 (Submitted):

Title: *Towards a typology of food consumed by Chinese outbound tourists: A globalization perspective.*

Authors: Jiayi Lin, Qingming Cui, Honggang Xu, Jaume Guia.

Journal: Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research. (SJR 2016 Q2 0.726)

### Article 2 (Accepted):

Title: *Food habits and tourist food consumption: an exploratory study on dining behaviours of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain.*

Authors: Jiayi Lin, Jaume Guia, Honggang Xu, Qingming Cui.

Journal: Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events - Special Issue on Outbound Chinese Tourism, the issue's theme is The Easternization of Tourism in a Post-Western world. (SJR 2015 Q2 0.494)

### Article 3 (Submitted):

Title: *Two faces of McDonald's and tourist consumption of fast food.*

Authors: Jiayi Lin, Qingming Cui, Jaume Marin, Xu Honggang.

Journal: International Journal of Hospitality Management. (SJR 2016 Q1 1.956)

## Intermediate Contributions

### 1 Industrial doctoral project related to this thesis

PROJECTE DE DOCTORAT INDUSTRIAL EXPEDIENT 2013 DI 040.

Project title: *The potential of Costa Brava Tourism destination for Chinese Tourists.*

The Industrial Doctorates Plan is from Generalitat de Catalunya Departament d'Empresa i Coneixement Secretaria d'Universitats i Recerca.

The project is managed by Agència de Gestió d'Ajuts Universitaris i de Recerca.

Empresa: Patronat de Turisme Costa Brava Girona, S.A.

Directors of the project in the company: Jaume Marín, Sandra Perich.

Director/a de tesi: Jaume Guia Julve.

Publication: Consultant report 2015, 2016, 2017

### Brief introduction of this industrial doctoral project

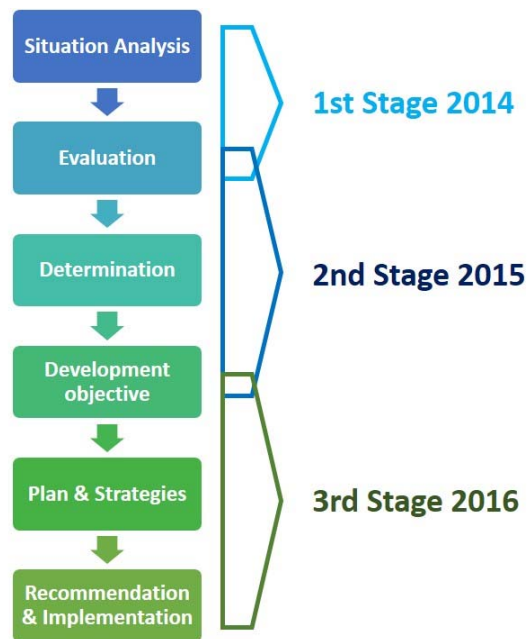
The project “The potential of Costa Brava Tourism destination for Chinese Tourists” is aim to gain a better understanding of Costa Brava Girona’s market position in Chinese market, and to gain better insights into the Chinese travellers. The fast growing Chinese outbound market is shaping the global travel. The Chinese tourist’s arrival number in Spain has kept increasing, the average annual growth rate is 39.1% from 2011 to 2016. Over 60% of them visit Barcelona when they travel in Spain. There is vast potential of the Chinese travel market and strong appeal of Costa Brava Girona’s destinations to the Chinese travellers, but the results also point to the great challenges faced by Girona’s destination in targeting and servicing this market.

### The overall objectives of the project

1. Study the China’s Outbound Travel Market, have a better understanding of Chinese tourists traveling in Spain, and outlines the main Chinese market perspectives to Spanish tourism industry.
2. Identify the attraction / experiences seeking by Chinese traveller; Assess competitive positioning on key products and identify growth opportunities.
3. Identify motivators of traveling to Spain.
4. Identify barriers of traveling to Costa Brava Girona.
5. Explore the role of social media and increase the visibility of destination in Chinese tourism website.

6. Develop the strategies and plan to develop the Chinese market in Girona province.

Procedure of developing this project in 3 years (Apr 2014- Apr 2016):



**Figure 1 Procedure of developing industrial doctoral project**

## 2 Participation in international congresses and conferences

The 4th International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality between China and Spain (ICTCHS), 2014, Mataro, Spain;

PhD Workshop: The art of writing, Academic publication in Annals of Tourism Research - Prof. John Tribe, 2015, Girona, Spain.

The 6th International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality between China and Spain (ICTCHS), 2016, Madrid, Spain;

The International Conference on Sustainable Tourism and Development 2017, Hong Kong, China.

- Oral report: *Effects of food habits on food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain.*

PhD Workshop 2017, School of Tourism Management, Sun Yat-Sen Univeristy, Guangzhou China.

- Oral report: *Eating in Spain - Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain.*

## Abbreviation List

CNTA - China National Tourism Administration

COTRI - China Outbound Tourism Research Institute

CTA - China Tourism Academy

DMO – Destination Marketing Organization

EU – European Union

Fam-trip - Familiarization trip

UK – United Kingdom

UNWTO - The World Tourism Organization



## Table of contents

<b>COVER PAGE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>THESIS SUPERVISION CERTIFICATE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>THESIS FORMAT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>INTERMEDIATE CONTRIBUTIONS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1 INDUSTRIAL DOCTORAL PROJECT RELATED TO THIS THESIS .....	3
<i>Brief introduction of this industrial doctoral project</i> .....	3
<i>The overall objectives of the project</i> .....	3
<i>Procedure of developing this project in 3 years (Apr 2014- Apr 2016):</i> .....	4
2 PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES .....	4
<b>ABBREVIATION LIST</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>INDEX OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>INDEX OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>RESUM</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>RESUMEN</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>22</b>
1. BACKGROUND OF CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISM.....	23
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND .....	24
3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	25
4. THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS DISSERTATION.....	25
REFERENCES.....	26
<b>CHAPTER 2 TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF FOOD CONSUMED BY CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS: A GLOBALIZATION PERSPECTIVE</b> .....	<b>29</b>
1. INTRODUCTION .....	30
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	31
2.1. <i>Food typology in existing tourism research</i> .....	31
2.2. <i>Globalization and food consumption in tourism</i> .....	32
2.2.1. Conceptualizing globalization .....	32
2.2.2. The influence of globalization on food consumption in tourism.....	33
3. METHODS.....	34
3.1. <i>The research sites</i> .....	34
3.2. <i>Data collection and analysis</i> .....	35
4. CLASSIFYING FOOD CONSUMED BY CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS .....	35
4.1. <i>Local food</i> .....	36
4.2. <i>Homeland food</i> .....	37
4.3. <i>Glocal food</i> .....	38
4.4. <i>Grobal food</i> .....	40
5. DISCUSSION: FOOD TYPOLOGY AND TOURIST FOOD PREFERENCES .....	41
6. CONCLUSIONS.....	43
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	44

REFERENCES.....	44
<b>CHAPTER 3 FOOD HABITS AND TOURIST FOOD CONSUMPTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON DINING BEHAVIOURS OF CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS IN SPAIN.....</b>	<b>50</b>
1. INTRODUCTION .....	51
2. TOURISTS' FOOD CONSUMPTION FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE .....	53
2.1. <i>Religion and dining in tourism</i> .....	53
2.2. <i>Nationality and cultural eating differences with regard to tourism</i> .....	54
2.3. <i>Chinese food culture and tourist food consumption</i> .....	55
3. FOOD HABITS IN CHINESE CULTURE .....	56
4. METHODS.....	57
5. FOOD PREFERENCES OF CHINESE TOURISTS, AND NOVELTY-SAMPLING .....	60
6. THE ASPECTS OF "UNACUSTOMED" DINING .....	61
6.1. <i>Food ingredients and taste</i> .....	61
6.1.1. Unfamiliar ingredients .....	61
6.1.2. Unfamiliar taste .....	61
6.2. <i>The quantity of food</i> .....	62
6.3. <i>Dining time and duration</i> .....	63
6.4. <i>Cultural construction of healthy food</i> .....	63
7. COPING STRATEGIES FOR UNACUSTOMED DINING .....	64
7.1. <i>Enduring the cultural difference</i> .....	64
7.2. <i>Eating fast food</i> .....	65
7.3. <i>Eating overseas Chinese food</i> .....	65
7.4. <i>Carrying "cultural baggage"</i> .....	66
8. CONCLUSIONS.....	66
8.1. <i>Implications and future directions</i> .....	68
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	69
REFERENCES.....	69
<b>CHAPTER 4 TWO FACES OF MCDONALD'S AND TOURIST CONSUMPTION OF FAST FOOD. ....</b>	<b>74</b>
1. INTRODUCTION .....	75
2. TWO FACES OF MCDONALD'S.....	77
2.1. <i>McDonald's and globalization</i> .....	77
2.2. <i>McDonald's and glocalization</i> .....	78
3. METHODS.....	80
3.1. <i>Data collection</i> .....	80
3.2. <i>Data analysis</i> .....	81
4. CONSUMING MCDONALD'S IN TOURISM AND ITS REASONS.....	83
4.1. <i>Eating McDonald's as "losing face (mianzi)"</i> .....	83
4.2. <i>Differences and McDonald's as an attraction</i> .....	85
4.3. <i>The standardization of McDonald's, familiarity and predictability</i> .....	86
4.3.1. Familiar facilities.....	86
4.3.2. Familiar ordering rituals .....	87
4.3.3. Familiar food and drinks .....	88
4.4. <i>High efficiency of McDonald's</i> .....	88
5. DISCUSSION: MCDONALD'S AS WORLD FOOD AND ITS POSITIVE FACE TO TOURISTS .....	89
6. CONCLUSIONS.....	92
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	93
REFERENCES.....	93
<b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>98</b>
1. CONCLUSIONS .....	99
2. FUTURE RESEARCH .....	102

# Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain

REFERENCES.....	106
<b>APPENDIX A SUMMARY OF FIELD WORK .....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>APPENDIX B LIST OF FIELD WORK IN 2014 &amp; 2016 .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>APPENDIX C LIST OF INTERVIEWEES.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>APPENDIX D LIST OF DMO FAMILIARIZATION TRIPS .....</b>	<b>111</b>

## Index of figures

<b>INTERMEDIATE CONTRIBUTIONS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
FIGURE 1 PROCEDURE OF DEVELOPING INDUSTRIAL DOCTORIAL PROJECT .....	4
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>错误!未定义书签。</b>
FIGURE 1 CHINESE TOURIST ARRIVALS IN SPAIN (2003, 2011-2016) .....	24
<b>CHAPTER 2 TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF FOOD CONSUMED BY CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS: A GLOBALIZATION PERSPECTIVE .....</b>	<b>29</b>
FIGURE 1. FOOD TYPOLOGY AND ITS RELATION TO ‘FAMILIARITY-NOVELTY’ CONTINUUM .....	42
<b>CHAPTER 3 FOOD HABITS AND TOURIST FOOD CONSUMPTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON DINING BEHAVIOURS OF CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS IN SPAIN.....</b>	<b>50</b>
FIGURE 1. THE EFFECTS OF FOOD HABITS ON CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS’ FOOD CONSUMPTION.....	59

## Index of tables

<b>CHAPTER 4 TWO FACES OF MCDONALD’S AND TOURIST CONSUMPTION OF FAST FOOD.....</b>	<b>74</b>
TABLE 1. THE INFORMATION ABOUT INTERVIEWEES WHO ATE AT MCDONALD’S .....	82
<b>APPENDIX A SUMMARY OF FIELD WORK .....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>APPENDIX B LIST OF FIELD WORK IN 2014 &amp; 2016 .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>APPENDIX C LIST OF INTERVIEWEES .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>APPENDIX D LIST OF DMO FAMILIARIZATION TRIPS .....</b>	<b>111</b>

JIAYI LIN

To My Mum *Peimin*

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### Abstract

Food consumption is one of the essentials in tourism experience. Especially in the long-haul travel of international tourists, understanding their food consuming behaviours can reveal the nature of travel. The existing tourism studies are lack of a comprehensive framework to explore the various food choices of tourists. Local food as a tourism attraction has been well recognized and studied by many tourism scholars. However, the phenomenon that tourists prefer food other than local food has not received much attention. In the destination, tourists do not limit to take local food, but also other types of food. This dissertation firstly intents to build a new typology of food consumed in tourism from a globalization perspective, and exposes a full range of dining experience, through investigating Chinese tourists' food consumption in Spain. Then this dissertation investigates how food habits influence Chinese tourists to consume Spanish local food. Tourists may face many impediments to taste exotic local food. This study also explains how tourists deal with these obstacles in local food consumption. Finally, this research explores the reasons why Chinese tourists chose to eat fast food in McDonald's, which is always seen as the opposite to local food. Currently researches of investigating tourists to consume fast food are limited. This research challenges the pervious views on McDonald's and clarifies some positive aspects of McDonald's to international visitors.

A qualitative research approach was adopted. The fieldwork was conducted twice in Barcelona and Madrid in 2014 and 2016. Madrid and Barcelona are the most popular destinations for Chinese outbound tourists, which have plenty of must-see tourism attractions. Thus, it was easy to reach Chinese tourists in the two cities. All the interviewees were Chinese and they were interviewed in Chinese. A convenient sampling method was adopted to choose interviewees. A total of 68 groups with over 206 interviewees participated the semi-structured interview. Each interview lasted from 10 minutes to 55 minutes, with an average 15 minutes. Furthermore, this dissertation also used participant observations to collect data, which took place during thirteen DMO's familiarization trips. The field note from participant observations become supplementary materials to understand the dining behaviours of Chinese tourists.

Firstly, the results show that the food consumed by Chinese tourists in Spain can be classified into four types: local food, glocal food, grobal food and homeland food. Here, glocal food refers to these overseas ethnic foods and grobal food refers to branded fast food. This typology also reveals the food preferences of outbound tourists. The order of these four types of food relates to the level of familiarity to tourists. The most novel one is the local food of tourism destination, then the global food and grobal food follows. Homeland food certainly reaches the highest degree of familiarity for tourists. The food preferences of Chinese tourists

are reflected in this familiarity continuum. Theoretically, this innovative typology can contribute to explain tourists' food consumption behaviours from all other countries.

Secondly, from the cultural perspective, the results also expose that the differences between Eastern and Western food habits impede Chinese tourists to taste local food consistently. Unaccustomed factors in their dining experience of Spanish local food include unfamiliar ingredients, strange tastes, different quantities of food, different dining times and duration, and different cultural concepts on healthy food. The research also reveals that Chinese tourists applied different strategies to deal with these situations, which include enduring the cultural differences, eating familiar fast food, eating just Chinese food, or bringing food from home. Aiming to have a healthy and comfortable dining experience, Chinese tourists switched between different food choices in their long-haul journey in Europe.

Lastly, besides homeland food and local food, fast food is another option for tourists. McDonald's is used as a case to learn the function of fast food and fast food restaurant to tourists. The findings from this thesis reveal that searching for differences in a foreign McDonald's becomes a motivation of the food consumption behaviours for some Chinese tourists, which is caused by McDonald's glocalization strategy. For most of the tourists, consuming McDonald's is because of the standardization and high efficiency, which provides fast, familiar and predictable facilities, ordering service and set menu food. The findings suggest when travel to overseas novel destination, the familiar McDonald's serves a sense of ontological security for international tourists. Even the benefits of McDonald's for some tourists are undeniable, some Chinese tourists judged that having McDonald's in travels was losing face. This thesis try to argue that, from tourists' perspective, the positive aspects of McDonald's should be reconsidered by the academia.

This thesis extends and deepens the understandings of tourists' food consumption experience in long-haul travelling with food cultural differences. In conclusion, tourists are not pure novelty-seekers when dining overseas. Besides exotic local food, tourists also liked to eat their familiar food such as cultural baggage, overseas ethnic food, and fast food. When dining local food, tourists may face many obstacles caused by different food habits and food culture. Thus, compared with local food, the familiar foods are more fundamental to tourists. Familiar foods can provide the ontological comfort of home for tourists.

### Resum

El consum d'aliments és un dels aspectes més importants dins l'experiència turística. Comprendre les actituds del turista pel que fa al consum de menjars pot revelar la naturalesa del mateix viatge, sobretot en els de llarga durada dels turistes internacionals. Els estudis turístics existents manquen d'un marc holístic per explorar les diferents opcions alimentàries dels turistes. El menjar local com a atracció turística ha estat ben reconegut i estudiat per molts estudiosos de l'àmbit del turisme. Tot i això, el fenomen que els turistes prefereixen menjar encara que no sigui local, no ha rebut molta atenció. A la destinació, els turistes no es limiten a consumir menjar local, sinó que també ingereixen altres tipus d'aliments. Aquesta tesi pretén, en primer lloc, construir una nova tipologia d'aliments que es consumeixen en l'àmbit turístic des de la perspectiva de la globalització i exposa una àmplia experiència gastronòmica a través de la investigació del consum d'aliments dels turistes xinesos a Espanya. Tot seguit, aquesta tesi investiga com les costums alimentaries influeixen en els turistes xinesos a l'hora de consumir aliments locals espanyols. Els turistes poden trobar-se amb molts impediments a l'hora de degustar l'exòtic menjar local. Aquest estudi també explica com els turistes tracten aquests obstacles a l'hora de consumir aliments locals. Finalment, aquesta investigació explora els motius pels quals els turistes xinesos opten per menjar *fastfood* a McDonald's, sempre percebut com allò contrari al menjar local. Els estudis actuals que investiguen sobre el consum de *fastfood* entre els turistes és limitat. Aquesta recerca qüestiona les opinions sobre McDonald's i aclareix alguns aspectes positius de McDonald's als visitants internacionals.

S'ha adoptat un enfocament de recerca qualitatiu. El treball de camp es va dur a terme dues vegades, tant a Barcelona com a Madrid, el 2014 i el 2016. Madrid i Barcelona són les destinacions més populars per als turistes provinents de Xina, ciutats que ofereixen moltes atraccions turístiques imprescindibles per veure. D'aquesta manera, era fàcil arribar als turistes xinesos a ambdues ciutats. Tots els entrevistats eren xinesos i van ser entrevistats en xinès. Per tal d'escollir als entrevistats, es va adoptar un mètode de mostreig apropiat. Un total de 68 grups amb més de 206 entrevistats van participar a l'entrevista semiestructurada. Cada entrevista va durar entre 10 i 55 minuts, amb una mitjana de 15 minuts. A més a més, aquesta tesi també va utilitzar l'observació de participants per recopilar dades, que van tenir lloc durant tretze viatges de familiarització amb la DMO Girona Costa Brava. Les anotacions in situ de les observacions dels participants han esdevingut material complementari per comprendre els comportaments gastronòmics dels turistes xinesos.

En primer lloc, els resultats mostren que els aliments consumits pels turistes xinesos a Espanya es poden classificar en quatre tipus: menjar local, menjar global, menjar grobal i

menjar casolà (de Xina). Aquesta tipologia també ens ajuda a entendre les preferències alimentàries dels turistes que surten. L'ordre d'aquests quatre tipus de menjar es relaciona amb el nivell de familiaritat dels turistes. El més innovador és el menjar local de la destinació turística, a continuació el global i tot seguit del grobal. El menjar casolà assoleix el grau més alt de familiaritat pels turistes. Les preferències alimentàries dels turistes xinesos es reflecteixen en aquesta gradació de familiaritat. En teoria, aquesta tipologia innovadora pot contribuir a explicar els comportaments del consum alimentari dels turistes dels altres països.

En segon lloc, des de la perspectiva cultural, els resultats també expliquen que les diferències entre els hàbits alimentaris orientals i occidentals impedeixen que els turistes xinesos puguin provar els aliments locals de manera continuada. Ingredients desconeguts, gustos estranys, quantitats de manejar, horaris i durada de l'àpat diferent de la mateixa manera que també són diferents els conceptes culturals sobre els aliments sans. Tots ells són factors no usuals durant la seva experiència gastronòmica pel que fa als aliments locals espanyols. La investigació també revela que els turistes xinesos van utilitzar diferents estratègies per fer front a aquestes situacions, les quals inclouen mantenir les diferències culturals, menjar *fastfood* familiar, menjar només menjar xinès o portar menjar de casa. Amb l'objectiu de tenir una experiència gastronòmica saludable i còmoda, els turistes xinesos varen anar canviant entre les diferents opcions alimentàries durant el seu viatge de llarga estada per Europa.

Finalment, a més del menjar casolà i menjar local, el menjar ràpid esdevé una altra opció per al turista. McDonald's s'utilitza com a cas per conèixer la funció del *fastfood* i el restaurant de *fastfood* per als turistes. Els resultats d'aquesta tesi revelen que la recerca de diferències en un McDonald's estranger es converteix en una motivació del comportament del consum d'aliments per a alguns turistes xinesos, causada per l'estratègia de glocalització de McDonald's. Per a la majoria dels turistes, consumir en un McDonald's té a veure amb la normalització i alta eficiència, que és proporcionada per les instal·lacions ràpides, familiars i predictibles, servei de comanda i els menús preestablerts. Els resultats suggereixen que quan viatgen a una nova destinació a l'estranger, la familiaritat del McDonald's ofereix una sensació de seguretat ontològica als turistes internacionals. Fins i tot, per a alguns turistes, els beneficis que ofereix McDonald's són innegables; alguns turistes xinesos van criticar que tenir McDonald's en els viatges no estava ben vist. Aquesta tesi pretén argumentar que, des de la perspectiva dels turistes, els aspectes positius de McDonald's han de ser reconsiderats per l'àmbit acadèmic.

Aquesta tesi amplia i aprofundeix els coneixements de l'experiència del consum d'aliments dels turistes a llarga estada amb diferències culturals alimentàries. En conclusió, els

## Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain

turistes no són purament cercadors de novetats quan mengen a l'estranger. A més d'un menjar local exòtic, els turistes també els agradava menjar els seus plats com a equipatge cultural, menjar ètnic i *fastfood*. Quan es consumeix menjar local, els turistes poden afrontar molts obstacles causats tant pels diferents hàbits alimentaris i la cultura. Així, en comparació amb els aliments locals, el menjar familiar és més fonamentals per als turistes. Aquests poden proporcionar als turistes la comoditat ontològica que ofereix la llar.

## Resumen

El consumo de alimentos es uno de los aspectos más importantes dentro de la experiencia turística. Comprender las actitudes del turista en cuanto a este consumo puede revelar la naturaleza del mismo viaje, sobre todo en los de larga duración por parte de turistas internacionales. Los estudios turísticos existentes carecen de un marco holístico para explorar las diferentes opciones alimentarias de los turistas. La comida local como atracción turística es un tema reconocido y estudiado por muchos estudiosos del ámbito del turismo. Sin embargo, el fenómeno que los turistas prefieren alimentarse aunque no sea con comida local, no ha recibido mucha atención. En el destino, los turistas no se limitan a consumir comida local, sino que también ingieren otros tipos de alimentos. Esta tesis pretende, en primer lugar, construir una nueva tipología de alimentos que se consumen en el ámbito turístico desde la perspectiva de la globalización y expone una amplia experiencia gastronómica a través de la investigación del consumo de alimentos de los turistas chinos en España. A continuación, esta tesis investiga cómo las costumbres alimentarias influyen en los turistas chinos a la hora de consumir alimentos locales españoles. Los turistas pueden encontrarse con muchos impedimentos a la hora de degustar la exótica comida local. Este estudio también explica cómo los turistas tratan estos obstáculos relacionados en el consumo de alimentos locales. Finalmente, esta investigación explora los motivos por los que los turistas chinos optan por comer *fastfood* a McDonalds, que siempre se percibe como lo contrario a la comida local. Las investigaciones actuales que indagan sobre el consumo de *fastfood* entre los turistas son limitadas. Esta investigación cuestiona las opiniones sobre McDonalds y aclara algunos aspectos positivos de McDonald a los visitantes internacionales.

Se adoptó un enfoque de investigación cualitativo. El trabajo de campo se llevó a cabo dos veces, tanto en Barcelona como en Madrid en 2014 y en 2016. Madrid y Barcelona son los destinos más populares para los turistas provenientes de China, ciudades que ofrecen muchas atracciones turísticas imprescindibles para ver. De este modo, resultó fácil llegar a los turistas chinos en ambas destinaciones. Todos los entrevistados eran chinos y fueron entrevistados en chino. Para escoger a los entrevistados, se adoptó un método de muestreo apropiado. Un total de 68 grupos con más de 206 entrevistados participaron en la entrevista semiestructurada. Cada entrevista duró entre 10 y 55 minutos, con una media de 15 minutos. Además, esta tesis también utilizó la observación de participantes para recopilar datos, que tuvieron lugar durante trece viajes de familiarización con la DMO Girona Costa Brava. Las anotaciones in situ de las observaciones de los participantes se convierte en material complementario para comprender los comportamientos gastronómicos de los turistas chinos.

## Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain

En primer lugar, los resultados muestran que los alimentos consumidos por los turistas chinos en España se pueden clasificar en cuatro tipos: comida local, comida global, comida grobal y comida casera (de China). Esta tipología también nos ayuda a entender las preferencias alimentarias de los turistas que salen de China. El orden de estos cuatro tipos de comida se relaciona con el nivel de familiaridad de los turistas. Lo más innovador es la comida local del destino turístico, después el global y a continuación el grobal. La comida casera alcanza el mayor grado de familiaridad por los turistas. Las preferencias alimentarias de los turistas chinos se reflejan en esta gradación de familiaridad. En teoría, esta tipología innovadora puede contribuir a explicar los comportamientos del consumo alimentario de los turistas de otros países.

En segundo lugar, desde la perspectiva cultural, los resultados también explican que las diferencias entre los hábitos alimenticios orientales y occidentales impiden que los turistas chinos puedan probar los alimentos locales de manera continuada. Ingredientes desconocidos, gustos extraños, cantidades de comida, horarios y duración de la comida diferentes, igual que los diferentes conceptos culturales sobre los alimentos sanos; todos ellos son factores no usuales durante su experiencia gastronómica en cuanto a los alimentos locales españoles. La investigación también revela que los turistas chinos utilizaron diferentes estrategias para hacer frente a estas situaciones, las cuales incluyen: mantener las diferencias culturales, comida *fastfood* familiar, comer sólo comida china o llevar comida de casa. Con el objetivo de tener una experiencia gastronómica saludable y cómoda, los turistas chinos fueron cambiando entre las diferentes opciones alimenticias durante su viaje de larga estancia por Europa.

Finalmente, además de la comida casera y comida local, la comida rápida se convierte en otra opción para el turista. McDonalds se utiliza como caso para conocer la función del *fastfood* y el restaurante *fastfood* para los turistas. Los resultados de esta tesis revelan que la búsqueda de diferencias en un McDonalds extranjero se convierte en una motivación del comportamiento del consumo de alimentos para algunos turistas chinos, causada por la misma estrategia de glocalización de McDonalds. Para la mayoría de los turistas, consumir en un McDonalds se debe a la normalización y alta eficiencia, que es proporcionada por las instalaciones rápidas, familiares y predecibles, su servicio y los menús preestablecidos. Los resultados sugieren que cuando el turista internacional viaja a un nuevo destino en el extranjero, la familiaridad del McDonalds ofrece una sensación de seguridad ontológica. Incluso, para algunos turistas, los beneficios que ofrece McDonalds son innegables; algunos turistas chinos criticaron que no está bien visto tener McDonalds en los viajes. Esta tesis pretende argumentar que, desde la perspectiva de los turistas, los aspectos positivos de McDonalds deben ser reconsiderados por el ámbito académico.

Esta tesis amplia y profundiza los conocimientos de la experiencia del consumo de alimentos de los turistas de larga estancia con diferencias culturales alimentarias. En conclusión, los turistas no son puramente buscadores de novedades cuando comen en el extranjero. Además de una comida local exótica, a los turistas también les gusta comer sus platos familiares como equipaje cultural, comida étnica y *fastfood*. Cuando se consume comida local, los turistas pueden afrontar muchos obstáculos causados tanto por los diferentes hábitos alimentarios y la cultura. Así, en comparación con los alimentos locales, la comida familiar es más fundamental para los turistas. Esto puede proporcionar la comodidad ontológica que ofrece el hogar a los turistas.



## Chapter 1 Introduction

## Introduction

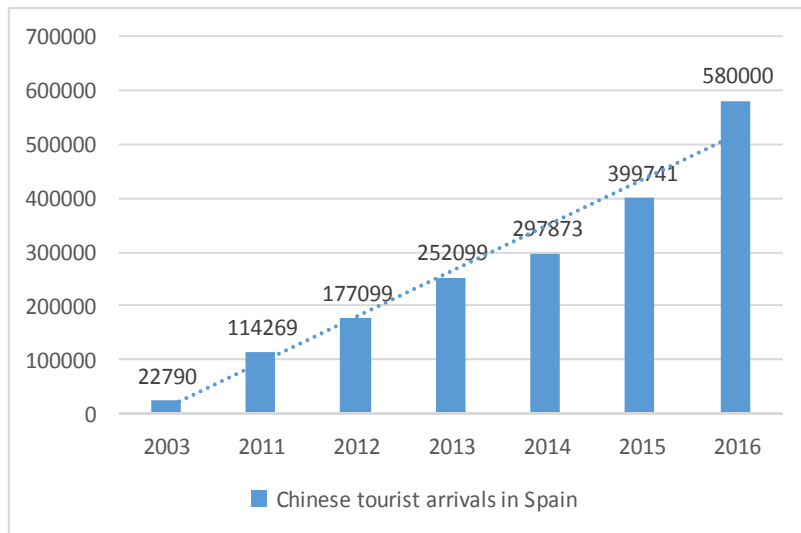
This dissertation sheds light on the food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain, attempts to reveal the complexity of tourist food preferences, especially the international tourists. The topic is progressed based on two kinds of backgrounds: the first is the emerging Chinese outbound tourism market in practice; the second is that tourism studies have paid more attention on tourist consumption of local food rather than regarding eating in destination as a diverse behavior.

### 1. Background of Chinese outbound tourism

The development of Chinese outbound tourism has experienced a rapid increase, and has shaped the global travel market. UNWTO (2013) forecasted Chinese outbound tourism market would reach 100 million trips before 2020. China is now the largest international tourism source market (Arlt, 2013), 137 million Chinese tourists have cross border trips in 2016 (COTRI, 2017), even though these outbound trips were mainly short-haul routes around Asia. The statistics from 2016 show that Chinese outbound tourism market reached 70.1 million trips (exclude cross-border trips to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), has an 11.7% increase compared to 62.8 million trips in 2015 (COTRI, 2017) .

Chinese outbound tourism has drawn much attention from tourism studies (Ryan & Gu, 2008). Numbers of the studies focus on their destinations such as Asia, America and Australia. Nevertheless, there is less research about Chinese tourist behaviors and experience in Europe.

There were 11.7% of the Chinese outbound tourists visiting Europe in 2013 (CTA, 2014). In 2015, this number reached 3.4 million and increased 22.9% comparing to 2014 (CNTA, 2016). Spain is an attractive destination for international tourists, which received 75.2 million international tourists in 2016, and it was the third over the world (Tourspain Beijing, 2017). Even though Spain is not one of the most popular destinations in Chinese outbound market yet, it has huge potential to attract more Chinese tourists. In recent years, the fast growing arrival number of Chinese tourists has created new record in Spain (Figure 1). The Chinese tourist's arrival number in Spain has kept increasing, the average annual growth rate is 39.1% from 2011 to 2016. In 2016, 580000 Chinese tourists visit Spain, increase by 45.7% compare to 2015. The Chinese tourists' expenditure rises 114.14%, and they spent an average of 2593 euros in their trip to Spain, also the average length of stay is 9.4 days in Spain (Tourspain Beijing, 2017).



**Figure 1 Chinese tourist arrivals in Spain (2003, 2011-2016)**

Source: Instituto de Estudios Yurísticos, Frontur, Instituto de Turismo de España (Beijing Office)

## 2. Theoretical background

This dissertation will not study the whole experience of Chinese outbound tourists, but only explore their food consumption experience. Food taking is an essential part of the whole tourist experience (Richards, 2002; Hall & Sharples, 2003). Recently, food consumption in tourism has drawn much more attention from tourism scholars. However, different types of food receive different research interests. Generally, scholars focused more on local food than other types of food, because local food can be regarded as tourism resource (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Henderson, 2004; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Ab Karim & Chi, 2010).

As tourism resource, local food is believed to have many benefits to tourism destination development. Firstly, eating local food could be one part of authentic experience (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2013), which can enhance tourist overall satisfaction and experience quality (Sims, 2009). Secondly, food is a significant element of place identity (Richard, 2002), and therefore developing local food can strengthen local people's identity with their home. Thirdly, local food can be an effective destination branding tool (du Rand, Heath & Alberts, 2003; Tellstrom, Gustafsson & Mossberg, 2006; du Rand & Heath, 2006).

However, local food is not always the primary travelling motivation. McKercher, Okumus and Okumus (2008) claimed that the attractiveness of local food to tourists may be just some researchers' wishful thinking. Tourists may also choose to eat some other types of food. Food usually plays two basic roles in tourist experience. On one hand, dining can be a symbolic behavior, in this sense, tourists like to try novel food to obtain peak experience; on the other hand, dining is a compulsory behavior, in which, tourists like to eat familiar food to sustain

their basic body needs and obtain ontological security (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). Ontological security means “the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action” (Giddens, 1991: 92). On the contrast, ontological insecurity is a term created by Laing (1960) in his book *The Divided Self*, in which, “the individual would be constantly threatened by the everyday experiences of any life, would lack a sense of self and agency, and would be subject to fears, anxiety, and dread, in different forms and at different times” (Croft, 2012: 221). Exotic local food can only meet one aspect of tourist desires, and may cause ontological insecurity to tourists, which has obtained little academic attention.

The research gaps are that current tourism studies explore little about the different types of food tourists consume in their journey and the reasons why they like to eat that kind of food. This dissertation will apply the globalization theory to make a comprehensive classification of food types, and then explore Chinese tourists’ experience of two particular types of foods in that typology.

### 3. Research questions

The dissertation attempts to reveal the complexity of tourist food consumption by three independent but interrelated studies. The research questions include three parts.

(1) What types of food do Chinese outbound tourists consume in their journey in Spain?

(2) How do the food habits of Chinese tourists influence their consumption of Spanish local food?

(3) Why do Chinese tourists choose to consume fast food?

All the three studies use Chinese outbound tourists as case, but the research results are also appropriate to explain the food consumption experience of tourists from other countries, especially when they travel to a destination with different food culture. The logic between the three studies is elucidated below.

### 4. The framework of this dissertation

The following chapters of this dissertation are organized as follows. Chapter 2 is a study to make a classification of all food consumed by Chinese tourists in Spain. Under the guide of theories about globalization, this chapter finds four food types: homeland food, global food (chain-store fast food), glocal food (overseas ethnic restaurant food) and local food. This typology reveals other possible food choices in addition local food for tourists. Local food is not their only choice. Actually, in their long-haul journey, Chinese outbound tourists ate almost

all the four types of food. This typology can also show tourists' food preferences. Homeland food is the most familiar food to tourists, and the local food is the most exotic. Tourists can choose any food according to their own need.

Through the study in chapter 2, we can have a holistic view about the foods (Chinese) outbound tourists choose to eat. The next step is exploring how the tourists experience each type of food. Thus, chapter 3 and chapter 4 investigate one particular type of food consumption experience respectively.

Chapter 3 studies how the food habits of Chinese tourists influence their consumption of Spanish local food. Although Chinese tourists were willing to taste Spanish local food, many Chinese tourists told that they were not accustomed to eat local food because Chinese food habits are different from Spanish food habits. The challenges to Chinese food habits included unfamiliar ingredients and tastes, different quantities of food, different dining times and duration, and different cultural concepts of healthy food. In order to avoid too much unaccustomed dining experience, Chinese tourists may choose to eat fast food, overseas Chinese food, the food brought from home, or self-catering food. Each strategy is worth of depth investigation.

Chapter 4 explores the reasons why Chinese tourists ate fast food in McDonald's. This study finds that some tourists chose to eat McDonald's for its differences. McDonald's adopts a glocalization strategy to integrate local culture to create new products. The "new differences" were seen as tourism attractions by some tourists. Most of the tourists ate McDonald's for its standardization and high efficiency, which provides fast, familiar and predictable physical environment, ordering procedures and food and drinks. With the standardized products and services, McDonald's provides Chinese tourists a sense of home. Although McDonald's is beneficial to international tourists, there were still some Chinese tourists regarding eating McDonald's as losing face. This study argues that the academia should reconsider the positive aspect of McDonald's from a tourist perspective.

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## Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain

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Chapter 2 Towards a typology of food consumed by Chinese  
outbound tourists: A globalization perspective



## Towards a typology of food consumed by Chinese outbound tourists: A globalization perspective

**Abstract:** Until now no systematic studies have been conducted to classify the typology of food consumed in tourism. Adopting a globalization perspective, this study aims to build a typology of food consumed by tourists, through classifying the food taken by Chinese tourists in Spain. The fieldwork was conducted in Barcelona and Madrid in 2014 and 2016. Semi-structured interview was used to collected data. A total of 78 groups with 206 Chinese tourists were interviewed. It found that the foods which Chinese tourists consumed in Spain can be divided into four categories: local food, glocal food, grobal food and homeland food. Based on the degree of familiarity to tourists, there is an order among the four types of food. Local food is the most novel to tourists, followed by global food, grobal food, and homeland food. The familiarity continuum reveals the food preferences of Chinese tourists.

**Keywords:** food consumption in tourism; food typology; globalization; localization; Chinese outbound tourists

### 1. Introduction

Dining is an essential part of tourist experience (Richards, 2002; Hall & Sharples, 2003). Food-related topics are receiving an increasing interest in tourism field recently. However, different types of food draw different research attention. Generally, scholars focused more on local food of tourism destinations than other types of food, because local food is believed to play a more significant role in promoting tourism development (Hall, Mitchell & Sharples, 2003; Tellstrom, Gustafsson & Mossberg, 2006).

To be specific, local food can represent the local cultures (Henderson, 2004). In this sense, eating local food is a symbolic activity aiming at experiencing local authentic culture (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). Guan and Jones (2015) found that the attractiveness of local food to tourists can significantly affect their decision-making in choosing destinations. Thus, tourism destinations can use local food as a marketing tool to promote themselves and enhance their competitiveness (du Rand & Heath, 2006; du Rand, Heath & Alberts, 2003; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Mykletun & Gyimothy, 2010). Tasting local cuisine is also an important motivation for tourists to participate in events, which can contribute to economic growth of the destinations (Chang & Yuan, 2011) and preserve the cultural identity of its local residents (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Metro-Roland, 2013; Timothy & Ron, 2013).

Moreover, studies on dining experience of tourists also concentrate more on local food consumption. Kim, Eves and Scarles (2009, 2013) found three major categories that impact the tourist dining experience: motivational factors (include excitement, escape from routine, health concern, learning, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment); demographic factors (gender, age and education) and physiological factors (food neophilia and food neophobia). Food neophilia means the tendency to explore and taste new, novel and varied foods, while food neophobia means being wary of new foods because of their potential risks to health (Fischler, 1988). All these factors have effects on local food consumption. Visitors believe that food produced by local ingredients is healthier. For instance, Russian tourists regarded Finnish local food to be fresh and healthy (Mynttinen, Logrén, Särkkä-Tirkkonen & Rautiainen, 2015).

However, as McKercher, Okumus and Okumus (2008) claimed, the attractiveness of local food to tourists may be just some researchers' wishful thinking. In fact, tourists consume many other types of food than just local food in their journey, such as fast food (Osman, Johns & Lugosi, 2014). Quan and Wang (2004) argued that food consumption in tourism can be both supporting experience and peak experience. As supporting experience, dining is an obligatory behavior and an extension of daily habit (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). Hence, tourists may choose to have their familiar food rather than tasting the exotic local food. For instance, many Chinese group tourists in Australia ate Chinese food in most occasions and sampled local food sometimes (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010). Cohen and Avieli (2004) pointed out that there are many impediments that prevent tourists from eating local food, such as health and hygiene concerns, different eating habits and table manners, communication gaps.

Until now, little research has systematically explored the typology of food consumed by tourists in their entire journey. This study attempts to address this deficiency by exploring the foods Chinese tourists choose to consume in their travel in Spain. In an outbound journey, tourists will face more difficulties in food choices, especially when Chinese food culture is very difficult from the Spanish food culture. Moreover, in the context of international travel, globalization plays a significant role in food supply and consumption (Hall & Mitchell, 2002; Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012), and thus, can not be neglected when considering the food typology. Consequently, this study will apply the theories about globalization to classify the food types.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Food typology in existing tourism research

There has not been a single study targeting specifically on the typology of the food itself. Only a few studies on tourist food preferences mentioned some types of food.

Torres (2002) built two food classification systems. The first one includes American, Mexican, Yucatec, Italian, French, Asian seafood, steak, etc. The second one includes Mexican cuisine, tropical fruits, organic food, temperate fruit, home food, and Yucatec dishes. It can be found that Torres' (2002) classifications lack a consistent criterion, thus, are unsystematic. In another article, Torres (2003) divided food into fruits, vegetables, meats, poultry and seafood. It was a classification based on food ingredients aimed at illustrating the relationship between tourism and agriculture. Sheldon and Fox (1988) categorized food service facilities into hotel fine dining, hotel coffee shop, non-hotel fine dining, non-hotel coffee shop, local restaurant, ethnic restaurant, fast foods, and limited menu restaurant. In this typology, it is hard to identify the kinds of food the tourists may prefer, for example, tourists may take local dessert in a non-hotel coffee shop. Cohen and Avieli (2004) classified food by nations, such as Italian cuisine, French cuisine, Chinese cuisine, and so on. Chang, Kivela and Mak (2010) indicated two types of food: Chinese food and local food. To Chinese tourists, Chinese food means the food from their home country.

The above classification systems are mainly based on three different criteria: 1) by the country of origin for a specific cuisine, such as Spanish, Turkish, Thai cuisine and so on; 2) by food ingredients, such as meat, fruits, vegetables and so on; 3) based on the familiarity of food to tourists, such as local food or food from home country. The first two methods do not reflect tourists' food preferences. The third one does not fully reveal all the possible options that tourists have in the destination. In globalization era, tourists have more possible choices between food from tourists' home states and local food in destination.

## 2.2. Globalization and food consumption in tourism

### 2.2.1. *Conceptualizing globalization*

Globalization is a complicated concept and has attracted numerous scholars to interpret it. As a concept, globalization refers to "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992, p.8). The relevant topics cover a wide range (Ritzer, 2007), in which, there are some key issues in the research on globalization. Robertson (2001) summarized some key problems of the globalization paradigm, one of which relates closely to this study: does globalization involve increasing homogeneity or increasing heterogeneity?

Globalization is usually regarded as a force of homogenization. Scholars concerned that globalization will decrease the local cultural diversity (Tomlinson, 1991). In the context of food culture, American fast food is considered as a force to destroy local food culture in other countries (Gaytán, 2004). Countries like Italy and France have initiated slow food movements to advocate local food culture and criticize fast food (Andrews, 2008).

However, some other scholars argued that globalization brings heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. Roland Robertson (1995) reminded that the two concepts – globalization and localization – are interdependent rather than opposite. Globalization is not going to destroy local culture, but integrates with it and generates new cultural forms. The syncretic process is glocalization (Robertson, 2012). The phenomena of glocalization can be found in various fields, for example, McDonald's creates new products by combining its own standards with local culture (Ram, 2004). In the perspective of glocalization, the commodities and media and other cultural changes brought by globalization are not seen as totally coercive, but rather as providing material for individuals and local groups to create a new culture (Ritzer & Ryan, 2002). Therefore, in this perspective, globalization does not cause cultural homogeneity but brings cultural diversity.

However, the ideas of glocalization may be too optimistic, and ignore the destructive forces of globalization (Ritzer & Ryan, 2002). Ritzer and Ryan proposed the concept of grobalization, which

focuses on the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations, and the like and their desire, indeed need, to impose themselves on various geographic areas. Their main interest is in seeing their power, influence, and in some cases profits grow (hence the term grobalization) throughout the world (Ritzer & Ryan, 2002, p. 56).

By grobalization, Ritzer emphasized the force of homogeneity in globalization. With the force of grobalization, the difference between regions will gradually decrease. In this situation, social processes are more likely to be one directional and deterministic (Ritzer, 2004).

As stated above, globalization eventually may have two possible consequences: homogeneity caused by grobalization or heterogeneity caused by glocalization. There is not a consensus on which one is more powerful. However, Ram (2004) argued that the processes of grobalization and glocalization do not contradict each other, but work on different levels. Grobalization has a prevalent influence at the structural-institutional level, while glocalization affects the expressive-symbolic level. For instance, at the symbolic level, McDonald's produces some glocal foods by integrating with local food culture, but these foods are also produced and consumed in an industrialized-standardized way. In this study, it was found that the two forces coexist, both of them influence the food supply and consumption in tourism.

### *2.2.2. The influence of globalization on food consumption in tourism*

Globalization also has an effect on tourist food consumption. When tourists visit a destination, they have two basic choices on food consumption: choosing familiar food or

novelty food (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). When choosing familiar food, the tourist's dining is an obligatory behavior, also an extension of the daily life experience (Quan & Wang, 2004). In this sense, the main purpose of dining is meeting the basic body needs or pursuing a sense of ontological home comfort. When tourist chooses novelty food, his/her dining is a symbolic behavior aiming at experiencing local culture of the destination. This dining behavior is opposite to daily eating habit. According to Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012), globalization leads to homogenization of tourists' consumption, which means tourists could get access to more familiar food. The homogenization of food consumption reverses to enhance the force of globalization. Similarly, localization promotes the creation and development of local food, which could attract tourists to consume novel food. The motivation to attract more tourists will enhance localization in reverse (Hall & Mitchell, 2002).

Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012) pointed out theoretical possibilities other than local food for tourists to choose. But, there is not yet an empirical study to systemically investigate the food types consumed by tourists in practice. Moreover, Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012) concentrated more on interpreting globalization and localization, but neglected the complicated interactive relationships between globalization and localization. Hence, this study will consider two more relative concepts – globalization and localization – and their impacts on tourist food choices.

Inspired by the theories about globalization, this study attempts to build a typology of food consumed by tourists through investigating the foods that Chinese tourists chose to eat in their travel in Spain.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. The research sites

The fieldwork was conducted mainly in Madrid and Barcelona. Chinese outbound tourism market keeps expanding recently (Li, 2016). More and more Chinese tourists choose to visit Spain, which has made it easier for researchers to contact Chinese tourists in major destinations. In Barcelona, the interviews were conducted in sites such as Plaça de Gaudi, Plaça de la Sagrada Família, ticket box and entrances of Sagrada Família, subway entrances at La Rambla and Plaça de Catalunya, restaurants in Barri Gòtic district, and fast food shops (i.e. McDonald's, Burger King, Wok). In Madrid, sites such as Templo de Debod, Palacio Real de Madrid, Catedral de la Almudena, Plaça de España were chosen.

These sites were chosen for two reasons. Firstly, most of these sites are must-see attractions or must-eat restaurants for Chinese, so it was easy to find Chinese tourists there. Secondly, in these sites, tourists had more time for interviews. For example, at the entrance of

Sagrada Familia, many tourists queued hours to buy ticket, which gave the investigator plenty of opportunities to talk with them. In plazas, tourists can sit and rest and their visits there were more relaxed and flexible. This in turn made them more agreeable for an interview.

### 3.2. Data collection and analysis

Semi-structured interview was used to collect data. The data was collected in two separated periods. The first was from 31 October to 12 November, 2014. The second was from 26 September to 5 October, 2016. All the interviewees were Chinese and they were interviewed in Chinese. A convenient sampling method was adopted to choose interviewees, which means interviewees were those who had free time and were willing to be interviewed. The key questions included tourists' traveling schedules, foods tourists chose to eat, reasons why they wanted to eat like that, and how the food experience was. In this study, we chose to analyze the food types that Chinese tourists chose to eat in Spain.

The Chinese culture is collectivism-oriented (Hofstede, 2001). In the fieldwork, it was observed that Chinese tourists traveled with friends or relatives, and gathered together either in visiting attraction or having rests. In most instances, more than one tourist talked with the researcher in the interview. A total of 78 groups with over 206 tourists were interviewed. Each interview lasted from 10 minutes to 55 minutes, with an average 15 minutes. 15 groups were package group tourists, independent tourists were in the rest 63 groups. The interviews were recorded with their consent. All the interviews were later transcribed for further analysis.

In the analysis, all the interviewing texts were read through at beginning. Then the materials about food itself were picked up for coding. Different foods were identified at first, such as Spanish food (e.g. seafood paella, Iberia ham, tapas), Chinese food, fast food etc. Based on the theories about globalization, these foods were classified into different categories: local food, glocal food, grobal food and homeland food. The definition of these terms will be elucidated below. Chinese tourists have different preference in these foods, which can also be revealed in the categories. Tourists are more familiar with homeland food, and unfamiliar with local Spanish food. The typology in this relates to the conceptual framework built by Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012) and supplements more details to their framework.

## 4. Classifying food consumed by Chinese outbound tourists

Human is omnivore, which means they can not get enough nutrition by just eating one single type of food (Fischer, 1988). Hence, human diet is always diversified. Food taken by Chinese outbound tourists is also not singular. They chose food according to their needs and food accessibility. The foods that the Chinese tourists have in Spain can be divided into the following categories: local food, homeland food, glocal food and grobal food.

### 4.1. Local food

Seeking novelty is one of the important tourism motivations (Cohen, 1972; Lee & Crompton, 1992). Tourists often want to experience things that are different from their daily life. Local food represents the exotic culture (Henderson, 2004), which makes tasting exotic food a significant part of experiencing local culture in place away from home. In order to satisfy tourists' curiosity, many tourism destinations make great efforts to promote their food culture.

Chinese tourists wanted to taste the local food when they arrived at the destination and/or even before their trips. One extreme case in the investigation was that two couples made reservations for all their dinners on Spanish local restaurants over the internet while they were still in China (G28). They had looked forward to having a wonderful journey filled with the pleasure of tasting all kinds of Spanish local cuisine. Most of the tourists did not arrange their trips in such details. Yet during the journey they still searched for more local restaurants. Some of them searched for information on travel websites or cell phone applications such as Tripadvisor and Yelp, and some followed guide books such as Lonely Planet to find the local restaurants that have an excellent reputation. For example, local restaurants as La Paradeta and 4 Catsin Barcelona, La Botínin Madrid, food markets as Mercado de San Miguelin Madrid, Mercado de la Boqueríain Barcelona have been highly mentioned by the Chinese tourists. Quite often, the author saw a number of Chinese tourists queued up in front of a famous restaurant named La Fonda in Gothic district. Two couples told “we want to try the paella, because the guide book *Globe-Trotter Travel Guidebook to Spain* recommends this restaurant” (G20). Other interviewees (G03, G14, G18) also mentioned they had meals in this restaurant.

The Spanish local food chose by Chinese tourists usually included paella (rice dish), jamon (Iberian ham), cochinitillo asado (roast suckling pig), seafood, tapas, sangria, and so on. However, for Chinese tourists, having local food may be not a positive peak experience. In one example, G25 were dissatisfied with the paella. In her opinion, the authentic dish did not equal tasty food. “I had my first dish of paella in America, where was a five-star hotel in Miami. I thought it was very delicious. When I arrived in Spain, my first mission was to taste paella. But all the taste experience was not good. The American one must be improved” (G25, female1).

However, whether or not the local food can bring a satisfying peak experience, it is an important type of the food which tourists consume in destinations. However, the definition of “local food” needs a further clarification. The word, local, is a vague notion. Also the definition of local food is ambiguous (Mynttinen, Logrén, Särkkä-Tirkkonen & Rautiainen, 2015). Morris and Buller (2003) mentioned two methods to define the local food: emphasizing the geographical area of food production and food consumption or emphasizing the external value assigned to food. It would be difficult to define local food by its geographic location of

production. Local is a relative concept in the geographic sense (Robertson, 2012). For example, paella originates from Valencia, and turns into a Spanish “national dish” in recent years. On a national scale, paella is an authentic local food only in Valencia. However, on a global scale, paella can be considered as Spanish local food. Secondly, it is impossible to define local food according to the food ingredients, cooking methods, presentation and other food making procedures. This is because the food that is previously known as local, communal, and indigenous has been influenced by globalization (Robertson, 2001). It is difficult to tell which cooking procedure has not been fully influenced by the globalization for now. Meanwhile, Sims (2009) found that in reality tourists did not care about which region the food came from, yet they paid more attention to the symbolic attributes of food. Thus, the definition from Bessiere (1998) is more persuasive. The food reflecting the culinary culture from a particular place or society can be considered the local food, regardless of whether the food ingredients come from this place, or where the food is produced. Paella is a typical dish that reflects the Spanish culinary culture. Even when it's cooked and served in America, it is still regarded as a Spanish cuisine.

#### 4.2. Homeland food

If someone is exposed to an unfamiliar social system for a long period, he may experience a cultural shock (Pearce, 2005) and face ontological insecurity. Ontological insecurity means someone feels threatened by the experiences of any life, lacks a sense of self and agency, and is subject to fears, anxiety, and dread (Laing, 1960; Croft, 2012). Hence, Cohen (1972) claimed that tourists need familiar things or environment to buffering the shock caused by unfamiliar environment. Food from homeland can act as an “environment bubble” to protect tourists from the unfamiliar new environment momentarily (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Food from tourists’ home states can provide tourists a sense of home and brings them the ontological security (Quan & Wang, 2004). Ontological security means “the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action” (Giddens, 1991: 92). The food which is from the home country of tourists is defined as “homeland food” in this study.

Chinese tourists like to return to their familiar food in Spain. What should be emphasized here is that homeland food does not mean Chinese food in Spain, but refers to more authentic Chinese food. The Chinese cuisine in Spain has adjusted its flavor to satisfy local tastes. Therefore, it becomes closer to glocal food, but not authentic food from China. In this typology, we want to emphasize the authenticity of food itself. However, there is also a possibility that some overseas Chinese restaurants can provide excellent and authentic Chinese food.

The authentic homeland food comes mainly from two sources. The first one is “cultural



baggage” brought by tourists from home state. Cultural baggage refers to these things carried by migrants from home state to another place, which usually involve migrants’ own cultural habits (Hannerz, 1992, p.248). Many tourists have known that they would have an unaccustomed situation with the exotic cuisine before traveling. Therefore, they prepared some food products from home and carried with them. The Chinese are not alone. Tourists from other countries also behave like this. Each country has its own food in their cultural baggage, for example, the British like to carry black tea, the French bring cheese, the Japanese bring miso, and Chinese tourists love carrying instant noodles (Leach, 2016). These familiar food products are convenient to carry and cook, and give the tourists a sense of home after experiencing the food adventures in a tourism destination. Tourist G05 said that “it is better to have some instant noodles, the cup noodles. Should be cup noodles of ‘Jinmailang’ (a instant noodle brand). I just saw once here”. Some of the tourists like to bring along their favorite sauce, to change the flavor of the local food in a destination. For example, the family G32 came from Yunnan province, where people like to eat spicy food. They brought chili sauce and hot pot seasoning with them to Spain.

*Q: Do you carry chili sauce to Spain?*

*A: Female 1: Yes, we brought it. Female 2: For matching the porridge. Female 1: I think most people from Yunnan and Sichuan province will carry the chili sauce. (G32)*

Secondly, just like this family, some tourists carried cooking pot, condiment and even rice with them. They cooked by themselves. G04-female1 said “we bring pickled mustard tuber, instant noodles, soybean paste and rice. We cook for ourselves. For cooking the steam rice, we bring 5 kg of rice”. For people who are used to eating rice, it is a kind of self-identity (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993). Those people will miss rice if they have not had rice for a long time (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993). However, most of the regions in the Western counties do not produce rice and do not eat rice. That is why Chinese tourists carry rice with them on the trip. In a personal conversation with an employee of the local travel agent, she said that some Chinese tourists even cooked their meals secretly in five-star hotels.

Certainly, self-catering tourists may not necessarily cook their familiar home food. Self-catering could also be a deep experiencing way of local food (Therkelsen, 2015). However, for most of the Chinese tourists, especially those who carried cooking pot and rice, self-catering was meant to cook familiar food only, most of which were Chinese cuisine.

### 4.3. Glocal food

The glocal food here mainly refers to the ethnic food which is away from its home country, such as French cuisine in Vietnam, Italian cuisine in China, Chinese cuisine in Spain and so forth. These cuisines have widely spread around the world. The globalization of Chinese food

is induced mainly by the movement of human rather than capital, technology and organizational principles (Wu & Cheung, 2002). In history, traders, foreign labors and emigrants from Fujian and Guangdong Provinces of China contributed a lot to the spread of Chinese food to Southeast Asia, America and Oceania (Wu & Cheung, 2002; Tam, 2002; Fernandez, 2002). Even today, the globalization of Chinese food still relies heavily on the global movement of Chinese people. Although the number of Chinese restaurants in the United States is more than the number of McDonald's, Burger Kings, and KFCs combined (Lee, 2008), Chinese food has never developed in an institutionalized expanding way as McDonald's.

However, in order to satisfy the local customers' food preference, the overseas ethnic restaurants often change their food taste and table manners (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). This is a typical process of glocalization: the integration between globalization and localization (Robertson, 1995).

In overseas Chinese restaurants, the most famous example of glocal food is the dish *General Tso's Chicken*. It is a very popular dish in America. It was believed that this dish originates from Hunan Province, China. But, in fact there is no such a dish in mainland China (Lee, 2008). It was invented by a Taiwanese chef in 1949, then spread to the United States. Nevertheless, the *General Tso's Chicken* nowadays is quite different from the original version (Michallon, 2016). There are many other specious Chinese dishes, such as Wonton soup, Sweet & Sour soup, Crab Rangoon, Lo Mein, Egg Fuyong, Beef with Broccoli, Mooshu pork (Qingdi, 2017). The adjustment of Chinese food in the Western world can be considered a process of glocalization. Likely wise, the Italian, French and Spanish cuisines in China have also experienced the similar process.

The common reaction of Chinese tourists to Chinese food in Spain was inauthentic, unpalatable or not so good. Tourists walked into a Chinese restaurant with the hope to enjoy some familiar food and experience a sense of home. They usually ordered familiar dishes but eventually had unfamiliar taste. The couple G44 commented that the foreign Chinese food "is not authentic and not tasty". As a result, this couple stopped searching for Chinese restaurants, and kept self-catering during the trip in Spain.

In spite of the negative experience in the Chinese restaurants in Spain, there were still many Chinese tourists who chose to eat there. Compared to the local Spanish food, tourists were more familiar to the glocal Chinese food. Eating local food occasionally is acceptable, however, having it the entire the trip will be a challenge to many Chinese tourists. Glocal Chinese food can also provide the comfort of home to a degree.

In theory, Chinese tourists should also be familiar with glocal food from other countries.

Interviews have showed that a few Chinese tourists (G28, G44, G68) chose to taste other glocal foods, such as Japanese, Korean, Indian, or Thai food.

### 4.4. Grobal food

Grobal food here refers to the American fast foods that include McDonald's, KFC, Burger King, etc. These fast food shops can be found all over the world. Chinese people are also familiar with these brands. In Shenzhen city of China, the first KFC opened in 1986, and the first McDonald's opened in 1990 (Yan, 2006). Now McDonald's operates more than 700 restaurants in China. KFC has more than 1,500 restaurants. People have easy access to these American fast food shops, especially in large and medium-sized cities in China.

In the fieldwork, the author often saw Chinese tourists in fast food shops in Barcelona. Grocal food shops usually have good location in city center or close to hot tourism attractions. For example, nearly every major fast food brand has a branch surrounding the landmark the Basilica of Sagrada Familiar in Barcelona. In Segovia, McDonald's and Burger King are also next to the iconic landmark Roman aqueduct. These fast food shops provide convenient service for tourists to dine. There were 17 groups of tourists who mentioned their consumption of McDonald's. In general, fast food is considered a symbol of cultural imperialism and Americanization, which has met resistance in Italy and France (Andrews, 2008). Tourism is deemed to be the most important way to revive local culture and local food (Rizter, 2004; Sims, 2009). But in fact Chinese tourists still consume fast food in overseas trips. Travelers from other countries also eat fast food in their outbound journey (Osman, Johns & Lugosi, 2014).

Many scholars may not agree to classify McDonald's as grobal food, because one of McDonald's development strategies is to integrate with local culture. Therefore, McDonald's is a good example of glocalization in many studies, such as McDonald's in East Asia (Watson, 2006).

This study considers the fast food as grobal food for two reasons. First of all, Rizter creates the concept of globalization to emphasize the aspect of profit growth and expansion in globalization, which is ignored by the glocalization. These fast-food enterprises expand from home state to the rest of the world with a clear purpose for profit growth. While integrating local culture and promoting products suitable for local consuming habits aim to gain higher profit, this localization strategy also reflects a certain degree of similarity throughout the world, which is "diversity takes standardized forms" (Goodman, 2007).

Moreover, the standardization of fast food is what many Chinese tourists seek in outbound travel. These enterprises still retain most of their core products no matter which part of the world it is offered, such as McDonald's Big Mac, and Burger King's Whopper sandwich.

McDonald's can provide standardized services. Its ordering system is similar throughout the world, so it becomes a good option for those tourists who do not speak Spanish and English. For example, a senior couple chose McDonald's just because "McDonald's (menu) is very simple and clear. I know which one I want" (G35, male). McDonald's also provides safe and reliable food that is also extremely important for some tourists. "It's safe. I know that will be fine for me to have this (McDonald's)" (G22, male). The characteristics Chinese tourists seek in McDonald's are standard, fast, safe, and familiar. Therefore, the meanings of McDonald's and other fast food business to Chinese tourists are consistent with the standardization and homogeneity brought on by globalization. Based on these two reasons, fast food is defined as global food in this study.

## 5. Discussion: food typology and tourist food preferences

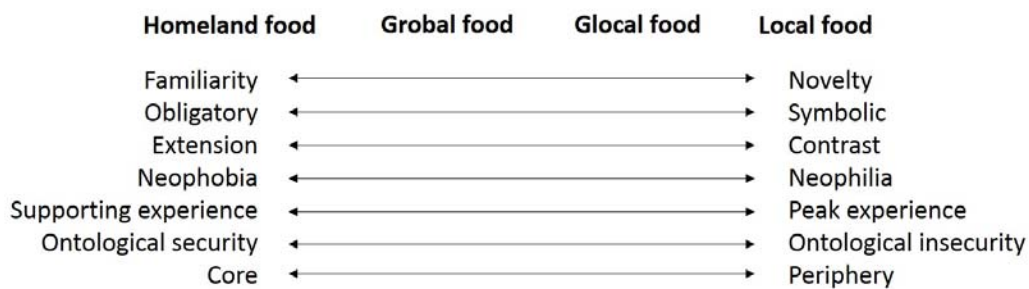
The above food typology can also link to tourists' food preferences and choices. Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012) summarized three pairs of dimensions to explain the food consumption of tourists: familiar vs. novelty, obligatory vs. symbolic, extensions vs. contrast. These three pairs interrelate to each other. When visitors choose novel food, they consider diet as a symbolic behavior, which is different and contrary to their daily dining experience. When tourists consume familiar food, dining is perceived as a kind of obligation for survival, which is similar and extent to the daily eating behavior.

However, this study does not regard these three pairs of dimensions to be completely opposite each other and separate. Instead, this study considers them as two ends of a continuum (Figure 1). In this continuum, the above food typology can be sorted out in order according to their familiarity to tourists.

The most novel and unfamiliar food is the local food in the destination, which represents an exotic culture. Global food refers to ethnic food in countries other than its own country of origin, for example Chinese restaurants in Italy, or Italian restaurants in China. It integrates local food culture of the destination with food culture of its country of origin. It seems familiar to tourists, but its contents are different from authentic homeland food. Thus, global food combines both the sense of familiarity and strangeness. Ironically, although global food does not originate from most of tourists' home states, tourists feel more familiar to them than global food. To Chinese tourists, McDonald's food is more expectable than Chinese food in a Spanish restaurant. Because of globalization, fast food is becoming part of the daily life in countries outside America. Meanwhile, their food and service are almost the same in different countries. Tourists can have the same global food in a destination as in their home town. In general, tourists are more familiar with global food than the global food. Food from tourists' home state has the highest familiarity. The authentic homeland food is mainly from two sources: the food

in cultural baggage carried by tourists from their home state, and self-catering food in destination. Occasionally, ethnic restaurants in destinations also provide authentic homeland food. There is a possibility that some Chinese restaurants in Spain can serve very good and authentic Chinese food.

What can be included in this framework is not limited to the three dimensions proposed by Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012). The other dimensions include neophobia vs. neophilia (Fischler, 1988), supporting experience vs. peak experience (Quan & Wang, 2004), ontological security vs. ontological insecurity (Laing, 1960), and core vs. periphery (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010). The core-periphery structure will be explained below, the other dimensions have been explained at the above.



**Figure 1. Food typology and its relation to ‘familiarity-novelty’ continuum**

This theoretical framework enriches the understanding about food types consumed by tourists, and demonstrates in greater details the complexity of tourists’ food preferences and choices in destination.

Theoretically, this framework is not only used specifically in analyzing Chinese outbound tourism, but also is appropriate in explaining the food consumption of tourists from other countries. This framework is more effective in examining travels crossing different regions or nations with different food cultures. The contexts of each food typology are different for tourists from different countries. For instance, when the Spanish tourists visit China, the local food for them is Chinese cuisine; the modified Spanish cuisine becomes glocal food such as paella or tapas in Chinese version; grobal food remains the same which are the fast foods from McDonald’s, Burger King, and others. Homeland food can be authentic Spanish cuisine in China or their culinary cultural baggage.

In this framework, Chinese outbound tourists have different preferences to familiar food and novel food. In their travel to the West, Chinese tourists would to try new cuisines, but they cannot eat novel food for too long and too often (Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline & Wang, 2011). The food preferences of Chinese outbound tourists are generalized by Chang, Kivela and Mak (2010) as the core-periphery principle, which means Chinese tourists always eat foods that they are

familiar with, and just sample some local food. When Western backpackers travel to the East, they are eager to try different authentic food as cosmopolitans do (Falconer, 2013). But as the travel lengthens, they would choose to return to their familiar food because of the intolerance with novel food (Falconer, 2013). It seems that the core-periphery principle also exists in the food consumption of Western tourists. However, the evidences are still not systematically collected. More studies about the food consumption behaviors of Western tourists need to be undertaken to determine whether the core-periphery principle is applicable in general.

## 6. Conclusions

Because local food can serve as a tourism attraction in a destination, the existing tourism studies pay more attention to local food. Topics about the roles of local food in local development and tourist experience of consuming local foods have been well explored. Other types of food are almost ignored. In reality, during their journal, tourists consume variety of foods, revealing a complicated picture of tourist experience. Although some studies made some classifications on food (e.g. Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010; Torres, 2002; 2003), their typologies are not systematically explored and lack clear theoretical criterion.

To bridge the research gap, this study builds a food typology through classifying the food consumed by the Chinese outbound tourists in Spain. Based on the relationship between globalization and localization, the food is classified into four categories: local food, global food, grobal food and homeland food.

Globalization facilitates the movement of people, food and capital and significantly diversifies food consumption of the tourists. First of all, globalization enables tourists to travel to another place to taste exotic food. Secondly, the movement of people from one place to another also increases the tourists' accessibility to their familiar food. Tourists can eat in ethnic restaurants such as the overseas Chinese restaurants, which are owned and operated by Chinese emigrants living abroad. In most occasions, the original tastes of the ethnic foods have been modified to satisfy the local population. Thus, under the influence of both globalization and localization, overseas ethnic restaurants produce new glocal tastes. Only a small percentage of tourists may taste authentic food from ethnic restaurants in a destination. Thirdly, the expansion of capital across different countries leads to the widespread of grobal food such as McDonald's, KFC, Starbucks, and so on. This presence of institutionally standardized food in both tourists' home states and their destinations make it possible for tourists to eat grobal food in destinations, which is similar to what they can have at their home. Lastly, tourists can carry ready to prepare home cuisines with them during their trip, defined as culinary cultural baggage. The four categories describe the inter-related characteristics between globalization and localization. Their relationships reveal the complexity in the behaviors of the international tourists. While

international tourists travel to experience the exotic and different cultures, they also need to feel the familiarity of home. Both are crucial for them to continue their trip. Familiar food can provide such a home feeling.

This typology not only explains the types of food consumed by Chinese tourists traveling in Western countries, but also reveals the food preferences of outbound tourists. On an international trip, tourists usually switch between novel food and familiar food (Quan & Wang, 2004). Between novel food and familiar food, four type of food are identified. Local food is the most novel to tourists, followed by global food and grobal food. Homeland food is most familiar to tourists. The typology systematically expands our understanding about the tourists' food choices. It also contributes to refining the conceptual model proposed by Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012).

Food consumption plays an essential part in understanding the tourist experience. In the future, the patterns in food consumption in the tourist travel should receive more academic attention. Besides local food, scholars should recognize the significance of other food types in the tourist experience and their contribution to destination economy. Furthermore, this research also calls for more in-depth studies to examine if the typology framework is applicable in explaining the food consumption by tourists in different cultural contexts and travel practices.

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Chapter 3 Food habits and tourist food consumption: an exploratory study on dining behaviours of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain.

## Food habits and tourist food consumption: an exploratory study on dining behaviours of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain

**Abstract:** Local food as a tourism attraction has been well recognized and studied by many tourism scholars. However, the phenomenon that tourists prefer food other than local food has not gotten much attention. This article attempts to explore how the eating habits of tourists can hinder their consumption of local food by studying the food consumption behaviours of Chinese tourists in Spain. Qualitative methods were employed to interview fifty-two Chinese tourists in Barcelona, and field notes of participant observations taken during thirteen familiarization trips for Chinese market were also used to help understand the dining behaviours of Chinese tourists. The results show that due to different food habits, Chinese tourists only sampled local Spanish food during their travels in Spain. The challenges to Chinese food habits included unfamiliar ingredients, strange tastes, different quantities of food, different dining times and duration, and different cultural concepts of healthy food. The research also reveals that Chinese tourists chose many strategies to deal with the unaccustomed eating situations, such as enduring the cultural differences, eating familiar fast food, eating just Chinese food, or bringing food from home. In long-haul Europe travels, Chinese tourists often switch among these strategies in order to eat healthily and comfortably.

**Keywords:** food consumption, Chinese outbound tourists, food habits, novelty-sampling, Spain

### 1. Introduction

This study will focus on how food culture and habits from China influence tourist food consumption by exploring the eating behaviours of Chinese tourists in Spain. Food contains the nutrients necessary to sustain human life, but also is a manifestation of local culture (Chang, 1977). As a cultural representation, food can have two opposite effects in tourism: on the one hand, the local food culture in tourism destinations can be considered a tourist attraction where tourists seek to taste and enjoy novel local food (Cohen, 1972; Long, 2004; Kim & Eves, 2012), and on the other hand, the eating habits from a tourist's home country can impede their consumption of local food in a destination (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). In the former case, the traveller's eating experience is quite different from in their everyday life, but in the latter, it is just a repetition of their everyday life habits (Quan & Wang, 2004).

Because of its cultural meaning, food has been widely regarded as a tourism resource (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Henderson, 2004; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Ab Karim & Chi,

2010), and its role in destination development has been well studied. Firstly, it can reflect authentic local culture, and consuming local food can be seen as an authentic experience for tourists (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2013). This authenticity will be enhanced when the eating experience meets tourists' expectations about local food (Sims, 2009). Secondly, food is also a significant element of place identity (Richard, 2002), and therefore can strengthen local people's identity with their home. For instance, in a study about food festivals in Cornwall, England by Everett and Aitchison (2008), the local people believed that local food promotion could protect and advertise their heritage, traditional skills and the local lifestyle, and also be a legacy for upcoming generations. Culinary tourism "is about groups using food to 'sell' their histories and to construct marketable and publicly attractive identities, and it is about individuals satisfying curiosity" (Long, 2004: 20), and as a consequence, food can play an important role on improving the tourist experience and strengthening a destination's place identity (Timothy & Ron, 2013). Therefore, scholars have recognized food tourism as a useful tool for destination marketing and branding (du Rand, Heath & Alberts, 2003; Tellstrom, Gustafsson & Mossberg, 2006; du Rand & Heath, 2006), and many tourism boards all over the world have started to promote culinary tourism in order to brand their destinations.

However, local food is not always a primary tourist motivation when travelling (Hall & Sharples, 2003). For instance, McKercher, Okumus and Okumus (2008) claimed that the attractiveness of local food to tourists may be just some researchers' wishful thinking. In fact, a study conducted in Cordoba, Spain revealed that only 10% of the tourists considered local food as a major motivation when choosing the destination, and that 68%, while agreeing on the importance of food in a destination choice, did not consider it the most essential reason (Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012). Also, in another study of Japanese, American and Canadian tourists in Hawaii, the results showed that only 18% of tourists considered food as an influencing factor in their destination choice (Sheldon & Fox, 1988). Therefore, as these studies suggest, tourists will not necessarily always consume local food in the destination (Quan & Wang, 2004). This was further observed by Falconer (2013), who found that at the beginning of a trip, female Western tourists acted as if it was their obligation to eat the local food, even when the food was not appealing to them, but in the end they changed their minds and reverted to eating more familiar food. While there are many studies that have researched the motivation and experience of eating local food (Kim & Eves, 2012; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2013; Mynttinen et al., 2015), incidences of tourists not consuming local food have not been fully investigated (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

This paper aims at shedding light on how a "home food culture" can constrain tourists' food consumption in long-haul and long-stay holidays. Culture is a pattern or style of human behaviour shared by a group of people (Chang, 1977). With different cultural backgrounds,

each group has different food habits, and therefore food choices over the world are diverse, sometimes even within the same nation. Researchers have acknowledged the significance of culture as a determinant of food preferences, but “relatively little is known about to what extent and in what specific aspects culture and religion have impacted food consumption in tourism” (Mak, Lumbers, Eves & Chang, 2012: 930). Moving from one place to another, especially from east to west, huge differences are found in what people eat and how they eat it, and therefore, there is a need to explore to what extent the home food culture of tourists is preferred when they travel abroad.

Chinese tourists’ food consumption during their travels in Spain is chosen as a case study to analyze how the home food culture of Chinese travellers influences their food choices on overseas long-haul and long-stay trips. The reasons for choosing Chinese tourists are three-fold: (1) Chinese food culture has a legacy of thousands of years of food tradition (Anderson, 1988), and plays a central role in Chinese daily life (Simmons, 1990). Chinese people have plenty of specific concepts and beliefs about food (Chang, 1977), and therefore the influence of food culture on Chinese tourists’ food consumption makes it an interesting case to study. (2) Huge differences exist between Eastern and Western food cultures, such as ingredients, cooking procedures, table manners and so on, and therefore the study of Chinese tourists travel to a Western destination will provide more interesting results than a closer destination. (3) China is one of the most important emerging tourism markets around the world (Arlt & Burns, 2013; Li, 2016), and therefore the results of this study will help tourism destinations to better understand Chinese tourists’ behaviours.

## 2. Tourists’ food consumption from a cultural perspective

Food consumption can be affected by ecological, economic, cultural, physical and psychological factors (Beardsworth, 1995; Connor & Armitage, 2002). Among these, social culture defines what kinds of food are exotic, edible or palatable (Long, 2004). In tourism studies, two basic types of cultures that can affect food consumption have been identified: sacred religious culture and secular culture. They both involve beliefs about food, with the religious cultures often having much more strict, formal, and institutional rules than secular cultures (Long, 2004), and therefore the effects of this on eating are often more variable.

### 2.1. Religion and dining in tourism

Within all religions, Islam may have the strictest regulations on diet. Amuquandoh (2011) compared the attitudes towards Ghanaian food between Muslim tourists and tourists from other religions (Christianism, Atheism, Buddhism, Agnosticism, and Judaism), and found that Muslim tourists pay more attention to hygiene issues in food preparation, as a strict practitioner



of Islam is strictly concerned about food ingredients, kitchen infrastructure and cooking procedures. In addition, Muslims are not allowed to have pork or alcohol (Hassan & Hall, 2003), and must eat *halal* food, which refers to food or drinks that are allowed under Islamic dietary guidelines, but not *haram* food, referring to food prohibited under Islamic dietary guidelines (Mak, Lumbers, Eves & Chang, 2012). For instance, as Muslim tourists were becoming an emerging target group in New Zealand, and as *halal* food could be very difficult to find there, Hassan and Hall (2003) suggested setting up food standards to attract these customers. Studies on how religion affects tourist food consumption are still relatively few in tourism research.

### 2.2. Nationality and cultural eating differences with regard to tourism

Compared to strict religious rules for eating, the influences of secular culture on eating are more flexible, which makes their study more ambiguous, diverse, and difficult to define, and most of the existing studies on this topic have been comparative research based on tourists' nationality.

For instance, a study conducted by Sheldon & Fox (1988) about international tourists in Hawaii showed how different nations pay different attention to food. Japanese tourists were more concerned about food than Americans and Canadians, as over 60% of American and Canadian tourists skipped at least one meal a day (Sheldon & Fox, 1988). Also, Japanese were more conservative about choosing unfamiliar food (Sheldon & Fox, 1988). Similarly, Pizam and Sussmann (1995) found that while American tourists preferred local food when visiting the United Kingdom, Japanese, French and Italian visitors preferred their own food over local British food. Also, March (1997) found that Koreans preferred to have Korean cuisine when travelling in Australia. Therefore, all these studies support the assertion made by Cohen and Avieli (2004) that most Asians would avoid novel food when travelling, while Westerners are more interested in eating new types of food.

However, another study, which applied the Uncertain Avoidance Index (UAI) to evaluate the attitudes of international tourists towards novel food while travelling in Hong Kong, showed how the UAI of mainland Chinese tourists (UAI=30) was lower than that of Americans (UAI=46), Australians (UAI=51) and Western Europeans (UAI=29 to 94), whereas Singaporeans (UAI=8) had the lowest score (Tse & Crofts, 2005). These results indicate that tourists from Eastern cultures are more willing to taste novel foods than Westerners, which is the opposite of the findings in the studies mentioned further above. Similarly, Torres (2002) found that American tourists were more conservative with regard to food when travelling in Yucatan, Mexico, and they consumed less Mexican food than tourists from other nationalities. Moreover, compared to Asian tourists, Europeans have been found to be more conservative in

some destinations, as in Telfer and Wall's (2000) study, for instance, Asian tourists spent more money on local food while in Indonesia, while Europeans preferred non-local food.

These conflicting results may be caused by similarities between the food cultures of the tourism destination and the tourist's country of origin. The more the two cultures are similar, the more likely tourists would have a lower Uncertain Avoidance Index when eating local novel food. This could partially explain why mainland Chinese and Singaporean tourists visiting Hong Kong had the lowest UAI scores, and why Japanese did not want to eat local foods when visiting Hawaii. Therefore, in general terms, studies about tourists' food consumption differences based on nationality only indicate some basic trends about cultural differences (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995), and never fully elucidate how culture influences tourist food consumption. Because this research perspective is not useful enough to understand food habits in a particular culture, Dann (1993) advised using other approaches such as using culture, personality, lifestyle, social class or tourists' roles to obtain more solid results about tourists' food behaviour when visiting a destination with a different food culture.

### 2.3. Chinese food culture and tourist food consumption

Unlike Muslims and Christians, Chinese do not share a particular religious belief. Some Chinese minorities have a religious faith; for example many people living in Xinjiang believe in Islam, and most Tibetans believe in Tibetan Buddhism. However, most Han Chinese people are not devout religious people. According to an investigation into religious belief in China, except for Tibet and Xinjiang, only 20.1% of Chinese people claimed to believe in at least one religion (Guo, 2014). Thus, their food habits are basically influenced by their traditional secular culture instead of religion. Despite this fact, few studies have been done on Chinese tourist food consumption.

For instance, Chang et al. (2010; 2011) made a valuable exploration into how Chinese culture affects tourist food consumption, and the results showed that Chinese tourists had a core-peripheral diet structure. Chang et al. (2010) found that Chinese outbound tourists to Australia mainly ate Chinese food, and only sampled local food occasionally. These same researchers classified tourists into three types: observers, explorers and participators (Chang et al., 2010). Participators ate more local foods than the other two types, but did not continuously eat local food throughout their trips. Chang et al. (2010) also found that even when eating local food, Chinese tourists looked for familiar tastes, and that local dishes with a "Chinese" taste and/or that were made using Chinese cooking procedures were more popular among Chinese travellers. Additionally, they found that Chinese collectivist culture also affects Chinese travellers' food consumption behaviours in that the travellers may give up personal food preferences in exchange for pursuing harmony within the tour group.

In another study on the diets of Taiwanese tourists, Chang (2017) pointed out that the Chinese perception of a healthy diet is strongly influenced by traditional “*yin-yang*” concepts. Chinese people classify food into “hot” and “cold” types, where cold represents *yin* and hot is related to *yang*. In order to achieve a healthy diet, both “cold” and “hot” foods should be taken together in meals, which means having a balance between *yin* and *yang*. Therefore, it is relevant to know more about the particular food habits of Chinese culture.

### 3. Food habits in Chinese culture

Other disciplines such as history, anthropology and sociology have also explored Chinese food habits (Anderson, 1988; Chang, 1977; Simmon, 1990; Roberts, 2002), and some of these habits are summarized below.

“*Fan-cai*” (饭-菜) is the essential principle of Chinese dining (Chang, 1977; Chang et al., 2010). The staple food for the main course is *fan*, which is usually rice or steamed wheat-, millet-, or corn-flour bread or noodles, while *cai* are side dishes that are composed of vegetables and meats. Preparing a typical Chinese meal always follows this principle. *Fan* is usually eaten to prevent hunger, but has no strong flavors, and *cai* is tasty and provides variety. If eating *fan* alone, the meal will be boring, while only having *cai* may result in feeling hungry very soon after the meal (Chang, 1977).

Chinese food beliefs closely relate to perceptions of diet and health. Referring to health, people always take into consideration food hygiene and food safety (Cohen & Avieli, 2004); however, Chinese health beliefs on food are different from those regarding hygiene and safety. Even when the food has a high standard of hygiene, in Chinese beliefs it does not mean it has to be healthy. Chinese adopt their own criteria with a strong cultural significance to determine whether food is healthy or not. Food is classified as cold and hot according to its attribute and nature, which corresponds to the forces of *yin* and *yang*, as was mentioned above. Hot food could be “oily and deep fried food, peppery hot flavorings, fatty meat, or oily plant food” (Chang, 1977: 10), and also include alcoholic spirits (Simmons, 1990), while in contrast, foods such as “water plants, most crustaceans, certain beans (such as mung beans)” (Chang, 1977: 10) and some vegetables with low calories (Simmons, 1990) are regarded as cold food. Furthermore, there is some neutral food which falls in between cold and hot, as for instance rice or apples (Simmons, 1990).

Chinese people believe that the human body needs elements from *yin* and *yang* to reach a balance in order to guarantee good health. Correspondingly, in order to be healthy, people should take a balanced amount of cold and hot foods. For instance, eating too much meat will cause the body to overheat “*shang huo* (上火)”, and therefore vegetables have to be eaten to

balance that heat. Cold and hot foods are also taken under other considerations, like their relation to gender or to the seasons. In terms of gender, male is seen as *yang*, and female as *yin*. Therefore females cannot take too much cold food, as it will increase their inner cold and will not benefit their health (Simmons, 1990), especially in older females. Regarding the seasons, in summer, cold food such as cucumber or watermelon is eaten to prevent heat, while in wintertime, lamb, red dates or Korean ginseng can supply the energy to warm up the body. That is why many regions in China have the tradition of eating lamb in winter.

Dining also plays a vital role in Chinese social interactions. As members of a collective culture, Chinese have a strong tradition of food-sharing, as other Asian nations also have (Cohen & Avieli, 2004), which is different from contemporary Western traditions. During special occasions and other social affairs, food plays an important communicative role which goes far beyond its nutritional function. In China, most social interactions such as meetings with relatives and friends or business negotiations are done over a dining table (Anderson, 1988), and *guanxi* is strengthened by the sharing of food.

Chinese food culture and habits are thus diverse, and very little is known about how those habits affect Chinese tourists' food consumption in long-haul and long-stay destinations. Two questions that require study include, since the eating habits in Western countries are quite different from those in China, will the food habits of Chinese tourists constrain their consumption of local food, and if so, to what extent and in what ways? Chang et al. (2010, 2011) did some initial studies on this topic, although they: 1) only focused on package tours rather than on independent tourists; 2) and they only analyzed the dining behaviours of Chinese tourists visiting Australia (Chang et al., 2010). Therefore, research should be extended to independent Chinese tourists and to other destinations. Following the lead of Chang et al. (2010), this article aims at finding out how Chinese food habits affect the eating experiences of both group and independent Chinese tourists visiting Spain.

#### 4. Methods

This is an exploratory study employing a qualitative research approach to collect data in two ways: semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The interview data were mainly collected in Barcelona, which is a must-visit Spanish destination for Chinese tourists, and the fieldwork included two stages. First, the preliminary work was done between 4 and 7 October, 2014, with the aim of exploring tourist attractions in Barcelona and searching for suitable locations for interviews. As a result, several sites were chosen, such as parks Plaça de Gaudi and Plaça de la Sagrada Família, the ticket box and entrances to Sagrada Família, restaurants around Sagrada Família, subway entrances at La Rambla and Plaça de Catalunya, and some restaurants in the Barri Gotic. Among them, Sagrada Família was the main site to

conduct interviews, as it is a must-see attraction in Barcelona, and a number of independent and package Chinese tourists gather in the surrounding area nearly everyday. They usually spent a long period of time in this area to take pictures, eat, wait for entry, and take breaks. Therefore it was quite convenient and accessible to interview Chinese tourists here.

The major fieldwork then was conducted from 31 October to 12 November, 2014. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, and a convenient sampling method was adopted, meaning that only those tourists who were willing and had time to do an interview were interviewed. The interviews were carried out in Chinese, and all of the interviewees were Chinese tourists. The main questions for the interviews included questions about the tourists' travel schedules, what kinds of food they ate, why they ate like this, or whether they were used to eating Spanish food.

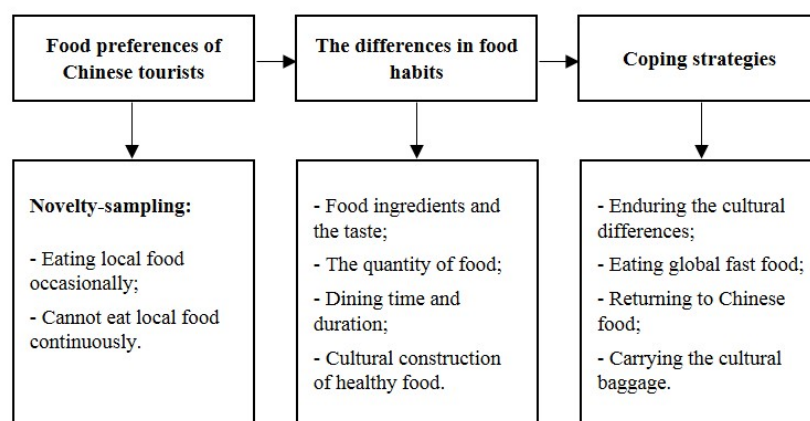
In the fieldwork, it was observed that most Chinese tourists travelled in groups, and that the people in the groups were either friends or relatives. They gathered together when visiting attractions or taking rests, and in most instances, more than one tourist talked with the investigator during each interview. So, while thirty groups of Chinese tourists were interviewed, there were a total of fifty-two interviewees, all of whom were Han Chinese. Seven of the thirty groups were on package tours, and the rest organized their trips by themselves. The interviews were recorded with the tourists' consent, and all of the interviews were later transcribed for further analysis.

In addition, the first author worked in the Tourism Board of Costa Brava – Girona of Spain to assist in Chinese market promotion. In order to promote Chinese tourism, every year the tourism board organizes many familiarization trips for Chinese travel agencies, journalists and wholesalers to get familiar with the attractions in Girona Province. Familiarization trip is a frequently-used strategy for destination planners or marketing agencies to get intimate knowledge of a destination (Pizam, 1990; Weber, 2001). Between March 2013 and May 2016, the first author participated in a total of thirteen familiarization trips, with each trip lasting between one and three days. The first author played two main roles in the trips, which were translating between Chinese guests and Spanish hosts and interpreting tourism attractions to Chinese guests. During the trips, the tourism board arranged for the Chinese guests to taste the local Spanish cuisine, which provided excellent opportunities for the researcher to observe the dining experiences of the Chinese guests. Most of the Chinese guests had extensive travel experience, but for some of them, the familiarization trip was their first time visiting Europe, and their dining behaviours helped show how their food habits impacted their food consumption.

The data analysis consisted of two parts: analysis of the interviews was the main part, with the field notes from the participant observation providing supporting evidence for the results of the interview analysis.

Coding and thematic analysis was the main method used to analyze the texts of the interviews. There are different coding systems in different research designs (Saldaña, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 2009), and in this research the aim of the coding was to answer the research question about how eating habits influence tourists' eating choices, behaviours and experiences. Coding was used to find patterns and classify those aspects of tourists' food consumption practices.

Before coding, the texts were all read through at least once. Then, the coding concentrated on themes like: typology of the foods consumed, attitudes toward those foods, the accustomed and unaccustomed aspects of eating, the influence of food habits on food choices, and so on. The results revealed that most of the Chinese tourists mentioned the unaccustomed aspects of food in their dining experiences. They had different kinds of food during their visit to Spain, such as Spanish food, Chinese food, fast food, and so on. The comments about the local Spanish dishes from Chinese tourists included terms like: unaccustomed, salty, strange smell, and so on. As for the unaccustomed aspects, they mentioned: food ingredients, taste, table manners, and consequences of eating on bodily feeling. In order to cope with these unaccustomed aspects, the Chinese tourists adopted different strategies: enduring the food, ordering familiar food instead (fast food, Chinese food), or carrying "cultural baggage".



**Figure 1. The effects of food habits on Chinese outbound tourists' food consumption**

The observation field notes also support the results of the above analysis. The final results of the data analysis and their discussion are shown below.

## 5. Food preferences of Chinese tourists, and novelty-sampling

Human beings always face a tension between food neophilia and food neophobia (Fischler, 1988). Food neophilia means the tendency to explore and taste new, novel and varied foods, while food neophobia means being wary of new foods because of their potential risks to health (Fischler, 1988).

According to the results, when travelling in Spain, Chinese tourists usually consume both familiar and novel foods during their journeys. Very few of the tourists were found to be absolute novelty-seeking or novelty-avoiding consumers. Consuming local food is one of the essential ways to experience local culture for Chinese tourists, and therefore tourists visited local restaurants, cafés, bars and markets to taste local dishes or food ingredients: *“When we travel to different countries, we love to taste the local food” (G8-Female1)*. This supports the idea that tourists like to taste some local foods as a sort of attraction (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012). Several iconic restaurants were mentioned by the interviewees as places visited, such as “Sobrino de Botín” in Madrid, “La Fonda” and “Four Cats” in Barcelona, and “Meson de Candido” in Segovia. Some of these tourists were even curious about Spanish cooking methods: *“I will taste the flavor of the food and try to learn how to cook it” (G5-Female1)*. To them, Spanish food was a cultural attraction.

However, tasting local Spanish food was not a continuous activity throughout the trip. Almost all the interviewees said that they could not constantly take local food. For example: *“I can only have Western style food for two days, so for today’s lunch I went to a Chinese restaurant” (G2-Male)*. Tasting local food occasionally was acceptable, while eating it all the time was a challenge for many Chinese tourists.

It is the food habits that make Chinese tourists return to Chinese food. There are many differences between Chinese and Spanish eating habits. Therefore, the interviewees frequently mentioned the word ‘unaccustomed’. A couple of them said that they were “unaccustomed” to local food: *“we don’t pay much attention to food, just not used to it. Ordinarily we take Chinese food and have Spanish local food occasionally” (G5-Female)*. According to the tourists’ perception, food habits are formed over a long period of time, and even inherited across generations: *“The food habit is very important. You can change some of the habits, but lots of people can’t. It has lasted for generations” (G8-Female2)*. It is impossible to change habits in a short time, which means that one cannot change one’s accustomed eating ways suddenly while travelling.

Therefore, a pattern can be found that Chinese tourists ate Spanish and Chinese food intermittently. Chinese food mitigates potential food cultural conflicts by providing an

“environmental bubble” (Cohen, 1972; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). There were few pure novelty-seekers or novelty-avoiders, and most of the tourists were novelty-samplers who fall in a middle position in the spectrum that ranges between food neophilia to food neophobia.

## 6. The aspects of “unaccustomed” dining

There were many unaccustomed aspects when Chinese tourists consumed Spanish food, including unfamiliar ingredients, unfamiliar tastes, different table manners and etiquette, and different conceptions about health relating to food.

### 6.1. Food ingredients and taste

#### 6.1.1. Unfamiliar ingredients

Choosing ingredients is the first step in cooking, and usually the most essential step. Food ingredients have regional characteristics, as some of them are only produced in particular areas. Therefore, dishes that contain these ingredients carry regional features as signatures, and because of the regional features of food, many tourists are not used to eating dishes with unfamiliar ingredients.

One of the most obvious examples is how Chinese tourists dealt with snails. While snails are famous ingredients in Northern Spain and France, they are not perceived as edible food in Chinese culture. So, Chinese tourists could not accept an iconic Catalan dish made with snails. One lady stated, “*they took me to a restaurant for tasting snails but I didn’t taste them*” (G15-Female1). Even journalists from Hong Kong, who were thought to have much more tourism experience, could not eat more than one or two snails during their press trip Catalan-style lunch (17 April 2016). Even if the food is edible in an objective sense, Chinese tourists are not used to eating it because of the unfamiliar ingredients.

#### 6.1.2. Unfamiliar taste

Even though many dishes may have similar or familiar ingredients, different cooking procedures may lead to unfamiliar tastes. Taste is an important part of tourists’ dining experience (Kim & Eves, 2012), and taste, smell and texture may be reasons for avoiding local dishes.

Some Spanish dishes were too salty for the Chinese palate, such as paella, deep-fried seafood and jamon: “*The deep-fried fish in Malaga was very salty (G3-Female)*”; “*I’m not used to eat the ham, too salty, with strange flavor (G5-Male)*”. Salting is a traditional process for preserving fresh seafood for transportation in Spain, even since the time of the Romans (Medina, 2005), and may cause an over-salty taste of some seafood dishes for Chinese people.



China has Jinhua ham, which is similar to Iberian jamon but is eaten in a different way. Iberian jamon is eaten without any cooking, while Jinhua ham is usually cooked as a compounding ingredient, which adds the flavor from the ham to other ingredients in the dish.

Furthermore, particular cooking procedures in different cultures give unique flavors or textures to their dishes. Rice is a common grain in both Spanish and Chinese food dishes, and paella, originally from the Valencia region, has become a Spanish national dish in recent years. Tourists can find paella in nearly every tourism destination in Spain, and all of the interviewed tourists ate paella during their visits. However, in most cases, Chinese tourists were not used to eating rice as it is used in paella: *“The rice is undercooked, tough, and unpalatable”* (G14); *“Basically all the rice of paella I tasted was crunchy”* (G1-Female). The equipment used for cooking paella is a round metal pan with two loop handles, without a lid (Medina, 2005). In contrast, Chinese people cook rice in a deeper pot with a lid, and the steam helps to cook the rice in a particular way. Tourists tried to use the Chinese cooking method to describe their experience of tasting paella: *“The texture of rice is quite tough, it seems like directly soaking in liquids without a steaming process”* (G5-Female).

Chinese tourists are unaccustomed to unfamiliar ingredients and strange seasonings. A couple commented on paella that: *“the yellow sauce is weird, and the spices in the rice are strange. I can’t take it”* (G5-Male). They did not know part of the flavor comes from saffron because saffron is not common in China. It is used as medicine but not as a routine condiment. Another example was goat cheese: *“I feel sick on goat cheese. The smell and taste is disgusting. I just swallow it reluctantly, also causes me nausea later”* (G9). Both goat cheese and saffron are unaccustomed elements in Chinese tourists’ dining habits, and can make Chinese tourists feel uncomfortable.

### 6.2. The quantity of food

The ways of serving food and its quantity in Spain are different from in China. The servings in Spanish restaurants are generally based on a full course meal for each customer including a starter, a main course and dessert. However, Chinese people always share dishes with each other in their daily meals, and this way they have control over how much they eat. The most obvious difference is the quantity of food in each dish. Spanish starters may be a salad, ham or cold soup; the main course may have seafood, steak or paella; and dessert covers a selection of cakes or fruits. Unlike the Spanish style, a Chinese starter contains various small cold dishes and/or a small bowl of hot soup, aimed at whetting the appetite, and some Chinese tourists felt full just after finishing the Spanish starter. One person stated that after finishing the paella as starter, he did not want the main course steak anymore. After visiting a Michelin-starred restaurant, one visitor said: *“the meal is magnificent here. One dish after another, more*

*than twelve courses in total. I am stuffed very soon, though*” (G15-Female). Multiple courses are often difficult for Chinese diners, and therefore some Chinese tourists skip the starter or the dessert and only order the main course or the starter: *“Mostly I only order main course”* (G4).

### 6.3. Dining time and duration

Eating times and durations are also relevant aspects of food habits. Spain has a unique lifestyle in that they are used to eating dinner much later than other European nations as a result of climate and for historical reasons (Medina, 2005). In the central and southern regions of Spain, the locals always have lunch around 2-4 pm and dinner around 8-11 pm. However, in China, lunch is around 11:30am-1pm, and dinner starts from about 6pm, and this pattern cannot be easily changed within a short holiday. According to their biological clocks, Chinese tourists would get hungry earlier than the local Spanish people.

Secondly, the Spanish dining duration is much longer than the Chinese. Either because of the multiple courses in the meal or the time gaps between each course, the dining time is expanded, and as a result, a Spanish dinner is often not finished until midnight, therefore coinciding with the sleeping time for Chinese people: *“It surprised me that local people visited the restaurant at 10pm or 11pm for dinner”* (G16-Female3). This habit is a shock for some Chinese tourists, and in the officially arranged familiarization and press trips, most of the participants could not cope with this late dinner culture, and some of them even skipped dinner or left the table just after finishing the main course.

### 6.4. Cultural construction of healthy food

As stated above, for Chinese people the body should keep in balance, which means that individuals must take a combination of cold and hot foods to attain a balance between *yin* and *yang*. Under this principle, there are also many occasions when Chinese tourists are not comfortable with eating Spanish food.

First, Chinese tourists cannot eat deep-fried food or roasted dishes all the time. However, roasting, baking or deep-frying are the most frequently used cooking procedures in Spanish cuisine. For example, deep-fried fish, shrimp or calamari are common tapas dishes, which Chinese people believe may cause inner heat leading to a variety of physical discomforts such as a sore throat, pimples and others. A lady (G13-Female2) commented on Segovia’s Cochinillo: *“It’s too greasy to have a big piece of roasted suckling pig in the main course”*. In one of the familiarization trips analyzed (12 May 2016), chips and deep-fried seafood and vegetables were in most of the starters in a grill restaurant and so many Chinese journalists didn’t eat much, and as a result, most of the deep-fried food was wasted. The best way to balance hot food is to take a similar amount of cold food such as vegetables and fruits.

Vegetables are a fundamental part of Chinese cuisine, especially green leafy vegetables (dark leafy greens), but Spanish vegetables do not consist of many dark leafy greens. Chinese passengers from Shanghai (G1) complained about Western cuisine on their Mediterranean cruise trip for being short of vegetables. They had excessive internal heat and requested a Chinese meal immediately after they disembarked in Barcelona.

Instead, vegetables are generally served as salads in Europe, and are cold and raw. That is another thing Chinese people are not used to. Avoiding cold and raw food is also important in Chinese food habits and therefore, to some Chinese tourists and particularly for female travellers, hot food is a basic need: *“Most of the Chinese people need boiled and hot food. The custom comes from generation to generation. Eating hot food and drinking hot water is inherited in our blood” (G8-Male)*. Seniors and female tourists are then the more careful when taking cold and/or hot food. There is the belief that females need more hot food than males for preventing pathogenic cold, and as a consequence Chinese female tourists avoid having cold dishes of tapas and cold drinks. Even experienced travellers cannot change their food habits: *“Having hot food is my priority. Although I often travel to overseas, I still prefer hot food and hot water” (G8-Female)*. Taking hot water is another cultural conflict Chinese people face when they arrive in Western countries, as Westerners do not drink or serve hot water: *“Our stomachs don’t adapt to cold water. The hotel room doesn’t have kettle here” (G17-Male)*. A tourist (G10) mentioned that: *“the younger generation may not care, because they are young and have a strong body; but seniors would like to have hot soup or porridge for dinner.”*

Pursuing a *yin-yang* balance for physical health is one of the food beliefs in Chinese culture, and is alien to Western culinary practices, and these habits always confuse Western hospitality managers. Therefore, eating Spanish food may easily cause an imagined imbalance in Chinese tourists that leads to physical discomfort in long-haul and long-stay travels. They believe that through taking or avoiding certain kinds of food, their health can reach the desired balance.

### 7. Coping strategies for unaccustomed dining

From the above, it can be seen that many differences exist between Chinese eating culture and the Spanish dining style. However, thanks to globalization, tourists nowadays have more food choices in tourism destinations, and there are four mechanisms Chinese tourists use to deal with unaccustomed foods and dining styles.

#### 7.1. Enduring the cultural difference

The first way to cope with cultural food conflicts is by trying to endure them. For instance, a senior couple (G1) took a Mediterranean cruise trip which was their first visit to Europe, and they were not used to the Mediterranean cuisine. Without any other choices, they just ate foreign

meals on the cruise, but upon disembarking in Barcelona, they immediately went to get Chinese food. In another case, a lady was struggling with a twelve-course meal in a restaurant. She thought it was impolite both to the chef and her friends to not finish the dishes: *“Our friends generously took us to taste all kinds of local foods for reunion in Europe. Once, in a high quality restaurant, we tasted twelve courses. I was totally full. The dining time was really long. I am not used to it” (G15-Female)*. Therefore, in some cases, tourists have to eat foreign food even when they do not like it.

## 7.2. Eating fast food

Tourists may choose more familiar food after having tried unaccustomed local food. Nowadays, globalization is influencing food culture all over the world, and one obvious influence is the global expansion of fast food brands such as KFC, McDonald’s, Pizza Hut, and so on. KFC, McDonald’s and Pizza Hut entered the Chinese market in the 1990s (Yan, 2013), and became a particular type of new familiar food for the Chinese. Hence, many Chinese tourists choose to eat fast food when they are not used to eating local food. After some difficult experiences with local cuisine, the first choice of a young couple, G5, was to use their mobile phone to find a McDonald’s, and some older tourists also chose to consume McDonald’s.

## 7.3. Eating overseas Chinese food

Facing unaccustomed food, the most common action is to return to Chinese food: *“I’m not used to Western style food. In most of my overseas trips, I will look for Chinese food after 3 days” (G17-Female)*. Compared to fast food, tourists are more likely to seek out Chinese food. For example, when the couple G5 passed by a Chinese restaurant, they immediately gave up their former plan to go to McDonald’s. However, many traditional dishes have different flavors in overseas Chinese restaurants, and in some situations, the authentic flavors are lost. However, even if they taste different, many Chinese tourists still prefer to have this type of Chinese food. A tour guide stated that Chinese tourists prefer even unpalatable Chinese food over Western-style food. Tourists even sometimes add familiar condiments to local dishes as a temporary replacement for home flavors: *“We are not used to the taste of paella, and just add vinegar on it to cover the unfamiliar flavor” (G5)*. Although Spanish vinegar is a little bit different to the Chinese type, Chinese travellers use its familiar taste in order to try to finish the dish.

Furthermore, some travellers purchased local ingredients and cooked them themselves. However, these travellers were those who stayed longer in one destination: *“We bought local seafood, beef tripe and vegetables in La Boqueria Market. The fish meat with bones will be steamed. She will cook the ox tongue” (G4-F1)*. In this case, they used local ingredients to cook

Chinese-tasting food. Self-catering is thus a temporary way to avoid unfamiliar ingredients and unaccustomed flavors.

### 7.4. Carrying “cultural baggage”

“Cultural baggage” is a term proposed by Ulf Hannerz (1992: 248), referring to things carried by migrants from home to another place, which usually involve cultural meanings or habits from the migrants’ homelands. Cultural baggage can make migrants feel comfortable in exotic places (Wang, 2015), and Chinese tourists also carry cultural baggage when travelling overseas. Some of them can foresee before their trip that they would not get used to the local food, and so to deal with the potential problems of unfamiliar food, they plan in advance to bring Chinese food with them. A travel website conducted a survey to find out which were the main “must-pack” travel items in the world, and Chinese tourists showed a likelihood of carrying instant noodles with them on their trips (Leach, 2016). Instant noodles in this case are a kind of culinary “culture baggage” that ensure Chinese tourists have a “home flavor” available when they need it. In fact, even though overseas supermarkets also sell instant noodles, some Chinese tourists prefer a specific and familiar brand: *“Better to have some instant noodles here in Spain but they must be ‘Jinmailang’ cup noodles. I only saw them once in the supermarket here” (G5-Male)*. Tourists from other countries also pack home flavors with them, such as Japanese people carrying miso soup, Mexican people bringing canned chilies, and Australian people bringing vegemite (Leach, 2016). Therefore, tourists from different countries may use the same strategy as Chinese tourists when they travel on long-haul and long-stay journeys.

Moreover, Chinese cultural food baggage contains condiments, pickles, or staple foods: *“We brought pickles, thick broad-bean sauce, instant noodles, and 2.5kg of rice. We’re going to cook” (G4)*. They doubted whether the local supermarkets would sell rice or not. Even on a familiarization trip (24 November 2014), participants carried “Laoganma” chili sauce, which is a very popular chili sauce brand in China, to the restaurant and added it into the paella.

Finally, it needs to be emphasized that a single tourist may adopt all the above strategies, meaning that a traveller may carry a cultural package with them and meanwhile sometimes have fast food, sometimes Chinese food, or sometimes taste local food in the destination. Sometimes they even cook their own food during the trip. Tourists’ food choices are thus complicated, and therefore it is a topic that deserves further research.

## 8. Conclusions

Because of its representational and promotional functions for a locality, scholars usually regard food, especially local food, as an attraction. However, a few researchers have pointed out that there are cultural impediments that make tourists avoid local food (Cohen & Avieli,

2004). Therefore, tourists may continue to eat familiar foods in their tourism destinations (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). By studying the food attitudes and behaviours of Chinese tourists in Spain, this paper explores how the everyday eating habits of tourists can hinder their consumption of local food,.

This research has found that Chinese tourists in Spain are never totally novelty-seeking or novelty-avoiding with regard to food. All of the interviewees in this study changed their eating choices by switching between local Spanish food, fast food and Chinese food as their trips progressed, and all of them were novelty-sampling tourists, which falls into a middle ground within the continuum defined by food neophilia and food neophobia.

The main reason that prevents Chinese tourists from eating Spanish food is the difference between Chinese and Spanish food habits. There are many aspects in which Chinese tourists are not used to eating Spanish food. In most cases, Spanish food either uses unfamiliar ingredients or has a strange taste to Chinese people, and in these situations, the tourists are not used to the physical aspects of Spanish food. Furthermore, the quantities of food in Spain are larger than in China, and therefore many tourists only order a starter or a main course rather than ordering an entire meal. Moreover, Spain also has later eating times and longer eating duration than China. Lastly, Chinese people have different beliefs about food consumption and health. They try to avoid eating only hot or cold food in one meal, as they believe that they will feel bodily discomfort if they do so, and to them, Spanish meals contain either too much hot or cold food, and therefore there is a conflict between Chinese health ideas on eating and traditional Spanish food dishes.

In any case, people must eat, and therefore tourists have to eat whatever is at hand when travelling. When they are not used to local food, they have to endure it if they have no other choice, but in a global era, most tourism destinations have a variety of global and foreign foods. The first choice of Chinese tourists is Chinese food – to find Chinese restaurants. Even though food in overseas Chinese restaurants is different than authentic Chinese food, Chinese tourists prefer home tastes rather than high-quality local food, and if they cannot find Chinese food, they may choose familiar global fast food. In some circumstances, tourists may buy local ingredients to cook in their home style, and in other cases tourists foresee before their trip that they would not get used to Western food and so bring foods from home with them.

Since most previous studies have paid attention to food as a tourism attraction, this study contributes to understanding how food acts as constrain in the study of food consumption in tourism.

### 8.1. Implications and future directions

In theory, this research can also help to understand the food behaviours of tourists from other countries. Chinese tourists' dining behaviour in Spain is only one instance of tourist groups visiting different cultures, especially when going to a country having obvious differences in food culture from their country of origin. Tourists from other nations may also face the same situations as Chinese tourists; for example, when European tourists travel to Southeast Asia. When considering how culture can influence tourists' food preference, previous studies paid much attention to nationality-based differences in food choices, but this study has constructed different dimensions including physical aspects of food, the quantity of food, dining time and duration, and cultural constructions of healthy food in order to understand how food culture can impact tourists' attitudes and behaviours. These dimensions can also be used to study tourists from different countries.

In practice, this study can help the tourism industry to understand the food preferences of tourists. Because of the potential contribution to economic growth, many tourism boards just consider the local food supply, neglecting the importance of other types of food (Osman, Johns & Lugosi, 2014). However, food as a supporting experience also plays a crucial role in satisfying tourists (Quan & Wang, 2004). Tourists are more likely to novelty-sample in their travels, and so too much local food does not always lead to high quality experience. Other food, such as global fast food and ethnic foreign food, should also be provided. Specifically, to satisfy Chinese tourists, restaurants in destinations should adapt the tastes of local food, table manners and eating times according to Chinese food habits. For instance, in order to attract Chinese tourists, Spain should reduce the salinity of paella, shorten dining duration, and open some restaurants earlier than standard Spanish dining times. To tourism agencies, it is better to arrange different types of food for their Chinese customers rather than filling their trips with local cuisine. Hot food and hot water are also preferred by Chinese tourists.

The food culture differences experienced by Chinese tourists in Spain can also be explained as culture shock. This concept was presented by Oberg (1960) almost 60 years ago, but until now there are still few related empirical studies with regard to tourism (Hottola, 2004). There are many elements of culture shock, such as physical, orientational, cultural, and daily experience-related (Pearce, 2005), and food is one of the physical elements. Future studies can concentrate on the longitudinal food choices of tourists in destinations in order to further understand the psychology of tourist culture shock.

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Chapter 4 Two faces of McDonald's and tourist consumption of fast food.

## Two faces of McDonald's and tourist consumption of fast food

**Abstract:** The current researches of investigating tourist consumption of fast food was limited. This study aimed to illustrate why international tourists consume fast food through exploring Chinese outbound tourists' experience of dining McDonald's in Spain. The fieldwork was conducted in Barcelona and Madrid in 2014 and 2016. A total of fifty-four Chinese tourists were interviewed by employing semi-structured interview. The results show that some tourists chose to eat McDonald's because of searching the differences, which caused by glocalization strategy. Most of the tourists ate McDonald's for its standardization and high efficiency, which provides fast, familiar and predictable facilities, ordering service and set menu food. By these, McDonald's can offer international tourists a sense of ontological security. Although McDonald's can bring tourists many benefits, there were still some Chinese tourists regarding eating McDonald's in travel as losing face. This study argued that the academia should reconsider the positive aspect of McDonald's from a tourist standpoint.

**Keywords:** food consumption in tourism, McDonald's, standardization, efficiency, Chinese outbound tourists, Spain

### 1. Introduction

Recently, food consumption in tourism has drawn much more attention from academic research (Mak, Lumbers, Eves & Chang, 2012). However, studies in this filed mainly focus on issues related to local food. Local food is regarded as a marker of authentic local culture and one of tourism attractions (Guan & Jones, 2015; Henderson, 2004). It can improve tourist experience quality (Sims, 2009; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; 2013) and promote economic development of tourism destinations (Hall, Mitchell & Sharples, 2003; Tellstrom, Gustafsson & Mossberg, 2006). Even though local food has various benefits, actually tourists not only consume local food in their travels, they also take fast food such as McDonald's, Burger King and so on, which seems completely opposite to local food. However, tourism studies ignore the phenomenon that tourists consume fast food. Except for the study by Osman, Johns and Lugosi (2014), there are few papers that explore why tourists consume fast food.

Osman, Johns and Lugosi (2014) revealed various aspects of tourist consumption experience of McDonald's. First, McDonald's provides a controlled isolated environment. This space offers modern infrastructures and familiar food, which can help tourists temporarily avoid the host culture and cultural shock, and feel a sense of home. Second, the familiar food, service

and environment in McDonald's evoke the self-identity of tourists, reminding that they are the English speaking Americans. Third, McDonald's can be a buffer space where tourists can suspend the busy travel itinerary, take a rest and plan their following trips. Fourth, McDonald's also plays different roles when tourists experience destinations physically, socially and symbolically. For instance, some tourists used McDonald's as a physical and geographical coordinate to orientate the destinations. Fifth, in different nations, McDonald's always provides the foods integrated with local culture. This makes it become a space for tourists to experience the authenticity of destinations. For example, after eating McDonald's in China, some American tourists intended to purchase some knick-knacks, which were seen as part of authentic experience of Chinese social culture.

This study follows Osman, Johns and Lugosi (2014) to further explore why tourists consume fast food in destinations. Although they already have had an in-depth explanation, their research objects are mainly English speaking tourists especially the Americans. For American tourists, McDonald's can certainly provide a sense of home and evoke their self-identity. Differently, this study chooses Chinese tourists as research objects, for whom, McDonald's is not an authentic food from their nation. In the 1990s, when McDonald's was introduced into the Chinese market, it was popular for its symbolic meaning of American modern culture (Yan, 2006). Then, in an international tourism context, what does McDonald's in a foreign country mean to non-American tourists? This study will provide additional evidences from Chinese tourists to address this research question.

In addition, we also go back to sociological theories relating to McDonald's, to evaluate the theoretical significance of the research finding. In the explanation of Osman, Johns and Lugosi (2014), McDonald's is both familiar and novel to tourists. It represents globalization and anti-globalization. These contrasts greatly influence the tourist's experience of McDonald's. However, for better understanding the contrasts, it is necessary to take a step back to review different dimensions of McDonald's in sociological theory: globalization and homogenization at structural-institutional level, and glocalization and heterogenization at expressional-symbolic level (Ram, 2004).

Sociologists and anthropologists have dual attitudes to McDonald's: on one hand, they are vigilant against and resist McDonald's because of its globalization and homogenization in the institutional level (Ritzer, 2012); on the other hand, they also understand and defend McDonald's for its glocalization and heterogenization in the symbolic level (Watson, 2006a). The study will show that globalization transforms McDonald's from an American food into a "world food", which brings many benefits and conveniences to global travelers. We attempt to

argue that the positive aspect of McDonald's in the institutional level should also be valued, rather than only focus on its negative aspect as some sociologists do.

## 2. Two faces of McDonald's

McDonald's is a fast food enterprise from America, but now it has spread all over the world. It has more than 36, 000 branches in over 100 countries and regions<sup>1</sup>. Its business model has a significant influence on the whole catering industry and even on other industries (Rizter, 2012). Its franchise has inspired other fast food corporations in America such as Burger King, Wendy's and so on. When McDonald's entered into foreign countries, it often led a trend to open fast food restaurants in these countries. For instance, Paris had its first McDonald's in 1972. Since then many fast food restaurants modeling the McDonald's formula appeared on French streets (Fantasia, 1995). Many other industries such as Wal-Mart, IKEA also adopted an operation similar to McDonald's and achieved a global success. The expansion of McDonald's and its business model is generalized by George Rizter (2012) as McDonaldization, which has four dimensions: high efficiency, predictability, calculability and control. McDonaldization has influenced various areas in the world, and will continue to influence more regions and practices.

### 2.1. McDonald's and globalization

The global expansion of McDonald's and other American fast food has brought two different reactions. In the first reaction, people adopt a vigilant and hostile attitude towards McDonald's. They criticize and reflect on McDonaldization. Humans not only use food as a source to meet their physical needs, but also give many cultural and political meanings to food (Mintz, 1996). No matter in practices and in theory, McDonald's is regarded as the epitome of globalization and Americanization (Rizter, 2012). Globalization "refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992: 8). It has created close relationships among different areas and the fate of different areas in the world closely linked. But the interaction relationships are not symmetrical (Tomlinson, 2007). The essentials of globalization are to pursue growth, expansion and profit maximization (Rizter & Ryan, 2002). Such a force is much more powerful than local organizations, corporations, and cultural institutions. Thus, the homogenization caused by globalization is believed to threaten the diversity of local cultures. The force of homogeneity mainly spreads out from the Western states especially America and affects other countries, which is called as cultural imperialism by Tomlinson (1991).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us.html>



In the context of food and drinks, the rapid expansion of fast food is seen as a severe threat to traditional food culture and local restaurants. Fast food is put in the opposite to local cuisines. Fast food represents globalization, standardization and homogenization, while local cuisines stand for localization, diversification and heterogenization. Kottak (1978) regarded eating in McDonald's as a ritual, in which, the served food, the costumes, utterances and nonverbal behaviors of servers are all standard. The consumers present a different self in the standard McDonald's rituals from that in their local culture (Stephenson, 1989). In order to preserve local tradition and culture, many cities campaigned to resist McDonald's (Watson, 2006a). The most famous of them is slow food movement originating from Italy since 1986, which aims to preserve and promote local food tradition (Jones et al., 2003).

Moreover, Rizter (2012) also criticized the "irrationality of rationality" in McDonaldization. Max Weber argued that the modernization of the Western world is a process of disenchantment and rationalization. Rationalization can bring efficiency, but also may become "iron cages", in which "the self was placed in confinement, its emotions controlled, and its spirit subdued" (Takaki, 1979: xvii), and thus humans may be alienated. This is a possible irrational consequence of rationalization. McDonalization is also a rationalized process and has already caused irrational consequences, such as artificial friendliness, higher costs, threats to health and environment and so on (Rizter, 2012). Nowadays, McDonaldization not only occurs in the catering industry, but also spreads to education, religion, employment and other social domains (Rizter, 2010). It not only occurs in America, but also spreads worldwide. That means irrational consequences may occur in various domains in many societies. Therefore, many sociologists claim to resist McDonaldization (Smart, 1999).

### 2.2. McDonald's and glocalization

On the other hand, some scholars rethink the consequences of McDonald's global expansion, and find that McDonald's influenced local culture while being influenced by local culture. Therefore, their attitudes toward McDonald's become more tolerant. In this reaction, scholars assert that the influence of globalization on the local is never one-way action. Local culture does not wait to be affected, but responds actively to globalization. This in turn affects the globalization (Rizter & Ryan, 2002). Robertson (2012) called the interaction and fusion of globalization and localization as glocalization. In this sense, McDonald's becomes an excellent example to elucidate glocalization.

When McDonald's is introduced into other countries, it will not copy completely everything as it in America. Instead, it usually makes adjustments according to local social culture and food habits. Firstly, it usually keeps its core products but also provides new food mixed with local taste. For instance, McDonald's in China provides rice, French McDonald's

offers wine, German McDonald's offers beer, McDonald's in Spain offers salad with olive oil and vinegar. Secondly, McDonald's also adapts its service to the local people's consumption habits. Studies on McDonald's in East Asia found that in order to attract Asian customers, McDonald's makes a compromise on its principle about high efficiency. They will not rush the customers to eat and leave fast, which makes McDonald's become a leisure space for East Asian guests to sit down for a long time (Yan, 2006; Wu, 2006). Furthermore, considering the importance of children in Chinese families, McDonald's in mainland China and Hong Kong also offers birthday party services for children (Yan, 2006; Watson, 2006b). Thirdly, McDonald's can change its physical environment to adapt to its surrounding landscape. For instance, when entering the UK, McDonald's changed its interior and exterior decoration (DeBres, 2005). At last, the introduction of McDonald's may improve the revival of local food. For example, the development of McDonald's in Israel contributed to the revival of Israel traditional food *falafel* (Ram, 2004).

Therefore, anthropologist James Watson (2006c) argued that McDonald's impact on local food culture is not one-way but two-way: it changes the local culture while being changed by the local culture. Hence, the consequences of globalization are not a homogenized global culture, but more heterogeneous and diverse cultures. "There is now a world culture ... It is marked by an organization of diversity rather than by a replication of uniformity" (Hannerz, 1990: 237). After a renewed understanding of McDonald's, scholars are no longer that harsh to McDonald's but more tolerant.

As stated above, McDonald's has two faces: homogenization caused by globalization and heterogenization caused by glocalization. The two faces seem to contradict each other, but in fact they are two sides of a coin. Homogenization impacts at the structural-institutional level while heterogenization influences at the expressive-symbolic level (Ram, 2004). For instance, Israel traditional food *falafel* coexists with McDonald's, which is only diverse at symbolic level; at institutional level, *falafel* is still produced and consumed in a standard and McDonaldized way (Ram, 2004). In this sense, the critical attitudes towards McDonald's are mainly directed at the structural-institutional level, and the tolerant attitudes mainly directed at the expressive-symbolic level.

However, this study attempts to shed lights on the positive aspects of McDonald's at the structural-institutional level, which received little attention from research. The first impression to fast food in academia is still negative. When James Watson (2006c) reported his research on McDonald's and glocalization in an anthropology conference, a scholar questioned if he got funds from McDonald's and advertised for it. In the book *The McDonaldization of Society*, Ritzer (2012) just listed some advantages of McDonald's, and then put more length on

criticizing McDonald's. Tourism research also paid little attention to tourists' fast food consumption (Osman, Johns & Lugosi, 2014).

To modern tourists, the homogenization and standardization in food consumption caused by the expansion of fast food such as McDonald's may not be a bad thing. Just as Rizter indicated, "in a rapidly changing, unfamiliar, and seemingly hostile world, the comparatively stable, familiar, and safe environment of a McDonaldized system offers comfort" (2010: 23). Lyon, Taylor and Smith (1994) also pointed out the possible advantages of fast food. This research will use the example that Chinese tourists ate McDonald's in Spain to elaborate the positive aspects of McDonald's as world food.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Data collection

This study is one part of a doctoral project, which aims to explore the food consumption experience of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain. The fieldwork was conducted in Barcelona and Madrid in two periods. The first was from 31 October to 12 November, 2014. The second was from 26 September to 5 October, 2016. A qualitative research method was employed. The first researcher used semi-structured interview to collect data. The interview language was Chinese.

Before the interview, the researcher had visited many tourist attractions in Barcelona and Madrid to look for appropriate sites for interview. It is difficult to interview tourists when they are visiting attractions. Interrupting their visit will increase the possibility of being refused and influence the quality of interviews negatively. So it is critical to choose "right" situations for conducting a successful interview. Finally, several sites were chosen. In Barcelona, the sites included Plaça de Gaudi, Plaça de la Sagrada Família, ticket box and entrances of Sagrada Família, subway entrances at La Rambla and Plaça de Catalunya, restaurants in Barri Gòtic district, and fast food shops (i.e. McDonald's, Burger King, Wok). In Madrid, the sites were Templo de Debod, Palacio Real de Madrid, Catedral de la Almudena, Plaça de España were chosen.

There are several advantages of these sites for interview. First, most of them are must-visit attractions or must-eat restaurants for Chinese tourists. It was easier for the researcher to find the tourists there. Second, it was more likely for tourists in these sites to agree for an interview. For example, in plazas tourists usually took a break to sit and rest. Their schedules were relatively flexible, which gave more time for the researcher to communicate with them. Similarly, at the entrance of Sagrada Familia, many tourists queued hours to buy tickets. In the line, tourists usually felt boring and thus were more interested in talking with the interviewer.

Third, interviews inside or outside of the restaurants especially in fast food restaurants can immediately get the tourists' experience of and explanations about why they consumed in this restaurant. That reduced the vagueness of experience recalling due to long time memory.

Interviewees were chosen by a convenience sampling method. The key interview themes included tourists' traveling schedules, foods tourists chose to eat, reasons why they wanted to eat like that, and how the food experience was and so on. In this study, we are only analyzing the reasons why Chinese outbound tourists eat at McDonald's.

The Chinese culture is collectivism-oriented (Hofstede, 2001), which could also be seen in Chinese tourists' travel behaviors. In the fieldwork, it was observed that very few Chinese tourists travelled alone. They liked to make a journey with friends or relatives, and often gathered together either in visiting attractions or taking rests. Often, it was more than one tourist who talked to the researcher during the interviews. A total of 78 groups with 206 tourists were interviewed. All of them were Han Chinese. Each interview lasted from 10 minutes to 55 minutes, with an average 15 minutes. The interviews were recorded with their consent. All the interviews were later transcribed for further analysis.

### 3.2. Data analysis

Among the 78 groups, there were 19 groups with 54 tourists who ate at McDonald's food on their trip before the interview, see table 1. This study mainly analyzes the data about the 19 groups. But for comparison, some material about tourists who did not eat at McDonald's also is included.

There are a range of analytical techniques for analyzing qualitative interviews (Patton, 2002), from analysis with a pre-assumption to analysis without prior understanding of research problems (Glaser & Strauss, 2011). In this study, we did not build a pre-assumption about why Chinese tourists ate at McDonald's before analysis. Inspired by Schmidt (2004), we analyzed the interview material in four stages.

The first stage was material-oriented formation of analytical categories. The goal of analysis was clear: to find out the reasons why Chinese tourists ate at McDonald's. These reasons of consumption were also the analytical categories in this study. We found out the analytical categories by reading the interview material intensively and repeatedly. We identified and wrote down the reasons one by one when reading transcribed passages line by line. When no new reasons were added, we stopped the process.

In the second stage, we assembled the analytical categories into a guide for coding. We classified three main categories: the differences in McDonald's, the sameness in McDonald's, and the high efficiency of McDonald's. The sameness categories included three sub-categories:

familiar facilities, familiar ordering procedures and familiar food and drinks. Besides the three categories, we also found that some tourists tried to conceal their consumption of McDonald's, which was considered as the fourth category.

The third stage was coding material. Here, coding means “relating particular passages in the text of an interview to one category” (Schmidt, 2004, p.255). The relation between vivid material and abstract category would enable us elaborate research results logically and evidently.

In the last stage, we put the identified categories in theoretical backgrounds about McDonald's to interpret the theoretical significance of the results. For example, the differences in McDonald's were consequences of glocalization, the sameness in McDonald's was caused by globalization and standardization, the high efficiency was one dimension of McDonaldization, and it was a particular Chinese social psychology that tourists tried to conceal their consumption of McDonald's. We interpreted these results together in a unified theoretical framework, and reevaluated the effects of McDonald's as world food on tourists.

**Table 1. The information about interviewees who ate at McDonald's**

<b>Code of group</b>	<b>Number of tourists</b>	<b>Age &amp; Gender</b>	<b>Type of tourist</b>	<b>Interview sites</b>
<b>MG01</b>	3	Early 20s (2F 1M)	Independent	Entrance of Sagrada Familiar, Barcelona
<b>MG02</b>	2	Late 20 (1F 1M)	Package	Burger King next to Sagrada Familiar, Barcelona
<b>MG03</b>	2	30s - 40s (2M)	Independent	Plaza of Sagrada Familiar, Barcelona
<b>MG04</b>	2	Early 30s (1F 1M)	Independent	Entrance of Sagrada Familiar, Barcelona
<b>MG05</b>	6	Early 30s-40s (4F 2W)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG06</b>	1	Mid- 40s (1M)	Independent	Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid
<b>MG07</b>	3	Early 30s (3F)	Independent	Plaza of Royal palace, Madrid
<b>MG08</b>	2	Late 20s (1F 1M)	Independent	Plaza of Royal palace, Madrid
<b>MG09</b>	4	Mid-50s (F), Mid 30s (1F 1M), Kid (1F)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona

<b>MG10</b>	4	Mid 20s (1F 1M), Mid- 50s (2F)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG11</b>	2	Mid- 50s-60s (1F 1M)	Package	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG12</b>	6	Mid 30s (1F 1M), 50s-60s (2F 1M), Kid (1F)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG13</b>	2	Early 20s (2F)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG14</b>	2	Mid 30s (1F 1M)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG15</b>	2	Mid 40s (1F 1M)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG16</b>	2	Early 20s (1F), Early 50s (1F)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG17</b>	2	Mid- 50s-60s (2F)	Package	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG18</b>	3	Early 30s (3F)	Independent	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona
<b>MG19</b>	4	40s (1F 1M), 60s (1F 1M)	Package	Plaza of Gaudi, Barcelona

#### 4. Consuming McDonald's in tourism and its reasons

##### 4.1. Eating McDonald's as "losing face (*mianzi*)"

Before elucidating the reasons of Chinese tourists consuming McDonald's, it has to point out that some Chinese tourists considered consuming McDonald's as "losing face (*mianzi*)". *Mianzi* is a China's local concept to describe a special Chinese social psychology. It refers to someone's social status or prestige gained by playing social roles which are recognized and approved by others (Hu, 1944). Losing *mianzi* means someone would feel a sense of shame and humiliation if what he did is not consistent with the role other people expect him to play (Hu, 1944).

In the context of dining on traveling, tourists are expected to taste local food voluntarily and gladly. It can be seen from tourists' preconception about local food. Tourists deemed that it was a *certain* experience to taste local food when traveling. When the Western backpackers travelled to Asia, they considered having local food as a key part in experiencing the authenticity of local culture (Falconer, 2013). Similarly, in their journey to the West, Chinese tourists also wanted to taste local food at first. Many interviewees told that in their planning they usually searched online in advance to find which local restaurant was worth tasting, but

no one searched for fast food in advance. The most extreme case was two couples (MG-08) who had already booked every meal before departure, all of which were in local Spanish restaurants. Thus, it seems that eating local food is a common imagination for being a “true” tourist.

In this instance, eating fast food is certainly not in accordance with the expected tourist role. When asking Chinese tourists if they would go to eat McDonald’s, some of them answered definitely not. “I don’t want to eat McDonald’s here. You can eat it everywhere” (MG-03). Tourists always share their local food experience on social media, but never the fast food. The prejudice to McDonald’s can also be observed among the tourists.

Those tourists, who had the same perception of McDonald’s but cannot deny the fact that they had eaten it, usually emphasized that they did *not enjoy* eating McDonald’s. For example, there was a young couple with their mother and aunt (BG-14). They were sitting in the Sagrada Familia Park and eating the McDonald’s takeaway. In the interview, the young lady and her aunt both denied that they liked eating fried chicken. But the young husband told the truth: “both of them ate (the fried chicken). Aunt, you also finished my one.” The aunt explained: “I was too hungry just now, so I just tasted a little piece.” The process of denying, revealing and explaining illustrated that tourists attempted to conceal their desire to have McDonald’s. Some other tourists also repeatedly emphasized this was their only time to have McDonald’s in Spain (G-16).

There is a common expectation about a tourist’s role: tourists should eat local food. Taking fast food does not meet the expectation, so some Chinese tourists tacitly approve it as lose face. Because of this social psychology, they did some face work. “The concept ‘face work’ actually means projection of self-image and impression management. The goal is to shape and instill in the minds of others a particular favorable image” (Hwang, 1987: 960). The above description reveals two possible strategies to maintain faces: (1) They denied planning to eat McDonald’s in future trip; (2) When they cannot deny they have eaten McDonald’s, they denied their love of McDonald’s. These two strategies were aimed to convince the researcher that they did not enjoy the experience of eating McDonald’s.

Western tourists also value local food more than fast food. When Western tourists eat fast food on their travel, some of them usually feel shame, guilt and disappointment (Falconer, 2013; Osman, Johns & Lugosi, 2014). But they confessed their emotional experience to researchers. Conversely, some Chinese tourists lay to the investigator in order to manage the impression to them and save their faces.

Certainly, only few interviewees consider having McDonald's as losing face. The senior tourists were more likely to hide themselves than young tourists. Most of the tourists shared their experience of consuming McDonald's honestly.

#### 4.2. Differences and McDonald's as an attraction

McDonald's applies localization strategies in different countries, by integrating local culture with their main products to generate new products and services (Watson, 2006c). McDonald's glocal products are diverse in different regions over the world, which becomes a reason for tourists to consider McDonald's as an attraction.

Some tourists visited the overseas McDonald's to check whether any differences existed between McDonald's in the destination and in the home country. They wanted to discover and experience the differences. There were three female tourists from Beijing (MG-06). One of them skipped the buffet breakfast of hotel in order to taste McDonald's in Madrid.

*Q: Do you want to have McDonald's?*

*A: Female 1: I have already examined it. I went to McDonald's for breakfast this morning.*

*Q: Tasty? Aren't they the same?*

*A: Female 1: No, no, no, the countries matter. The one I visited in Saipan was different. McDonald's in some countries are different. They served salad here.*

*A: Female 2: They served salads in the United States as well, various salads.*

*A: Female 1: I had not eaten McDonald's for a long time. I just told my husband that here they had self-serve kiosks. He was surprised to tell me: "how long did you not have McDonald's?! McDonald's in China had the kiosks since last year". (MG-06)*

The lady (MG-06, female1) defined her consumption of McDonald's as "examination", which indicated that her motivation was to examine and experience the differences. McDonald's in China does not serve salad before 2016, but salad bowl is optional with set menu in Spain. The difference was attractive to the lady. The foreign McDonald's seems to be a must-visit attraction for her. When the researcher intentionally told that McDonald's was the same, she disagreed based on her experience and gave an example from Saipan.

Her enjoyment was to discover the differences, even exaggerated the inexistent difference. She found that McDonald's had self-serve kiosks in Spain, and immediately told her husband who was in China then. In fact, McDonald's has already installed the kiosks in China, but she did not know that since she had not consumed domestic McDonald's for a long time. It also illustrated that she was not interested in McDonald's food, and she only enjoyed finding the differences. Osman, Johns & Lugosi (2014) deemed that consuming these differences with local characteristics was an authentic experience.



The regional differences of McDonald's become attractions only on the condition that it is a familiar restaurant to people in different states. It can only be a pleasure to find differences between familiar things. However, there were only a small percentage of the tourists getting pleasure from it; MG-06 was the only case in the investigation. The vast majority of tourists chose McDonald's for its familiarity rather than the novelty.

### 4.3. The standardization of McDonald's, familiarity and predictability

While Chinese tourists travel abroad, they cannot take local food too long and too often (Li et al., 2011). There is a "core-periphery" principle in food preferences of Chinese outbound tourists, which means Chinese tourists mainly take Chinese food and sample some local food once for a while (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010). Eating Chinese food is to search for a sense of home.

McDonald's can also provide a sense of home to the tourists. For American tourists, McDonald's certainly can offer a sense of home (Osman, Johns & Lugosi, 2014; Rizter, 2012). For Chinese tourists, just as what we will elaborate below, it is the same. Although McDonald's is from the United States, it has operated in China since 1992, and has become a familiar food in Chinese people's daily life. During their traveling, McDonald's plays the same role as Chinese food, providing a sense of familiarity, comfort and security.

It is the standardization and homogenization that makes McDonald's being familiar to international tourists (Watson, 2006c). Globalization and homogeneity have been criticized by sociologists. But they may not be a bad thing for international tourists. Because of globalization, homogenization and standardization, wherever the tourists go, they can still have similar McDonald's as the one in their home countries. It increases the predictability of food consumption for tourists (Rizter, 2012). The standardization brings familiarity in consumption, including familiar facilities and physical environment, familiar ordering rituals and familiar food.

#### 4.3.1. *Familiar facilities*

Firstly, McDonald's can provide familiar physical environment for tourists. The logo with golden arches is one of the most recognizable brands that tourists can easily find. Many tourists wanted to taste Spanish local food at first, but when the local restaurants were full, they would think of McDonald's because it was "easy to find" (G-18-Female2). In contrast, you had to make an effort to find a satisfying local restaurant.

McDonald's also offers clean toilets. This feature had been considered an important sign of modernization before in China (Yan, 2006). A clean toilet is very important for tourists,

which can be seen from the “tourism toilet revolution” in China (Dai, 2015). Tourists were familiar with McDonald’s standard facilities. They would expect that McDonald’s would have a clean and comfortable bathroom. Thus, tourists will choose McDonald’s when they need this service. Sometimes, using the bathroom was even the primary motivation than having food. For instance, a tourist told “I just went to McDonald’s for toilet. But I saw the ice cream cones, then bought some. Usually I don’t eat it” (G-16-Female 2). Her primary motivation was using the toilet; buying ice cream was just incidental.

Osman, Johns & Lugosi (2014) mentioned that some tourists visited McDonald’s for free wi-fi, or baby diaper changing table. However, we did not meet such kind of Chinese tourists in this study. Usually, Chinese tourists do not take babies in a long-haul outbound travel, so they do not need the changing table. Moreover, most of the Chinese outbound tourists will buy a local cell phone sim card or carry portable wireless routers to access the Internet. McDonald’s wi-fi is not necessary for them any longer.

#### *4.3.2. Familiar ordering rituals*

McDonald’s ordering process is standardized and predictable. The waiters serve customers with standardized utterances. Customers choose meals from a standard menu, wait to pick up the orders in a specific area, and after meals throw the garbage themselves. This process was described by Kottak (1978) as a ritual. The standardized rituals can reduce barriers of ordering and dining caused by cultural differences.

Language barrier may be a main impediment when tourists have meals abroad. Especially when ordering food, Chinese tourists often feel perplexed because of language barriers. A couple (G5) did not speak Spanish, but many local restaurants only provided Spanish menus. It caused a negative feedback on local food experience. “I didn’t know what was on the menu. I just braced myself to make the order. They served the dishes, we ate it bravely, but we didn’t know what we ate even after we finished the dishes” (G5-female). The awkward experience pushed them to avoid having local food constantly. “Yesterday, he (her boyfriend) said he was hungry. I said OK, then used my phone to locate a McDonald’s” (G5-female).

Even with English or Chinese menus, obstacles still existed. Tourists were unable to understand what they were going to eat through the limited language description of the dishes. Some tourists thought it was insufficient with a mere translation. “I think the Chinese menu is still insufficient. It would be easier to understand the menu with photos; we can directly get what is on the plate” (BG-14-male).

McDonald’s standardized ordering rituals overcome these barriers. Its menus are with photos and prices, and the design is almost the same over the world. Hence, Chinese tourists

knew how to order food in McDonald's. Even the seniors (BG-15) who did not speak English can also order McDonald's meals in Barcelona.

*Q: Do you order meals by yourselves at McDonald's?*

*A: Female: Yes, we ordered by ourselves.*

*Q: Why did you choose McDonald's?*

*A: Female: The other restaurants didn't mark the price. Male: McDonald's menu is very clear. I know which one I want. Female: Other restaurants didn't show it clearly. You have to ask them, but we cannot understand what they said.*

Nowadays, McDonald's has installed self-service kiosks for customers to order meals by themselves. The menus on kiosks with different languages and pictures can help tourists to avoid communication obstacles with waiters. It simplifies the ordering procedure, and increases the accuracy and efficiency of the service.

### 4.3.3. Familiar food and drinks

Although McDonald's products are slightly different among different countries, its major products and services do not have significant changes. Based on the experience of McDonald's in nine countries, Watson (2006a) concluded that all the flavors in these states were the same. One of the factors contributing to its success is that McDonald's creates a predictable taste (Rizter, 2012).

The predictability can offer tourists a sense of security. In order to avoid unknown risks caused by food intake, humans develop a self-protection mechanism "food neophobia", which refers to "prudence, fear of the unknown, resistance to change" (Fischler, 1988, p.278). For instance, the personality of a university lecturer (MG-02) belonged to food neophobia. He only took McDonald's while traveling alone in Madrid. He thought McDonald's was "safe! I know I will be fine if eating McDonald's. What can I do if I have something wrong and get food poisoning? Now I'm traveling abroad alone. Do you consider this problem before? Dining is risky!" (MG-02, male). Illness is a trouble to tourists. Therefore, some tourists are more cautious to try novel food when they are traveling than in daily life. Hence, McDonald's is a good choice for them.

### 4.4. High efficiency of McDonald's

There is one more basic reason for tourists to consume McDonald's, which is its high efficiency. Through the efficient mode of production, such as simplifying producing procedure and product types, and disciplining customers to service themselves (Rizter, 2012),

McDonald's has turned customers' dining to more efficient. Customers may spend ten minutes to finish a meal; the traditional restaurants cannot serve in this fast speed.

Sometimes, finishing a meal fast is an essential requirement in tourists' travel itineraries. For example, the young couple MG-07 chose McDonald's because they were short of time.

*Q: Did you have fast food such as McDonald's?*

*A: Female: Yes, we had just been there. He (her husband) wanted to have meats, and then I suggested having McDonald's. We must visit the dome of Almudena Cathedral before two o'clock. So we can just have a casual lunch. McDonald's can be eaten quickly... We were short of time, and he was so hungry. We didn't eat anything until afternoon.*

They had to visit the attraction at a fixed time, so the time for lunch was limited. In this situation, McDonald's is a good choice, because they can finish the meal in a short time. Efficiency is a basic feature of fast food, but was ignored in the research of Osman, Johns & Lugosi (2014).

Thus, having McDonald's is not an isolated incident. Completing the eating task quickly is due to having start the next tourism activity on time. Tourism itself has shown the sign of McDonaldization: highly predictable, highly efficient, highly calculable and highly controllable (Rizter, 1998). In order to avoid inefficient queuing up for tickets, many Chinese tourists reserve online tickets of popular attractions, such as Casa Batllo, Casa Mila, Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. While booking e-tickets, tourists are required to determine the specific entering time. Therefore, in many cases the time of visiting attractions is fixed, and dining time has to be flexible. Tourists can highly predict and organize their schedule when booking tickets in advance. With the limited time and fixed schedule, the efficient fast food becomes tourists' preference. In this sense, dining is embedded in the entire travel itinerary, and dining quickly is an essential requirement in order to complete the travel itinerary successfully.

## 5. Discussion: McDonald's as world food and its positive face to tourists

The modern tourism experience was described as "home plus" by Theroux (1986, cited from Hannerz, 1990). It means for modern tourists a comfort of home is necessary, then plus some extraordinary experience in destinations. In the food consumption in tourism, "home plus" means familiar food plus exotic food. On the one hand, tourists desire to taste novel food (Long, 2004; Kim & Eves, 2012; Hall & Sharples, 2003). Novel food can act as attraction and bring peak experience for tourists. In this sense, eating is a symbolic behavior and contrasts with daily dining (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). On the other hand, tourists cannot get exposure for too long to the exotic food. They also need timely return to the familiar food and access to the "ontological comfort of home" (Quan & Wang, 2004: 301). In this sense, eating is a compulsory behavior and an extension of daily dining (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak,

Lumbers & Eves, 2012). In this structure, both the familiar food and novel food are indispensable.

However, “home plus” also means that familiar food is more fundamental for tourists than novel food. In travel, only cosmopolitans would like to keep trying novel food in different cultures, they usually eat authentic local food wherever they go (Molz, 2007). Hannerz defined that “a more genuine cosmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (Hannerz, 1990: 239). Modern tourists travel around the world, but most of them are not the cosmopolitans (Hannerz, 1990).

Not everyone is born with an open mind. Fischer (1988) argued that as an omnivore, mankind is naturally with a paradox, which is the contradiction between food neophilia and food neophobia. The former refers to the fact that humans prefer various novel food to obtain various nutrients. The latter means people are more conservative on changing and trying new food in order to keep protected. These two personalities would determine tourists’ preferences on novel food (Mak, Lumbers, Eves & Chang, 2012; 2017). In general, Asian tourists are more conservative on trying novel foods (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

Furthermore, the modern society is full of risk and uncertainty (Beck, 1992). There are also many uncertainties in tourism activities, for example, the storms, fires, diseases and other risks in cruise tours (Weaver, 2005). The uncertainty may bring tourists extraordinary travel experiences, but also could lead to cultural shock (Hottola, 2004; Pearce, 2005). Even when cosmopolitans travel abroad, they also prepare well in advance to deal with potential risks, such as infectious diseases, injuries and so on (Molz, 2006). In an international trip, people experience a spatiotemporal discontinuity, and is transferred from a familiar space to an unfamiliar space. This discontinuity, which causes unknown, uncertainty and risk, also breaks the ontological security of tourists. The ontological security means “the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action” (Giddens, 1991: 92). Therefore, searching familiar social and physical environments in an unfamiliar space is very important to ensure the ontological security of tourists.

As stated above, because of internal personality traits and external uncertainty of society, the familiar elements in food consumption representing sense of home are more fundamental for tourists.

When mentioning food which can provide sense of home for tourist, the first coming to people minds is the food from tourists’ mother country. However, it is not convenient for tourists to have home flavor in tourism destinations. The ethnic restaurants do not spread widely

and homogeneously in foreign countries. Moreover, foreign ethnic restaurants usually serve the food with different taste from the home country (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). For example, food in European Chinese restaurants is different from the food in Chinese restaurants in China. Overseas Chinese food is modified to attract more local customers according to the foreign food culture. Sometimes, the modified Chinese food can not satisfy Chinese tourists.

In this sense, McDonald's and other fast food restaurants have positive functions to tourists. Hannerz (1990: 249) asserted that "there is now one world culture". Then, McDonald's and other fast food can be regarded as world food. They can provide sense of home for tourists from different countries. For example, Chinese tourists can feel secure in McDonald's in Spain. However, McDonald's originates from America, how can it provide home comfort for tourists from other countries? What does McDonald's as world food mean?

It is the globalization and homogenization which make the McDonald's become a world food and offer home comfort to tourists. In the first stage, through the expansion of globalization, McDonald's has branches in more than one hundred countries over the world. It influences people slowly in different nations, disciplines their tastes, and guides them to cultivate new food habits. When McDonald's entered into mainland China in the early 1990s, it was consumed as a marker of American culture (Yan, 2006). Today, McDonald's has become a familiar food in Chinese daily life. In the second stage, McDonald's provides tourists homogeneous and standardized food products in different countries or regions. Wherever the tourists are, they can have a shelter from overwhelming exotic culture. The synergy of globalization and homogenization turns McDonald's into a constant, fixed, and stable space within the global mobility, providing stable, standardized and familiar food and services for worldwide tourists to attain ontological comfort of home. For people from non-America countries, McDonald's get transformed from exotic food to familiar food. Then, for international tourists, McDonald's acts as homeland food in an exotic land.

McDonald's not only offers tourists products and services which are predictable and standardized, but also the calculable and predictable speed. Tourism itself is experiencing McDonaldization (Rizter, 1998). The McDonaldization of tourism reduces the uncertainty in international travel, such as predictable travel plan, reserved flights, accommodation and even attraction tickets, and pre-confirmed transport information in destinations. As mentioned above, finishing the meals quickly and efficiently can ensure the fixed travel schedule being completely successfully.

Therefore, McDonald's and its globalization at the structural-institutional level have positive effects on international tourists as well. Scholars have become more tolerant and positive to McDonald's at the expressive-symbolic level (e.g. Watson, 2006c). We argue that

scholars and the public should also reduce their prejudice against McDonald's at the structural-institutional level.

### 6. Conclusions

Tourism studies are paying more attention to tourist food consumption, but most concentrate on the local food. Besides Osman, Johns & Lugosi (2014), few studies focus on the phenomenon that tourists eat fast food. This study explains why tourists consume fast food from a sociological perspective, through investigating Chinese tourists eating McDonald's in Spain.

Both the two facets of McDonald's have been revealed in tourism: on one hand, tourists can have the same McDonald's in different cities over the world; on the other hand, McDonald's can also become a tourist attraction by merging with local culture. The former is the consequence of the globalization and homogenization of McDonald's, and the latter is the consequence of the glocalization and heterogeneization.

Moreover, the two basic attitudes of sociologists towards McDonald's receive echo from Chinese tourists. Some tourists felt excited about the differences of McDonald's in different regions. Seeking the differences became a pleasure for them. In this aspect, tourists enjoy experiencing the glocal products and services in McDonald's. This attitude corresponds with Watson and other anthropologists (Watson, 2006). On the other hand, some other tourists also had negative attitudes on McDonald's. They considered McDonald's as fast food that is opposite to the local food. With a preconceived notion, tourists were expected to eat local food, as if fast food has lower hierarchy than local food. The prejudice to McDonald's led to different reactions of Western and Chinese tourists. Western travelers confessed honestly that they felt shame to eat McDonald's (Falconer, 2013; Osman, Johns & Lugosi, 2014). Chinese tourists also had a sense of shame to eat McDonald's, but in order to save their faces (*mianzi*), they denied their enjoyment with and dependence on McDonald's.

Many tourists embraced the convenience, familiarity and comfort brought by McDonald's. It offers familiar facilities, standardized ordering rituals and food and drinks. The standardization of McDonald's simplifies the purchase procedure, reduces misunderstanding and offers ontological security. Meanwhile, McDonald's provides highly efficient and highly calculable food service, which can help to improve the efficiency, predictability and control of whole travel.

According to the reasons of Chinese tourists consuming McDonald's, it can be found out that, as a world food, McDonald's has brought many positive effects on tourism experience. The positive aspects have been ignored by sociological theories to some degree. The globalization of McDonald's makes worldwide people be familiar with it in their daily life at

first, then offers ontological comfort of home for tourists in another end of the earth. The globalization and homogenization of McDonald's may generate negative impacts on the local food culture. However, from a tourist standpoint, we should reconsider the positive face of McDonald's and its globalization at the structural-institutional level.

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## Chapter 5 Conclusions

## Conclusions

### 1. Conclusions

This dissertation sheds light on the food consumption behaviors and dining experience of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain. By studying the food choices of Chinese tourists, this dissertation attempts to reveal the characteristics of food consuming behaviors of international tourists in the long-haul travels. Food consumption is considered as an essential part of tourism experience. On one hand, food-taking provides tourists the basic nourishment for their survival; On the other hand, food can also play as tourist attractions to enhance the quality of tourism experience and tourist satisfaction, to market tourism destination branding, and to promote the local economic development. Although the academia has recognized these two functions of food (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012), tourism researches unevenly pay attention on these two aspects. The existing tourism studies focus more on the local food as economic growth engine, but ignore other types of food as physical needs and symbolic habits.

In order to bridge the research gaps, three interrelated studies have been done to explore the complexity of tourist food preferences in this dissertation. Tourists do not always show interests in the local food of the destination. Conversely, tourists face many impediments when taking local food, so they also choose other types of food. The following parts will introduce the main conclusions of this research.

Firstly, the first paper (*Towards a typology of food consumed by Chinese outbound tourists: A globalization perspective*) applies the theories on globalization to systematically classify the types of foods which Chinese tourists consumed in Spain. Tourism studies about tourist food consumption have not classified the food types according to a consistent criterion. In this study, the foods are classified into four categories: homeland food, global food, glocal food and local food. Local food mainly refers to the food with local cultural characteristics in a tourism destination. Homeland food is the authentic food from tourists' home country, which can be the culinary cultural baggage they carry from home or their self-catering cuisine. A small percentage of tourists could also taste authentic homeland food from ethnic restaurants in destinations. In a globalization era, many ethnic foods with strong cultural characteristics are mobilized to other countries and in most instances their original tastes are modified in order to satisfy local people. This process could be seen as glocalization. Food in these overseas ethnic restaurants is defined as glocal food in this study, for example Chinese food in Spain. Global food refers to the branded fast food with an intention to expand and gain maximum profits, such as McDonald's, KFC and so on. The four categories cover different interactive conditions

between globalization and localization. This typology can not only explain the types of food consumed by Chinese tourists traveling in Western countries, but also can help to understand the food choices of tourists from other countries on their journey to a destination with different cultural background.

This typology can also reveal the outbound tourists' food preferences. In an international trip, tourists usually switch between novel food and familiar food. They have different preferences to familiar and novel food. According to the degree of familiarity, there is an order among the four types of food. Local food is the most novel to tourists, followed by global food and grobal food. Homeland food is most familiar to tourists. The typology systematically deepens our understanding about the tourist food choices.

From the first study, it can find that the local food of tourism destination is not the only option for tourists. Their food choices are various. Their perception and experience of different types of foods are different from each other. Based on the food typology, the next two papers explore how tourists perceive and experience a particular type of food. The second paper investigates the impediments of Chinese tourists having Spanish local food, and the third one examines why Chinese tourists chose to eat grobal food such as McDonald's.

Although local food can be used as a tourism attraction and with multiple benefits, tourists may encounter various obstacles when they consume local food. As Cohen and Avieli (2004) pointed out, the existing tourism studies do not know much about the impediments tourists may face in their food consumption. Some of the impediments are caused by the different food cultures. When Chinese tourists travel to Spain, it is the meet between eastern culture and western culture. Initially, Chinese tourists were curious about exotic food culture and were willing to try local foods. However, during a long term outbound journey, the exotic food culture caused cultural shock to Chinese tourists. They were not used to consistently eat Spanish local food for long-term because of different food habits. The second paper "*Food habits and tourist food consumption: an exploratory study on dining behaviours of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain*" explains the phenomena from a cultural perspective.

These unaccustomed aspects include: (1) unfamiliar food ingredients and tastes. Spanish local cuisine uses some ingredients which are considered as inedible in Chinese food culture, such as escargots. Even using the same ingredients, taste and texture of the Spanish dishes may be different because of the different cooking methods. For example, paella is a typical Spanish rice dish. Although Chinese people are familiar with rice, the flavour of paella is too salty and the rice is half-cooked to Chinese tourists. (2) Different food quantity. A formal Spanish meal involves three or more than three courses that serve a large amount of food. That is excessive to Chinese people. Many Chinese tourists can only finish one dish, which equaled to quantity

of food they took in daily life. Therefore, very few visitors order the full three courses Spanish dinner. (3) Different meal time. The meal time in Spain is different from China. Lunch and dinner in Spain is usually eaten three hours later than in China. Chinese lunch generally starts around twelve o'clock and Spanish one is around two or three in the afternoon; Chinese dinner is around six o'clock, and Spanish one need wait until nine. Depending on the number of courses and the quantity of food in a formal dinner, the dining time will last until late night in Spain. Many Chinese tourists felt sleepy at dinner, some of them skipped the desserts. (4) Different cultural concepts on health. China has a special cultural belief on diet which relates to health concerns. Chinese people classify food into two basic categories: hot food and cold food, which represents *yang* and *yin* respectively. They believe that a healthy body needs to eat both hot and cold food for achieving the balance of *yin* and *yang*. Therefore, after eating fried foods Chinese tourists need to eat a little vegetable to balance.

For these reasons, Chinese tourists can not continue to consume local food. When they were in the unaccustomed dining situations, they either endured the cultural conflicts or return to familiar food. They can choose culinary cultural baggage carried from home country, or global food such as McDonald's, KFC, Burger King, and so on, or overseas Chinese food. The cultural differences in food habits could also occur in other group of tourists from other countries, especially when the tourists travel to a place with different culture from their own culture.

The third paper (*Two faces of McDonald's and tourist consumption of fast food*) discusses why Chinese outbound tourists consume fast food. Tourism researchers have ignored the phenomenon that tourists also consume fast food. Except Osman, Johns and Lugosi (2014), no other research concerns on this topic. In the background of globalization, McDonald's has experienced changes. It not only represents homogenization and globalization, but also stands for heterogeneity and glocalization. McDonald's standardized products have been sold all over the world, but it also mixes with the local culture to create many new products. The two sides of McDonald's can also be seen from the tourist dining experience in McDonald's. On one hand, there were a small number of tourists searching the differences of McDonald's in different countries for fun. These differences are the consequences of glocalization of McDonald's. On the other hand, most of the Chinese tourists consumed McDonald's for familiar sense of home. The standardization of McDonald's enabled it to provide familiar dining environment, meals and food ordering procedures in different countries. As the second paper shows, when tourists encounter the unaccustomed dining situations, some of them will shift to consume McDonald's and search for the comfort sense of home. The globalized McDonald's has been known by consumers in their daily life, which enabled it to offer ontological security for tourists in another exotic place. In this sense, McDonald's becomes a world food, which can bring many benefits



for international tourists. Nowadays, the sociological theory mainly criticizes McDonald's for its globalization and homogenization by considering it as a force to threaten the local culture and reduce the cultural diversity. In this study, some Chinese tourists also regarded having McDonald's as "losing *mianzi*" because it did not match their roles as tourists. However, the third paper reveals that McDonald's also has positive aspects on international tourists' food experience.

This dissertation firstly proposes a comprehensive framework to understand food consumption behaviors of Chinese tourists, and classifies the food they consumed into four categories. Then the next two studies explored the experience of Chinese tourists consuming local food and fast food in Spain. Through these three interrelated studies, this thesis shows the complexity of tourists' food consumption, and enriches the understanding of tourist food consumption experience. Although this thesis was conducted based on the empirical data from the context that eastern tourists traveled to Western world, the conclusions are also appropriate to explain the food consumption experience of tourists from any countries or regions traveling to a destination where has different culture from their own national or regional culture.

**After the three studies, it can be concluded that:** (1) Tourists are not pure novelty-seeking in terms of food consumption. Their food choices are more complicated than exotic local food. Tourists also choose to eat their familiar food such as food brought from their own countries, food in overseas ethnic restaurants and even fast food. (2) Tourists may face many impediments when eating local food, especially when the food culture of tourism destination is different from it of source countries. These impediments would drive tourists return to their familiar food. (3) Compared with local food, the familiar foods are more fundamental to tourists, which can provide the ontological comfort of home for tourists. In a tourism destination, it would be fine for tourists not to taste local food, but it would have problems to only offer tourists exotic local food without any familiar food.

**This dissertation contributes to** reveal the complexity of tourist food consumption by (1) proposing a typological framework, which can help to comprehensively understand all the foods consumed by tourists in destination; (2) illustrating how food habits will influence tourist food consumption of local food; (3) pointing out that the globalization and homogenization of McDonald's also have positive aspects to tourist dining experience, especially the international tourists.

## 2. Future research

According to the research framework proposed in this study, there are some more research topics being worth exploring in the future. The first topic is tourist self-catering experience.

Self-catering is becoming a popular travel way in Chinese outbound tourism, and not limited to the independent tourists. Many Chinese tourists carry cooking pots when they travel to Europe. Usually, self-catering is believed to be a way to experience the local food (Therkelsen, 2015), but many Chinese tourists aim to have familiar food through self-catering in tourism destination. The academia has not paid enough attention on this travel mode.

The second is tourist dining experience in overseas ethnic restaurants. The first study in this dissertation defines food in overseas ethnic restaurants as glocal food, because it has changed more or less to fit the food habits of overseas local people. However, the foods still keep something unchanged. The question is what the foods have changed and what have not, and how these changed and unchanged aspects would influence tourists' dining experience. The dissertation has mentioned some aspects about the two kinds of food consumption experience, but they are worth of more detailed and comprehensive research.

The third direction is about synthesizing food typology and tourist typology. This study indicates that tourists would have different food choices during their international journey. They may choose homeland food, glocal food, global food or local food, as revealed in the first study. Each type of food has different familiarity to tourists. Some previous studies prove that different types of tourists have different preferences to familiar and novel service or attraction. Therefore, there is a potential coherence between food typology in this study and tourist typologies in previous studies. In the future, it is necessary to combine different typologies in order to better understand tourist food consumption. Moreover, in tourism studies, generally a new formed classification often has little relevance to earlier typologies (Pearce, 1992). As Pearce stated: "As in other fields of tourism, the typology literature is fragmented, lacks cohesion, and is without much sense of common purpose and central direction. A major reason for this is the multifaceted nature of tourism which makes any comprehensive analysis or classification very difficult, and consequently has led researchers to concentrate on certain aspects (e.g., demand, development, or impact), to focus on particular types of tourism (e.g., coastal or alpine), or to limit themselves to selected areas (e.g., the Mediterranean, the Black Sea coast, or the North Carolina coast)" (1992: 22). Thus, linking food typology in this study and tourist typologies in previous studies may contribute to "a long way toward establishing some common ground on which a more theoretical and unified approach to the study of tourism might be developed" (Pearce, 1992: 23). Generally, there are three earlier tourist (experience, motivation) typologies which have the potential to be linked with food typology here.

The first tourist typology was proposed by Erik Cohen (1972). He classified tourists into fourfold types: the organized mass tourist, the individual mass tourist, the explorer, the drifter. The first two also is defined as institutional tourists, the latter two is defined as non-institutional

tourists. The four types of tourists have different preferences to familiarity and novelty. “The organized mass tourist is the least adventurous and remains largely confined to his ‘environmental bubble’ throughout this trip” (Cohen, 1972: 167). This type of tourist like to stay in familiar microenvironment and dislike to try new things. The individual mass tourist mostly seeks familiarity and try novel things sometimes. The explorer does not like to experience ordinary tourist activities. “The explorer dares to leave his ‘environmental bubble’ much more than the previous two types, but he is still careful to be able to step back into it when the going becomes too rough” (Cohen, 1972: 167). The drifter seeks a total novel experience in tourism destination, avoiding tourism establishment, trying to speaking local language, living a local life. Therefore, for different types of tourists in Cohen’s typology, different types of food will be preferred. According to the logic, the organized tourists would like to eat homeland food during all their journey while the drifter would prefer local food all the time. The explorer may eat local food mostly, but sometimes he may choose to step back to his familiar food, such as homeland food or chain-store fast food. The individual mass tourists mostly would like to eat his familiar food and sample local food sometimes.

Another typology is about tourist experience. Erik Cohen (1979) proposed five tourist experience modes: the recreational mode, the diversionary mode, the experiential mode, the experimental mode and the existential mode. Everyone has a “center”, “which is the charismatic nexus of its supreme, ultimate moral values” (Cohen, 1979: 180). For people, their center usually lies in their daily life world, but for tourists their center could also lie in a world away from home. In recreational experience mode, the tourist regards his daily life world as the center, traveling to tourism world is to restore energy to sustain healthy daily life. To him, whether the tourism world is meaningful or not is not important. In diversionary mode, the tourist sees both the daily life and tourism experience as meaningless, and he does not seek meaning. For him, travelling “becomes purely diversionary – a mere escape from the boredom and meaninglessness of routine, everyday existence, into the forgetfulness of a vacation” (Cohen, 1979: 185). In experiential mode, tourists realize the alienation of their daily life and try to seek authentic life by experiencing social life in other societies. For them, the center is the society away from their own society. In experimental mode, people quest for different alternative life-ways rather than adhering to a spiritual center. For them, spiritual center could be any possible places away from their own society. They experience and compare different authentic life-ways to find out which one fits their needs and desires. Tourism is a trial process. In existential mode, one may have existential experience when he commits to one spiritual center after a series of travel experiments. It is interesting topic to explore what roles food can play in different experience modes. In recreational mode, eating may act as a way to restore energy, so both the familiar food and local food could attract the tourists only if the food can provide the sense of

relax and enjoyment. In diversionary mode, tourists want to escape from routine, so local food may satisfy their desires. However, if this type of tourists can keep eating local food is still waiting for more empirical research. In experiential and experimental mode, tourists want to seek authentic life ways in other societies. Local food is one part of authentic culture, thus, tourists in the two modes would be more likely to taste local food. Especially in experimental mode, tourists will keep trying different local food until they find out the food suiting their needs. When the tourists find their favorite food and food culture, they will adhere to this culture and then eating becomes an existential experience.

The third typology is Philip Pearce's "travel career ladder" (1988), which describes five levels of tourist motivations: relaxation needs, safe/security needs, relationships needs, self-esteem and development needs, and self-actualization needs. In this ladder, tourists were not expected to have only one level of motivation, but one set of needs may be dominant (Pearce & Lee, 2005). If linking this ladder to tourist food consumption, tourists with different set of needs would have different preferences to different foods. Tourists with lower levels of motivations such as relaxation needs and safe needs may choose to eat familiar food. As revealed in the dissertation, familiar food can provide ontological security of home for tourists. For tourists who want to seek relaxation in tourism, basic nutrition needs may be more important than taking adventures in tasting exotic food. Conversely, tourists with self-esteem or self-actualization motivations are more likely to taste unfamiliar local food. For these two types of tourists, learning and novel experience are important to get self-development and fulfillment. Familiar environment cannot provide stimulation for development. Thus, tasting local food could be one part of these tourists' self-developing or self-actualizing experience. The most interesting group are tourists with relationships needs. For this type of tourists, social relationship and group harmony may be the most important aspect in their journey, what to eat has secondary importance. In other words, this type of tourists may compromise their first choice to keep consistent with group needs. For instance, in the research of Chang, Kivela and Mak (2010), some Chinese outbound tourists chose food they did not like in order to sustain group harmony. In this sense, eating becomes a social tool, what important is eating with some others rather than the food.

As stated above, there are many possibilities to line the food typology with tourist (experience, motivation) typologies, which may contribute to create a common ground for tourism studies. However, although many theoretical possibilities are revealed, there still need more empirical studies to testify and evaluate these propositions.

Lastly, food culture and food habits are not stable, solid and fixed forever. When the East meets the West, both of their culture includes food culture and people's food habits may change.

Thus, cultural acculturation could be an interesting research topic, which can identify what and how the food culture and habits in both the destination and tourist market are influenced by each other.

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## Appendix A Summary of field work

The qualitative research approach was applied in this dissertation which included semi-structured interviews and participant observations. Firstly, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in Barcelona during 31 October to 12 November, 2014, and in Madrid and Barcelona during 26 September to 5 October, 2016. Most of the Chinese tourists traveling to Spain would visit Barcelona and Madrid which had many must-see attractions. The preliminary field work explored tourist attractions in Barcelona to search locations for interviewing Chinese outbound tourists from 4 and 7 October 2014. The sites were convenient and accessible to collect data, which included parks, plazas, ticket box and entrance of attractions, restaurants and fast food shops, subway entrances (see Appendix B Details of field works).

Totally 68 groups with over 206 interviewees participated the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C Details of interviewees). Each group referred to three different types of tourists and involved different number of interviewees in each interview. Eight groups belonged to full-package tourists, who joined the tour package from China and traveled to Spain with tour guide; Six groups traveled as semi-package tourists, who joined the bus tour after they arrived in Spain. The price of bus tour package only included bus transportation and accommodation. These kind of tourists had free time when they got off the bus; The rest fifty-four groups were all independent Chinese outbound tourists, which mean 79.4% of interviewees visited Spain as independent travelers. Therefore, the result of this dissertation reflected the trend of Chinese independent traveler market. Interview questions related to all perspectives of their dining experience in Spain. Each interview lasted from 10 minutes to 55 minutes, with an average 15 minutes. All the data were recorded and later transcribed for further analysis.

Furthermore, the participant observations were also applied in this dissertation, which the data collection took place during thirteen DMO (Tourism Board of Costa Brava Girona)'s familiarization trips from March 2013 to May 2016 (see Appendix D Details of familiarization trips). Each trip lasted between one and/or three days in Girona province, mainly Girona city and Figueres. The author participated these familiarization trips to assist Tourism Board of Catalonia or National Tourism Board of Spain to promote destinations of Girona province to Chinese outbound market. The major participants were Chinese travel agencies, journalists and wholesalers. During the trips, the Chinese guests were arranged to taste the local Spanish cuisine, which provided excellent opportunities for the author to observe the dining experiences. The field note were documented and become supplementary materials to understand the dining behaviours of Chinese tourists.

Appendix B List of field work in 2014 & 2016

<b>Date &amp; City</b>	<b>Location of investigation</b>	<b>Action</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Oct– 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2014 <b>4 days</b> <b>Barcelona</b>	Placa de Catalunya, Barrier Gotic, La Rambla, Placa d’Espanya, Motjuic, Sagrada Familia, Port Olimpic.	Explored the location to collect data from Chinese tourists, searched for the place where the Chinese tourists had time to stop and participate the semi-structure interviews.
31 <sup>st</sup> Oct – 5 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2014 <b>6 days</b> <b>Barcelona</b>	Sagrada Familia (Plcac de Gaudi, Placa de la Sagrada Familia, entrance of gate 3, outside the official gift shop), Fast Food Shop (Burger King, KFC, McDonalds, Wok).	Collecting information, interview Chinese tourists in the street and in the restaurants, also involved on site observation.
7 <sup>th</sup> Nov – 12 <sup>th</sup> Nov <b>6 days</b> <b>Barcelona</b>	La rambla, La boqueria, Restaurants (La Fonda, Los Caracoles, Les Quinze nits), Fast Food Shop (Burger King, KFC, McDonalds, Wok), Casa Batllo, Casa Mila, Placa de Catalunya (Areo Bus Stop), Sagrada Familia.	Collecting information, interview Chinese tourists in the street and in the restaurants, also involved on site observation.
26 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2016 <b>Madrid</b>	Madrid city center (Plcac de Espana, Plcac de Oriente, Temple of Debod, Museo Nacional del Prado).	Explored the location to collect data from Chinese tourists, searched for the place where the Chinese tourists had time to stop and participate the semi-structure interviews.
27 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> Sep 4 days <b>Madrid</b>	Temple of Debod, Royal Palace of Madrid , Catedral de la Almudena , Plaza de España, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.	Collecting information, interview Chinese tourists in the street and in the restaurants, also involved on site observation.
3 <sup>rd</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct 3 days <b>Barcelona</b>	Sagrada Familia (Plcac de Gaudi, Placa de la Sagrada Familia, Fast Food Shop (Burger King, Wok).	Collecting information, interview Chinese tourists in the street and in the restaurants, also involved on site observation.

## Appendix C List of interviewees

No.	Number of Tourists	Gender of interviewees	Age	Type of tourist	Date of Interview
G01	2	2F	Mid-50s	Full Package	31 Oct 2014
G02	3	2F 1M	Early 20s	Independent	31 Oct 2014
G03	2	2F	Early 20s	Independent	31 Oct 2014
G04	4	4F	Early 30s	Independent	31 Oct 2014
G05	2	Couple	Late 20s	Semi-package	1 Nov 2014
G06	2	2M	30s-40s	Independent	1 Nov 2014
G07	2	2M	40s	Independent	1 Nov 2014
G08	4	2 Couples	50s-60s	Full Package	1 Nov 2014
G09	1	1F	Early 30s	Independent	1 Nov 2014
G10	1	1M	Early 30s	Full Package	2 Nov 2014
G10	1	1M	Early 30s	Full Package	2 Nov 2014
G11	2	2F	Early 30s	Independent	2 Nov 2014
G12	2	Couple	Early 30s	Independent	2 Nov 2014
G13	3	Couple, 1F	Late 20s, Mid-50s	Full Package	2 Nov 2014
G14	1	1F	Late 20s	Independent	3 Nov 2014
G15	1	1F	Mid-50s	Independent	3 Nov 2014
G16	4	3F 1M	Early 20s	Independent	4 Nov 2014
G17	2	Couples	Early 30s	Independent	4 Nov 2014
G18	4	1M 3F	Early 20s	Independent	7 Nov 2014
G19	6	6F	Early 30s-40s	Independent	7 Nov 2014
G20	3	3F	Mid-30s	Independent	7 Nov 2014
G21	2	Couple	Early 30s	Independent	27 Sep 2016
G22	1	M	Mid-40s	Independent	28 Sep 2016
G23	1	F	Mid-30s	Independent	28 Sep 2016
G24	2	2M	Late 30s	Independent	28 Sep 2016
G25	2	2F	Early 50s, Early 20s	Independent	28 Sep 2016
G26	3	3F	Early 30s	Independent	30 Sep 2016
G27	2	Couple	Late 20s	Independent	30 Sep 2016
G28	4	2 couples	Early 30s	Independent	30 Sep 2016
G29	2	Couple	Mid-20s	Independent	30 Sep 2016
G30	3	3F	Early 30s	Independent	30 Sep 2016
G31	2	Couple	Mid-20s	Independent	3 Oct 2016
G32	4	Couple, Kid	Mid-30s, Kid	Independent	3 Oct 2016
G33	3	3F	Early 30s	Independent	3 Oct 2016
G34	4	Couple, 2F	Mid-20s, Mid-50s	Independent	3 Oct 2016
G35	2	Couple	Mid-50s-60s	Semi-package	3 Oct 2016
G36	6	2 couples, 2F	Mid-30s, 50s-60s, Kid	Independent	3 Oct 2016
G37	2	1W, 1 F	Mid-30s	Full Package	3 Oct 2016



## Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain

<b>G38</b>	2	2F	Early 20s	Independent	3 Oct 2016
<b>G39</b>	2	Couple	Mid-30s	Independent	3 Oct 2016
<b>G40</b>	2	Couple	Mid-30s	Independent	3 Oct 2016
<b>G41</b>	2	Couple	Mid-40s	Semi-package	3 Oct 2016
<b>G42</b>	2	Couple	Mid-30s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G43</b>	4	2 couples	Late 40s, 50s-60s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G44</b>	2	Couple	Mid- 50s-60s	Semi-package	4 Oct 2016
<b>G45</b>	2	2F	Early 20s	Semi-package	4 Oct 2016
<b>G46</b>	2	2F	Mid-20s, Mid 50s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G47</b>	2	F	Mid- 50s-60s	Full Package	4 Oct 2016
<b>G48</b>	4	Couples	Early 30s, 50s-60s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G49</b>	2	Couple	Early 30s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G50</b>	2	Couple	Early 30s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G51</b>	2	Couple	Early 30s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G28</b>	4	2 couples	Early 30s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G52</b>	2	Couple	Early 30s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G53</b>	3	3F	Early 30s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G54</b>	2	Couple	Mid-50s-60s	Independent	4 Oct 2016
<b>G55</b>	2	F	Early 30s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G56</b>	2	F	Early 30s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G57</b>	3	F	Early 30s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G58</b>	4	2 couples	40s, 60s	Full Package	5 Oct 2016
<b>G59</b>	4	4F	Early 30s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G60</b>	2	2F	Early 20s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G61</b>	5	5F	Mid-30s, Early 40s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G62</b>	8	2 families	Mid-30s, Early50s	Semi-package	5 Oct 2016
<b>G63</b>	6	6F	Mid-30s, Early 40s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G64</b>	2	2F	20s, 50s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G65</b>	4	2 couples	40s, 60s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G66</b>	4	2M 2F	40s, 60s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G67</b>	2	Couple	late 20s	Independent	5 Oct 2016
<b>G68</b>	2	Couple	late 20s	Independent	5 Oct 2016

**M - Male, F – Female**

## Appendix D List of DMO Familiarization trips

No.	Date	Restaurant and meal time	location	DMO fam- trip	Number of participants
1	28-Mar-14	Lunch - Restaurant Shanghai (Chinese food) 13:30 - 15:15	Figueres	Press, Fans of Barcelona FC	10
	28-Mar-14	Dinner - Índigo Restaurant, Hotel Carlemany Girona (Catalan style, Grill bar) 21:30 – 23:40	Girona		
	29-Mar-14	Lunch - El Pedro de Pals (Catalan style) 13:00 - 15:30	Pals		
	29-Mar-14	Dinner - Mar Brava Restaurant - Silken Park Hotel San Jorge (Catalan style) 21:00 – 23:00	Platja d'Aro		
2	23-Apr-14	Dinner - Hotel Pirineos (Catalan style) 21:00 - 23:00	Figueres	Press	9
	24-Apr-14	Wine tasting, La Botiga del Celler - Perelada Vins i Caves (wine shop) 12:30 – 13:30	Peralada		
	24-Apr-14	lunch at Grill del Celler (Catalan style) 14:00 – 16:00	Peralada		
3	11-Jun-14	Lunch - Restaurant Shanghai (Chinese food) 13:30 – 15:30	Figueres	Press	9
4	28-Sep-14	Dinner – El Vol Gastronòmic, Pop-up Restaurant (Catalan style), 12 courses 21:30 - 24:00.	Girona	Domestic tour wholesalers from China	9
5	24-Oct-14	Dinner - Hotel Carlemany (Catalan style, Grill bar) 20:30 - 23:30	Girona	Golf players from China	12
6	24-Nov-14	Dinner - Peralada wine cellar (Catalan style) 20:30 - 23:30	Peralada	Domestic tour wholesalers from China	13
	25-Nov-14	Lunch - Restaurant Shanghai (Chinese food) 13:00 - 15:15	Figueres		
	25-Nov-14	Dinner – Girona, El Vol Gastronòmic (Catalan style) 21:30 – 23:30	Girona		

Food consumption of Chinese outbound tourists in Spain

7	09-Dec-14	Dinner - El Blanc, Hotel Ciutat De Girona (Catalan style) 20:30 - 23:30	Girona	Domestic tour wholesaler from China	9
	10-Dec-14	Restaurant Shanghai (Chinese food) 13:30 – 15:30	Figueres		
8	18-Mar-15	Restaurant Shanghai (Chinese food) 13:30 – 15:30	Figueres	Domestic tour wholesaler from China	9
9	17-Apr-15	Lunch - Casa Marieta (Catalan style) 14:00 - 16:00	Girona	Domestic tour wholesaler from China	12
10	14-May-15	Lunch - Restaurant Shanghai (Chinese food) 14:00 - 15:30	Figueres	Press	4
	14-May-15	Dinner - Hotel Peralada (Catalan style) 21:00 - 23:30	Peralada		
	15-May-15	Lunch - Casa Marieta (Catalan style) 14:00 - 16:00	Peralada		
	15-May-15	Dinner - Hotel Carlemany (Catalan style, Grill bar) 21:00 - 23:30	Girona		
11	27-Nov-15	Dinner - El Blanc, Hotel Ciutat De Girona (Catalan style) 20:30 - 23:30	Girona	Spanish domestic tour operators	7
	28-Nov-15	Lunch - Restaurant Shanghai (Chinese food) 13:00 - 15:00	Figueres		
12	17-Apr-16	Lunch - Casa Marieta (Catalan style) 14:00 - 16:00	Girona	Press	2
13	12-May-16	Lunch - Restaurant Cines Gran Muralla (Chinese food) 13:30 - 15:00	Girona	Domestic tour wholesaler from China	6
	12-May-16	Dinner - Hotel Carlemany (Catalan style, Grill bar) 20:30 - 23:30	Girona		
	13-May-16	Lunch - Restaurant Shanghai (Chinese food) 13:00 - 15:00	Figueres		