

FOCUS-BALKANS

Focus groups on Traditional food

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METHODOLOGY

- The survey period: March-April 2010
- Total: 18 participants

Sample structure according to gender, age, type of the settlement and consumption level of participants

Gender		Type of settlement	
Males	9	Urban	10
Females	9	Rural	8
Age		Participant in charge of food shopping	
18-34	7	Always	9
35-55	7	Very often	9
55+	4		

PERCEPTION OF TRADITIONAL FOOD CONCEPT

- The most frequently mentioned traditional food is: sarma, dairy products (e.g. kajmak), beans, cheese pies, dishes made of corn flower (kacamak, proja)
 - Associations to traditional food: village, family, heritage, tasty food, home made food, healthy food
 - Urban respondents mentioned some abstract aspects of traditional food: cultural influences, nationalities, differences among various regions, etc.
- **Concepts of traditional food:**
 - 1) traditional food as home-made (hand-made) food, opposite to industrial products/dishes,
 - 2) traditional food as food prepared and consumed by many different generations
 - 3) traditional food as locally produced/grown food
 - 4) traditional food as food exclusively produced and consumed in Serbia
 - 5) traditional food as food evocating emotions – food made in our childhood, food made in villages by our grandparents, food consumed in a family and food connected with social events



TRADITIONAL FOOD CONSUMPTION AND PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR

- Participants' favorite market place for buying traditional food is the green market – there they can find a great offer of all kinds of food, producers sell healthy, not-chemically treated fruit and vegetables and they can bargain with the sellers.
- Respondents also like to buy food in specialized shops, mostly in butcher's shops
- Urban respondents buy traditional food in green markets and in supermarkets equally, because supermarkets are convenient, very near to their home and have good offer of all kinds of food. Rural people grow their own fruit and vegetables and usually prepare traditional food by hand.
- Respondents eat traditional food regularly, i.e. daily.
- They mostly eat it for lunch, but also for other meals – breakfast and dinner.
- Most participants eat traditional food in family circle, in any occasion.



IMAGE OF TRADITIONAL FOOD



homemade food

the diversity of traditional products & dishes



traditional food is healthier than other food
traditional food is more natural than other food



All participants argue that in each country it is well known which region produces the best quality products in the different branches of food production



Younger participants are more likely to consider traditional food not so healthy
All respondents consider Serbian traditional food overwhelmed with meat



The natural status of the traditional products strongly depends on its seasonality. If the product comes from the greenhouse out of season, some participants perceive it as non natural, artificial food



Participants don't know what the origin of labels means in the context of administrative procedure that the producer must fulfill in order to gain the protected geographic identification for their products



GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- Consumers often identify traditional food at the opposite side of industrial and **strong branded food**.
- Traditional products are processed products based on ancient cuisine and old recipes rather than raw foodstuffs.
- Consumers consume traditional products in everyday life.
- Consumers consider traditional products as “healthy food”: without preservatives, without artificial colouring, or other additives

SUGGESTIONS OF NEW HYPOTHESES FOR CONJOINT ANALYSIS

- Consumers consider traditional food unhealthy due to its fattiness, high caloric values and low diversity of ingredients especially healthy nutrients.
- Women might perceive the traditional food quality not as high as men.
- Consumers in the rural areas eat locally available and recognizable traditional products more often.
- Consumers living in the urban areas eat well known and recognizable traditional products with export possibilities.
- Consumers care of the quality of meat more than of quality of other types of food.
- Men and women equally associate traditional food with family concept.