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Culinary Tourism in Greece: Can the past define the future? A comparative analysis by using 10 case studies

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Abstract

This paper examines the possibility that gastronomy, based on ancient Greek values, could be part of the answer for economic prosperity through the development of food tourism in a country with harsh economic environment such as Greece. We examine if local food, culture and tourism could become great fields of new entrepreneurial and thus regional development when paired with knowledge, innovation and quality. We shall examine what the historical background on ideas such as gastronomy, entrepreneurship, and innovation in ancient Greek culture; in order prove that the answer to contemporary business practicing might be hidden in the history of the country. Real examples of innovative entrepreneurship related to gastronomy will be presented as case studies. By analyzing them, we will prove that there is an answer for potential business growth, when tailor-made solutions are applied that take into account the unique characteristics of a place while utilizing its competitive advantages.

Key words: culinary tourism, gastronomy, economic development, comparative analysis, Greece

Jel Codes: O20, R11, R58, Z32

1. Introduction

This paper highlights the unexplored potential that could be developed if local gastronomy was incorporated as part of a plan for sustainable food tourism development in Greece. Gastronomy is a great element in tourism, assisting to the creation of identity of one destination. At the same time food tourism and could be beneficial for the local population and production while assisting towards the creation of new jobs. Thus, food tourism and local gastronomy could become great field of entrepreneurial development in contemporary business environments when interrelated with innovation and quality.

In this paper we will examine what was the historical back ground on gastronomy, entrepreneurship, and innovation in ancient Greek and we will study the possible relationship that they could have in contemporary Greek economy. We will try to examine if the answers for Greek economy restart based on Tourism and Agriculture could be “hidden” in the country’s history. Innovative and successful examples related to gastronomy, tourism and entrepreneurship will be presented as case studies that will prove that successful business solutions could spark growth in Greece, when customized practices take into account the unique characteristics of the country and its people. The first case study is related to a snail growing farm in Peloponnese, called “Fereikos” which became extremely successful by highlighting a Greek delicacy such as the snails through innovative new products, and environment friendly growing practices. The second example is the successful restaurant of Athens, named “Funky Gourmet” who was founded by three young people, and specializes on innovative molecular Greek gastronomy. Last, we will examine a business idea which recently appeared in Greece and is called “sky meal”. This is a neoteric concept based on excellent thematic gastronomy, the latest technology and innovation while it combines unique experiences through dining, 50 feet above the ground, to different locations within a unique scenery every time.

The study’s contribution to the literature lies in being one of the first to identify the opportunities for innovative business activities related to gastronomy, in harsh economic environments such as the one in contemporary Greece, thus laying the foundations for future research. More specifically, this article will help us examine the importance of innovative gastronomy related entrepreneurship, based on quality as a way to achieve economic recovery in a Greek economy, which is based on agriculture, qualitative processing and services (such as tourism and hospitality). We will also have the opportunity to examine if the answer of many developmental problems in Greece can find solution by studying the past. Specifically, in an economy with low competitiveness, new kinds of tourism such as food tourism can be an answer for the stimulation of the Greek tourism sector and agriculture. Gastronomy tourism related activities require low investment in general while achieving high return on investment. If action is taken by the government and the tourism entrepreneurs who operate in Greece then the beneficiaries will be a series of occupations such as farmers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, merchants, guides, and wine producers and so on. These people can stay close to their home land and operate their businesses, contributing substantially to the unique gastro experience,

without the need to move to urban areas in order to find a job as it was happening in the past. They could find an occupation or offer services and became a valuable piece of the puzzle in the Greek tourism. However this has to be done with imagination and in an innovative way so they can be attractive to international gastro tourists, offering at the same time quality services and products. Along with problems in economy and other structural deficiencies, the Greek state came to the point of low production, low compatibility and austerity memorandums. Looking back in history, Greeks will find that in ancient times, entrepreneurship and innovation were virtues. Greeks should study their history and culture in order to rediscover, the hidden Odysseus in them, with the restless and creative spirit of Greek entrepreneurship which was the unique characteristic that led ancient Greece to achieve economic prosperity and technological development. With the assistance of ten business paradigms from Greek reality, we will show which might be the right way that contemporary Greeks should follow. Actions that involve traditional gastronomy based on genuine hospitality, paired with top quality products and services, based on unique experiences which will involve all five senses in a way that only gastronomy can achieve, might be part of the answer.

2. Theoretical Background & Previous studies

2.1 Gastronomy

Two hundred years ago the word "gastronomy" made its first appearance in France, as the title of a poem published by Jacques Berchoux (1804). Despite the huge popularity achieved by the word gastronomy since then, the study subject of gastronomy, is still "devilishly difficult to determine» (Santich 1996). Although the origin of the word is undeniable, in ancient Greek was «Gastros» stomach and «Nomos» was the Law, notions which remain only loosely related to the literal translation of the word. The wide range of definitions can be reduced to two main categories coated and blurred boundaries. On the one hand, the gastronomy simply associated with the enjoyment of good food and drink. On the other hand, it is an extensive discipline that encompasses everything including food, including all the things we eat and drink. Generally the Greek term gastronomy, international today, characterized the fine art of food enjoyment, to which included not only the selection and preparation of food but serves as well. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines gastronomy as the art of selecting, preparing, serving, and enjoying fine food. The first formal study of gastronomy was undertaken by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826), which was most eloquently published in *La Physiologie du gout* in 1825 has been translated numerous times into English as "The Physiology of Taste". He gives a classical definition of gastronomy as the study of good eating, (J.A. Brillat-Savarin [1862]. What Brillat-Savarin has done is to pave the way for subsequent studies about the relationship between the senses and food and food and beverage consumption as a science. On the other hand, the paper "Gastronomy Tourism: A Meaningful Travel Market Segment" (Jaksa Kivela, John C. Crotts, 2005) pointed out that one of the key functions of the destination's foodservice industries is the provision of those experiences and feelings that individuals believe they should be having while on holiday or while travelling. Gastronomy is often referred to exclusively as the art of cooking and good eating; however, this is only one part of this discipline. Others have suggested that gastronomy is the study of the relationship between culture and food.

Someone who is seriously involved in gastronomy is often involved in tasting, preparing, experiencing, experimenting, researching, discovering, understanding, and writing about food, and, usually but not exclusively, about wine.

2.2 Gastronomy or Culinary Tourism

Gastronomy tourism is the result of social economic development and living standard improvement of recent decays. More recently, the serving and consumption of food has become a booming global industry, of which tourism is an important part. With the improvement of living standards, “eating” became not only the product that satisfies the basic human needs, but also one cornerstone element that enriches life. By connecting gastronomy with tourism not only diversify the tourism products, but also improves the attractiveness of a tourism destination. “Culinary Tourism” is a term first suggested by Long (2004) in 1998, to express the idea of tourists’ experiencing other cultures through food. Wolf (2002) however, defined culinary and/or gastronomy tourism as travelling for the purpose of exploring and enjoying the destination’s food and beverage and to savour unique and memorable gastronomy experiences. This definition finds support in an earlier research by Finkelstein (1989), Johns and Clarke (2001), and Kivela and Johns (2002) who suggest that feelings and memories make dining out when on holiday, very special and attractive, because these become transposed into experiences that are often very personal (Finkelstein, 1989).

A large number of destinations use gastronomy as a tourism marketing tool, and many also use tourism to promote gastronomy and vice versa. That means gastronomy and tourism have close relation. A definition of food tourism, and a much more extensive work, comes from Hall and Mitchell (2001) and Hall and Sharples (2003). According to Hall and Sharples (2003), food tourism is “visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are the primary motivating factor for travel” (Hall & Mitchell, 2001, p.10). Long (1998) uses an anthropological perspective and defines culinary tourism as “an intentional, exploratory participation in the food ways of an ‘Other,’ participation including the consumption or preparation and presentation for consumption of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered as belonging to a culinary system not one’s own”. What is noteworthy about the definition is its similarity to the idea conceived by Zelinsky (1985), the key characteristic being that one need not travel to a place away from home to be a culinary tourist. According to Zelinsky (1985) eating at ethnic and regional cuisine restaurants is a form of gastronomic tourism, implying that a person need not be a tourist in the conventional sense to take part in food tourism. However, Zelinsky’s study is limited in its approach in that it confines itself to just one activity: eating at ethnic restaurants.

Local cuisine represents the identity of a community or a region. Meal and table customs may also lead to the integration of tourists into local cultures by making the visitors absorb cultural codes. Consuming the food of other people and borrowing from their culinary practices may provide a sense of the place visited, and be seen as a symbolic consumption of a region or a place, facets of its climate, history, customs, and scenery. Furthermore, tourists also buy food and beverages as souvenirs. Such flavorsome reminders embody the link between the destination and elsewhere, and prolong and reinforce the journeys as travel sensations may be reactivated after return (Bessièrè 2001).

According to Long (1998), the sites for participation in culinary tourism, include restaurants, ethnic restaurants, festivals, festive food events especially dedicated to a particular produce and cooking demonstrations using home grown, freshly picked product at community festivals. According to Long (1998), a culinary tourist’s participation in the foodways of the ‘Other’ is either ‘intentional’ or ‘exploratory’ or both ‘intentional and exploratory.’ This implies that culinary tourist may be positioned on a continuum from low to high based on interest, curiosity, and intention. Long (2004)

posits that the culinary ‘Other’ can be classified into five categories: culture, region, time, ethos/religion, and socio-economic class.

In conclusion we shall state that gastronomy tourism is each but at the same time and all of the above once we should not separate parts of the human experience which is rather complex as the human nature when it comes to food consumption. The spiritual and tangible nature of human is closely interrelated and influenced to the point that food, human perception, feelings, and pleasure, are all great part of food experience and the associations that cultural consumption conjures up to the human mind, body and soul. This is why; ancient Greek philosophers, early encountered food and food experiences in a holistic approach, keeping in mind that food can be much more than an everyday necessity, while the fillings and the emotions caused by its consumption are greater than a simple gastronomical saturation. To the contrary food enjoyment as multidimensional unique experience is capable to facilitate a range of human needs, starting from satisfying everyday survival instincts, to noble consumption of pure culture and even satisfaction of art making.

3. Lessons from the past

3.1 Gastronomy in ancient Greece

When one thinks of ancient Greece, temples and tragedies bring to mind, but not necessarily cookery. However the Greeks were supreme in the kitchen. Their cooking was simple, elegant and full of texture making the most out of nature and seasonality. Greek cuisine is another expression of culture and national identity that embraces multiple local subcultures co-existing in one territory; in other words a unifying element in Greece that can be seen (tasted) everywhere. Greeks early on become experts at experimenting with new flavors, harmonizing aromas and discovering new ways of cooking. The diversity of Greece's agricultural production, microclimates, geography, influenced from multiple cultures that contacted Greece through history. Food played an important part in the Greek mode of thought. Classicist John Wilkins notes that in the *Odyssey* for example, good men were distinguished from bad, and Greeks from foreigners, partly in terms of how and what they ate. Herodotus identified people partly in terms of food and eating. The Greeks did not ignore the pleasures of eating, but valued simplicity. Mr. Hill, one of Britain's most highly regarded chefs, said: 'Fifty years ago, we might have preferred the Roman approach. But Ancient Greek cooking has much in common with the nineties belief in a healthy, balanced diet, with less emphasis on meat and vulgar sauces'. Arcestratus, who wrote in 300 BC, sounds like a modern foodie. He favored fish over meat and insisted on freshness and quality. Ancient Greeks were fully aware of each food's nutritional benefits and pharmaceutical qualities (skin and trauma rehabilitation). For example, Andrew Dalby (*Siren Feasts*, page 12) says that Arcestratus refers to Chios as the island with great cooking tradition from where great cooks were produced, fine wine was made and a significant source of fine snails. At the same literacy, Aegean Astypalea Island was also indicated by Arcestratus as a place known for its quality snails, which were considered an aphrodisiac. Dalby quotes Galen who noted that "all Greeks eat snails every day. They have tough flesh, but once cooked, are highly nourishing". Over time, more and more Greeks presented themselves as gourmets. Fermentation and leavening in bread and beer making was also known. The Greeks later used an alkali or wine yeast as a leavening agent. Fresh fish was one of the favourite dishes of the Greeks but they enjoyed dairy products as well. The most widespread drink though was water, and spring water was preferred: It was recognized as nutritious because it caused plants and trees to grow. Pindar called spring water "as agreeable as honey". The Greeks would describe water as robust, heavy or light, dry, acidic, pungent, wine-like, etc. Greeks and Romans customarily served their wine mixed with water, as the drinking of pure wine was considered a habit of uncivilized peoples. However, there were major differences between the Roman and Greek symposiums. A Roman symposium served wine before, with and after food was served, and women were allowed to join. In a Greek symposium, wine was only drunk after dinner, and women were not

allowed to attend. The Greek symposium was a key Hellenic social institution. It was a forum for men of good family to debate, plot, boast, or simply to revel with others. They were frequently held to celebrate the introduction of young men into aristocratic society. "Symposium" which was a drinking party derives from the verb "sympinein", which means "to drink together".

Food had philosophical dimension as well. The Deipnosophistae, which means "dinner-table philosophers," give us detail information, chiefly on matters connected with dining, but also containing remarks on music, songs, dances, games, courtesans, and luxury. At last, we should not forget that Greek cuisine is not only delicious and nutritious as well once is located in the core of Mediterranean diet.

Traditionally, gastronomy and health were not considered to be natural partners. Under the current definition, however, the two concepts are much closer. What we or do not eat has a profound effect on our health and well-being. For instance, ancient Greeks did not eat wheat but they consumed Zea a grain rich in Magnesium thought to be the food of the brain. Gluten found in wheat was considered a brain "retarder" that slows brain's functionality. They also consumed Ippofaes (Sea Buckthorn). A berry with 194 easily absorbable vitamins. Grains were consumed whole where today we retrieve the bark from grains, where all vitamins are located, we bleach flour to turn white and on the name of profit we sell vitamins separately as supplements. (Chadwick et al 1983). Hippocrates said 2300 years ago: "let food be the medicine and medicine be the food. If food choices are at the basis of health problems, food should not be neglected in finding solutions for these problems".

3.2 Innovation

It is proven that contemporary cultures place a high premium on novelty. As Armand D'Angour argued in his paper "Innovation in Classical Greece" (Armand D'Angour Cambridge University Press, 2011) we should consider the more balanced views about old and new found, in classical Greece. Consuming societies, consider innovation and novelty. A similar ambivalence about newness is evident in another era of intense novelty and creativity, classical Greece from the eighth to the fourth centuries BC, when the Greeks produced a series of innovations that formed the basis for two millennia of western thought and achievement in literature, art, architecture, philosophy, politics, medicine and mathematics. The Greeks could even lay claim to having discovered innovation, since they were the first known people to have written about the notion (the Greek word for innovation, "kainotomia"), is first found in a comedy by Aristophanes of 422 BC). The Greeks innovated in artistic and intellectual spheres, rather than in practical or technological areas, but the principles underlying their innovations were parallel those found today. Aristotle observed that innovation means different things, depending on the area in which it is applied. For instance, political innovation is different from technical. Investigators of novelty need to consider at the outset such questions as: "what does the new mean in this context? What sort of innovation is required here?" Numerous other principles stemming from the Greeks' experience of innovation can be compiled from the corpus of texts that have come down from the classical age. One important consideration is that innovation is dynamic: that is, it involves an active interchange between individual innovators and the public, tradition and change, old and new. To retain their creativity, innovative individuals and societies need to acknowledge what is of lasting value. Plato, (Hamilton and Huntington, 1971) a trenchant critic of the "new", would have banned it altogether, arguing that innovation should involve no more than a modest variation of familiar structures. (Respect for tradition is in fact an important basis for innovation: for novelty to succeed it must appeal to existing perceptions about what is valuable or effective.) In ancient Greece, innovation was also paired with rights of the creator so he could be mentioned and rewarded. Athenaeus (S. Douglas Olsen, 2012) described what may be considered the first patents (i.e. exclusive

right granted by a government to an inventor to practice his/her invention in exchange for disclosure of the invention). He mentions that in 500 BC, in the Greek city of Sybaris (located in what is now southern Italy), there were annual culinary competitions. The victor was given the exclusive right to prepare his dish for one year

3.3 Entrepreneurship

“Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic, and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards” (Hisrich, Peters, & Shepherd, 2005, p. 8). Entrepreneurship is also a major source of employment, economic growth, and innovation, promoting product and service quality, competition, and economic flexibility (Carland, Hoy, Boulton, & Carland, 1984). Entrepreneurship can be traced back to ancient Greece, where entrepreneurial activity brought independence, economic and social reform (Baumol, 2004). It was a major source of employment, economic and growth, and an integral part of the economic renewal process (Kuratko, 2003). Entrepreneurship is also a mechanism by which many people enter the economic and social mainstream of society, facilitating culture formation, population integration, and social mobility (Bednarzik, 2000). On the other hand as mentioned in his work “Entrepreneurship in classical Greek literature” (Karayiannis, 1990 a, 83), entrepreneurial activity was sometimes and in some places limited not only by the "primitiveness of the economy" and state interference in economic life but also by the philosophical and ethical limits imposed on it. Some idealist philosophers taught that the acquisition of wealth, despite its importance in everyday life, was regarded as the least desirable objective of free citizens. The insatiable desire for wealth was condemned as a cause of unfairness, injustice and unequal distribution of wealth. For many Greek writers, success in business was determined by the personal actions and characteristics of the entrepreneur and in particular by his knowledge, efficiency, special labor and character. However, many authors on social matters recognized elements which distinguished the role of the entrepreneur from that of the ordinary worker. Those elements we shall try to extract from the ancient Greek literature. Entrepreneurship in those far-off days was not motivated by the modern capitalistic spirit, nor was the market process similar to that of modern times. The actions of individuals should not concentrate on economic matters only, and entrepreneurs should not aim at a maximum but only at moderate profits. In the final analysis, the profit-seeking activities of individuals were judged in terms of their social acceptability and fairness. On the other hand, the ideas held by the Greeks (particularly Xenophon) on the subject of entrepreneurship are still valid today; so are those related to management, the assumption of risk and the search for the most profitable investment of assets. The ethical, social, legal and economic limits imposed on ancient Greek society in many occasions camouflaged the role of the entrepreneur as the dynamic and energetic force in economic activity which has proved so fruitful during more recent times. The entrepreneur played a more conservative role which tended more towards the preservation than the accumulation of wealth. (Thompson, 1982). Nevertheless, the writers of the period recognized some of the functions of entrepreneurship which were also noted in the pre classical and early classical economic literature. The majority of the Greek authors were against the idle rich who spent his wealth and enjoyed a luxurious life (Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 1.16; Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, 30, 42, 105; Isocrates, *To Demonicis*, 9; Demosthenes, *For Phonnio*, 45, 53). On the other hand, they stressed the usefulness of those who make investments in order to increase production, their own economic strength and that of their city (Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, 153; Hyperides, *Euxenippus*, 36; Demosthenes, *For Phormio*, 8-9, 42, *Against Nausimachus*, 25-6). The usefulness of investment was also recognized by Xenophon, who proposed that the city, in order to increase its revenue, must act like a capitalist and entrepreneur (Trever, 1916,

75). By advancing the argument he stated that “the volume of profits is proportional to the capital invested, that is, a man who saves on a small income can, very easily, show a large surplus, with a large one” (Oeconomicus, ii. 10).

After a point, ancient Greeks gave entrepreneurship a god related dimension. Specifically, they believed that god Hermes helped individuals to make profit and acquire wealth (Aristophanes, Frogs 1144-1145). That is why we see the bust of Herms as symbol of many Greek chambers of commerce.

3.4 Regional Development

Ancient Greeks believed that profit and wealth seeking, contributes to Regional development. Although profit and wealth seeking activity was dismissed by the Socratic philosophers as a minor aim of life, the economic strength of Athens, for example, was resulted not only from her military power, but also from the economic activities of its citizens. To present a picture of entrepreneurial activity in ancient Greece and particularly in Athens, it is necessary to discuss the environment in which it was exercised. Private ownership was the simplest economic model that characterized the ancient Greek economy (except of Sparta). The majority of the Greek authorities supported this economic model on the grounds that:

- (a) The owner "loves" his own things much more than other people's (Isocrates, Panegyricus, 76).
- (b) The care, responsibility and work effort of an individual is increased by private ownership (Xenophon, Oeconomicus, ix.17, Symposium, viii, 15).

On the other hand, trade, which was heavily enhanced by colonization, was recognized to be an ancient profit-seeking enterprise, contributing to local development through commerce and was divided into wholesale and retail trade in terms of usefulness, fairness, profitability and risk-taking. In Greece, colonization began at an early date, of about 900 to 700 B.C. Greece is a country surrounded by water and the sea has always played an important role in its history and its development. The ancient Greeks were active seafarers, seeking opportunities for trade and founding new independent cities at coastal sites across the Mediterranean Sea. The trade was mainly food related and the reason of money accumulation and regional development for the merchant's city of origin. By the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., Greek colonies and settlements stretched all the way from western Asia Minor to southern Italy, Sicily, North Africa, and even to the coasts of southern France and Spain. The major Ionian cities along the coast of Asia Minor prospered. They cultivated relationships with other affluent centers like Sardis in Lydia, and by this time, the eastern Greeks had established independent cities to the north along the Black Sea. This region, in particular, opened up further trade connections to the north that gave access to valuable raw materials, such as gold. Trading stations also played an important role as the furthest outposts of Greek culture. Greek goods, such as pottery, bronze, silver, gold vessels, olive oil, wine, honey and textiles, were exchanged for luxury items and exotic raw materials that were in turn worked by Greek craftsmen. In the Nile Delta, the port town of Naucratis served as a commercial headquarters for Greek traders in Egypt. Likewise, well-established maritime trade routes around the Mediterranean, enabled foreigners to travel to Greece. In the seventh century B.C., contacts with itinerant eastern craftsmen, notably on Crete and Cyprus, inspired Greek artists to work in techniques as diverse as gem cutting, ivory carving, jewelry making, and metalworking. After the unprecedented military campaign of Alexander the Great (336–323 B.C.), more extensive trade routes were opened across Asia, extending as far as Afghanistan and the Indus River Valley. These new trade routes introduced Greek art to cultures in the East, and also exposed

Greek artists to a host of artistic styles, as well as precious stones. Garnets, emeralds, rubies, and amethysts were incorporated into new types of Hellenistic jewelry, more stunning than ever before. In the ensuing centuries, the Greeks continued to live in these eastern regions, adjusting while accumulating knowledge and experience, such as exotic spices, and gastronomy techniques, (vinegar, cheese making etc.) but always maintained contact with the Greek mainland. Corinth dominated trade in the West. For the most part, it exported Corinthian vases which were often filled with gastronomy related goods such as olive oil, and wine in return for grain. Some city-states, such as Syracuse and Selinus in Sicily, erected major temples that rivaled those in the eastern part of Greece. Unlike the Aegean islands and mainland Greece, where marble was plentiful, Sicily and southern Italy had few local sources of high-quality marble. Thus, the artists in Magna Grecia established a strong tradition of working with terracotta and limestone evolving clay cookery and oven making as well. Athens exerted its influence over sea trade. Athenian pottery was widely exported, especially to Etruria and to the colonies in southern Italy, where it inspired local imitations. When in 272 B.C., the Romans conquered Magna Graecia, and Sicily came under Roman in 212 B.C. the newly conquered western Greek colonies played an important role as the transmitters of Greek culture (gastronomy and commerce techniques included) to the Romans.

Nowadays, foodservice, economy and tourism researchers, such as, Hjalager (2002, 2003), Fields (2002), Richards (2002), and Scarpato (2002) have convincingly proposed that an increasing number of tourist destinations have become very famous because of their unique gastronomy and food related activities. Food is one of our basic needs, so it is not surprising that it is also one of the most widespread markets of identity. Given the strong relationship between food and identity, we understand why food came become an important marketing tool in tourism promotion and gastronomy tourism, specifically, an effective tool for regional development. One of the basic reasons for this phenomenon is the strong relationship between certain localities and special types of food. As Hughes (1995:114) points out, there is a “notion of a natural relationship between a region’s land, its climatic conditions and the character of food it produces. It is this geographical diversity which provides for the regional distinctiveness in culinary tradition and the evolution of a characteristic heritage.” Food can also be used as a mean for guiding tourists around regions or countries. The close association of gastronomy to local, regional and national identity is apparently threatened by the process of globalization. However, lately it is believed recently by many that “Local has become a treasure”: Especially in rural destinations, we can seek for comparative and competitive advantages in their diversified gastronomy traditions.

Generally speaking, gastronomy tourism if used wisely could be an opportunity for regional development. However, not all regions are equally attractive to gastro tourists and by simply providing decent accommodation facilities, do not guarantee success. The total tourist package must be sufficient to attract and keep tourists, offering suitable opportunities for spending (Gannon, 1994). Developing and organizing regional tourism may require a significant investment either beyond the means of the business owners or greater than justified by potential returns (Fleischer & Felenstein, 2000). Local communities and traditional small businesses may find it difficult to adapt to a service role. The quality of products and services must match modern tourist’s demands and expectations. At the same time we should bear in mind that gastronomy tourism is not the panacea for all regional problems, but it could offer a number of positive results (Long and Lane 2000). It is one of

the many opportunities that rural communities might consider in order to improve productivity and incomes. At the same time, Haukeland and Jacobsen (2001) argue that tourism in rural communities needs to be rooted in strong back-lines with the local economy if it is to be sustainable. To become an appropriate and successful peripheral development tool, cuisine for tourism must be integrated with other aspects of rural advancements through complementary activities, and they propose that attention should be addressed to (1) Encouraging innovative back-linkages with the local economy, and thereby stimulating niche specialist food production and promotion – including non-standardized and organic food produce, (2) Stimulating locally rooted food-related growth and co-operation of small and medium-sized enterprises, (3) Generating locally retained value-added benefits from production, processing and retailing, (4) Raising food quality and generating awareness of the requirement to improve and maintain quality, at both the production and consumption ends of the gastronomic tourism chain, (5) Strengthening the local image and regional identity through the development and promotion of place-specific food brands, thereby helping to promote – though also lead to possible over- commercialization – of local culture and heritage (Haukeland and Steen Jacobsen 2001).

4. Research questions

In this paper we will try to answer the following:

- ✓ How the transition is realized from the ancient times to present?
- ✓ Can new business ideas based on gastronomy and tourism flourish in the contemporary difficult Greek economic environment?
- ✓ Can gastronomy assist regional development?
- ✓ Can modern Greeks find answers for their economic problems by studying their history?

5. Methodology

5.1 Why Chosen the case studies

In this paper we try to find representative cases that show how entrepreneurship can flourish when combined with knowledge, innovation, quality and neoterism. It is certain that the field of food tourism can give countless business opportunities for new entrepreneurs. People have just to study ancient history and see how their ancestors progressed. The same recipe for success could be true nowadays. All the case studies chosen have some special characteristics which make them unique. All examples are related to gastronomic excellence at different sector. They are all successful businesses in their field of operation. They strive for perfection and they are doing so by improving continuously their products and their services. Many of them are basing their products on tradition (such as Greek recipes, theme, raw material etc.). Innovation is another great element for their success, so is and their successful adaptation to change in contemporary unfriendly business environments. Some are environment friendly or “responsible” as they use local, seasonal and in many cases bio grown products for better results. They respect their guests so they offer them new quality products and services every year and they participate in the regional development of the area they operate.

5.2 Short description of companies’ profile

1. *Fereikos* is a company that was founded in 2007 and at the moment they work with 178 snail producing farmers. It is the first company that introduced and developed the organic snail

farming in Greece. It is based in Ancient Corinth, and oversees the global development of organic snail farming and snail products. Fereikos is focused on two principles: people and quality. During the years, invests heavily in R&D in order to develop new methods and know how in the farming sector and innovative products. In 2011 they launched a new series of innovative products such as fresh, live snails, pre-cooked snails in brine packed in jars and cans, frozen snails and pasta based on snails with Mediterranean flavors.

2. In 2007, *Funky Gourmet* introduced for the first time the concept of private Cheffing in Greece. They aimed to redefine the catering businesses. The restaurant began its operation in 2009. They usually create designed degustation menus inspired by unique local products captured at the peak of their seasonality and freshness. They aspire to introduce to their guests to their own point of a refined local cuisine while using molecular cooking. It is a successful combination of funky and gourmet. Since 2014, Funky Gourmet acquired two Michelin stars of culinary excellence.
3. Another great example of innovative entrepreneurial effort based on gastronomy is “*Dinner in the Sky*” which is based on the new concept of “pop up restaurant”. Dinner in the Sky is an extra-ordinary company which allows people to dine at 50 meters in the air. David Ghysels founded this Belgium-based company in 2006 when he conceived the idea of “suspended dinner” at unique places. Forbes Magazine saw the photo and listed it in its rankings for the 10 most usual restaurants in the world. Now, Dinner in the Sky operates in about 45 countries.
4. *Unismack*: is an innovative food related company which mainly produces healthy snacks and crackers. It is a purely Greek company (headquarters in Kilkis, Greece) mainly exporting (99% of its production). Their goal from the beginning was the global market. Through research they targeted the 1% of the world population which suffers from celiac disease, a gastrointestinal problem that does not allow patients to consume gluten. In addition, 8-10% of the world, people has sensitivity to gluten consumption (bloating, swelling). Because most gluten free products are tasteless; with hard texture and poor quality, they decided to create tasty, highly nutritious gluten-free products. The first product was the Cheese Ups, a snack, based in real cheese. The novelty lies in the whole recipe, is that Cheese Ups is among the few products worldwide in the form of chips that have such great content in cheese (43%) when the classical chips cheese content is only 1-2% and that in a powder form. The company supplies the international market with the following gluten free products: snacks, cheese ups, crackers products, and a series of chips products made with legume flours such as lentil, chickpea etc.
5. *Trikalinos* makes a traditional fish roe product, which comes from the past, leaving its traces in the present while and creating a unique bridge to the future. A bridge that connects a unique Greek delicacy with the largest foreign markets. The company has its roots back to 1856 but the current owner took over in 1995, giving new life to the company and the product by creating the first certified roe production facilities in Greece. The Trikalinos fish roe, ended up among the 30 best and healthiest foods in the world, by the pioneer and opinion maker Chef on the planet Ferran Adria in the book called “Fragile Feast”. Through the love, passion, research and hard work the company changed the notion of fish roe as an unhealthy food (by decreasing the amount of salt). With assistance from Harokopeio University, they proved that their roe was beneficial for the arteries. Since then, Trikalinos fish raw began to travel successfully abroad.
6. *George Koliopoulos* is the founder of *Speiron*. The man who turned olive oil into a luxury, by creating, in 2006, the first company of Luxury Food & Beverage in Greece and the first “luxuryoliveoil” in the world: He distinguished that top quality oil was exported until then, at very low prices and the creation of a very strong luxury brand of olive oil was completely

absent. The vision and the original idea led, in the creation of λ / lambda, a strictly limited production of ultra-premium olive oil. This innovation was confirmed by the report of the inflight magazine of Delta Airlines, one of the major American airlines.

7. ***Stella Mare*** is a ready meals food company specializing on sardines. It fishes in open Greek seas, and their products are processed authentic recipes which includes care, expertise and commitment, authenticity, freshness and quality. Since 2004, in, Messenia prefecture, the company Stella Mare entered the wholesale of fresh fish. Its noble aim is to make known the Greek sardine anchovy fillets worldwide in the most naturally preserved form. The fish is harvesting early in the morning which guarantees excellent quality of fillets. It is processed fresh, even within the first 24 hours from catching, resulting in the absence of histamine products. The company has created some innovative products such as smoked and spicy filets, salted, herbed, and traditionally marinated
8. ***Gaea Products S.A.*** Gaea's vision is to be the absolute leader in the category of Mediterranean Greek cuisine-meze in the international fine foods arena, synonymous to quality, tradition, authenticity and innovative Greek specialty foods. From its very first day (1995), Gaea follows one unique path. A path that combines the values of olive oil with tradition and innovation that gets inspired only from pure, high quality products while combining them in amazing recipes. The product portfolio has been designed to provide the essential ingredients and products for promoting internationally Greek "meze" as the authentic Greek Mediterranean lifestyle and cultural culinary experience. "Gaea", meaning Mother Earth, in the history of creation in ancient Greek mythology, is a symbol of fertility and the goodness of earth. The Gaea product range, offers tasty ingredients, for the finest, traditional Greek cuisine. These ingredients are exclusively of the highest quality, naturally grown in the fertile earth of Greece, sun-ripened and harvested the traditional way.
9. ***PAPADIMITRIOU SA*** Christos Papadimitriou is a 35 year-old pioneer. His company combines tradition and innovation Papadimitriou SA was founded in 1939 by his grandfather Chris, producing and exporting raisins and today is one of the largest food companies in southern Greece exporting in 35 countries. Today emphasizes 100% natural balsamic vinegar produced exclusively by Greek raisins and the new generation of innovative Mediterranean products based on vinegar. The series included, among others, Greek mustards with herbs and spices , the novelty of which was based on the replacement of plain vinegar with balsamic vinegar and sugar with honey .In Recent years the range of company products was expanded with the addition of cream balsamic vinegar. Particular innovation and leadership, primarily for the Greek market are creams balsamic vinegar with fruit flavors such as fig, strawberry and orange - lemon), for which demand is growing both in Greece and abroad.
10. ***Sea World*** is a Greek company with 25 years of experience in frozen fish. It is one of the leaders in the field of retail frozen seafood and ready meals through its 23 stores across Greece. The company offers a complete variety of nutritious modern meals that is tasty, traditionally cooked with excellent quality. The Sea World innovates and brings to the table the authentic, homemade dishes of traditional Greek cuisine! Greek and Mediterranean recipes based on fish, are packed in a traditional way on parchment paper, ready for baking in the oven. Baking in parchment paper is the comparative advantage of the company because. Baking in parchment paper (wax paper) is an ancient Greek tradition. It combines simplicity of execution and wonderful taste result. Sea World chose this method, answering to the customer's demand for seafood products cooked quickly and healthy while having great taste.

3.3 Entrepreneurship

As mentioned in his work “Entrepreneurship in classical Greek literature” by Karayiannis, 1990 a, 83), entrepreneurial activity was limited not only by the "primitiveness of the economy" and state interference in economic life but also by the philosophical and ethical limits imposed on it. Philosophers also argued that the acquisition of wealth, despite its importance in everyday life, was regarded as the least desirable objective of free citizens. The insatiable desire for wealth was condemned as a cause of unfairness, injustice and unequal distribution of wealth. For the Greek authors, success in business was determined by the personal actions and characteristics of the entrepreneur and in particular by his knowledge, efficiency, special labor and character. Cities such as Athens were more prone to entrepreneurship than others once they saw that private wealth meant state prosperity. Contemporary entrepreneurship is less affiliated to moral standards than in Ancient times. Profit became the center of attention, usually at any cost.

Fereikos is a company that turns its entrepreneurial interest towards snail farming when most of young educated Greeks chose blue collar jobs staying in big cities and abroad. Fereikos found the answer to success in forgotten and even misunderstood products such as snails that had great nutritional and dietary value. At the same time snail is a product with no waste whatsoever once it can be used 100% in cosmetics and gastronomy. A good feasibility study shown the opportunity, once prices and demand in Europe were right, while cultivation conditions in Greece were outstanding and nobody else had started such an enterprise. So, they entered the market first, created partnerships, took risks and finally succeed even though their studies were irrelevant to the subject. **Funky Gourmet** started as a small private Cheffing business and gradually evolved into an Avant garde restaurant. They promote their innovative, artistic cooking, mainly by participating in seminars, lectures, expeditions and through their everyday work. Restaurant business is in many ways a difficult kind of business today, once at this high level, it requires a lot of investment, highly paid experienced personnel and premium quality products in order to maintain quality. **Dinner in the Sky** on the other hand, introduced themselves through media in a glamour and rather noisy way (TV, magazines radio etc.) .As a business model is rather more effective than a regular restaurant because it can control its costs. Through reservations, it can plan in advance, where to set its infrastructure, and estimate how much food to prepare, avoiding unnecessary expenses. At the same time when the demand gets saturated, they are ready for their next location. **Unimask** highlights the correct dietary nature of its products; aiming at a specialized target (gluten intolerants, real cheese lovers) and underline the fact that snacks can be enjoyed by everybody when made healthy, especially the children. So it appears to all potential customers as a company with sensitivity in issues such as children obesity and public health, which takes care of us and our children. At the same time it “decriminalizes” snacks as junk food, turning them into nutritionally acceptable success food story. **Trikalinos** takes Greek tradition (fish roe) to the next level something that **Speiron** does with olive oil as well. Both Trkalinos and Speiron give great attention to detail in order to guarantee that are made exactly as they were made hundreds of years ago. In the case of Trikalinos, fish roe is picked with care by the local fisherman and as a highly perishable food, is treated with great care at the place it is fished once all the company info structure is in Aitiloakarnania. The company has made certain adjustments on salt content and has manage to scientifically document (Harokopio University) that traditional fish raw is a healthy delicacy, beneficial for the human cardiovascular system. At the same time Trikalinos made new products in order to utilize all

its product, (e.g. powder fish raw from trimming) a practice used in truffles as well, and packed sea salt. **Speiron** has targeted high-end customers worldwide and adjusted its super glamour products to their standards. Speiron certainly offers great products and that is proven by various taste nominations and quality awards. The trick is on the “amount of myth” packed in these bottles such as the use of 100 years old olive trees, old stone mills; hand packed and filled bottles practices, etc. All this unique practices in olive oil production created a new super premium category of super olive oil which is treated and marketed as jewelry. These adding value marketing practices are what make Speiron products so successful and expensive. **Stella Mare** is one more company related to fishing and food packing. It is one more company like Fereikos and Gaea that turned to Greek nature in order to achieve business success. It combines expellant raw material (fresh sardines and anchovies filets) great knowledge of fishing techniques (fished in Aegean only early in the morning) and packing tradition, with company’s own fishing boats. After research in gastronomy and local cuisine, Stella Mare created products based on some of the most favorite traditional recipes of southern Greece that became great business success from the very first moment. **Gaea SA**, was founded in 1995 upon the finding that Greek agricultural food products, despite their inherent high quality and good taste, were absent from international markets. The company realized, as ancient Greeks had done in the past that quality Greek goods, must reach the global market in order for the company to thrive. Their limits were not Greece itself but the world creating an extrovert business. It is important for Gaea to preserve and optimize what “Mother Earth” is offering to the people. **Gaea SA** has a multidimensional approach on entrepreneurship. They have a holistic approach regarding their offered products which allowed them to become one of the leaders in the category of Mediterranean Greek cuisine-meze in the international fine foods arena, synonymous to quality, tradition, authenticity and innovative Greek specialty foods. Gaea gets inspired from only pure, high quality products and combines them in amazing recipes, constantly searching for best practices from all over the world in an effort to improve continuously. The corporate strategy is to promote and sell in the international markets and Greece a Portfolio of authentic Greek Mediterranean products consisting of both innovative value-added recipes and fresh traditional ingredients. The company promotes Mediterranean lifestyle and cultural culinary experience. Its original orange and black corporate colors in the label), reminiscent ancient Greek pottery used to store foods. The company guarantees that products of the Gaea brand evolve constantly according to traditional methods and recipes. From ancient Greek value on entrepreneurship, Gaea has kept honor, values and trust. The company guaranties (and the awards from all over the world prove) that it sells the highest quality natural and organic products available, 100% natural, totally free from additives and preservatives. It excels through innovation, and retro innovation (like the oxymelo, ancient Greek vinegar like recipe) but also research and state of the art technology. It supports team happiness and excellence, ensures ethical working practices, caring about community & environment (1st carbon neutral olive oil in the world, 1st carbon neutral consumer product in Greece). Finally, it creates wealth through profits and growth sustainability. Gaea knows the power of partnerships that’s why it maintains long term, stable relationships with suppliers and trading partners. Finally, leads by introducing new authentic Greek experiences, without compromising its values to commercial success. **Papadimitriou SA** was founded in 1939 when first producing and exporting raisins. Following traditional entrepreneurial guidelines, the new management took excellent raw

material and agricultural knowledge and turn I into success. Papadimitriou combines tradition and innovation with emphasis on quality agricultural goods .Today it emphasizes 100% natural balsamic vinegar, produced exclusively by Greek raisins and the new generation of innovative Mediterranean products based on vinegar. The new CEO established its new success on an old well known product that the family had a lot of business connections, experience and good reputation, raisins. The owners having the sense of responsibility, and the will to build tradition and renew the activities of the family business, expanded even further by diversifying its range of products. Chris as a third generation manager has lived changes in the raisin market and his father's decision to shift production to balsamic vinegar in 1998. Chris modernized corporate identity and began to build the product range with new flavor balsamic vinegars and mustard. In 2009, became CEO - during his leadership the percentage of Greek market in balsamic vinegar increased from 10% to 40 % and expanded its operations from 14 to 28 countries. The same applies to the percentage of exports, which now account for 78 % of total turnover. **Sea World Company** stick to the tradition and won the markets. Investing on traditional culinary values and techniques, offered Greek recipes served in smart packaging (parchment) in a way easy to cook and enjoy. Fish is an expensive product, so Sea World was able to preserve in and make in accessible, by freezing it (so there is no waste) marinate it with local flavors and herbs once all the ingredients exchange flavor in the package until are used. Besides, they chose to stay away from fatty unhealthy frying. Ancient Greeks were masters in baking and so did the company by offering backed fish meals, as a great value for money product at low price (less than 3€) complete, and healthy. The company took every day authentic recipes and offered them to the people at low price, without undesired fishy odors or time consuming cooking preparations, with portion control capability (you bake only what you need to consume).

3.4 Regional Development

As mentioned earlier, ancient Greeks believed that individual profit and wealth seeking, eventually drew to regional development. They increased state wealth through colonization and commerce and made themselves and their place of origin well known from one side of the earth to the other. The majority of the products sold were food related once Greeks produced great wine, oil, bread, clay pots textile and so on. In the same manner, gastronomy and gastronomy tourism related economic and entrepreneurial activities could also become an opportunity for regional development. Starting with **Fereikos** we shall say that the particular enterprises, not only gave jobs to local snail farmers, but also made the area of Korinthia well known even abroad and a lot of people make their leaving by snail related activities. Not to mention the visitors that visit Fereikos estate each month in order to get informed or close deals with the company. The company itself makes all its manufacturing investment at the prefecture of Korinthos, contributing to the development of the local economy. **Funky Gourmet** was able to put Keramikos, a rather underdeveloped area, into the culinary map of Athens with thousands of high end customers visiting and many reporters and media personnel from different magazines, doing interview of the place year around. Nobody could imagine years ago that this degraded commercial suburb could be in all magazines in Greece and abroad because of the repeatedly awarded restaurant. Other businesses have been attracted in an area that stores used to move away 6 years ago. **Diner in the Sky** could

contribute in the short term in the development of a specific area by choosing to offer its services at this place because of all media attention it draws. Generally speaking, the company chooses places that they already possess some kind of fame or natural beauty (e.g. Crete, Corfu Mykonos etc.) **Unismack** does not emphasize locality and regional development because its production is mainly directed to customers abroad. On the other hand the cheeses used in the main product are not Greek....The company has chosen to establish itself in Kilkis -Greece, but wet substantial regional development contribution is a future possibility when the size of the company will increase. **Trikalinos** on the other hand emphasizes its historical roots, Aitoliko and makes Aitoloakarnania prefecture famous around the world due its direct affiliation with this unique product. When someone purchases Augotaraxo (fish roe), or reads about it in cooking magazines, automatically he thinks of Messologgi and Aitoliko. Trikalinos has managed to make the fish roe, the Greek fisherman and the pallades (the small wooden fishery houses in the sea lake) well known. All related products (sea salt, dry fish roe powder, even fish from Ionian and the lagoon of Messologgi) and the people related to them, are all benefited by the glory of Augotaraxo, the famous Greek Bottagra that top chefs and gourmands around the world included in the prestigious club of the very best delicacies, worldwide. **Speiron** is another example of companies that do not directly cause regional development. Basically, because they do not have their own production or bottling facilities (in this case), once the model of production chosen is working fashion with external partners instead of having their own. On the other hand, olive oil from Koroneiki olives can be found at deferent parts in Greece, so the success of Speiron, cannot be cashed out by a specific part of Greece. **Stella Mare** draws its origin from Marathopolis, a picturesque seaside village in Messenia. All the facilities are in Messenia and the partners, fishermen, workers and other related occupations are all from the area, so we can be certain that the existence of Stella Mare contributes to the regional development and local economy substantially. The same is true for **Gaea Products SA** where geographical product identification is part of the company's philosophy, intensively advertised by the company and promoted as strong competitive advantage. Such an example is Kritsa Extra Virgin Olive Oil, produced at Kritsa, one of Crete's oldest olive groves with the help of an ideal micro-climate and the island's long standing heritage in cultivating olives! The Gaea - "Vranas Olive Press Museum" extra virgin olive oil is produced in Lesvos Island, located in the Northeast Aegean Sea and is a result of an effort to create something beyond the ordinary, something unique. This oil comes from the "Agrielia" (wild olives) olives variety, particular and unique to this corner of Greece, well known for the great quality of olive oil it produces. Located in the traditional village of Papados, at the center of an ancient olive grove, the Vranas olive press, was the first steam powered press in the Aegean with machinery from the factory of Essigonis (Essigonis' grandson designed the mini cooper). Built in 1887, the factory was shut down after 60 years of continues production, until it's rebirth through the restoration completed in 2005. Now, this historical monument stands as a strong reminder of the history of both Lesvos and Greek Olive oil. For Gaea, the revival of this industrial monument symbolizes a return to the ancient wisdom and proven health values of the traditional Greek diet. Proceeds from the sales of this olive oil support the Museum, ensuring the proper maintenance of Lesvos's industrial history. Al the above prove that Gaea contributes to regional development in many different ways something that many successful enterprises should imitate. **Papadimitriou SA** continues its businesses in Messenia as his grandfather did in late 30s. All ingredients such as raisins,

vinegar, figs, citrus used at various products, are all from Messenia region. Once the company is exporting to many countries, along with the brand Papadimitriou, so the Kalamata – Messenia brand gets positive publicity and fame. Not to mention all the partners of the company such as suppliers get benefit financially, from the 9 million annual gross profit of the company. Finally, **Sea World** contributes to the national economy as a profitable food related enterprise; but not at to the regional, once regional identification of the products was not a prime target. The company identifies its products as Greek with no further notification.

7. A Comparative Analysis

7.1 Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA).

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is a technique, originally developed by Charles Ragin (1987, 2000, 2008) and already widely used in sociology, political science, and more recently management studies and tourism (e.g., Crilly et al.,2012; Fiss, 2011; Fiss et al., 2013; Greckhamer, 2011).

QCA is a reliable method widely used in order to research and analyze different aspects of tourism. Many researchers all over the world have put QCA it to test in order to realize in depth research. Some characteristic examples are Alrik Thiem in its work “Analyzing multilevel data with QCA: yet another straightforward procedure” . “comparing recent contribution to Quality & Quantity: by Denk and Lehtinen (Qual Quant 48(6):3475–3487, 2014). Present Comparative Multilevel Analysis (CMA) as an innovative method whereby the effects of contexts on outcomes of interest can be studied configurationally if combined with Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Researchers interested in the contextual analysis of configurational data are well-served by the existing toolbox of QCA. Some of them such as: Arjana Cela in her work “Estimating the Economic Impact of Tourism: A Comparative Analysis of Albania, Barry Cooper & Judith Glaesser in their research “Analysing necessity and sufficiency with Qualitative Comparative Analysis: how do results vary as case weights change”, Anastasia Kopaneli in her work “Finance, Marketing, Management and Strategy Planning. A Qualitative Research Method Analysis of Case Studies in Business Hotels in Patras and in Athens” have utilize it in tourism related reasearch QCA is also used by the research team of .ITEP such as Dr Kyriakos Emm. Rerres, Scientific Director of ITEP, Dr Agni Christidou, Director Hellenic Chamber of Hotel, Dr Antonis Spinakis, General Manager QUANTOS S.A, Sophia Panousi, Researcher., Dionysia-Chrysavgi Aggelopoulou, Research Assistant., and Dr Gerassimos Zacharatos, General Director of ITEP, Emeritus Professor of Tourism and Economic Management, University of Patras in their report Performance of Greek Tourism and developments in the basic figures of the GreekHotel Market 2011 –2012. Vayionis, W. Kafouros. 2008 have also use it in their work “TOURIST DEVELOPMENT IN GREECE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS” (in Greek),where the basic objective of this study is to present and analyze as adequately and possible the economic conditions which prevail in the tourism markets of the Mediterranean region. Other tourism related resarchers are, Anestis Fotiadis 2009 (Hungaria Greek Rural development comparison), Antonios A. Giannopoulos^{a*} & Eleni P. Mavragani^b with their research:“Traveling Through the Web: A First Step Toward a Comparative Analysis of European National Tourism Websites” .

In QCA, researchers explicitly use membership in either fuzzy or crisp sets to operationalize membership in multiple categories. QCA holds the promise of opening up significant new fronts in research on categories. As just one example, QCA lends itself naturally to the study of what strategists call ‘white space’ opportunities (Johnson, 2010) – that is, theoretically feasible combinations of product or service features around which no products or markets have yet emerged. QCA is well-suited to identifying and exploring such opportunities because it uses truth tables to combine measures of multiple qualities or attributes into matrices that capture how cases are distributed in an n-dimensional property space defined by these attributes. It is rare to find empirical instances in every possible configuration of a multi-category space, a phenomenon known as limited diversity (Ragin, 2000). This limited diversity can be used to identify unexplored configurations that may be valuable or to better understand the landscape of features that tend to co-occur. In addition to applications in strategy, this kind of analysis also holds the promise of enabling detailed examination of changes to classification systems over time.

A second research front where QCA can yield new insights involves exploring how membership in multiple categories affects various outcomes of interest, including category emergence, dissolution and the population dynamics of categories. QCA is suited to this line of investigation because it employs Boolean algebra and a language that is half verbal-conceptual and half mathematical-logical (Ragin, 2000). In a study that relates firm membership in five different categories to a particular outcome, for example, a researcher might find that firms having membership in categories A, B, and C but not E exhibit the outcome of interest, thus supporting deeper theorization about potentially complex consequences of membership in multiple categories. Much more could be said about why and how set-theoretic analysis of categories is well suited to advancing categories research, but we trust that this brief outline of what might be possible makes it evident that set-theoretic methods such as QCA are a toolkit well suited for studying categories that – after all – are sets. A comparative analysis compares two or more things: “two texts, two theories, two historical figures, two scientific processes, and so on” (Walk, 1998). It can be about two similar things that have crucial differences (two companies with different effects on the regional development) or two similar things that have crucial differences, yet turn out to have surprising commonalities. Typically, qualitatively oriented scholars examine only a few cases at a time, but their analyses are both intensive, addressing many aspects of cases and integrative –examining, how the different parts of a case fit together, both contextually and historically. By formalizing the logic of qualitative analysis, QCA makes it possible to bring the logic and empirical intensity of qualitative approaches to studies that embrace more than a handful of cases such as research situations that normally call for the use of variable-oriented, quantitative methods. A comparative analysis requires you to make an argument. Some describing or defining of the two elements will be necessary, but the heart of the paper comes with your argument about how they compare. Push ourselves into the work of making an argument about how the two elements compare which involves drawing conclusions, analyzing, and synthesizing, (Bloom, 1956). QCA has been used in research related to culture, tourism and gastronomy. Currently have more adherents in Europe than in the United States. It is used for analyzing data sets by listing and counting all the combinations of variables

observed in the data set, and then applying the rules of logical inference to determine which descriptive inferences or implications the data supports. Case-oriented researchers are often critical of quantitative cross-national researchers for ignoring the gap between the results of quantitative research and what is known about specific cases. They also have little interest in the abstract, high-level concepts that often characterize this type of research and the wide analytic gulf, separating these concepts from case-level events and processes. QCA, plain and simple, attempts to bridge these two worlds. This attempt has spawned methodological tools which are useful to social scientists in general.

QCA is a method that bridges qualitative and quantitative analysis. Most aspects of QCA require familiarity with cases, which in turn demands in-depth knowledge. At the same time, QCA is capable of pinpointing decisive cross-case patterns, the usual domain of quantitative analysis. QCA's examination of cross-case patterns respects the diversity of cases and their heterogeneity with regard to their different causally relevant conditions and contexts by comparing cases as configurations. QCA also provides powerful tools for the analysis of causal complexity: By using QCA it is possible to assess causation that is very complex, involving different combinations of causal conditions capable of generating the same outcome. This emphasis contrasts strongly with the "net effects" thinking that dominates conventional quantitative social science. QCA also facilitates a form of counterfactual analysis that is grounded in case-oriented research practices. This allows us to conclude that QCA is appropriate to our analysis because it is ideal for small-to-intermediate-N research designs: QCA can be usefully applied to research designs involving small and intermediate-size Ns (e.g., 5-50). This is the range of companies that we shall examine in our study (10). In this range, there are often too many cases for researchers to keep all the case knowledge "in their heads," but too few cases for most conventional statistical techniques. QCA is grounded in the analysis of set relations, not correlations. This is exactly what we would like to show in our study: Relations among the different case studies and the four dimensions (*Gastronomy, Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Contribution to Regional Development*). Then we shall show if and how these ten businesses are successful in the six basic characteristics that seem to lead to success and by using principles and practices from ancient Greece.

Using a Frame of Reference: A frame of reference is "the context within which you place the two things you plan to compare and contrast. It is the umbrella under which you have grouped them. The frame of reference may consist of an idea, theme, question, problem, or theories. The best frames of reference are constructed from specific sources rather than your own thoughts or observation. Most assignments tell you exactly what the frame of reference should be, and most courses supply sources for constructing it. If you encounter an assignment that fails to provide a frame of reference, you must come up with one on your own. A paper without such a context would have no angle on the material, any focus or frame for the writer to propose a meaningful argument" (Walk, 1998). This is the reason why QCA is the most proper form of analysis in order to analyze the findings in our research.

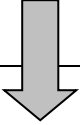
Starting our analysis, we shall state that all ten cases chosen in this paper, combine characteristics that seem to lead to success such as:

1. *Promoting culinary excellence*
2. *Respecting tradition*

3. *Continues innovation of the products and services*
4. *Quality & continuous improvement*
5. *Environment friendly*
6. *Assisting regional development*

At the same time these criteria will become the factors of the comparative analysis (comparative study) among the ten types of entrepreneurial action.

Figure 1: *Lessons from the past*

Ancient Greece		Gastronomy	Innovation	Entrepreneurship	Regional Development
Modern Greece		Gastronomy	Innovation	Entrepreneurship	Regional Development
<i>Case study1</i>	<i>Fereikos</i>		√	√	√
<i>Case study2</i>	<i>Funky Gourmet</i>	√	√		√
<i>Case study3</i>	<i>“Dinner in the Sky”</i>	√	√	√	
<i>Case study4</i>	<i>Unismack</i>	√	√	√	
<i>Case study5</i>	<i>Trikalinos</i>	√		√	√
<i>Case study6</i>	<i>Speiron</i>	√	√	√	
<i>Case study7</i>	<i>Stella Mare</i>	√		√	√
<i>Case study8</i>	<i>Gaea Products S.A</i>	√	√	√	√
<i>Case study9</i>	<i>PAPADIMITRIOU SA</i>	√	√	√	√
<i>Case study10</i>	<i>Sea world</i>	√	√	√	

Analysis (Figure 1): As mentioned earlier in ancient Greece, Gastronomy had a special importance and it was interrelated with social life, nutrition even philosophical theories. Innovation was a great part of everyday life and it was desired, even though at a philosophical level; there were different approaches regarding its use and to the degree that innovation could be a self-fulfilling prophecy sometimes, which could become a potential threat to the democracy itself. On the other hand, regional development was directly deriving from individual wealth seeking, while ancient Greeks gave great importance on locality and place of origin taking great pride of their mother land. We see that depending on consumption practices and the food consumed itself, (e.g. barley vs wheat, diluting wine with water or not), people were considered civilized or barbarians. Besides, local development was facilitated by food related entrepreneurship at many levels. For instance, the Aegean islands, Crete and Peloponnese, were very famous for their wine and olive oil production. Commerce flourished by Greek merchants and the fame of their cities –regions became well known through their presence and goods that were sold to all Mediterranean regions, bringing wealth, power, and technological development in return to Greece.

Those are some great examples of how gastronomy as an expression of culture was related to entrepreneurship and commerce and how it influenced local and regional development. Nowadays, gastronomy develops continuously in Greece, starting from the late 90s where new products appeared in the Greek market through EU free trade practices and new food related businesses start popping up thorough Greece. Even though there were not many well-known quality Greek food products (but rather foreign imported goods), restaurants, supermarkets and delicatessen, along with specialized magazines of lifestyle and gastronomy, initiated the Greek public into the secrets of modern gastronomy. Competitions and awards were founded, such as (the Golden Chef Hats) by Athinorama magazine which started as a private initiative and has been endorsed by government and regional authorities lately awarding restaurants for their quality and dedication to gastronomy. Gradually, the people were introduced to flavorful ingredients, rear material, small producers, innovative chefs and authentic recipes that were introduced to the public through a media boom and especially TV food programs. Gradually, new demand for quality in gastronomy food, was created, and local producers started making their appearance to the Greek market. Some chefs “turned their back” to foreign cuisines and luxurious foreign ingredients and discover seasonal, local, unknown Greek grown or produced ingredients and became ambassadors of the new qualitative Greek gastronomy trend, in the late 2000.

From then on, new chefs and restaurants or delicatessen appeared, specializing on Greek cuisine, showcasing authentic local recipes, Greek traditional cooking techniques and outstanding ingredients, made Greek cosine trendy, once again. As shown in our first table, Fereikos Snail Company realized its gastronomy related potential and realized entrepreneurial initiatives based on the primary sector and agro farming. They study ancient Greek culinary tradition of snail cooking and revitalize the snail farming, by trying to satisfy the strong foreign demand for snails in (French, Spain, Italy, Germany) by organizing Greek,

snail farmers. They also showcase the appetite and love that ancient Greeks had for this wonderful animal along with the nutritional and health benefits that someone could enjoy when consuming this delicacy. After educating the public about snails for decay, they introduced snail pasta, making snail consumption easier to potential consumers. Funky gourmet is an operation that is based on gastronomy once it is a restaurant awardee with 2 star Michelin practicing molecular cuisine. The two chefs-proprietors draw a lot of their recipes from the traditional Greek cuisine and they attribute neoteristic “deconstructed” dishes with a funky flair. Funky Gourmet comprehends the philosophical backroad that ancient Greek philosophers especially the hedonists and empiricists gave to the importance of the five human senses in perceiving gastronomy in order to maximize pleasure and make the experience memorable. Having versed on this, they pay special attention on having different textures, temperatures, aromas and techniques in the same dish, even bite, so that they stimulate our senses, while challenging our brain to think. The tools are the use of illusion, thematic metaphors, even high-end technology, (eg Sous-Vide cooking, Spherification Foams Flash Frozen) giving to the meal a unique dimension, as every moment of life is. Dinner in the Sky utilizes gastronomy in order to attract customers and the whole business idea revolves around an alternative gastronomy experience. Even though not only expensive meals are offered in such settings any more, the idea first started by utilizing highly acclaimed chefs, presenting exquisite food, 50 meters above ground, combined with natural fear and a lot of adrenaline due to the elevation in order to emphasize the uniqueness of the experience itself. Utilization of a five senses during delightful food consumption creates powerful taste memories in human a theory stated and utilized by ancient Greeks gastronomists and philosophers. We can conclude that Dinner in the Sky knows how to create unique experiences that require deep knowledge in human physiology combined with contemporary marketing and gastronomy. This is what makes this business idea successful. **Unimask** is based on the development of better food product in the category of snacks, where the food is mainly artificially colored and flavored. Its products are based on principals deriving from the balanced Greek Mediterranean diet, where the flours used are from natural legumes such as chick peas, beans and lentils avoiding regular flour and gluten intolerance problems. The company has based its commercial success on the use of real cheese (largest content in snacks worldwide) and the creation of healthy snacks than even kids can eat and enjoy, low in salt and fat. **Trikalinos** is based on Greek caviar products (Bottarga or Avgotaraho in Greek) which is one of Greece’s most treasured foods and a firm staple of the super healthy Greek diet.. Ancient Greeks enjoyed Avgotaraho fresh or preserved and knew its unique dietary qualities. The traditional techniques of preservation with salt and bee wax come from the ancient times, offering an authentic historical delicacy unchanged through centuries unlike many other versions found around Europe and North Africa. This natural preservative serves to maintain the delicacy’s unique taste, untainted by synthetic products or packaging. Trikalinos improved the preservation techniques by reducing the salt content, but retained the traditional flavor. This is an excellent example of how the traditional gastronomy knowledge having reached top level, is maintained by new companies assisting them to achieve success. Such philosophy and dedication drove Trikalinos products in the list of the most favorable gourmet products in the world, for the Spanish legendary chef of the century, Ferran Andria making Greek Caviar famous around

the world. Speiron is another good prove of the potential of super quality Greek products. Success seems to come when a great product is produced in the very way that was done in ancient Greece. The crushing of this olive oil is done with the equipment and means as 3000 years ago, by Koroneiki olive tree variety that have lived over 100 years in most cases, hand-picked and bottled. All the procedures are executed as our Greek pre assessors executed them and only the modern bottles and marketing techniques are added in order to create what the company calls “the first ultra-premium olive oil”. **Stella Mare** is a company that reached success by creating products based on ancient gastronomy practices, and fishing techniques. As Greeks did for thousands of years, fishing takes place only early in the morning keeping the fish fresh firm and flavorful. The preference of ancient Greeks to small fishes called “foam fishes” (afropsara) especially the sardine is well documented. These small fishes contain the largest amounts of Ω -3 fatty acids, beneficial to the human cardiovascular system. On the other hand, one of the notorious gastronomic flavor enhancers in ancient times was a fermented anchovy mixture, called “Garos” (garus in Latin) It was a famous seasoning of ancient Greek cuisine made from fish like fish sauce in Chinese and Japanese cooking. Garos was added in savory and sweet food in order to enhance flavor and aroma. Garos was well known among ancient gourmands, with pleasant delicate and spicy taste. The most expensive “Garos” was made from salted tuna which was deriving from the coasts of Byzantium. We also find it as a sauce with wine (oenogarum), vinegar (oxygarum), pepper (garum piperatum), and oil (oleogarum) or with water (hydrogarum). Garos had medicinal properties and was used as treatment of dog bite, against gastro and other related diseases. Stella mare preserves and utilizes these traditional and ancient gastronomic guidelines, creating delightful combinations of sardines and anchovy filets, smoked, herbed, marinated and spiced, based on the techniques and gastronomic principles well known by our Greek pre ancestors thousands of years ago. **Gaea Products SA**, uses traditional recipes and Greek - Mediterranean gastronomy in order to preserve the authenticity of its top quality products. By doing so, it stays within the balanced Mediterranean dietary principles it advocates, and offers to its customers easy to use solutions, ready to eat free of preserves and additives. Traditional Greek gastronomy by definition stands for such principles. The company finds this as the best way to promote olive oil, tomato products, vegetables, legumes and other dietary jewels from Greek earth (Gea) once Greek cuisine is not characterized by complicated cooking techniques, complex sauces and processed ingredients. To the contrary, Greek cuisine is notorious for the important of freshness, seasonality, locality of ingredients, simplicity in cooking with the least human intervention possible, along with intelligent flavor combinations. These are the cornerstones of splendid Greek cooking. An example of the revitalization of ancient Greek products by Gaea is oxymellon or else, the Balsamic vinegar of the ancient Greeks. A traditional ancient Greek recipe, from the Minoan period in Crete, in order to give a special and unique character to any food! The unique ancient taste and aroma combination of Greek thyme honey, perfectly paired with supreme quality balsamic vinegar, offers a classic tasteful delight, and a 100% natural product! It is an elegant touch from the past that adds gourmet sophistication in any meal. **Papadimitriou SA** borrows elements and vinegar making techniques too, from ancient Greek gastronomy by specializing in vinegars combined with flavorings such as mustard and Greek honey. Far earlier than olive oil, long before wine, Greeks fell in love with honey. In ancient Greece, the bee, as well as its

products were well respected, and found themselves high in the heart of the people and the men in power. Proof of this constitutes the large quantity of mythological references and representations in ancient Greek vessels of mainly 6th century B.C. These facts prove the significant place of bee products in the daily life, as food but also as medicine. **Papadimitriou SA** specializes on balsamic vinegar from Greek raisins following a tradition for sweet vinegars which reaches Homer as far back as 6000 years BC. In the ancient Greek kitchen, red wine vinegar was a fundamental ingredient. Used either as a preservative and flavoring agent, it was known to have antiseptic and therapeutic qualities. Its healing virtues are extolled in records of the Babylonians, and the great Greek physician Hippocrates reportedly used it as an antibiotic into wounds. The ancient Greeks also produced vinegar by mixing raisins with grape must, and allowed it to ferment, making it thick and sweet. This was the original Greek balsamic vinegar and each household made it for its own use. Nowadays, premium Greek extra virgin olive oil and traditional aged Greek honey-balsamic vinegar come together (Gaea and Papadimitriou) in ethereal vinaigrette dressings, combining flavor, aroma and a rich polyphenol bouquet! Finally Sea World chose a particular technique from Mediterranean -Greek cooking tradition that has given the differentiation needed to its seafood products. The secret is cooking fish, in parchment paper. Ancient Greeks were masters in baking, especially in bread baking. Bread baking began in Ancient Greece around 600 BC, leading to the invention of enclosed ovens Ancient Greeks turned bread making into science by constructing different types of oven, according to the recipe of the bread. Traditional Greek gastronomy involves cooking in earth ware (clay pots) called “Yastra”. Greeks are famous for cooking traditional Greek lamb such as “kleftiko” (Greek lamb wrapped in parchment paper)! A technique that makes lamb juicy and tender, melt-in-the-mouth, infused with herbs and wine. From kleftiko and clay cooking, Greeks cooked more delicate foods in parchment paper. This method is most often used to cook delicate fish, vegetables, and poultry. Sea World uses this elegant traditional parchment cooking method, to keep seafood juicy and flavorful, while giving to the customer a perfectly easy, nutritious and clean way to enjoy in a few minutes a great variety of different traditional homemade fish recipes by just popping the meal in the oven.

2. Innovation in ancient Greece was related more to the artistic and intellectual sphere, rather than in technological areas and science. Great Aristotle stated that innovation was no single-dimensional and that could mean different things, depending on the area in which it is applied:. The most important characteristic and requirement of innovation was believed to be that in order to retain creativity, innovative individuals and societies need to acknowledge what was considered of lasting value so, innovation should always follow classic rules and values in order to be acceptable. This is the reason why “innovating” was a process that should never turn to a “blasphemy” but always serve virtue while respecting tradition:

Fereikos realized that innovation should become a part of its business DNA in order to succeed. This is the reason that its owners created new products which allows consumers that cannot stand snail texture but they would like to enjoy the nutritional benefits from snails, to cook snail made pasta. The innovation besides the easiness in cooking includes the chemical

makeup of the pasta itself and the flavors chosen (e.g. Mediterranean with respect to traditional snail recipes). **Funky Gourmet** restaurant innovates technically, by utilizing high end modern cooking techniques such as molecular cooking in order to alternately interpret classic Greek recipes and tease human senses. We shall mention some signature items such as Greek feta cotton candy, olive oil spheres, Tsatsiki foams and other textures aiming to freeze the moment, and make you think, making a meal at Funky Gourmet a unique memorable experience always with respect quality and tradition. **Dinners in the sky** comparing to a normal restaurant, innovates in the way that it offers a meal in an unusual setting, combining adrenaline rush and elegance of formal gourmet meal, in an unconventional setting 50 meters above ground, making the breathtaking scenery of each chosen place, an alive decor. At the same time the innovation is that it maximizes uniqueness of each meal by making it unrepeatable, once the same meal, with the same weather conditions, the same people at the same day, will never be repeated again. **Unismack** utilizes innovation in order to tackle dietary problems for many people and at the same time in order to maintain flavor and dietary balance. With respect to Mediterranean diet, substitutes traditional wheat flour with alternative lentil, chickpea and other legume flours in order to achieve excellence in snack making. Unismack dares to think that snacks can be healthy, gluten tolerant, and made of real ingredients. Its secret recipe, allows greater cheese content in its snacks, it bypasses all structural problems that such a choice could have in snack making (e.g. unstable structure due to high protein content) and brings to the people tasteful healthy Greek flavored snacks for everybody. **Trikalinos** does not use innovation in order to excel. It is based on other attributes of its product, relaying mainly on traditional product making. **Speiron** innovates both on packaging and marketing. The product itself stays as close to the traditional version as possible. The company does not try to innovate in the way this way originally produced. To the contrary, it makes sure that the traditional methods are strictly followed to the last detail. Handmade bottling, packaging, artistic labeling and innovative marketing techniques are all viral tools in order to support the classic value, of handpicked products, cold press extra virgin olive oil. In other words, simplicity “wrapped” in luxury. **Stella Mare** is not based on innovation but rather on traditional values of Greek food preparation and qualitative raw material carefully picked. **Gaea Product SA** is a company dedicated to innovation in order to pursuit excellence. It combines a lot of virtues ancient Greeks attributed to innovation and tries continuously to achieve perfection, realizing that striving for quality is an ongoing process. **Gaea** leads the way, by introducing new authentic Greek experiences, without compromising its values to commercial success. The company invests in research & development, preserving lost knowledge, while creating new products – and new ways to offer traditional products. From the moment of its foundation in 1995, the Gaea, combines the values of olive oil with tradition and innovation. What makes Gaea unique is the combination of dozens of awards with the commitment to innovation, along with corporate social responsibility and development in the international business environment. Gaea is committed to the generation and application of new ideas and skills to produce new products, processes and services that improve economic and social prosperity, sustainability and protect the environment. Gaea is a leading company when it comes to innovation investing heavily in research. The use of best practices from local and regional societies combined with original research, analyses, case studies, education and training approaches, and leads to advanced

quality products across all fields of Gaea's interest. Gaea's innovative spirit concerns marketing concepts as well. Gaea was the first to launch the "meze" concept, as the authentic Greek life - style and cultural - culinary heritage. Besides it was the first which made the 1st Carbon Neutral extra virgin olive oils in the world. Gaea recently introduced its olives in a unique and innovative packaging: Olives in Snack Pack the olives are packed under modified atmosphere, while the packaging is re-sealable, allowing repeated safe openings and closings. The product is 100% natural, sun ripened and handpicked and has low salinity, without any use of preservatives or additives. The basic idea for this packaging is transforming the use of olives from an appetizer or an ingredient to a dish, into a healthy snack that everyone can easily enjoy in every aspect of a modern lifestyle, at work, in school, pick nick etc. The healthy aspect of the product is based on its low salinity levels, without any use of preservatives or additives. Lastly we should mention, Gaea's cooking sauces which are based on traditional - regional recipes from Greek islands. **Papadimitriou CH SA** has introduced innovation mainly in the product making, rather than the marketing techniques, bottling etc. Mr. Papadimitriou merged the old Corinthian raisins with local balsamic vinegar, transforming the family company to an innovative food producer that paired successfully, two wonderful local ingredients into a delicious innovative product. More specifically, in the '90s they created the first Greek balsamic vinegar by currants, based on traditional local recipe for sweet vinegar, called "Glykadi". The new raisin-made balsamic vinegar enables production of vinegar without preservatives and additives. In this context, the company has prioritized the supply of healthy and high nutritional value products to consumers worldwide through continuous product innovations by using materials of high quality, consisting mainly of local agricultural production. Today the company which is still based on family tradition constantly invests in product innovation, which is a basic success factor and part of its competitive advantage. In 2004 the company developed a new series of Mediterranean products based on balsamic vinegar. The series included Greek mustards with herbs and spices, the novelty of which was based on the replacement of plain vinegar with balsamic vinegar and sugar with honey. In recent years, the range of company products was expanded with the addition of cream balsamic vinegar. Particular innovation, primarily for the Greek market are the creams of balsamic vinegar with Mediterranean fruit flavors such as fig, strawberry and orange - lemon, for which demand is growing both in Greece and abroad . **The Sea World Company** innovates in relation to the product and brings to your table authentic, homemade dishes of traditional Greek cuisine! The innovation is based on Greek and Mediterranean recipes based on fish, packed in a traditional way, with baking sheet, ready for roasting in the oven. With respect to tradition, the company offers meals in parchment paper that consist of a wide variety of mouth-watering, healthy food in packs of 4 and 2 servings, with basic ingredients of the highest quality fish and seafood. The customer has to simply place the baking sheet in the oven and enjoy excellent, homemade food! The differentiation of the company is cooking in parchment paper. That is bringing to a wide range of customers a technique mainly used in our homes by our mothers and grand moms. By using a brilliant approach, **The Sea World Company** combines a healthy way of cooking, simplicity of execution and wonderful tasty result. By doing so, the company adapted its seafood products and the demands of the modern way of cooking, creating unique products at low prices fully compatible.

Figure 2: Characteristics that lead to success

Modern Greece		Gastronomy	Innovation	Entrepreneurship	Regional Development
<i>Criterion 1</i>	Promoting culinary excellence	<i>Funky Gourmet Case study 2</i>			
<i>Criterion 2</i>	Respecting tradition	<i>Sea world Case study 10</i> <i>Gaea Products S.A Case study 8</i> <i>PAPADIMITRIOU SA Case study 9</i>		<i>Trikalinos Case Study 5</i> <i>Speiron Case study 6</i> <i>Fereikos Case Study 1</i> <i>Stella Mare Case study 7</i>	
<i>Criterion 3</i>	Continues innovation of the products and services		<i>Funky Gourmet Case study 2</i>	<i>Unismack Case study 4</i> <i>Gaea Products S.A Case study 8</i>	
<i>Criterion 4</i>	Quality & continuous improvement	<i>Funky Gourmet Case study 2</i> <i>Trikalinos Case Study 5</i>	<i>“Dinner in the Sky Case study 3</i> <i>Speiron Case study 6</i> <i>Gaea Products S.A Case study 8</i> <i>Sea world Case study 10</i> <i>PAPADIMITRIOU SA Case study 9</i>	<i>Fereikos Case Study 1</i> <i>“Dinner in the Sky Case study 3</i> <i>Unismack Case study 4</i> <i>Stella Mare Case study 7</i>	
<i>Criterion 5</i>	Environment friendly			<i>Gaea Products S.A Case study 8</i>	
<i>Criterion 6</i>	Assisting regional development	<i>Trikalinos Case Study 5</i>		<i>Fereikos Case Study 1</i> <i>Stella Mare Case study 7</i> <i>Gaea Products S.A Case study 8</i> <i>PAPADIMITRIOU SA Case study 9</i>	<i>Funky Gourmet Case study 2</i>

Analysis (Figure 2): Analyzing table No 2, we can examine the four specific dimensions that progress was achieved in Ancient times. These were gastronomy, innovation, entrepreneurship and regional development. First, a lot of economical action was revolving around gastronomy and food related actions. Restaurant, symposiums, raw material commerce, dealers inside and outside Greece they all became the driving force of economic development for centuries. Eating and good leaving are essential in human life and food consist a large part of human history related to culture, religion and crafts. Greeks as a hospital nation with reach culinary tradition surrounded by excellent raw material (vegetable, honey, fish, olive oil etc.) became experts in food and cooking, something that modern Greeks also enjoy until today. That's one of the reasons that they make great restaurateurs. Needless to say that hotels and restaurants in Greece today reach 105.000 units. Funky Gourmet emphasizes gastronomy (as restaurant) and bases its success on culinary excellence (2 star Michelin). Sea world also turned to food related products in order to take advantage of the unique quality ingredients found in Greece in abundance (fish in this case) and so did Gaea (oils, sauces, balsamic) and Papadimitriou (raisins balsamic vinegar). All three companies excelled by giving emphasis in respecting and mastering traditional methods of production, preparation and cooking for their products. Funky gourmet and Trikalinos (fish roe) both gastronomy related enterprises, base their success on their dedication for unconditional quality and continuous improvement. Trikalinos also assisted regional development by keeping all its production close to the lagoon of Aitoliko, and by giving fame with his brand to the region of Aitoloakarnania by making its product synonymous to the place of origin. Innovation was always a characteristic of the Greeks and Odysseus was a glorious example by representing the smart Greek who always manages to accomplish things even under harsh circumstances. Many of the case studies are characterized by innovation and innovative products and services and this means that innovation was and still is a key element in business success and survival. Innovation shows qualities such as adaptability and adaptability shows intelligence both important in survival. As Heraclitus stated, "things change, and things that don't change are condemned to die". So, we must be flexible, ready (capable) to change and adjust in new harsh conditions (e.g. austerity). Funky Gourmet restaurant is characterized by innovative food techniques that foodies love. This creativity and originality is part of the restaurants' DNA and that keeps it at the top. In 2015 was nominated one of the two best restaurants in Greece. **Dinners in the Sky**, Speiron, Gaea, Sea World and Papadimitriou are also innovative companies that emphasize quality in products and services with dedication in continues improvement. As successful entrepreneurs Trikalinos saw opportunity in traditional products such as fish roe, showing that classic values are a reliable area to invest even in crisis. It is something like investing in gold when economy shakes. Speiron did the same thing by cashing out on outstanding olive oil when everybody shells olive oil but nobody offers tradition with this degree of authenticity style and finesse. Fereikos turned on snails. Known from their grandparents and the elder, all Greeks know that snails, is picks when first rain falls in the early fall. Snail offer top quality protein, and it is all usable from shell to its caviar, for either food or cosmetics. The company invests on tradition recently introducing authentic flavored pasta made by snails for people who would like to enjoy them differently. Stella Mares is another successful entrepreneurship with emphasis on tradition. In food business it is very important to follow this rule in order to stay successful and last. You can innovate and differentiate, but you should make sure that you know and understand the classic way, the ingredients, and the authentic techniques. In other words you can innovate while respecting the traditional way. If you innovate or try to, and change things around on the name of change without real knowledge of things or respect for tradition, then you lose your natural "compass" and you might end up just doing "things different" in an effort to hide your ignorance that a comparison to the prototype could cause. This is a mistake that young chefs and business tend to do with catastrophic results. Successful enterprises dedicated to continuous innovation of both products and services are Unismack, and Gaea. Quality and continuous improvement seems to be corner stones

of the success of many companies from ancient times until today. If you want to stay at the top you should be dedicated in quality but quality by definition is an ongoing process which means continuous effort. Qualities such as genuine passion and perseverance are attributes that successful leaders can inject when leading by example, into the DNA of their enterprise. These are virtues that characterize most of our case studies such as Fereikos, Dinners in the Sky Stella Mare and Unismack. If you want to be globally successful you must possess deep knowledge, respect for values and character. Someone who considers himself as a potential leader understands the human responsibility to protect the environment. In food related businesses, a leader should understand that we should preserve environment in order for earth to offer us top quality raw material as it does for thousands of years. So as ancient Greeks taught, people should respect and preserve nature, take only what is needed, without destroying it, possessed by gluttony. Gaea, the biggest in size than all enterprises examined, is awarded repeatedly as environment friendly company going so far as to create the 1st Carbon Neutral extra virgin olive oils in the world. Enterprises and commerce were the tools that made Greek civilization well known all around the world. They caused prosperity to the citizens and Greek characteristics seemed to pair with entrepreneurs ideally. In the last decades, Greeks lost this business instinct by start working for the governments, giving up the excitements of private sector to the security of a job for the government. Recently, austerity, layoffs, and the natural instinct for survival, turned people back to the private sector once again. Many of them turned to farming, fishing, and agriculture in general and that will restore national production. Companies like Fereikos in Korinthos, Stella mare in Messenia, Gaea in Agrinio, Papadimitriou in Kalamata, succeed will assisting regional development with their businesses bringing new jobs to local communities and new income to local economy. Finally, Funky Gourmet is a great example of how a small business alone can revitalize a whole area, change its reputation and as a magnet, attract other businesses to an area. As mentioned by Tonia Tsakiri (To Vima. 2015), during economic crisis and austerity, in Greece people invests mainly in food related businesses such as café bars and souvlaki restaurants which mainly replace clothing stores. Most popular is souvlaki, pizza follows, and next are coffees bars and burger restaurants. Another trend recorded in the area of focus, is that entrepreneurs and consumers today in Greece, turn to easily prepared ethnic street food, a rather foreign trend. Greece is famous for its street food but foreign influenced flavors have flooded the market the last 5 years. These are small food hubs (either on food trucks or small pop up food points that offer fast ethnic bites food with great flavor, at very affordable prices. It satisfies the desire of the people for a fast alternative dining solution, with more adventurous, ethnic new tastes and healthy diet. The street food, which usually requires small spaces, attracts many investors who aim at an alternative, cheap, innovative concept (e.g. sushi for 2€, Arabic falafel pita sandwich, bagels, donuts, tacos, wraps, or fish and seafood delicacies). The majority of business is anonymous and consists of small, family-units, which operate at district level. The "family profile" business assists in attracting, consumers which seem to prefer local small businesses, food made to order, authenticity and the sense of familiarity. The growth observed in the foodservice industry in recent years, promoted the development of organized competing restaurant chains operating in Greece nationwide as well. Undoubtedly a big role in this rapid development of the food industry was played by franchise business model. To survive a company in this competitive industry is required to continuously upgrade the quality of products and services offered. Innovation is another ongoing parameter in the industry's success both in food and services.

All cases examined in this paper, share some common characteristics which we shall mention. First, they are all successful enterprises which operate in Greece. They are rather unique on what they do and how they do it. They are all related to food and gastronomy. While operating in a harsh economic environment, all examples are very successful into adapting to the current reality and have managed to

survive. They succeed, by constantly striving for perfection and they are doing so by trying to improve continuously their products and their services. So, dedication to quality is an unnegotiable fundamental element to their success. Also, they are basing their products and services on Greek tradition (such as authentic Greek recipes, theme, and local top quality raw material etc.). Innovation is a key element of their success. Many of them (e.g. Gaea) are environmental responsible as they use strictly, local, seasonal and in many cases bio grown products, while they have been certified for their practices. They are also successful because they customize their products to their customers' needs and that show great knowledge and genuine care for them. Finally, their entrepreneurial success and their innovative nature, work as a magnet for new customers and employees and they function as local attraction, creating jobs for many people, while stimulating local economy and contributing to the branding of the region they operate.

8. Conclusion & Recommendations

In this paper it was shown that enterprises based on food and gastronomy excellence could have great potential and could develop even in harsh business environments such as the one existing in contemporary Greece. The answers to successful entrepreneurship many times are hidden in the words of ancient Greek philosophers and the practices of the merchants at the time, who also taught the importance of innovation, adaptation, tradition, quality and gastronomy in business growth. Greeks realize the importance of these classic values and turn back to them as an answer to austerity and the need for low investment entrepreneurship. After all, Greek idiosyncrasy fits that of a restaurateur perfectly, because since ancient times hospitality (a Greek word) is in the people's nature that can always fall back as an occupation of preference. As ancient Greek say states that "We should always know where we are coming from in order to know where we are going" and Greeks more than ever before during this harsh period need to rediscover themselves and put their competitive advantages along with their traditional virtues to use for their own benefit. From the examples studied was proven that food and gastronomy as cornerstones of modern tourism development, can assist to the development of destination identity and most important, in regional development and local people's prosperity. However, there are some elements that should characterize these entrepreneurial efforts in order to be successful. First they should be beneficial to the local population and production. In order to do that it means that they should be customized to the needs of local people and economy. No foreign development model could be efficient if not adopted. Secondly, they should promote culinary excellence, acquire real knowledge, show respect to tradition, ability to innovate successfully and will to survive. These elements will assist towards the creation of new jobs and the reduction of regional unemployment. No move or plants should be made without native culture as a compass for our future actions. This will maintain competitive advantages and differentiate them from competitors, conditions that are essential in the modern compatible tourism environment. They should be innovative and successfully adjust to change. They should be dedicated to quality and strive for continuous improvement. Finally they should respect nature by using seasonal, local ingredients at their peak of freshness and nutritional value. If all the above are true, only then these businesses and businesses that imitate such best practices could contribute to a sustainable regional development.

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