A typology of urban speciality shops selling rural provenance food products – a contribution from Portugal

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore and typify the characteristics and diverse features of urban speciality stores selling rural provenance food, taking the case of three cities in Portugal.

Design/methodology/approach – The study was based on hierarchical cluster analysis, performed upon data collected from a survey to 113 shops, located in Aveiro ($n = 15$), Lisbon ($n = 56$) and Porto ($n = 42$).

Findings – The study identified three clusters of shops according to the type of rural provenance products sold, services provided and clientele characteristics: the wine focused, the rural provenance focused and the generalist. The study confirms that in Portugal, small food retail outlets, with different rural provenance patterns and degrees of specialization have considerably grown in large cities over the last decade.

Research limitations/implications – The study contributes to typifying urban speciality food stores selling rural provenance products and to addressing critical research gaps on this topic. The study highlights the dynamism of small food retail outlets and their significance, mediating and responding to changing patterns of food consumption in urban spaces.

Originality/value – This study contributes to a better understanding and characterization of food speciality shops in urban settings and their links with rural territories of provenance, an under-researched topic on the food retail literature.

Keywords Cluster analysis, Rural provenance food products, Speciality food shops, Speciality shops' characteristics, Speciality shops' typology

Paper type Research paper

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Introduction

The role and significance of small food stores have changed dramatically over time, especially in the urban centres of many European countries (Guptill and Wilkins, 2002). These changes can be understood as consequences of urban recomposition dynamics, local socio-demographic transformations, as well as alterations in food consumption patterns and global supply chains (Bianchi, 2017; Truninger, 2014; Renting *et al.*, 2003). While changes in food retail have often been subject to academic inquiry, focusing either on large retailers and long supply chains or alternative food networks (AFNs) and short food supply chains (SFSCs) (González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021; Watts *et al.*, 2018; Wilson and Whitehead, 2012), research on small food shops is comparatively scarce. This gap seems more relevant when these shops have been able to persevere in spite of the hegemony of more standardized formats, and even take advantage of smaller scales by forging closer connections with customers and producers (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2017; Seguí, 2011, Vignali *et al.*, 2003).

By fostering new connections between various actors (retailers, distributors, producers and consumers) or reactivating and repurposing already existing ones, small shop owners in urban centres' work as modulating nodes in a web of symbolic and material links between geographies of provenance and of consumption (Singer, 2018; Seguí, 2011). As such, these shops may contribute to agriculture and rural tourism development, especially in countries like Portugal, where rural areas and agricultural activities have been declining since the 1960s (Figueiredo, 2021). Having suffered a serious aggravation of its population's economic and social conditions following the 2008 financial crisis, Portugal is a compelling example of significant transformations in small food retail patterns in urban centres, but also of how the bourgeoning of rural provenance foods sold in speciality shops may foster opportunities that benefit rural populations (Acampora and Fonte, 2008; Dogan and Gokovali, 2012; Gyimóthy, 2017). While the increasing visibility of speciality shops is suggested by circumstantial evidence in the Portuguese media (Cristino, 2018) there is, to the best of our knowledge, no systematic attempts to analyse both these shops and their links to rural areas, in Portugal and elsewhere.

This paper intends to fill this gap in existing research by addressing the following question: How are small urban stores selling rural provenance foods characterized (and differentiated) according to their products and services, and according to the connections with rural food producers and customers? To answer this question, a cluster analysis based on a survey questionnaire applied to speciality shops selling rural provenance food products in three Portuguese cities (Aveiro, Lisbon and Porto) was performed. By providing insights on key food speciality shop features, the proposed typology can be used as an analytical tool contributing to a better understanding of this type of retail in other settings.

Literature review

Previous research focusing on food products of rural provenance has underlined a global shift away from quantity and massification to the increasing preference for quality and differentiation of food products, coherent with what Goodman (2003) coined the "quality turn". Consumers report a wide range of concerns when justifying their preferences for rural provenance foods, such as environmental soundness (Bianchi, 2017; González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021), health and safety (Wilson and Whitehead, 2012; González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021), nostalgia (Truninger, 2014) authenticity or heritage and artisanship (Figueiredo, 2021). Through labels such as local, authentic, gourmet, environmentally friendly, producers developed different strategies for food quality differentiation and market segmentation responding to a growth of interest in speciality food by consumers (Vignali *et al.*, 2003; González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021). As addressed by the extensive literature focusing on consumer preferences, there is an important segment of shoppers that prefer to buy food products according to qualities such as rural, local, traditional, terroir or speciality (Aprile *et al.*, 2012; Balogh *et al.*, 2015; Calvo-Porral and Lévy-Mangin, 2018; Fernandes *et al.*, 2017; González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021; Watts *et al.*, 2018).

These valuation of food qualities led to the promotion of origin labels and brandings such as Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) or Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) underpinned by European Union regulations (Fonte, 2008; González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021; Figueiredo, 2021). While findings are mixed, these types of labels can often meet with a growing (yet diverse) demand that is willing to pay for higher prices (Aprile *et al.*, 2012; Balogh *et al.*, 2015, Calvo-Porral and Lévy-Mangin, 2018; Fernandes *et al.*, 2017). Plus, those links also promote the development of closer trust-based relations between producers and consumers through nonconventional arrangements such as consumer co-operatives, farmers' markets and direct sale activities (Watts *et al.*, 2018). Research on AFN and SFSC (González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021; Renting *et al.*, 2003; Watts, *et al.*, 2018) has consistently analysed the role of non-conventional arrangements in the promotion of rural foodstuffs amongst urban consumers who support these initiatives based on ethical and environmental concerns (González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021), while also associating closer producer–consumer links with higher quality produce. These are especially valued under conditions of diminishing returns for many farmers (Renting *et al.*, 2003; Figueiredo, 2021) and increasing concentration of power in supply chains, particularly by large retailers (Vignali *et al.*, 2001). The role of these nonconventional supply chains in bringing urban consumers closer to rural provenance foods has often been a key topic in this research field (González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021; Watts *et al.*, 2018).

There is much less knowledge about how small urban retail outlets, such as speciality and gourmet shops, may contribute to promoting rural provenance foods (Figueiredo, 2021). Additionally, while research has been showing that large retailers have sought to respond to the growing demand for provenance foods (Kneasfsey *et al.*, 2017) much less is known about smaller formats in urban settings. However, small shops in urban centres seem to be particularly well positioned to form beneficial relations both with small-scale producers and with an urban and cosmopolitan clientele, as suggested by a few studies (Acampora and Fonte, 2008; Dogan and Gokovali, 2012, Gyimóthy, 2017). For example, Baritaux *et al.* (2011) point out that managers of smaller formats have a better understanding of their public's preferences and Printezis and Grebitus (2018) advocate that consumers may be willing to pay higher prices for rural products from independently owned smaller shops than from large retailers or farms, especially when shops source directly from producers (Watts *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, as argued by Seguí (2011), small shops are also better suited than large retailers in offering more personalised interactions with customers and conveying more detailed information about products and producers. By selling products that bear strong connections to specific territories (Figueiredo, 2021; Singer, 2018), these shops are also important in shaping perceptions about specific regions and the countryside in general. In this vein, they may contribute to fostering the economic viability of change in agricultural practices and food processing that seeks to respond to current consumers' preferences. Following other trends in Portuguese shopping in general pointed out by Cachinho (2014) food shopping has been increasingly described as an experience. Rezende and Silva (2014) have highlighted that food providers may develop different types of service encounters seeking to meet different expectations regarding the food experience. Likewise, speciality shops may be expected to provide different sets of services and sell additional types of products besides foods that can be related to the overall strategy of customer engagements.

Over the years, small shops in urban centres have lost centrality and experienced decline in several European cities due to competition from supermarkets, shopping malls and the proliferation of out-of-town large retail formats. Some of these places, such as Lisbon and Porto city centres, have experienced "*recovering (regeneration) partly associated with increasing tourism, new lifestyles and gentrification*" (Kärrholm *et al.*, 2017, p. 160), that seem to have opened new market possibilities for small food shops. In effect, tourist activity in

Portugal has risen sharply over the last years, as evidenced in the change from 12,927.907 to 27,142.416 overnight stays in the country from 2009 to 2019. This increase was far more expressive in the country's capital – Lisbon – followed by Porto, the two cities accounting for 70% of the total of tourists in 2019 (Pordata, 2020). The number of foreign residents in the country has also changed from 436.020 in 2008 to 588.976 in 2019 (Pordata, 2020a). As Guimarães (2018) and Baptista *et al.* (2018) conclude in their studies focusing on the Portuguese capital, both the rise in tourist influx and the increase of foreign residents are not only pushing up the numbers in transportation and accommodation but also changing market demand for food retail in the most sought-after areas. Despite their suggestion that small retail outlets are experiencing a resurgence and increase in recent times, knowledge about the characteristics and role of small food shops in Portuguese cities is still limited.

Methodology

Data collection

This paper seeks to address the gap in existing research by providing answers to the following question: How are small urban stores selling rural provenance foods characterized (and differentiated) according to their products and services, and according to the connections with rural food producers and customers? The analysis is based on data collected through a questionnaire applied to a set of speciality food shops located in three Portuguese cities – Aveiro, Lisbon and Porto. The cities were selected on the basis of their number of residents and visitors. Lisbon and Porto are the largest cities in the country and ranked 63rd and 96th in the most visited cities in world in 2019 (Euromonitor International, 2019). Aveiro is a medium-sized city, according to Portuguese standards, and was analysed mostly for comparison with the other two, although it experienced an increase in tourism influx, it remains largely a city visited by one-day tourists. Similar to the other two cities, Aveiro experienced an increase in the number of speciality food stores in recent years.

The procedures to identify the universe of these shops in the three cities were part of a larger project [1] that started by defining what shops would encompass "urban specialty shops selling Portuguese rural provenance food products". A series of selection criteria steps were made. Firstly, we included shops that sell rural provenance foodstuffs from Portugal, independently of selling (food or non-food) products from other origins. Secondly, for the reasons highlighted in the previous section regarding the small-scale format, we decided to focus on shops with less than 10 employees. Finally, since the project also addresses the role these shops may play in promoting Portuguese rural provenance foodstuffs, stores that did not sell products of rural origin were not considered for the analysis.

Identifying small shops selling rural provenance food products was a major challenge, since no comprehensive official database is available. To overcome this difficulty, a combination of three procedures was used:

(1) Firstly, a Google Maps search was conducted based on a list of key-terms, such as regional, gourmet and speciality food shops;

(2) Secondly, a set of lists of speciality shops was compiled from leisure-related newspapers and magazines' articles, as well as leisure websites;

(3) A third list of stores was collected from a commercial database of Portuguese companies.

These three lists were finally combined in a single list containing all the shops that met the aforementioned criteria ($N = 194$, from which 23 in Aveiro, 101 in Lisbon and 70 in Porto). All the 194 shops were contacted and visited by research team members, between June and September 2019, in order to collect information.

Questionnaire design followed a selection of variables stemming from a literature review focusing on the valorisation of rural provenance food products and, to a lesser extent, on the role of small urban shops for agriculture and rural territories (e.g. Acampora and Fonte, 2008; Figueiredo, 2021; Fonte, 2008; Kneafsey *et al.*, 2017; Seguí, 2011; Vignali *et al.*, 2003). The questionnaire was organised in three main parts. The first part was devoted to shops' general characterization. The second part included questions on the types of products sold, regions of origin and certification labels, services offered and forms of food products' acquisition. The third part was devoted to clientele characterization, including questions on the average number of customers, their nationality, age and gender. Apart from the open-ended questions related to the identification of the products sold and their regions of provenance, the questionnaire was mainly composed by close-ended questions. The open-ended questions were subsequently recoded into quantitative variables. Respondents were shop owners, shop managers and, in a few cases, employees appointed by the owners/managers according to their availability and knowledge about shop sales. The global survey response rate reached 61.9% (119 out of 194 shops) and from this batch, 113 questionnaires were considered valid for the analysis.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 25). In order to segment the shops, the answers to the open-ended question "What are the most sold rural provenance Portuguese food products?" were recoded into seven binary variables: "Vegetables and by-products", "Olive oil", "Honey, Jams and Preserves", "Cheese and other dairy products", "Wine and other Beverages", "Meat", "Cured Meat and other Animal by-products". These seven binary variables were then used as input variables in a hierarchical cluster analysis. Ward's method and the Squared Euclidean distance were used to identify homogenous groups of shops.

The agglomeration schedules and dendrogram obtained suggested the existence of two, three or four clusters. Further, in order to identify the best cluster solution, as suggested by Hair *et al.* (1998), the clusters of the three solutions were profiled regarding the seven variables used as input in the cluster analysis – most sold rural provenance Portuguese food products – and a three-cluster solution was retained. Chi-square tests were used to identify statistically significant differences amongst the clusters regarding the following variables: (1) general characteristics of the shops; (2) type of products sold and regions of provenance; (3) certified products and mode of sourcing; (4) other services offered and (5) customers' characteristics.

Findings

Three clusters of shops were identified from the hierarchical cluster analysis based on the type of rural provenance food products sold (Table 1). Statistically significant differences amongst the clusters regarding the variables used to characterize the shops are displayed in Table 2, the type of products sold and regions of provenance is shown in Table 3 and the certified products and mode of sourcing in Table 4. Other services provided by the shops are displayed in Table 5 and the clientele profiles in Table 6. Figure 1 displays the shops' location, by city and cluster. Considering the characteristics of each cluster and the differences between them, it is possible to further explore what are the distinctive features of each group in order to address the main research question and corresponding dimensions.

Cluster profiles

The wine-focused shops. The first and smaller cluster (11.5%) contains 13 stores from Lisbon and Porto that sell almost exclusively wine and, to a lesser extent, other beverages and food products of rural provenance. Compared with the other two clusters, especially with the "Rural

Table 1. Clusters identified according to the most sold Portuguese rural provenance food products

Types of Portuguese rural products sold by shops**	Total		Clusters*			Chi-square test	
	N	%	"The wine focused" (*N* = 13, 11.5%)	"The rural provenance focused" (*N* = 49, 43.4%)	"The generalist" (*N* = 51, 45.1%)	Value	*p*-value
Vegetables and by-products	47	41.6	0.0	8.2	*84.3*	70.113	0.000
Olive oil	18	15.9	0.0	8.2	*27.5*	9.725	0.008
Honey, jams and preserves	24	21.2	0.0	24.5	23.5	3.975	0.137
Cheese and other dairy products	49	43.4	0.0	*77.6*	21.6	43.137	0.000
Wine and other beverages	48	42.5	*100.0*	40.8	29.4	21.223	0.000
Meat	13	11.5	0.0	*26.5*	0.0	19.187	0.000
Cured meat and other animal by-products	24	21.2	0.0	*36.7*	11.8	13.276	0.000

Note(s): Values in italic correspond to the highest values when statistically significant differences exist
*Percentage in column
**Only the values corresponding to "yes" are presented

Provenance Focused", these stores are more likely to sell products from multiple regions of the country (particularly North, Centre and Alentejo and Lezíria), indicating that they are inclined to invest in a more diversified offer (including the shops located in widely known wine regions, such as Porto). The diversity on the offer is equally related to the variety of Portuguese wine regions with designation of origin, which matches the higher number of officially certified products sold by the wine-focused shops. Besides wine, olive oil and cheese sold by some of these shops, equally have certification of origin. These products are very often bought from the same wine farms and producers and are used as a complement in wine tasting events promoted by the stores. Despite no statistically significance being observed, the wine-focused shops are more likely to acquire wine and food products both directly from the producer and from a distributor. The shops included in this cluster were more often founded between the years 2000 and 2014 and they are more likely part of a chain. Besides wine and beer tastings, the wine focused shops tend to organize more workshops and cooking courses than the other two groups of stores, as well as – although with less significance – shopping delivery. In contrast with the other two clusters, people from overseas, men and individuals between their thirties and fifties are the most dominant customer profile of these shops.

The rural provenance-focused shops. The second cluster (43.9%) contains 49 stores that focused on rural provenance food products in a more clear-cut manner than the shops included in the other two clusters. This cluster has the larger proportion of stores selling cheese (and other dairy products) together with meat and cured meat (as sausages and other animal by-products). A specific feature of this cluster is that it contains significantly more shops selling food products from a single region than the other two groups. Not surprisingly given the relevance of cheese within the products sold, the centre region is the most referred region due to its well-renowned Serra da Estrela cheese (a PDO-certified cheese) followed by the North region. Shops within this cluster sell certified products (PGI, PDO), mainly cheese and cured meat products which is a distinctive feature. Similar to the first cluster there is a tendency, although to a smaller degree, to acquire food products both directly from the producer and the distributors. However, an important part of the rural provenance-focused

General stores characteristics	Total N	Total %	Clusters* "The wine focused" (N = 13, 11.5%)	"The rural provenance focused" (N = 49, 43.4%)	"The generalist" (N = 51, 45.1%)	Chi-square test Value	p-value
City							
Porto	42	37.2	46.2	40.8	31.4	a)	a)
Aveiro	15	13.3	0.0	16.3	13.7		
Lisbon	56	49.6	53.8	42.9	54.9		
Company type							
Single member company	55	53.9	58.3	61.9	45.8	2.435	0.296
Collective company	47	46.1	41.7	38.1	54.2		
*Part of family company***	79	71.8	69.2	76.6	68.0	0.933	0.627
*Integrates chain/ franchising***	10	8.8	15.4	8.2	7.8	a)	a)
Year of founding							
Before 2000	32	28.6	30.8	35.4	21.6	a)	a)
[2001–2014]	34	30.4	38.5	29.2	29.4		
[2015–2019]	46	41.1	30.8	35.4	49.0		
Last management, year of start							
Before 2000	23	21.3	23.1	33.3	10.0	a)	a)
[2001–2014]	33	30.6	30.8	28.9	32.0		
[2015–2019]	52	48.1	46.2	37.8	58.0		
Number of employees							
only 1	24	21.40	33.30	18.40	21.60	a)	a)
[2–9]	81	72.30	66.70	73.50	72.50		
[10–15]	7	6.30	0.00	8.20	5.90		

Note(s): Values in italic correspond to the highest values when statistically significant differences exist
*Percentage in column
**Only the values corresponding to "yes" are presented
a) The assumptions of chi-square test were not observed

Table 2. Cluster profile regarding the general stores characteristics

shops buys directly from the producer, particularly cheese that is, again, a distinctive feature that contrasts with the first cluster. These shops are located in all the three cities, even though its number is proportionally larger in Aveiro. Even without statistical significance, these shops are more likely part of a family company and, compared with the other clusters, a higher number of shops was founded before the year 2000, including some as far back as the 1800s (in Lisbon and Porto). The rural provenance-focused shops are more likely to offer a wider range of services, such as wine and food tastings, cafeteria, restaurant and takeaway meals. These stores are also more likely to develop their own food products' brands, exploring a different angle on the connections between (rural) food production and (urban) commercialization. Customers tend to be most likely both male and female, from all ages as well as from Portugal or Overseas.

The generalist shops. The last and larger cluster (45.1%) includes 52 stores that, compared with the previous ones, are more likely to sell vegetables and related products as well as olive oil. These shops also tend to sell a wide variety of other products (from foodstuffs to hygiene

Products sold and regions of provenance	Total N	Total %	Clusters* "The wine focused" (N = 13, 11.5%)	"The rural provenance focused" (N = 49, 43.4%)	"The generalist" (N = 51, 45.1%)	Chi-square test Value	p-value
*Types of products sold***							
Foods of rural provenance	103	91.2	30.8	98.0	100.0	a)	a)
Other foods	77	68.1	23.1	69.4	*78.4*	14.684	0.001
Beverages	98	86.7	100.0	89.8	80.4	4.168	0.124
Handicraft	28	24.8	0.0	26.5	29.4	4.950	0.084
Hygiene and cleaning	31	27.4	0.0	14.3	*47.1*	19.036	0.000
Diversity of provenance							
Single regions	19	17.0	7.7	*31.3*	5.9	12,194	0.002
Multiple regions	93	83.0	92.3	68.8	*94.1*		
Single region of provenance							
Alentejo and Lezíria	2	10.5	0.0	8.3	16.7	a)	a)
Centre	5	26.3	0.0	41.7	0.0		
North	9	47.4	100.0	33.3	66.7		
Açores	3	15.8	0.0	16.7	16.7		
*Multiple regions of provenance***							
Açores	8	9.1	0.0	12.1	8.9	a)	a)
Alentejo and Lezíria	38	43.2	40.0	39.4	46.7	0.457	0.796
Algarve	18	20.50	10.00	12.10	28.90	4,048	0.132
Centre	55	62.50	70.00	72.70	53.30	3,326	0.190
Lisbon	12	13.60	30.00	15.20	8.90	a)	a)
Madeira	4	4.50	0.00	0.00	8.90	a)	a)
North	65	73.90	90.00	63.60	77.80	3,494	0.174

Note(s): Values in italic correspond to the highest values when statistically significant differences exist
*Percentage in column
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a) The assumptions of chi-square test were not observed

Table 3.
Cluster profile regarding the products sold and the regions of provenance

and cleaning products both of rural and non-rural provenances) that justifies the cluster designation. The variety of products commercialized by these shops goes together with the higher diversity of regions of origin, even though, as in the other two clusters, North, Centre, Alentejo and Lezíria are the most frequent regions of provenance. In a similar vein, but with less expression, the generalist shops sell certified food products. Amongst these, vegetables, olive oil together with honey, jams and other preserves, are the most frequent, which significantly distinguishes this group from the other two clusters. A common feature to the other two clusters lies in the acquisition of food products both from distributors and directly from producers, although the shops in this third cluster are more likely to purchase the products directly from the producers, following a similar pattern to the rural provenance-focussed cluster. Like this latter cluster, the direct purchase from producers is most evident in the case of the products that firstly define these clusters (correspondingly cheese and vegetables and olive oil). The generalist shops are set in all the three cities analysed, although they are proportionally higher in Lisbon. These shops are more likely to be recently founded

Characteristics of products sold	Total N	Total %	Clusters* "The wine focused" (N = 13, 11.5%)	"The rural provenance focused" (N = 49, 43.4%)	"The generalist" (N = 51, 45.1%)	Chi-square test Value	p-value
Number of certified products							
None	8	7.6	0.0	8.9	8.5	a)	a)
Up of the five products	23	21.9	7.7	22.2	25.5		
More than five products	74	70.5	92.3	68.9	66.0		
*Most sold certified product types***							
Vegetables and related products	27	29.3	0.0	18.9	*47.6*	14,103	0.010
Olive oil	25	27.2	15.4	13.5	*42.9*	9,622	0.008
Honey, jams and preserves	13	14.1	0.0	8.1	*23.8*	6,488	0.039
Cheese and other dairy products	45	48.9	7.7	*73.0*	40.5	18,608	0.000
Wine and other beverages	43	46.7	*92.3*	45.9	33.3	13,885	0.001
Meat	4	4.3	0.0	10.8	0.0	a)	a)
Cured meat and other animal by-products	17	18.5	0.0	32.4	11.9	8,934	0.011
Source of majority of rural products sold							
Directly from producers	43	38.7	15.4	38.8	44.9	a)	a)
Through intermediary/ distributor	11	9.9	15.4	14.3	4.1		
Both producer and distributor	57	51.4	69.2	46.9	51.0		
*Products brought directly from the producer***							
Vegetables and related products	34	37.40	11.10	14.00	*69.20*	29,643	0.000
Olive oil	19	20.90	0.00	14.00	*33.30*	7,285	0.026
Honey, jams and preserves	22	24.20	11.10	23.30	28.20	1.203	0.548
Cheese and other dairy products	34	37.40	0.00	*58.10*	23.10	16,701	0.000
Wine and other beverages	34	37.40	*100.00*	34.90	25.60	17,491	0.000
Meat	8	8.80	0.00	8.80	0.00	a)	a)
Cured meat and other animal by-products	16	17.60	0.00	25.60	12.80	4,429	0.109

Note(s): Values in italic correspond to the highest values when statistically significant differences exist
*Percentage in column
**Only the values corresponding to "yes" are presented
a) The assumptions of chi-square test were not observed

Table 4. Cluster profile regarding the characteristics of products sold

Other services provided by the shops**	Total N	Total %	Clusters* "The wine focused" (N = 13, 11.5%)	"The rural provenance focused" (N = 49, 43.4%)	"The generalist" (N = 51, 45.1%)	Chi-square test Value	p-value
Restaurant	11	9.7	0.0	14.3	7.8	a)	a)
Cafeteria	26	23.0	7.7	28.6	21.6	2,637	0.268
Meal take away	12	10.6	7.7	12.2	9.8	0.285	0.865
Meal delivery	6	5.3	0.0	8.2	3.9	a)	
Bookshop	5	4.4	0.0	4.1	5.9	a)	
Workshops/ cooking courses	15	13.3	*23.1*	4.1	19.6	6,459	0.040
Food tastings	64	56.6	30.8	53.1	*66.7*	5,886	0.053
Wine or traditional beer tasting	65	57.5	84.6	57.1	51.0	4,802	0.091
Event catering	10	8.8	7.7	6.1	11.8	a)	
Food gift baskets	41	39.8	30.8	36.7	45.1	1,232	0.540
Gift card	12	10.6	7.7	12.2	9.8	0.289	0.865
Own brand of products	23	20.4	7.7	22.4	21.6	1,465	0.481
Online shopping	30	26.5	30.8	22.4	29.4	0.755	0.685
App for sales	4	3.5	0.0	6.1	2.0	a)	
Shopping delivery	32	28.3	46.2	24.5	27.5	2,410	0.300
Mail shopping delivery	38	33.6	46.2	24.5	39.2	3,461	0.177
Restaurant supplying	28	24.8	7.7	24.5	29.4	2,626	0.269

Note(s): Values in italic correspond to the highest values when statistically significant differences exist
*Percentage in column
**Only the values corresponding to "yes" are presented
a) The assumptions of chi-square test were not observed

Table 5. Cluster profile regarding other services provided by the shops

(after the year of 2010), possibly reflecting the urban tourism investment as a recovery strategy from the financial crisis. They also tend to be owned by a collective company, although some possess a family nature, similar to the second cluster. As in the case of the shops from the second cluster, the generalist are more likely to organize food tasting events. Besides that, although without statistical significance, they seem more likely to offer event catering and gift baskets. As to the customer profile this cluster is characterized by the predominance of women, Portuguese born and from all ages.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the characteristics and diverse features of urban speciality food stores selling rural provenance food, taking the cases of three cities in Portugal. Small food retail, particularly speciality food shops, has received much less attention than large retailers and their impacts on urban consumption landscapes. Therefore, through a hierarchical cluster analysis, this study aimed at contributing to typify urban speciality food stores and addressing critical gaps regarding both rural provenance food production and commercialization research. The features of the shops found show that small retail is a dynamic sector and that its significant role as mediating and responding to

Customers' characteristics	Total N	Total %	Clusters* "The wine focused" (N = 13, 11.5%)	"The rural provenance focused" (N = 49, 43.4%)	"The generalist" (N = 51, 45.1%)	Chi-square test Value	p-value
Nationality (majority of customers)							
Portuguese	47	41.6	30.8	38.8	47.1	a)	a)
Foreigners	28	24.8	23.1	20.4	29.4		
Both	38	33.6	46.2	40.8	23.5		
Sex (majority of customers)							
Women	24	21.6	0.0	12.5	36.0	a)	a)
Men	7	6.3	30.8	2.1	4.0		
Both	80	72.1	69.2	85.4	60.0		
Age group (majority of customers)							
20–35 years	5	4.4	7.7	2.0	5.9	a)	a)
36–50 years	39	34.5	46.2	36.7	29.4		
51–65 years	9	8.0	15.4	4.1	9.8		
More than 65 years	1	0.9	0.0	0.0	2.0		
All ages	59	52.2	30.8	57.1	52.9		

Note(s): *Percentage in column
a) The assumptions of chi-square test were not observed

Table 6. Cluster profile regarding the customers' characteristics

changing patterns of food consumption deserves more research. The growing number of these shops within Portuguese urban centres (Guimarães, 2018), following the aforementioned growth of tourist influx and the increase in foreigner residents (Baptista *et al.*, 2018; Kärrholm *et al.*, 2017) reinforces the need to study and typify these stores, in Portugal as elsewhere.

The research focused on three Portuguese cities that have experienced increasing tourist and visitor numbers over the last decade. In fact, overnight stays in Portugal increased more than 100% in the last 10 years. In Lisbon, the increase was 230% and in Porto 300%. In Aveiro, although numbers are lower, the increase represented 200%. As previously stated, Lisbon and Porto currently account for 70% of the total number of tourist's overnight stays in the country (Pordata, 2020). This increase, together with the growing numbers of foreign residents (Baptista *et al.*, 2018; Guimarães, 2018; Kärrholm *et al.*, 2017) contributed to changing the market demand for food retail and to a resurgence of smaller food shops. This resurgence is fully confirmed by our data, as the majority (64.4%) of the stores surveyed were founded in the last 10 years. However, some stores that were founded in the 19th century or in the first three decades of the 20th century (especially dominant in the second and third clusters) were able to resist the increasing penetration of more standardized retail formats (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2017; Seguí, 2011, Vignali *et al.*, 2003). This suggests that different types of shops have different degrees of adaptability and resilience to shifts in consumer demand, especially to the changes in food tastes towards rural provenance.

One of those changes such as the greater significance of provenance in food consumption preferences (Aprile *et al.*, 2012; Balogh *et al.*, 2015, Calvo-Porral and Lévy-Mangin, 2018; Fernandes *et al.*, 2017; González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021; Watts *et al.*, 2018), is reflected in the diverse ways that rural provenance is represented in the different types of shops analysed. Food shops may be linked to a particular region, a family or type of product or even try to portray the countryside as a whole, especially to overseas customers. This

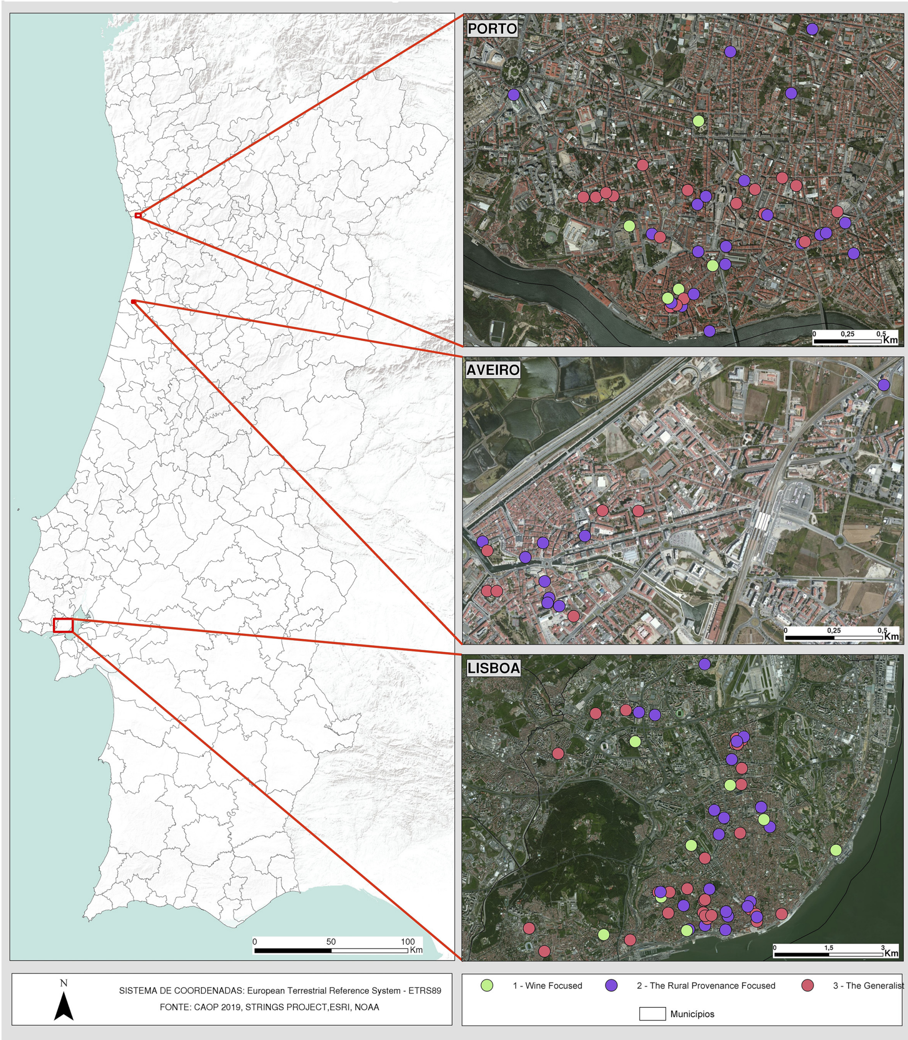

Figure 1.
Location of shops by city and cluster

could explain the sale of other than food items that are particularly able to bear these symbolic associations, such as handicraft, especially in the second and, more evidently, in the third cluster. This broader meaning of provenance is in line with the findings of Figueiredo (2021) regarding both the use of region and nation in small shops products' promotion. Although the shops in all three clusters tend to acquire their products from diverse regions, suggesting the relevance of displaying the variety of Portuguese products, this is more visible in the wine focused and the generalist clusters. The rural provenance-focused cluster is more likely to sell products from a single region, according to the type of product. In all cases it is evident that rural provenance matters (Figueiredo, 2021), and some areas of the country are specifically targeted as commercially appealing provenances. This is particularly true regarding certified products, sold by almost all the shops included in the three clusters, particularly in the wine focused and in the rural provenance focused. This prominence is certainly due to the very character of the products sold by these shops, often anchored in particular regions and terroirs officially recognized and labelled with controlled origin designations (González-Azcárate *et al.*, 2021; Figueiredo, 2021; Fonte, 2008).

The relevance of provenance when it comes to food products is also demonstrated by the direct links the shops have with producers. In fact, these direct connections form an important part of product sourcing and are more likely to be valued by the rural provenance-focused shops and the generalist stores, evincing advantages for both producers and retailers, as well as the role the former play in promoting rural provenance food amongst urban consumers (corroborating the findings of Baritaux *et al.*, 2011; Printezis and Grebitus, 2018; Seguí, 2011 and Watts *et al.*, 2018). This promotion is also demonstrated through the services provided by the shops, whether to improve shopping convenience through the availability of online sales or delivery services, or to improve consumer experiences by organizing food and wine tasting events or even by providing a multifunctional space that includes a cafeteria or a restaurant. This is in line with the conclusions of Cachinho (2014) on the current trend to embed food sales in richer and more rewarding consumption experiences.

The three clusters of shops present some diversity regarding clientele characteristics. While the rural provenance-focused shops are visited both by women and men, both from Portugal and overseas and from all ages, in the generalist shops there is a higher proportion of Portuguese and women amongst customers, possibly due to the wider selection of products and to the prevalent role women still play in the domestic division of labour, namely, shopping (e.g. Achón *et al.*, 2017). On the contrary, in the highly specialized wine-focused shops, men (often from overseas), between 30 and 50 years old, are the most frequent customers, suggesting relevant differences regarding gender and age in speciality rural provenance food-related products shopping.

Conclusions, limitations and future research

The empirical evidence discussed above reveals that small food retail outlets with different rural provenance patterns and degrees of specialization flourished in Portugal in the last decade. This accompanied the enormous tourist influx (and to a lesser extent, the foreign residents' growth), which was particularly visible in the three cities analysed, especially in Lisbon and Porto. From wine speciality shops to more generalist ones, these shops seem to fill the current consumers' demands and preferences regarding food. The proposed typology of shops clearly demonstrates these matters by highlighting the diversity both between and within the different clusters, in terms of products sold, services offered and connections with rural provenance food producers. Therefore, the diverse and sometimes-overlapping features of the shops analysed seem to be related with the need to promote the variety of the country's rural provenance food-related production to a wider clientele, increasingly interested in the Portuguese provenance of the food consumed.

While we are aware that the proposed typology represents a single contribution to address a research gap regarding urban speciality food shops, our findings may provide the basis for further analyses concerning the diversity of shops and their connections to specific territories and producers. Particularly relevant is the need to extend the research to other urban settings, both in Portugal and other countries, in order to further test the adequacy and expand the scope of the proposed typology. Further evidence is still needed on the type and content of the different connections between shops and producers, together with the products sold. As these may refer to more or less organised supply chains, data on this could be particularly insightful for policy recommendations, as well as to better understand the impacts on agriculture, rural development and on the strengthening of rural–urban connections. Finally, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic situation may open new lines for research, as small shops are particularly reliant on tourism and, therefore, especially vulnerable to lockdown and border closure restrictions imposed by governments. On one hand, this may compromise their survival and imply changes in urban retail landscapes, on the other, this type of research may be insightful to inform which retail shops are more resilient to disruptive change.

Note

1. STRINGS - *Selling The Rural IN (urban) Gourmet Stores – establishing new liaisons between town and country through the sale and consumption of rural products* (PTDC/GES-OUT/29281/2017/ POCI-01-0145.

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