



Second International Conference on
AGRICULTURE IN AN URBANIZING SOCIETY
Reconnecting Agriculture and Food Chains to Societal Needs
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Consuming the rural idyll through food

Analysis of the consumption of rural foodstuffs by urban populations in Portugal

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Aims

- To identify the consumption habits of small-scale rural food products by urban residents
- To understand the factors that influence consumption patterns

How?

- Through the analysis of the results from a survey directed to a sample of Portuguese urban residents (N=1223)

Theoretical background

- Food is a relevant part of the culture and identity of a territory, reflecting both **material and immaterial aspects**:
 - Biophysical conditions
 - Local environment and natural resources
 - Main agricultural productions, activities, and traditions
 - Specific know-how and visions of the world local populations have developed during centuries
- Small-scale rural food products – and the way they are **transformed, prepared and presented** – are part of the culture and tradition that are closely tied to territory characteristics;
- In this sense, food is “**more than just food**” (Figueiredo, 2013); it is part of a territory’s **heritage** and **legacy**.

Theoretical background

- Food is also considered a major part of what has been defined as the '**rural idyll**', contributing to foster **positive images** and social representations on rural areas and acting as a **pull factor** regarding rural tourism destinations
- Food is an important part of the tourists' **experience** of a destination and may contribute to foster, especially in peripheral and disadvantaged rural areas:
 - The development of traditional local productions';
 - The liaisons between tourism activities and local social and economic fabrics

Methodology

- A questionnaire applied to a sample of the Portuguese population over 14 years old (applied between 11/2013 and 10/2014 and combining personal interviews and online answers)
- **A total of 1839 valid questionnaires were obtained** (59.8% - personal interviews / 40.2% online)
- **A quota sampling** approach was adopted based on the following criteria:
 - The municipality of residence categorized in three levels:
 - level 1 municipalities – most urban;
 - level 2 municipalities – the intermediate
 - and level 3 municipalities – the most rural
 - The parish of residence (categorized in two groups – urban or rural, according to INE classification)
 - Gender
 - Age

Methodology

- In this paper we aim to identify the consumption of small-scale food products of rural areas by **urban residents** and the factors that influence this consumption. Therefore, only respondents that live in one of the two major Portuguese municipalities, Lisbon and Porto (**N=1223**), were picked to carry the analysis.
- First, a descriptive analysis was carried out to characterize the consumption patterns of rural areas' food products of urban residents, the motivations and constraints associated with this consumption.
- Afterwards, an exploratory study was carried out using a backward stepwise logistic regression analysis, in order to identify the factors influencing the consumption of rural food products.
- The dependent variable is a binary choice indicating whether respondents had purchased rural food products or not. The independent variables included in the model were related to their images of the rural areas, their links to these areas and their socio-demographic profile.

Sample Profile

- **Residence**
 - 69,8% of the respondents live in Lisbon
 - 30,2% live in Porto
- **Gender**
 - 56.5% of respondents are female
 - 43.5% are male
- **Age**
 - 13.1% - 15 to 24 years old
 - 61.1% - 25 to 64 years old
 - 25.8% - 65 or older
- **Education levels**
 - 46.3% of respondents have higher education
 - 19.2% of respondents have only gone through, at most, primary school education
- **Activity**
 - 43.4% are employed
 - 31.2% are retired
 - 15.7% are students
 - 8.1% are unemployed
- **Income**
 - 62.4% have relatively low net monthly household incomes (lower than €1500).
 - 6.3% of respondents have a net monthly household income higher than or equal to €3500.

Discussion of results

Table 1. Consumption of food products of rural areas

<i>Have you consumed food products of rural areas?</i>	N	%
Yes	938	76,7
No	285	23.3
<i>Most consumed products</i>	N	%
Vegetables	611	65.5
Fruits	381	40.8
Wine	185	19.8
Olive oil	163	17.5
Cheese	151	16.2
Meat	131	14.0
Honey	78	8.4
Other dairy products	75	8.0
Eggs	71	7.6
Bread	68	7.3

Discussion of results

Main motivations to consume the products

These products are healthier

395 42.1

These products have a better flavour

390 41.6

These products are more reliable

273 29.1

Willingness to support local producers

168 17.9

These products are organic

143 15.2

These are national products

120 12.8

Major constraints to consume the products

These products are more expensive

232 23.7

These products are difficult to find

185 18.9

It is difficult for me to go to rural areas

157 16.0

These products are produced in a small scale

123 12.6

Table 2. Motivations and constraints to consume the products

Discussion of results

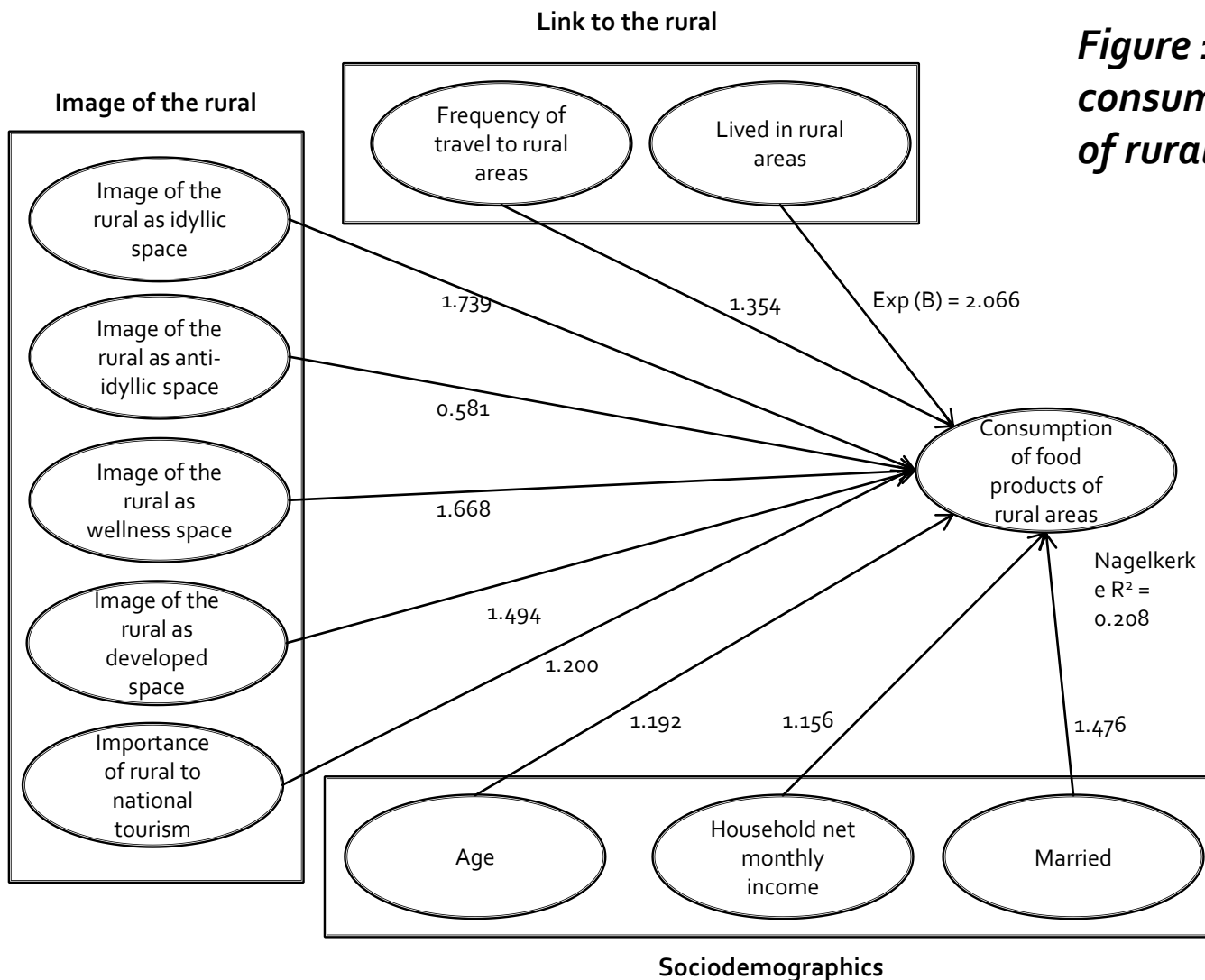


Figure 1. Determinants of the consumption of food products of rural areas

- The model Chi-square is 172.820, $p < 0.05$;
- Nagelkerke R² = 0.208;
- Hosmer and Lemeshow test = 15.021, $p = 0.059$;
- 77.3% of cases are correctly classified

Conclusions

- More than **three quarters** of the respondents consume small-scale, rural produced foodstuffs
- They consider those products to be **healthier**, **better flavoured** and **more reliable** than other products
- The respondents' **attachment to rural areas**, including the **frequency of visits** to these areas, their **images** of rural areas, and their **sociodemographic profile** are the factors that have most impact on the consumption of these products



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Grazie mille!
Obrigado!

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