



Co-creation of local gastronomy for regional development in a slow city

Cocriação da gastronomia local para o desenvolvimento regional numa cidade slow

Magnus Emmendoerfer 

Universidade Federal de Viçosa & Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto, MG, Brasil, magnus@ufv.br

Thiago Chagas de Almeida 

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração – Pública, UFV, Viçosa, MG, Brasil, thiagoc-almeida@hotmail.com

Greg Richards 

Breda University of Applied Sciences & Tilburg University, Netherlands, G.W.Richards@uvt.nl

Lénia Marques 

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Department of Arts and Culture Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands, marques@eshcc.eur.nl

Received: 04.08.2022; Revisions required: 17.10.2022; Accepted: 13.02.2023

Abstract

This study describes the process of developing a typical dish for a slow city, using the lens of co-creation and coproduction. The slow movement argues that appreciation of local cuisine increases through events and developing slow food practices. Participant observation and interviews with actors involved in the development process revealed the symbolic components used to enhance the cultural heritage of Vizela, Portugal as a slow city. The research shows that the slow city initiative has gradually provided the basis for a gastronomic attraction to support tourist development. The development of a typical dish for the city was found to aid the recovery and revalorization of local knowledge, while the support of gastronomic culture by the local authority and community participation helped to strengthen regional identity and to develop an attractive and sustainable tourist offer. Thus, this study revealed the importance of residents in this development process as well as showed requirements that may support the rescue and cocreation of typical dishes for tourism.

Keywords: Co-creation, Intangible Heritage, Tourism Development, Public Management, Slow Cities, Culture.

Resumo

Este estudo descreve o processo de desenvolvimento de um prato típico de uma cidade (slow city), sob a ótica da cocriação e da coprodução. O movimento slow defende que a valorização da culinária local pode ser ampliada por meio de eventos e do desenvolvimento de práticas slow food. A observação participante e as entrevistas com atores envolvidos no processo de desenvolvimento revelaram componentes simbólicos usados para valorizar o patrimônio cultural de Vizela, Portugal enquanto cidade slow. A pesquisa mostra que a iniciativa da cidade slow tem, gradativamente, fornecido as bases para uma atração gastronômica para apoiar o desenvolvimento turístico. O desenvolvimento de um prato típico da cidade contribuiu para o resgate e a valorização de saberes locais, enquanto a valorização da cultura gastronômica pelo poder local e participação da comunidade ajudaram no fortalecimento da identidade regional compondo a oferta turística com atratividade e sustentabilidade. Assim, revelou-se a importância dos moradores neste processo de desenvolvimento, bem como de requisitos para o resgate e a cocriação de pratos típicos para o turismo.

Palavras-chave: Cocriação, Patrimônio Imaterial, Desenvolvimento Turístico, Gestão Pública, Slow Cities, Cultura.

1. Introduction

The emergence of new forms of tourism is strongly related to territorial specialisation, which has been promoted through public sector bodies keen to create a distinctive image for their region or city. Specialisation based on endogenous resources, or a set of exogenous interests, or a combination of both, can support destination marketing activities.

Territorial specialisation has been described in a number of different ways, particularly related to the designation of cities as: creative (Landry & Bianchini, 1995), green (Campbell, 1996), enterprising (Hall & Hubbard, 1996), innovative (Feldman & Audretsch, 1999), digital (Ishida, 2002), intelligent (Shapiro, 2006) and slow (Mayer & Knox, 2006). The slow city approach, which is the focus of the current paper, seeks to reconcile endogenous public interests (Lowry & Lee, 2016; Valls, Mota, Vieira & Santos, 2019; Wierzbicka, 2022; Zagroba, Pawlewicz & Senetra, 2021) with servicing consumer needs, based on

activities that are in line with the slow movement, particularly practices related to the slow food (Petrini, 2001) and slow tourism (Ekinci, 2014).

This paper argues that integrated actions of the slow movement with public and private stakeholders in tourism, especially the food and beverage sectors, can contribute to the development of gastronomic tourism, supporting the requalification of traditional dishes as well as the development of 'conviviality spaces' (or convivium) to prepare, taste and savour indigenous dishes. We view the development of conviviality and the appreciation of the local cuisine as essential attributes for the certification of a slow city, also known in Ibero-America as the 'Good Life City'. Gastronomic tourism could also add social and economic value to products offered in the slow city. The slow concept can also be used to stimulate collaboration between different actors for the achievement of common goals. Since the actors in the tourism system include both producers and



consumers, collaborative activities can embrace both co-creation and coproduction processes.

Of the more than 200 cities certified by one of the international slow city networks (Ekinci, 2014), there are many that did not designate any typical local dish before certification as a slow city. But inclusion in a network of slow cities increases the need to distinguish the food offer of the city from other network members. Although having distinctive local food is not a determining factor in membership of the slow cities network, having a typical dish or local cuisine enables a city to satisfactorily meet most of the requirements specified by the slow cities movement.

Therefore, the research question of this paper is: How can the creation of a typical local dish in a city guided by a regional development process enable co-creation and coproduction between different social actors in a slow city? In this sense, this study aims to understand the development process of the first typical local dish in a slow city. The following section discusses theoretical perspectives on the Slow Movement and the Slow City, as well as co-creation and coproduction activities.

2. Slow movement & slow city

The slow movement attempts to address the problems caused by the desire for speed in modern society. Rethinking the speed of everyday life is also a means of increasing the quality of life, which is an increasingly important issue for many, particularly in post-Covid times. Slow food philosophy has also become increasingly important because of the growing attention for more sustainable ways of life.

The slow food movement emerged during the 1980s, and was initially seen as a form of opposition to fast food and consumer society. As a philosophy or lifestyle, the slow movement proposed a general slowing down of everyday life, enabling more meaningful social relationships between people and the pleasurable right to enjoy good food (Petrini, 2001). This movement became an ideal supported by a large number of people, leading to the creation of an international association, which currently has more than 100,000 members in 132 countries. The network operates through many different activities, with a series of sustainable incentives, such as conservation of biodiversity, promotion of small farmers and the appreciation of local culture (Emmendoerfer et al., 2021; Petrini, 2001).

The lifestyle promoted by the slow movement included elements that are generally antagonistic to the 'fast' model of contemporary society. The slow movement has also benefitted from the increasing convergence between slow food, community solidarity and sustainability present in tourism (Ekinci, 2014; Pérez-Mongiovi & Cardoso, 2013).

Concern about sustainability and the preservation of culture has also generated alternative models of tourism that reject mass consumption, since environmental degradation and threats to indigenous communities are frequent areas of

conflict in tourism (Ekinci, 2014). The slow philosophy aligns with the development of tourist areas with a focus on activities in natural and rural areas, adhering to the principles of sustainability and local recovery. Such developments are heavily reliant on collaboration between a wide range of local and international actors, including both producers and consumers. Using the city as a spatial focus to stimulate such collaboration was one of the inspirations for the slow city concept, which emerged from the 1999 World Congress of slow food in Italy (Clancy, 2018; Lowry & Lee, 2016; Petrini, 2001). This proposal was subsequently articulated with slow food practices designed to favour local development linked to slow gastronomic tourism (Pereiro & Earl, 2005). Slow tourism consists of activities that respect the culture and history of the place (Heitmann, Robinson & Povey, 2011). In this sense, it is tourism that values natural and less abrupt socio-territorial transformations, which do not damage local identities (Clancy, 2018).

The Slow movement provides local communities with the opportunity to co-produce, that is, to use inputs of different origins for the supply of public goods and services (Ostrom, 1996). This can manifest itself in different ways and through the interaction of many different actors. The precise form of coproduction will depend on local dynamics, existing projects, as well as the needs of the co-producers themselves (Brandsen & Honingh, 2016).

For a city to be recognised as a slow city, initially, the local government consults the local community, political representatives and other stakeholders. This results in a proposal to the international slow city network. This application indicates how the city meets the requirements (guidelines) of a slow city. No city needs to meet all the requirements immediately, but must demonstrate how it will work on areas in which it is currently weak (Wierzbicka, 2022). Ekinci (2014) sees the recognition of a slow city town as based on six key criteria: i) Environmental policies; ii) Infrastructure policies; iii) Increasing the quality of the urban fabric; iv) Celebration and Promotion of Local Production and Local Products; v) Community and Hospitality; vi) Awareness and understanding of slow movement in the city.

3. Co-creation and coproduction

Firstly, it is necessary to understand that the concepts of co-creation and coproduction are related to the academic sphere of marketing, and more specifically to issues of creativity, communication and perception of value related to multi-stakeholder perspectives (social/citizen, organisational, client/consumer) (Frio & Brazil, 2016). Thus, the concepts considered here involve the role of different actors in the creation of an offer and the constant exchange of values between these actors. It is also worth noting that despite the marketing bias of the concept of co-creation in particular, the role of the public sector is crucial (Brandsen & Honingh, 2016).

The logical-conceptual dimension that permeates both coproduction and co-creation, called Dominant Service Logic



(DSL), assumes that the generation of value for an offer lies not in the good itself, but rather in the relationship between supplier and different stakeholders through the interaction, negotiation and proposition of attributes that will bring economic and substantive increases to the outputs of a given process (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). This context necessarily implies the need for the existence of inputs, information and people from different origins in the service proposition so that co-creation or coproduction can emerge.

Morais and Santos (2015) argue that the theoretical dimension of co-creation in particular is underdeveloped. This is explained largely by the fact that the academic discussions about co-creation are quite recent, beginning with the works of Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2002). The current paper contributes to the existing literature by analysing the co-creation contributions of a wide range of actors in the value production chain. Whereas most research on co-creation has emphasised the relationships between producers and consumers, particularly in the context of tourism there is a need to include the role of a broad range of intermediaries who are involved in linking production and consumption.

Co-creation has been interpreted as the "active participation of the client in activities of the value chain" (Morais & Santos, 2015, p.228). In this definition, co-creation seems related to enlisting the client or consumer in value production, and the terminology used relates mainly to the private sector, especially in the context of marketing. However, co-creation can involve several actors contributing collectively to the process of generating value at different stages of the value chain, with a focus on competitiveness in providing a service and quality of experience for the end consumer. This broader view of co-creation involves cognitive and relational experience. That is, the interaction and learning of the actors involved in a given process influences the results, since co-creation considers the interactive aspect of the generation of value obtained through the relationship between the links in the creation chain of a good or service (Ribeiro, Tavares & Costa, 2016). This understanding is endorsed by Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2002), who point out that co-creation is aimed at increasing the competitiveness and visibility of a given productive process. (Ribeiro *et al.*, 2016). Co-creation logic may be appropriate in different contexts, such as the qualification of the offering of a particular good or service of collective interest.

In the specific context of tourism, value co-creation occurs when there is active participation of different actors in the production of visitation experiences (Andrades & Dimanche, 2014; Campos, Mendes, Valle & Scott, 2015; Prebensen & Dahl, 2013). Thus, in order for there to be value co-creation through tourism, companies or other organisations that manage this activity need to mobilize the involvement of different actors to collectively develop good experiences (Andrades & Dimanche, 2014).

Binkhorst (2006) adds that tourism co-creation should not only be focused on tourism enterprises, not even on the product, but

on the relationship between producers and the value of what is produced. Based on this conception of co-creation, the current research investigated the coproduction process of the first typical dish of a city internationally certified as a slow city.

As far as coproduction is concerned, its seminal conceptual definitions are clear: it is the "process by which the inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not in the same organisation" (Ostrom, 1996, p.1073). As the current study extends coproduction to the public sphere, it is possible to note the existence of an evolution of the concept since, initially, it appeared to make the State more efficient in delegating tasks to other actors in the provision of public services. However, due to the changes in public administration since the initial discussions on coproduction in the 1970s, the concept has evolved, also considering public goods and services that generate greater value and meet the real needs and desires of citizens and other stakeholders (Brandsen & Honing, 2016).

In the discussions about coproduction, the role of the user of a given service tends to be more restricted and operational, since the focus of this work is specifically on the productive process (Morais & Santos, 2015). Therefore, the idea of coproduction is more closely related to the context of the public arena, where the emphasis is on the effectiveness of services rather than on competitiveness and the generation of profit.

Based on the conceptual definitions discussed here and on the contributions of authors such as Santos & Morais (2015) and Frio & Brasil (2016), it will be assumed in this paper that co-creation consists of a broader and more comprehensive process focused on the relational aspect of the value chain and with more market focus; while coproduction focuses on the production process, related to the contributions of all the actors that participate in the offer of a particular good and service for the transformation of the inputs into products. In the present work, we argue that coproduction perspectives can usefully be included in the analysis of the co-creation process, helping to broaden the analysis of value creation.

4. Research methods

Our analysis of co-creation and coproduction processes focuses on the city of Vizela, Portugal, a recognised slow city that did not previously have a local typical dish or a distinctive gastronomic profile. It is important to highlight that this study is one of the results of a research agenda initiated in 2015 involving researchers and practitioners from countries such as Brazil, Portugal and the Netherlands. Vizela was the first slow city in Ibero-America to revive and revalorise a typical dish associated with the history and traditions of the city. It was also chosen as a case study because: 1) the process was coordinated by the municipal government; 2) it was articulated with public, private and civil society organisations related to diverse socioeconomic sectors; and, 3) it was easy for the authors to access data on this process.



Participant observation and interviews were the main methods used to explore the process of developing the first typical dish of the Slow City. These methods also enabled us to explore the alignment of this process with the principles of the Slow City project. The participant observation included notes from informal interviews – which are freer dialogues, with a theme, but without a pre-established script (Gil, 2007). The interviewees were the actors involved identified during the research and the coordinator of the Slow City project in Vizela.

The actors interviewed included the mayor of the city and the architect of the urban planning area of the city hall, teachers from public elementary schools in the central region of the city, owners of the city's restaurants and the coordinator of the city's tourism sector. The contacts with these actors included one-day visits, once a month to the city, from August 2015 to November 2016. The visits included more participatory contacts, such as meetings in the city hall, schools, restaurants and tourist shops in the historical centre of Vizela. Observational activities included making photographic records before or after the meetings with the actors researched, as well as exploration by the researchers of public roads and spaces. The eight interview respondents were selected on the basis of being direct participants in developing the typical dish and accessibility (all actors were willing to participate in this study).

In addition, bibliographical and documentary searches were carried out. The bibliographical research was mainly used to identify the environmental determinants of the Slow City certification in Vizela. Some of those preliminary data were communicated in Emmendoerfer et al. (2017), which later inspired the revisitation and advancement of this knowledge with a focus on the theorisation of co-creation and coproduction dealt with in this article. In the documentary research, demographic, historical, tourist, cultural and gastronomic data about the city of Vizela available on the internet and *in situ* were collected. Both searches were mentioned in the references of this article.

Each interview commenced with the following open question: "Tell us about your experience of the process of making the first typical dish of your city?" Dialogues were held during visits in the city lasting between 20-50 minutes. These dialogues would clarify the concept of the Slow City project and the typical dish, data on the international network of slow cities, and links with the culture of Vizela and Portugal. An in-depth interview with the Slow City project coordinator was also carried out, which allowed a broad view of the initiative and assisted in structuring the subsequent sections of this paper. Table 1 shows the eight actors interviewed and the focus of the analysis of each interview.

Table 1 - Actors and focus of the analysis of each interview

Actors interviewed	Interview analysis focus
Mayor of the city (n = 1)	City hall actions for the production process of the city's first typical dish
Architect of the urban planning area of the city hall and coordination of the project "Slow City" (n = 1)	City hall actions for the production process of the city's first typical dish
Teachers from public elementary schools in the central region of the city (n = 3)	Participation of municipal public-school teachers in the process of producing the city's first typical dish
Owners of the city's restaurants (n = 2)	Participation of local restaurants in the process of producing the city's first typical dish
Coordination of the city's tourism sector (n = 1)	Coordination of the production process of the city's first typical dish

Source: Prepared by the authors.

After each interview, the researchers spent approximately 4-6 hours transcribing the data. For data interpretation, the content analysis technique was used, based on Bardin (2018), specifically performing the pre-analysis and data coding procedures. The pre-analysis took place by reading and systematising the transcripts, which were the data records. The coding included the selection of themes and items from the transcripts relating to the objectives of the research.

Particular attention was focused on two main development processes: (1) recovery of the typical dish and (2) revalorisation of the typical dish. In terms of the revalorisation process, we paid particular attention to the requirements of the slow city as outlined by Ekinci (2014), and which have been tested and applied by Emmendoerfer et al. (2021).

The reliability of the analysis was ensured by clarifying the operationalization of the methods used (participant observation, bibliographic, documentary and in-depth interviews). The validity of the research was controlled through the triangulation of data, both from primary and secondary sources.

5. The slow city process in Vizela

Vizela is one of 308 municipalities of Portugal and has 23,736 inhabitants (National Statistics Institute [INE], 2012) spread over a territorial area of 24.7km², administered by the local authority of the same name, and recognised since September 1, 1998 by Law 63 of the National Assembly (Portugal, 1998). In the same law, Vizela village, the seat of the municipality, was elevated to city status. The city of Vizela is located in northern



Portugal, the former regional province of Minho in the Braga district, and has approximately 12,700 inhabitants.

The in-depth interviews indicated that in 2008 one of the architects responsible for the urban planning department of the city of Vizela recognised the need to create an intentional territorial development model, after reading a news story about slow cities in a national newspaper. After studying a technical dossier on the same subject, they sought information on the international slow city model and its ability to enhance the territory of Vizela.

It took two years (2009-2010) for the organisation and preparation of the application project for the slow city title. According to Pérez-Mongovi (2013, pp.201-202), the city of Vizela achieved certification in 2011 based on the following attributes: a) environment: water quality and recovery of hydrotherapy as a sustainable activity and enabler of quality of life, including the arboreal nature park and the surrounding countryside; b) cultural heritage: including tangible elements such as buildings and architecture with Roman and medieval origins, and intangible elements such as ancestral traditions and gastronomy. Local gastronomy is marked by the quality of production and the existence of *Bolinhol* (covered sponge cake), a unique delicacy in Portugal, which is strongly linked to Vizela.

The municipality of Vizela analysed the history and cultural heritage of the city and its region, in order to identify opportunities for the development of slow food products. That

work enabled the city to regenerate a typical dish linked to the city, as described below based on Emmendoerfer et al. (2017).

5.1 Recovery of a typical dish

To understand the cuisine of the territory of Vizela, it is necessary to study the long history of this region, through field observations and documents. This historical perspective provides the background that allows us to identify the elements that helped the Municipality of Vizela and its partners to identify a potential typical dish that could serve as a symbol and tourist attraction for the slow city.

From the interviews, we observed that the Vizela story is old and refers to traces of pre-Romanesque civilisations of the Iron Age, such as the Celts, who lived in and passed through this territory that now belongs to Portugal. According to Silva (2013), the Romans (centuries II and III, BC) were one of the peoples that marked the territory of Vizela for the construction of hot spring (thermal) baths.

The ruins of the Roman settlement remain, even under part of the area of the historic centre and under the paving of the main town square, where there is a fountain of sulphureous waters known as *Bica Quente*. According to the interviewees, this material heritage was recovered by the city with its entry into the international slow city network. This included the restoration of the fountain and the "bica" or water spout, which now has a bronze plaque with the inscription "Bormanicus" in honour of the pre-Roman people who passed through Vizela in antiquity (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Bica Quente fountain rebranded as 'Bormanicus'



Source: Prepared by the author 1. Research data.

The influence of religious organisations like the Catholic church also marked the Vizela region in the seventh century. At this time, there was a council for the division of the territory in bishoprics, which created the first Portuguese parishes, including *Oculus Calidarum*, i.e. "Caldas" of Vizela, one of the current parishes of the municipality (Vizela, 2017).

At the foundation of Portugal as an independent kingdom in 1361, King Dom Pedro I granted his son Prince John I (son of Pedro and Inês de Castro) the lands of Riba Vizela, formerly

known as Vizela. Thus, from 1361-1408, it was a county with administrative independence (Vizela, 2017). Later, the territory of Vizela was integrated into the territory of Guimarães, remaining subordinate to this city for several centuries recognised status as a village from the year 1929. In 1964, the Movement for Vizela County Restoration was founded, aiming to make the village a county again (Silva, 2013), which was officially granted by the government of Portugal in 1998.



It is noteworthy that the recovery of the history and cultural heritage of Vizela was important to the entrepreneurs based in this slow city. They initiated a plan to recover and develop the typical dish that came to be called "Merendeiro Chicken" (MC), as a contribution to meeting the slow city model requirements. The regeneration of the typical dish MC is based on a study by the city of Vizela of the ancient gastronomic traditions, which local residents had "forgotten". This arises from the slow food philosophy, which seeks to develop an original dish and that represents the unique characteristics of the region, as a potential inducer of local tourism (Clancy, 2018; Lowry & Lee, 2016; Pereiro & Earl, 2005; Petrini, 2001).

According to the interviewees, in the past, the inhabitants of Vizela were devotees of St. Benedict (Patron Saint) and organised a procession every year on July 11, going from the central square of Vizela to the sanctuary overlooking the city. By tradition, the population carries a packed lunch to regain strength after the climb. In the city center there is the source of hot thermal water (as seen in Figure 1), which has since always been used to "scald" chickens that were used in making a dish for easy carrying and transport. The interviews indicated that the MC emerged from this gastronomic pragmatism that led the people of Vizela to carry rice with chicken, salami and ham on the pilgrimage climb. This created a dish served on arrival at the sanctuary, using just the basic ingredients available to the participants.

Free range chicken is the central ingredient of this dish, and after being "scalded" in thermal hot water it was washed in cold water with lemon to eradicate the sulfurous "flavour" of the thermal waters. As a result of the resurgence of this ancient recipe, the hot spring in the city centre was, in turn, restored, reaffirming the importance it still holds in the memory of the people of Vizela, as well as being a visitor attraction.

5.2 Typical dish regeneration as a tourist product

The synthesis presented above of the history of Vizela provides an illustration of what was needed for the Municipality to gather cultural and symbolic elements that have marked the history of the city. This set of elements also created the understanding that the MC dish alone would not be enough to support Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) for this slow city (Emmendoerfer et al., 2017).

Therefore, the Municipality of Vizela developed a tourism product design focused on gastronomy. This included the typical dish regeneration process of MC as part of the slow city initiative, seeking to meet the four requirements of this model described above. The following section describes the general sequence of actions undertaken to link MC to the slow city initiative.

Requirement 1 - Raising awareness for good meals and nutrition

Awareness raising is a basic requirement of slow food and an important part of the activities that allowed the City Council of Vizela to requalify the MC dish. Therefore, according to the interviewees, it was necessary to gather information that was primarily held by the elderly residents in Vizela, in order to understand the eating habits and traditional ways of preparing and cooking food, especially for the dish in question. Their life experiences and tacit knowledge were used for the symbolic configuration of a value proposition co-created from identity elements (Ribeiro *et al.*, 2016) of this slow city.

The elderly inhabitants also provided access to recipe books, which allowed the development of a reference recipe for the ingredients and mode of preparation of the MC dish (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Prototype casserole to prepare Merendeiro Chicken in Vizela



Source: Prepared by the author 1. Research data.

The Casserole prototype shown in Figure 2 was designed by Abel Cardoso, architect of Vizela and co-created with an artisan in the city. In addition, the regeneration of the MC dish included cooking the chicken in a clay casserole dish, inspired by the fountain of hot water spout in the city centre (in line with the urban planning of this slow city) and linking to the ceramic tradition of Portugal.

Requirement 2 - Develop a culture of local Slow Food and provide training for people working in tourism

The Municipality of Vizela invited the owners of restaurants in town to participate in the MC initiative. Initially, attendance at the meetings was modest, with only a few owners, but during the development of programme over the years 2013-2014, participation has increased, reaching a total of 14 restaurants.



These restaurants were sites that implemented slow food principles, introducing MC to residents and tourists as a means of fomenting entrepreneurial activity and competitiveness by developing an integrated and systematised tourism offer (Prahald & Ramaswamy, 2002).

To introduce restaurants to the slow city model, several meetings were held and co-created by the city of Vizela with the restaurant owners to: raise awareness about the importance of the slow city model for Vizela; present the story of MC as a

typical dish of the city; internally validate the development of the reference recipe of this dish; defining the utensils and accompanying food that would be used to serve the dish; and enabling the owners and restaurant employees to prepare and serve the dish in a minimally standardised way. It was emphasised that creative practices (Landry & Bianchini, 1995) would be welcome in the provision of restaurant services, provided they do not compromise the essence of the preparation of this dish and how to serve it.

Figure 3 - A way of serving the Merendeiro Chicken dish at the restaurants



Source: Prepared by the author 1. Research data.

Figure 3 shows how the MC dish should be served in restaurants in a brown-covered casserole dish (typical Portuguese ceramic) with a lid that indicates the name of the dish and the city. Added to this are two large serving spoons (created specifically for this

new dish) one mentioning Bormanicus and the other Oculis Calidarum, referring to elements of the ancient and medieval history of Vizela. The ingredients and mode of preparation of this typical dish are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Merendeiro Chicken Recipe

Ingredients		Preparation
- 1 whole chicken	- 1/2 green bell pepper	1. Cut the chicken into eight pieces. Dice the onion, garlic and <i>sauté</i> with olive oil. Add the diced peppers and the raw chicken, salami and parsley. Lightly pour the wine over the pop and let it braise. 2. Remove the chicken and pepperoni and add water. Allow to boil and add the rice to a non-confection creamy rice, but moist. 3. Place the chicken and rice in a clay pot or casserole dish. Decorate with the sliced salami and put it in the oven.
- 1 onion	- 1/2 yellow bell pepper	
- 2 cloves of garlic	- 500 grams rice <i>carolino</i>	
- 1 <i>salpicão</i>	- 1/2 dl green white wine	
- 2 tomatoes bunch	- 1dl extra virgin olive oil	
- 4 parsley stalks	- Herbs qs (Gorse and mint)	
- 1/2 red bell pepper	- Piri-piri and Sea salt qs	

Source: Association of Portuguese Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism (APHORT, 2015).

The recipe for the preparation of this typical dish (Table 2), passed the external validation of the APHORT, which certified MC as a Portuguese typical dish in Vizela in 2014.

Requirement 3 - Implement measures of protection of traditional local production and local products & to develop markets with local products

In addition to the certification by APHORT, measures are in place to protect this first autochthonous gastronomic dish in Vizela. The brown casserole dish and serving spoons can be purchased by restaurants, but cannot be sold by them, because this symbolic assemblage is unique to the restaurants accredited by the Municipality of Vizela. The number of accredited restaurants increased from 14 in 2014 to 22 by November 2016. This institutionalisation process, as well as the focus on the interaction

between public and private actors in the service composition, reflects the theoretical perspective of coproduction based on the consensus and collaboration actors in the systematisation of the dish (Brandsen & Honingh, 2016). In addition, this process created new vectors of value delivery, to increase the reach as well as the generation of higher perceived value in relation to the MC offer (Prahald & Ramaswamy, 2002).

Residents and tourists wishing to get the casserole dish for MC (in a different colour and without spoons) to prepare this dish at home, or just to keep as a souvenir of the city, can buy it from the Interactive Vizela Tourism Shop, where there are spaces for dissemination of tourist information and local products. Here you can buy the MC casserole dish and find restaurants in town that sell this typical dish, both activities contributing to the aggregation of value in order to effect DSL as proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004).



It is noteworthy that this typical dish is not marketed outside of the city because the City Council aims to stimulate and increase inbound tourism by offering a new and distinctive gastronomic option.

Requirement 4 - Communication and events to raise awareness and understanding of the slow city

Awareness-raising activities included three main elements: a) developing brochures and web pages that address the issues that slow city are applied; b) establishing lines of communication to the press and local and national media; c) promoting special events to encourage local development and support facilities.

In this sense, MC began to be disseminated in the media by the city of Vizela only after the redevelopment process described in the previous sections, three years after the certification of the city as a slow city. This demonstrates the value-communication aspect proposed by lenses of co-creation in the re-signification of tourist supply at the local level (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Since January 2015, MC has featured on the webpages of the institutional websites of the City of Vizela and Commercial and Industrial Vizela Association (locally), the APHORT (national level) in advertising campaigns such as "Prove Vizela" and the network of slow cities (international level). MC has also been promoted through social networks including Facebook, YouTube and Wikipedia. The interactive tourist shop in the city centre of Vizela distributes a promotional flyer about MC, and local and national events have also been used to promote this dish beyond the region of Vizela. Thus, after the official launch of this dish on January 24, 2015, in the public space called "House of Vizela People", MC featured on the menus of participating restaurants, as well as being sold in local events such as: "Gastronomic Weekend" an initiative promoted by the promoting company of Regional Tourism Promotion Agency; Vizela city festivals in August; Children's Fair with terroir products in November, among others.

These endogenous events included dining, technical and scientific, economic and cultural activities. These events stimulated tourism and helped to address seasonality issues, offering possibilities for other local tourism development niches, such as slow tourism. Slow tourism can be boosted if the management of visitation activities prioritises local heritage and resources (Valls *et al.*, 2019).

For the promotion of inbound tourism, the municipality of Vizela, began participating in national events in partnership with the Trade and Industrial Association of the municipality, including the International Tourism Fair in Lisbon. These events aided the dissemination of the city through exhibition and tasting of its typical products such as MC and the typical dessert, *Bolinhol*, which is an icon of the traditional desserts of this city.

Bolinhol is now also marketed in combination with the MC in menus of Vizela restaurants, accompanied by wine from the Minho region, the famous *vinho verde*, or green wine. This has

allowed an increase in sales of these typical products and expands their promotion through this combination of a main dish and dessert. Another way of popularising MC has been to include this dish as an item of awards for cultural competitions in town, as in the case of a municipal photo contest called "Vizela Feel".

6. Discussion and implications

Although the development process of MC has largely been successful, some future challenges have been identified in terms of strengthening the local cuisine and tourism. In the economic dimension, the owners of Vizela restaurants only have this dish available to order or at the end of the festive week. If any resident or tourist wants to experience the dish for lunch or dinner on the same day, it may be unavailable for prompt service.

The main reason for this is that production of one of the key ingredients, free range chicken, is insufficient to meet the demand of the gastronomic city. If the chicken is frozen, this would compromise the quality and taste of the dish. This production challenge needs to be analysed and an integrated plan drawn up for the production chain of farms and the commercial infrastructure of the city. There is a clear need for coproduction and the integration of the actors linked to MC, because the inputs need to be articulated with clear logistics and communication, to achieve an adequate supply (Ostrom, 1996). From a tourism perspective, there is also a need for more training of staff and increased communication for tourists. Linking supply and demand through a reservation system for the consumption of MC is also a development that could be considered. The Vizela case underlines one of the main contradictions of the slow food movement, which is the creation of excess global demand for local products which are by their very nature in short supply (Scarpato, 2003).

From a social perspective, one of the current challenges in relation to MC is to make it locally known in the city of Vizela, and this will require public-private collaboration to become more inclusive and increase access to low-income residents. One strategy might be encouraging the use of local products in schools, hospitals and community centres, and offering MC in schools for young people to become familiar with this part of their gastronomic heritage.

The rejuvenation and revalorisation of MC has demonstrated that it is necessary to gather popular knowledge and expertise in various areas such as history, architecture, design, production engineering, urban planning, geography, sociology, administration, education, economics, the environment and tourism. The professionals in these areas can work together with the community to increase local skills and facilitate the development of authentic products that can serve as endogenous tourist attractions.

The Vizela case also shows how the systematic and integrated development of local food gastronomic products and services



to stimulate enterprise and tourism in a slow city. Vizela supports slow tourism by prioritising the originality of visitor activities (Clancy, 2018), through the appreciation of material resources (Valls *et al.*, 2019) and the symbolic value of place (Heitmann *et al.*, 2011). This broadly reflects the placemaking model developed by Richards (2020), which is based on adding meaning to endogenous resources through the application of creativity. These perspectives also emphasise that in addition to the co-creation processes often emphasised in tourism research (Campos *et al.*, 2018) there is also a need to study coproduction processes that contribute to the development of co-created experiences.

It is worth mentioning that this study has some limitations. One concerns the positionality of the researchers, who as external observers may miss some of the nuances of the local development process. In particular the meanings attached to food and gastronomy by local residents may not be fully uncovered through the limited interviews and observations that could be made. Another limitation refers to the choice of qualitative methods, which does not allow the generalisation of results. However, we hope that the knowledge developed from the Vizela case can help to inform investigations in other empirical contexts. The results of this research can also support practices aimed at recovering and requalifying other typical dishes from different cities around the world – from the perspective of slow tourism, slow food and slow cities.

7. Final considerations

This paper demonstrates that the systematic recovery of a typical dish can link local people with the region, as well as generating gastronomic products and services and developing local tourism. The project studied enabled co-creation between public and private actors in different ways, providing citizens with information about the history of their city and creating collective intelligence related to local food. The case demonstrates the potential of coproduction, with different inputs being provided by different actors. Once one of the inputs (information) was offered by local residents, the other resources were provided by entrepreneurs and the public sector, working together on the transformation of these inputs into a service, which consists of the whole process of offering MC.

In addition, it is evident that through the generation and communication of different forms of value, MC increased the perception of value by the potential consumers of this typical dish, attributing history, memory, advertising and design, allowing the customers of the restaurants where the dish is offered to realise more benefits in consuming the product, which is related to the prospect of co-creation. Moreover, APHORT certification added value to the MC brand, increasing its legitimacy and increasing the perceived quality of the services and the image built around the initiative. It was observed that MC from Vizela has become a means of distinguishing this city from others in Portugal, as well as supporting its slow city status. MC has revealed that local

cuisine and slow food can be a means to promote the aims and sustainability practices of a slow city.

Finally, this study revealed the importance of local residents in the development process. Residents are sources and validators of local history and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. They also play an important role in the creation and production of goods and services that can enhance and develop contemporary forms of tourism, such as slow tourism. This endogenous strategy of tourism development shows that gastronomy can be an important inducer of new knowledge and relationships, boosting the economy while using sustainable principles as a guide for local development.

Acknowledgments/Funding

The authors wish to thank the Brazilian National Counsel of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq), the Minas Gerais Research Foundation (FAPEMIG), and to Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) for their support of this research.

Author Contribution: All authors have contributed equally. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Disclosure statement: The authors declare no potential conflict of interest.

References

- Andrades, L., & Dimanche, F. (2014). Co-creation of experience value: A tourist behavior approach. In N. Prebensen, J. Chen, & M. Uysal (eds.), *Creating experience value in tourism* (pp. 95-112). London: CABI.
- APHORT (2015). *Receita [Frango Merendeiro]*. http://www.aphort.com/img_upload/receita.jpg
- Bardin, L. (2018). *Análise de Conteúdo*. Lisboa: Edições 70.
- Binkhorst, E. (2006). The co-creation tourism experience. *XV International Tourism & Leisure Symposium*. Barcelona, Spain.
- Brandson, T., & Honingh, M. (2016). Distinguishing different types of coproduction: A conceptual analysis based on the classical definitions. *Public Administration Review*, 76(3), 427-435. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12465>
- Campbell, S. (1996). Green cities, growing cities, just cities? Urban planning and the contradictions of sustainable development. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 62(3), 296-312.
- Campos, A. C., Mendes, J., Valle, P. O., & Scott, N. (2018). Co-creation of tourist experiences: a literature review. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(4), 369-400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2015.1081158>
- Clancy, M. (2018). *Slow Tourism, Food and Cities Pace and the Search for the "Good Life"*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ekinci, M.B. (2014). The citta-slow philosophy in the context of sustainable tourism development: the case of Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 41, 178-189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.08.013>
- Emmendoerfer, M. L., Costa, V. N. G., Cardoso, A., Pereira, V. Oliveira, M. J., & Mendes, J. C. (2017). Rescate y recalificación de un plato típico para el Turismo en una Citta-slow. In J. A. Norrild (ed.), *Gastronomía y turismo: destinos con sal y pimienta* (pp. 98-115). Buenos Aires: CIET.
- Emmendoerfer, M. L., Fraga, B. D. O., & Ashton, M. S. G. (2021). Public development plan based on coproduction and slow principles: an analytical scheme by action research. *Urbe. Revista Brasileira de Gestão Urbana*, 13, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2175-3369.013.e20210020>



- Feldman, M.P., & Audretsch, D.B. (1999). Innovation in cities: Science-based diversity, specialization and localized competition. *European Economic Review*, 43(2), 409-429. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0014-2921\(98\)00047-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0014-2921(98)00047-6)
- Frio, R.S., & Brasil, V.S. (2016). Comportamento de Cocriação de Valor do Consumidor: Adequação da Inserção de uma Variável a um Modelo Proposto. *Revista de Administração IMED*, 6(2), 149-161. <https://doi.org/10.18256/2237-7956/raimed.v6n2p149-161>
- Gil, A. C. (2007). *Como elaborar projetos de pesquisa*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Hall, T., & Hubbard, P. (1996). The entrepreneurial city: new urban politics, new urban geographies? *Progress in Human Geography*, 20(2), 153-174. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030913259602000201>
- Heitmann, S., Robinson, P., & Povey, G. (2011). Slow Food, Slow Cities and Slow Tourism. In P. Robinson, S. Heitmann, & P. Dieke (eds.), *Research Themes for Tourism* (pp. 114-127). Wallingford: CAB International.
- INE (2012). *Anuário Estatístico da Região Norte*. Lisboa, Portugal.
- Ishida, T. (2002). Digital city Kyoto. *Communications of the ACM*, 45(7), 76-81.
- Landry, C., & Bianchini, F. (1995). *The Creative City*. London: Demos.
- Lowry, Linda L., & Lee, Misoon. (2016). CittaSlow, Slow Cities, Slow Food: Searching for a Model for the Development of Slow Tourism. *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*, 40. Available at <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1618&context=ttra>
- Mayer, H., & Knox, P.L. (2006). Slow cities: Sustainable places in a fast world. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 28(4), 321-334. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2006.00298.x>
- Morais, F.R., & Santos, J.B. (2015). Refinando os conceitos de cocriação e coprodução: Resultados de uma Crítica da Literatura. *Revista Economia & Gestão*, 15(40), 224-250.
- Ostrom, E. (1996). Crossing the great divide: Coproduction, synergy, and development. *World Development*, 24(6), 1073-1087. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(96\)00023-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(96)00023-X)
- Pereiro, X., & Conde, S.P. (2005). Turismo e oferta gastronómica na comarca de Ulloa (Galiza): Análise de uma experiência de desenvolvimento local. *Pasos, Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 3(1), 109-123. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2005.03.007>
- Pérez Mongiovi, D., & Cardoso, A. (2013). O turismo no modelo cittaSlow de desenvolvimento urbano. O caso de Vizela no Norte de Portugal. *Cadernos de Turismo - Governança e Turismo - da Conferência Internacional de Turismo - INTERTUR*, Maia, Portugal, 3, 193-209.
- Petrini, C. (2001). *Slow food: le ragioni del gusto*. Bari: Laterza.
- Portugal (1998). *Lei 63. Criação do município de Vizela e elevação a cidade*. Lisboa: Assembleia da República. <https://goo.gl/NwQvNp>
- Prahalad, C.K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2002). The co-creation connection. *Strategy and Business*, 27, 50-61.
- Prebensen, N. K., Vittersø, J., & Dahl, T. I. (2013). Value co-creation significance of tourist resources. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42, 240-261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.01.012>
- Ribeiro, H.C.M., Tavares, V.C.M., & Costa, B.K. (2016). Cocriação de Valor: Uma Bibliometria de 2000 a 2014. *Revista Eletrônica de Estratégia & Negócios*, 9(1), 118-151. <https://doi.org/10.19177/reen.v9e12016118-151>
- Richards, G. (2020). Designing Creative Places: The role of creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 85, 102922. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102922>
- Scarpato, R. (2003). Sustainable gastronomy as a tourist product. In Hjalager, A.M. & Richards, G. (Eds) *Tourism and Gastronomy* (pp. 146-166). London: Routledge.
- Schlüter, R. (2006). *Turismo y Patrimonio Gastronómico*. Buenos Aires, CIET.
- Shapiro, J.M. (2006). Smart cities: quality of life, productivity, and the growth effects of human capital. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 88(2), 324-335.
- Silva, J.E.C. (2013). *Vizela, Desenvolvimento e Antagonismos Políticos: As Disputas Autônomicas da Regeneração à República* (Masters Dissertation, Universidade do Porto, 2013). <https://repositorio-aberto.up.pt/handle/10216/72384>
- Valls J-F., Mota L., Vieira S.C.F., & Santos R. (2019). Opportunities for Slow Tourism in Madeira. *Sustainability*, 11(17), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11174534>
- Vargo, S.L., & Lusch, R.F. (2008). Service-dominant logic: continuing the evolution. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-007-0069-6>
- Vizela (2017). *História.Câmara Municipal de Vizela*. <http://www.cm-vizela.pt/autarquia/concelho/historia>
- Wierzbicka, W. (2022). Activities Undertaken in the Member Cities of the Polish National Cittaslow Network in the Area of "Energy and Environmental Policy." *Energies*, 15(4), 1309-1325. <https://doi.org/10.3390/en15041309>
- Zagroba, M., Pawlewicz, K., & Senetra, A. (2021). Analysis and Evaluation of the Spatial Structure of Cittaslow Towns on the Example of Selected Regions in Central Italy and North-Eastern Poland. *Land*, 10(8), 780-808. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10080780>