

History of Retailing and Consumption

The Evolution of the Retail Trade sector in Iberian Cities from the Nineteenth Century to the Second World War --Manuscript Draft--

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Abstract:	<p>The evolution of retail trade in European cities during the first decades of the twentieth century can be a powerful indicator about their urban and social dynamics. The growth in the number of shops, the spatial rearrangement of their distribution, and the increased social and political relevance of shopkeepers are features commonly highlighted by the historiography. But this picture is better known for Central and Northern European cities. As for the Iberian Peninsula although some efforts can be mentioned, there are still progress to be made. The papers discussed in this introductory essay address those questions through a double perspective: first, an analysis of the urban space and its impact on the development of the retail trade spatial distribution and evolution; second, a historical and comparative analysis of four Iberian cities trying to build a better picture about the spatial, social and economic relevance of their retail trade. These perspectives will be explored for the cities of La Coruña, Barcelona, Bilbao and Lisbon studying the retail trade spatial distribution and the introduction of new forms of commercial concentration and consumption, roughly between 1840 and 1940.</p>
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Introduction

The evolution of the retail trade in European cities during the first decades of the twentieth century can be a powerful indicator reflecting their urban and social dynamics. The growth in the number of shops, the spatial rearrangement of their distribution, the increased social and political relevance of the shopkeepers, and the transformations in the consumption patterns between the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the Second World War, are features commonly highlighted by the historiography. But this picture is better known from observations of Central and Northern European cities, with those images tending to be applied, sometimes in a simplistic way, to the whole continent. As for the urban centres of the Iberian Peninsula, although some isolated research efforts can be mentioned, there is still some progress to be made.

The four papers presented here will address those questions analysing the urban space of each city - its features, its changes over time, the transformation of the economic, social and public space of the city - and its impact on the development of the retail trade spatial distribution and evolution. The theme issue can be seen as an historical and comparative analysis to build an improved picture about relevance of the urban retail trade in the Iberian Peninsula. These perspectives will be explored through combined case studies about the retail trade distribution and the introduction of new forms of commercial concentration and consumption, roughly between 1840 and 1940, regarding the cities of Barcelona, Bilbao, La Coruña and Lisbon. The four cities share some characteristics derived from being port cities and, with the exception of La Coruña, where the trends are not so pronounced, they all experienced a late but rapid industrial development in the final decades of the “long nineteenth century”, also accompanied by a strong rise in the population between 1877/78 and 1940.

The main goal is to put together a comprehensive picture about the urban retail trade looking at and comparing two big (Barcelona and Lisbon) and two medium sized (Bilbao and La Coruña) cities of countries that were on the route to dictatorial political regimes in the first decades of the twentieth century. At the same time, the importance of ports, urban development and territorial expansion, demographic growth, new consumption patterns and politics in the consolidation and sometimes transformation of the retail trade sector in those cities is addressed.

As stated in one of the case studies, historical study of the retail trade has its difficulties, related to the multiplicity of situations and scales that characterize this type of trade, its fragmentary nature, and the traditional volatility of these business. At the same time

it is believed that this study can provide a good starting point to understand urban mutations in the transition from modern to contemporary societies in the Iberian urban territories.

But not in the South? The historiography of retailing and urban space.

Inserting the history of Iberian retailing into the existing European historiography requires us to review the ways in which this has evolved in recent decades. The explosion of interest in social history in the decades after the Second World War was only rarely extended to retailing and retailers, and then primarily to examine their presumed role as agents of a reactionary petty bourgeoisie responsible for bringing fascists in general, and the Nazi party in particular, into power. The first detailed studies duly identified a politics of economic despair as shopkeepers found themselves forced into extremist positions, trapped between the agents of big capital (chain department stores) and organised labour.¹

Approaches to the history of retailers became much more nuanced from the late 1970s as historians adhered to the plea of Arno Mayer to engage with the lower middle class ‘on its own terms’.² Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz Gerhard Haupt complained of the ‘regrettable’ tendency for research on retailers and artisans to privilege politics over other fields of inquiry, preferring to confine their work to the pre-1914 period to avoid undue pre-occupation with the rise of Fascism³. Along with Philippe Vigier, they promoted round tables at which exchanges took place between European historians studying this independent petite bourgeoisie which, as they pointed out, possessed very different characteristics from the white collar classes with whom it had been amalgamated by the political theorists. This fostered research into a wide variety of social and cultural topics, including the role of women and the family in small businesses, the nature of workplace relations, sociability, localism and trade associations.⁴ The subtitle of Crossick and Haupt’s masterful synthesis of this work ‘Enterprise, Family and Independence’ neatly captured the nature of the petit-bourgeois milieu.⁵

Philip Nord’s study of nineteenth century Parisian shopkeepers stood out within this literature for its deployment of spatial analysis.⁶ He showed how the fortunes of small shopkeepers varied by location within the city, pointing in particular to the impact of Haussmanization – the urban redevelopment of the city characterised by the construction of wide boulevards under the eponymous city prefect during the Second Empire – and the influence of department stores in defining the character of the commercial districts that surrounded them. Nord not only argued that this created winners and losers amongst the petite bourgeoisie, but that this in turn affected their politics, precluding any pre-ordained

disposition to seek solutions on the radical right even while acknowledging that this choice was eventually taken.

Few of the historians brought together by Crossick and Haupt worked on Southern Europe – there are no references to Spain, Portugal, or for that matter Greece, in their jointly authored volume on the petite bourgeoisie in Europe between 1780 and 1914⁷. Italy did feature, however, primarily drawing on the work of Jonathan Morris on Milan and Daniela Luigia Cagliotti on Naples⁸. While Cagliotti's careful exploration of the world of Neapolitan retailers mirrored the socio-cultural concerns of Crossick and Haupt, Morris' approach was closer to that of Nord in that he situated shopkeeper politics within an understanding of the commercial environments created within the city space. It was not proximity to department stores that defined these, however, but the city's revenue raising structures, specifically the *dazio consumo* – a sales tax levied on goods sold within the city walls, but not in the suburbs that were developing beyond them. Distinctions between trade, type and size of shop were less important than location for determining the political preferences of their proprietors.

Urbanisation, the emergence of new forms of distribution, and transformations in the socio-political landscape all impacted upon Italian retailing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although economic downturns at times damaged the sector, there was no sense of an existential crisis caused by the emergence of chain multiples and department stores, if only because these were so few of them. Rather there was a recognition that shopkeepers could utilise their economic and political power to insert themselves into debates over the processes of urban modernisation. In particular they subverted early Fascist plans for a rationalisation of the retailing sector through a reduction in the number of small shops, by appropriating the instruments of the corporate state to gain control over the operation of the shop licensing systems.⁹ They were able to preserve this into the post-war era, slowing the advance of supermarkets and multiples by exploiting planning regulations that governed both the number and location of large-scale operators, confining them to designated zones outside the city centres.¹⁰

This theme issue is an attempt to introduce the Iberian experience into a European historiography that, after a cultural turn towards a focus on consumers and consumption, now appears to have begun a new engagement with the history of retailing incorporating more multi-disciplinary approaches.¹¹ This has been fostered through the work of academic associations such as CHORD and CHARM, and the appearance of the *Journal for the History of Retailing and Consumption*, and the *Journal for Historical Research in Marketing*. There

has been a return to the perspectives developed through geographic or spatial analysis,¹² but introducing the use of digital methodologies, namely, geographic information systems.¹³

Studies of southern European cities such as Athens, Barcelona, Bilbao, La Coruña, Lisbon and Mersin, based primarily upon tax sources and a detailed analysis of the urban space with the help of GIS, have recently appeared.¹⁴ These addressed several topics relating to retail trade and the distribution of commerce in the urban landscape, from social segregation to the influence of urban morphology in the development of the commercial sector, through analysis of local businesses and the liveability of cities or showing the historical development of retail trade in port cities.

Retailing and Urban Space within Iberian historiography.

Although there has been relatively little direct engagement with the history of retailing in Spain and Portugal until recently, some important insights have already been developed through broader historiography, particularly in the case of Spain.

For Portugal there are some studies about the bourgeoisie of Lisbon and Oporto in the second half of the nineteenth century, though without specific analysis of the retail trade.¹⁵ One of the few studies on this subject was developed for Oporto but essentially from a geographical perspective.¹⁶ And that emphasis has been the major focus of most of the works in the past decades, dedicated to these two major cities, with only a few mentions of retailing and consumption in an historical perspective. The exception to this scenario is a work on patterns of consumption (of essential goods) and standards of living, between 1874 and 1922, published in the 1970s, but essentially centred on the study of the working class.¹⁷ We find the same perspective in a work from the 1990s that, while changing the chronology of analysis, also addresses workers' levels of consumption.¹⁸ One of the few papers devoted to the study of retail trade in a historical perspective deals with the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.¹⁹ Following recent European trends, a renewed interest in consumption topics has been sought with the organization of an international congress on the production, transformation and distribution of food.²⁰ But in recent approaches to the history of consumption, the Portuguese case is sometimes only briefly mentioned in the context of Early-Modern trade or about the impact of European integration.²¹ More in-depth analyses focusing on gender and consumption are available, but only for Portuguese society after the 1950s.²²

Regarding the spatial distribution of retail trade in Portuguese cities, some works may be mentioned, but without the contribution of historians and again only focusing on the

second half of the twentieth century.²³ Almost all of them also share the fact that they were published in the 1990s, and the most recent works are essentially in the area of sociology, economics or marketing.²⁴ Finally one work with an historical perspective about the retail trade and shopkeepers of Lisbon should be mentioned, characterizing the main features of small business, but essentially studying the shopkeepers' associational life and their political alignment between 1870 and 1910.²⁵

In Spain, until the first half of the 1980s few studies were done on retail, retailers or even the petty bourgeoisie. The main research topic was clearly the industry and the labour market, or studies on the dynamics of conflicts between the working class and other social groups, in an effort to characterize the economic structures of some cities or when analysing the evolution of the consumer cooperative phenomenon (once again a topic linked to the working class).²⁶

In the second half of the 1980s some studies on retail trade and street vending began to emerge. At the beginning of the following decade, lower-middle class political engagements began to be researched. But in 1996 Nuñez Seixas also stated that the study of the middle classes was an “ignored field for contemporary social history of Spain.”²⁷ This relative lack of interest was associated with a weak development of urban history, which after a brief resurgence in the early 1990s, has again come into crisis, to be resumed only in the twenty-first century.²⁸ However, an ongoing problem in the historiography on this subject in Spain was the fact that it focus too much on the local and regional case studies and not on analysis comparing various cities nationwide.²⁹ The same could be said for the whole of the Peninsula, with rare exceptions.³⁰ For the Spanish case, though, there have been attempts to address this issue in recent years, either in the case of urban history or in the study of the bourgeoisie (in this case, essentially, centred in the nineteenth century).³¹

As we saw for Portugal, in Spain the approaches to retail trade, consumption and the creation of a consumer society have been also more abundant in the area of geography and sociology than in history.³² Nevertheless, the first studies on the subject developed more systematically after the 1990s.³³ Between the mid-1990s and 2010 the main focus of Spanish studies was on the understanding of urban growth, on the evolution of its sectors of activity, with a predominance of studies on industry and labour first and, in recent years, a greater emphasis on the study of the relationship between urban growth and the development of the trade and services sector.³⁴ Since 2010, interest in retail and consumption seems to have renewed.³⁵ Also in these cases, the regional or local approach adopted forms an obstacle to a

more systematic and comprehensive analysis of the impact of the commercial and retail sector in all Spanish cities

Recently, however, this trend has changed. Some work on Madrid can be singled out seeking to combine an integrated view of urban, economic and social development of the capital between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s.³⁶ A collective work of 2015 on the new urban middle classes in Spain in the first third of the twentieth century, with new interpretations, new sources and new methodologies, including the use of GIS, should also be mentioned. It corresponds to an effort of synthesis and comparative study on the evolution of some Spanish cities, which begins to address the difficulties mentioned previously.³⁷

Evolution of the retail trade sector in four Iberian cities

With this special issue, it is hoped to make another contribution to this comparative view, this time with a particular focus on retail trade and including both the Spanish and Portuguese cases. This is a comparative look at the economic and social evolution of the Iberian cities which may enable us to highlight a set of common factors that can improve our knowledge about urban development and the tertiarization of cities in the first third of the twentieth century. The focus is on the analysis of the changes undergone by the retail and services sector, seeking to identify the emergence of new forms of commerce, new professions and new habits of consumption. It also allows for a comparative view between some of the main port cities of the Iberian Peninsula. And as will be seen, it corresponds to an urban phenomenon that probably transcended borders, taking into account some of the similarities of the processes found and some of the factors that explain them. Although the chronology of the case studies is diverse, with that of Lisbon concentrating between 1890 and 1910 and that of Barcelona, for example, extending between 1840 and 1940, the fact is that all point to more or less significant changes that were occurring between the end of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century.

In the case of Spanish cities, and not only those that will be highlighted here, trade was probably the sector that experienced the most profound changes in this process of urban transformation, as suggested by Jesús Mirás Araujo.³⁸ In the case of Portuguese cities, Lisbon and Porto always stood out, both for the rhythm and volume of their population growth between the second half of the nineteenth century and the 1960s, influenced by industrial development, and the earlier development of tertiarization.³⁹

Barcelona:

Barcelona's growth from the second half of the nineteenth century, apparently, strengthened, rather than threatened, the role of a commercial centre traditionally played by the city's historic centre. This aspect is of particular interest since in all the other cases of cities studied here historical centres lost some of their commercial role or their economic and social dynamics during the period studied.

The Barcelona study explores the transformations that urban commerce was experiencing between the mid-nineteenth and the 1940s from a spatial perspective. Both the development of the port and the territorial expansion of the city are essential factors in perceiving the dynamics of retailing and its modernization, something that has not been adequately highlighted by historiography dedicated to the study of port cities, as pointed by Nadia Fava in her article.

In fact, ports have always been an important factor for urban development, and proximity to the coast was fundamental for the reinforcement of large cities in the Iberian Peninsula, with the great exception of Madrid. In the case of Barcelona, urban growth was also influenced by the migration wave of the second half of the nineteenth century. This was important not only in quantitative, demographic and labour availability terms, but also in the economic and financial dynamics of the city, as a proportion of these migrants returned after enriching themselves in trade and other activities in the colonies. The figure of the “Indians” in the urban memory of Barcelona is, in this sense, close to that of the “Brazilians” for Lisbon and Porto.⁴⁰

Barcelona experienced a truly explosive population growth between 1840 and 1940, rising from 175,000 to over 1 million. In the first half of the nineteenth century the city had experienced a period of some stagnation resulting from the Napoleonic invasions and loss of colonies in South America, very similar to the cases of Lisbon and La Coruña. Until the second half of the nineteenth century the commercial structure of the city was very traditional, featuring, in common with other Mediterranean cities, a small scale retail trade sector, family-run, very dispersed geographically within the city, and essentially dedicated to the sale of essential goods. Demographic growth, coupled with the liberalization of trade after the 1830s and subsequent economic development based on industrialization and port dynamism, stimulated the relatively early introduction of new forms of retail and consumption comparatively to the other three cities. In part, these changes occurred even before the territorial expansion of the city that happened in 1897.

The first changes in the retail structures relate to the concentration of stores in specific avenues, in arcades and passages. This reorganization took place within the historical city

centre between the 1850s and 1880s. Some of these early forms of commercial concentration resulted from investments linked to banking and port activity. These new spaces of consumption tended to concentrate and stimulate businesses related to the sale of luxury products. The changes are signs of the emergence of a modernized consumer society in the city.

In Barcelona, we see that other concentration phenomena, such as department stores or public food markets, reinforce this perspective, with the former locating in the transitional area between the historic city and the modern expansion zone and the latter accompanying the growth of the city in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first ones of the twentieth century. Barcelona's first department store dates from 1878 and the period of construction of these spaces extended into the following decades. For Bilbao and La Coruña there is no information on this type of store, but in the case of Lisbon they appear a little later (in the 1890s), in smaller numbers and with more modest dimensions.⁴¹ The location of the department stores and the type of products usually sold there - expensive and for sporadic consumption - are good indicators not only of changes in consumer habits, but also of increasing geographical and social mobility within the urban population.

The transformation of Barcelona's retail landscape between the second half of the nineteenth century and the Second World War is at the same time a story of the rising of a new consumer society and a constant concern with the food supply to a fast-growing city.

Bilbao:

Bilbao was already an industrial city in the nineteenth century but significantly changed its sectors of activity at the turn of the century, in the face of population growth and economic development. The city experienced an intense process of rural migration, associated to an increasing dynamism of the labour market. Like other Iberian cities (Barcelona, La Coruña, Lisbon or Madrid, for example), it was the subject of an urban expansion plan that led to the incorporation of territories of neighbouring municipalities. In addition, the presence of a maritime port and its dynamism, as well as industrial development, were important factors in explaining the strong population growth and changes in the distribution of activity sectors.

Using new sources, José María Beascoechea-Gangoiti, Susana Serrano-Abad and Arantza Pareja-Alonso have sought to characterize and analyse this evolution from a spatial perspective, identifying the emergence of new social actors, with a particular focus on the retail and services sector. Tax records, demographic censuses and business registers were

used to identify new types of activities and the adaptation or transformation of others. They also made visible the degree of women's participation in this sector of activity, usually neglected, either by the lack of sources, or by the legislation and mentality of the time that privileged the connection of women to the private sphere and their economic subordination to men.

At the end of the nineteenth century the strength of the financial sector and the development of Bilbao's port were determining factors for the expansion of the city, which quadrupled its population between 1876 and 1930. Industrialization generated a very dynamic labour market, where women seemed to participate on a very small scale. Unlike other Iberian cities such as Lisbon or La Coruña, for example, Bilbao did not experience an economic crisis between the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. It also took advantage of its privileged geographical position in the north of Spain to benefit from the war economy between 1914 and 1918. A crisis seems to have arrived only in the immediate aftermath of the War, but recovery occurred as early as 1922, particularly in the financial sector.

The city's process of urbanization and industrialization gave rise to a highly structured and segregated social space, with three cities within the city: the historic centre, the new bourgeois city and an industrial and working belt. In economic terms the city was divided into two large sectors, with almost half the population in the production, transport and construction industry and the other half in commerce and services. It was in the new area of the city that the port and connections to the railways were built. The historical centre, however, maintained its commercial primacy until the last decade of the nineteenth century, but after that this was transferred to the new neighbourhoods, with the historic centre even losing some of its political dominance.

About a quarter of the business accounted for sale of basic products, which included food and beverage retail stores. The presence of women in the retail trade was around 15% in 1901 and their presence was especially felt in clothing stores, restaurants and lodging.

By the 1920s business activity seemed to be expanding but also changing as new professions, new types of business appeared, and new products were now being sold. A process that seems to have been influenced by urban expansion, but also by the technological and economic modernization, as well as by the relations established with the industrial city and the port. The commodity sector appears to have strengthened its share, particularly as regards the sale of wine. But there were businesses linked to automobiles, radios,

gramophones, telegraphs and others. In addition, women consolidated their presence in the retail and services labour market.

In conclusion, in the early twentieth century, alongside a society dominated by industrial workers, a vibrant commercial sector evolved corresponding to the main declared economic activities, especially the commodity trade. By the 1930s the city had modernized itself with new products, new businesses, and a modern workforce, almost half of it employed in the services sector.

La Coruña:

La Coruña was a city of weak and late industrialization in the nineteenth century, with commerce and services already forming its main economic activity. With the dynamism of the port, and as the centre of provincial power in the region of Galicia, the position of the tertiary sector in La Coruña was strengthened during the first third of the twentieth century. The pattern and evolution of its retail trade is very similar to that of other medium sized Spanish port cities, as Jesús Mirás Araujo points out in his article.

The period between 1890 and 1935 was very important for a new phase of urbanization and economic development of Spanish cities. Although initially the political stability of the monarchy and non-belligerence in First World War helped in this process, Primo Rivera's dictatorship, republican experience, and civil war brought political, financial and economic uncertainty. Spanish cities were able to take advantage of the cycle of war and the introduction of technological innovations in terms of energy and transport, especially the railways, which allowed them a good level of economic development and some resilience in the 1920s.

Some of those cities evolved slowly towards industrialization. Others were not in a position to expand their influence beyond a local or regional scope, and this conditioned their growth. These differences were also visible in the rhythms of the rural-urban migration, with different impacts on population growth. By 1930, some of these small and medium-sized cities saw their tertiary sector become significantly modernized. La Coruña was one of those cities that, experiencing no significant industrial development, turned the retail and services sector its most modern economic activity.

The dynamism of the port was an important factor in this. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the possibility of trading with America, which, until then had been reserved to Seville, was extended to other Spanish ports. For this reason, La Coruña suffered the negative impacts of the loss of the colonies in the first quarter of the nineteenth century

and entered a period of stagnation that affected the entire regional economy. However, in the mid-nineteenth century the city began to change and the financial sector played a major role in this change. This coincided with a wave of intense emigration that generated a profitable business with Atlantic travel and all associated business and service activities. At the same time, there was some industrial development centred on fisheries and canned fish.

This dynamism enabled the financial sector of La Coruña to become the most important in Galicia at the turn of the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1940 the city more than doubled its inhabitants. This was partly due to natural growth, but primarily to the territorial expansion of the city and to rural migration. Growth rates for most indices were similar to those we can find for Barcelona, Bilbao and Lisbon. In the 1920s, the tertiary sector became dominant. It was a retail business based on small shopkeepers scattered all over the city and essentially dedicated to the sale of basic products.

The administration sector also provided jobs, as did industry, still very much linked to the use of maritime resources, or the construction sector, linked to urban and housing expansion. However, the city could not become an industrial hub, since most of this activity had a local impact, linked to the population's supply of essential goods. The political changes of the 1930s were accompanied by a certain economic depression in the city. The industrial crisis meant that in relative terms the retail trade tended to occupy a more prominent position within the city's economic activities.

Lisbon:

Lisbon shared with the other case study cities, a set of characteristics and factors that help to explain the development of its retail sector; however it experienced a significant difference resulting from the fact that it was Portugal's capital. This political and administrative factor has always been a stimulus for its economic and demographic development. Yet, if a certain hegemony within the Portuguese urban landscape can be clearly verified at the end of the nineteenth century, Lisbon's pathway to get there was relatively uncertain, especially in the first half of the century. The loss of Brazil in 1822, the resulting economic crisis, the impact of the liberal revolution and two civil wars, all resulted in emigrations that made the population of Lisbon stagnate. After the 1860s, however, the city witnessed a very significant population growth, which lasted until the first third of the twentieth century.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the historic centre remained the most densely populated area of the city, but the population growth rate was increasing in a set of

neighbourhoods where bourgeois housing was still sometimes mixed with working class housing. In the new expanding zones to the west, east, and north - areas more distant from the centre that were incorporated in the city in the 1886 territorial expansion - the population densities were lower, but the rate of growth was much higher and the socioeconomic characteristics of the population more homogeneous, composed essentially of workers and lower middle classes.

In the transition between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century, the city and its retail trade suffered from the financial and economic crisis that devastated the country after 1890, as Daniel Alves demonstrated in his article. Using data from the municipal licenses it is possible to verify that the retail trade took advantage of the city's faster population growth before 1890 to also expand significantly. In that decade, however, the crisis led to a general fall in the number of licenses registered in the City Council. Between 1900 and 1910 a recovery was observed, although at a rate slower than the one before 1890.

However, this general picture has several nuances, both as regards the economic and social characteristics of the retail trade, and in terms of its geographical distribution throughout the city. Lisbon had a retail trade essentially focused on the sale of necessities or daily consumption, with a significant proportion of grocery stores and taverns or other outlets selling wine. It was a type of trade conducted mainly by men on an individual basis, with only about 13% of licenses being sought by firms and 13% by women. Almost all of these stores were based in rented premises, and the rents paid by such establishments increased significantly between 1890 and 1910.

Demographic growth and the consequent urban and real estate pressure, as well as the expansion and modernization of the city, through the extension of its territory and the construction of a modern port, help to explain the increase in the rents and their impact on the transformation of retail trade in these decades. The increase in rents seems to have primarily affected businesses with lower value added, basic goods, rather than the luxury goods trade whose position, absolute and relative, was reinforced. The same can be observed in relation to the forms of proprietorship: firms were best able to overcome the late nineteenth century crisis while women, whose shops suffered the largest increases in rents, saw their overall share of the city's retail trade decline over the years. This last trend is different from the one observed in Bilbao, as mentioned above.

At the same time, there was a degree of redistribution of the typologies of commerce in the city. Some of the traditional areas related to the retail trade in Lisbon - the historical centre and the western part of the city - were losing dynamism to new areas that were now

growing at the pace of the population growth. The historic centre saw the closing down of many shops serving everyday consumer goods, but a rise in those supplying superfluous, luxury or added value consumer goods such as jewellery, watch making, confectionery and perfumery. These changes in the geography of the retail trade in the city were accompanied by the appearance of new typologies of consumer goods, with an increased number of licenses for electrical stores, gramophones, automobiles and even animatographs, the precursors of cinemas. In this way, one can interpret the crisis of the end of the century as a sign of the beginning of the modernization of the retail and services sector, as well as the expansion of a consumer society: features that were also appearing in other Iberian cities.

Population, territorial expansion and ports, and their impact on retail trade

The end of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century seem to have represented a new phase of urban development in Spain.⁴² Recent studies on Portugal suggest the same dynamic, if less pronounced.⁴³ These years essentially correspond to the core period analysed in the four articles presented, and these developments were responsible for changes in the structure of the retail trade of the four cities. These years also correspond, in both countries, to a period of political transition - admittedly experienced at different paces - that led from monarchy to dictatorship, via periods of different lengths as a republic. But this general historical and political outline that frames the changes in the economic and social structures of the trade and services sector of those Iberian cities was not decisive for those transformations. Other historical factors influenced the changes in the retail trade that were highlighted in all the articles. From the comparative reading of the four case studies, the population dynamism and its impact on the cities' social space, their territorial expansion and the consequences on the urban structure, the renewal of the role of their ports and the respective economic development, stand out as determining factors.

Spain, Portugal and the respective cities suffered the consequences of the truly revolutionary first half of the nineteenth century. The Napoleonic invasions and the resulting economic, social and political crisis were followed by the first liberal revolutions and the independence of the South America colonies in the early 1820s. Consequences from this period were clearly visible in the stagnation that affected many of the peninsula's port cities, both in economic and demographic terms. To these factors the political instability of the following decades was added, contributing to the transformation of the mercantile bourgeoisie of the cities into industrial and commercial bourgeoisie. The subsequent

economic transformation of the second half of the century stimulated the population and urban growth observed in the last quarter of the century.

The crisis of the first half of the century seems to have bequeathed a common legacy to the structure of the retail trade in the various cities. There was a great predominance of establishments selling essential goods; small family businesses with an essentially local or regional impact, in which, at least according to Bilbao's and Lisbon's examples, women participated on a small scale. The retail trade was geographically widely dispersed across the cities, and accompanied their expansion as populations grew as a result of the intense rural migration in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The main focus of urban commerce still remained in the cities' historical centres.

This gradually changed after the turn of the century. The demographic pressure led all the cities to administratively incorporate large territories of the neighbouring municipalities, while a process of demographic loss in the historical centres began. At the same time, all these cities witnessed the economic role of their ports being renewed or strengthened. It is probably safe to assume that these urban processes impacted, or were sometimes the starting points for, the changes observed in the retail trade structure. Because of the greater openness and exposure to economic globalization coupled with rapid population growth, the retail trade appears to have gradually modernized, even though in some cases it suffered from the economic impact of the 1890s crises or of the First World War. Business selling higher value-added goods began to be concentrated in the historical centres, while at the same time new products and new types of consumers appeared everywhere.

It is true that in this process there existed differences between the various cities. The configuration of commerce that remained in the historical centres of each city is one of these examples. In Bilbao the old historic centre swiftly lost its commercial, and even social and political dynamism, with the basic goods businesses remaining in the centre and the luxury trade accompanying the growth of the new bourgeois neighbourhood. In Lisbon the central neighbourhoods, while changing their character, remained the city's commercial centre, conserving also the main services, as well as the cultural offer (theatres and cafes) and the centres of power, such as the Town Hall and the ministries' buildings.

Concentration in the retail economy took place much earlier in Barcelona than in other cities. It can be said that the city that first started to grow in population terms, and where the port also had an earlier impact on urban economic activities, was the one that was more quickly integrated into the trend of retail modernization that was already being felt in Europe beyond the Pyrenees. In La Coruña, where the same developments were observed

later and took place at a slower pace, it seems that modernization occurred later and with less impact.

What is certain is that, in the four cities as a whole, one can witness, albeit with different rhythms, unmistakable signs (in the case of Lisbon and La Coruña) or concrete evidence (in the case of Barcelona and Bilbao) of the emergence of a modern consumption society. The geography of the retail trade, trade specialization within certain areas of the cities, a greater distance between the sites of housing and consumption, and a whole wealth of new products and services becoming available to the public, are good indicators of this new aspect of modernity arriving in medium and large port cities of the Iberian Peninsula during the first third of the twentieth century.

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The Evolution of the Retail Trade sector in Iberian Cities from the Nineteenth Century to the Second World War

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Abstract

The evolution of retail trade in European cities during the first decades of the twentieth century can be a powerful indicator about their urban and social dynamics. The growth in the number of shops, the spatial rearrangement of their distribution, and the increased social and political relevance of shopkeepers are features commonly highlighted by the historiography. But this picture is better known for Central and Northern European cities. As for the Iberian Peninsula although some efforts can be mentioned, there are still progress to be made. The papers discussed in this introductory essay address those questions through a double perspective: first, an analysis of the urban space and its impact on the development of the retail trade spatial distribution and evolution; second, a historical and comparative analysis of four Iberian cities trying to build a better picture about the spatial, social and economic relevance of their retail trade. These perspectives will be explored for the cities of La Coruña, Barcelona, Bilbao and Lisbon studying the retail trade spatial distribution and the introduction of new forms of commercial concentration and consumption, roughly between 1840 and 1940.

Keywords:

retail trade; port cities; urban space; Iberian Peninsula

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5 20th Century.
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