

# IDENTITY AND CONTEXTS OF REGIONAL IDENTIFICATION: INSTITUTIONAL STAGES, INTERREGIONAL RELATIONS AND IMAGES OF REGIONAL GENDER IN THE ALTO DOURO OF NORTHERN PORTUGAL

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## Resumo

Este artigo examina a identidade sociocultural como uma prática de identificação. É condicionada pelos espaços disponíveis para o seu desempenho: instituições regionais (geralmente espaço de 'boca-de-cena') e relações sociais menos formalizadas baseadas no trabalho (espaço de 'bastidores'). Na região tratada, este trabalho é principalmente de cariz agrícola. Relações de classe e género entre (e não só dentro de) fronteiras regionais fornecem recursos simbólicos para encenar a identidade regional. Portugal é um espaço importante para análise porque é muito frequente (e erroneamente) considerado despojado de diferenciação cultural ao nível regional.

## Abstract

This article examines regional sociocultural identity as a practice of identification. It is conditioned by the spaces available for enactment: regional institutions (generally "front-stage" space) and less formalized social relations based in work ("back-stage" space). In the region treated, this work is largely agricultural. Class and gender relations across (not just within) regional boundaries furnish symbolic resources for dramatizing regional identity. Portugal is an important space of analysis because it is so often (falsely) considered bereft of cultural differentiation at the regional level.

## Introduction

The topic I examine in this article is that of regional identity as a practice of identification. The Demarcated Region of the Douro, also known as the Alto Douro (and I will call it this) serves as the setting for this examination.<sup>1</sup> Regional identification has a varying relationship with national identification, and this latter requires brief discussion before I proceed on the regional question. Portuguese – as all – national identification is a coordinated activity in which symbols sedimented from past activities are used in the pursuit of future collective goals. The Portuguese national flag, recently brandished with unusual intensity in support of collective victory in the field of competitive sports, is an example: the blue shields on a white background and encapsulating golden castles are generally taken to represent the reconquest and absolutist territorial control; the golden armillary sphere represents “the Discoveries” (and particularly Brazil, according to some); the red and green of the background are the colors of the Portuguese Republican Party (Wheeler 1978:64). Though the flag is used by different political parties for divergent visions of a collective future, the imagination of that future as belonging to a collective group—of perhaps differing social composition—is facilitated by the existence of this object that rehearses the political history of its referent through its patchwork of colors and symbols. Beyond the Portuguese flag, there are other symbols of national identity: fado and “Portuguese” bullfighting count among these (Almeida 2004; Gomes 2001). Once we move beyond the flag, however, we find ourselves on symbolic terrain where regionalized distributions trouble the purportedly national symbols: fado, for example is readily specified as Lisboeta in origin, while bullfighting is commonly understood as focused in the Ribatejo.

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article was presented as part of a panel entitled *Construções de Identidade em Contextos Regionais, Étnicos, Nacionais e Transnacionais no Espaço Lusófono* at the VIII Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais, held September of 2004 in Coimbra, Portugal. I thank the panel organizers José Manuel Sobral and Daniel Melo for their invitation and assistance. José Sobral asked many important questions about this text, most of which remain for me to answer.

“National” symbols very often, then, fail to erase completely their non-national origins. These origins are, moreover, often understood as regional—as identifiable, that is, with a particular, named, stretch of terrain understood to have something about it that differs from the national. In other words, “the national” often presupposes regional differentiation. Moreover, the regional level of social-spatial organization is best imagined, I think, as part of a continuum involving spatial, historical, ecological, social and cultural elements that lead it to complement the national or to contradict the national, depending on the historical conjuncture in which analysis is conducted. Galicia, for example, can be understood as a region of Spain with Nationalist tendencies that grow or shrink depending on the conjuncture.

Regions—at least modern regions—within Portugal have not, it seems, developed nationalist tendencies at odds with Portuguese nationality. They can, however, act to deconstruct widespread assumptions about nationality: for example, the Maria da Fonte uprisings of the 1840s challenged a particular national agenda regarding the treatment of the dead, doing so from a material and cultural base in the Minho that may have had strong similarities with Trás-os-Montes (as suggested in Riegelhaupt 1981, and confirmed in Ferreira 1996), but that differs significantly from the south of the country. With regard to the living, too, regional differences in Portugal have been important to anthropologists concerned with the form taken by everyday life within Portuguese national boundaries. O’Neill’s (1987) work in Trás-os-Montes has shown us that inheritance is an example of serious regional variability. Pina Cabral (1991: 91-108) generalizes from such examples to argue convincingly for Galaico-Portuguese and Mediterranean cultural regions within Portugal. Bastos (1988) demonstrates how the Algarve combines material and cultural elements for its own kind of specificity, particularly regarding marriage and inheritance. Parkhurst (2002) provides an overview of Portuguese regional differentiation as expressed in marriage and kinship patterns.

Most importantly for what I want to convey about regional identity here is that it is an active process of identification, that this process inevitably takes place in the context of social relations, that there are often important institutional aspects to this identification, that there is a kind of boundary maintenance entailed in the identification through

social relations, and that these social relations have “center stage” and “back stage” aspects which often are informed by the gendered identification of space. Most work in anthropology on Portuguese regional differentiation has attended to social relations, but has neglected institutions beyond the level of the family. This is possibly why the Alto Douro has been overlooked in Portuguese anthropology.

An emphasis on extra-familial regional institutions distinguishes the classic, and unduly forgotten, work of John W. Cole and Eric R. Wolf on ethnic identity formation in the Italian Alps (1999 [1974]). Cole and Wolf show that two villages a mile distant from one another differ significantly: St. Felix is organized into homesteads with attached land, while Tret is nucleated, with parcels of land surrounding the village; St. Felix villagers emphasize primogeniture in inheritance, while Tret villagers valorize equal inheritance among all children; most significantly, in St. Felix male householders compose the membership of a “self-governing rural commune” (Wolf 2001: 295), which is non-existent in Tret. Of some significance is that St. Felix villagers tend to speak a dialect of German as their first language, while Tret villagers speak a Romance language. That a self-governing rural commune has evolved in St. Felix is in large part the result of the vagaries of history: the ecology of the area allows for it, but it was the original connection to Bavarian frontiersmen and a later benign neglect by the Habsburg empire, and then by Italian fascism, that provided for the commune’s ongoing strength (Cole and Wolf 1999 [1974]: 263-272). Previously the commune served as one of the building blocks of “the Tyrolese [regional] assembly” (Ibid.: 26); though no longer functioning, the regional assembly reinforced the commune, providing it historical staying power it might otherwise have lacked.

One of the distinguishing features of the Alto Douro is that it has something approximating the “Tyrolese assembly” that gave the commune of St. Felix some of its legitimacy and durability. It is known as the Casa do Douro, a wine growers’ association to which all owners of vineyards in the Demarcated Zone of the Douro belong automatically. The Casa do Douro is the outcome of more recent historical developments than the Tyrolese Assembly, and has therefore not been active long enough to articulate the stark cultural differences sometimes displayed by Tyrolese in the Italian national context. The Casa also focuses on matters pertinent only to wine agriculture: it does not reorganize

representative government as structured nationally. However, though regional identification in the Alto Douro is not based in a notion of ethnic difference, it is similar to the “ethnic affiliation” found in the Italian Alps in its reliance on “backstage” social contexts for the enunciation of regional stereotypes. Cole and Wolf tell us that

Ethnic affiliation is relegated to the background when Trettners and Felixers visit each others’ churches, play games of cards at the inn, close a deal over a glass of wine, or chat in the marketplace in Fondo.... Yet, all the interchanges take place in the public eye. Backstage...within each community villagers communicate among themselves, in terms of a set of fixed images of the other population. These stereotypes may not apply to any one member of the population so characterized, but they do reflect historical experiences each group has had with the other.

(Cole and Wolf 1999 [1974]: 272)

In what follows I use Cole and Wolf’s approach to ethnic differentiation to discuss the Alto Douro. As the first modern demarcated wine region in the world, the Douro merits discussion as a region with a distinctive set of identifications. Crucial among these is the regional institution of the Casa do Douro. I examine this institution as a groundwork for regional identification at the local level, and examine how wine growers of the Alto Douro identify with it. Then I examine how in an Alto Douro village regional identifications are constructed “backstage” and in relation to other regional identifications. Crucial to these backstage constructions are notions of regionalized gender differentiation. The topic of regionalized gender relations is a topic that moves us significantly beyond the insights of Cole and Wolf, at least as explicitly formulated in *The Hidden Frontier*.

## 1. One Context: The Casa do Douro

The Casa do Douro is located in Peso da Régua (henceforth Régua), which is generally acknowledged as “the capital of the Douro.” It is one of the triangle of institutions representing the economic actors involved in the port wine trade, the other two being the Associação de Empresas do Vinho do Porto (AEVP), which represents the shippers (or marketers)

of port wine, and the Instituto do Vinho do Douro e Porto (IVDP), which represents both growers and shippers, along with the Portuguese state. As the representative of the interests of the wine growers of the Alto Douro region, the Casa do Douro promotes the economic interests of these growers against the antagonistic interests of the wine shippers, based in Vila Nova da Gaia. The shippers' main interest is making a profit, which involves buying cheap, when possible, and selling dear. Port wine has acquired prestige as a quality product, and the shippers are concerned to maintain this. Thus, the ranking system of A (highest quality) through F (lowest quality) for vineyards devised by the Instituto do Vinho do Porto (IVP), the predecessor of the IVDP, was developed partly with the shippers' interests in view. The main interest of the growers is a high level of "*benefício*" (or permission to sell wine as port wine, which garners much higher prices than table wine). The Casa do Douro promotes this interest, and also attempts to unite growers economically by advocating increases in *benefício* across the different qualities of grapes. Since 1991, cuts and increases in *benefício* have been applied evenly across the grape classes, instead of differentially according to quality (Moreira 1998: 264). Though this across-the-board approach has led to some agitation on the part of growers with high-class vineyards (Moreira 1998:264), such efforts—to achieve some equality among growers while promoting quality among grapes—help explain the Casa do Douro's durability as a regional institution. Vineyards in the Douro are distributed across 85,000 parcels, owned by about 30,000 growers, and worked by some 80,000 laborers (Brito 1997:36; Guichard 1995:606). Ownership is socially polarized: the proportion of vineyard land held by large producers is higher than the national average (Guichard 1992:341), while the great majority of landowners possess just over one hectare of land, with that total being divided among three different parcels (Martins 1990: 439).<sup>2</sup> A large proportion of small owners have lower quality vineyards: in defending equal application of increases and cuts in *benefício*, the Casa do Douro has arguably mitigated the social polarization that characterizes regions devoted to market agriculture, creating, according to Moreira, a notable level of regional solidarity (Moreira 1998: 264).

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<sup>2</sup> The data on average number of parcels comes from 1979.

Recent protests at the Casa do Douro illustrate that the institution retains its regional importance. On July 28, 2004, 500 wine growers gathered before the institution to protest the proposal by the IVDP for the harvest of 2004. While 126,000 *pipas* of port wine were authorized for production, representing an increase of 18,000 over the previous year (*O Público*, July 24, 2004), the IVDP took the position that the increase should go disproportionately to higher letters (*O Público*, July 29, 2004). The growers traveled to Régua to appeal for Casa do Douro support against the proposal. Their concerns were heard and rearticulated via loudspeaker by Luciano Vilhena Pereira, who had run recently for the presidency of the Casa do Douro, and by Manuel António dos Santos, current president of the institution (*O Público*, July 29, 2004; *O Arrais*, July 29, 2004). Santos led the crowd to the IVDP, located very near the Casa, in Régua, to protest the proposal, but the president of that institution was absent (*O Arrais*, July 29, 2004). Though the outcome of the protest is impossible to predict with any precision, the action does stress the importance of the Casa do Douro to winegrowers: though 500 growers out of 30,000 might seem an insignificant figure (as it does to the *O Público* journalist reporting on the protest, though not, it should be noted, to any of the many regional journalists following the story), a case can be made that given the transportation problems to and in Régua the number is substantial. It is worth noting that the IVDP has announced it will press charges against the Casa do Douro and winegrowers for the "invasion" of its premises that followed the massing of protestors outside of its doors (*Semanário Transmontano*, August 20, 2004).<sup>3</sup>

Such protests are one kind of context in which regional identifications are made. They are as important in the Alto Douro as they are in southern

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<sup>3</sup> As the main work for this article was completed in August of 2004, I have been unable to pursue more recent developments in the struggle between the Casa do Douro and various other political players over the distribution of the benefício and other matters. Whatever political scenario might emerge, however, I think it is worth stressing that it will not be reducible to one elite interest group (be it Casa do Douro administrators or large port wine shipping firms) defeating another, and subsequently recasting the image of the region according to its interests, with the small growers then simply adapting to this new image. Such elite-focused depictions are commonplace, but inaccurate insofar as they fail to acknowledge the interests of small growers and laborers, which, though malleable, are relatively independent, just as those bearing these interests have significant agency of their own.

France, where Winnie Lem has demonstrated that Languedoc family winegrowers have been “quick to mount protests, organize demonstrations, and initiate political actions that took on a variety of forms to safeguard viticulture and family farming,” thus acquiring “a reputation for being a particularly volatile lot” (Lem 2002: 290). While in the Languedoc, regional identity with an “ethnic” component (due, above all, to the Occitan language and a sense of national historic difference from France) serves as a rallying point among small farmers, Alto Douro wine farmers and other regional denizens lay claim to a distinction based mainly in the soil and the difficulty of working it, though this can be conceived loosely as ethnicity, at least in the local view. A regional author has written that he does not know of “any other man or woman carved from the hard work of the land, whose faces are so identical with the adverse conditions which they shape,” faces expressing an “ethnicity” created by constant work, and uncertainty (Monteiro 1998). The President of the Casa do Douro also emphasizes the role of land above all else during the protest on July 28<sup>th</sup> of 2004:

Estamos todos aqui para proclamar por justiça para a nossa região e para todos nós. Somos aqueles que damos vida à nossa região, como deram os nossos antepassados. Criámos condições para que esta região ande nas bocas do mundo e tenha sido considerada recentemente como «Património da Humanidade». Temos que ser nós a impedir que destruam a nossa região, os nossos interesses e as nossas propriedades

(“Peso da Régua: Manifestação dos Vitivinicultores em oposição ao comunicado de Vindima do IVDP”, *O Arrais*, 29 de Julho de 2004)<sup>4</sup>

The Casa do Douro has weakened over the last ten years, but it has been a remarkably resilient institution, and predictions of its demise should be viewed with some skepticism: it survived the national revolution of 1974 because it is deeply rooted in the Alto Douro region and the soil and topography making it distinctive. Regional economic crisis after the onset of the world depression in 1929 led to agitation for the formation of the institution, just as regional economic crisis had led to the founding of its predecessor institution, the General Company of Vineyard Agriculture

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<sup>4</sup> Given the multilingual character of this journal, I leave most Portuguese material in the original language, making exceptions only in using single words or short phrases that require linguistic integration into the body of the text.



of the Alto Douro, by the Marquês de Pombal in 1756.<sup>5</sup> Yet, at the beginning of the 1930s, António Salazar's authoritarian corporatist regime was reconfiguring Portuguese institutional organization, so that while the agitation in the region led to the emergence of the Casa do Douro, the institution took form within the corporatist system. The framework of corporatism was one in which all the country's institutions were closely overseen, or "tutored," by the central government, which placed office holders, including those of the Casa do Douro, according to their social and ideological positions.<sup>6</sup> Election by the Casa's Assembly continued for some offices (Moreira 1998:121 ff.), but by the middle 1930s, according to Moreira, "a nova orgânica traduzia um notório empobrecimento do character representative das estruturas corporativas da CD [Casa do Douro] e consequentemente do seu autogoverno e da sua natureza associative" (Moreira 1998:124). Due to its corporatist heritage, the Casa do Douro was slated for extinction by successive democratic governments after the 1974 Revolution. It survived, however, and was one of the only institutions in the Portuguese wine sector to do so. Moreira's (1998) work is a convincing effort to demonstrate that it was precisely the regional impulse behind the institution that kept it alive when so many other regional wine institutions – Carcavelos, Setúbal, and Dão, for example (Moreira 1994:86-91) – were abolished or significantly transformed in the revolution's aftermath (Moreira 1998:52 ff.). As a regional institution, the Casa do Douro serves as a public, "onstage," context, where, despite obvious complexity at the level of political factions, at least one seemingly unproblematical identity is presented: male vineyard owners as Durienses. It would seem that the institution works to homogenize regional identification by constructing a stage on which only males owning land within the demarcated region need appear.

This sort of stage and the acting it supports is consistent with the "backstage" reality that men own vineyards more often than women. In

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<sup>5</sup> It is worth emphasizing that Pombal acted in response to petitions for intervention by the Portuguese government on the part of well-to-do parties in the Alto Douro area (Schneider 1980: 38-45).

<sup>6</sup> National elections were held, but orchestrated to result in the government's preferred outcome. I follow writers such as Payne in preferring "corporatism" to "fascism," in part because, the Salazarian regime found Portuguese fascist political factions extremist, and fought off their political challenges (Payne 1995:312-317).

the course of the work in documents I carried out in conjunction with my ethnographic research in the parish and village of Socalcos (see below) I learned that of the 279 individuals for the parish listed in the Casa do Douro as having rights to *beneficio*, 223 (79.9%) were men and 56 (20.1%) were women (Parkhurst 1999: 108), with the gender distribution holding steady across class boundaries.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Another Context of Identification: Interregional Work Relations and the “Backstage”

The “center stage” of the regional institution and the backstage documentation of male-biased land-ownership are consistent with Cole and Wolf’s portrayal of St Felix commune and the Tyrolean regional assembly as dominated by land-owning men. When we look backstage and past legal documents, however, we see that other classes, genders and regions are involved in the construction of Duriense regional identification. In order to look backstage, I will examine another context: that of the grape harvest in the Douro. Though this context can be viewed as at least partially public, it is somewhat off center stage because it escapes the oversight of the Casa do Douro (and most other formalized institutions). Moreover, because it involves contact between men and women, it allows us a view into the more intimate aspects of regional life. The observations I will draw on in what follows were all offered in backstage settings: people’s homes, where the people for the Alto Douro were removed from the people from the surrounding regions. The setting for the observations is Socalcos, a pseudonym for a parish and a village in which I did intensive fieldwork in 1993 and 1994, and have visited many times since—1996, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004. In the following, I will be referring to the “ethnographic present” of Socalcos in the early-to-mid 1990s.

In order to “set the stage” for the analysis of harvest-time social interaction, it is important to examine how Socalcos villagers view their regional condition to differ from the regional condition found in the

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<sup>7</sup> Ownership of rights to *beneficio* is an indirect, but logical, measure of rights in the land most valuable to all Duriense winegrowers.

surrounding mountains. Generally the difference is located in the economy and gender relations. The local view is summarized by Leonor, a 55-year-old Socalcos woman with four adult children who still spends her afternoons working in the vineyards for wages:

Para ali [em Macedo de Caveleiros, por exemplo], aquelas zonas é mais de agricultura. Para ali, é quase que cada qual colhe para si. Fazem para casa, não é? Por exemplo, tem aqueles grandes lameiros de agricultura – de batata, hum, centeio, trigo, cevada, milho – e depois tem aquelas videiras, aquelas ramadas, e colhem e fazem para casa, para terem bebidas em casa. É mais assim por estas zonas. Não se vêem vinhas assim como nós por aqui, tudo assim em vinhas. E então lá sabe o que é que se vê? Que nem sei como aquelas pessoas para ali vivem. É só montes, montes, montes, montes. Não se vê nem terrenos por batatas. Nada. Lá não há dinheiro. Por exemplo, eu tenho um rebanho de gado – um rebanho de cabras – e o senhor também tem. Ora, hoje, ou esta semana, eu trabalho para o senhor, para semana o senhor trabalha para mim. E andam assim de troca. E depois vendem aqueles gados e aqueles gados é que dá dinheiro. Mas eles não trabalham assim a salário como nós. Ai, eu gosto mais daqui. Eu gosto mais de estar aqui.

While she underplays the significant subsistence production to be found in Socalcos and the market production to be found in the mountains, Leonor captures the basic regional differences accurately. And though she occupies a very low class position, Leonor considers the cash-based economy of the Alto Douro preferable to the more subsistence-based economy found at the region's edges.

Connected with this local view of regional economic differences is a sense that the subsistence-based areas are culturally different. This is generally interpreted as a contrast between “tradition” and the lack thereof. Listen to Carlos, thirty-two years old with a salaried job at one of Socalcos' wine estates, and Maria, fifty-eight and a housewife. According to Carlos, in the Minho region,

... guardam grandes tradições. Aqui já não guardam. Já não guardam tradições antigas. Quer-se dizer há povos mais ... mais agarrados assim às coisas, que realmente não querem esquecer, e há povos que, prontos, que não se interessam. Que esquecem facilmente. Sabes que no Minho tem

essa tradição. No Minho as pessoas são pessoas muito católicas, pessoas muito ... guardam grandes tradições. Aqui, já não guardam. Já não guardam tradições antigas.

According to Maria,

Aqui o Douro ... o Douro, ici, não é só aqui Socalcos, o Douro é muito grande, não é? Não é tão crente como os povos da serra. Lá para cima, para as montanhas, são muito mais crentes do que nós cá do Douro, do que os Durienses, sim senhor. Eu trazia pessoal abaixo na quinta muitos anos. O Douro não é crente como é a montanha.

Carlos' assessment of different "peoples" clarifies the local link between tradition and religiosity, and between these and the economic assessment offered by Leonor:<sup>8</sup> What could we be dealing with here but a notion of the Alto Douro's modernity in comparison with the other regions?

Modernity is generally conceived as the social condition of permanent change linked to capitalist economic development: in modernity "all that is solid melts into air" (Berman 1982). For Carlos and Teresa, tradition is the "solid" melted by regions like theirs. Some ambivalence inheres in their remarks, especially if we consider the characters of the speakers. Maria, especially, seemed always to be issuing implicit criticisms of the Alto Douro for its lack of faith. Yet I noted pride in their remarks as well, that of the "advanced" who look on the mountain traditions nostalgically – and thus condescendingly – as the superseded verities of the past. Most Socalcans wonder with Leonor how the mountain people could live like that. For them, the retrograde status of the mountain regions fully explained the in-migration of their inhabitants: the migrants wanted some of the wealth that came from advanced capitalist agriculture.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Carlos' and Maria's notions of a comparative lack of religiosity in the Alto Douro would seem to have an objective basis (Costa 1997). What they do with that objective basis in constructing a regional identity for themselves is not determined by the economy, however, and this is the main point here.

<sup>9</sup> My claims here are at some variance with Jane Collier's (1997) insights into how economic modernization leads to a valorization of the category of "the traditional" in western Andalusia. However, as Collier focuses her attention mainly on an Andalusian village and its outmigrants, and not on movement into Andalusia of people from outlying regions, it is hard to determine if her perspective and mine are consistent with one another. I suspect that they are.

That economic “backwardness” (*atraso*) was thought to have important effects on gender relations was made clear to me in a conversation I had one evening during the harvest with three Socalcans – a husband and wife (João and Teresa) and a family friend (Paula) – about women from the mountain areas:

Paula: Aquelas mulheres da montanha sabem fazer estrumes, sementeiros e tudo. Andava a mulher a semear batatas...

João: Andam elas com arado! Andam elas com arado, e com sacholas. Que o homem, os homens andam na, pronto, andam uns nas quintas, outros na – em empregos. Elas é que fazem tudo, ali com sacholas, ali aos ombros ... é pior que um homem.

Paula: Pegam em enxadas, pegam em sacholas, e nós aqui ...

João: Em gadanhas, em gadanhas. Sabes o que é uma gadanha? A gadanha é uma coisa de segar erva, que é a coisa pior que há. É a coisa pior que há.

Paula: É uma gadanha ou catana?

João: Gadanha. Catana é na tropa. Tinha uma catana para cortar mato. Já na tropa. Agora a gadanha é aquilo que utilizam na – tenho ali duas. Tenho ali duas gadanhas, para segar mato. Aquele gajo que anda todo o dia com aquilo, a trabalhar, chega ao fim do dia cansado. E já vi mulheres – mulheres – muitas mulheres! Olha, em Sobrados, em Garganta. A mulher é que pega naquilo! Pronto. E essas chegam – sei que chegam ao fim do dia cansadas, e que, pronto, que realmente que aquilo é que é trabalho.

Paula: É trabalho, mas não tem ambiente nenhum em casa.

João: Tá bem, isso é outro caso.

Teresa: Mas, ó Shawn, em casa, as casas é uma porcaria. Não sabem fazer nada, nem nada. Não tem limpeza,

Paula: Nem comer fazem.

Teresa: Nem tem nada. Nem de fazer o comer, nem nada. Eu já sei fazê-lo fora [como empregada doméstica] como em casa.

This is a common view on mountain women, based on the sporadic experiences of Socalcans in the upland areas. Note that the reason for

the engagement of women in “men’s” work is understood to derive from economic need. There is in fact a closer gender balance between men and women in settlements close to the Douro River than in the more mountainous areas, and so the description is based in facts and sound reasoning.<sup>10</sup> Still, one claim merits attention for its ideological function. The observation about women doing men’s work spurs both of the women in the exchange to define themselves against what they consider a different – and inferior – regional gender order.

To summarize, there is a notion in Socalcos that economic development explains why workers come from the outside regions to work in the Alto Douro. The presence of outside workers in the Alto Douro troubles Socalcans, however, and especially those with few or no vineyards, who express the strongest views on their differences from interregional migrants. Lower-class Socalcans believe their region’s wealth places them in a higher class position than in-migrants. Thus in-migration works to produce a notion of a class-division between regions. The notion is conditioned in part by the resentment felt by Socalcans about their relation to the bourgeoisie of Porto, which Socalcans feel benefit inordinately from the wine produced in the Alto Douro, and to condescend while doing so. (A common refrain heard in Socalcos and across the region is: “Não é vinho do Porto, é vinho do Douro!”). The notion is also informed by lower-class people’s class position within the local community. In-migration allows them to raise themselves symbolically. The symbolic class divide between regions is intimately involved as well with notions of a gendered division between regions.

This gendered division is highlighted during harvesting season, when female migrants from outside of the region arrive in *rogas* from areas south of the mountains rising from the Douro River, and from areas north of the Douro Demarcated Region, to pick grapes. *Rogas* consist of women and men, but their women hold special symbolic importance for Socalcans. *Rogas* are trucked in to stay for the length of the harvest—about two weeks. In the morning, trucks transport the members of the *roga* from their collective sleeping quarters to estate

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<sup>10</sup> This observation is based on my perusal of data from the Instituto Nacional de Estatística (1993). For brief observations on gender balance in the populations of two villages near the Douro River in the Cima Corgo subregion see Parkhurst 2000 (especially 218 ff.). The ecological basis of gender variation in northern Portuguese emigration is an important topic on which little research has been done.

vineyards for harvest. The work is organized according to age, status, and gender. At the end of the day comes the treading of grapes, when interregional gender distinctions are heightened. When darkness makes it impossible to cut grapes, the workers are transported down the sinuous slopes to the treading tanks. Grapes have been heaped into the tanks throughout the day. The quintessential moment of the harvest has arrived: the first treading (*a corte*). Estate-owning families continue the tradition of inviting well-to-do guests from the city to view the event. To the guests the regional origin of the treaders is assumed to be Duriense or considered of no importance. But to Socalcans, especially poorer Socalcans, the treaders are regionally branded. Socalcos men and women adamantly claim that Socalcos women do not tread grapes. Though on a rare occasion a Socalcos woman may tread, this will be in the privacy of her home tank (*lagar*). For Socalcos women, treading in public view would violate local rules of gender decorum. Women from the mountains, in lurid contrast, tread.

This fact is consistent with the description of the “Duriense woman” published by Amílcar de Sousa in 1906. According to Sousa:

Se é a operária que corta as uvas, a dona de casa cuida da alimentação, e que trabalhos não passa para dar de comer ás «ranchadas», que de longes terras da «montanha», ao som de cantigas nostálgicas e com danças ingenuas, nos fins de setembro, invadem o Douro ...

As mulheres das «ranchadas» – as «montanheiras» – colhem de dia, pelo sol de fogo, as uvas, favos d’assucar, e de noite, coristas no grande palco do lugar, de saias arregaçadas, «sovam» o vinho que lhes tingem as pernas nuas e roliças

(Sousa 1906: 174)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Leite de Vasconcelos claims that women in various parts of the Alto Douro tread grapes (Vasconcelos 1982: 624-631). It is hard to date his observations with any precision, but they seem to derive from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>. More precisely for the first half of the twentieth century, Maria affirms that in the Alto Douro “o trabalho nos lagares é feito por homens.” “No entanto,” she continues, “mais de uma vez tem sucedido as mulheres colaborarem também nessa faina, quando escasseiam os lagareiros” (Lamas 1948: 129). A close reading of Vasconcelos and Lamas raises the question of whether the women to which both texts refer are Durienses or from the surrounding regions, but because they don’t address the question of how specific tasks might be regionally codified, this kind of question is not answered.

The economic explanation for this is that women from places like Mondim de Basto (north of the Douro) need the cash offered by treading;<sup>12</sup> the social explanation is that men in Mondim are less able than Socalcos men to control women's behavior; the cultural explanation is that in Mondim views of gender differ from those held in Socalcos. The importance of these explanations is that they are bound up in work that serves as a performance. When Mondim couples dance a laborious polka in the must to the swirling concertina music before an audience of nattily dressed city people and interested locals, a scene is played out that informs Socalcos' sense of regional identity. The work of Mondim women in the treading tanks facilitates the reproduction of a key aspect of Socalcos gender division; at the same time it provides an interregional backdrop against which Socalcos women's distinction can stand out.

These grape-treading mountain women are not only less decorous. Socalcos claim that they readily accept the sexual advances of Socalcos men. It is a rare conversation about harvest workers that fails to include tales about women from the *rogas* returning home with a growing belly. These conversations and tales are key backstage discourses of regional identity. Whether accurate or not, these discourses express a common feeling that the surrounding mountains are spaces of improper sexual relations, and foster a sense that the Alto Douro and the zones supplying it with labor have a collective gender relation, with the Alto Douro a symbolically "male" region and the mountain parts of Trás-os-Montes and the Beira Alta "female" regions. There is no discussion of Socalcos women being impregnated by in-migrating male harvest workers. When mountain youths approached young women from Socalcos, generally at dances, they were not well received. As one Socalcos woman told me: "the boys would come here with shoes that were all polished up, but completely worn out beneath the polish." She then laughed and shook her head at the "poor things." Young mountain women serve as the symbol of their region's gender identity. In the Socalcos view, in addition to being "feminine," that region is symbolically illegitimate, for mountain girls fail to marry the Duriense men purported to impregnate them. The symbolism requires little factuality to function, of course: merely by

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<sup>12</sup> Estate workers can make two possible wages in a 24 hour period: a day-wage for working in the vineyard and a night-wage for working in the treading tanks.



treading (and displaying their legs) mountain women provide all the proof of illegitimacy necessary for further regional fantasizing.<sup>13</sup> The mountain regions' symbolic gender is rendered consistent by the weakness in the gendered division of labor found there: because men and women do the same labor in the mountains, men and women can be lumped together under the sign of regional femininity.

## Conclusion

Viewing the Alto Douro region as symbolically gendered certainly does not contradict the picture of the region conjured by the image of land-owning men gathering in Régua to demand effective representation by their regional institution. It does complicate it, however. When wine growers assemble institutionally, they are practicing a regional identification that shows a male face. What I have attempted to show is that this identification involves an orchestrated devaluation not just of women, but also of other regions (identified as female). A circular symbolic chain leads from a Duriense gendered division of labor to the social predominance of Duriense males and from the supposed sociocultural simplicity of the mountains to the purported division-saturated complexity of the Alto Douro. Socalcos make sense of their class and gender divisions against the amorphous backdrop of a nearly ever-present regional Other. Kelley (1994) demonstrates the importance of attending to gender in analyzing the relations between national cores and regional peripheries. Socalcos smallholding families and workers remind us that interregional gender relations require analysis alongside of more conventional (national) core-(regional) periphery protocols. Gendered Duriense regionality may well be a further example of the "masculine hegemony" examined by Almeida (2004) in the context of Portuguese national identifications, but it is important to emphasize that such

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<sup>13</sup>Lamas' description of in-migrating women harvest workers suggests that they have little significant contact with Alto Douro men: "Elas vêm de longe, em ranchos [um termo regional menos específico do que rogas] – mulheres das montanhas de Bigorne, Gralheira, Montemuro e de outros lados. Mas não se dão com os *durienses*. Ambos mantêm os seus costumes e o seu contacto é quase exclusivamente com os da sua região" (Lamas 1948:124). In the 1990s I noted that young female harvest workers stuck fairly closely to their own groups.

hegemony depends on regional identifications informed by particular institutions and particular region-based interactions. Certainly if the spatial origins of wine harvesters changes, or treading disappears from the vinification process, the practice of regional identifications – gendered and otherwise – in the Alto Douro will alter. There are signs that this is occurring with the increased use of Eastern Europeans in harvesting activities, and the mechanization of must-production. Yet significant numbers of workers continue to hail from the regions surrounding the Alto Douro, and treading is maintained as a “traditional” way to produce fine wine.

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Shawn S. Parkhurst

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