

Political movement in the making of regional space: The Alto Douro of northern
Portugal

Longer version

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Introduction

This paper is about a region in Portugal called the Alto Douro. It is a strange stretch of land – 250,000 hectares full of cliffs, bluffs, scrub brush, rubble and vineyards. The landscape is distinctive for being composed of a hard, but readily fissured, rock called schist [**slide 1**]. The vineyards are bedded in the rubble [**slide 2**] and carved into the bluffs [**slides 3, 4, 5**]. The Douro river system presides under all of this, having preconditioned the terrain through erosion. Dispersed across the landscape is a multitude of settlements, the inhabitants of most numbering in the low hundreds, the inhabitants of a few numbering between 5,000 and 10,000.

The curious topography is dedicated to the production of port wine – a sweet wine fortified through the addition of brandy during fermentation. The Alto Douro is the first demarcated wine region of the modern world (Unwin 1991:21), and, since 2001, a World Heritage Site. Geographers describing the rock-ribbed terrain have wondered “how men ever came to consider it suitable for cultivation” (Stanislawski 1970:97). That common question has not yet been adequately answered. It resonates, invisibly, with another question, less commonly asked: how has transit played a role in giving a seemingly inhospitable terrain a regional identity? It is the question addressed by this paper.

The transit is best discussed as circulation. The reason: it transpires between relatively fixed points. Following Lomnitz-Adler (1992) –himself apparently influenced indirectly by Wallerstein -- I find that these points can usefully be called regional cores

and peripheries.¹ The transit also moves in more than one direction between these points, often doubling back, and in so doing helping to secure their relative fixity. There is reason to view circulation as a fundamental problem in the social sciences. Marx considered circulation second, logically, only to production in the creation of the capitalist world most human beings inhabit.² Anthropologist Greg Urban recently made a different claim, writing in 1996 that “circulation is the basis of all culture” (Urban 1996:xiii). If capital and culture are defined, as I think they should be (agreeing with analyses such as Geertz 1973 and Wolf 1999), public, social phenomena instead of merely psychological orientations and categories, the importance of circulation for capital and culture, as well as for many other features of the human world, would seem undeniable.

What else circulates? Through what sorts of social-spatial scales does circulation occur? Taking up the last question first, there seem to be a world scale, a nation-state scale, and a local scale. There is also a regional scale. The “regional” is particularly interesting because it seems to be the least sociocentric and the most geographical of all of the social-spatial concepts available at this time. (By “most geographical” I mean something like “most likely to harbor a sense of ‘given material terrain.’”) Of items that circulate in regional terms, we could emphasize goods of various kinds. Certainly also people and discourses circulate. Such items receive special emphasis in the pages that follow. Circulation of this kind has political entailments. To come to grips with these I use the idea of regulation. The particular regulation of concern here is the regulation of

¹ Lomnitz-Adler’s work on regional matters is ground-breaking in anthropology. I express his debt to Wallerstein tentatively because Lomnitz-Adler does not cite Wallerstein.

² Volume II of *Capital* is entitled “The Process of Circulation of Capital.”

region. Involved with regional regulation is an ideology of region and something best called hegemonic regionalization, as will be seen toward the end of the paper.

If “region” is indeed a useful concept because it troubles easy sociocentrism, the Alto Douro seems to be particularly useful because, although seeming to be particularly durable in geographical terms, it is especially hard to pin down in conceptual terms. It does not fit in like the piece that completes the puzzle of the seemingly integrated nation. The reasons are multiple. It is an administrative region, but not like Portugal’s other administrative regions, and certainly not like the districts, counties, and parishes that cross-cut it or fit into it. Occasionally it is considered an independent socio-cultural region, both by dwellers there and by geographers, [slide 6] but more commonly it is considered part of a broader region. A name frequently found on regional maps, “Trás-os-Montes e [and] Alto Douro,” registers the association [slide 7].³ The Alto Douro is a demarcated wine region, like others in Portugal (Simões 2006); yet it is different from the others in being the first, and in being the one with an identification growing from some tenacious grass roots (Moreira 1998). Portugal’s preeminent geographer, Orlando Ribeiro, considered the Alto Douro “perhaps the most clearly defined, the most varied [*acidentada*], yet also the most uniform [*uniforme*], of Portuguese regions” (Ribeiro 1995:315) – not just on a par with other Portuguese regions, that is, but *primus inter pares*.⁴ No other Portuguese wine demarcation is accorded such importance.

³ The Alto Douro was carved out of two preexisting sociocultural regions (or provinces) – Trás-os-Montes and Beira Alta. In the first part of the twentieth century it was assimilated to Trás-os-Montes province, rendering the former Beira Alta areas within it parts of “Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro.”

⁴ Ribeiro’s geographical “regions” generally coincide with what in the past were called provinces. I try my best to be consistent in calling these sociocultural regions, while remembering the geographical character of their constitution.

A more detailed picture of the region requires attention to grapes and wine. The Alto Douro has been roughly equivalent to the Douro Demarcated Region of port wine production since 1756. Since that date the region has been in part an explicitly spatialized system for regulating the production of port wine. It is surrounded by strict boundaries beyond which the purchase of grapes for this product is illegal. It is differentiated internally into segments of land which are “scientifically” indexed to prices payable for their grape produce.

The Alto Douro and the Casa do Douro

From 1932 until the present, growing grapes for port wine has entailed mandatory membership in the Casa do Douro.⁵ The Casa do Douro (CD) is one of the triangle of institutions representing the economic actors involved in the port wine system, 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 dos Vinhos do Douro e Porto (IVDP), which represents both growers and shippers, along with the Portuguese state. The CD represents the economic interests of Alto Douro (in Portuguese, *duriense*) wine growers, particularly as they clash with the economic interests of port wine shippers. The latter are based in the city of Porto (the toponymic origin of the wine’s name) and in Porto’s neighbor city Vila Nova de Gaia, both of which lie sixty miles to the west of the Alto Douro, on the Atlantic coast. The shippers’ main interest is making a profit, which includes 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

⁵ Different institutional parties are attempting to alter the requirement for membership. The CD has, understandably, resisted.

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 grapes for port wine, which garners much higher prices than table wine). The CD promotes this interest, and also attempts to unite growers economically by advocating increases (and sometimes cuts) in *benefício* across the different qualities of grapes. The Alto Douro is highly polarized in terms of land ownership, with great numbers of small, semi-proletarian growers, who tend to own the poorest quality vineyards, and small numbers of large, capitalist growers, with high-letter vineyards. In defending equal application of increases and cuts in *benefício*, the CD 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).

The regulation is crucial to the region. However, ultimately the regulation cannot be applied with complete neutrality. This is the case partly because the institutions effecting regulation occupy particular places, and in so doing, render the region they regulate irregular. The reason: the places occupied are typically places of relative power and population. Examining the circulation of political agents involved in forming the CD will help demonstrate this. These are the circulating people mentioned in the introduction. If we ask how regional regulation was formed through circulation, they are a key part of the story. In forming the CD they were "placing" it through circulation. They placed it in a town called Peso da Régua ("Régua" for short), and in so doing made for irregular regulation.⁶

⁶ It is officially recognized as a city, but because of its size and of how it is viewed in Portugal vis-à-vis larger cities, I refer here to it as a town.

“Placing” the Regional Core: Régua

The town of Régua has a population of about 10,000. It lies near the western edge of the demarcated region in a narrow, elongated basin, hollowed out by erosion from an original tectonic cleft [slide 8]. Régua is not an old settlement in Portuguese terms, or even in *duriense* terms. It was granted an archdeaconry in 1492. King Manuel I gave it a royal charter in 1513 (Soares 1936:17-18). The charter in particular calls attention to Régua’s comparative youth. In contrast, the *duriense* town of São João de Pesqueira, enfolded in a high, rolling plateau just south (and much above) the Douro River, received the first charter in Portuguese history, in 1055 AD (Reis 1991:33).⁷

Although Régua’s importance developed comparatively late, it developed with some rapidity. In the eighteenth century Régua achieved real economic gravity. From Lisbon, the Marquis of Pombal decreed the creation of a royal Wine Company and a regional demarcation, each dependent on one another. He ordered that the Wine Company’s warehouses be located in Régua (Soares 1936: 56 ff.; Correia 1974: 239). Once the warehouses were established, winegrowers throughout the Alto Douro were effectively forced to visit Régua to sell their wine. Because the winegrowers required lodging, inns multiplied. Local merchants opened stores in order to sell agricultural tools and supplies to winegrowers (Soares 1936:56-59). Agglomeration effects continued developing from there. Thus, the regional coreness of Régua can be seen as punctually abetted by the state, but also as developing according to a regional logic of its own after the original intervention.

⁷ Charters conferred prior to the establishment of Portugal as an internationally recognized sovereign state (in 1179) are hard to describe as “royal” in any conventional sense of that word. They were, however, certainly conferred by redoubtable *claimants* to sovereign power

A large part of that regional logic pivots on struggle. Three subregions compose the Alto Douro. From west to east these are the Baixo Corgo, the Cima Corgo, and the Douro Superior [slide 9]. Régua is in the Baixo Corgo. The regional struggle is structured along subregional lines, “with each subregion ... disposed to undermine common regional interests” (Amorim 1991 [1943]:15). The Baixo Corgo has 33% of its land devoted to grape production, while the figures for the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior are 18% and 7% respectively. The latter two subregions struggle to increase these percentages, and the market share of their port wine. When they resist Régua’s leadership, Régua must communicate appeals for unity to those subregions in order to keep its privileged political and economic position. Here we enter into the circulation involved in the historical making and remaking of a region.

Re-Centering Régua Regionally, 1907-1932

In 1865 the Wine Company established by Pombal was completely dismantled. Regional regulation ceased. In 1907, economic devastation created the “the Douro Question,” and kept it alive until 1932 (Pereira & Sequeira 2004). The Question emerged from two experiences. First, the Alto Douro had been punished by various vineyard infestations which decimated production for years upon years beyond the date when they originally appeared. For oidium this date was 1852, for phylloxera 1863, for mildew 1893 (Pereira 2005:189). Second, winegrowers from the southern part of the country (the Ribatejo and parts of the Alentejo) took advantage of the void left in wine supply for the Portuguese market to sell their own wines, often of very inferior quality, under the label of “Douro” or “Port” (Pereira & Sequeira 2004:63-64). The effect was that when *duriense* wines recovered, there was little national market for them (although the

important British market appeared secure at that time). In other words, keeping the Alto Douro alive meant securing a market for *duriense* wine. The question of how to accomplish this hung in the gloomy air without satisfactory answers for decades.

Régua's regional position in this context is captured by neo-realist novelist Alves Redol in his portrayal of the *paladinos* (champions) of the Alto Douro in 1910 and 1911. In this period of severe economic crisis, the *paladinos* attempted to forge a regional federation of winegrowers. Redol describes the *paladinos* from Régua as "only in agreement when it came to showering criticism on those from Alijó and Pesqueira who, because they were from above the Corgo [east of the Baixo Corgo], did not submit to the political dominance of those from Régua" (Redol 1981 [1951]:208). Even though the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior together produced more wine than did the Baixo Corgo at this time (Pina 1998:545), the Cima Corgo *paladinos* were unable to shift the center of political gravity in the region. Perceiving this, they concentrated on maintaining a measure of independence from Régua and its Winegrowers' Commission. They suspected the latter of colluding with southern winegrowers to redefine "port" as wine from any Portuguese region shipped through Vila Nova de Gaia (Redol 1980 [1953]:292-295).

Régua's spatial role in the region can be detected in later years, when the long crisis spiked in intensity. On May 10, 1914, the Civil Governor of Vila Real, on orders from the republican national government of Bernardino Machado, held a commission meeting-cum-rally in Régua devoted to the "Douro Question."⁸ In attendance were representatives from the wine region's many municipalities and wine-growers' unions (*sindicatos*) (Pereira & Sequeira 2004: 67). In 1925 and 1926, Régua was the site of large

⁸ Over the course of the long crisis, the Portuguese national government made a fundamental shift from constitutional monarchy to republic. The First Portuguese Republic was proclaimed in 1910.

public meetings organized by the *paladinos*, who were concerned that Great Britain might accept “port” wine from anywhere in Portugal (Martins 1990:377), and who clamored for government measures to restrict the “port” label and the Vila Nova de Gaia entrepôt to *duriense* wine (Sequeira 2000:42). Such meetings surely entailed political circulation – of people and polemics – around Régua as a center of gravity.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s the evidence suggests that Régua’s pull as a regional gyroscope was undiminished. With the beginning of the world depression in 1929, the wine economy of the Alto Douro entered into even greater crisis. Conditions were such that “rural workers offered to work only for food.” Even so, “the grower found it difficult to employ them” (Amorim 1991 [1943]:11). In 1931, two winegrower’s unions in the Baixo Corgo and one in the Cima Corgo, considered to be among the few that were fully functioning within the region as a whole,⁹ sponsored conferences in the Cima Corgo town of Favaios, high on a plateau some eight rough kilometers north of the Douro River. They were desperate for solutions (Sequeira 2000:147). The first conference took place on August 16 (Amorim 1991 [1943]:16). The second was scheduled for September 13, but was canceled at the last minute by order of the municipal administrator of Alijó (Amorim 1991 [1943]:16-17), who had jurisdiction over Favaios. The same administrator later forced the cancellation of a conference scheduled to last from December 26 to December 31 (Amorim 1991 [1943]:19-23). In place of the last prohibited conference, a smaller meeting was held in Régua, on December 26, at the home of Júlio Vasques. It involved the heads of the wine-growers’ unions from Barqueiros (west of Régua), Santa

⁹The Baixo Corgo unions were located in Barqueiros and Santa Marta de Penaguião. The Cima Corga union was located in Favaios (Roseira 1992:107).

Marta da Penaguião (north of Régua), and Favaíos (northeast of Régua).¹⁰ It resulted in a communiqué about what had been attempted and what was needed. The communiqué was issued to wine-growers' unions across the region (Amorim 1991 [1943]:28).

In March of 1932, the municipality of São João de Pesqueira, in the Cima Corgo, some kilometers south of the Douro River, responded to the call to arms sent out after the December 26 Régua meeting. It sponsored a conference for the region's municipalities in the town of Pinhão, also located in the Cima Corgo, on the northern bank of the Douro River. From that conference emerged the idea of a federated winegrowers' union (Amorim 1991 [1943]:31; Roseira 1992:107). On June 26 of 1932, a similar meeting, presumably greater in size, was held in Régua (Moreira 1996:90). In July of 1932 a meeting of agricultural and winegrowers' syndicates took place once again in Pinhão. It was followed by a meeting in Régua at the end of the same month, this one including administrative authorities from the region (Moreira 1996:84).

After this meeting a draft charter for the Comissão da Viticultura da Região Duriense (Douro Region Commission on Wine Agriculture; the Portuguese acronym is CVRD) was drawn up and sent to the national government. According to the charter, membership in parish-level unions was to be obligatory for all winegrowers. The federation of these was to be called "Casa do Douro." On August 21 of 1932 a meeting was held in Alijó, high on the Cima Corgo plateau, north of the Douro River, at which this charter was presented to the public (Moreira 1996:ibid.). At the meeting it was determined that the CD was to be a self-regulating institution independent of the state.

¹⁰ Although Régua served as a meeting place for the union heads, Régua's wine-growers' union was not involved in the meeting (Amorim 1991 [1943]:56-57).

However, the authoritarian government of António Salazar, established in 1932, forced acceptance of modifications (Moreira 1996:85).

Régua was the site of a new meeting in October, at which counter-modifications were proposed (Amorim 1991 [1943]:32; Moreira 1996:90). The government accepted many of these, and a decree containing the statutes of the Federated Wine-Growers Unions of the Douro Region (Federação Sindical dos Viticultores da Região do Douro), “or, as it is better-known, the Casa do Douro,” was approved on November 18, 1932 (Amorim 1991 [1943]:32; see also Moreira 1996:85).

Emerging, as had its predecessor institution, at a time of economic crisis, the CD took shape as a recasting of Pombal’s Wine Company. Against its challengers Régua consolidated its power as the central place of this historical recasting. Its centrality is revealed by specific features of social topography. For instance, the *paladinos* of the Regional Commission (CVRD) and the CD were strongly tied to Régua. Júlio Vasques was a native of Régua (Correia 1968 [1965]:123-124). Antão de Carvalho, Camilo Bernardes Pereira and J. J. Costa Lima headed different institutions--including the municipal government--in Régua when the push for the Federation of Unions gathered steam (Moreira 1996:91-93). Régua's centrality in the process of gathering regional support can be seen, too, in the itinerary traced by the different meetings: the meetings moved from the Cima Corgo highlands town of Favaíes down to the riverside knolls of Baixo Corgo Régua, then east along the river to Pinhão in the Cima Corgo, and again back to Régua, once again to Pinhão, then to Régua one more time, up to the highlands Cima Corgo town of Alijó, and finally back down to Régua. The itinerary suggests forays made into the margins, or semi-margins, in order to draw supporters back to the

core, where the CD would be located. These circulating meetings, and the circulating elements which constituted them (people, documents and discursive understandings passed along orally) had the effect of re-centering Régua in regional terms.

Has the circulation involved in making the region through transmission from and through Régua continued? To answer this question we must examine more recent political processes, and examine the role of print media – particularly newspapers – in these processes. Examining newspapers with some care should make it clear that “politics” must be construed broadly to include the practice and geography of regional representation. “Representation” should also be accorded ample interpretive scope.¹¹

Re-Centering Régua after 1990

Elections in the 1990s for the directorate of the CD underscore the durability of Régua's core character. The elections of 1995 seem to be typical in most regards, so I will use them for illustrative purposes. The most noteworthy difference between the two competing slates of candidates was subregional. Thus the incumbent president's slate (List A) was made up of two candidates from the Baixo Corgo and one from the Cima Corgo. The challenging slate (List B) was composed of two candidates from the Cima Corgo and one from the Douro Superior. The challengers emphasized the importance of these origins in claiming that they would operate differently from the incumbents, particularly by traveling to Lisbon with representatives of the various *duriense* municipal governments to address ministers in the national government. By criticizing the incumbents' favored political strategy of "bringing winegrowers into Régua on buses for

¹¹ It involves both political representatives and cultural representations.

rallies,"¹² the challengers seemed to view the space of Régua as part of a political problem to be solved.

The challengers (List B) failed, as the incumbents (List A) garnered 58.25% of the votes to their 38.45%.¹³ The voting totals varied by subregion, with much stronger support for the incumbents in the Baixo Corgo (the incumbents received 64% of votes compared to List B's 34%) than in the other two sub-regions (in the Cima Corgo, List A won 57% to 39%, and in the Douro Superior only 51% to 46%). There were also significantly fewer abstentions in the Baixo Corgo, with 39% voting, than in the other two subregions, where less than 33% of eligible voters cast ballots.¹⁴ From these patterns we can see that winegrowers in Régua and the Baixo Corgo supported the status quo more than did the voters of the other subregions. The status quo entailed specific positions on the politics of winegrowing and on the dominance of one subregion over the others.

We can also see that although the peripheralized subregions seem to have been comparatively discontented with the status quo, abstentions in those subregions lent de facto support to the Baixo Corgo core as the stage for regional representation to a national political audience. The regional newspapers, both published in Régua, supported List A as the "known list" (e.g., Miranda 1995). It is likely that the newspapers' editorials had some impact, although this is difficult to measure. The spatial patterning of the election results conforms with Redol's portrayal of the relations between regional core and periphery circa 1910, as well as the political circulation that enabled the formation of

¹²"Eleições para a Casa do Douro (Lista B): Entrevista com Prof. Luís Eduardo Pereira Pinto," *O Arrais*, 15 de Junho de 1995.

¹³Blank and null votes keep these figures from adding up to 100%.

¹⁴All figures were tabulated on the basis of information in "Casa do Douro: Resultados finais das eleições," *O Arrais*, 29 de Junho de 1995.

the CD in Régua. It reproduces on another register the circulation of the core into the periphery and back again during attempts to organize regional resistance to economic depredation by extra-regional wine interests in the early 1930s.¹⁵

By “another register,” I mean the register of tallied votes, and the representation of those votes. Acknowledging the distinction between registers opens up the question of representation in its more fully symbolic sense. How is Régua located in this kind of representation? To answer this, it is important to examine newspapers.

“Pressing” Circulation

Régua has been the publishing center of the Alto Douro for at least 150 years. Although many books have been published in the city over the past 100 years, newspapers call for special attention due to their more regular circulation. Since 1863, Régua has been the home of at least 19 different newspapers, ten of which have, judging from their titles, been explicitly pitched at representing the Alto Douro Region (Tóro 1946: unpaginated).¹⁶ Currently there are two important newspapers published in Régua which address themselves to the interests of the region: *Notícias do Douro* (News of the Douro)¹⁷ and *O Arrais* (The Helmsman). Founded in 1934, *Notícias do Douro* is by far

¹⁵ The institutional changes in wine regulation during the first decade of the twenty-first century have occasioned skirmish after skirmish between different interest groups in the Alto Douro. As Régua is the site of the institutions at the center of most of these changes (the CD and the IVDP), the streets of Régua serve as the scene of most of the skirmishes. For a brief account, see Parkhurst 2005.

¹⁶ Tóro only offers data on newspapers published up to 1946. Further archival work may well reveal important newspapers founded between that date and 1978.

¹⁷ The term “Douro” is used more often in everyday speech than the term “Alto Douro” to refer to the area roughly correspondent with the Douro Demarcated Region. Barreto (2006:8) takes pains to make the interchangeability of the terms clear, and to support the continued use of “Alto Douro” for geographical precision.

the older paper. *O Arrais* was founded in 1978. The papers are similar in format and content, so I will focus on *Notícias do Douro* in describing the layout of the papers.

In the mid-1990s, *Notícias do Douro* was sold mainly by subscription, at a yearly cost of \$20.00 U.S. Its weekly print run was estimated at 12,600 copies, which gave it, according to the masthead, "the greatest circulation in the Douro."¹⁸ In terms of circulation, this puts it in the top 5% of regional papers serving northern Portugal surveyed by Pedrosa (1991:259).¹⁹ In 1991, the population of the 19 counties having parishes in the Demarcated Region was 240,000 (Gaspar 1993:52). Basing calculations on this figure, one copy of the paper was produced per every 19 *durienses*.²⁰ There is always at least one issue to be found in each parish, as all parish councils subscribe. There are more readers than subscribers. I have seen issues of either paper passed between villagers. More common than instances of the newspapers passing through various hands are instances of villagers – sometimes illiterate villagers -- paraphrasing stories from the papers to one another in conversation. It makes sense, then, that the content of the newspapers, or renditions of it, circulate through word of mouth as well as through reading.

¹⁸The circulation of *O Arrais* should run close behind, however, judging from the regularity with which I have encountered it in village households. It also differs from *Notícias do Douro* in being available for purchase on newsstands, although mainly in Régua.

¹⁹Pedrosa (1991:261) seems to count the papers serving the Alto Douro as among those few of the 147 "regional" papers circulating in the north with a clear regional definition and readership. Many of the others "do not extend beyond the parish or county [where they are published], or, when they do, they cover a space that is not definable in conventional regional terms."

²⁰Of course, this figure is useful only in providing a crude sense of newspaper readership within the region. Emigrants make up a significant portion of the subscribers to many northern Portuguese newspapers.

Newspaper Political Economy

The regional newspapers generally defend the political and economic operations of the Alto Douro's core institution – the CD. As these operations depend on political leadership and staffing drawn largely from the Baixo Corgo subregion, this means a de facto support for the political dominance of one subregion over the other within the key economic regulatory apparatus. If we return to the elections of 1995, we can see how this support operates.

During the elections, the editor of *O Arrais* penned an editorial in support of the Baixo Corgo incumbents. Eduardo Miranda opens his editorial by encouraging a full voter turnout among winegrowers as a means of showing "class unity" and support for an institution created to defend their interests, but currently in a position of "accentuated weakness" (Miranda 1995). According to Miranda, a strong turnout would prompt the national government to reconsider its single-minded efforts to "Europeanize Portugal" by promoting migration from the countryside to the Portuguese metropolises. For Miranda this migration is at least as much a voyage of social degradation -- urban unemployment and the poverty, drug addiction and other ills following in its wake -- as the high road to economic development. Most importantly, it leads to the "desertification" of regions like the Alto Douro.

Having established the national importance of rural regions and holding up the Alto Douro as a model, Miranda then shifts the focus to the election at hand. List A earns his unqualified support because President Mesquita Montes, "though not irreplaceable," is the man best able to negotiate the independence of the Demarcated Region against global market forces because he has "an excellent quality, only comparable to a 'vintage'

wine of an excellent harvest year: the exporters and their supporting cast cannot control him."

Hardly an issue goes by without some news -- often front-page -- on the CD. The coverage of the institution, and its Baixo Corgo leadership, is nearly always positive. An example of this bias is a pair of articles published by *O Arrais* on the protocol of December 21, 1996 between the CD and the national government. The protocol provided the CD with limited financial protection against court-ordered seizures and sale of CD property following the institution's inability to make scheduled loan payments to a creditor. Because of the questionable financial activity that made the protocol necessary and because of their discontent with certain institutional changes in the region,²¹ a group of *duriense* winegrowers issued formal demands for the removal of Mesquita Montes from the presidency.

Nonetheless, *O Arrais* issued an article on the topic which sought out only the view of Mesquita Montes.²² Months later, an article covering the demands of the protesting winegrowers concludes by citing the words of the incumbent president of the CD on the demands.²³ Mesquita Montes applauds the protests against him as positive signs of collective regional liveliness and attempts to redirect the criticisms by saying "the growers should have awakened long ago to ally themselves with the CD against the manner in which the institutional reform was effected."

²¹These changes included the transfer of certain regulatory powers of the CD to a "Regional Interprofessional Council," also headquartered in Régua, and then from the Interprofessional Council to the Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e do Porto (IVDP). The IVDP is also headquartered in Régua.

²²"Casa do Douro: 'Vão-se os anéis, fiquem os dedos,'" *O Arrais*, 9 de Janeiro de 1997.

²³"Uns Falam, outros consentem: Viticultores contestam reformas e saem em defesa da Casa do Douro," *O Arrais*, 6 de Junho de 1997.

The political bias of the papers is further revealed in the tendency to relegate criticism of Mesquita Montes to letters to the editor. Such letters are followed -- especially in *O Arrais* -- by a response defending the CD's leadership. The papers' ties are not to the person but to the regional institution, however. This became clear in 1999, when snowballing financial problems compelled Mesquita Montes finally to step down from the presidency of the CD. Following Montes's departure, the newspapers shifted to wholesale support for a new president. That president, Manuel António dos Santos, is from the regional core (Vilarinhos dos Freires, in the Baixo Corgo). He was reelected to his tenth year in office in the spring of 2009. He remains in office as I write. In his first election, he defeated a candidate from the Cima Corgo. In later elections, the Baixo Corgo candidate has defeated challengers from the other subregions. The success of Baixo Corgo candidates may not depend on the circulation of regional newspapers from the (Régua-cum-Baixo Corgo) regional core into the regional periphery. Certainly, however, that success is portrayed to the region as a whole as merited. It is important to recall that an effective portrayal depends on circulation.

Regional Newspaper Culture

The regional newspapers do not limit their attention on the politics of the *duriense* economy. They also portray the Alto Douro as a region with a distinctive culture. To do so, the papers abstract greatly, pushing local differentiation to the margins. As the regional images used are often developed by writers based in Régua, or the Baixo Corgo more broadly, the newspapers work to produce a picture of the region as culturally homogeneous while reproducing Régua's importance as the core of something best called

“hegemonic regionalization.” Such reproduction is a sort of re-centering accomplished through circulation.

Ideology is part of that hegemony. In this case, the ideology is called “regionalism.” The ideology of regionalism is expressed well in portraits of the Alto Douro dedicated to interpreting the human meaning of the regional landscape. Nearly every issue of *O Arrais* or *Notícias do Douro* contains such portraits. Typical is an essay by J. Monteiro, a writer from the Baixo Corgo subregion. In “The *Duriense*” (Monteiro 1998), we learn that the man of the Alto Douro “excavates vineyards,” “reigns victorious over schist,” and, no matter what his age, has a face the color of the soil from working on the land so single-mindedly. Monteiro 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.” These faces express an “ethnicity” sculpted by constant work, and uncertainty: nature has taught them that grape crops can be completely ruined with one spell of bad weather. The endurance of the *duriense* is as heroic as that of the Portuguese emigrant, and Monteiro believes that a bronze statue, without a name or identity, should be erected in Régua as a way of honoring “the *duriense* man and woman” -- the builders of “this cathedral of schist.” The portrait might seem concrete, but on inspection it dissolves into an abstraction of “rock.” We are presented with a human face fusing metamorphically (from a certain analytical distance, metaphorically) with the land its body works.

How is this essay ideological? To answer this it makes sense to draw selectively from the work of Roberto Dainotto. For Dainotto, the idea of region always serves as a token of essence. It embodies the “purity and authenticity” that anchor Western

metaphysics (Dainotto 2000:173) – even more thoroughly than does the idea of nation. This definition seems accurate enough -- IF we specify that it applies not to “region” but to the ideology of “regionalism.” An ideology is a system of ideas developed in specific social conditions that furthers the interests of a particular social group or set of social groups (Wolf 1999). A set of social groups –let us say large landowners and the professionals who operate to keep the land and produce of such owners at a high value – can be defined by its occupation of a particular regional space. How would an ideology of the Alto Douro as a space where land and human beings are fused emerge from the conditions and interests of such a spatially specific set of groups? From the point of view of the large landowners and professionals of Régua, defining the Alto Douro as made up only of land and labor, thus neglecting such realities as far-flung local settlements and their politics, works very nicely to divert attention not only from issues of class differentiation, but also from core-periphery imbalances. The circulation of such an ideology through newspaper accounts works at denying difference in the interest of keeping actual differences available for exploitation.

Local Stories and Hegemonic Regionalization

Regional ideology is not all there is to any region. This is certainly the case for the Alto Douro. *Duriense* people engage in practices that escape ideology. These have consequences for the overall, differentially distributed, sense of region that also escapes ideology. To remain even minimally viable ideology must address these practices and this sense of “regionality.” That is, for regional ideology to work at all, the Régua newspapers must establish and maintain a readership in the various subregions of the

Alto Douro. Keeping the readership is a hegemonic process by which many alternative discourses are selected from in the course of contingently unifying one overall discourse (Williams 1980:39). This discourse acknowledges the interests and definitions of dominated social groups in order to co-opt them in a process much like, and sometimes piggybacked onto, the circulation of politicians and political campaign messages designed to foster peripheral support for Régua. Because peripheral social interests and identifications remain powerful, what occurs is not a simple erasure of the localities anchored in the steep slopes of the Douro basin. What occurs is, rather, a sophisticated interpellation -- or textual "hailing" (Althusser 1971:127-186; Silverman 1983:219-222) - of the readers from these communities as "regional people."

The interpellation is successful, I suggest, in the following way. When depicting the region as a cultural entity, the Régua newspapers represent it in highly abstract terms intended to convey a shared essence which links schist, grapes, wine, and regional membership. The images amount to tokens of regionalism, circulated through the towns and villages of the region on a weekly basis in pursuit of ideological conformity.

The receiving localities do not passively conform to these images, however, and in fact demand space in the newspapers to convey their own sense of local realities. While it is to be expected that local stories would focus on political issues of immediate concern or on local history, the dearth of discussion of grapes, wine and regional membership is surprising. So is the lack of obvious regionalism. Yet by virtue of seeking out the regional frame of the Régua newspapers, such articles do seek the attention of an imagined regional audience for their claims of local distinction and local unity (Griswold 2008).

These claims are themselves ideological, but at a local rather than a regional level. The articles tend strongly to focus away from local difference and local conflict. In doing so, they enact localism rather than regionalism.²⁴ However, they serve hegemonic regionalization by ensuring a widespread readership of a main instrument for regionalist ideology.

The regional core needs the regional periphery. And although that core might not be the recipient of revolutionary threats issued from its periphery, it attempts to paper over local differences, even while it must accept the peripheral localities' resistance to its efforts. As for peripheral localities, immediate social differences and conflicts keep them from focusing effectively on the problem of dominance from the core. Cultural production from towns and villages in the regional periphery does circulate to the core, yet the core orchestrates a strong sense, and fact, of durability by conducting the circulation of that production. At the same time, core representations continue to move outward into the periphery in a steady stream, where they meet with significant success in defining a homogeneous meaning for the region.

Conclusion

The Alto Douro region has been constituted, and is constantly being reconstituted, via circulation. This is certainly true for its regulatory aspects. It is also true for the irregularities that underwrite and emerge from regulation. At base, of course, the circulation of goods such as grapes on their way to transformation into wine has mattered a great deal to the region and its regulation. This kind of circulation operates at some

²⁴ The strength of the focus away varies according to genre of local story. I have analyzed local genres in Parkhurst 2008.

distance from the kind that I have focused on here. In focusing on the transit of politicians and their messages, I hope to have done some good in shifting attention to forms of circulation that are less than obvious – from the outside, anyway – in regions such as the Alto Douro. In attending to newspaper circulation I hope to have demonstrated how regions and their regulation depend on representations, which must move through the world if they hope to accomplish anything. Ultimately, it is likely that all forms of regulation, at least in class- and state-based societies, involve not just circulation, but circulation in the service of regional cores and peripheries, and therefore in the service of ideology and hegemonic regionalization.

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