In the Middle of the Myth: The Problem of Power in Gender Relations and the Alto Douro Region of Northern Portugal

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Abstract: Recent ethnographic scholarship has divided Iberia into a south of male social dominance and a north of female social dominance or social equality. In this article I critique the sweeping character of these distinctions through a review of ethnographies which describe instances of male dominance in northern Portugal. The particular ecological/economic conditions linked to male power in the north lead me to ask if such conditions might define regions, and regional gender relations, at a level between the local settlement and the broad area designated "the north." Analyzing my ethnographic data from northern Portugal's Alto Douro region, I suggest that they do.

Résumé: La production ethnographique récente établit une division dans la péninsule ibérique entre le sud où les hommes dominent et le nord où on trouve une domination des femmes ou l'égalité sociale. Dans cet article, je critique le caractère absolu de ces distinctions au moyen d'une revue des ethnographies qui décrivent des cas de dominance masculine dans le nord du Portugal. Les conditions écologiques/économiques particulières reliées au pouvoir masculin dans le nord me conduisent à chercher si de telles conditions pourraient définir des régions et des relations régionales entre les sexes à un niveau situé entre l'établissement local et l'aire plus large désignée comme le «nord». Sur la base de données ethnographiques de la région d'Alto Douro du nord du Portugal, je prétends qu'on peut établir un tel niveau intermédiaire.

Introduction

Recent publications on local gender relations in Iberia attempt to retrace the lines of a cultural map that has become increasingly problematic. In this article, I question the sociocultural content and spatial contouring of this map both through a focussed review of ethnographies set in northern Portugal and an analysis of data drawn from my own ethnographic work in a small northern Portuguese region called the Alto Douro, world-renowned for its wine, and a puzzle piece for anyone interested in the regional character of economy and culture.[1] My purpose is not to do away with cultural maps. Indeed, the revival of notions of a "Mediterranean" culture area by Brøgger and Gilmore (1997) and O'Neill (1995) is worth attention because of the stress such a notion puts on cultural differentiation in space. In addressing this work, I mean, rather, to emphasize that approaching culture as a "distributive" phenomenon is so important as to demand great spatial precision (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Lomnitz-Adler, 1991, 1992; Rodseth, 1998; Wolf, 1999). Studying culture as distributed means trying to grasp how everyday practices, representations, understandings and identities depend both on localized space and extralocal spatial connections. Such an approach to culture demands close attention to regional differences, commonalities and boundaries. Our maps must be precise, and their dimensions specified. In this article I attempt to demonstrate the importance of one of these dimensions: economic organization.

Brøgger and Gilmore (1997) claim the presence of an honour-and-shame system across southern Iberia, and a mirror image of this system in northwestern Spain and "north/central" Portugal. In their view, the fulcral difference between the two cultural systems is the public power of women: in the south men dominate socially by controlling the public sphere, while in the north women control this sphere, and thus are dominant in local society as a whole. O'Neill's (1995) work, though more

focussed on a single ethnographic case, also opposes a northern to a southern cultural system.

Because these articles focus on gendered social dominance and geographical difference, various approaches can be made to their claims: We can explore the political functioning of "honour-and-shame" and "Mediterranean culture" as categories in the academy (Goddard, Llobera and Shore, 1994; Herzfeld, 1987; Pina-Cabral, 1989). We can investigate the role played by regional difference in the imagination of nation-states (for the Portuguese case see Medeiros, 1995, 1996, 1998). We can question the definitions and ethnographic portrayals of social dominance, its shifting local contexts, and negotiations (the productive enterprise of many feminist ethnographers, and the main focus of Gala González, Kelley and Roseman, in this volume). Finally, we can examine the geographical distinctions being made. This article attends largely to the latter task, though the third approach necessarily informs the undertaking.

I argue that a more regionally differentiated view of northern Portugal is required for an understanding of gender relations there. These gender relations may well involve dominance, but to see how, we must take regionally differentiated political economies into account and ask how they affect not only the relations between the public and private spheres, but also the very relevance of this distinction for women and men (Kelley, this volume; Lamphere, 1997). Here I lay out the claims made by Brøgger and Gilmore (1997) and O'Neill (1995) and problematize their concept of "northern Portugal" through a review of countervailing descriptions of "gendered" authority in local social relations there. This leads to a differentiated view of agriculture in the north, and an examination of gender relations in the Alto Douro region. In concluding, I indicate how regions like the Alto Douro not only warn against homogenizing portrayals of cultural space, but also raise questions about regional interconnections.

The Iberian Antipodes of Gendered Dominance?

Portugal may be merely one fifth the size of its Iberian neighbour, yet it is geographically, socially and culturally heterogeneous. One of the basic areal distinctions has long been that between the north and the south.[2] This distinction has largely been located in different land-holding regimes, with the rolling plains of the rural south carved up into large landed estates held by absentee owners and worked by landless proletarians, and the hilly north fractured into small parcels of land largely worked by their owners, with fewer numbers of rural wage labourers. This economic portrait remains accurate within limits, one of which is the Alto Douro region of the north.

Views of this north-south distinction vary by discipline. Thus sociologists consider the north-south split to remain important in terms of such social attributes as wage levels and educational attainment (M.V. Cabral, 1992; Medeiros, 1992). Anthropologists Brøgger and Gilmore focus more clearly on localized space. In their analysis, gender relations differ between what they refer to as the north and the south in terms of female or male dominance in the "private" and "public" realms. In both the north and the south, according to Brøgger and Gilmore, women are the authorities in households, which they consider "private" spaces. However, in "north/central" Portugal, they argue, women dominate public space to the extent that "in this corner of Iberia, the power and independence of women is more than pronounced; it is absolute" (Brøgger and Gilmore, 1997: 15). In contrast, village public space in the south is completely dominated by men. Thus, women's dominance in northern Iberia, in Brøgger and Gilmore's view, is dominance of local public space.

In bringing the local level into the broader notion of regional difference, Brøgger and Gilmore prompt two interrelated questions: how is "dominance" in this local public space defined, and how is this local public dominance mapped onto regional space? As my concern is mainly the portrayal of the "north," the sketch of life in the fishing village studied by Brøgger (1990) is worth some detailed attention. The work was conducted in Nazaré, a coastal fishing village 100 kilometres north of Lisbon, in the Estremadura region of central Portugal. Curiously, Brøgger and Gilmore not only use Nazaré to illustrate "northern" gender relations, but neglect coast-interior distinctions as well.[3] Following Brøgger's earlier work, Brøgger and Gilmore (1997: 21-24) outline a number of social practices that support their argument. In Nazaré there is, to begin with, a strong tendency toward matrivicinality, which contributes to women's power in the household. In addition, women also dominate public space, as they market fish caught by the village's fishermen. Men are largely absent, catching fish on the open sea and when present in the village display none of the "blustering or protective masculinity" found in the south. Instead, they haunt the bars because they need "refuge": their wives do not tolerate them at home during the day. Brøgger and Gilmore, emphasize, finally, that Nazaré women's public comportment is strikingly different from that of "southern" women, for they "possibly become even more dominating when leaving their houses," speaking in "stentorian" tones.

In summary, Brøgger and Gilmore argue that between the north and the south women's public presence differs radically. They consider the most satisfying explanation for this difference to be a combination of the presence or absence of the honour-and-shame code with "ecological/economic" variables. The honour-and-shame code, based in controlling female sexuality by confining women to "private space," is present in the south, but absent in Nazaré. Economic conditions compound the effects of the code's presence, as across southern Iberia proletarian men control public space as psychological compensation for their low-class status, while in Nazaré fishing provides men with social prestige (ibid.: 28).

A number of loose ends dangle from this model, two of which merit special attention. First, as anthropologists of gender will note, the association of women with a "private" and men with a "public" sphere has been problematized by ethnographic work since the private/public model was forwarded in the early 1970s (di Leonardo, 1991; Lamphere, 1997). Examining the complicated interrelations between such spheres in everyday practice would produce a more convincing depiction of gender relations. Second, the larger cultural map being invoked demands attention, for two reasons.[4]

First, the authors use "north/central Portugal" very loosely. At one point, the comparison is between "Andalusia and northern Portugal," with the latter quickly replaced by the fishing-focussed "Atlantic-fringe complex" (Brøgger and Gilmore, 1997: 26). The descriptive emphasis on the fishing economy further tends to conflate coastal, fishing-oriented Portuguese settlements with a "rural northwestern Iberia" which is only for one fleeting moment hypothesized as possibly distinct from the world of "fisherfolk" (ibid.: 26).

Second, O'Neill (1995) portrays gender relations in the northern Portuguese interior in a fashion consistent with Brøgger and Gilmore's vague use of "the north." O'Neill describes the lives of two "peasant women" from the Trás-os-Montes village of Fontelas, and the continuities and discontinuities in their experiences. These experiences are described, with impressive detail, to the partial end of demonstrating what O'Neill has argued in an important earlier work (O'Neill, 1987): that the life cycle of Fontelas women is different from that of women in "Mediterranean societies" (O'Neill, 1995: 112). The fundamental difference is that "marriage is . . . practically dissolved as a key biographical moment" (ibid.: 113) because of the character of property transfer: in Fontelas the transfer of agricultural property so important to livelihoods tends to occur after the death of the head of the family, while in "Mediterranean societies" property is transferred both at marriage (through dowries) and death.

O'Neill concludes that "this part of the North of Portugal presents a radically different feminine world from that of the South" (ibid.: 113). From the precision of "*this part* [my emphasis] of the North," he segues into generalization about northern Portugal as a whole, where "women are simply not repressed, devalued, subordinated or exploited by men or indeed by the overall society" (ibid.: 114). O'Neill opposes this north to "the Alentejo and Estremadura provinces of the South, [where] we find a much more radical subordination of women to men" (ibid.: 113). Thus, his study complements Brøgger and Gilmore's characterization of "the north" of Portugal. At the same time, he locates the Estremadura in the "south" of male dominance, in contrast to Brøgger and Gilmore's association of the Estremadura Nazaré's region with female dominance.

In summary, despite their lack of clarity on boundaries, both articles homogenize gender relations in the north and the south, and in doing so invite an examination of the ethnographic literature which finds intra-areal variation. The next section is such an examination. It uses the ethnographies of Brettell (1995; 1986), Cole (1991) and Pina-Cabral (1986) to illustrate variation in gender relations in the north, and the relation of this to differing class contexts and economic conditions.

Differentiating the North

Numerous ethnographic works on northern Portugal have depicted elements of both women's autonomy and male dominance. The work of Caroline Brettell (1995; 1986), for example, is highly instructive regarding power and gender relations in the north. In Brettell (1995) we encounter three women who emigrated to Paris from different regions of northern Portugal, and who speak clearly about male authority at home. Ricardina dos Santos, from the Beira Alta region in the Portuguese interior, tells Brettell that "A father has all the authority and if it is necessary to shout or to beat, he will" (1995: 52). Her father had persuaded her with threats of a beating to stop seeing a certain boy (ibid.: 58). Virginia Caldas emigrated from the rural Minho region, where, Brettell tells us, "the father or eldest male holds the reins of authority" (ibid.: 71). Ana Fernandes, who emigrated from Porto, emphasizes how parents should closely supervise young women's comportment because of the threat of "shameful" (sex-related) behaviour (ibid.: 97).

Brettell does not reject the idea that women in northern Portugal have social power. Rather, she offers careful descriptions of the circumstances in which power

is exercised by both men and women. Brettell's (1986) historical-ethnographic work on the consequences of male migration from a northwestern (Minho) parish is a model of contextual observation. Brettell cautiously concludes that in this agricultural region women's behaviour "was not totally controlled" (Brettell, 1986: 259) because of the combined effects of small holdings in land, an emphasis on the nuclear family and male absence through migration. However, control of women's behaviour varied with the social status of women's families of origin, for in wealthier families young women were not required to work outside of the home, and were thus kept under "the watchful eye of their fathers" (ibid.). Moreover, the force behind social control was associated with a patriarchal principle, so that "authority and castigation" were embodied by fathers (ibid.: 251).

Variability in the gendered embodiment of social power is further highlighted for the northwestern region in Cole's (1991) study of Vila Chã—a coastal fishing community. In this text Cole attends to the ecological, economic and social conditions under which female authority in local social life has expanded and contracted. Most important for fisherwomen's control over their lives was the ocean's character as a collective resource, the location of production in households and male absence through migration. However, Cole conveys how autonomy for women has been undermined by increasing involvement in wage labour. Moreover, she demonstrates how male authority has been exercised locally. Just inland from the fishing community is an agricultural system in which "male authority reigned over the farm enterprise" (Cole, 1991: 98). In these farming households, women were kept close to home by their fathers and husbands.

Finally, Pina-Cabral (1986) finds gendered relations of social power in the upper Minho region to differ between the small-town bourgeoisie and the peasantry (defined as subsistence-oriented landowners). Working alongside of his depictions of difference between these social groups is, moreover, a clear claim about how economic change has affected relations between the genders. Pina-Cabral sees increasing integration of peasant households into a market-based economy—effected both through agricultural production and non-agricultural activities—to be increasing "the power of men in the home" (Pina-Cabral, 1986: 86; see also J.-F. Almeida, 1986). More recently Pina-Cabral has argued that with the increasing bourgeoisification of Portugal as a whole has come increasing male power in households (Pina-Cabral, 1993a).

Taken together, the ethnographic works consulted in this section demonstrate that gender relations in northwestern Portugal vary with ecological setting, placement on a city-countryside continuum and the social class position of households. They also demonstrate, however, that one economic context seems especially likely to entail men's power over women: market-oriented agriculture. Given the agreement on this point among the studies considered, it is worth asking what kinds of gender relations might be found in a part of northern Portugal where agriculture is more heavily market-based than in the northwest, and has been for several centuries. The Alto Douro is just such a region.

As we enter the Alto Douro, we must keep in mind the complexity of the relations among the market integration of agriculture, gender relations and social change, usefully pointed to by Rogers (1985, 1991). Rogers' (1985) comparative analysis of gender relations in rural France posits that dominance in gender relations depends fundamentally on what she calls the "cultural system" that structures local everyday life. Rogers identifies two types of cultural system: the egalitarian and the hierarchical. The former is associated with northern France and the latter with the south of the country. A cultural system's logic is expressed in a number of domains, such as settlement pattern and inheritance practices, and Rogers convincingly details the interrelations among such domains.

Of particular importance to the Alto Douro case is Rogers' persuasive argument that these regional differences in cultural system preexist the development of capitalist relations in agriculture. Rogers shows how in the southern French village of Ste Foy increasing involvement in the market for agricultural commodities has worked to reproduce the local hierarchical cultural system, and thus male dominance (Rogers, 1991). Thus Rogers' work demonstrates that areal arguments about culture remain useful even while notions such as "honour-and-shame" have had their contents and geographical contours largely dissolved by research and critique.

While Rogers' object-lesson suggests we should always look beneath commoditized economic relations for the cultural substrata, the lesson's spatial logic entails the possibility that in some regions market relations may have exercised unusual power in shaping the basic structure of local life—either because of the structure of the local cultural system, or because of historical interruptions in that system.[5] In examining the question of gendered dominance within northern Portugal in regionally sensitive terms, then, we must attend closely to spatial questions, at different scales. The following section is a description of the Alto Douro which attempts to show

two things: First, that the spatial and economic features of the region are intimately intertwined; and second that this spatially specific economic organization has important consequences for three aspects of local social life, which in turn deeply inform gender relations in the region. These three aspects are property relations, the division of labour and the connections between household and "public" spheres.

The Alto Douro

Social scientists have long portrayed rural northern Portugal as regionally divided among the Minho, Trás-os-Montes, the Beira Alta and the Alto Douro. The Minho is a hilly, verdant region, with varied agricultural production and dispersed settlements. Trás-os-Montes, to the east of the Minho, is more arid, with an agriculture more focussed on grain crops and a settlement pattern of densely concentrated but widely separated villages. The Alto Douro is defined by the Douro river, lying in southern Trás-os-Montes region, where the river system has eroded steep slopes into the terrain. It begins some 67 kilometres east of the city of Porto, on the Atlantic coast, and stretches across 80 kilometres to the Spanish border. It extends approximately 16 kilometres north and an equal distance south of the Douro river. At its southern edge, the Alto Douro borders on the Beira Alta region, which is comparable to northern Trás-os-Montes in topographical and ecological terms.

The Alto Douro is sharply distinctive from the rest of Trás-os-Montes in economic terms, and subject to institutional regulation dividing it from both Trás-os-Montes and the Beira Alta. This distinctiveness is not deeply encoded in the terms people use to identify themselves; at the same time, all of the "Durienses" that I know consider themselves quite distinct from other "Trasmontanos," above all in terms of their economic system, which they see as almost completely cash-based as opposed to the more subsistence-oriented areas surrounding them.

Massive terraces have been gouged and carved into the steep schistous slopes of the river system for grape production. Dynamite has often been needed to blast apart the solid masses of schist found throughout the region, as the rock "does not break down into soils under normal conditions of the zone" (Stanislawski, 1970: 95). Until the 1680s, the Alto Douro's geology and hot climate[6] limited agricultural production to small harvests of wine, chestnuts and olives, and made the region one of the poorest in Portugal (Schneider, 1980: 33). Beginning in the 18th century, however, the region's wealth increased through the heavy export of its wines first to England, then to the rest of the world (ibid.; Martins, 1990). Since 1756, with some interruptions, the Portuguese state has maintained a demarcation around the region in order to regulate the quality and quantity of wine produced in the circumscribed space. Alto Douro wine—known the world over as Porto, or Port, after the city which long served as its exclusive point of shipment abroad—is a sweet wine high in alcohol content produced by halting the fermentation process with the addition of brandy. Portuguese economic historians associate the early demarcation with the fact that port wine was the first Portuguese economic sector to have been structured in capitalist terms (Martins, 1988: 392), and consider the Alto Douro a zone of precocious "agricultural capitalism" (Pereira, 1983: 126). Since its birth this region has depended on surplus labour from its surrounding regions (Enjalbert, 1949: 294; Monteiro, 1911: 50), and on extra-regional imports for the provision of food (Valério, 1993: 40).

In the Alto Douro, settlements are divided among large, somewhat self-enclosed estates, often owned by absentee landlords and tending to lie close to the river,[7] commercial towns, also often along the river, and villages and hamlets located high up on the slopes or plateaus above the winding river or its tributaries. The region is itself composed of three subregions. From west to east, these are the Baixo Corgo, Cima Corgo and Douro Superior. Rainfall, agricultural productivity, and settlement density all diminish from the former to the latter.

In 1993 and 1994[8] I carried out 15 months of field work in a Cima Corgo village I call Socalcos, which lies two kilometres up and away from the Douro, at the head of a small winding valley. On a sunny day, from the slopes above it the village looks like a heart-shaped island of whitewash gleaming in a terraced sea of vines. Most of the village's 155 houses are squeezed together onto two steep inclines, so that from the base of the village you seem to confront a misplaced patch of old city high-rises. Eighty-seven of these houses are inhabited for the greater part of the year by 270 individuals. The others are resided in only some months of the year by families having their main residences elsewhere in Portugal, or abroad. Among year-long Socalcos residents, there are 10 more males than females.

Gendered Property Relations

The grapes growing on the slopes around the village are ranked by the Casa do Douro (henceforth the CD), the regional regulatory body for port-wine grape production.[9] The CD confers a *benefício* on higher quality grapes—that is, it certifies them for sale to firms producing port wine,

thus allowing them to command a price about four times what local grapes earn for table wine. In such a regulatory context, differential ownership of vineyards must be considered if patterns of gendered dominance are to be understood.

In Socalcos, men overwhelmingly predominate as owners of vineyards. The CD possesses a register of *benefício*-holders for every parish in the Alto Douro. In one column the register lists the *benefício*'s owner.[10] In a second column the amount of *benefício* is displayed in litres. Of the 279 different owners listed for Socalcos parish, 223 (79.9%) of them are men and 56 (20.1%) are women. From interviews I determined that a grower needed to produce a minimum of six 550-litre barrels—called *pipas*—of wine with a *benefício* per year to live entirely from household wine production. In Socalcos village, only eight out of some 87 households attained this level of *benefício*.[11] The members of other vineyard-holding families were required to work for wages in the vineyards of wealthier families. This class differentiation, long a focus of writing on the Alto Douro,[12] seems not to influence gender-based *benefício* ownership significantly. The average *benefício* demonstrates this, as does the range in *benefício* held. In the parish, men own an average of just over four barrels of *benefício*, while women average just below three barrels. The range in *benefícios* is also comparable for women and men, stretching from 10 and 20 meagre litres among wage labourers with a smidgen of land to over 15 000 litres at the high end of the class scale. Thus poor women are as likely to own a *benefício* as wealthier women. Both wealthy and poor women, however, are much less likely to own one than men.

The gender imbalance in *benefício* ownership suggests an imbalance built into the forms of land acquisition. Land is acquired through inheritance and purchase, but in both cases cash mediates the transfer. Inheritance tends to follow a rule of strictly equal partibility. It involves calculating the cash value of property of various types, and dividing it into equal parts primarily on the basis of estimated market value. The distribution often takes place through picking numbers corresponding to parcels from a hat. Current law disallows the division of small parcels. Thus, in the case of small holdings, the heir who can buy out the others is in a favourable position; and men have greater access to cash than do women. For agricultural work in Socalcos, women receive 65% of men's wage rate. Throughout the Alto Douro, men's wage rates for agricultural work are 50-70% higher than women's (Rebelo, 1995: 93). This is rationalized by a belief that men's work requires more strength and skill than women's (see n. 18). Moreover, women work only half days for wages. Additionally, since the 1970s, returned emigrants have become some of the largest landholders, and men have moved abroad, and returned, at higher rates, and have earned higher wages in the receiving country, than have women.[13] In the Alto Douro economy, this greater access to cash explains a large part of the gender imbalance in the inheritance of vineyards.

Vineyards are also purchased by non-heirs for various reasons—ranging from disputes within families to a lack of cash or interest on the part of the heirs. Here again, men's greater access to cash helps them prevail among buyers of land. But among non-heirs, men have yet another advantage in purchasing land. Much of the land sold outside of families has been worked on a sharecropping basis, with the owner typically living in Porto. The active sharecropper is often a lone man. Yet even when a family unit sharecrops together, men always organize the operation.[14] When a property is opened to bidding, the sharecropper's bid is given preference among equal bids.

The Gendered Division of Labour

The cash economy thus favours males among both heirs and non-heirs; consequently, men are typically the owners of property. However, a full understanding of local social life in terms of equality or domination in gender relations requires viewing ownership in combination with local work practices.[15] In Socalcos a clear gendered division of property is accompanied by a gendered division of labour which we can glimpse through an examination of the yearly round.

In the vineyards, the fall and winter are devoted to loosening and fertilizing the soil around the vineplants, pruning the established vines and planting disease-resistant "American" rootstock. This is all men's work. Women pick up the pruned branches in the afternoon. In the spring, men strap 50-pound blowing machines to their backs, and tramp down the rocky rows spraying milky herbicide onto the ground. Women mix the herbicide, pour it into large jugs and carry the liquid down the rows on their heads to refill the machines. At the end of the day their hair is streaked with the blue-white weed-killer.

At harvest time there is a new wrinkle in the division of labour. On large estates with hired labour, workers are trucked in from the surrounding subsistence agricultural regions; on smaller holdings, the labour remains family-based. On both types of holding, women cut the grape clusters and fill small baskets with them. Women and children empty these baskets into 50-70 kilo-

gram baskets that men carry on their backs via the vineyards' schist stairways to trucks. From the trucks the grapes are emptied into mechanized wine makers or into troughs for treading. Women working in the estate harvests enter the troughs with men from their home region and tread grapes. Women from Socalcos make it very clear that it is husbands, fathers and sons who tread grapes in the troughs in the basements of their houses, because, they say, women should not expose their legs. The local view is that the women from the surrounding regions tread because in those areas people's notions of propriety differ from those proper to Socalcos.[16] Thus a key symbolic aspect of the local gendered division of labour depends on the inter-regional movement of workers into the Alto Douro. I will return to this point in the conclusion to the article.

To summarize, in Socalcos, vineyards are considered a masculine space in which what is seen locally as the most skilled work (pruning), the most arduous work (hoeing, the carrying of heavy weights) and the most "indecorous" work (treading grapes) is performed by men, while women's vineyard work is considered physically undemanding and unskilled. In contrast, the maintenance of the home is considered to be women's responsibility. Some kinds of work in the house are considered more strictly feminine than others, however.

Women typically work in vineyards for wages only in the afternoon, for they spend the morning doing laundry and preparing the afternoon meal. This might consist of pork chops, fried potatoes and peas mixed into steamed rice, accompanied by wine (for the men). Though some garden produce is used in meals, women buy much of the household's food—especially meat and fish—from trucks that come from Lamego and Régua, two of the region's commercial towns. On a normal workday, the women prepare the food, serve the men and eat after the men have gone to the café for coffee (and brandy, if they are wage-labourers).

Men sometimes cook during women's absences. However, there is no such flexibility when it comes to cleaning. Cleaning up after meals consumes much time, even now that piped water is common. Further cleaning of the house involves sweeping and mopping concrete and hardwood floors on a daily basis, or even more often. Though keeping the house clean is a time-and-energy-consuming business, cleaning the clothes of the household members consumes the greatest amount of time. Bright clothes on all family members is a measure of what is called a woman's "seriousness." Family laundry is often done in the public wash tank. On all days but Sunday, in all kinds of weather, women carry clothes in brightly coloured plastic basins either set against the hip or balanced on the head to the tank, which is set on a platform on the village's eastern slope. One woman I knew spent nearly 20 hours a week washing and beating and drying her family's clothes.[17]

Two general points can now be made about the division of labour in Socalcos. First, men view the division not as complementary, but as a distinction between "important" and "unimportant" work. The men's view is, moreover, hegemonic. When I commented that women worked very hard, men would agree, but then emphasize that women's work was unskilled, while theirs—especially grafting and pruning—was skilled. I observed wives arguing with husbands that women's work was skilled as well. They often emphasized the skill required to cook well, for example. While agreement was not reached in such arguments, there was a subtle hierarchy in the rhetorical positions taken: though wives might refuse to accept their husbands' disparaging evaluations of women's work, they would not belittle their husbands' skills (as their husbands did theirs). Rather, they restricted themselves to elevating women's work to the level of men's work, which seemed to be viewed as defining the upper limit of skill.[18]

Yet such a division of labour, and beliefs about it, in themselves give no clear indication of dominance or equality in gender relations. The second point to be made, then, is that when male ownership of property and dependency on market sales or wages by the majority of the local population is factored into the division, housework tilts the women's side of it toward dependency. Moreover, the spatial relations between houses and productive land promotes this. Alto Douro villages are comparable to the villages of the upper Trás-os-Montes region studied by O'Neill in being like islands agglomerated in expanses of productive land. Yet the Alto Douro village is different in being surrounded by highly commodified rather than subsistence-oriented land. In locating exchange value in grapes and in the work done in vineyards, far from the houses, commodification has boosted the power of both male farmers and male agricultural wage labourers over their wives.

The Household, Public Space and Gender Relations

In Socalcos, homes are not simply separated from production, however. Men tend to be registered as the owners of the houses with which their wives are symbolically associated. For example, when three adult women inherited a house from their father on his death, their hus-

bands soon registered as the owners of the third-shares of the house. Later, two of the husbands sold their shares to the third husband. This tendency puts women in a dependent position, at least as regards the legal rule of ownership, which provides homeowners with a resource for authority. Many women villagers shared the view of the young woman who told me that "men have the property in their name because in the village it is still the men who rule over women and in the home."[19]

This view of men's power in the household could be read as expressing a myth of male authority, especially in households in which women have some control over the purse strings. In some Socalcos households, women do have such control. However, in particular kinds of household, men's power has been real. Economic conditions specific to the Alto Douro have influenced the organization of these households. Just over 60 years ago Descamps (1935: 121) observed that in the Alto Douro landowners large enough to live on the income from wine sales held a strong "paternal authority" and a tendency toward virilocality and virivicinality. This pattern continues today. One son, typically, will reside in a separate residence a few steps from the father's house, and owned by the father. The son works in the paternal vineyards for daily or monthly wages toward the end of purchasing his own vineyard land, to be worked in combination with the father's land, which he will inherit at the death of his parents through cash-based negotiations with his siblings. The women in such landholding families are most tightly bound to the household space. Moreover, the male heads of these households generally control the purse strings.

In contrast, in perhaps half of the wage-labouring households wives have some control over the purse strings, to the point where in a few homes wives manage the household budget, doling out cash to their husbands when asked. This is not the only social class difference between households, however. Descamps (1935: 118, 120) considered proletarian families to differ from landholding families in exhibiting tendencies toward uxorilocality, but at the same time toward "wife battering." Most people in Socalcos see uxorilocal tendencies to have ended with the economic improvements following from emigration and return—improvements which began in the 1970s. Yet in proletarian families there is still a sense of greater affect among maternal kin, expressed by the adage: "The children of our daughters are our grandchildren. The children of our daughter's-in-law may be our grandchildren, and may not." The phrase might indicate a residual emphasis on uxorilateral kin ties associated with the now disappearing uxorilocal residence pattern among the poor.[20] Yet one should be cautious in drawing conclusions about resources for female power in proletarian families from this emphasis.

Two aspects of the wine-based economy urge this caution. The first of these I have indicated already: ownership of vineyard land is an important resource for male authority, even among those many families having access to land only through sharecropping arrangements.[21] The second aspect involves the product of the land: wine is thought to contribute to gendered dominance within landless households through its consumption. In Descamps' view, the "wife battering" he described in the 1930s was a product of the consumption of wine by proletarian men made desperate by their economic condition.[22] In the course of my work I discovered that numerous local people of all classes considered violent male behaviour toward women in poor families to be a continuing problem. Whenever I was told about this, the explanation given was consonant with Descamps': the wine poor men consumed led them to their violence.[23]

My research suggests that in the Alto Douro virivicinality supports substantial male power within landowning households.[24] Moreover, in Socalcos "matrifocality" may be present to some extent in poor households, but problematized by a sensed threat of male household violence. However, households are not all there is to local social life. Determining whether a public sphere is materially present and culturally meaningful and, if so, assessing how men and women relate to it are matters of considerable importance for any assessment of male and female power.

Yet here the evidence is ambiguous, as is worthy of this clearly bounded, but ambiguously constituted, regional space. A public sphere can be taken to be made up of different components. One of these is formal local politics. Women in Socalcos, and the rest of the Alto Douro, are very rarely elected to office. Another component of the public sphere is all of those spaces linking up the densely packed houses of Socalcos—the two cafés, the tavern, the two village squares, the public wash tank, the church, and the steep narrow streets. All are understood locally to be a public, community arena.

. Examining these component spatial parts, we see that some public spaces are considered more appropriate for women to act in than others. With the exception of the church, appropriateness depends on the association of the space in question with household tasks or family activities.[25] Thus, women, and only women, are found at the public washing tank, which is a space for reproducing the public presentability of the family. The cafés, in contrast, are considered male space, except for Sundays

after mass, when many women gather there with their families, and weekday mornings, when many women come to the cafés to pay household bills and purchase meat, laundry soap and other items. The tavern is more exclusively male, though here too women enter when fresh bread has been delivered for sale—for the tavern, like the cafés, sells a limited range of groceries. The streets and squares are used by both men and women with no apparent anxiety. However, the comments of Arminda, a middle-aged mother of five who is married to a small landowner, express a feeling shared by many women about the space of the house in relation to at least one kind of public space:

Arminda: Outside of Socalcos I'll go to a café, but here I won't. I don't like to go to the café [because] people talk about people when they go to the café. [But] it's like they say to me, too: "You don't even leave the house."

Shawn: They criticize you when you don't leave the house, and they criticize you when you do leave the house?

Arminda: That's exactly it. They criticize [women] for going to the café, being there with men drinking. That's what the criticism probably is.

Shawn: And a woman, what does she need to do to remain a woman of . . .

Arminda: Of respect. Not engaging in a lot of conversation. If she talks with young men a lot, they begin to treat her with less respect. It's better to stay in the house.

In fact, I only saw Arminda in the café when she went there to pay bills or to buy food. Yet I did see her and many other women working outside of the home. At least four times a week she joined other women at the public washing tank overlooking the village to do the laundry of the seven people in her household. In addition, I often encountered her in the streets, where she was doing errands. In the course of these she would stop to talk with women (more rarely with men, including myself), but only briefly. Arminda's movements show how, though "respect" depends on a woman's sticking close to home, there is a countervailing tendency to promote her presence in public, if household-related work draws her there (and if she exhibits efficiency in her errands).

To summarize, there are patterned gender relations which suggest a form of male dominance which is linked to the ecology and economy of the area. In Socalcos, males control land, are symbolically associated with the wine that defines the region and exercise various degrees and kinds of control in their households. Moreover, public space would seem to be less important in the maintenance of whatever gender dominance exists in Socalcos than is the space of the household.

Conclusions

In this article I have argued that the portraits of gender relations in "the north" of Portugal found in the work of Brøgger and Gilmore and O'Neill are overly homogenizing. The former authors see "the north" as a zone of female dominance, while the latter author argues it is a zone of gender equality. I have tried to show that male dominance is found in the area as well by drawing both on published ethnographic work on northwestern Portugal and my own ethnographic data on the Alto Douro region. The works of Brettell, Cole and Pina-Cabral have shown how in northwestern Portugal men have significant control over women, in particular ecological and economic contexts. My research is convergent with these ethnographic portrayals of northwestern Portugal.

Brøgger and Gilmore homogenize not just "northwestern Iberia," but also private and public space. In analyzing the Alto Douro village of Socalcos, I have tried to show how these spaces are configured in particular ways because of the specific articulation of market-based agriculture and a settlement pattern of dense villages separated by land devoted to commodity production. In particular, I have argued that this articulation has influenced property relations, the division of labour and the use of and symbolism of space in such a way as to contribute to real, though variable, male dominance. In the "private space" of Socalcos the matrifocality emphasized for the whole of Iberia by Brøgger and Gilmore is contravened by significant amounts of male control. "Public space" seems not to be controlled by one gender or another, as it is in those authors' accounts, partly because this space is heterogeneous. I conclude from this that the "private/public" distinction may vary regionally in terms not just of its character, but in terms of its salience (see Kelley, this volume; Lamphere, 1997).

Rogers' lesson, detailed earlier, about the resilience of some localized "cultural structures" in the face of increasing market integration is not irrelevant to the Alto Douro. Rather, the historical specifics of this regional space have made it open to social and cultural influence by market relations. In the Alto Douro, a zone of monocropping was created by market forces and the Portuguese state, and populated in significant part through a series of settlement waves beginning in the 18th century. This has made of this thin, reticulate region an interruption in whatever broader northern cultural-economic commonalities may exist.

The Alto Douro is not only "different." Its economic organization and spatial location connect it with its surrounding regions in various ways which will have consequences for gender relations. In this article I have been able to touch on these only briefly. Yet it is worth noting that the Alto Douro still attracts migrant labourers who provide Alto Douro women with a regional "other" against which they define themselves: these are the women who come down from the mountain areas, expose their legs like men in the treading troughs and, according to Socalcos women, also do "men's work" when at home, thus failing to be "good" housewives like themselves. Thus the economic character of regions like the Alto Douro not only has consequences for gender relations in the regionally "internal" terms I have detailed in this article. It also raises questions about economic, symbolic and other relations *between* regions (Kelley, 1994) which must be addressed if the distributed character of gender relations is to be fully understood.

Notes

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2 Historians date various economic and social north-south distinctions to the formation of Portugal as a nation in the 11th century (Marques, 1972; Mattoso, 1991).

3 The distinction between an urbanized, modernizing litoral and a rural, underdeveloped and "patriarchal" interior was a fundamental one in some of the groundbreaking Portuguese sociology of the 1960s (e.g., Nunes, 1969). It is revisited, and reaffirmed, with some historical qualification, in a recent collection of sociological essays on Portugal (Barreto, 1996).

4 Brøgger's monograph on Nazaré has also been criticized for its depictions of Nazarenos as somehow "medieval" (S.L. Cabral, 1992), and its emphasis on the "Mediterranean" as a cultural category (Brettell, 1992; Pina-Cabral, 1991; see also Herzfeld, 1992: 50-57). Callier-Boisvert's (1991) criticism of the book for paying insufficient attention to regional and national context is convergent with my criticisms of the article under discussion here.

5 See also Roseman's article in this volume, which discerns egalitarian and hierarchical tendencies in the same localized space. It is worth noting that O'Neill has made a similar observation for northern Trás-os-Montes (O'Neill, 1987)—though not with regard to gender relations.

6 The Alto Douro is also distinguished from the rest of Trás-os-Montes as the *terra quente* (hot land) from the *terra fria* (cold land).

7 Monteiro (1911) and Medeiros (1978) draw parallels between these and the latifundia of southern Portugal's Alentejo region.

8 These years are implied by the temporal references below.

9 Over the course of my field work the Casa do Douro began losing many of its functions to a newly formed institution called the Comissão Interprofissional da Região Demarcada do Douro, which operates somewhat differently (see Peixoto, 1997). The impact of the alterations on economic and social life remain to be seen. They had negligible influence on local social life during my stay, however.

10 The column of names includes the names of firms or unspecified heirs, but I attend only to the names of individual owners. It is worth emphasizing that the figures I cite are for the entire parish to which Socalcos belongs. Also worth emphasizing is that though these records do not precisely reflect the current legal reality of individual ownership (some of the named proprietors are deceased, for example), in a completely updated list the gender contours should remain basically the same.

11 In 1994, six such barrels would bring in approximately $4 320 U.S.

12 One of the earliest descriptions of the heavy presence of landless labourers in the Alto Douro as compared with the rest of Trás-os-Montes is a manuscript from 1796 (Mendes, 1981). The sociologist Descamps (1935) considers the Alto Douro to be rural northern Portugal's most proletarianized zone in the first half of the present century. Social historians have recently written on this proletarianization for the period observed by Descamps (e.g., Costa, 1996 and 1997), and ethnographers have followed suit for the present day (Bennema, 1996; Parkhurst, 1997).

13 Young unmarried women migrate heavily too, but mainly to the city of Porto, where many work as live-in "domestics."

14 Frazão-Moreira (1996: 50) reports similar findings in her study of an Alto Douro village not far from Socalcos.

15 The following analysis of the division of labour as an ideological underpinning for gendered dominance is informed in

part by Lem's (1988, 1991) analyses of women's subordination among winegrowing families in southwestern France.

16 Consulting earlier accounts of Alto Douro harvest work (such as Sousa, 1906), we get a sense of how durable Alto Douro women's avoidance of treading has been.

17 Riegelhaupt's observations regarding women's household work in an Estremaduran village in the early 1960s hold true for Socalcos in the early 1990s. "Within the household," Riegelhaupt says, "aside from child rearing, the majority of a woman's time is spent in clothes washing and the preparation of food" (Riegelhaupt, 1967: 117).

18 This portrayal of the male control of skill in the division of labour seems to be a long-standing one, as well. Describing vineyard and other work in the Alto Douro circa 1911, Monteiro (1911: 51) writes that "masculine energy is devoted to the most difficult, tiring and complex operations." Yet the ideological character of this assessment is suggested by Lamas (1948), who describes women carrying weights equal to those carried by men at harvest time. Today one can see women carrying loads on their heads equivalent to the weight of the grapes carried by men; the only real distinction between women and men here is the context or type of items carried. (Women carry enormous loads of potatoes and firewood, for example.)

19 In considering "women's equality" to be associated with city living, this woman shared the views of the Galician women interviewed by Gala Gonzalez (personal communication).

20 On this saying, see Pina-Cabral (1993a: 992-993).

21 Frazão-Moreira (1996: 50) points out that in sharecropping families living in a village near Socalcos "the father is the central figure in terms of holding knowledge about work and managing material and human resources. It is the father... who determines his sons are going to work for wages outside of the household, who receives the wages, and who distributes weekly allowances on Sunday; it is he who assigns tasks to the members of the domestic group, and who directs agricultural work."

22 In Descamps' words, there were to be found "maris ivrognes battant leurs femmes" (Descamps, 1935: 118). For an Alto Douro writer's view on drunkenness in the region, see Brasio (1983).

23 The conventional local phrasing of this is that some men "ficam bêbados" (become drunk) and "batem nas mulheres" (beat their wives). Understandably, this topic came up in conversations only after a certain trust had been developed. It remains difficult to write about because I think that a detailed discussion in print of what I have heard about and not seen would be a violent act (of representation) on my part. I am inclined to take the descriptions of violence as accurate, though I see the role of wine as much more problematical. (As Pina-Cabral [1986, 1993b] has pointed out, in Portugal, wine is a symbol of masculine power; thus the accounts I have been given, like those given to Descamps, might well be examples of "myths of male dominance" in a symbolic register, with the wine representing the principle of male potency rather than somehow physiologically "causing" male violence.) However, I prefer to report on people's sense that male violence is connected to regional particularity rather than to affirm the reality of that violence as somehow regionally systematic. Cole (1991) and Kelley (this volume) describe men behaving violently toward women in local contexts in which there seem to be more egalitarian relations between the genders than what I have been describing, and this is a strong caution about treating such behaviour as systematically related to regional conditions.

24 Comparable male power in households is found by Almeida (1996) in wealthier households in the Alentejo region of southern Portugal.

25 The space of the church is a complicated topic which I cannot address in the space allotted me. Here I can only record that typically twice as many women attend mass as men.

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