

Capítulo 11

The Douro Region, a heritage to develop and innovate while preserving

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Abstract

Given the great territorial diversity in Portugal, both potentialities and issues multiply, particularly in more peripheral, inland rural areas, where the Demarcated Douro Region (DDR) is located. This region is a paradigmatic space partially classified as a World Heritage Site, where high-quality wines are produced, particularly Port.

Given the importance of local dynamics in preserving and revitalizing the territory, this paper addresses Cambres, a parish located in the DDR facing pressing problems, but also set within a privileged scenario with emphasis on Tourism in Rural Areas (TRA) as well as innovative projects in 'charming' and even luxury tourism, such as the *Douro River Hotel* and *Aquapura Douro Valley*.

Based on surveys and interviews, as well as extensive fieldwork, it was possible to characterize the region's territorial dynamics, since not only were endogenous potentialities boosted, but competitiveness and sustainability also grew. However, which other strategies should be implemented?

Keywords: Rural development, tourism, local dynamics, multi-functionality, innovation.

Introduction

Portugal, Europe's western-most country, although covering only about 92.000 km², boasts an undeniable landscape, economic and social diversity. In fact, to illustrate with a generic indicator, population density, one can easily observe that a heavily populated

Northern region (since population densities often exceed 250 inhabitants/km²) is opposed to the Alentejo region (Southern Portugal) with values frequently below 30 inhab/km². However, despite these asymmetries, which are recurrent regardless of the indicators under analysis (landscape, social, economic, cultural or other), particularly striking is the high concentration of economic activities and population in coastal areas, but within a complex and diversified framework, resulting from multiple endogenous potentialities that, in general, serve to frame the existing deficiencies. Considering the size of the country, this paper is focused on the Demarcated Douro Region (DDR), located in Northern Portugal.

In a paradigmatic area renowned worldwide, located in the valley of the Douro River about 100 kilometres east of Porto, high-quality wines are produced, particularly Port. It is a peripheral region in which some of the most problematic indicators of a social and economic nature can be found, despite the significant potential of the landscape, culture and wine sector. Apart from the decline of the region's economic and political-administrative framework, for example, it is suffering from progressive demographic decline associated to clear population ageing.

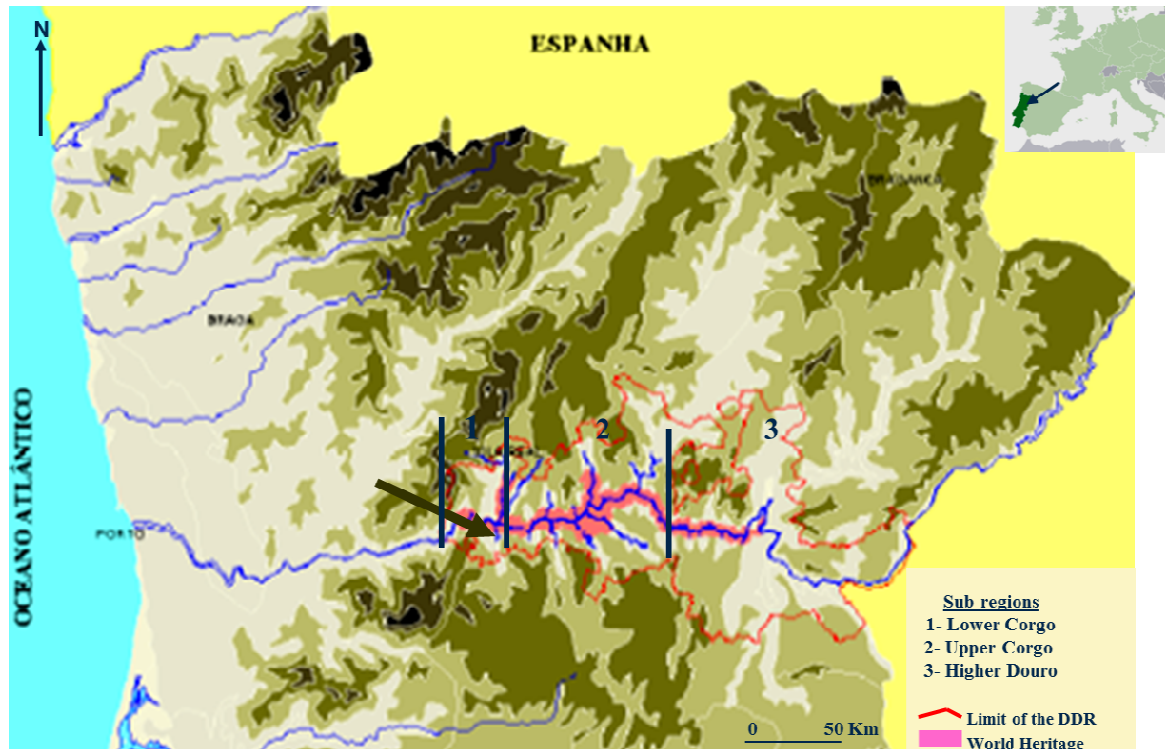
It is however important to address the DDR's productive sector in this paper. Covering 250.000 hectares of land, of which 45.000 are occupied by continuous vineyards (IVDP, 2010), the region stretches from Mesão Frio at its extreme west to the border with Spain. This area extends through a very narrow valley and its tributaries, where the slopes often exceed 30° bearing a succession of terraces covered in vines of specific regional grape varieties.

Boasting a rich history of more than 250 years, it is however not homogeneous. In fact, although vineyards and winegrowing mark and its individuality and sustain this heritage site, it is the landscape diversity that stands out, boosting the region's oenological and tourism potentialities, and thus three sub-regions were formed: Lower Corgo, Upper Corgo and Higher Douro. The Lower Corgo (Fig.1), the western-most sub-region marked by a Mediterranean-type climate which, although typical throughout the region, has here a higher degree of humidity and lower average annual temperatures¹.

¹ Maximum temperatures can however exceed 40°C in the summer and minimum temperatures regularly drop below zero in winter, even though snowfall is rare.

Here less full-bodied wines are produced, but which are more highly appreciated in drier years.

Fig. 1- The Douro Demarcated Region and Cambres.



Source: Plano Intern. De Orden. Territ. Do Alto Douro Vinhateiro, UTAD

Moving East, the Upper Corgo contains the major *quintas*², forming part of the agricultural holdings of exporting firms. The most extensive and renowned *quintas* are located in this area, sustained by a labour force with advanced technical skills working in vast, modern and mechanized vineyards, and producing the most outstanding Port wines. If in the Lower Corgo, the “cradle” of the winegrowing region, there is still a high percentage of old vineyards and traditional terraces, supported by “rubble stone” walls made of schist, in the Upper Corgo, new morphological types of vineyards predominate, organized into “vertical rows” (“*vinha ao alto*”) and “narrower terraces or shelves” (“*vinha em patamares*”), as preferred forms of overcoming manpower shortage and high wages, besides allowing for a higher mechanization rate. Concurrently, however, such techniques

²*Quinta* - large or medium-sized wine estate which includes, in addition to more or less extensive vineyards, both a residence, manor house or other, and a wine production facilities (warehouses, mills, etc.).

lead to the adulteration of the traditional landscape. There is a still a need to combine modernity with tradition.

Moving further eastward towards the border with Spain, we find the Higher Douro, the eastern-most sub-region with a more recent vineyard history and where, given severe water shortages³, olive and almond trees are dominant in the landscape. However, it is in this sub-region that the expansion of mechanized vineyards has become more relevant since the 1970s (Photos 1 to 3)

Photo 1- The importance of the vineyards with their tradicional terraces in the Lower Corgo, with high parceling of proprety but were the biodiversity is ensured.



Source: Photo author, 2011

In any of the sub-regions, the degree of humidity increases as one ascends in altitude, while the temperature decreases, a factor which influences the quality of the wines, thus explaining the different types available. It is from this variety that wines of various organoleptic nuances are produced, both Port wines and non-liquorish wines, whether DOC or VQPRD⁴ or other regional wines

³In the Upper Douro, not only are the average annual temperatures higher, but the total annual precipitation is approximately 400 mm.

⁴ DOC (*Denominação de Origem Controlada*) and VQPRD (*Vinho De Qualidade Produzido Em Região Demarcada*) are Portuguese wine classifications which literally mean “Controlled Designation of Origin” and “Quality Wine Produced in a Specified Region” respectively.

Photo 2- The Upper Corgo with its large entrepreneurial wine estates, where investments were made in the renewal of the vine and mechanization, given the existence of strong human and financial capital.



Source: Photo author, 2011

Photo 3- The Higher Douro with the expansion of vineyards, but also of almond and olive groves.



Source: Photo author, 2011

Despite the considerable potential of the landscapes, founded on schist soil of schist-greywacke complex, which is further accompanied by an incalculable wealth of architectural, social, cultural and gastronomic heritage, there are several problems ranging from inadequate wine distribution to poor land use structure, given that small farms with less than 2 hectares in area are dominant in the region, and including demographic decline and population ageing. In addition, internal access routes are deficient, namely the vicinal connecting farmsteads, there is inadequate maintenance of architectural heritage and the progressive loss of traditional festivities and traditions, a inestimable intangible heritage, reflecting experiences going back in time that have always mobilized the land and its people. Thus, the preservation and revitalization of the Douro heritage is undermined.

When analyzing the local scale, the above setting becomes even bleaker, particularly at the parish level, as is the case of Cambres. This town belongs to the municipality of Lamego (Lower Corgo) and is located between two urban centres of major regional importance, Peso da Régua (where the *Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e Porto* and *Casa do Douro* are based, as well as other entities engaged in organizing and controlling the winegrowing region), and Lamego, an episcopal city with a long history mirrored in its architectural and cultural heritage.

However, it is important to stress the local scale, its dynamics and weaknesses, as it is at this level that major development projects are carried out. Furthermore, without the interventional collaboration of the local population, the class that actually preserves agricultural assets and heritage, but always in connection with other land planning agents, good governance can be achieved and, consequently, globally sustainable and responsible development which shall spread throughout the Douro region.

To achieve this goal, there are several means of financial support from European institutions transcribed into national strategic plans. Such is the case of the “2007-2013 Rural Development Programme”, which favours not only the increased profitability of the agriculture and forestry sector, especially in strategic sectors such as winegrowing and wine production, but also product diversity and quality (MADRP, 2007a). In addition, there is the need to enhance the multifunctional potential of landscapes, in an alignment which aims to boost rural areas and ensure their sustainability. Moreover, tourism is an

investment that is emerging in the Douro region, especially among medium and large *quintas*, be they family-based or corporate, to which other entities were joined upon classification of these landscapes by UNESCO as World Heritage in December 2001.

Moreover, the Douro Valley is one of the tourist destinations involved in the creation of a worldwide network of "excellence" recognized by the World Tourism Organization. Involvement implied the need for a thorough diagnosis, encompassing the multiple land components (environmental, economic, social and cultural), the only way in which to detect weaknesses and propose strategies for their correction (Bédard, 2008). In this context and upon assessment by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations, the Douro region, comprising a total of 14 parameters, obtained seven "excellent" marks (safety, health and wellness, food and beverages, extra-regional accessibility, environment and landscape, vineyards, culture and heritage), two with "high" performance (archaeology and hospitality), whereas accommodation and services reached an "average" score (CCDR-N, 2008).

This paper focuses on the analysis of the local tourism sector in its various components, particularly accommodation and its related issues, based on surveys and interviews involving several tourist units located in the parish, regardless of the available offers, or lack thereof, provided by local *quintas* and small hotels perfectly situated in the landscape, in addition to extensive fieldwork following prior documentary research. This can be justified by the less favourable evaluation by the World Tourism Organization in this parameter that must be corrected so as to achieve "excellence". Let us not forget, however, that, by placing emphasis on such practices of touristic development, there is the underlying concern with the dynamics of the local and regional economy as a whole, within a sustainable framework, in addition to the need to maintain territorial specificities, whether in terms of the landscape, or in terms of the environmental, economic, social or cultural dimensions. Hence, there is investment in the region's distinctive quality, but in a competitive and appealing setting, both for the domestic and the external markets, including both public and private entities in such dynamics, in addition to the local population, effective custodians and preservers of local heritage.

1-Cambres, a parish in the Demarcated Douro Region

Cambres, a parish covering about 11.16 Km² pertaining to the municipality of Lamego, is located on the left bank of the Douro River with a privileged landscape. It is situated on steep schist slopes, in a succession of traditional terraces, highly demanding in terms of manpower, but also terraces which have recently undergone restructuring leading to mechanization, one of the ways to overcome the shortage of labour.

In this idyllic setting, however, there are noticeable differences both in terms of settlement and vineyard structure, and even in the preponderance of vineyards and their legal structure, but always embedded in a framework of superb architectural and cultural heritage, mirroring the ancestry of winegrowing and viticulture traditions. Hence, manor houses from the 17th and 18th centuries multiply, spread throughout large local *quintas* or more concentrated in certain inhabited areas, as well as other vernacular and religious heritage. It is small holdings, however, that are dominant in the Lower Corgo, and obviously Cambres, located among predominantly traditional vineyard terraces, in a landscape where biodiversity persists, given the maintenance of olive and fruit trees to delineate the vine plots, vital for the survival of these families.

On the other hand, to accurately frame Cambres and its locative advantages, other parameters must be considered, given that the parish's privileged landscape and cultural situation is enhanced by an optimal location, situated as it is between two polyfunctional urban centres of major regional relevance, Lamego and Peso da Régua. Furthermore, it is also served by good extra-regional access routes, especially after the opening of the A24 motorway, in addition to being close to the railway.

Within this framework, it is imperative to make some reference to the waterway as well, the Douro River, and the Cambres pier where vessels carrying granite to Europe are docked, but especially to the Régua pier, on the other river bank, designed to receive thousands of tourists seeking these places and the Douro heritage. Unarguably, accessibility is a key parameter for sustainable development, since it facilitates connections to the surrounding areas.

This compelling framework which also expanded its distinctive virtualities after the partial classification of the Douro landscape by UNESCO as "World Heritage" in December 2001. This emphasis has also led to strategic investment in the DDR, considered as a

priority tourist attraction according to the "Strategic Plan for Tourism", looking ahead to transform "the Douro into a tourist attraction of international visibility, making the tourism sector a lever for the region's economic and social development" (MEI 2008, 84). Cambres is included in the classified site.

Despite the manifold potentialities of Cambres, weaknesses are evident, among which those falling upon the wine-growing and producing sector, the mainstay of the regional economy, are particularly serious. Sharp demographic decline and population ageing in the region are also major concerns (Pina, 2009b), in addition to poor intraregional access routes. Very narrow and winding, not always object of convenient maintenance, especially local roads, these routes are, however, a repository of stories ranging from stretches of the St. James' Way, the Roman roads deployed in the extreme W and E, which although usually very steep, bear a wealth of history and boast an excellent landscape, or the 18th-century road (built during the Pombal administration) and crossroads with "shrines" that allow direct access from the banks of the Douro River to the urban centre of Lamego. And, how can we ignore the route of the railway designed in the 19th century (Pina, 2004), which, as the result of new strategic goals adopted by the Portuguese governments during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, has become obsolete and unviable in economic terms? The infrastructure remains, however, following a winding route, connecting the narrow valley of Varosa (tributary of the Douro river) to the more levelled section of the parish where the larger, business-type farms are concentrated, before crossing the extreme S and SE, the region's steepest area, particularly above 400 meters in altitude. There, we find greater biodiversity as the vineyard is occasionally supplanted by orchards or olive groves, in addition to glimpsing remnants of forested areas on the more shadowy slopes, facing North, traces of territorial occupation prior to vineyard expansion in the 17th to 18th centuries. It is a "journey through time and space" illustrating the region's cultural, morphological and landscape diversity.

Another deficiency is observed in terms of accommodation. Traditionally the livelihoods of rural parishes were based on the winegrowing, associated with a basic commercial sector based on food and accommodation services, since regular visits from Cambres' emigrants abroad or those who moved to the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto meant that the residential function had remained much the same. Only after the

1980s did this scenario change. Indeed, the need to accommodate national and foreign tourists led to the development of multifunctional activities within agrarian holdings, followed by applications for TRA membership, as well as more demanding and innovative tourism investments. This was the case in Cambres, thus overcoming the lack of quality accommodation and services, the essential basis of a desired “destination of excellence”, as well as boosting some of the parish’s and region’s distinctive characteristics, thus promoting their effective internationalization (Bédard, 2008).

As a result of the demographic flows mentioned previously, deficiencies of a demographic scope can be added to those described above. In fact, despite its privileged setting, Cambres is one of many examples in the Douro region where demographic decline is undeniable, a trend that is especially perceptive since the 1960s, albeit subject to different cycles that include more alarming figures in the 1960s and 1970s, losing pace afterwards. In this context, in 2001, only 2651 inhabitants were surveyed in the parish (Census 2001, INE), whereas in 1940, the year in which the maximum population was reached, 4675 individuals were recorded in the census.

Meanwhile, early in the third millennium, not only did the agricultural population accounted for only 30.7% of the resident population in Cambres, but it was also, in fact, quite aged, with 24% of the population over 65 years old, as young people had moved to the surrounding urban areas primarily drawn to tertiary activities. However, these young people maintained residence in the parish, allowing them to assist in the agricultural work of the family business but only after normal working hours (Pina, 2007).

Demographic decline and population ageing are undeniable facts. Still, it is the wine-growing and producing activities that sustain the local economic fabric. And, in this context, successive problems arise, among which poor land use stands out, since Cambres is located in the sub-region where small family farms are prevalent. To set an example, although the average size of farms was, in 1999, 3 hectares, 46% barely reached 1 hectare and 60% did not exceed 2 hectares (Pina, 2005). Moreover, this farm area is divided into 2 to 3 separate plots, scattered and traversed with ancient pathways, full of history but very narrow, which makes it difficult for even a small tractor to pass.

In contrast to these tiny family farms, sustained by dual activities and several sources of income, there are some properties with better infrastructure and larger in size called *quintas*. They usually include the family home, of a manorial structure or not, expanding the vineyard area to between 10 and 40 hectares. Nonetheless, let us not forget that, in the parish, these *quintas* are limited in number.

Thus, distinctive signs are evident in the landscape of Cambres, as well as the existence of a strong economic and social dichotomy, given that, as the vineyards in the large-sized units are renewed and the degree of mechanization increases, those of a family-based structure remain traditional in operation, because cultural and sentimental legacies urge their owners and family to do so (Pina, 2005).

Considering that Cambres is but one regional example, the weaknesses of the Douro situation are clearly evident, particularly when we move away from more appealing scenarios and urban areas. This is why it is necessary to implement development dynamics that include a strong emphasis on the modernization/restructuring of the vineyards, in addition to the training of human resources in view of sustainable development. There are, however, other strategies to ensure the productivity of this region. Indeed, a certain territorial requalification has been promoted, especially visible since the late 1990s when other high-quality tourism units emerged. With an effective promotion and supported by well-established territorial marketing (Osório et al, 2008), tourism promotes the attraction of high-income visitors. In this context, what is the impact of such investments? Which other dynamics should be associated for a sustainable yet differentiating development in Cambres?

2-Tourism in the Douro region

2.1- The impact of Tourism in Rural Areas (TRA)

An appealing yet deficient setting is confirmed in Cambres and in the DDR, thus requiring the application of strategies to ensure the profitability of this region. It is in this context that TRA has been favoured since the 1990s and, as of 2001, ‘charming’ and even luxury tourism. Also, the DDR is in fact a region full of potential, as was recognized by the World Tourism Organization and the “Regional Tourism Agenda”, projecting through

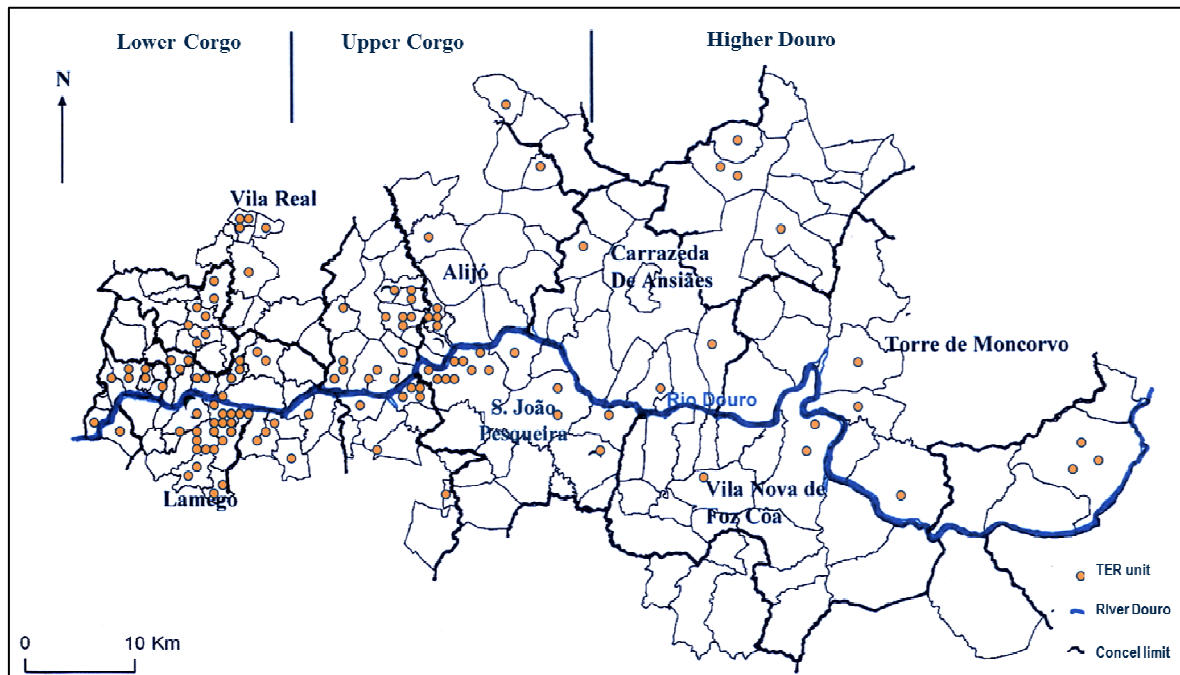
established policies a strategy of tourism development which is “*sustainable based on Qualification, Excellence and on the Competitiveness and Innovation of its tourism offer*” (Fazenda et al., 2008, 81), that is, turning tourism into a driving force of the regional economy.

To achieve this, however, heavy public investment is required, particularly in qualifying and upgrading the area, including, for instance, access routes or reference to built heritage and investment in the wine-growing and producing sector, the economic and social mainstay of this landscape unit. Only by these means can the region become more dynamic, thus increasing regional competitiveness in a comprehensive framework of all the territorial agents. For this purpose, there are community support frameworks, such as the “ON.2 Programme” and the “Tourism Development Plan of the Douro Valley” (CCDR-N, 2006), in addition to the “Economic Enhancement Programme for Endogenous Resources” (PROVERE). In this framework, the better structured agricultural holdings increasingly seek to associate with tourism activities, namely TRA.

TRA emerged in the early 1980s, but the great expansion of this type of tourism took place in the 1990s and beyond, particularly after the region was classified by UNESCO as “Evolutionary Landscape, World Heritage”. Thus, applications for TRA membership increased, but predominantly in the Lower Corgo, as seen in 2010 (Fig. 2). Cambres is undoubtedly an example worth noting because, if the first TRA members were registered in the late 1980s, in 2010, 9 *quintas* were associated to agro-tourism and 3 to housing tourism (Pina, 2010a).

In general, the *quintas* consist of medium-sized properties with a privileged landscape and a remarkable architectural heritage. Under the coordination of the family proprietors, guests are provided with activities that only in exceptional cases are confined to the estate, adding others, such as trips to explore the region and the major urban centres, as well as visits to protected areas, such as the Biological Park in Meadas or the Natural Parks of Alvão and Marão. Through agreements signed with regional companies, these *quintas* also offer the possibility to participate in Douro river cruises, historical train trips and also water sports.

Fig 2. - The impact of Tourism in Rural Areas in the Douro Demarcated Region in 2010.



Source: Turismo de Portugal, Rota do Vinho do Porto e outras

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Although individually these units are noteworthy examples, their accommodation capacity is limited, not to mention subject to rather seasonal occupation. In fact, occupation rates are highest between May and October, peaking in August/September, which is not sufficient to create and maintain sustainable endogenous dynamics. However, this aspect cannot be considered negligible. Moreover, the human aspect must also be highlighted, since not only are more and more women aged between 40 and 65 years old, with a technical and cultural background of higher level, responsible for projects, but there are also employees. From this, however, stems another weakness of such enterprises, since the degree of employability of these units is reduced, besides

being seasonal or even occasional, often confined to events or to receiving large groups. Permanent staff only exceptionally exceeds two members. Furthermore, these employees are generally 30 to 50 year-old women with elementary schooling and training. In this context, they perform the least specialized services. The only exception is the oenologist who supports wine-growing and producing activities.

In summary, although TRA units located in Cambres effectively enhance the agricultural holding where they operate and facilitate the dissemination of the landscape, history, gastronomy and local and regional traditions, their impact is still very much limited and complementary to wine-growing and producing activities. In this context, it is necessary to boost and diversify investments in the complementarity among the different offers, one of the ways to increase the labour force. Meanwhile, other potentialities are underestimated, namely those related to heritage and intangible culture (Pina, 2010b) in a setting where revitalization is urgent.

2.2- The impact of luxury, "charming"⁵ tourism

Complementing previous initiatives and following the classification of the Douro landscapes by UNESCO, other projects have emerged of a private and highly ambitious nature, involving large investments. We refer to initiatives in the area of high-quality tourism, such as the “Hotel Douro River”, a four-star hotel with a privileged location in the Régua Basin, as well as a unit included in the tourism of excellence, the “Aquapura Douro Valley”.

The “Douro River Hotel” is a four-star hotel unit corresponding to a major investment made by an individual from the Douro region living between Lisbon and the Algarve for decades, but who intended to return to his roots. In a path of phased return to the DDR, he gradually acquired degraded and contiguous houses located between EN 222 and the point where the Varosa river meet the Douro (Photo 4). Situated on the outskirts of Peso da Régua, a fact already indicating an exceptional location, which is further enhanced by a view over the “Régua Bassin”, confined by the Marão Mountain. With this scenery in mind, the current owner bought the first house in 1999 with the

⁵ The data presented herein was provided by the management board of the “Douro River Hotel” and the “Aquapura Douro Valley” between 2009 and 2010.

purpose of building a secondary home. However, his perception of the opportunities that the UNESCO classification provided to the DDR, as well as his knowledge of the region's serious shortcomings in terms of quality accommodation, led him to purchase the remaining four houses, thus building the hotel, which was completed in 2009. With 38 rooms, an innovative design and high-quality services, including a Spa, it has since become a member of "Style Hotels – Trendy and Elegant Hotels", which facilitates its internationalization.

In turn, the "Aquapura Douro Valley" (Photo 5), a five-star hotel located about 2 km from the hotel described above, combined not only a privileged landscape, perfectly situated between vineyards and the Douro River, but also a wealth of historical references, since it was set up in a 19th-century manor house (Quinta Vale de Abraão), surrounded by a recreational park covering 8 hectares with centenarian trees and waterfalls. Operations began in 2007.

Photo 4– The Douro River Hotel, located between EN 222 and rivers Douro and Varosa (2010).



Source: Photo author, 2010

Photo 5- The Aquapura Douro Valley, located between the Douro River and the vineyards (2009).



Source: Photo author, 2009

This hotel is the most important tourism investment in the Douro valley, resulting in a new luxury hotel concept that favours small units (up to 50 rooms) located in an appealing landscape setting, as is the DDR, in addition to proximity to urban centres of superb heritage. The hotel offers different types of facilities and services, with rooms in the 19th-century manor house and flats installed in built structures which were once designed for agricultural activities (olive mill, electrical power generation centre, storage areas and other attachments), as well as new structures disguised among the trees of the forest park.

As the entire enterprise is centred on water and its potential, the catalytic element of the hotel is a large Spa, 2200 m² in area. Thus, investments are made to combine authenticity and sophistication, wrapped in a *signature design*⁶and *décor* whose chromatic palette highlights the region's colours, that is, tones of schist, soil and wine in conjunction with decorative elements associated to vineyards and winemaking. This investment is distinguished from the others in the region, attracting high-income social strata, connoisseurs of landscape heritage, gastronomy and regional wines. It is a member of "Small Luxury Hotels".

⁶Architect Luís Rebelo de Andrade.

Here are two projects that emerged after the classification of the DDR landscape, both investments of an economic nature but also with the aim of revitalizing areas full of potential. These initiatives also led to innovation without degrading the landscape and, in addition, attempted to mitigate another problem, the demographic recession, by creating jobs. In fact, 107 young and qualified individuals have been employed.

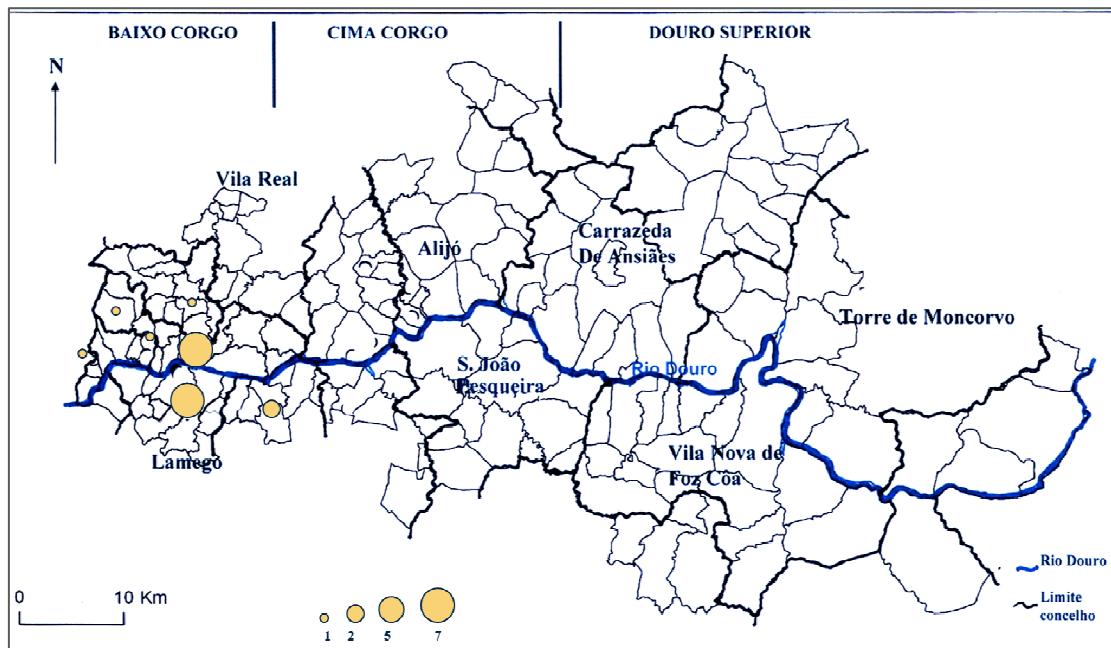
The human resources in these two units deserve some attention here. Among the 22 employees it takes to perform duties at the “Douro River Hotel”, it should be noted that the owner chose to favour the local population, which is why 15 employees are from the region, particularly Lamego and Peso da Régua. Additionally, there are also employees from other municipalities nearby, but who take less than 20 minutes to get to work.

The staff at the “Aquapura Douro Valley” is comprised of 85 employees, indeed a significant figure given the territorial setting in which it is located. In the selection process, endogenous human resources have not been neglected, since 56.5% (48 individuals) are from Lamego or surrounding municipalities, namely Peso da Régua, notably 31 from the latter municipality. There are, however, disparities between the staff of the two establishments, given that a greater territorial dispersion is visible in relation to the employees at the “Aquapura Douro Valley”. 12 come from Porto, 14 from other municipalities in Northern and Central Portugal and, to a lesser degree, from Lisbon or even Alentejo and the Algarve. Finally, 7 are foreigners performing highly specialized duties or holding management positions.

Moreover, when analyzing the employees’ current area of residence for both hotels, the impact is clear since 20 employees at the “Douro River Hotel” are already living in the surrounding urban areas or in the parishes where they were born (Fig.3) less than 15 minutes away by motor vehicle, and only two specialized technicians live in municipalities bordering the DDR (Douro River Hotel, 2010).

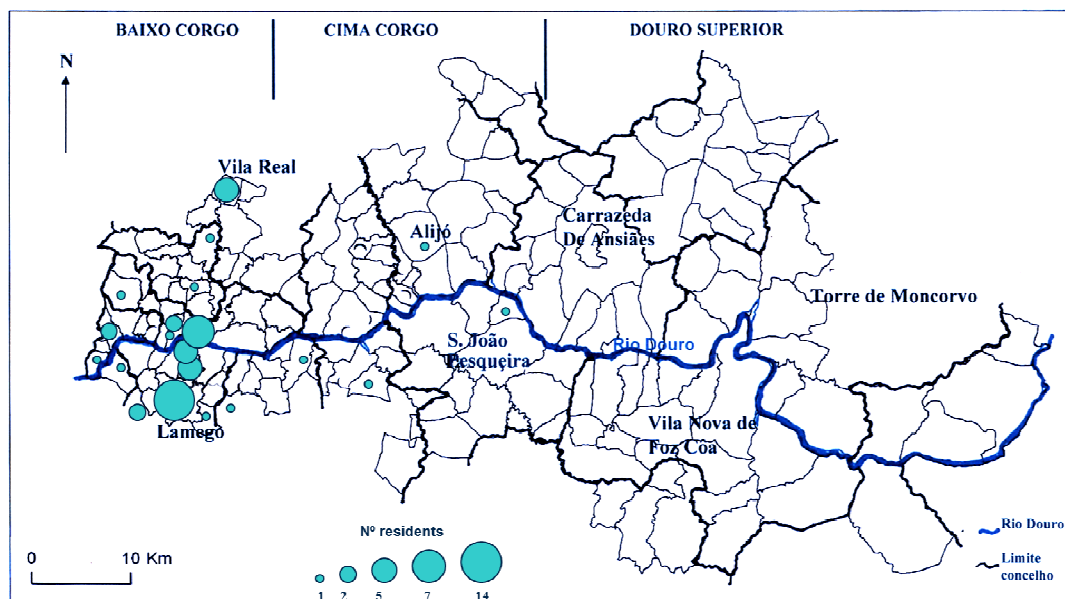
With regard to “Aquapura Douro Valley”, there are many similarities when looking at the official residence of the employees: more than 75% (61 individuals) moved to Lamego and Peso da Régua, or nearby municipalities, preferring especially the municipal seats and, particularly the main regional urban centre, Vila Real (Fig.4). On occasion, there are also residents in other municipalities in Northern and Central Portugal, but with good access routes.

Fig. 3 - Official residence of the “Douro River Hotel” employees in 2010.



Source: Douro River Hotel

Fig. 4- Official residence of the “Aquapura Douro Valley” employees in 2009.



Source: Aquapura Douro Valley, 2009

These are indeed investments that have led not only to the permanence of residents, but also to the mobility of workers to the region. The social impact of these

tourism initiatives is therefore significant on a local and regional scale, in a setting where demographic decline is clearly identifiable.

Another point worth noting relates to the duties performed by these employees in the hotel unit and their technical training (Tables I and II). The less demanding tasks are performed by residents from the municipalities or vicinities of Lamego and Peso da Régua, generally older, whereas the most specialized jobs (Spa, among others) are carried out by younger qualified residents from the major regional urban centres and particularly from Porto in the case of the five-star hotel. As regards management, administration and executive services in the “Douro River Hotel”, management is undertaken by family members but supported by specialized personnel holding a higher education degree in the field of hospitality and tourism management, whereas in the “Aquapura Douro Valley”, staff includes Portuguese members as well as foreigners with a higher education degree, to which we add privileged social contacts. Only in technical support and more specific services is experience preferential, reason by which these employees are sometimes older and live further away: the focus on experience and distinctive quality is very clear here.

Tab. I - Main groups of activity of the human resources of the "Douro River Hotel" according with their official residence in 2010.

Official residence	Main Groups of Activities						TOTAL
	receptionists / porters	cleaning/ maintenance	kitchen/catering	SPA	higher technicians	administration/ management	
Lamego (municipality)	2	1		2	1	2	8
Peso da Régua (municipality)	1	3	5				9
Other surrounding municipalities			2		1		3
Other municipalities NORTH region			1				1
Other municipalities	1						1
TOTAL	4	4	8	2	2	2	22

Source: Douro River Hotel, 2010

Tab. II - Main groups of activity of the human resources of the "Aquapuro Douro Valley" according with their official residence in 2009.

Official residence	Main Groups of Activities									TOTAL
	recepti onists	porters	cleaning/ maintena	kitchen	catering /bar	technical maintenan	SPA	higher technician	administration / management	
Lamego (municipality)	3	3	7	4	3	2	1	1	1	25
Peso da Régua (municipality)		1	4	3	4	2	1			15
Other surrounding municipalities	2		8	3	3	1	1			18
Other municipalities										
NORTH region	1			2	1			1		5
PORTO (metropolitan area)					1		5	2		8
Other municipalities										
CENTRE region	1		1	2	1			2		7
LISBON (metropolitan area)							1			1
Other municipalities										
SOUTH					1					1
From abroad				1		1		1	2	5
TOTAL	7	4	20	15	14	6	9	7	3	85

Source: Aquapura Douro Valley, 2009

It is thus a very favourable labour structure with young and qualified staff members, given that 17 employees at the “Douro River Hotel” are aged between 21 and 35 years old with an advanced technical background (7 hold an Undergraduate/Master’s degree or have completed a technical course, whereas 6 have completed 12 of schooling). As for “Aquapura Douro Valley”, 75% of employees are 21 to 35 years old and only 6% are above 45 years of age. Moreover, 34% have 12 years of schooling, whereas 28.2% have vocational or higher education degrees covering all the technical areas required for project management and maintenance.

Although these hotel investments are insufficient to trigger and maintain noticeable development dynamics, they convey a meaning that cannot be ignored, since they keep local highly-qualified young individuals from fleeing and attract others. It is necessary, however, to associate these with other complementary initiatives capable of boosting the existing ones.

All things considered, these hotel investments have not only preserved the existing heritage, but also promoted other related activities. In addition to the Spa, the hotels also offer wine tasting and regional gastronomy, including visits to *quintas* with which there are prior agreements, both within the parish and in the Upper Corgo. They also offer touristic train and river boat trips, allowing visitors to explore the region, namely in terms

of architectural heritage, handicrafts and other intangible heritage, such as festivals and traditions, popular culture, in short, the distinctive history of the landscape.

Scientific, technical or artistic events are also another strategic aspect explored in these hotels, providing accommodation for different types of guests according to the season of the year. Thus, family stays dominate during the holiday season, Easter or harvests, while middle-aged couples with no children (40 to 65 years old) usually occupy weekdays, especially during winter time. When the analysis is centred on the organized technical groups, it is found that more than 50% are associated with pharmaceutical or medical associations in the case of “Aquapura Douro Valley”, whereas in the “Douro River Hotel” the diversity is greater. Nevertheless, both hotel units aim to further develop this aspect throughout the year, extending agreements to several different companies and differentiated technical groups.

Following the strategies implemented, there is also an undeniable, growing trend in stays by foreigners, a booming market involving mainly Spaniards, but also the French, Belgians and Americans. Whereas in 2007, the opening year of “Aquapura Douro Valley”, 90% of the guests were Portuguese, in 2010 the national group corresponded to only 65%. Meanwhile, in the “Douro River Hotel”, despite the short period of operation, the same objective is also clear, aiming to quickly reach 40% of foreign guests.

Hence, an exceptional world heritage region is disseminated and dynamics are triggered enabling its preservation and revitalization.

3- Conclusion

A privileged and internationally renowned region, the DDR represents an idyllic territory with terraced slopes that resulted in its classification as World Heritage. Despite the region's manifold potentialities, it also struggles with many problems, among which are economic stagnation associated with a decline in the wine-growing and producing sector, poor land use structure and the deficient profile of farmers, as well as sharp demographic decline.

In order to preserve and revitalize this paradigmatic region, several strategies are being developed, including a multifunctional approach to the agricultural holdings, particularly among the medium-sized and large *quintas*. Meanwhile, other endogenous potentialities are being completely underestimated, which could help to minimize the

seasonality of tourism and trigger the sustainable development of the Cambres parish and the region as a whole. To set an example, fruit trees need to be used to promote participation in fruit crops, associated with the preparation of jams and liqueurs, and more value needs to be added to olive harvesting and olive oil production, mainly during the low season.

There is also the need to create routes integrated in the “paths in time and space”, taking advantage of the technical and historical diversity of access routes and their landscape framework (St. James’ Way, Roman roads, the proposed railway line, etc.); and how can one ignore the traditional festivities with their specificities or handicrafts which in the meantime are gradually being lost? Only in this way can the region be boosted, reversing the less positive trends that are currently underway.

On the other hand, tourism, in its various forms, is indeed another strategic investment that favours the Douro region, where population decline is undeniable and problems arise in the wine sector, even though wine-growing and producing constitute the economic and social mainstay of this landscape unit. In this context, only a multifunctional perspective, covering all social classes but favouring the local population, the effective custodians and preservers of the local and regional heritage, can enable the development of a sustainable framework. Local potentialities must be revitalized, whether they be environmental, economic, social and cultural or even intangible, including innovation. Within this scope, in addition to the wine-growing and producing industry, tourism is important, including TRA and more sophisticated tourism based on small yet high-quality hotels providing excellent service to their guests, in addition to knowledge and dissemination of a distinctive landscape. All in all, they contribute to regional sustainability. Thus, tourism is another strategy that encourages a young population with higher education to remain in the Douro region, besides attracting a dynamic and attractive staff.

In brief, there are multiple strategies that can bolster the regional economy with a view to achieving sustained development, based on qualification and excellence, but also innovation and competitiveness. To this end, it is important to qualify human resources, improve infrastructures, as well as diversify recreational activities and increase the supply of quality accommodation. Cambres is an example in which

revitalization and sustainable development come together in a way that is expected to be harmonious. Moreover, networking is also required for the international projection of the Douro region, creating interrelations namely with the European Association Vintur, thus envisaging joint strategies that enhance wine culture and tourism in the European area.

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