Introduction

From 1852 to 1857 Portugal lived a period of public calamities provoked by torrential floods and sea storms\(^1\). Some parliamentarians being themselves part of the agrarian elite or their representatives could announce the devastation of their fields provoked by hydrologic hazards\(^2\). Under an electoral tax paying regime system, the bigger farmers of the low land rich arable flood plains would present their own discontentment to their fellow politicians.

Furthermore they could demand directly public action, to the parliamentary bodies and to the government, through public works whilst mountaineers didn’t have the same kind of representation. This one was increased during the period under which statistical and geographical reports on the territory were held across the 1860s and 1870s.

The data produced was referred in parliamentarian debates to defend, beyond the lowlands affected by hailstorms, heavy rainfalls and torrential floods, territorial public policies for all areas at risk of flooding as well as, of epidemics spreading. Actually, for almost three decades, the territory kept on being squeezed between two devastating hydrologic masses: the torrential flooding drained from the mountains to the shores, and the sea upsurges towards the inland\(^3\).

In order to present solutions for situations of public calamity, the surveying of the territory carried out from the 1850s till the 1870s\(^4\), was used to show the urge

---

\(^1\) Annaes do Observatório do Infante D. Luís. Resumo das Principais Observações Meteorológicas executadas Durante o Período de 20 Anos Decorridos Desde 1856-1875, Lisboa Imprensa Nacional, 1877; Melo, Cristina Joanaz de, Contra Cheias e Tempestades: Consciência do Território, Debate Parlamentar e Políticas de Águas e de Florestas em Portugal 1852-1886, Thesis Submitted assessment with a view obtaining the degree of Doctor in History and Civilization from the European University Institute, Florence, August, 2010.

\(^2\) Sessions of the parliamentarian debates in the Deputies Chamber, Barão de Almeirim, 05.03.1855, in Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 05.03.1855.

\(^3\) Melo, Cristina Joanaz de, Contra Cheias e Tempestades...., 2010, pp. 66-74.

\(^4\) Branco, Rui Miguel Carvalhinho, The Cornerstones of Modern Government: Maps, Weights and Measures and Census in Liberal Portugal (19th century), Thesis Submitted assessment with a view obtaining the degree of Doctor in History and Civilization from the European University Institute,
about finding solutions to prevent public calamities for all over the territory. The new data proved that peripheral areas to the lowlands were suffering the same kind or worse economic, health and social problems.

Furthermore, under the mission or surveying the territory the brigades in charged of producing the statistical and geographical description of the Districts as well as of determining the weights and measurements, revealed another reality to the legislative chamber: an unknown economic country. The public officers describing the Districts activities had come across with a myriad of natural resources extracted form the commons both hydric as well as terrestrial, traded and manufactured at a local level beyond any tax control from the central government. Yet they seemed to be well allocated and controlled under monopoly schemes for some local entities⁵.

Till the late fifties and early sixties, the parliamentarians had no spark of knowledge of how fruitful those economic activities could be, such as, sand extraction for porcelain industry or oysters recollection. The most significant example might be the factory of “Vista Alegre”, nowadays an exporting brand for the name of Portugal, which, throughout some decades of the 19th century, absolutely legally, was allowed


⁵ Oliveira, Francisco de Paula Campos e, Informações Para a Estatística Industrial… 1867.
to use public sands in its activity, free from taxes for the public coastal domain was only legislated in 1864⁶.

Public calamities: one trigger for surveying landscapes at risk

Within a framework of civil war carried out from 1834 till 1852, between two liberal rival factions (radicals and chartists), the political priorities were focused beyond any concerns of environmental management. And when the political stabilization was reached in 1852, the drivers of territorial policies concerned material achievements.

It was not until public calamities had rich an apocalyptic scenery of famine (with crops devastated), diseases (spreading in wet environments and scarce sewage systems), death (under nutrition, faecal and water contamination), and social conflicts (against sanitary measures) that politicians living in Lisbon did understand that a different approach had to be undertaken. For that purpose the territory had to be thoroughly known⁷.

Public calamities had in a way lead to the displacement of human resources carrying out the broad project of mapping the territory at 1/100 000m to other more urgent surveys⁸. In the late fifties and early sixties, the priorities were to identify in detail the Portuguese water basins, the areas at a risk of torrential waters formation and over flooding, landslides and mudflows due to lack of forestation, and wetlands at risk of spreading epidemics. They had been given order to identify as well the inland and coastal wetlands such as the moors, fens, salt marshes and the dune area bordering the coast. However, the geographical chart and the report for landscapes at risk, presented in the survey about the forest areas in the country, were only available, respectively by 1865 and 1867⁹. In the fifties, storms and diseases called for action¹⁰.

---

⁷ Melo, Cristina Joana de, Contra Cheias e Tempestades…, 2010, pp. 105-127.
⁸ Idem, idem.
Disturbing the creed for progress through the railways lines building, the health problems occur widely in the country demanded immediate attendance. Yellow fever was not erased yet in 1858 as it had been achieved for the cholera and the typhus crises. Till the 1880s, yellow fever would re-emerge widely spread across a vast range of the territory, in the wetlands near by the coast or in the stagnant waters of the middle terraces in the hills as well as in the uplands.

Between 1854 and 1858 when Governments came across with the need to plan sanitary policies and civil protection, the tools available for it were either imperfect or inexistent. There was not such a fool geographical map for the territory, as the natural resources were not yet surveyed in a reliable statistical and mapped way by the mid of the nineteenth century. Parliamentarians had to count on their own experience and further on with the public data collected and produced by public bodies in the forthcoming two decades.

In 1859, the government had ordered a sanitary information about the areas of rice production for it was believed that the origin of the malaria was provoked by the culture of that cereal. Furthermore, it was also thought that the coastal maritime winds would transport the virus in the drops of water from the salt marshes or estuaries into the inland.

It was necessary to identify then the areas of that evil focus of contamination and the ones that were in risk of being easily affected with the same Karma. One of those would be the lagoon of River’s Vouga delta. Was then under a context of diseases propagated in water that the deputy for this District José Estêvão de

---


10 Melo, Cristina Joanaz de, Contra Cheias e Tempestades..., 2010, pp. 105-127.


12 Melo, Cristina Joanaz de, Contra Cheias e Tempestades..., 2010, pp. 105-127.


Magalhães brought to light an all set of problems concerning hydrologic and hydric resources regulation, management and administration. Common waters had no regulation\textsuperscript{15}.

The lagoon is shared among several municipal inhabitants and theoretically, counties administrations. In this area the “Ria de Aveiro” all conflicting and illegal problems could be addressed to. In 1859, despite many projects for the port and the correction of the lagoon, the coastal sandy evolution was still affecting the navigation and the inexistence of its port’s protection. The danger of the malaria propagation was helped by the incapacity of draining the water to the sea from the flooding plain where rice was being produced; but the most outrageous non controlled situation was that of absolute lack of authority in public waters, shared among several populations and popular municipalities, each one claiming the right of the wet common.

Water was a branch of Administrative Law which had bee forgotten since the abolishment of the ancient regime rights. Although the Act of 13 of August of 1832 which abolished those rights had established the main framework for the public resources administration, yet it did not consider regulation for common and municipal waters administration.

According to the deputy, the Administrative Law had forgotten that branch of the public resources Wright. The administrative codes of 1836 and 1842 kept aside the common waters as well. Therefore the wetlands and watercapes were submitted to the law of the stronger local power, which did not necessarily mean the local official municipal authority.

According to this parliamentarian, notwithstanding municipalities endorse clear authority over land, however arriving into the waters “they have no authority. They are not amphibians”\textsuperscript{16}.

Besides, when coastal common waters full of oysters, cramps, prawns and other sea food, salt, algae, fish, ducks, and water, were shared or competed among several contiguous populations and counties, there was no rule of any sort imposing or

\textsuperscript{15} Estêvão de Magalhães, session of the Deputies Chamber by 09.01.1858, in \textit{Diário da Câmara dos Deputados}, 1858.

\textsuperscript{16} Idem, idem.
defining how to attribute which areas in the wetlands to municipal authorities. Likewise, because there was no delimitation in the water, which section of the lagoon was under each county administration and surveillance, it was explored as a chaotic common, where the costume rules of inland commons control and surveillance could be ignored as long as a boat could cross waters.\(^{17}\)

Extortion and abuse of power over the exploitation of hydrologic resources due greatly to the lack of administrative rules was then, the default situation. According to this statement the lagoon was an open stage for total impunity towards naval battle fields. They were held among individuals, groups or caciques, for the control of natural resources exploitation.

Nonetheless, even tough the municipalities surrounding the “Ria de aveiro” have pronounced themselves through petitions sent to parliament, complaining about the intentions of abolishing the rice culture, they did not asked for any solution to the government towards the common water and commons resources.\(^{18}\)

It was later, in 1873, when the Government finally gave the concession of the oysters’ banks extraction to the Marquis of Niza in the salty marsh lagoon of Aveiro, the Lagoon of Óbidos and the Ria Formosa that populations reacted against this business once it was overriding ancestral rights over the wet commons.

After the surveying of the territory, entrepreneurs and politicians became aware of oyster economic value, both and an individual profit as well as of the state expectations over tax collecting. Actually, in 1870 when the project for this operation was presented in 1870, the main argument brought into the debate to deny the concession of monopoly was how damaging it would be for state tax collecting.\(^{19}\)

\(^{17}\) Idem, idem.


\(^{19}\) Bill of law to concede the monopoly of oysters bank exploitation to the Marquis of Niza, of Ria de Aveiro, Lagoa de Óbidos, and the coastal area of Algarve, session of the deputies Chamber by 16.12.1870, Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 1870; The debate on the project was carried out in the sessions of 24, 27, 28 and 29 of March of 1870, 24, 27, 28 and 29, Diário da Câmara dos Deputados., 1870.
In 1870 was due to the initial proposal of marquis de Niza contract that would disable other economic activities held on the lagoons resources, and therefore reducing the tax collectable base for the treasury, that some of the common rights seemed to have been kept in the business agreed with the government. Although some deputies presented the argument that monopoly over this business would drive populations into misery by changing the secular ways of survival, that regime of resources exploitation would weaken free market competition, and again the final amount of tax collecting for the State²⁰.

Two years later, when the final version of the contact was allowed by the parliament under more favourable tax paying conditions and wider obligations of the marquis of Niza on both increasing the oysters banks as well as of not overriding the wetlands populations rights over other resources, the communities of Serra do Bouro, Nadadouro, Vau, Carregal, Foz do Arelio e surrounding the wetland and affected by this contract reclaimed the lagoon of Óbidos complain against this measure for, at the same it would profoundly change the populations and previous local controllers of the resources from all their economic life. Therefore, they presented petitions in order to plead the legislative chamber to reconsider the contract²¹.

In the following years of 1872 and 1873, a torrential set of petitions against of in favour that business, flushed from the Algarve, and some from the western coast municipalities served by the wetlands of oyster banks of the mentioned lagoons²². The ones that felt their business and oysters collecting as well as other resources used in danger of being damaged, mostly from the western coast, with other economic traditions and social control and occupation of the territory, asked for its abolishment.

However, in the Algarve the battle for it was harsher. The populations in favour for the contract were the ones that would be favoured with employment. In areas of sandy movable dunes, bad for agriculture, salt marshes, and fishery, a steady paid job would encourage this position. On the contrary, when Mister José Vicente

²⁰ Rodrigo de Freitas, 24.03.1871, Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 1871.
²¹ Session of the parliamentarian debates in the Deputies Chamber of 22.04.1872, in Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 1872.
²² Sessions of the parliamentarian debates in the Deputies Chamber of : 15, 19, 20.021872 in Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 1872; 12,22, 30.04.1872 in Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 1872; 16,24.01-1873; 04,05,06,08,10,12,17,18,20,21,27.02.1873 in Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 1873; 01,05,07,08,17,18,19,21,22,24,26, 27.3.1873, in Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 1873.
Barbosa du Bocage established a contract for the Tagus and Sado’s oyster banks exploitation by the 10th of August of 1867, it was granted with no problem.23

The main difference for the parliamentarians refusal the Marquis de Niza Contract was that this new proposal was to cover about of 200 kilometres of oyster banks extraction in the Algarve, and North of Lisbon in many areas affecting also many populations under a regime of monopoly for this activity while Bocage had asked for 3km in the Tagus.24

Furthermore, whilst the request of Bocage was undertaken immediately after the publishing of the national first surveys on the matter and there were no accounts for the profits of this activity, after the parliamentary debate on the bill that proposed the regulate on for oyster banks management for all over the country, the success of the activity was more then publicised. Then, in the early 1870s it seemed that there some kind of encouragement for a seafood golden run for the parliament discussed this matter thoroughly for many areas of the country, has any parliamentarian body had never performed before.25

Maybe the impact of flooding and yellow fever in the estuary had discouraged the exploitation of those resources till the drainage of the swampy areas held, in the majority of the marshes by the public services, in the farming land of the state, in the flood lands of these two rivers, from 1862 till 1865. Also probably because the most fertile lands bordering the waters belonged to the state being managed by the Public company of the “Lezírias do Tejo e Sado”, and private landowners might have had less control over the watercapes.

In any case, what seems quite striking to me, is that, in the rich water capes, with natural resources that produced profitable economies, the process of keeping the state way form intervention in that kind of areas is very alike to the one undertaken in the uplands to avoid the central administration full awareness of the parallel economies held locally.

---

23 Sr. Cortez, Session of the parliamentarian debates in the Deputies Chamber 29.031871, in Diário da Câmara dos Deputados, 29.031871.
24 Idem, idem.
25 Look at note 22.
Uplands and heaths: the unexpected economic autarchy

In 1856 two apparently contradictory statements describe the highest District of the country: Guarda. In April the “agriculture society” of Guarda reported that although poor in cereals production, the main richness of the region was held in wool cattle. Forestry was fairly abundant mainly of chestnuts and the trade was mainly performed with the neighbour Spain. By November, the Civil Governor the Government urgent call for evaluation on the cereals production far all over the country, given the fact that the harvest of the year had been the worst of the century known so far. In the district they had to import it from abroad, meaning Spain, with whom they already normally trade.

As it will be further explored in this text both the reports from the Agriculture Society in April and afterwards in November, confirm the specificity of that location poorly populated but controlling the altitude economies of landscapes of heaths, chestnuts, oak, moors, and natural grasslands holding cattle raising: caws, sheep and pigs.

Also how the full global control of the landscape in the mountains, stated by the members of the agriculture society, at the same locals, described an intentional Status quo of the local hierarchy economic control of the District. That one was allocated among private landowners who undertaking the most efficient works on cattle raising and agriculture, mainly in what concerned developing orchards. And order was kept as such because there were no common pastures.

Sheep and goats

By the third of July of 1856, after a catastrophic awareness of the cereals devastation for all over the country due to heavy rainfalls and sever floods, Portuguese prime Minister demanded a survey on the cereals production and food supply through all the continental territory in order to evaluate the level of scarcity.

26 “Relatório da Sociedade Agrícola da Guarda” in Boletim do Ministério das Obras Públicas Comércio e Indústria, Abril 1856, Lisboa, 1856, pp. 208-219
As all Districts ought to report urgently to the Ministry of Public Works, the one Agriculture Association of Guardas by November confirmed the almost expected information: that the cereals were quite inexistent and had to be imported from abroad.

However, according the report of the Agriculture Society of Guarda published in previous spring, that precise region did not live or survive under a cereal economy. On the contrary, the mountaineers’ communities had more capacity to survive economically to a devastating torrential regime in the valleys and lowlands.

Precisely because they were living above watersheds and rivers flows growth. Furthermore, as the reported stated, they lived in fertile irrigated and drained grassed dells – for there were caws and these herbivorous only eat soft and rich plants and unlike pigs do not seek for mud.

This almost comic statement reveals however how a scarcely populated area as the one of District of Guarda was in the sixties, can reveal other characteristics of the mountains hidden or unveiled economies based on and probably oligarchy local control over natural resources management, exploitation and trade. It will reveal as well, like it happened with the “Ria de Aveiro” that there was no interest to show to central power how local economies could actually perform a good standard totally aside from central administration awareness free from taxes for the Treasury.

What kept these regions independent from to much curiosity had probably been the condition of altitude, difficult access both in orography as well as from distance from the placement of the Central Administration head-quarters in Lisbon. Altitude, space up and the density of landscapes diversity at micro-scale fertility would contribute for this autarchic economic condition.

That region of Guarda mountains “Serra da Estrela”, within the 1000-2000m altitude, make a dense mosaic of different climates, soils and water distribution; Slopes, dells and natural terraces containing springs, streams, drainage’s rivers and lakes. It also hosts heathers for sheep and goats, water and grass for cows in the mires.

rich small depressions of the mountains, peat and heats to be burnt as charcoal. Animals abundance as well as chestnuts trees (*Sativa Castanea*), would grant both a food diet of animal proteins, milky products, together with dry fruits nutritional richer than other cereals like barley or corn\(^\text{30}\).

Before the introduction of the potation Europe, nuts were the base diet of poor soil lands, not wheat or corn. Animals could be fed from pastures as heaths, peat, or fields of grasslands in dells or, unlike in other European Regions, in the abundant hydrologic net of the Portuguese mountains and doesn’t have perpetual snows.

Furthermore along ten years of extra rain combined with warm weather in woodlands of *Quercus* species “producing” extra leaves, fodder and humus, unlike it would be expected in the mountains slopes, precisely because there were geological terraces, fertility might have increased.

Space and quality of natural pastures had already been analysed for that region which were demanded to be to be the corn-stone of wool industry in the country by the future Marquis of Pombal, one the most iconic political figures of Portugal from its strong charisma and endeavour spirit for the economic development\(^\text{31}\).

It can also be pointed out that already in the 18\(^{th}\) century, the wool industry had been sponsored endorsed that activity in that region because of hydrologic resources for the textile industry, but also because the flocks nearby the factories were being kept in areas of tested shepherd ing and transhumance traced back till the Middle Ages.

In the first half of the 19th century the Mesta rights were abolished for they were a monopoly heritage of the Ancient Regime. Still, transhumance had not been abolished neither livestock breeding in mountains had been forbidden.

In Portugal there has never been an association alike the Spanish one, Mesta, but mountaineers kept on supporting their economy in resources that could be explored in the uplands such as cattle, dry fruits and fodder from the woodlands.

\(^{30}\) Idem, ibidem.

Uplands under such conditions were by no means of economic useless and less to be disregarded from the economic point of view.

Actually comparing the alternatives of escaping from hydrological hazards impacts in the economy, mountaineers would have better alternatives because they were not stuck to a ground and fenced landscape and therefore individual economy. In this sense, although among a local oligarchy, the uplanders could move their cattle way climbing always upper. In the slopes, shepherds and rural communities did not have to face the same problem of micro fenced or hedged properties and enclosures limitations as their similar communards had in the lowlands.

Albeit being a very dangerous statement for commons and rural communities in the mountains are always a very tricky subject I still sustain that even for the poor with goats flocks, completing the uplands economy, and probably listed by the sheep owners, did know the environment and how to shelter people and animals again, always up or down in the so much diverse climatic and soiled based of the inland Mountains of Serra da Estrela.

If we take into account the statement of the same report of the agriculture commission of 1856, is actually everything there: an alternative economy to the lowlands, divided among private cattle raisers or even farmers, where there were no common once they had been illegally appropriated by landowners, which had a positive effect of raising no conflicts for those lands among private landowners and rural communities. And these will lead us into the theme of the appropriation of the commons in the uplands.

Again, as it as been extensively studied in the Portuguese historiography, in the Parliament, when the discussion for the selling of public properties took place in the legislative forum, the major opinion was that appropriating the commons for improving civilized and modern cattle raising or agriculture was right. The most respectable press on rural affairs like and among them *The Rural Archive* (*Archivo Rural*) journal would defend this through the opinion of his Director, Rodrigo de Moraes Soares, Director of the Public agriculture Service and professor at the General institute of Agriculture.
According to this respectable opinion, the resilience to allow the selling of the state public commons, especially those good for pasturing, was not because of the respect for the communards and poor property rights, but precisely because these unprotected people had been emptied off of their rights precisely by the local caciques, men of power, local authorities, that had illegally appropriated that state land in the course of the times. They were using state property with no right to it. Therefore, one can induce that, state control was demanded to moralize local abuse of authority and social control though the monopoly of natural resources uses, management and free exploitation.

Unfortunately for the peripheries the surveys accomplished in the sixties on the territory about orography, hydrological net, soil occupation, forest and heaths distribution and wetlands completed by a rigorous description of areas at risk of torrential flooding and wide spread of epidemics through watercapes, as well as the statistical survey and identification of weights and measures in the country in order to adopt the metrical system, did reveal a very parallel country in many of the areas considered as of regardless economic interest by the central elite.

Within 1861 and 1865 was developed the field work and the full printing of the Geographical Chart at a scale of 1/500 000 m; between 1866-and 1867 the territory for woods, uncultivated land, water basins distribution were surveyed and charted as well upon the level curves indicating steepness of orography. These works exposed the orography and the perimeter of the state summits in the relief, mountains and hill; water basins were identified in detail as well as the wetlands across all over the territory, that under appropriate drainage works could become pastures of outstanding quality both in the uplands moors of the north eastern province of Trás-os-Montes, in the “Veiga de Chaves”, or in the fens of the Algarve.

As we already know from Maria Carlos Radich studies, the most striking unexpected result was that 5 million over 9 millions of hectares, that constituted the area of Continental Portugal, were uncultivated. Heath and pastures were among

---

34 Radich, Maria Carlos, Alves, A.A. Monteiro Dois Séculos de Floresta em Portugal, Lisboa, edições CELPA, 2000.
them, but this figure together with the information of the possibilities for cow raising in the middle slopes or in the uplands was then explored as an agrarian possibility in the forthcoming years.

Also those surveys presented 21 water basins of torrential drainage, against the normally mentioned nine biggest rivers of the country, used for navigation to link the inland to the sea\textsuperscript{35}. These new data stressed then, the tremendous density of water resources totally disregarded by the central administration both in the inland as by the shores. At the end, they were confirming the damages caused by the lack of management as well as of regulations for water resources, not only from a point of view of its consequences as to easy calamities to occur, but also considering the economic losses for the state due to the total chaotic and free use of natural resources.

For instance, the water used in factories for textile or ceramics washing or steam energy, was free from taxes; as well as, the raw material collected for clay and pottery industry from state or municipal commons. As the heaths and trees of the uplands or the crustaceans from the salt lagoons, it seems that also rocky minerals constituted valuable resources under the shade.

**Rocks and sands: resources at the shade**

The statistical information produced by the Department of Weights and Measures of the Aveiro’s District, described a daily practiced situation stating a very normal situation. Resources like clay, building stones and sand were of free recollection. They could be taken from the commons, not only by the poor but also from wealthy landowners. Private farmers as the communards would extract from the inland commons as well as of coastal sandy or rocky margins cal, stone building or milestone, chalk, clay, at no cost at all\textsuperscript{36}.

What maybe surprised at the most the brigade collecting these data was the unexpected amount of stone industries development based on rock, sand and clay extraction. Furthermore in the public ones, in the commons, they were free from any

\textsuperscript{35} Relatório da Arborização Geral do País, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1868.
\textsuperscript{36} Oliveira, Francisco de Paula Campos e, Informações Para a Estatística Industrial ..., 1867
charges\textsuperscript{37}. These raw materials were freely collected supplying home works or small factories of ceramics or brick production.

At the same time these resources – sands, stone and clay - would be the cornerstone source of raw materials for units of medium and industrial big dimension, which were practicing an already quite developed technique of ceramic fusion. This industrial process would require huge amount of water to operate sand washing.

Resources such as flagstone, clay, or sand extraction had not been classified as products of regulation or taxation from the central Portuguese fiscal system till the 20th century, although at a local level they had played a very important role, like hydrologic resources.

Yet, was only with the statistical report of 1875 signed by Gerado Pery, that he realized and drew the attention for, the lack of information for an activity that would raise interesting profits, for which there were not global data for the country. In his statistical survey all he came to say was that there were no data neither on the percentage of this activity for the GDP or of what was the real important of it in the national economy\textsuperscript{38}.

Despite this warning, rocky resources, sand, stone, and clay building and lime stone kept on being left aside as of interest for legislators till the following century. It’s very weird how a crucial material for building construction passed decades without calling the attention of rulers for this industry, especially when they were crucial for the public works development. They had become eventually, a matter of stronger interest in the twentieth century under demographic increase and the push for house building.

**Conclusions**

What one can grasp from the exposed examples is that “big puddles”, “shrubs” and “stones” were a remarkable base for hidden economies quite important for local economies. Some of them, like the oyster business, became so appealing for private interest that when they became known as of free to be explored, they were lusted for

\textsuperscript{37} Idem, Idem, p.115,  
\textsuperscript{38} Pery, Gerardo A. Geographia Estatistica Geral de Portugal e Colónias, 1\textsuperscript{a} ed., Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1875.
big entrepreneurs introducing, eventually, profound changes in the balance of local powers and economic control of peripheries.

The launching factor for this awareness among the central elite was the surveys of the territory, turned available by the end of the 1860s. Before this period, there were no tools that could have shown to the legislators and entrepreneurs how other economic activities beyond agrarian and iron industry could be of similar profitable interest. Politicians and economic elite had thought of the territory policies so far under the tripod of economic drivers as farming, cattle raising and communications.

Therefore, till the 1860s and 1870s, the local elites could freely operate mastering the monopolies or shared agreed partition of the other natural resources extraction, management and profit. Then private farmers, shepherds, both in the uplands as well as in wetlands, like fishermen or naval operators lead locally the profitable economies which were not of interest of the main driving vectors of central administration political programs.

Peripheral authorities were happy top not have the legislator attention towards their source of richness for they did not show any will for changing this economic, social and administrative status quo not even under torrential calamities and famine. They accepted the state help but did not seek for the state intromission in their affairs.

As a matter of fact, when the amount of free resources became to be at light, a path for taxation over their economic uses seamed to be put in motion. Therefore, a possibility to be yet confirmed is till what extent the master for natural resources control, grant economic survival and therefore social obedience, was also a powerful tool to control political performance. Till what extent than, when the state became able to rule and fiscal all natural resources management, it meant also a loss of political power at local level. An hypothesis yet to be confirmed in further on.