

## **Trading on Terroir:**

# **Fostering Artisanal Cheese and Alcohol Production through Specialized Agrarian Industrial Districts**

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## **I. Introduction and Paper Outline**

Specialized Agrarian Industrial Districts, or “SAIDs,” are bounded zones producing specialized *agricultural* products. By bounded, we mean that production processes are spatially confined or agglomerated to a geographic “region” or “cluster”; SAIDs’ are also “bound” less literally by a set of characteristics and features. Producers are vertically disintegrated, yet localized products and producers’ networks enable higher-end and export sales. SAIDs’ features resist and supplant international divisions of capital and labor and those regimes’ associated outputs of “cheap food” and mass-produced “commodities from nowhere.” SAIDs’ structure and distinctive features enable a dynamism that resists standardization and concentrates associated knowledge and skills, even against a broader backdrop of global transnational corporation (TNC) consolidation and vertical integration.

The following research questions drive our inquiry: What characteristics and features are associated with “successful” SAIDs? Are SAIDs, their production processes, and their final products a niche bourgeoisie-bohemian sideshow *within* modern agro-industrial processes of mass production, or do they represent a potential alternative path to agro-industrial consolidation? Finally, what are SAIDs’ social and ecological consequences?

In this paper, we begin by examining the academic literature associated with industrial districts that both situate and inspire our contemporary inquiry surrounding SAIDs. Next, we couple insights from SAIDs’ theoretical construction with empirical research from four cases of SAIDs, noting specific key characteristics we believe are common to SAIDs. Some of these characteristics are also associated with industrial districts; others, like *terroir*, include aspects more unique to agro-industrial production. We complement our descriptive analysis with critical-

theoretical analysis of key concerns associated with SAIDs' current structure. These concerns reveal a different set of macro-structural forces and political coalitions supporting SAIDs than what a reader might otherwise assume from the industrial-districts literature. We then advance an *alternative* potential structure for SAIDs, as a provocation rather than as a definitive model. We conclude by noting the myriad of future opportunities that might exist for further inquiry surrounding SAIDs.

## II. Industrial Districts: A Point of Departure

Piore and Sabel note in their 1984 book, *The Second Industrial Divide*, that traditional Fordist/Keynesian mass production was increasingly at a disadvantage when compared to countries like Japan and Southern Italy, which pioneered a new model of flexible specialization. Yet the concept of regional clusters dates back well before Piore and Sabel, perhaps to Alfred Marshall's 1876 discussion of the "Marshallian Cluster," where natural synergies of firms located in close proximity resulted in economic competitiveness. Authors like Pietrobelli and Rabellotti, and Arvanitis and Haixiong, examine such clusters in Russia, South China, Tuscany (Becattini), and India (Chari). Porter focuses on "cooperative-competition" to engage the technological and network-based affinities of clusters in an agro-industrial context in California (wine).

Key to the industrial-districts literature is that public and social goods and institutions create a *local*, and not international, division of labor, with knowledges and technologies shared by proximity and also across firms. Industrial districts include not just firms but also civic and public-sector organizations and infrastructure (IDS Sussex, Industrial Districts). These districts are typically tied into local communities. Harvey criticizes flexible specialization for its increased power of capital over labor, and increased worker precarity more generally (Harvey).

Our inquiry draws centrally on this literature, and complements and specifies it. We focus specifically on agrarian-industrial commodities, and also examine districts within a background framework of critical urbanization processes as advanced by our *Emergent Urbanizations* course. This framework includes concepts like: depeasantization, differentiation and dispossession; the dialectics between concentrated and extended urbanization, and recombinant urbanization; and “disarticulations” from the increasingly hegemonic international divisions of capital and labor.

### **III. Specialized Agrarian Industrial Districts (SAIDs): Definition and Key Features**

#### *a. Institutional and Regulatory Arrangements*

Regulatory and institutional arrangements by a local- or national-state, many of which are “bottom-up,” lobbied for and designed by small producers, designate and bound SAIDs. Specific “denomination of origin” regimes allow producers to develop and exchange *localized* knowledges, standards, and regulations of production, not demands imposed by agro-industrial TNCs.

#### *b. Landed Property Regimes*

Landed property regimes shape SAIDs’ viability. SAIDs are often located in areas with recombinant legacies of agrarian reform movements or collective ownership, or in protected natural or cultural heritage zones (SAIDs also benefit from tourism). These zones tend to have high biodiversity, and biophysical aspects shared between biosphere reserves and agrarian units. SAIDs often abut and include distinctive land regimes.

#### *c. Terroir*

SAIDs exist in specific *terroir*, or biophysical geographies, with distinctive climate, topography, and soil and their associated agricultural practices; the material properties of specific

commodities further specify the biophysical conditions under which SAIDs can successfully exist. A corollary to these three “supply-side” or “production-driven” characteristics that enable SAIDs is a critical “demand-side” factor: the role of consumer preferences/trends, and the role SAIDs play in “shaping” consumers’ tastes. In some cases, like mezcal and wine, taste-shaping and induced demand can pose a threat to the integrity of the SAID and its traditional production and ecological practices.

#### **IV. SAIDs’ Literary Foundations**

There are multiple causal stories and bodies of knowledge that coalesce around SAID-like concepts, foregrounding different key characteristics of SAIDs. A synthesis and crystallization of the major literatures underpinning our understanding of SAIDs is as follows:

##### *a. Regional Clusters*

Regional locations, land uses, and human interactions centrally shape (for good or for bad) agglomeration and polarization. Locational interdependencies underpin the persistence of efficiency- and innovation-enhancing clusters of capital and labor. **See: Scott and Storper, Schmitz and Nadvi, Forster, Glaeser, and Mike Davis.**

##### *b. Cooperative Competition*

Legal and agricultural devices enable smallholder agricultural producers: crop and agriculture insurance to protect against risks; a robust, decentralized, credit and banking system for capital goods; scientific and knowledge/technological supports from universities; regional organizations and associations; cooperatives and worker-producer negotiated entities supporting populist and socialist agrarian activism. **See: Humphrey and Schmitz, Unger, Porter, and work by the OECD.**

*c. World-Historical*

Post-National Developmentalism and Pax Americana (1950s and 1960s), American military-industrial leaders sought to remake global production systems through Fordist/Keynesian mass production, but the paradigm collapsed beginning in the 1970s. The resulting “industrial dualism” between privatized Keynesian mass production, and local craft or guild-based production systems, privileged “flexible specialization.” Yet flexible specialization is associated with precarity and an increased power of capital over labor. **See: Piore and Sabel, Harvey, and work produced by Sussex’s Institute for Development Studies (IDS).**

*d. Chains*

The global supply or value “chain” metaphor reveals the emergence of an international division of labor and growing articulations to it; “disarticulations” across space and time are forged through disjuncture and disruption that selectively transform, or disarticulate, existing social relations and forms of production. **See: Bair and Werner, McMichael, Pietrobelli and Rabelotti.**

*e. Depeasantization*

This literature examines processes of de-capitalization of rural landscapes, and the intentional *depoliticization* of the pains of primitive accumulation, as well as the transition from self-employment, cooperative agriculture, and subsistence economies to economically dependent wage-labor (Proletarianization). State-directed agricultural development can be redirect to peasants in disadvantaged regions. Might SAIDs enable “differentiation without dispossession?” **See: Araghi, Sanyal, and Mazoyer and Roudart.**

## **V. Empirical Terrain**

Empirically, our research engages two commodities and four geographies: cheese in the Franche-Comté, France and Minas-Gerais, Brazil; and alcohol in the Cape Winelands of South Africa (wine) and Zapotitlán de Vadillo, Jalisco, Mexico (mezcal). We examine alcohol and cheese because their *material* and *biophysical* properties lend themselves to SAIDs' political/institutional construction. In all four cases, numerous actors cultivate specific production processes, craft/guild traditions, and consumption brands or "tastes" to supplant mass-production processes. They share the following similarities: institutional and regulatory arrangements promoting specialized products by certain producers; agrarian landed property regimes enabling smallholder and/or cooperative production; and distinctive *terroir*.

In Franche-Comté, inter-firm networks draw on extensive cooperative structures and nation-state policies for their production, like the Agricultural Cooperative Union of Traditional Cheese-Making Dairies (UCAFT) and an "Appellation d'Origine" distinction in European legislation through the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) policy regime. As a relatively prosperous rural region with natural beauty and protected natural and cultural land, Franche-Comté contains humid, mountainous valleys with lower population density.

Some producers in Jalisco, the Western Mexican state, and particularly Zapotitlán de Vadillo, produce mezcal artisanally with many of the same technologies and labor patterns as were used in the late 1500s and onward. Other producers mass-produce mezcal. The Mezcal Denomination of Origin (MDO) policy regime adopted by Mexico's federal government in 1994 prevents commercial production of "mezcal" by producers outside the specific region. Similarly, the NOM-99 seeks to impose a set of uniform standards and regulations on mezcal and agave production, incentivizing vertical integration. Land management coincides with traditionally

collective profit-sharing and welfarist labor relations. “Rural” population is somewhat dense, and demographics are stable even as laborers arrive and depart seasonally.

In South Africa’s Stellenbosch Wine of Origin zone, grapes are handpicked, but industries are capital-intensive with the latest global technologies. Inter-firm relations include networks of cooperative-competition with shared meteorological sensors and high-resolution weather stations. The region has deep racial, socioeconomic, and political cleavages between the (largely) white Afrikaner land-owning wine owners and largely Coloured and Black South African farmworkers. Townships abutting vineyards have extraordinarily high population density, which has recently led to insurgencies and conflict between farmers and “squatter” populations.

*Queijo Canastra*, named for the specific region in Minas-Gerais, Brazil where it is produced, includes production regulations set both by Brazil’s Institute of Patrimony, History, and Art (IPHAN), and Ministry of Agriculture and the Interior (MAPA). Producers cannot call their products “*Queijo Canastra*” unless products were produced in one of seven specific municipality zones in the Serra da Canastra region. Serra de Canastra is located centrally in the part of the country and region with a high concentration of socio-cultural movements, including MST and other landless workers’ movements; Canastra includes high proportions of high-salary landowners.

## **VI. Discussion**

Engaging critiques by Araghi, Sanyal, Harvey, and others, we find key theoretical and political concerns with SAIDs’ current structure. Indeed, we find a gap in the literature: critical fine-grained, geo-comparative analysis of SAIDs’ theoretical and political dimensions.

Specifically, we advance the following concerns with SAIDs, and discuss them below in greater depth: (1) SAIDs’ distinctive regulatory and institutional arrangements promote not just economic dynamism and upgrading but also protectionism. SAIDs are bounded, like “exclusionary-suburbs,” with local-production zoning, privileging insiders with access to credit and technology over “outsider” smallholders. (2) Within SAIDs, distinctive landed property regimes are associated with concerning practices that include using “informal” and/or exploited labor, consumer safety concerns, and new right-wing political coalitions. These regimes disproportionately benefit privileged political groups and harm long-marginalized communities, including indigenous populations, in and abutting SAIDs. And finally, (3) SAIDs’ association with “terroir” includes not just traditional and ecologically sustainable production practices tied to place and biophysical constraints, but also a “social construction of desire” and taste that commodifies traditional culture in favor of niche bourgeois-bohemian consumption. SAIDs’ profits are often driven by consumer-induced demand. An additional concern is that non-SAID mass production suppliers seem to be increasingly imitating SAIDs’ appeals.

In this discussion, we consider these three central theoretical and political concerns with SAIDs, drawing on our four empirical cases to do so.

- a. *SAIDs’ distinctive **institutional and regulatory arrangements** promulgate not just economic dynamism and upgrading, but protectionism, economic nationalism, exclusion, and privilege for certain small producers*

We examine Franche-Comté, France, which features prominently in the SAIDs literature and has extensive inter-firm networks supporting cooperative structures and nation-state policies for production. In Franche-Comté, the extensive UCAFT cooperative structure includes 75%+ of producers, and the “Appellation d’Origine” passed into European legislation through the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) policy regime (“European Commission,” 26). In

Franche-Comté, for PDO certification as official “Comté” cheese, firms are *required* to work with specific breeds of Montbéliard cows, with hectare stocking limits, prohibitions on silage, and a limitation of concentrates or fertilizers for the cows. Local regulators require only one, or in some cases two, cow milkings per day but no more (“European Commission,” 31-35). These policy regimes, surely, allow SAIDs to remain competitive with diseconomies of scale. But SAIDs do not stem from regional efficiencies and natural “upgrading,” as Piore and Sabel might advance. Rather, interventions on both the supply-side (production) and demand-side (consumption) ensure that SAIDs’ structures, and the products they sell, are dynamic.

In Western Minas-Gerais, Brazil, savvy politicians have connected economic-policy supports with farmer/producer coalitions in the dairy and cheese industry, forging nascent right-wing political coalitions, even as insurgent movements envision alternative paths.

Near Sacramento, Minas Gerais, Tonon finds over 30,000 independent small dairy farmers each using 45 gallons of milk from 35 cows to produce about 40 rounds of cheese daily (Tonon, 2018). With a 100+-year history and an artisanal past, these cheesemakers compete globally, with firms supported by mediating infrastructure including NGOs like SerTãoBras, where farmers exchange knowledge with small producers (for example, with the Franche Comté’s infamous l’École Nationale d’Industrie Laitière et des Biotechnologies) (Tonon). However, cheesemakers have struggled to find *domestic* cheese markets. They complain about slow federal bureaucracies and “incipient and restrictive” legislation concerning the commercialization of artisanal cheese, like Law no. 24,218/2018, and unsympathetic public officials (Martins, 2018). Another name for artisanal “*Queijo Minas Meia Cura*” is “*Queijo Canastra*,” which refers to a specific region in Minas where it is produced. Because of a strict set of production regulations set both by Brazil’s IPHAN and MAPA Ministries, producers cannot

call their products “*Queijo Canastra*” unless products were produced in one of seven specific municipality zones in the Serra da Canastra region. Cheese producers in Minas Gerais favor export-friendly production-support schemes, and politicians happily connect these demands with Brazil’s Farm Lobby and their demands for land in the Amazon, enraging environmental groups and minority Brazilians (Stargardter and Boadle, 2019). In Brazil’s recent 2018 election, Bolsonaro won in Sacramento and much of Minas-Gerais, locally with around 66% of the vote, to Haddad’s 34% (El País, 2018).

With Bolsonaro’s Brazil, SAID-style cheesemakers serve as a relevant political constituency to bolster support for economic nationalism and authoritarian populism. Counter-movements exist: in Minas-Gerais, the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) has a strong organizing presence, and the area is noted as high in its concentrations of landless workers’ movements overall. Yet the region is also home to a large proportion of high-salary landowners. In this region of Brazil, post-1980s transformations have led to questions of inequality, global competition, and environmental destruction in regionally specific ways, with alliances often favoring oligarchic and extractive power structures.

The knowledge-sharing and production agreements *between* Brazil and France, most notably through Poligny’s École Nationale d’Industrie Laitière et des Biotechnologies, indicates extended urbanization. Across two distinct and supposedly “rural” geographies, producers share production and cultivation insights, prioritizing Global North “knowledges” as more legitimate.

*b. The unique **landed property regimes** associated with and abutting SAIDs lead to exploitative labor practices, informal labor flows, and new right-wing political coalitions*

In SAIDs we find that landed property regimes correlate with labor and workplace patterns, land-uses and ecological trends, and governance arrangements. They are all

inextricably linked, producing distinctive yet widely varying SAID-like spatial formations. Policy regimes affect labor and technical arrangements, ecological and environmental outcomes, and land regimes, often in the service of agro-industrial consolidation and vertical integration at the expense of local and traditional producers.

Jalisco, the Southern Mexican state, particularly Zapotitlán de Vadillo, produces mezcal with traditional labor and technology regimes in a cooperative balance between thousands of smallholder producers, and between humans and nature. Labor experiences in agave and mezcal small-scale production vary, but employ over 42,000 in the greater region, usually producing between 500-1,000 liters per month part time, in addition to rain-based subsistence agriculture (SAGARPA et al.). Artisanal mezcal production is only one component of these small-holder regimes: collaborative clusters producing domestically remain the majority (Lucio).

Distinctive landed-property regimes align with Balakrishnan's dialectical concept of recombinant urbanization. Balakrishnan examines Western Maharashtra, India's agrarian landed property regimes and caste/class relationships, showing how prior land-use formations and governance arrangements shape emergent patterns and pathways (Balakrishnan, 1). Under Mexico's contemporary liberalization (1992-present), Zapotitlán de Vadillo, Jalisco, provides similar insights. Current production processes and labor-market arrangements reflect complex land-based arrangements developed by Mexico's post-revolutionary *ejido* system (1915-1992), a social land-tenure structure legalized and legitimized by Article 27 of Mexico's 1917 Constitution.

Sadoulet and De Anda find that by 1988, "the social sector was composed of 28,056 *ejidos* and indigenous communities including 3.07 million *ejidatarios* and *comuneros*, accounting for 70% of Mexican farmers and some 15 million family members" (Sadoulet and De

Anda, 1349). Most *ejidos* were collectives lacking individual land tenure. Production processes relied on informal-trust ties and community-created “boundaries of conflict resolution” (Luers, et al., 2006). Sadoulet and De Anda found although over 70% of Mexican farmers utilized this communitarian land regime, “this sector is, however, [was] mainly endowed with rainfed land, much of which is of very poor quality...only 16% of the *ejido* land is irrigated. Some 64% of the *ejidatarios* have farms of less than 5 ha which are in general insufficient to maintain a family, implying extensive participation by family members in the labor market and in seasonal migration. Only 9% have farms larger than 20 ha constituting a small sector of commercial farms” (Sadoulet and De Anda, 1350). In 1988, the *ejidos* rarely sustained full livelihoods, but served as a land-based fulcrum of norms and community stewardship, as workers labored there and elsewhere. This explains why many *ejidatarios* produced mezcal seasonally and artisanally while also producing staple crops like maize, often not for the world market (Sadoulet and De Anda, 1352, Lucio, 255).

Specific mezcal and agave product liberalization policies had a particularly biting effect in Jalisco. Accordingly, workers now migrate seasonally in what resembles “rural-to-rural proletarianization,” typologically distinct from *ejidos* migration supplementing community-based ties. Garita and Delgado-Serrano argue that workers’ lived experience on *ejidos* today varies tremendously: local-state relations, interpersonal and community ties, and social capital sometimes create virtuous cycles of community cohesion, or “individual interests over community ones” and “diachronic distrust” (Garita and Delgado-Serrano, 11).

In South Africa’s Stellenbosch Wine of Origin district in the Western Cape, white farmers control around 70 percent of South African individually owned farms, even as white South Africans are now only 8% of South Africa’s overall population (“Land Audit Report

2017”). The *New York Times* reports: “Nearly 80 of the farms in Stellenbosch sit on public land. And most of them are locked in 50-year leases that local authorities signed with white farmers in the early 1990s, right before the end of apartheid, in exchange for private investments in water infrastructure” (Gebrekidan and Onishi, 2019). Today, a look on CapeFarmMapper, hosted by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, reveals shocking aerial images of high-density informal settlements next to sprawling vineyards, as in Kayamandi Township, Western Cape, and Stefan Smit’s private farm. Insurgent South African land justice movements are now squatting on farms in the Western Cape, supported by ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa, who promises “land expropriation without compensation,” or the Economic Freedom Fighters Movement led by Julius Malema, for whom land redistribution and expropriation are key policy priorities.

In Mexico, agrarian labor is composed primarily by peasants coming from Central America and internally from the regions presenting the highest poverty rates of the country. They represent one of the most vulnerable groups due to poor living and working conditions, low incomes, lack of basic services, malnutrition, discrimination and various forms of abuse including child labor. This “rural-rural” transit occurs informally in diverse ways from independent travel to recruiting operations. Workers are hired seasonally, and they often travel with their families. It is estimated that 2,071,483 people constitute the group denominated *jornaleros agrícolas* (agricultural day workers) nationally integrated in 434,961 family groups (4.76 people per family). From 1990 to 2018, the Programa de Apoyo a Trabajadores Jornaleros Agrícolas (PAJA), a program that supported migrant peasants was managed by the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Social Development. With various degrees of successes as well as shortcomings, the program disappeared in 2019, under the new federal government,

without any proposed alternatives to address the situation. The national network of jornaleros and jornaleras is concerned about their erasure from public policy priorities and has issued a public letter to the Ministry of Social Welfare where they voice their preoccupations and request answers.

The apartheid government's forced relocations of Black/African South Africans to specific Bantustans, for example to QwaQwa in the former Transkei Province, were framed as voluntary searches for economic well-being. The apartheid regime's goal was to: "abolish labor tenancy and to resettle evicted labor tenants in the Bantustans as the final stage in a century-long process of state-assisted proletarianization" (Morris, 1979, 282). Millions of South Africans still live in Bantustans like QwaQwa, which are high-density "urban" landscapes in rural South Africa with few opportunities for mobility or livelihood-development. The apartheid regime often separated families, with men working in mines and factories and living in block-style apartment camps. In post-apartheid liberalization, urban migration happens in kinship-connected "bands." South Africans move from Bantustans to peri-urban or exurban townships for economic opportunity and functional public services. This "rural-to-urban Proletariat migration" underscores Brenner's extended-urbanization hypothesis.

In both Mexico and South Africa, landed property regimes today are refracted through historical realities and institutional arrangements (recombinant urbanization). Labor practices in and abutting SAIDs today engage that history, and at times reveal "disarticulations" from informal participation in international divisions of capital and labor (Sanyal, Araghi). Connections between rural Bantustans and peri-urban, high-density townships underscore "extended" urbanization, as do processes of "rural-to-rural" seasonal informal migration.

- c. *SAIDs' association with **terroir** includes not just biophysical sustainability and opportunities to supplant international divisions of capital and labor. Terroir*

*includes as well the social construction of taste and desire, commodification of cultural capital and intellectual expertise, consumer-driven demand, and consumer masquerading*

Producing cheese requires coagulating proteins in milk to form curds, and then separating the curds from liquid whey. The milk coagulation process often involves using rennet (an enzyme extracted from calves' stomachs that coagulates the proteins in milk) (Goff, 1-9). This production process gives way to *distinctive material politics*: whether a producer uses rennet for coagulation or adds a mass-produced vinegar substitute produces cheese with substantively different tastes. Moreover, cheese inputs (most notably milk) are perishable and require refrigerated storage infrastructure and energy to keep cool in tropical climates. Note Battistotti, et al., many higher-quality hard cheeses are stored for *years*, which requires significant upfront capital investment and refrigeration; small producers without sophisticated credit and banking services struggle to produce cheese as they will not receive income for these hard cheeses for a number of years after production.

Likewise, large TNCs struggle with key *diseconomies of scale*: “control points” require active staffing and affect cheese’s safety and quality: temperature, heating and cooling of milk, correct amount and humidity of rennet, draining of curd to remove whey, the amount of time and pressure while pressing the curd, correct time for ripening, and more. Indeed, in the Franche Comté, producers hand “poke” each wheel of cheese multiple times during its storage to ensure it is ready (“European Commission”). Other types of cheese, including curd cheese, do not require refrigeration and long-term storage and might be better suited for warm climates (Battistotti, et al.). Finally, cheese production requires extensive capital equipment including cheese molds, presses, vats, specific and custom-designed cooling systems, curd cutters, heat sealers, and often specific types of lactic acid bacteria starter culture (Goff).

In Mexico, like in France Comté, mezcal production practices are intimately tied to soil, climate, sunshine, topography, and regional customs. Yet liberalization-era *policy regimes* in Mexico tilt the playing field in the direction of agro-industrial techno-fields, seen specifically in the MDO and NOM-99 policy regimes. Under the guise of “safety,” “standardization,” and “consumer welfare,” these regulatory frameworks prevent the wider circulation of producers’ goods and sometimes force smallholders out of business, leading to firm consolidation. Nuñez et al. examine growing interest in “biofuel production” of mezcal and agave in these regions, even as current production costs remain higher than ethanol and sugarcane. Moreover, industrial and techno-field production is ecologically harmful. Zizumbo-Villarreal argues: “Over the last 30 years, cultivation of ‘Agave Tequilana Weber var Blue’ for industrial production of tequila, has generated soil erosion, chemical pollution, displacement of traditional food crops and traditional Agave landraces used for preparing “mezcal” in the Appellation of Origin Tequila area” (Zizumbo-Villarreal et al.).

In Franche Comté, as in *many other* SAID-like clusters, an elaborate network of intermediaries connects products to the “global metropolitan network.” The cheese’s value, in other words, derives not just from the product itself but from socially constructed tastes, familiarity, and desire in concentrated-urban geographies. Porter examines California’s wine cluster and how it connects to global markets through dedicated tourism and food clusters; labeling, public relations, and advertising firms; and specialized industry events and publications (*Wine Spectator, Trade Journal*). These intermediaries represent a massive industry to ensure California wines appeal to elite global consumers (Porter and Bond, 1-24, 1999). Tijssen et al. examine “packaging cues, e.g. colour and label,” that shape “a product’s sensory properties and conceptual appraisals, such as a product’s attractiveness.” Their findings indicate that packaging

and branding form “implicit associations [that] consumers have with the product’s healthiness and/or attractiveness” and taste (Tijssen et al., 126-134).

Nacef et al. note in France that “familiarity effects” around specific types and properties of cheese also shape the “expectation and liking” of cheese among consumers. Taste-shapers must craft a reputation and familiarity with products, specifically in certain circles. The concept of *cultural intermediaries*, originally coined by Bourdieu, is significant. Writing in France in 1984, Bourdieu states: “The new petite bourgeoisie comes into its own in all the occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decoration and so forth) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services” (Bourdieu, 1984, 359).

In the Franche Comté, cities like Poligny (population 4,400) have dedicated tourism offices networked regionally and connected to tourism offices in Paris; patrimony offices offer tax incentives to French residents hoping to renovate or restore old artisan-agricultural buildings (Negus). The OECD publishes numerous regional development working papers on how regions can follow Franche Comté’s lead: *Regions and Innovation Policy*, *Competitive Regional Clusters*, and *Globalization and Regional Economies* through their dedicated Directorate “SMEs, Regions, Cities, and Tourism” (OECD, 2019). A theme of these publications is that robust connectivity to metropolitan centers (like Paris) through cultural intermediaries, tourism, and SMEs comprehensively improves development and life outcomes.

Consumer deception and masquerading represent additional concerns for SAIDs. Notions of “terroir” are largely socially constructed proclivities for taste even if they reflect genuine desires for small-scale or artisanal production. Higher-end store-brand goods that are fully articulated into global production networks (at Whole Foods, or with Ben & Jerry’s Ice

Cream, for example) present products as artisanal and perhaps even “SAID-like” in regionally distinct production; consumers may pay a higher price for these products on branding alone, even though these products are fully articulated to international divisions of capital and labor.

## **VII. Towards an Alternative SAID**

Optimistically, SAIDs offer potential development pathways for rural “differentiation without dispossession.” When they include worker cooperatives and integrate environmentally sustainable local production practices, SAIDs offer a compelling alternative to neoliberal mass-production capitalism, grounded in regional developmentalism, brokered capital-labor relations, and quality (not “cheap”) food.

We argue that an alternative SAID arrangement must centrally ground land-management and environmental-stewardship practices. To do so, SAIDs may require traditional or long-standing knowledges, which couple effectively with the just labor practices required for workers (both formal and informal) within SAID producer-structures. SAIDs ought to require mutual support networks and cooperative structures; nonetheless, even with these institutional forms, informal and/or exploited labor could exist. We argue that SAIDs and their workers must be connected to socially embedded worker movements. These movements, themselves connected to broader networks across commodities and across geographies, must push for equitable access to the surplus coming from SAIDs’ production, and equitable landed-property regimes. In the long-term, this may require land reform through brokered negotiation with nation-states.

We recognize that viable SAID structures must produce for international consumers in the global production network. However, our model requires (through local-community and worker representation) that SAIDs’ products are locally available, and that a portion of the

surplus is shared with workers and cooperative structures to ensure social reproduction. SAIDs ought to prioritize local and in-house inputs for their own supply structures when possible.

In advancing our alternative SAID, numerous puzzles emerge: how can SAIDs ensure social reproduction for workers in the cooperative structure, and also provide just outcomes for workers “outside of” and abutting SAIDs? Which knowledges, practices, and traditions will SAIDs prioritize as they adopt these structures? As we would expect in any hierarchy, are there biases as to which groups in a region are leaders/managers? And how might such an ambitious operation be competitive and solvent facing vertical integration and mass production?

### **VIII. Conclusion: Opportunities for Future Research**

By resisting international divisions of capital and labor, SAIDs advance key course debates, including those on depeasantization, differentiation and dispossession; the dialectics between concentrated and extended urbanization, and recombinant urbanization; and questions of “disarticulations” from the increasingly common international divisions of capital and labor.

Spatially, SAIDs’ locations are diverse. Although our inquiry engaged four geographies and two commodities (cheese in Franche-Comté, France and Minas-Gerais, Brazil; and alcohol in the Western Cape, South Africa, and Jalisco, Mexico), we have reason to believe that many more SAID-like structures exist. From the mountains of Guizhou producing mushrooms and vinegar, to the prairies of Saskatchewan and their kinnikinic and Saskatoon berries, to Ethiopia’s new national policy around cereals production, SAIDs’ locations and dynamism result from nation-state institutional arrangements and local-state negotiations. Some SAIDs have emerged despite vertical integration pressures, with help from enduring “craft” traditions. Others are pre-planned, spurred by education and knowledge networks.

We caution, however, that SAIDs cannot be created: they require specific *terroir* and long-standing and situated production knowledges by local populations. SAIDs can, however, be encouraged, fostered, and enabled. Nation-states, regions, and producer networks seeking genuine disarticulations from vertically integrated agro-industry will find much to gain from SAIDs.