



Introduction

In late September 2017, the Moldovan national agency in charge of wine promotion organized an event in Prague called the ‘Wine Vernissage by Wine of Moldova’. This was part of a series of events outside the Republic of Moldova that were intended to increase the popularity of its wine abroad. It was hosted in one of Prague’s mediaeval buildings, the New Town Hall, and the event was invitation-based, targeting wine importers, distributors and journalists in the Czech Republic. The Prague vernissage happened shortly after the end of my one-year ethnographic fieldwork in Moldova researching winemaking, and I headed there at the invitation of one of my Moldovan interlocutors. Attended by a few hundred invitees, the event started with a brief timeline of Moldovan wine history presented by a diplomat from the Moldovan Embassy in Prague. Behind the speaker were the Moldovan flag and a large banner bearing the country’s brand logo, ‘Wine of Moldova’. As Czech wine drinkers and sellers were lured with the promise of ancient Moldovan vineyards and cellars, they were also reminded that the reason they now had quality wines coming from this region was ‘the Russian embargo, which proved to be a chance for us’, as the diplomat admitted. The intention was to use the wine bottles in the vernissage hall for a ‘walk-around tasting’, while a Moldovan folklore ensemble was preparing to come on to the stage after the speech had ended. After a final thanks to the assembled Czech public for giving Moldovans ‘an occasion to sell [their] wines’, and the announcement that a few of the wines on show at the event were already available in the local branch of Tesco, the musical ensemble, dressed in ‘traditional’ attire, took the stage to entertain the crowd with folk music, the standard cultural offering at Moldovan celebration events.

Some of the wines mentioned as being available in the supermarket were produced in one of the most prestigious wineries in Moldova, Purcari. Located in the eponymous village in the south-east of the country, Purcari is one of the Moldovan wineries that have managed to increase sales of bottled wine in Western markets considerably in the last decade. This village was the main site of my ethnographic fieldwork, which I carried out between August 2016 and August 2017. The acknowledgement of the winery in the Czech Republic pointed to the successful circulation and

consumption of its wine: the fact that high-quality Moldovan wine could be found on the shelves in a Central European country was an achievement, because Moldova had long been almost absent from markets outside the former Soviet space.

Until 2006, the republic had sold most of its wine production to the Soviet and, after 1991, Russian markets. However, in the spring of 2006, Russia imposed a ban on Moldovan wines claiming that they contained heavy metals and pesticides over the allowed limits. The impact of the ban was significant: in 2005, wine revenues comprised 9% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), but by 2007 that figure had plunged to 2.3%. The trade gradually recovered, reaching 4.8% of GDP by 2014. Key to this recovery was a reform in the wine sector that helped Moldovan wineries to access new markets outside Russia or to broaden existing ones. The reform consisted of changes to wine legislation, new production technologies and marketing strategies, and the promotion of indigenous grape varieties as unique products of Moldova. Also, quality-tracing devices such as Protected Geographical Indications, recognized at the European Union level, were put in place and the country-wine brand, 'Wine of Moldova', was created in 2014. Some of the sector-wide strategies for market renewal yielded good results, with sales of bottled wine from some Moldovan wineries growing considerably. In this context, Purcari arguably became the most successful Moldovan winery – and Purcari wines became increasingly popular in neighbouring countries to the west.

How does a Moldovan winery reinvent itself to become competitive in a saturated, globalized wine market? What socio-economic relations are mobilized in this process of value creation, and how is intense transnational competition in a crisis-ridden sector affecting the local winemaking community? This book follows the changes in the production of value in Moldovan winemaking from the late socialist period until the present day, as new socio-economic processes were put into motion by the entry of Moldovan wineries into the globalized wine market. Through its main focus on the production of value at different stages in the winemaking process and on wine workers' livelihoods, the book challenges the established theoretical focus on consumption and market differentiation in anthropological studies of wine while also contributing to a better understanding of the challenges that exist in a winemaking region in the former Soviet space.

Value is relational and is produced through the exploitation of human labour – that is, the undervaluation of human labour in order to create the surplus value necessary for the survival and reproduction of a capitalist producer (Turner 2008; Moore 2015). However, I also extend the notion of surplus value by acknowledging that it can be enhanced beyond the

production level: through marketing and through consumers' 'labour' of ascribing meaning to a commodity, a product can be branded and more value extracted from it through this affective relationship (Foster 2005). Drawing on this understanding of value, I follow the actions and relationships that produce value in the Moldovan wine world at a critical moment in time and from a contested sociocultural space. The themes of the chapters in the book reflect the areas of productive activities that enhance the value of Moldovan wine in domestic or transnational markets. A crisis of both the economy and prestige; the 'creative destruction' of homemade wine; the exploitation of labour; and, again, the creative differentiation of work through the classification of environmental features of a winemaking location are the critical points of surplus-value creation that I identify and analyse. These aspects are deeply embedded in a society that construes winemaking and wine consumption as part of its collective identity. Despite the complex nexus of meanings that surrounds Moldovan wine, social anthropologists have rarely researched the social relations of this winemaking country (Map 0.1).

Wine, Postsocialism and Globalization

Why has this been the case, given the long history and, more importantly, the high degree of sociocultural and economic importance attached to winemaking by Moldovans? My answer comes from three main directions that relate to the type of research foci in the history of the discipline, a reduced interest from outside in ethnographic research in Moldova and the position of Moldova and its wine industry in processes of globalization. First, wine production became a topic of research for Anglo-Saxon sociocultural anthropologists rather late in the history of the discipline (Pratt 1994; Ulin 1996; Lem 1999; Demossier 2010; Black and Ulin 2013). Due to the initial focus of anthropology on societies outside the West, winemaking did not fit its agenda, being an activity too closely associated with white Europeans. Secondly, the 'anthropology of postsocialism' has shown less interest in researching the independent Republic of Moldova than other states belonging to the former Eastern Bloc. Finally, although studies focusing on either globalization in 'postsocialist states' (Berdahl 1999; Creed 2011; Gille 2016; Aistara 2018) or in the world of wine (Black and Ulin 2013; Jung 2016; Demossier 2018; Inglis and Almila 2019) have increased in anthropology in recent years, Moldova has not been present as an example in this literature except in Cash (2015a, 2015b), who focused on household winemaking and its relation to the ritual and subsistence economy, because Moldovan commercial wine was almost absent from



international wine markets until the late 2000s. Until then, the stable trade relationship with Russia that had started in Tsarist times continued in different forms in different political regimes, but one aspect remained constant: up to 90% of the commercial wine production in the Soviet period and by independent Moldova was sold to Russia. The shock of the wine embargoes pushed many Moldovan wineries to seek access to trade

partners outside this traditional market, and this moment of the insertion of Moldovan wine into the global market is the central event that has prompted the present study.

The ethnographic analysis in this book aims to address these three dimensions and to show that anthropological research on wine provides rich insights into how global hierarchies of value (Jung 2016) influence winemaking communities, pertaining to the prioritization (or the marginalization) of local cultural and economic models. Research on the wine-industry reforms in Moldova yields new insights on the globalization of wine in general and on changes to local communities in particular – and, at this stage of access to the new markets, the power relations that structure the discourse on quality are more discernible. This is noticeable from the manner in which discourses on quality change, from the certification systems that are adopted, or from marketing strategies that emulate or try to distinguish producers from more established players on the global wine market in order to create value. As has been the case over the three decades since the fall of the Soviet Union, the countries belonging to the former Eastern Bloc have struggled with inequality while seeking integration into European capitalism (see Creed 2011: 7). The Republic of Moldova has been drastically marked by poverty, and the story of its search for new markets for wine and for more widespread ‘cultural’ recognition as a quality wine-producing country in Europe is one of the dimensions through which one can understand its decades-long hardship.

Before going into further detail about the present dynamics of Moldovan winemaking, a few historical reflections on the globalization of wine will help in delineating and understanding current relations pertaining to the wine trade and wine consumption. Wine started to travel across the world’s oceans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the first steps were made in the globalization of the wine trade (Inglis 2019). This circulation of wine was led by technological developments and colonial interests that lasted throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Starting in the mid-1900s, the phylloxera blight hit most wine regions around the world – with hindsight, becoming a transnational phenomenon that led to fundamental changes in the way in which viticulture and winemaking have been pursued right up until the present. Most importantly, cultivated grape varieties were homogenized to a great extent because many local varieties across Europe had been lost through phylloxera. This was a decisive event that compelled producers an intensified global exchange of vine stocks, viticultural practices and wine. In parallel, the circulation of wine and reproductive materials was increased by the advent of the railways in the nineteenth century (Simpson 2011). In 1914, three quarters of global wine production came from France, Italy and Spain (Simpson

2011: xxxii), countries that dominated the global wine market throughout most of the twentieth century up until the present.

However, since the 1970s, wine-producing countries from the so-called ‘New World’ have become increasingly popular. The principal New World winemaking countries, which have been depicted as the opposite of the conservatism of the Old World, are the US, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. The ‘Old World’ of wine refers to European and Asian winemaking countries, in which wines are associated with long histories of production based around small-scale, artisanal producers, their quality explained and marketed as being connected to their place of origin (Banks and Overton 2010: 59). While the Old and New Worlds of wine are analytical categories adopted by various wine scholars using the perspectives of geography, sociology or history (Banks and Overton 2010; Inglis and Almila 2019; Campbell and Guibert 2007), in understanding the globalization of practices and trade from the late twentieth century onwards, I employ them only to only a limited extent in this book as they do not capture the complexity of wine styles, history or power differentials. For Moldova, as for other postsocialist wine-producing countries, being part of the ‘Old World’ geographically does not have the same implications as for West-European producing countries because while it does indeed have a millennia-long tradition of wine production, Moldova does not share a place of the same rank as the pre-eminent Old World wine-producing countries such as France, Spain or Italy. Yet it does not belong to the pattern of the New World wines either. Consequently, a new conceptualization of the complex global wine industry is necessary, using ‘an approach which foregrounds the multiple “worlds of wine” as crosscutting, contingent and contextual’ (Banks and Overton 2010: 58). Does calling Moldovan wine ‘postsocialist wine’, for example, make sense?

This question has arisen because the so-called ‘anthropology of post-socialism’ has been exposed under critical scrutiny from both Eastern and Western scholars for almost two decades: already in the late 1990s, several anthropologists started to ask when the term ‘postsocialism’ would stop making sense – that is, when the socialist past would stop affecting this space (Hann 2002; Thelen 2011, 2012; Buchowski 2012; Kalb 2014; Petrovici 2015; Ringel 2016). Hann (2002: 8) criticized the use of a concept of ‘postsocialist culture’ as a ‘black box’ in which differences are underlined at the expense of similarities between societies or groups. This view ties in with another line of criticism – namely, how the ideological mobilization of the ghost of socialism ‘has managed to function as an enabler of policies maintaining low wages, reduced social spending, and diminished state involvement’ (Chelcea and Druță 2016: 537) in different domains. Chelcea and Druță (2016: 522) also inquire as to how the evocation of state

socialism influences class dynamics and political economies in Eastern Europe. They argue that keeping the discourse on the socialist legacy alive helps neoliberal ideology, while ‘zombie socialism’ aids the anti-communist (predominantly elite) discourse that has prevailed in the Central–Eastern European space in every decade since 1989. In this view, the continued relevance of the concept lies only in its reproduction of neoliberal ideology.

Implicitly, the validity of postsocialism as a spatio-temporal container has also been contested. Postsocialism firstly signified a spatial entity that referred to the region covering the former Soviet republics and East-European countries, where the socialist governments were dissolved between 1989 and 1991, and secondly a temporal one, referring to the decades following the fall of these socialist governments. It is difficult to lump together eastern and south-eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Caucasus and Russia (Tlostanova 2015) as postsocialist, as the countries in this space took different paths economically (Creed 2011; Chelcea and Druță 2016). Moreover, if we are to accept the ‘transition’ discourse, the Central- and East-European countries that in the early postsocialist years were aided to become functioning market economies are now all recognized as such. In this way, ‘postsocialism’ as a temporal signifier also expired.

Taking into consideration all the above critique, I contend that in order to understand the present dynamics within the Moldovan wine sector and its relations to external parties (such as wine critics, traders or consumers) when it sets out to compete with other wine regions around the world, a conceptual framework that incorporates the legacy of Soviet socialism is crucial. Moreover, as the ethnographic analysis that follows will show, memories of the socialist organization of society fuel the present alternative political imaginaries of Moldovan workers, who are central to understanding the current struggles of the Moldovan wine industry and the nature of contemporary capitalism in the former Eastern Bloc, where neoliberal processes of further industrial dismantling in favour of regimes of flexible accumulation are ongoing (Makovicky 2014a). The past specialization of each Soviet republic in specific types of products had the strategic aim of bringing the republics into relations of interdependence (Caldwell 2009: 8) – and this cultivated interdependence continued in various sectors after the fall of the Soviet Union, and strongly influenced these countries’ socio-economic dynamics. My interlocutors often used idioms like ‘Soviet mentality’, ‘Soviet type of people’ or ‘doing things like when we were with the Russians’ to refer to values and meaning of their actions or those of others. Although most frequently they had negative connotations in the sense of rigid, authoritarian or rough ways of acting, they also pointed to the perceived steadiness, security and equality of this period.

In the Moldovan wine industry specifically, the marked influence of the relationship with the Russian powers across the last two centuries became straightforward to me over my year-long fieldwork. First, the development of winemaking schools started while Bessarabia was part of the Russian Empire (1812–1918), with the first school specializing in viticulture being founded in Chişinău in 1842. The steady increase in the vineyard surface area on this territory – the largest registered, 193,000 hectares, was in 1983 (Rusu 2011: 42) – was closely tied to Soviet and, later, post-Soviet Russian market demand, as I detail in the next chapter. Furthermore, in the Soviet years and the first two post-Soviet decades, socio-economic relations in the wine industry evolved around the presence of Russia’s large-scale export market, in which Moldovan wine occupied the lower-quality segment.

Earlier ethnographies of winemaking in former Eastern Bloc regions have also traced the importance of the legacy of socialism in determining the value of wine. Yuson Jung’s (2011; 2014; 2016) research on the wine industry in Bulgaria looks at the shift from an economy of quantity in winemaking to an economy of quality, the former being often considered an attribute of socialist winemaking (Jung 2016) among wine critics and consumers; a similar shift in values has also been examined by Walker and Manning (2013) in Georgia. These studies show that postsocialist decollectivization had an important influence on the way in which winemaking came to be organized, and they also stress the image of (post)socialist wine in the world of wine: quantity over quality, and little regard for detail such as terroir and place of origin. Although exaggerated in placing former socialist states in the category of ‘quantity’-oriented winemaking, this perception still affects the circulation of wine in the global market (Walker and Manning 2013). Furthermore, Hann (2004) traced continuity and change in rural Hungary after socialism through the lens of winemaking in the marginalized winemaking region of the Tisza–Danube interfluvium and described three cases showing variation in developments in winemaking under socialism. It is shown that, as in the case of Moldova, the phylloxera blight and industrial winemaking led to the loss of local grape varieties. After 1989, Hungarian wine had to struggle against similar imaginaries as its Moldovan counterpart does today – the assumption that former socialist countries produce unsophisticated, mass-produced wines as opposed to the quality, or terroir, wines dominating in Western Europe.

There are temporal considerations too in looking at wine production and circulation through the lens of the socialist legacy. Wine has a slow return rate and a slower pace in building reputation and prestige, essential in selling the commodity. This means that changes to the political system will not produce quick changes in a sector such as winemaking – all the more so when the region in question is dependent on exporting. This is

not to say that other social and institutional changes are rapid, but that in the case of wine there is a nexus that yields a slow rhythm of transformation: not only do production practices need to change locally but for an export-oriented wine industry such as the Moldovan one, its prestige needs to be recognized by the critics and consumers of its importing countries as well. In practice, this means disposing of past practices and immersing oneself in the hegemonic value system of the global market.

I am not denying the partial agency of my Moldovan interlocutors in the reorganization of the wine industry, but after the loss of the traditional Russian export market and with the efforts of USAID and other Western partners, the project of reforming Moldovan wine meant aligning it with Western hegemonic standards of taste, quality, terroir discourses and imaginaries – similarly to other parts of the world (Jung 2014; Itçaina, Roger and Smith 2016; Swinburn 2013). After trade relationships with Russia went awry, Moldovan winemakers experienced the ‘postsocialist global condition’ (Gille 2010: 9; see also Creed 2011: 5) since access to transnational policy tools and belonging to cultures of commodification quickly became the condition for participation in globalized modernity. Gille (2010: 29) argued that 1989 was a missed opportunity for ‘developing “indigenous” public spheres, the sprouts of which already appeared in the 1980s’, because of a premature replacement of the national scale of representation with one at the transnational and supranational level. This view is useful in understanding and interpreting current changes in the sociocultural landscape of Moldovan winemaking, as the swiftness of the changes in this field and the direction in which winemaking practices and discourses are going leave little room for alternative local views on quality, taste or values in winemaking. There is, rather, a need and a willingness to show what I call cultural and institutional allegiance to recognized transnational players in the wine field. Notwithstanding, the socialist legacy in winemaking in Moldova is just one part of the factors influencing the transformations of this commodity. If, for example, the main portrait of Soviet-Moldovan wine was mass-produced wine, affordable for everyone, this has also been the image of Chilean or New Zealand wines until very recently. This way of producing and trading wine is not intrinsic to socialism: it has been part of the tendency towards mass production all over the industrialized world. Thus, when Moldovan winemakers and foreign critics are explaining the shift from ‘quantity to quality’ as the shift from ‘socialism to capitalism’ they are to a certain extent fighting the ‘zombie socialism’ coined by Chelcea and Druță (2016), this time referring to wine.

Given the implications of the critique addressed in this section, throughout the book I make critical use of the concept of ‘postsocialism’ and also use it interchangeably with the term ‘post-Soviet’. I favour the

latter term, given the teleological implications of ‘postsocialism’: in 1989, a particular form of socialism was ending – the Soviet kind – and in the near future socialist political regimes could come to power again, as the political yearnings of many of my interlocutors suggest (see chapters 1, 3 and 4 especially).

The Value of Terroir

While Purcari Winery is located at the margins of the European Union and the global wine industry, in Moldova and neighbouring Romania it is one of the best-regarded quality wine producers. This tension yields a prominent comparative dimension throughout the book, which serves to understand Moldova’s winemaking sector not only locally but also in relation to its better-known competitors, especially those in France and Italy. Comparison centres on the ‘terroir’ discourse – still the strongest criterion of differentiation among wine regions around the world, albeit a contested one (Itçaina, Roger and Smith 2016). Thus, the book engages with the practices and discourses that surround terroir in Moldova and elsewhere, and develops a critical political-economy perspective on this concept. Further, it interweaves a materialist focus on terroir and wine with globalization theories that emphasize the tensions between local materialities and practices, and international regulations.

The definition of terroir varies among both winemakers and researchers, but it is commonly defined as the aggregate characteristics of the physical environment (soil, climate, slope inclination) and human factors (knowledge, technology, the ‘soul’ of the winemaker) that endow a wine with individual character (see Barham 2003; Kjellgren 2004; Trubek 2008; Certomà 2011; Demossier 2011; Unwin 2012; Monterescu 2017). Terroir is also related to distinct production practices outside winemaking (Besky 2014; Weiss 2016), and winemakers may also see it as a partner in the wine-production process (Teil 2017).

The history of terroir is closely linked to the emergence of the ‘Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée’ (AOC) system, starting in nineteenth-century France (Demossier 2011). As wines began to travel between increasing numbers of places in this period, accompanying anxieties arose related to places of origin because imitations of wine styles made in recognized regions became common (Inglis 2019). The Law of the Appellations d’Origine Contrôlées – the basis for today’s AOC and for the European Union’s quality regimes – was put in place in France in 1919, and the institute that regulates it (‘Institut national de l’origine et de la qualité’ or INAO) in 1935 (Meloni and Swinnen 2013). The AOC has been the main point of reference

for other countries that adopted systems of classification of wine quality based on terroir like Italy; Spain; or, partially, Germany – and Moldova has followed similar steps in recent years. The discourse on terroir is today the hegemonic standard by which unknown wines are judged (Jung 2014), and analysing it closely reveals not only matters of taste and tradition in the winemaking region but also relations of power both local and global. Wine tastings, ratings and descriptions act as tools for establishing the place of certain wines in the ‘global hierarchy of value’ (Jung 2014: 26).

The adoption of the terroir discourse by the Moldovan wine sector after the mid-2000s has been part of a larger identity-seeking process among winemakers who have lost a traditional market and a response to the pressures of competitive wine markets in late capitalism. Thus, while drawing on the past terroir can also be seen as a technique of ‘the social construction of the present’ (Demossier 2011: 687), forging an identity for a place, a region or a country. Moldova has been no exception; virtually all wine-making regions around the world have ‘reinvented’ parts of their traditions and stories in the last three decades, driven by the need for differentiation in saturated markets. One iconic wine region, for example – Burgundy – felt the increased market competition particularly strongly, and its centuries-old terroir story has been destabilized. The story of Burgundy wine has been reshaped in the face of global changes, resulting in a combination of imbricated scales ‘in which [the] local and global overlap harmoniously and in a composite fashion, while readjusting under the pressure of change’ (Demossier 2018: 55). The reorganization of vineyards into smaller plots called *climats*, paralleled by the region’s inclusion in the UNESCO patrimony, were processes accelerated by the success of new wine regions in markets around the world.

Yet, while Burgundians and other western-European wine producers reformulated a concept present in their discourses for centuries, Moldovan winemakers found developing a Moldovan terroir rather new. However, the new sets of quality standards based on geographical indication and terroir recognized at the European Union level were not painted on a blank slate (see also Gille 2016: 16), as at the basis of the exportable terroir are local soils, yeasts, grape varieties and winemaking knowledge. Thus, the praxis and discourse of terroir has been in fact dependent on the local context, so the Moldovan/Purcari terroir is a result of material and discursive frictions between local and global, unique and generic. ‘Local materialities’ are necessary for globalization or Europeanization to work (Gille 2016: 113). Articulating a Moldovan terroir was one of the changes needed in order to be able to speak the language of the global wine market. I emphasize the relative novelty of this concept in Moldovan winemaking because it did not have much relevance in the socialist years either. Indeed, although

there were programmes for the delimitation of microzones of production in the Soviet Union in the 1930s,¹ similar to the French AOC (Walker and Manning 2013), they were not really followed up – so in the socialist states, the widespread practice was to manage grapes and their vinification centrally, by the state, and grapes from different regions were commonly mixed in the production process. The entry onto Western markets was paralleled at Purcari by renewed soil mappings and meteorological data recording or local yeast selection. The local history and these scientific data have been ‘curated’ into a new marketing discourse. Mapped soils are agricultural resources (King and Granjou 2020), and they create a scientific basis for differentiation in wine marketing, as I detail in chapter 5.

Homemade Wine

Although the focus of the ethnographic analysis in this book is on industrial-wine production and circulation, in order to grasp the dynamics of the Moldovan wine sector a close look at the significance of homemade wine is necessary. More than half of Moldovans live in the countryside and virtually every household in the south and the centre produces wine at home every year, mostly for its own consumption but also as a product for petty trade. This type of wine has been preferred by Moldovan consumers for decades while commercial, industrial wine has been produced predominantly for export. A 2016 survey showed that more than 70% of Moldovans find homemade wine better than commercial wine. Later in the book I will analyse in detail the implications that this divide has for the Moldovan wine market, but a central point is that commercial winemakers have difficulties in reducing their dependence on export markets in this context. Wine is, however, considered to embody the national spirit of Moldova, just like in other countries where it is a major product (cf. Guy 2003) – but is homemade wine the national drink, or is it the commercial wine made by professionals? In this book I show how these two broad categories of Moldovan wine exist in tension but also have important commonalities, borrowing knowledge and meaning from one another. At this point, I will only offer clarifications on the terminology and engage with the literature on organic foods and wine based on studies carried out elsewhere.

The term ‘house wine’ is frequently used among my interlocutors, yet in English the translation leads to some confusion as it more frequently refers to the bulk-wine option in restaurants. For this reason, I have settled on using ‘homemade wine’ throughout the book. It might be simpler to refer to homemade wine as ‘natural wine’, because in Anglophone anthropology it would create the least confusion: wine anthropologists writing about this

type of wine refer to it as ‘natural wine’ (Ulin 1996; Black 2013; Kopczyńska 2013; Cohen 2013; Demossier 2018), but in the present case it would not be accurate enough ethnographically. Here, the ‘house’ component is primary; it signifies the web of production relations within the household, while the ‘nature’ or natural side comes after. But the way in which peasant winemakers in Moldova technically define homemade wine is nevertheless similar to definitions of ‘natural wine’ elsewhere, as in the Western countries epitomized by Jules Chauvet’s approach.² This includes minimal chemical intervention, which means a healthier product; an emphasis on hygiene as a prime factor in reducing the need for preservatives; and the employment of very diverse ways of grape cultivation and vinification that require minimum or no pesticide input. While biodynamic and ecological wines have a system of certification in most wine-producing countries,³ natural wine is the least-regulated category among the ‘anti-establishment’ wines. Natural wine has a loose and non-legislated definition. It does not have clear parameters, it can be made from organic or biodynamic agriculture, it rejects synthetic yeasts; no sugar is added, fining agents of animal origin are not used, it is not filtered, no SO₂ is used and no oak aging is involved (Cohen 2013: 261–62). Nevertheless, the underlying principle of natural wine is one of minimum intervention, chemically and technologically. The ‘social’ definition is that this natural wine is produced with one’s own hands and is only rarely intended for the market.

While homemade wine is bound to the discourse of terroir, alternative production processes linked to the industrial, de-territorialized wine act as the true voice of terroir in some circles. One of the disputes boils down to control of the process of production, but the two sides follow different types of control with different aims. In the homemade wine-production process, the winemaker can trace the entire process of winemaking, from the operations over one year in the vineyard that culminate with the harvest to processing and storing the grapes. This ensures that the viticulture is ecological and winemaking ‘natural’. On the other hand, at the factory a more detailed type of control is sought after: quality standards in the vineyard, the processing section, the cellar and on the bottling line.

In this book, homemade wine is also analysed as a signifier of Moldovan resistance to the industrialization of wine and food in general. My interlocutors very often called homemade wine ‘wine without anhydride’, the main substance used for its stabilization and preservation. As one of the basic changes that made possible the industrialization of food was the development in preservation methods (Goody 2012 [1982]: 72), rejecting industrial wine on the basis of a virtually harmless substance, but one which makes possible an ‘unnaturally’ long shelf life, seems only consistent. As in the case of food, the world of wine is nowadays sensitive to matters

of production, composition or the philosophy behind the product (Gouez and Pétric 2007). In Western European and North American countries especially there are movements against industrial wine, and natural wines are a growing trend. Yet the concerns of Moldovan consumers coincide only partially with those of the supporters of the natural-wine movement in advanced industrialized countries (see Black 2013). As with organic foods and seeds, peripheral countries do not always have the same drives in their support for ‘natural’ organic products (Visser et al. 2015). If in advanced capitalist societies the organic market is a niche market targeting well-off consumers, in the former socialist countries of Europe economic constraints are frequently the primary reasons for consuming ‘homemade’ wine – thus making it more of a necessity than a choice, though matters of social status and local tradition are of comparable importance.

Labour and Its Reproduction

Robert Ulin’s 1996 monograph on the Bordeaux wine cooperative movement, *Vintages and Traditions*, focuses on the historical constitution of quality in the region of Bordeaux and on relations of production and work as a cultural activity in winemaking. An encounter with a family of vintners in a Dordogne cooperative in the early 1980s made him reflect on Marx’s theory of commodity fetishism, which led him to the insight that we often focus on a product and elide the topic of the producer. As an anthropologist of wine, he was frequently asked about the consumption aspects of wine and almost never about relations of production. His fieldwork started in 1984 and was spread out intermittently over eleven years, since which time the subject of the conditions of food production came closer to the light and sometimes even entered the spotlight, as in the case of commodities included in fair-trade schemes. In the case of wine, however, apart from the vintner, the production process – including the whole ‘assembly line’ – has not been subject to much scrutiny in anthropology. More than two decades after the publication of Ulin’s book, Anglophone ethnographies of the relations of wine production still remain rather scarce (exceptions are Pratt 1994; Lem 1999; Crenn 2016; and Demossier 2018), despite wine being a commodity of great sociocultural complexity and economic importance in the present. When it comes particularly to work in winemaking, the dislocation of social relations in production and circulation has been prevalent. Food commodities such as chocolate and wine, which can be associated with distinction, have seen their social and economic production processes left on the margins. Winemaking workers, who carry out hard labour,

are frequently dropped in favour of the artistry of the winemaker due to a ‘strong emphasis on the wine grower as the only active worker of the land’ (Demossier 2018: 40). Wine as a commodity has been represented in romanticized terms, as an instrument of social distinction, relaxation and idealized tradition (Bourdieu 1984). To give an important example, migrant labour in the vineyards has been neglected in anthropological literature despite its widespread existence in Mediterranean countries (Crenn 2016). Wine is associated with whiteness and European nations (Crenn 2016: 42), while migrant vineyard workers are seen as transient actors despite their prominent role in its manufacture. Focusing on Bordeaux field-sites, Crenn shows how racism regulates social and labour relations in winemaking regions in south-east France, where, besides the white French countryside, the category of the ‘Arab’ worker coexists in a precarious corner: the unacknowledged aspect of winemaking is its Muslim, Arab or Maghrebi workforce. With a complex history in the region, and with diverse countries of origin, large numbers of them are undocumented workers – but these realities rarely made the focus of anthropologists. In this way, the ‘concrete images of labour’ (Black and Ulin 2013: 6) are glossed over, the hierarchy of quality is naturalized through the hegemonic discourse of terroir (Jung 2014; Ulin 2007) and a historically rather immobile geography of wine quality is the result.

The title of this book – ‘Wine is our bread’ – paraphrases a statement by Katia, a 52-year-old manual worker in the Purcari Winery, who, when talking about her lifetime of work in the village of Purcari, said to me on a winter day: ‘Wine is our bread. I’m afraid that’s the only thing we can make money from here. What matters here in Purcari in the first place is the area; good wine is made in this microzone, with the slopes facing the sun.’ ‘Bread’ (Romanian, *pâine*) is also used here with the same secondary meaning that this word has in English – that is, ‘means of subsistence’, ‘work’ or ‘livelihood’. The present work addresses the scarcity of anthropological research on industrial-wine production in an East-European location, including the reshuffling of values and practices forced by globalization. I pursue this end by analysing how workers in the wine sector in Purcari experience the country’s recent entry into the globalized wine market, and how their productive activities at home and in the winery contribute to the value of Purcari terroir wines.

An explanation of the historical distinction between ‘labour’ and ‘work’ is, from the outset, relevant as it provides an important place of reflection on what humans’ transformative activity can mean in relation to different economic systems. The distinction between the two concepts appears in literature but it is by no means consistent (recent examples – Kim 2019;

Narotzky 2018; Kasmir and Carbonella 2014; Spittler 2003, 2008, 2009; Ulin 2002). In his book *Founders of the Anthropology of Work* (2008: 28), Gerd Spittler mentions how particularly difficult it is to maintain this distinction when one reads German writings, where the only word designating work or labour is *Arbeit*. He uses both the terms interchangeably, but explains an older preference to use ‘work’ rather than ‘labour’ – work is more suitable in his writing as it is referring more to non-capitalist societies and designates the mere transformative or interactive activity that leads to the creation of a product (Spittler 2009). Ulin (2002) chooses ‘work’ over ‘labour’ drawing on Hannah Arendt’s criticism of Marx’s failure to distinguish between the two. He justifies his choice as serving his thesis on refiguring work as cultural production: for Arendt, work is the social process through which humanity creates durable objects and relations while labour simply involves the human metabolic exchange with nature (Ulin 2002: 693). Labour is a more politically charged term, and it usually refers to wage work in capitalism. Indeed, other authors like Carbonella and Kasmir (2014) settle on using ‘labour’, defined as a political entity whose social protests and quietude, formal and informal organizations, and political cultures reflect its multiple engagements with capital and state as well as relationships with other workers – locally, regionally, and globally (Kasmir and Carbonella 2014: 6). Thus, in their understanding, labour is different from work, which is a social activity that does not include the ‘livelihood’ dimension. As the ethnographic analysis in the present book focuses specifically on livelihoods and relations of production in a winemaking village, I use the term ‘labour’ more often than ‘work’ to refer to the transformative and interactive activity in the commercial-winery context. However, I also use the two terms interchangeably in the book on a methodological ground: in a capitalist production system ‘work’ cannot be studied outside this context and, as the ethnographical chapters show, different productive activities in the household and in the firm overlap in the production of market value.

Temporally, the main focus is on the decades following 1989, when the new economic regimes in the former Eastern Bloc countries either brought flexibility to production regimes, labour recruitment and organization or else deepened it where it was already present. These changes in economic practice entailed changes in sociocultural practice as well. Flexibility in capitalism is nothing new, but it is expressed differently in different times and places (Narotzky 2015: 173). In Western countries, flexibilization followed the early 1970s and marked a break with ‘Fordist’ or industrial capitalism. In the former Eastern Bloc, flexible capitalist regimes took shape from the 1990s onwards. Commonly encountered changes were related to more irregular work schedules, product design was adapted to respond to greater

market competition, and access to the labour market took new forms like subcontracting and temporary contracts (Kjaerulff 2015). Participant observation in the bottling section of Purcari Winery particularly shows how these tendencies played out in the livelihoods of wine workers.

Anthropologists undertaking research in former socialist countries came to study a wide range of socio-economic transformations and continuities that took place under the new political regimes, some specifically related to labour (e.g. Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Kideckel 2002; Dunn 2004; Kesküla 2016; Kofti 2016, 2018; Rajković 2018) and the work ethic (Heintz 2005, 2006),⁴ with the proviso that until recently the topic of work and labour has been rather rarely a focus in Anglophone anthropology (Hann and Hart 2009). Some studies showed how the so-called ‘transition’ affected the working classes in the former socialist bloc and that dispossession and inequalities increased tremendously, with great material and emotional costs (Kideckel 2002). The worker became an increasingly less-valued social category, and a focus on entrepreneurs and management came to populate the public discourse (Grdešić 2015; Dunn 2004). This meant that recognition of the proletariat in terms of remuneration also decreased dramatically while a new factory-management discourse was built on criticism of the socialist system, which was dismissed as ‘incompetent and inefficient’ (Vodopivec 2010: 168) or associated with ‘backwardness’, ‘stasis’ and ‘rigidity’ (Dunn 2004: 64). Kofti (2016) showed that in Bulgaria, workers are depicted in the public discourse as lazy and inefficient, and as carrying with them an inefficient work ethic from the Communist years – a discourse similar to that researched by Müller (2007) in the former East Germany.

Nevertheless, here I focus particularly on a part of the proletariat that is difficult to define. The term ‘proletariat’ was developed in relation to urban, landless, industrial workers more than agricultural-estate labourers, and some social scientists use the term ‘rural proletariat’ for the latter type (Mintz 1974: 298). It represents wage-workers in rural areas working in capitalist agricultural enterprises, but the term has been defined in the so-called ‘plantation societies’, where landless workers in industrial agriculture predominate. Mintz’s ‘landless, wage-earning, store-buying and corporately-employed agricultural workers’ (Mintz 1974: 300) are thus similar to industrial workers, but this typology rarely exists in this form. Rural workers often engage in secondary productive activities. Thus, I refer to Purcari workers as a ‘rural proletariat’ or ‘rural workers’, with the qualification that they are all owners of small plots of land that supplement their selling of their labour force. The income and products that come from these plots of land are central means of reproduction of the community, some of which is absorbed into the capitalist process of wine production in the Purcari Winery. Extracting surplus value from the workers thus

relies to an important extent on the capacity of the rural workers to find additional sources of income besides their wages.⁵ I explain this extraction of surplus value in the framework of social reproduction theory (SRT), which enables us to analyse how different areas of daily (working) life and reproduction are subordinated to capital. The peasant household functions simultaneously as a production unit, a consumption unit and a unit of biological reproduction, suitable for exploitation in different socio-economic contexts (Edholm, Harris and Young 1978: 124).

Within the category reproduction of labour in capitalism, Harris and Young (1981: 123–24) distinguish between three dimensions of the process: the reproduction of individuals within a class, i.e. of individuals in relation to the means of production; the reproduction of adequately socialized labour, i.e. within a specific ideological apparatus; and third, the category relevant to the present ethnographic analysis, the material reproduction of labour. This last-named category refers to the material dimension of how workers reproduce: ‘the day-to-day maintenance of people adequately nourished, clothed, and “recreated” – in short, serviced – to work for capital’ (Harris and Young 1981: 124). The costs can be taken on by a welfare state or by the so-called informal sector (Harris and Young 1981: 124). In Purcari, it is the household subsistence economy, or domestic labour, that takes on an important part of the material reproduction of the labour force in the absence of a welfare state.

The risk of domestic labour remaining unnoticed is not only driven by its usefulness to capital to stay in the shade, unproblematized. It has remained unproblematized in anthropology until recently too, given that it is

directly attuned to the human organism and its physiological needs for food, cleanliness and protection, this ultimate derivation from the needs of the body gives the illusion that domestic work is a timeless activity, remaining substantially the same through all the major changes in the forces of production and across the entire ecological spectrum. (Harris and Young 1981: 131)

Although these reflections stem from feminist anthropology focusing on the gendered differences in the allocation of labour, I find them relevant to my focus on the class differentiation that the change from socialism to capitalism generated in Moldova.

Post-Soviet Moldovan Crises

A short journey through the recent history of the Republic of Moldova is necessary in order to have a better grasp of the transformations that are presently being analysed. Like other former members of the Eastern Bloc, Moldova’s post-Soviet years have been marked by periods of crisis,

which in the wine industry translated into periods of stagnation or regress. Anthropologists of East and Central Europe have explored the ways in which sociopolitical change has especially affected local agricultural communities (Creed 1998; Hann 2003a; Pine 2007; Aistara 2018). Two decades ago, there was ‘widespread recognition that the replacement of socialist institutions by Western models of capitalist market economy, private property, and civil society has not brought the rapid beneficial changes’ (Hann 2003a: 6) that many had expected. Almost three decades later, perceptions in parts of the postsocialist countryside have not become significantly more positive: possibly the disillusionment has become even deeper, as was the case with my interlocutors in the Republic of Moldova. For many, the capitalist market economy has meant deeper insecurities; private property has become a challenge to maintain; and, unofficially, 1 million Moldovans out of its total population of around 3 million live abroad. In this context, hopes and grievances were often compared unfavourably with the withered Soviet state (cf. Jung 2019: 20).

Starting in the early 1990s, conflicts emerged between the Moldovan government and groups wanting either independence from or unification with Russia. This led to Moldova’s national territory being divided into three main administrative regions: Moldova; the ‘Autonomous Territorial Unit of Găgăuzia’; and the ‘Territorial administrative units from the left part of the Nistru river’, or Transnistria. The last-named entity has functioned as an autonomous region since 1991, has a separate government from that in Chişinău and is considered the site of one of ‘Eurasia’s frozen conflicts’ (Dunn and Bobick 2014: 406). Găgăuzia, although separatist, has functioned as an autonomous territorial unit within the Moldovan state since 1994. In these regions, the population is predominantly pro-Russian and maintains close ties to the Russian Federation both politically and economically. Wine is produced in all three territorial units, and the tensions that originated in the early 1990s are, to a certain extent, still felt in the way in which the wineries from the three regions are presently organized to promote Moldovan wine abroad.

However, the most drastic problems for the sector stemmed from the Russian embargo on wine in 2006, which lasted over a year, and, later, a new one imposed in 2013 and still partially in place.⁶ These crises have led to a change of paradigm in wine production and marketing in order to focus on new markets – first, other (non-Russia) CIS states such as Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan; and then, the European Union and China. The structures of political organizations have mirrored this division as the parties that made up the post-Soviet governments of Moldova took pro-European or pro-Russian positions, including in the public discourse. The country’s media and intellectual and NGO environments often still orient their analyses in terms of ‘external vectors’ (Romanian, *vectorii*

externi), with the ‘pro-European vector’ promising European integration (modernization, a free market, consumption) and the ‘Russian vector’ seeking to take Moldova under its protective arm (stability, a large market, familiarity). In 2001, the post-Soviet Communist Party won elections principally by promising closer ties with Russia. In 2005, it won by mobilizing the opposite vector, promising closer ties to the European Union. In 2009, the Communist government was ousted and was followed by two pro-European governments, which in fact transformed the country to an oligarchic regime that led the country into a new crisis, which culminated in the ‘robbery of the century’ (Romanian, *jaful secolului*) in 2014 with the theft of almost 1 billion dollars from local banks, or about 12% of the country’s GDP. I carried out fieldwork between the autumn of 2016 and the summer of 2017, when discussions in the winery, in the villages, in Chişinău bars or in the media were punctuated by references to the leaks about the bank theft and by worries about what the transfer of the theft into the public debt meant for the 2 million Moldovans living in the country at that time.⁷

During the election campaign in autumn 2016, the candidates running for the presidency repeatedly said that they wanted to break away from geopolitical games and focus on the welfare of the Moldovan people. However, the two candidates running in the final round – Maia Sandu and Igor Dodon – formulated their electoral promises around the two opposite poles of Europe and Russia, while many Moldovan citizens continued in their turn to formulate their choices based on the same pole structure. One way of reading this readiness or perceived need to become part of a greater federation or state structure is that it constitutes continuity with the relations of dependence of the Soviet era, which – although paternalistic and hierarchical, and sometimes abusive – used to provide a redistributive framework that ensured dignified livelihoods for many. The void left by the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the subsequent straining of trade relationships could be filled by ‘Europe’ – the Western, modernizing entity in the view of many Moldovans. The ethnographic chapters in this book capture these aspects as they are experienced by workers in the winemaking village of Purcari.

Researching Moldovan Wine

In August 2016, I travelled to the Republic of Moldova to carry out ethnographic fieldwork in a winemaking community for one year. Isolating one site or following the multiple connections that de-centre single sites into multi-sites is a decision (Candea 2007: 172) grounded in methodological

and political questions. My ethnographic fieldwork took place predominantly in one site, but I followed up on a few connections outside the village in order to grasp how consumption is staged and what kind of local story is re-enacted in the marketing discourses deployed at wine events in Chişinău and, for example, in Prague. Moreover, the political-economic focus of this book does bring the political dimensions of wine production and circulation to the forefront, and these connections are regional and global as much as they are local. However, I do not categorize my research as multi-sited; it involves a single, ‘found-object’ (Candea 2007: 179) type of site, providing a historicized snapshot of the relations of production in a winemaking village. Winemaking sites circulate through history and markets as bounded sites, and this particularity of the relationship between wine and place made the somewhat classical village field-site choice on my part the most methodologically sensible one.

Purcari – including the village, the winery and the wine region – has been an especially revealing site, given its relatively long production history in the region and the rapid rise in sales of its wine in different markets. While Purcari is one of the ‘winegrowers at the margins’ (Ulin 1996: 2) of the European Union and the global wine industry, in Moldova and neighbouring Romania it is one of the most popular quality-wine producers. Purcari boasts the only winery in Moldova where tourists are allowed in every production department, as they ‘have nothing to hide’, as the marketing director told me, except for the laboratory, where equipment is more fragile and space limited. This means that on a daily basis, groups of from two to thirty tourists are walked through all sections of the factory, the industrial cellars and the historical collection, which consists of 25,000 bottles of Purcari wine from vintages starting in 1948 and going up to the present.

I first arrived in the village in late September 2016, right after the company CEO had agreed to my presence at the winery. In Purcari, where my main field-site was located, I lived at the winery complex, in ‘the dorm’ (Romanian, *cămin*). This building contained rooms that were allocated to the winery’s technical staff, none of whom were local, and to tour guides and the students carrying out university internships who usually came during harvest time. Contrary to the usual practice of ethnographers in rural areas of living with a host family, I chose to stay in the workers’ building, because it kept me close to any activity that was happening in the winery also, it turned out to be handy for the winery administration in that they could easily call me in to lend a hand when there was sometimes a critical need for more staff. This was also valid for winery tours, as several times when the number of tourists exceeded expectations I helped with Romanian- and English-language tours.

I carried out participant observation in the factory and in the vineyards, being present for the main operations in viticulture and winemaking over the year. In the company vineyard, I worked almost exclusively with the Purcari workers' brigade throughout the year – made up of two to three teams containing only villagers from Purcari, from teenagers to retired people. There were four other brigades from four other villages there, but I had limited interaction with them. In the Purcari Winery, I worked in all departments except for the laboratory, and the forty-plus employees in the production department gradually became open to me from October. In autumn – during harvest, when the grapes were brought to the processing section – I could observe and participate in their selection, crushing and fermentation. Later on, I helped with the filtering, wine transfers, ageing, bottling, labelling and packaging of wine bottles, and also by cleaning equipment. In the winery, some of the workers received me reluctantly but most of them became glad to have a helper or a conversational partner around. Age and gender usually shapes the experience of ethnographic fieldwork, and this was also the case in my research – but not to the extent that I had expected. Wherever I could work at the same pace as the employees, workers of all ages and genders became open interlocutors and shared their knowledge about the work and the village.

My observations included attention to work and work rhythms in the vineyards and the factory, household work, winemaking and wine consumption, and at the same time I followed the comparative interpretations of Purcari villagers in order to grasp their understanding of the present and the recent past. In the village, I visited current and former workers of the winery; took part in religious celebrations, gardening and activities in the vineyards; or simply visited the cellars for a sample of homemade wine. Thus, my work in Purcari is partly an ethnography of a shop floor, partly an ethnography of the fields of the company or home plots in a 'found' field-site delimited as a wine region for centuries.

In the village of Purcari, workers are ethnically homogeneous – mostly Moldovans – and Romanian-language use is predominant, though switching between Russian and Romanian is also common. The main language of communication in the field for me was Romanian and, to a lesser extent, Russian and English. My ability in Russian was limited but this did not impact strongly on my exchanges with workers, all of whom were fluent in Romanian. My presence in the village as a single woman from Romania who had been educated at Western universities elicited diverse reactions that ranged from puzzlement to welcoming attitudes, to outright opposition. As I was not researching wine as a product alone, but moreover relations of production and the biographies of workers and other wine-making staff, my inquiries would sometimes lead to refusals from villagers

who preferred not to voice criticisms or reveal knowledge about potentially sensitive topics such as privatization. I believe that the prolonged discussions and exchanges managed to bring more understanding to both sides, showing that a more horizontal exchange is possible. The implications of these tensions for the collection of the data on which this book relies were that they encouraged me to find a language in which to produce knowledge that minimizes hierarchical undertones. The main research topic – wine – is bound to reinforce and underline cultural hierarchies, both regionally and globally, that make the work of Moldovan winemakers and workers considerably harder. My aim throughout this book is to avoid teleological narratives of ‘catching up’ in writing about Moldovan wine, while I rely on my ethnographical data and a critical political-economy lens to explain how inequalities in this field have been constituted and maintained.

When researching industrial winemaking, I often interacted with technical staff in the winery and was at times considered unqualified to write about wine because I was a ‘non-technical person’ – yet most of the time, technologists and wine scholars were very helpful and open to speaking with a social scientist, finding my position as an ethnographer with an interest in how wine is produced and consumed to be perfectly legitimate. Vlad, the head of production at Purcari Winery, was one such person, and he had an important mediating role for my ethnographical study of the winery. He stressed that ‘in Moldova it was not like in France’, where workers of all kinds in wineries would talk cheerfully about their wine from the beginning: ‘here people look at you with suspicion (mistrust) for a while, but it is just a matter of time for them to trust you and open up like no other’.

The largest body of the data on which this book relies comes from discussions, unrecorded interviews and participant observation. Some recorded narrative and biographical interviews were helpful in confirming or completing sequences of events in the lives of the employees and villagers. By the end of the fieldwork, I had conducted fifty-one formal interviews (narrative-biographical and semi-structured interviews) with workers at the factory, technical staff, older villagers in Purcari and academics in Chişinău. In the interviews, I mostly followed life stories and my questions explored personal experiences, values and systems of meaning, or descriptions of production processes related to winemaking or other products. In Purcari, I mainly interviewed workers I had met in the winery, but also other villagers (former winery workers, the more elderly villagers, winemakers). I contacted and was able to interview the latter group through ethnographic snowball sampling, as my winery interlocutors recommended individuals who could share their work experiences or details of local history with me.

I also gathered data in Chişinău, where I carried out archival research and interviews with experts in the wine sector, following the connections to and from Purcari. I spent time in the State Archive and the National Library Archive in Chişinău, where I gathered files pertaining to the history of Purcari village and the winery as well as to the Moldovan wine industry as a whole. Archival research gave me a clearer image of the history of the industry in today's Moldova, at present there being no published monograph that has gathered extensive data about it. Whenever possible, I attended wine-related events in Chişinău such as National Wine Day, the Wine Vernissage in winter and spring, and the 'Wine Friendly' sessions at which Moldovan wine was promoted by sommeliers and producers in order to popularize consumption of bottled wine.

Apart from the public figures that appear in the ethnographic analysis, all the names of the people featured in the book have been anonymised to protect the identities of workers and other interlocutors. However, the village and the eponymous company, Purcari, cannot be effectively anonymised as they are two very prominent actors in Moldovan winemaking, and any effort to keep the names private would soon fail. Moreover, villagers, the mayor and the winery management have never expressed any reluctance to my retaining the real name of the village and the company in the current work.

Structure of the Book

The five ethnographic chapters that follow are organized in such a manner as to address the way in which the value of Purcari wine has been historically constituted through relationships of export dependence on Russia, as well as through labour and advertising. In chapter 1, I trace the history of winemaking on the territory of today's Moldova up to the present-day in order to show how historically the growth of the vineyard surface in the region has been related to export markets on Russian territory for the past two centuries. It was in this historical context that dependence on the part of Moldova was created and maintained. I combine ethnographic data and archival research to show how winemaking has been depicted in historical publications and how supranational entities transformed Bessarabian or, later, Moldovan wine. The role of the Russian embargoes since the mid-2000s in recent reforms of the wine industry in Moldova is analysed in greater depth. The economic sanctions have acted as catalysts of the postsocialist transformations of wine production and marketing practices. I then analyse the institutional reform after 2006, and provide an overview of the legislation governing the reformed Moldovan wine sector as well as

an analysis of the marketing organizations that have been created in recent years. I argue that in the case of wine, international regulations have led to contestation and a revised appreciation or re-evaluation of locality. The existing practices and discourses around Moldovan winemaking regarding wine styles, containers, labels, terroir, the marginality or exoticism of Moldova, and Soviet and post-Soviet tensions have been placed under scrutiny or rejected altogether as new regulations were adopted. These new developments are interpreted by interlocutors as a preferable form of dependence. In the last part of the chapter, I zoom in on my main research site, Purcari, to provide a history of the village and the winery as well as to consider how the organization of property and production at the national level starting in the 1990s affected the winemaking community there.

Household wine production is another revealing phenomenon for understanding the dynamics of the wine industry and the lives of the Purcari workers. In chapter 2, I describe how homemade-wine production is embedded in Moldovan society and analyse its role in the dynamics of the domestic wine market. The majority of Moldovans from both rural and urban milieus prefer to drink homemade wine rather than bottled wine. This preference is not only a matter of taste, and I show that it is primarily related to the embeddedness of homemade-wine production and consumption among Moldovans throughout the centuries. The dynamics of dependence analysed in the previous chapter are substantiated here through ethnographic data from the winemaking village of Purcari. In explaining how domestic wine production is partly responsible for the dependence of commercial wineries upon export, I focus on matters of hierarchization and differentiation in the field of winemaking as they are central to understanding the political economy of wine at large. To depict this, I rely not only on participant observation in the village but also on interviews with wine experts in the capital city of Chişinău. The latter group adds a new layer to the hierarchy between homemade wine and commercial wine.

Chapter 3 continues the focus on household activities in order to show how some socially reproductive activities are integrated into capital-accumulation processes. Drawing on Marxist scholarship arguing that capitalism relies in part on agricultural communities for the reproduction of labour power and that household work contributes to the reproduction of capitalism, I explore the social and economic processes that are necessary in reproducing labour power in the wine region of Purcari. Labour power as a commodity is fundamental to the whole system of capitalist production, although it involves non-capitalist processes of production, such as women's care work, subsistence gardening or resting; in this framework, they become 'naturalized' and taken for granted. The areas of

social reproduction that contribute to the circulation of capital in Purcari are food provisioning, inhabitable and functional spaces, and rest options (holidays, free days, socialization outside the work space). I follow these areas in a comparative manner as my interlocutors framed them. Their socialist-era experiences still inform how the present is evaluated. I end the chapter by bringing together ethnographic data on local entrepreneurs, who, in comparison with the rural proletariat, have more income and more liberties; to a considerable extent they see themselves as the winners from the new regime, but even they notice that Moldovan capitalism has meant loss, decay and exclusion on both the pragmatic and symbolic levels.

Chapter 4 complements chapter 3 by further analysing production relations in winemaking. The observations used in this chapter come predominantly from the bottling section of the Purcari Winery, where orders need to be prepared and shipped all year round. Night and weekend shifts, and extended work hours in general, were introduced on a permanent basis in 2015, when the winery's sales started to grow again after the setting of the 2013 embargo and doubled by 2017. It shows how workers in this department experienced the flexibilization of time once the winery's sales rose rapidly. While the ethnographic data in this chapter show how daily life in both factory and home changed, it also depicts the ways in which the competition and brand ephemerality of late capitalism is forcing firms to reinvent themselves quickly. Wine is a more complex commodity than most, as it covers a wide range of cultural practices; therefore, wineries are constantly looking for criteria of differentiation in all these realms. The rapid transformations in the winery disturbed workers' rhythms and renegotiated what constitutes a competitive commodity or organization. I also show how the winery's entry into the global market led to contradictory transformations in the lives of the workers: while work times were increased and produced new forms of alienation and the degradation of certain aspects of life quality, an enrichment of industrial work time through rituals of commensality and socialization started to occur at the same time.

In the last ethnographic chapter, 5, I focus on the scientific and marketing work that was mobilized to articulate the Purcari terroir. Wineries around the world still need to show their adherence to terroir, as this is one of the values that the world market imposes on actors of this kind. It is the adoption of the terroir discourse by wineries around the globe that reproduces the present logic of the world wine market. Through participant observation in the Purcari Winery, interviews with scientists and marketing workers and discourse analysis of website and brochure content, I analyse the construction of the Purcari terroir and the reasons for emulating Western discourses. Marketing work in the competitive global wine field

involves the selection of information in order to strike a balance between a location's generic and unique features. The main argument of the chapter is that, contrary to the positions of several authors in economic sociology and anthropology, there is no clear distinction or opposition between the uniqueness of commodities and their generic nature, and that the two categories constitute each other in the realm of commodities. Analysing the marketing discourse within this framework also serves as a foundation for discussion of the Soviet Union's legacy in the Moldovan wine industry. Like those of other wine regions outside the classical core of the so-called 'Old (Western) World', Purcari Winery negotiates its place in the new markets by emphasizing its localness and the uniqueness of its location as much as it seeks legitimation through positive comparisons with the produce of French wine regions. This chapter analyses what kinds of 'local materialities' are saved when the discourse of the winery changes in order to emphasize distinction and differentiation, as well as common points with the wines on European markets.

In the conclusion I show that there were two main drivers for change in Moldovan winemaking: Moldova's strained relationship with its main trading partner and the country's integration into a world wine market that has its own dynamics and contradictions, which a new actor needs to integrate. The overall aim of this book is to depict the local articulation of this nexus through an ethnographical study of workers and wine production, and of marketization. I follow industrial workers in winemaking in order to understand changes in the labour process as well as the experience of the everyday, both outside the winery and in the household. I track the ways in which the shift to new markets has led to changes in wine production, furthering both the flexibilization of labour in Moldova and the break with the Fordist industrial relations that characterized the Soviet years. The recurrent theme of the book is the materiality of changing wine politics seen through the narratives of labour and terroir.

Notes

1. A 'microzone' in the Soviet Union designated a restricted production zone for a branded wine, the closest concept to the French terroir in Soviet winemaking practices (Walker and Manning 2013: 205).
2. Jules Chauvet (1907–1989), considered 'the father of natural wine' in France, criticized the mainstream winemaking methods in the entire production process, from the vineyard to the factory. He was born into a family of *négociants* and throughout his life conducted experiments in winemaking (Cohen 2013). He strongly recommended the avoidance of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in the vineyard, and in the winery Chauvet came to condemn the use of additives such as SO₂ because the

presence of chemicals would attack beneficial indigenous yeasts. He considered its use avoidable if proper hygienic practices were followed.

3. Organic wines are wines made from organic agriculture, which typically excludes the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides in viticulture and the use of preservatives in the wine. Biodynamic wine is made from organic agriculture as well, but it includes Rudolf Steiner's methods for soil fertilization and all operations in the vineyard are done following certain astronomical configurations.
4. Other widely studied themes that bring insights as well on the value of labour and on working lives in the region have included changing property regimes (Hann 1993, 2002, 2003; Creed 1998; Verdery 1996, 2001, 2003), informal economies and domestic livelihoods (Pine 2007; Cash 2015a, 2015b), informal ties (Ledeneva 2009; Cash 2015c), urban change (Jansen 2015; Petrovici 2015, 2017; Ringel 2016), civil society (Gagyí and Ivancheva 2017; Mikuš 2018) peasant history (Cash 2014), language and ethnicity (Chamberlain-Creangă 2011; Heintz 2008), ecology (Dorondel 2016; Aistara 2018), migration (Demirdirek 2006, 2007; Keough 2016) and ritual (Cash 2011, 2013; Creed 2011; Gudeman and Hann 2015b).
5. This dynamic is a feature not only of capitalism: during the Soviet Socialist period, most households combined earnings from wage work and the private plot (Humphrey 1983: 269). Likewise, the local economy in Purcari and the surrounding villages relied not just on waged work in winemaking and the fruit and vegetable canneries but also on the supplementary household production of food by rural workers (see chapter 3).
6. At the end of 2020, only a limited number of Moldovan wineries exported wine to Russia and the export quotas remained low in comparison to the previous decades. In the first 2020 semester, the volume export quota for bottled wine to Russia was of 10.1 % and that of bulk wine was of 7.1% (Buletin informațional trimestrial, ediția 3/ august 2020, pp. 2).
7. At the latest census in 2014, Moldova's population comprised 2.9 million inhabitants. Its largest ethnic group is Moldovan (73.7%), followed by Romanians (6.9%), Ukrainians (6.5%), Găgăuz (4.5%), Russians (4%) and Bulgarians (1.8%). Over 80% of the population speaks Romanian or Moldovan (they are almost identical languages), followed by Russian and Găgăuz (PHC 2014). Yearly, the country receives around 1,2 million dollars in remittances from Moldovans working abroad – predominantly in Russia, the EU and Israel (IMF 2017). These remittances made up 15% of the country's GDP.