



## Introduction

### *Privatizing the State and the Transformations of the Agrarian Landscape*

‘Our lives revolve around the man-made elements in the landscape.’

—J. B. Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*

December 1989. News broke of the spectacular collapse of one of the harshest dictatorial regimes in the world. Images of the crowd surrounding and then ransacking the dictatorial palace, burning books and paintings, symbolized the destruction of a highly centralized state and the people’s wrath against a miscreant political regime. The helicopter carrying the dictatorial couple from the central government building roof represented, for most Romanians, the crash of a dreadful state that for years had oppressed its citizens. A few days after being chased from power, Nicolae Ceaușescu was caught, placed before an improvised jury, condemned and executed. The Romanian hyper-centralized socialist government collapsed and the public expected a democratically elected government to replace the hideous former government. The new self-appointed authorities had only a few days to take several political measures eagerly expected by the population. Land property was among the most pressing issues.<sup>1</sup>

While urbanites were still on the streets celebrating victory over the dictatorship, rural inhabitants were thrilled at the prospect of reclaiming the land and forests they or their parents had been forced to surrender to the state in the early 1950s. Now that the socialist state had been dismantled, the rural population became impatient to take collective farmlands back into their possession. In the months following the breakdown of the socialist regime rural inhabitants carried out spontaneous collective farm dissolution.<sup>2</sup> The Romanian parliament passed the first land reform law in 1991 and created local, regional and national Land Commissions, charging them with implementing land and forest restitution. The second law, passed in 2000, completed and at the same time complicated the provisions of the first law.

Land and land reform are not merely postsocialist concerns. Land has been the obsession of peasants and political reformers alike since the dawn

of modern Romanian statehood. It is difficult to find a better headline to describe the societal tensions than the title of a poem published in 1894 that screams: 'We want land!'. George Coşbuc, the author of the poetry, synthesized in a poem the peasantry's primary main social and economic plea since medieval times. The number of free landholders shrank continuously during the Middle Ages whereas the number of serfs continued to grow. In 1864 serfdom was abolished, steering Romanian agriculture towards small family farms. Collectivization of agriculture, which started in 1949, brought further transformations. Private land owners were 'convinced' through violent methods to donate their land and land-related assets to collective farms.<sup>3</sup> Theoretically, workers on collective farms organized farm labour, sharing both the labour itself and the proceeds. In practice, the collective farms had no more autonomy than any other socialist enterprise. Besides collective farms there were state farms, which were created out of land seized from large landowners.<sup>4</sup> While the collective farms were not subsidized by the state, the state farms benefitted substantially from socialist state subsidies. The breakdown of the communist regime triggered a new land reform that was intended to reverse collectivization. Decollectivization, as it was termed by scholars, was the process of breaking up collective farms and restoring land and land-related assets to legitimate former owners. State farms were also dismantled and the land was privatized.<sup>5</sup>

Changes in landed property rights and in agrarian relations were triggered by radical political transformations experienced by the Romanian provinces in the second part of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. Until 1859, when Moldavia and Walachia were united under the name of Romanian Principalities, the provinces that constitute Romania were ruled by different powers. Despite the 1859 Union, the Romanian Principalities, as they were called, remained, at least formally, under Ottoman control until 1878. Transylvania was a relatively autonomous province under the rule of the Hungarian kingdom and between 1867 and 1918 under the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Only in 1918 was Transylvania incorporated into the Romanian state: once the Austro-Hungarian Empire had disappeared, a new nation state emerged on Europe's map. Between 1881 and 1947 Romania was an independent kingdom.<sup>6</sup> The installation of the communist regime in 1947 ended one political regime and installed a different one under the Soviet Union's direct supervision. This regime ended in December 1989.

Changes in political regimes and the movement of the borders throughout the twentieth century also influenced the ethnic makeup of the population of Romania. In 1919, one year after Romania incorporated Transylvania, 57.12 per cent of the Transylvania's population was ethnic Romanian, 26.46 per cent was Hungarian, almost 10 per cent was German and 3 per cent of Jewish origin. At the country level, in 1919 Romania had

28 per cent citizens belonging to different ethnic groups.<sup>7</sup> More than 90 years after, the 2011 census showed that out of a population exceeding 20 million almost 89 per cent is ethnic Romanian. Almost 7 per cent of the population are Hungarians, most of them located in Transylvania, and 3.3 per cent declared themselves to be Roma. The Roma population is relatively uniformly distributed across Romania. Other ethnic groups that number fewer than 20,000 are Ukrainians, Germans, Turks, Russians and Tartars.<sup>8</sup> In Walachia, apart from some small villages with a Bulgarian population and some Roma, most people are ethnic Romanians. Moldavia presents pretty much the same picture: a tiny Russian population, some Roma but mostly Romanian ethnics.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were shaken by several land reforms implemented with varying degrees of radicalism. All were declared essential in order to modernize the country's economy and society. The most radical reforms unfolded in the last sixty years: the Utopian social engineering of the last two reforms brought immense social disruption and left deep marks on the agrarian landscape. In the early 1950s the communist Utopia required the erasure of class discrimination in order to achieve a paradisaical egalitarian social structure. Communist governments attempted to do this by nationalizing private farmland and forests and establishing collective and state farms. The quasi-elimination of property rights in agriculture during socialist times changed the agrarian landscape. Agricultural land was consolidated into large plots, and later on the means of production were mechanized in accordance with Nicolae Ceaușescu's dream of catching up with the industrialized Western countries. The postsocialist land reform yet again aimed to change agrarian relations, in order to modernize the country's economy and society. Land restitution was triggered partially by the desire to bring about historical justice and partially in order to achieve economic efficiency in the agricultural sector.<sup>9</sup> Postsocialist central state planners regarded land reform as a way to dismantle the collective organization of agriculture, improve the land tenure system and increase the economic efficiency of a country once dubbed the 'granary of Europe'. The centrally designed land reform had to be implemented through the lower levels of state bureaucracy: the mayor, the secretary of the mayor's office, the agricultural officer and the representative of the Local Inspectorate of Forest (LIF) were all agents of the state empowered to implement land reform provisions down to the last village. But, to paraphrase an old Romanian saying, many go out for wool and come home shorn. The local-level bureaucrats had their own economic interests, which were hardly compatible with those of central government. Central government did not foresee the local bureaucrats' opposition to land reform and the power of local social networks whose interests local bureaucrats represented and defended.<sup>10</sup>

By placing an emphasis on Romania as the focus of my research I am not playing a practical joke on the reader. The case of Romania, a country of a bit more than 20 million people, is not singular in the postsocialist world. The collapse of the Berlin Wall in October 1989 changed the lives of more than 100 million people in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>11</sup> If we count the tremendous changes in countries in central Asia that were once part of the Soviet Union and Asian countries such as China and Vietnam, we realize that the term postsocialism can be applied to more than a quarter of the world's territory, with a population reaching around 1.5 billion.<sup>12</sup> The 1989 turmoil affected equally people, economy, ecology and environment. In terms of people and territories affected, the postsocialist transformation is undoubtedly the greatest transformation of modern times.

However, I do not intend to understate the complexities of so many diverse countries by employing the term 'postsocialist'. This term ought to reflect the diversity of societies and their history in the same way as socialism, which was used to designate the organization of societies and economies that differed in many ways from one country to another. For instance, Yugoslavia and Poland halted the collectivization of agriculture when socialist agricultural policies were first implemented, whereas Albania, Romania and the Soviet Union did not stop until the last piece of land was collectivized. The socialist regime in Yugoslavia was more liberal than in most of the other countries. While Yugoslavia provided thousands of *gastarbeiters* to Western Europe, Romania and Albania were virtually closed countries where even internal movement was difficult. The manner of departure from socialism was also different from country to country. When the policy of decollectivization started in the late 1980s in Vietnam – a policy known as *Đôì mới* – in Romania the centralization of land management was fiercer than ever.<sup>13</sup> The end of the socialist governments also came about quite differently for different countries: in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia the socialist governments were peacefully removed, whereas in Romania some 1,000 people lost their lives in what was called a 'revolution'.<sup>14</sup> Despite following slightly different trajectories, postsocialist countries have nevertheless two general traits in common. One is the collapse of the party state and the emergence of political parties (except for Vietnam and China) which have given rise to a wider range of political ideologies, from social democrats (seen as inheritors of the communist parties) to liberals and conservatives. Second, the postsocialist governments adopted, at various stages but with few exceptions, a neoliberal philosophy concerning the market and the role of the state. Privatization of state enterprises, restoration of land and land-related assets to either former owners or to those who worked in agriculture, the privatization of forest and the opening up of the national market to global economic

forces are all part of the postsocialist political picture. I present this policy more thoroughly in chapter 3. It suffices to say here that privatization of industrial enterprises and of land and forest led to a rapid evolution into a highly differentiated society.

The transformation from a state-controlled economy into a market-driven one tended to follow one of two main philosophies. One was ‘shock therapy’ which recommended no half measures and no gloves when privatizing state assets, imposing restrictive budgets on all economic actors and the sudden liberalization of the national market. A second philosophy, coined ‘gradualism’, advocated a gradual disposal of state property rights, a milder approach to privatizing state assets and restrictions in the flux of foreign capital and investments than that adopted by the ‘shock therapy’ philosophy.<sup>15</sup> Romania was among the countries that adhered to the latter philosophy, at least until 1996 when a pro-Western government came to power, limiting private investments, maintaining a strong state presence within the economy and slackening the liberalization of the market.<sup>16</sup>

Depending on the degree of economic and political liberalization, the actual status of postsocialist countries differs greatly. Central European countries (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia) and the Baltic Countries were accepted into the selective club of the European Union (EU) in 2004 whereas Romania and Bulgaria were admitted only in 2007. Croatia joined as late as 2013. Serbia and Albania applied for this status in 2009 whereas the former Soviet Republics, other than the Baltic Countries, were not invited to join the EU.

The global neoliberal philosophy and governance and its political, economic, social and environmental outcomes is what binds postsocialism to postcolonialism. The term postsocialism is almost never used as an analytical term but rather designates a geographical area: Central and Eastern Europe. The term postcolonialism is used often as a theoretical paradigm but also tacitly presumes a geographical area outside Europe.<sup>17</sup> Both terms denote explicit or implicit opposition to the ‘West’ in terms of social, political and economic inequalities.<sup>18</sup> The two ‘posts’ as Verdery and Chari put it, are part of the same story in terms of epistemologies, policies, ideologies and space organization although each ‘post’ has its own peculiarities. Verdery and Chari plead for dropping the two ‘posts’ and replacing them with a unifying term: post-Cold War studies.<sup>19</sup> Although the aim of this book is not to compare the two ‘posts’, I fully acknowledge that globalization of forces producing environmental degradation affects the postsocialist countries in the same way and with the same intensity as the postcolonial ones. Thus, theories and authors which explain the causes of environmental degradation in postcolonial settings, ‘married’ with postsocialist studies scholarship, inform the analytical excursions of this book.

The geographic stage of the ethnographic episodes described in this book is represented by two communes, Dragomirești and Dragova, both located in Argeș County in the northern part of the province of Walachia (see Figure 0.1).<sup>20</sup> Both communes lie in hilly areas: Dragomirești in Sub-Carpathian hills and Dragova in the Carpathian Mountains at the border between Walachia and Transylvania. The ecology of the region largely shapes the local economy. On the surrounding hills of Dragomirești animals graze on pastures which alternate with orchards. On the top hills meadows alternate with forest whereas at the bottom of the hills a tiny strip of cropland stretches along the river. A few kilometres away can be found a huge industrial enterprise: the car factory Dacia-Renault. Thus, the local economy of Dragomirești with its three component villages is based on forest exploitation, subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry and industrial jobs. Dragova is less bewildering ecologically: located up in the mountains, the commune's three villages have large forests, meadows and pastures. The cropland is non-existent and the closest industrial factory is located some 100 kilometres away. Thus forest exploitation, animal husbandry and marketing dairy produce are the only components of the local economy. The ecological differences between the two communes are obvious. Ecology matters but so do politics, economics and social structures. I discovered the interlocks between these domains while interviewing villagers.

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August 2004 in a household from Dragomirești village. In the shadow of the porch protecting us from the summer heat, the man before me complains about the changes his village underwent after 1989. He recounts how orchards belonging to the collective produced high-quality plums which were exported to Western European countries, the maize seeds planted were very productive and resistant to every disease and pest, and pastures belonging to the collective farms produced an impressive quality and quantity of hay. Now, he emphasizes, the new 'private' plum trees are of a different type – good enough to make *țuica* (homemade plum brandy) but not for eating: 'We also keep maize seeds from one year to another as we can't afford to buy hybrid seeds which would be more productive and more resistant to pests'. The pastures have been transformed into either land covered by bushes or built-up areas. Anyway, he assures me, there are few cows left in this village, so no need of pastures anymore. 'As for the forest, well, as we say here in the village, there are no trees left in the forest so a cuckoo would not be able to build a nest,' he says, concluding with this local saying, graphically describing not only the disappearance of the forest but also the fauna which once used to populate these forests.

These stories bored me because I was concerned less about the type of plums cultivated now or the maize seeds they use than about market relations, local politics and social relationships within the village. Indeed, like other scholars of postsocialism before me, I was interested in the dismantling of the collective farm, the integration of the local economy into the wider, newly emerging capitalist economy and the new types of social relations emerging in the postsocialist period. Nevertheless, as my interlocutor pointed out, postsocialism meant reorganization not only of the society but of the natural world as well. Re-establishing private property rights over land and forest not only has economic, social and political implications; it affects local crops, trees, animals and rivers as well. As anthropologists have pointed out, decollectivization is undoubtedly a political and economic process, one that affects land tenure, the economy and local social relations.<sup>21</sup> However, it equally affects the type of crops cultivated, the variety of plum trees grown, and the quality of pastures and forests. More generally, land reform has changed the social, economic and political relations in the countryside but has also had environmental effects: trees, animals, plants, soils, and rivers have been put under immense pressure, subjected to dramatic changes.

This book suggests that the economic and political postsocialist transformations parallel environmental ones. By looking closer at the postsocialist changes in the natural environment I suggest, following Donald Worster, that there is a circular relationship between humans and their environment: humans influence the environment through economic and political relations and the environment influences human social relations.<sup>22</sup> Examining the circular relationship between humans and their environment does not suppose an equal intensity in action nor the same effect. The natural environment certainly has agency in changing the social and economic relations in rural areas. However, in this circular relationship – as I see it in this book – human action prevails and marks the landscape in a disruptive way. The effects of humans' activity on the environment have more dramatic impact and more visible consequences than the opposite. Thus, the circular relationship is not equal in both intensity and effect.<sup>23</sup> When I say 'environment' I mean something similar to William Cronon's understanding of 'nature': a human construction of the nonhuman world.<sup>24</sup> Humans shape the natural world through their social practices, and their activities make an impression on the landscape. As Denis E. Crossgrove put it, 'the ways people organize in order to produce their material lives result from and give rise to changes in relationships with their physical surroundings.'<sup>25</sup> Thus, by understanding changes in the agrarian landscape – that is, how the socialist landscape has been transformed into a postsocialist one – we gain a deeper understanding of the changes in local economics and politics.

In order to pinpoint how postsocialist economic and political transformations have marked the agrarian landscape and how the changed agrarian landscape has contributed to building new social relations, I explore unintended outcomes of centrally designed land reform in postsocialist Romania at local level. To understand how land reform has been thwarted at the local level, I look in two directions. First, I examine villagers' local ecological responses to wider economic changes. The return to private ownership, a tenet of both neoliberal ideology and postsocialist policies, did not suddenly turn the villager into an indomitable farmer aiming to conquer the market. By trying to muddle through, the villager has brought back pre-collectivization agricultural practices such as intercropping and crop diversification. Instead of producing a boom in animal husbandry, the mountain-dwelling villager has reacted by shifting the weight of the local economy from animal husbandry to rural tourism. All these economic changes have radically reorganized the agrarian landscape. Second, this book seeks to show that local state bureaucrats have had the power to influence the outcomes of land and forest restitution in order to meet their own interests rather than those of the central government. They have thwarted the overall values and intended goals of land reform. In this way, local power relations have shaped the postsocialist agrarian landscape. Diverging from other authors working in postsocialist settings who have looked only at socio-economic relations, I include in my analysis the nonhuman world, such as land, trees, crops, waters and animals. I argue that the economy of crops and pastures is intimately linked to the economy of animals and forests; to this end, I draw links between different parts of the ecosystem and between the ecosystem and humans. I show that the decrease in the number of cattle, along with other elements of economic origin, such as the collapse of state animal complexes and the retreat of the postsocialist state from marketing processes, influence the quality of the local pastures. In fact, village pastures shrank as they became overgrown by bushes. This change is not just a biophysical one but also brings changes in the property status: the state forest inspectorate steadily marks land covered in bush as state forest. This means fewer animals to graze, less pasture needed, and so no protests among villagers as they do not need pasture anymore. Thus, although this book confers a more central role on the nonhuman agents influencing human relations in postsocialist contexts, it recognizes the importance of human action in creating new environments and landscapes.<sup>26</sup> By taking seriously the natural environment and the animals that populate it, as well as the outcome of human action, this book intends to add to a scarce but yet continually growing literature.<sup>27</sup>

The remainder of the introduction explores the book's theoretical ambit and outlines the directions the book will head in.

## Land Reform and the Reorganization of the Landscape

Land reform was an attempt by postsocialist governments to impose new meanings of property on local people, attaching new values to land and utilizing a new economic language in accordance with neoliberal tenets.<sup>28</sup> It was part of the central state's plan to completely reorganize its socialist society, including people, economies and landscapes, and to transform it into something radically different. Postsocialist economic reforms were often neoliberal policies enacted by the national government but promoted by international financial institutions.<sup>29</sup> National policies regarding market relations implementation, land privatization and state withdrawal from any economic activity were thinly disguised impositions by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund missions, as I point out in chapter 3.

Postsocialist land reform led to the break-up of collective farms and land restitution to private owners in the early 1990s. As if Garrett Hardin himself had developed the land reform, governments used the 'tragedy of the commons' discourse when placing a significant emphasis on restoring private property; in this case the commons were replaced by collective and state farmland, while socialist collective farming was blamed for the failure of agriculture in Eastern Europe.<sup>30</sup> Private property and the market economy were expected to bring economic efficiency, responsibility for the environment and sustainable rural development. While Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland applied 'shock therapy' – the rapid privatization of land and agricultural assets – in their attempt to transform the socialist economy into a market economy, the first Romanian postsocialist governments were rather reluctant to promote deep land reform and slow in restoring private property.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, under pressure from international organizations and the emerging civil society, Romania gradually privatized industrial and agricultural assets. Land reform was part of a more general effort of the postsocialist state to reorganize and modernize the whole society: people, economies and landscapes had to be re-arranged in order to bring the country 'into Europe'. Through re-organization of the entire economy and the landscape, the postsocialist state has proved that it shares the same DNA as any other modern state.

Modernizing economy, people and spaces means, as James C. Scott has pointed out, a simplification of the landscape – he calls it legibility – for the sake of taxation and the efficient management and control of natural resources. This high-modernist ideology, as Scott calls it, requires the state to put monetary values on natural resources and control people and spaces, all in the name of improving the human condition.<sup>32</sup> The process Scott has described in his seminal book only partially covers the processes of land reform and the transformation of socialist societies into new, capitalist ones.

Postsocialist land reform was meant to abolish collectivization and the nationalization of forests and to reshape rural production relations. In the process of landscape modernization described by Scott, legislators in many European countries from the nineteenth century onward were interested in removing the multitude of local tenure arrangements and agricultural practices, which were difficult to codify and thus to tax. Instead, the high modernist state imposed land property rights; each plot had a clear owner with clear boundaries to be read by the cadastral officers in their attempt to make cadastral maps, a necessary instrument in taxing the land and forest. This process is, as Scott points out, a profoundly political one. The postsocialist reformers were driven by a similar rationale: private ownership of land would turn the rural inhabitant into a capitalist farmer producing for the market. In this way, rural inhabitants' standard of life would significantly improve while their production would contribute to national economic growth and to the general welfare of the country.<sup>33</sup> There were political reasons as well: governmental parties were interested in enlarging their electoral base by posing as reformers and at the same time making the rural population politically dependent on the state, a.k.a., the political elite.<sup>34</sup>

If the rationale and ideology of the postsocialist state are to a great extent similar to that described by Scott, restoring land and forest to their previous owners has had significantly different outcomes in the field. First, the large plots of agricultural land cultivated industrially by the socialist state or the collective farms were atomized through decollectivization. Instead of large 'legible' surfaces, in Scott's terms, the state reform has created myriad parcels of land with multiple owners, as Katherine Verdery describes in the context of a village in Transylvania.<sup>35</sup> One of the unintended consequences of land reform was land fragmentation. Anyone travelling today in rural Romania would notice the highly fragmented landscape.<sup>36</sup> Although in some parts of Romania, especially in the lowland villages, people have joined new land associations in the hilly regions, landowners prefer to work their cropland, pastures and orchards individually. The stubbornness with which villagers continue to work their land is explained both by the historical evolution of the area, as they have proudly expressed their status as free landholders throughout history, and by the political economy of the postsocialist state, which emphasized private property to the detriment of collective farms. For villagers living at even higher altitudes, land fragmentation is part of their landscape history. For centuries they were small landholders, and the fences surrounding each individual plot proudly state that the land is private. Socialist collectivization did not reach them.

Such a large process as land reform, designed centrally and imposed from the top downwards, often ignores or even suppresses the practical skills and knowledge of local people acquired through long-term ecological

experience, as Scott has warned us.<sup>37</sup> He calls this local knowledge and these adaptable skills *mētis*. Rural inhabitants' practical knowledge is based on an astute observation of the surrounding environment, a deep knowledge of the plants and the land they cultivate and on their immediate needs. Scientific agriculture imposed by the high-modernist state and implemented by agricultural experts not only dismisses this local knowledge and experience as unproductive but also represents, in Scott's reading, a strategy of control and appropriation.

How did postsocialist villagers, recently emerging from a differently organized society, namely a socialist one, react to these changes imposed by central governmental offices? This book argues that the reaction of villagers to these rapid changes differs from the one anticipated by central governments and their Western supervisors. Instead of being transformed into aggressive capitalist farmers, villagers rediscovered pre-collectivization agricultural practices. Once a villager reacquired his or her land, spread in several pieces throughout the commune's territory, he or she had to transform him or herself overnight from a farmer who executed the orders of the collective farm technicians into a farmer who had to make decisions concerning which crop to cultivate, when, and by what means. The collective farm aimed to cultivate a few crops intensively, following the supreme aim of the socialist government not only to achieve food sovereignty for the country but also to export agricultural products. The postsocialist landowner had a different aim and different means to achieve it. Villagers adapted fairly well to the land fragmentation by diversifying their crops, reintroducing the pre-war practice of intercropping maize, beans, and pumpkin (*Curcubita pepo*) and by shifting to the type of plums more suitable for making *țuica* than for marketing as fresh produce. He or she had less capital, less time, and less interest in maintaining intensive cropping. In other words, farmers opted for agricultural extensification in response to the fragmentation of land.<sup>38</sup> Local agricultural practices were adapted to the new economic milieu.

Postsocialist changes were equally traumatic for those villagers who had never experienced land collectivization. Until 1989 they combined two types of economic activity: animal husbandry and its associated activities, such as the production and selling of dairy products and meat, with a still emergent rural tourism. Although these commercial activities may seem to have provided a training ground for the new capitalist society, the uncollectivized villager was also unprepared for the rapid economic changes.<sup>39</sup> Operating within the socialist market, whether legal or illegal, in a shortage economy was different from operating in a growing competitive market. While they supplied dairy products that were in short supply on the socialist state market, in the new postsocialist milieu they had to compete with cheap Western dairy products. They began to compete not only with subsidized

products but with the socially valued Western agricultural products too. The opening of innumerable supermarkets, especially after 2000, led to an explosion of choice of different Western dairy brands. Thus, the once entrepreneurial peasant had to face changing consumption patterns too.<sup>40</sup> After 1989, the number of cattle and the labour and capital invested decreased due to all these factors.<sup>41</sup> Instead of intensifying animal husbandry, villagers turned to a more lucrative occupation: rural tourism. Uncollectivized villages were located at a rather high altitude in the Carpathians, and the lofty mountains, caves, cascades and 100-year-old forests surrounding those villages seemed there to be marketed to the increasing number of tourists.

The outcome of land reform was very different from that expected by the central planners. Villagers coped with the situation by resorting to local knowledge and practices, which they considered more suited to their interests. Thus I suggest that villagers resisted neoliberal governmental plans by finding their own way of dealing with them. Some rediscovered pre-war agricultural practices while others turned to new domains of activity. Thus, I suggest that improvement schemes such as land reform not only produce new forms of local knowledge and practice but also reinstate old ones that helped villagers to get by for centuries.<sup>42</sup>

## **Local State Bureaucracy and the Postsocialist Elite**

So far, I have described villagers' reactions to neoliberal changes enacted by the central government. Depending on the local ecological conditions, they resisted these changes by adopting old agricultural practices or turning to new economic domains such as rural tourism. In both cases, they responded to wider economic changes in a different way to that anticipated by central planners. These local agricultural practices have environmental consequences and create a new agricultural landscape that is different from the previous socialist one.<sup>43</sup> However, this is not the whole story of the changing landscape. Seeing the state as a monolithic agent with a homogenous identity and practices, as Scott seems to conceive it, and as an entity represented only by prominent political figures, leaves out many intermediary levels.<sup>44</sup> In the case I discuss here, land reform was developed in central offices but necessarily implemented by a multitude of agencies and branches of the state at local and regional levels. It is important to identify those state actors, institutions, agencies and people, ranging from local to national level, that have contributed significantly to the reshaping of the landscape. One cannot tell the story of such radical changes in the natural landscape without a thorough description of the social activity and political practices of the parties involved.<sup>45</sup> I follow Joel S. Migdal who identifies four levels of state

organization.<sup>46</sup> At the bottom of the state hierarchy are those officials who are in close contact with the population: tax collectors, police officers, teachers and all those tasked with applying state rules and regulations. These are what Michael Lipsky calls 'street level bureaucrats'; they are those who supposedly implement land reform provisions 'from the grassroots.'<sup>47</sup> A higher level is constituted by those bodies, local or regional, which implement policies, or those who work in local legislative offices or in courts. These officials channel resources and make decisions at local level. A third level is made up of central office staff in the capital city. These are the places where national policies are formulated and from which central resources are channelled to lower levels. Finally, the fourth level is constituted by a tiny group of top executive leaders. The four levels of state hierarchy are connected through a myriad of political and administrative threads. The relationship between higher ranked officials and lower officials is one of mutual dependence, at least in postcolonial and postsocialist countries, and it is based on an exchange: local bureaucrats provide votes for the party in power while high-ranking officials provide impunity.<sup>48</sup> Local state officials have at their disposal natural resources that can be easily converted into financial resources and, as I will show throughout the book, they do not feel shy about using and abusing them. As Alina Mungiu-Pippidi notes, the price of fierce competition for power in the state is the state itself and all its resources.<sup>49</sup> Thus, in order to understand how the state functions at a local level, one needs to document the relationship between local level officials and those higher in the hierarchy, and to show that local bureaucracy does not act autonomously but in concert with forces closer to the centre of power. Documenting this demonstrates that accountability, the mantra of every political scientist analysing the state, works vertically, from lower levels of bureaucracy towards higher levels, and not horizontally towards the citizens.

In postsocialist Romania, the local state is composed of two types of state official. Policemen, forest guards and employees in the mayor's office represent one type, which I call the local bureaucracy.<sup>50</sup> Higher levels of state bureaucracy appoint these officials and hold them accountable. Therefore, all these bureaucrats depend on the party in power. Thus the Romanian bureaucracy is indeed far more dependent on the higher political positions than Max Weber's Prussian bureaucrats who were in theory appointed on their own merits.<sup>51</sup> Members of the local government and the mayor represent a second body of institutions. These individuals are elected by and should be accountable to the villagers.<sup>52</sup> Although the bureaucrats I describe here share some features with the bureaucrats described by Weber, namely a special training, key knowledge and administrative skills, at the same time they differ quite substantially from the modern bureaucrats. Weber (1978: 979) presents the ethos of modern capitalist bureaucracy as free from 'arbi-

trary action and discretion, of *personally* (emphasized in the text) motivated favour and valuation, such we shall find to be the case among prebureaucratic forms'. The German sociologist portrays Prussian bureaucracy as 'dehumanized' in the sense that officials exclude from their administrative activity emotions or purely personal interests, acting in accordance with rules and objective considerations.<sup>53</sup> As I will show throughout the book, Romanian local state employees use their office positions to exploit the forest, the most valuable natural resource in rural areas, and to transform pastures into built-up spaces. Thus, local bureaucrats act in their personal advantage, avoid, if not directly break, the rules and laws of land reform and serve their superiors' political interests. In my reading, the bureaucracy I describe in this book is far from having an ethic similar to that of the Prussian bureaucracy described by Weber.

By exploring the interaction between different state officers and villagers I emphasize that there is a state presence even at local level, and that its actions directly shape the landscape. The ethnographical accounts in this book depict a state that is very much present in peoples' lives. I therefore give credit to an idea that conflicts with what some authors describe as a 'distant state' or the 'absence of the state' at local level.<sup>54</sup> For instance, Johannes Stahl discusses the Albanian case in which local officials extracting rent from illegal woodcutters have profoundly altered the landscape. His impressive ethnography points, however, to phenomena other than state dynamics: according to his approach, wider economic and political changes led to the retreat of the state from local life.<sup>55</sup> My own ethnography points in the exact opposite direction: the state, through its local level officials, is part of the daily life of the villagers and contributes significantly to forest exploitation and massive shrinkage of pasture areas. Thus, everyday political practices involving patron–client relationships and manipulation of office positions have a direct and massive impact on the local agrarian landscape.

### **Privatizing the State and Consequences for the Landscape**

In the period following the 'revolution', the re-formation of the Romanian state at all levels, the enactment of land reform laws, and farmland and forest restitution to pre-1945 owners, took place simultaneously. The emerging postsocialist states differ in many respects from the old, settled Western states, which were, after all, the model for the postsocialist ones. The postsocialist state was built *on* the ruins of the socialist state but *with* the building materials picked up from these ruins.<sup>56</sup> In other words, the changes produced in the structure of the state are the outcome of a *mélange* of late socialist and neoliberal political institutions, ideologies and people.

In the process of decentralization, multiple centres of authority have emerged.<sup>57</sup> Further, privatization of socialist assets, such as land, forest or industrial factories, and market liberalization have considerably diminished the influence of the central state.<sup>58</sup> The creation of the Local Land Commission (LLC) aimed not only to return private property to its legitimate owners but also to make this process more accountable to local villagers. However, as many ethnographic reports show, members of the LLC were able to hijack the land reform process to serve their own interests.<sup>59</sup> As heads of the LLC, mayors were in a very powerful position to acquire land and agriculture-related assets such as tractors or combines from the dismantled socialist collective farms. For instance, a mayor was able to manipulate information concerning land, having access to land registers from 1945 to the present. Maps and registers simply disappeared, and the mayor usurped land that apparently had no owner. When the heir to the land showed up, the mayor was able to impede the land restitution process.<sup>60</sup> In many cases, the mayor's friends, who were often his political supporters, received good quality land while the legitimate owners received poor quality land.<sup>61</sup>

Most local state officials were heirs of the communist government.<sup>62</sup> Although the central government was officially dismantled in December 1989, most of the local mayors and councillors remained in power. There seems to be a general agreement among anthropologists working in postsocialist countries that most of the local elite shares a socialist history. They had the advantage of having worked for the collective farms as directors and they could utilize the social networks that had been created in the postsocialist period.<sup>63</sup> Most of these former socialist elite relied on social connections that were transformed, in the postsocialist era, into market relations. The local elite now had a different connection with the central state. As Verdery pointed out, as the mayors acquired power through decentralization, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry had little leverage over them. This situation created immensely powerful local state officials: the mayor and the members of the local council, both elected by and therefore only accountable to the villagers, were virtually beyond the reach of the law.<sup>64</sup> However, the link between the centre and the local peripheries is even more complicated than this. As I have already mentioned, there is a double movement of resources and power relations from local level to the centre and vice versa: local level officials seek immunity from prosecution which is guaranteed by state officials located closer to the power centre; national politicians need votes which are usually brought in by local level bureaucrats and officials who have leverage over voters. This 'dialectical model of interaction' between the centre and the local peripheries is the perfect milieu in which to develop a patronage system at local level.<sup>65</sup> The existence of an extensive and politicized apparatus that once occupied pre-existing centres of power, together

with those who already had access to socialist structures, represent the base for this system. In the process of new state formation, defined by Anna Grzymala-Busse and Pauline Jones Luong (2002: 536) as a 'process of elite competition over the authority to create the structured framework of policy creation and implementation', the local and central elite created institutions in which they occupied a central place to serve their personal interests.<sup>66</sup> As Verdery suggestively put it, the local elite represents 'their *own* state'. They simply privatized the state.<sup>67</sup>

These plundering officials were responsible for land reform implementation; their local interests and the political relations they have built, based on the power conferred by their offices, have contributed to physical changes in the landscape: shrinkage of pasture and deforestation are two examples of this nature transformation. Dominating people is, in this case, interconnected with the domination of the natural landscape.<sup>68</sup> Chapters 3 to 5 and chapter 7 ethnographically describe the local state bureaucrats' practices of outwitting the central state's plans and promoting their own interests. By bringing local state officials into the discussion I show that the state's schemes of life improvement conflict not only with local practical knowledge, Scott's *mētis*, but with the lower levels of state bureaucracy too.<sup>69</sup> Local state officials are those who contribute to the most significant degree to changes in the agricultural landscape.

So far, I have drawn a picture in which economic and political actions shape the natural landscape. The landscape itself also contributes to shaping human economic and political relations. Before addressing this aspect, scarcely debated so far in the literature on postsocialist transformations, let me briefly clarify how I apply the overused term 'landscape'.<sup>70</sup> I understand landscape as being produced through land use practices in a certain place in a certain historical moment.<sup>71</sup> Seeing landscape in this way suggests not only that landscape is a social product, a consequence of the human transformation of nature, but also that it involves perceptions about land, its meanings, values and struggles.<sup>72</sup> It encompasses the different historical meanings people attach to their land ranging from personal and social identity to social status, moral aspects and economic value.<sup>73</sup> In postsocialist Albania villagers cut the 'communist trees', a chestnut forest, as an expression of scorn for the collective farm and to make sure this mode of organizing the economy would never return.<sup>74</sup> The chestnut forest embodies equally the collective farm history, state political power and the villagers' harsh lives throughout the last half of the twentieth century.

Landscape not only bears the marks of different ideologies and of state power but also creates power and influences economies, politics and discourses. A convincing example is the establishment of national protected areas throughout the world. The constitution of national parks means, in

many parts of the world, the imposition of European and North American ideas about wilderness, pristine landscape and biodiversity preservation.<sup>75</sup> What represents biodiversity conservation for the state or international agencies for nature protection constitutes hunting or cultivable land for villagers. As a consequence, landscape is invested with various ideologies and becomes the arena for political struggle between different groups.<sup>76</sup> This struggle is about imposing one's meaning on the landscape, determining what it is good for and who should define how to manage and use it. Landscape is a weapon of the powerful to be used against the weak.

Consequently, the forest becomes a contested space in which differently constructed claims over property rights have different meanings for different actors. For villagers interested in the forest as a means of livelihood and as a potential source of immediate gain, and for powerful local bureaucrats, the forest signifies wealth. The consequence is deforestation and the creation of a forestless landscape. For those interested in 'selling the scenery' the forest is an essential part of the landscape. For these actors landscape has a strong visual and aesthetic component before anything else. The forest signifies wealth for them too, but this cannot be understood outside the aesthetic element. After all, no visitor would spend money on a hike around stumps on a deforested hill. These villagers embrace the national parks' forest protection policies as supporting their own interests.

The struggle for nature becomes even more evident in the case of natural protected areas in postsocialist countries. As Wells and Williams have pointed out, in the context of a severe economic decline in postsocialist Russia, natural resources from protected areas become very attractive and represent a source of cash for a population experiencing great hardship.<sup>77</sup> The priorities of such a population, the meaning attached to the forest and its utility are very different to those of the state, international donors or NGOs. Consequently, two sets of practices, linked to two different ideologies, invest the landscape with different meanings and, at the same time, produce two types of landscape. In the case I will describe in chapter 4, the struggle between villagers and the national park is not only motivated by imposing ideologies; ultimately it is about granting exclusive property rights and about what Verdery calls 'effective ownership', or what villagers can or cannot do with their forests.<sup>78</sup>

The forest is an actor playing an essential role in determining local social dynamics. The forest has a history, interpreted differently by locals and the state, and a political life. Patronage relations have been built around the forest and local politics depends significantly on access to forest. Animals populating the forest play a central role in shaping the local economy, as I will show in chapter 5. Contributing for years to the destruction of pastures, the wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) has helped instigate the steady passage from animal

husbandry to rural tourism. A pasture completely destroyed is a tragedy for a community that relies on raising animals as well as a powerful reason to look for new economic avenues. Animals such as the Carpathian brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) also embody the presence and control of the state over private forests. For many villagers from the Carpathian Mountains the presence of the state agencies monitoring private forests is not the only way the state exerts control over the forest. The brown bear, a European protected species, is for angry villagers living proof that the state still exerts property rights over private forest: the presence of the animal in *their* forest represents an attempt of the state to keep them out of the forest and an indirect claim over its usage. In this case, the agency of nonhuman actors such as animals, much discussed in the new stream of theory called multispecies ethnography (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010), has a literal meaning. This theory's intellectual genealogy lies in the work of Donna Haraway and Bruno Latour, among others, who have suggested that human relations are sometimes influenced by nonhuman actors (from inanimate things to animals). They attribute agency equally to human and nonhuman actors.<sup>79</sup> Kirksey and Helmreich engage with Haraway and Latour's theory but they strictly refer to biological nonhumans, that is species other than *Homo sapiens*. The main idea put forward by proponents of multispecies ethnography is that there is a multitude of biological organisms that shape and are shaped by political, cultural and economic forces.<sup>80</sup> Following this body of theory I show that nonhuman actors, such as wild animals, mediate, influence or shape local social relations and feed the political imagination and the social critique.<sup>81</sup> The human and the animal worlds are distinctive yet intermingling: not only do all villagers husband domestic animals as part of their livelihood but they also share with wild animals the ecology of and the property rights over a territory. It's not a peaceful cohabitation but an adversarial one. As I will show in chapter 5 the conflict with wild animals takes political, social and ethnic forms and actions as nature is always invested with cultural meanings.<sup>82</sup> By looking at the landscape from this perspective – following William Cronon who teaches us that animals are part of the landscape – this book suggests new ways of understanding the transformations of the natural landscape taking place in postsocialist times.<sup>83</sup>

## Methods for Studying the State and the Agrarian Landscape

Exploring the unintended outcomes of land reform and the marks left on the postsocialist landscape requires a *bricolage* of approaches. The challenge of gaining access to intimate power relations in a small community is not easy either for ethnographer or informant. It requires the researcher to engage

sometimes in unorthodox investigative techniques. Thus, I have occasionally adapted the semi-structured interview to a free conversation especially when enquiring about sensitive issues: deforestation, who gains from land and forest, or bribes for state officials. I thought of this kind of conversation as an enquiry that did not seem like an enquiry. I came to this approach when I realized that standard techniques of investigation such as the classical interview did not get me very far. People were obviously reluctant to respond to my questions even though I never asked direct questions such as, 'Have you ever bribed an official?' When it got to this point I usually closed my notebook, put my pen in the small rucksack I always carried and made it clear that the interview was over. I then continued the conversation, displaying my interest in issues such as those mentioned above *not* as a researcher but as a fellow citizen who also experiences the hardship of the transition, the abstruseness of bureaucracy and the necessity of bribing officials. At this point villagers started to complain about the way they must interact with local officials and how they manage to deal with them. Several times, I carried out interviews in unconventional places such as bars in the villages. I offered informants a beer or a bottle of wine – usually more than one, generously sponsored by Humboldt University, my employer at that time. After a first 'official' interview with innocent questions about the communist past and capitalist present of Romanian agriculture, I invited the leaders of the illegal woodcutters, the policemen, the forest guards, the mayors and the vice-mayors, one at a time, for more friendly follow-up meetings in a bar, to enjoy some drinking. In face-to-face discussions over a glass of beer, with no tape recorder or notebook on the table, people were less reluctant about giving me candid accounts of their relationships with superiors or with the political party they represented, or about how they manage to get by.

Archival documents, such as economic and social reports about the commune, should be open for public access. The law 544/2001 stipulates free access to information regarding public interests. However, in my contact with bureaucracy, at local and regional levels, it became clear that if I wanted to see any document or data at all, I needed to 'buy' the co-operation of local officials with small gifts. Some bottles of cognac for people at the County Department of Statistics, some perfume and a silk scarf for the secretary of the mayor's office, and some packages with coffee and sweets for the agricultural officer worked miracles.<sup>84</sup> I had good access to the information I needed.

In order to measure the changes in land use that have occurred, such as the extensification of agriculture, I have used data concerning agricultural production gathered from official documents of the mayor's office or from the regional bureau of statistics located in the county capital. Data concerning deforestation, property rights over resources and the history of land plots were obtained through participatory mapping. The objective of a participa-

tory map is to enable villagers to carry out the interpretation of some aspects of their land resources and to point out what is important for them.<sup>85</sup> A map is never innocent; it stakes a claim on property rights to a territory, usually from the state's perspective ignoring at the same time local people's claims. I employed this technique, rather unusual among anthropologists, in order to allow villagers to express their points of view regarding property rights over local natural resources and the way the land is used.<sup>86</sup>

Local historical archives, though improperly referred to in this way, offered me some important historical documents. I was simply lucky to find in the pile of documents in a small dark room some items that I could use. More important historical information was found in unpublished manuscripts written either by those passionate about local history or by local teachers of history or geography who had to pass exams based on their research. These monographs are based on a thorough examination of local history including the environment and the economy. They are a rich source of historical and geographical information.

The following chapter will set the scene for the study by exploring the history of land use and, consequently, the economy in the two communes up to the break-up of the socialist regime.

### Notes

1. Cartwright (2001).
2. Hirschhausen (1997: 120); Verdery (1995). In other postsocialist countries, Bulgaria for instance, rural inhabitants were less eager to dismantle the collective farms and claim the land back (Creed 1995). This difference, which is not the focus of this study and therefore will not be analysed here, should be ascribed to differences in agricultural politics under socialism in the two countries. As Creed (1995) points out, the illegitimacy of Nicolae Ceaușescu's political regime may have also played a certain role in the postsocialist perception of collective farms. I thank one of the anonymous peer-reviewers for drawing my attention to this issue.
3. I use 'collective farm' and 'co-operative' interchangeably throughout the book.
4. Around 95 per cent of the land was collectivized. The mountainous land, mostly pasture, remained uncollectivized. Private owners were not officially allowed to lease their land. Nevertheless, as I detail in chapter 2, those who moved into the cities used to lease their private land informally. They also had to pay high taxes to the state as well as to deliver meat, wool and living animals. See for more details Constantinescu (1972).
5. Swinnen (1997).
6. Only in 1881 did the Principle of Romania officially become a king.
7. Scurtu (1995: 8). The number of ethnic Hungarians was larger before 1918 but after the incorporation of Transylvania by Romania many Hungarians fled to Hungary. The migration continued in the 1980s during the worst years of Nicolae Ceaușescu's political regime when some 36,000 Romanian citizens, most of them Hungarians, resided in the more liberal socialist Hungary (Brubaker 1996: 158–59).

8. This data is from the National Institute of Statistics ([http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/REZULTATE-DEFINITIVE-RPL\\_2011.pdf](http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/REZULTATE-DEFINITIVE-RPL_2011.pdf)), accessed 6 February 2015. There are voices, never confirmed by the official statistics, which claim that the Roma population is as large as 10 per cent of the population of Romania. What is certain is that some Roma either refuse to respond to the census question about their ethnic origin or they declare themselves Romanian ethnics.
9. Swinnen (1997).
10. Verdery (2002).
11. Bandelj (2008: xviii).
12. China and Vietnam are considered postsocialist countries in most of the academic literature. Despite the fact that the Communist Party is still the only ruling party in those countries, their economies and societies have suffered deep changes. Both countries have adopted a market economy, privatized their state enterprises and restored land and forest to villages or private owners (Sturgeon and Sikor 2004: 16). In short, they have followed the same path as other postsocialist countries. Not all authors agree with the label 'postsocialist' for the two countries (see, for instance, Hann and Hart 2011: 137, who use the term 'reform socialism').
13. For agricultural reforms in Vietnam, see Nguyen (2005). For Albania, see Stahl (2010a).
14. This statement contains several historiographical problems, which will not be solved here. Whether it was a revolution or a coup d'état conducted by other apparatchiks is not important here. What is important though is that this moment is the beginning of a massive change in the Romanian state at all levels.
15. For more details, see Hann and Hart (2011).
16. McCollum and Schoening (2002).
17. Owczarzak (2009).
18. Owczarzak (2009: 4); cf. Todorova (2009).
19. See Chari and Verdery (2009).
20. Commune is the smallest administrative unit in Romania encompassing from one to several villages. The name of the communes, of villages and the name of all persons mentioned in this book are pseudonyms. I was specifically asked by some of my informants to protect their names.
21. Creed (1998); Hann (2006); Mungiu-Pippidi (2010); Verdery (2003).
22. Worster (1990).
23. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for drawing my attention to this matter.
24. Cronon (1995).
25. Crosgrove (1998 [1984]: 5).
26. Melville (1994).
27. Gille (2009); Staddon (2009a, 2009b); Stahl (2010a).
28. Hann (2007).
29. Schwegler (2008).
30. Hardin (1968); see for instance Spoor (2009).
31. Hann and Hart (2011: 131); Mungiu-Pippidi (2010).
32. Scott (1998).
33. Sarris and Gavrilesco (1997).
34. Mungiu-Pippidi (2010).
35. Verdery (1998, 1999, 2003).
36. At national level, land restitution has fragmented the land into 14.3 million individual parcels with an average number of three parcels for each individual household

- (Rusu and Pamfil 2005). Thus, the image I describe in this chapter is representative for all hilly regions in Romania.
37. Scott (1998).
  38. I use the word 'extensification' as opposed to "intensification". Therefore agricultural extensification may be defined as the decrease in the amount of agricultural labour, capital investments and in the agricultural inputs per unit of worked land (Stahl 2010a).
  39. For the uncollectivized farmers and their openness towards the market economy, see Stewart (1998).
  40. Smith and Jehlička (2007); Mandel and Humphrey (2002).
  41. I simplify a discussion that is otherwise more complicated (see Iancu and Mihăilescu 2009). Changing patterns of consumption is just one of the many causes of the decreasing number of animals in mountainous areas. The increasing cost of production and the crises the Romanian society went through in the 1990s also account for the downsizing in the number of animals. See Mincyte (2011) for a similar account in Lithuania.
  42. For the production of new forms of knowledge see Li (2005).
  43. Following White (1996), Schwartz (2006b) and Mincyte (2009) I consider agricultural practices an essential part of environmental activities.
  44. See Herzfeld (2005: 373) for the critique of Scott (1998).
  45. Weiner (2005).
  46. Migdal 2001: (117–21).
  47. Lipsky (1980).
  48. Solnick (1998:13) suggests that high-ranking officials are 'dependent' to a certain degree on more junior officials as the latter have to implement strategies developed by the former. I suggest that this relationship is more complicated and involves movement in both directions.
  49. Mungiu-Pippidi (2006).
  50. Members of the local state are more numerous than I present here and include local physicians and school professors. I am interested here in naming only those bureaucrats who play a central role in changing the agrarian landscape.
  51. Weber (1978: 974). I am aware that I judge the postsocialist Romanian bureaucrats against a theoretical model such as the one suggested by Weber. I am also aware of the academic literature focusing on the ethnography of bureaucracy, which shows that real bureaucracies are appointed and act very differently from Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy. As the literature has shown (see, for instance, Howe (1990)) state bureaucrats may be judgemental, interpret in a subjective manner the policy they are supposed to implement and generally act less formally than suggested by Weber's bureaucracy. However, what I try to underlie mirroring the ideal type with the 'real life' bureaucracy is the undisputed *political* power of the local state bureaucrats, which creates a highly unequal relationship between them and the villagers (see also Dorondel and Popa (2014)).
  52. I have discussed elsewhere the relationship between the elected and appointed bureaucrats. For more details about this matter, see Dorondel and Popa (2014).
  53. Weber (1978: 979 and 975).
  54. For the 'distant state' see Bierschenk and de Olivier de Serdan (1997); for an 'absent state' see Stahl (2010a).
  55. Stahl (2010a).

56. I paraphrase Stark (1996: 995) who actually pointed out that 'organizations and institutions are not rebuilding *on the ruins* but *with the ruins* of communism' (the author's emphasis).
57. Grzymala-Busse and Jones Luong (2002).
58. Kaneff (2004).
59. Mungiu-Pippidi (2010); Spoor (2009); Verdery (2002).
60. Verdery (2002).
61. Mungiu-Pippidi (2010); Verdery (1998).
62. Mungiu-Pippidi (2010).
63. Lampland (2002); Stewart (1998); Verdery (2003).
64. Verdery (2002).
65. Hann (2001: 134).
66. Grzymala-Busse and Jones Luong (2002: 536); Marcus (1983).
67. Verdery (2002: 8). I use the expression 'state privatization' differently than Hibou (2004 [1999]). While she refers to the privatization of the state as 'the spread of use of private intermediaries for an increasing number of functions formerly devolving on the state and deployment of the state' (Hibou (2004 [1999]: VIII) I use the term to designate all ways in which the state is used for certain private advantages.
68. Sachs (2003) has made a similar point for a different époque and geographical space.
69. Herzfeld (2005).
70. See Czepczynski (2008) for an attempt to consolidate some of the most important definitions of the landscape. For a historical meaning of the concept see Olwig (1996).
71. Wiersum (2004: 131).
72. Crosgrove (1998 [1984]). For an anthropological approach to the landscape seen as a cultural process that incorporates, among other meanings, a visual element, see Hirsch and O'Hanlon (1995).
73. Dorondel (2005a); Hann (1993); Verdery (2005).
74. See Stahl (2010a) for more details on this episode.
75. Neumann (1998); Gissibl et al. (2012).
76. Moore (1993); Walker and Fortmann (2003).
77. Wells and Williams (1998).
78. Verdery (2003).
79. See Haraway (1985) and Latour (1988). Some anthropologists fiercely oppose the idea of giving agency to nonhuman actors. See the short but acid critique of Tim Ingold (2008) of the idea of giving agency to inanimate things.
80. Kirksey and Helmreich (2010).
81. For a good review of human–animal relations in terms of the construction of class and race relations, see Mullin (1999). For a more recent approach on human relations with nonhuman beings, see the discussion of Kohn's 2013 book sheltered by HAU (2014). However, I am not going *stricto sensu* in the same theoretical direction.
82. Tsing (1995); Carrithers et al. (2011).
83. See Cronon (1983).
84. Students who are not familiar with field methods may find this approach to field-work a bit unorthodox. Accessing some of the official documents held by the mayor's office, some of them already archived, requires the assistance of the mayor's office staff. They helped me in their working time and sometimes after; I therefore considered the packets of coffee, the scarf and the perfume to be a pale attempt

to pay for their working overtime. With regard to other bureaucrats such as the policemen or the state forest guards, alcohol brought us closer and helped override the cultural differences they may have felt exist between a Ph.D. and a researcher affiliated with a German institution and themselves. Drinking with my informants meant that I performed a male local social practice (Dietler 2006). The alcohol also helped to dissolve social barriers when talking with some of the illegal forest workers. Drinking in pubs from Rudari settlement, where no Romanian villager would ever go, helped me to transgress the mistrust Rudari have in Romanians – for many good historical and political reasons. In this way, the interviews went more smoothly, and the interlocutor found himself more comfortable when recounting his illegal activity. Drinking with Rudari while they told me their stories about forest activity does not mean I deceived them in any way. At all time they were aware of my scientific interests.

85. The technical approach I took for participatory mapping is as follows: I took several GPS points at the edge of the commune following the cardinal points. A satellite image of the area based on the GPS points was ordered. Daniel Müller printed out the digitalized satellite image. On the resulting image of the village I placed a transparency. A group of five villagers was invited to take part in the discussion. In a subsequent session in the house of one villager three locals mapped their own land and forest. The agricultural officers in both communes as well as forest guards were invited to attend the discussion and to draw the state forest boundaries and the location of private land and forest. Daniel Müller then digitalized the results of the villagers' and local officials' drawings and made the maps. For more information about this technique, see Müller et al. (2003).
86. For more on the maps' political discourse, see Walker and Peters (2001). Anthropologists critique the usage of satellite images (Ingold 2000), as villagers are requested to adopt the 'bird's eye' perspective when looking at such images. However, seeing 'familiar landmarks from an unfamiliar perspective' (Jackson 1994: 3) also has advantages as it points out significant differences between different categories of villagers. For instance, there was a tremendous difference between the perceptions of illegal woodcutters and the forest owners. The former know the forest well because they have to find the best places for exploitation. The latter do not often go into the forest and thus are less able to find their way through it, but they are able to name different parts of the forest that are linked to local history. This difference points to their contrasting ways of referring to the forest: in a utilitarian way or in a more affective, though not uninterested, way.