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Wine and Europe the Metamorphoses of a Land of Choice

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visions of Europe

Wine and Europe: the Metamorphoses of a Land of Choice

Notre Europe dedicates a component of its programme "What Binds us Together: European Identity" to the study of questions dealing with food and territory in Europe.

In this study, Aziliz Gouez and Boris Petric take on the case of a highly symbolic product: wine. The love of the soil, the lore of alchemic nuptials between sun and vine stock, the Dionysian ecstasy the drink induces are attitudes broadly shared by all Europeans. The analysis of the upheavals affecting both wine consumption and production proves very enlightening. It helps grasping the identity issues at stake in the European construction and in the exponential growth of exchanges at world level, at a time when vine, traditionally the Mediterranean's "plant of civilisation", has earned credentials in countries far removed from its cradle.

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Wine and Europe: the Metamorphoses of a Land of Choice

Aziliz GOUEZ and Boris PETRIC



« WHAT BINDS US TOGETHER: EUROPEAN IDENTITY » | CASE STUDY N°1



Wine and Europe: the Metamorphoses of a Land of Choice

AZILIZ GOUEZ AND BORIS PETRIC



AZILIZ GOUEZ

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Notre Europe

Notre Europe is an independent think tank devoted to European integration. Under the guidance of Jacques Delors, who created Notre Europe in 1996, the association aims to “think a united Europe.”

Our ambition is to contribute to the current public debate by producing analyses and pertinent policy proposals that strive for a closer union of the peoples of Europe. We are equally devoted to promoting the active engagement of citizens and civil society in the process of community construction and the creation of a European public space.

In this vein, the staff of Notre Europe directs research projects; produces and disseminates analyses in the form of short notes, studies, and articles; and organises public debates and seminars. Its analyses and proposals are concentrated around four themes:

- *Visions of Europe: The community method, the enlargement and deepening of the EU and the European project as a whole are a work in constant progress. Notre Europe provides in-depth analysis and proposals that help find a path through the multitude of Europe's possible futures.*
- *European Democracy in Action: Democracy is an everyday priority. Notre Europe believes that European integration is a matter for every citizen, actor of civil society*

and level of authority within the Union. Notre Europe therefore seeks to identify and promote ways of further democratising European governance.

- *Cooperation, Competition, Solidarity: « Competition that stimulates, co-operation that strengthens, and solidarity that unites ».* This, in essence, is the European contract as defined by Jacques Delors. True to this approach, Notre Europe explores and promotes innovative solutions in the fields of economic, social and sustainable development policy.
- *Europe and World Governance: As an original model of governance in an increasingly open world, the European Union has a role to play on the international scene and in matters of world governance. Notre Europe seeks to help define this role.*

Successively presided over by Jacques Delors (1996-2004), Pascal Lamy (2004-05), and Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa (since November 2005), Notre Europe aims for complete freedom of thought and works in the spirit of the public good. It is for this reason that all of Notre Europe's work is available for free from our website, in both French and English: www.notre-europe.eu

Foreword

The challenge faced by Europe today is not so much born of conflicts and confrontation than brought about by patterns of rupture and social disintegration. How can people cooperate at a time when the globalisation of exchanges plays havoc with the interdependency and cohesion systems set up in the framework of the welfare state? How can they be brought together around a common project?

*It is in order to address such questions that Notre Europe launched its research programme *What Binds us Together: European Identity*. This programme expresses our determination to set our sights beyond the institutions and their operations so as to delve into European lifestyles and practices. Its first component ponders issues of food and relations to the soil, two building blocks equally essential to collective identity. "People centred" as it is, this research will interest anybody who wishes to understand how the sense of belonging to Europe comes about, how Europeans live, which values they share. It also aims to enlighten the analyses of European decision-makers by putting them back in touch with the local impact of European integration and the way it is perceived by the people.*

Starting from the anthropological approach of an iconic product – wine – this study gives a good account of citizens’ relationship to Europe. Embracing a wine-growing region in Southern France, it takes up the thread of European identity. The case of Languedoc-Roussillon is exemplary on several counts. It shows that wine production cannot be envisaged solely under an economic angle, as political, social and cultural dimensions also spring from it. It shows how current mutations in the region’s productive system also impact on spatial distribution, political attitudes and social relationships. It helps us grasp how difficult it is to “live socially” when the traditional frameworks of collective belonging (Nation State, political parties, trade unions, etc...) crumble.

Wine is directly hit by the new deal in global production and consumption. The resulting upheavals give rise to hasty value judgements amongst Languedoc wine-growers. Hot-blooded Southerners waste no time in likening the Other to the classic Barbarian come (lately) to impose a taste for standardised wine, and in lumping together New World producers and consumers as agents of a predatory globalisation, instigator of cultural decline. For wine is more than the fruit of the earth, it is the hallmark of civilisation conveying the rich diversity of its soils, climes, social structures and European know-how. It is a “sensitive” product in more ways than one: not just because it is vulnerable to market fluctuations but also because it is redolent of sensuality, fulfilment of the senses and is bound in feelings and emotions steeped in collective identities born of the territory, the group, indeed the class.

The love of the soil, festive sociability and the lore of rootedness associated with this drink are traits shared throughout Europe. One of the great merits of this study is thus to enable the reader to become fully conversant with the identity issues at stake in the European construction and the intensification of world exchanges. The market alone cannot foster society. The defence of European know how and arts of living thus hangs on European leaders’ capacity to “bring out our ideal” and to make its place felt at the heart of our joint project.

«Wine is the son of sun and earth, but toil was its midwife. Like great works and great thoughts, it does not come out of the press ready to be engulfed by a greedy and inconsiderate stomach. It requires the joint efforts of art, patience, time and care. It requires a long sojourn in darkness in order to achieve this masterpiece of flavour which the brain marvels at as much as the palate».¹

¹ Paul Claudel, opening address delivered on 2 May 1935 on the occasion of the *Exposition universelle et internationale* and published in the *Figaro* on 5 May: “In Praise of wine”, address for the Brussels International Fair, 1935 in *Accompagnements* [Accompaniments], Gallimard, 1949, pp. 246-249 et dans *Œuvres Complètes* [Complete Works], t.XXIX, *Proses et Poésies Diverses* [Various Prose and Poetry], 1986, pp. 123-125 (Translation by the translator of this paper).

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Introduction

Boris Petric's fieldwork research was completed in a large measure thanks to European funding under the 5th R&TD framework program dedicated to a cross-disciplinary approach of European enlargement (Cultural Patterns of the European Enlargement, «CULPAT», n°50/19/93).

We are indebted to Marion Dupuis for her compilation of documentary and bibliographic data.

“Wine involves the whole of Europe when it comes to drinking it but only one particular Europe when it comes to producing it. Although vine (if not wine) has met with success in Asia, Africa, and even more so in the New World, where it has been passionately re-fashioned after the compulsive example of Europe, that latter, narrow continent alone matters.” Drawn from the first volume of his study on Capitalism and Material Life, these lines by Fernand Braudel give a clear indication of the deep implication of wine in European history. This bond harks back to the religious history of the continent since it is first along the channels of Christian propagation that wine achieved its early and extraordinary inroads into Europe: for, born in a Mediterranean context, heir to the Jewish religion and the Greek and Latin cultures, the Christian religion had adopted as its food symbols and cult instruments the produce that made up the material and ideological basis of this civilisation – namely wine, bread and oil. It further harks back to European expansion in the New World where “*feats were accomplished to acclimatise the vine*” and to the centuries old expansion of commercial integration within the European continent since, from the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of modern times, the significant wine consumption of Northern Europeans “*mark out an important trade movement from the South upwards: By sea, from Seville and Andalusia to England and Flanders;*

IN *MYTHOLOGIES*, BARTHES STARTS HIS ARTICLE ON WINE WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS: “WINE IS FELT BY THE FRENCH NATION TO BE A POSSESSION WHICH IS ITS VERY OWN, JUST LIKE ITS THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY TYPES OF CHEESE AND ITS CULTURE. IT IS A TOTEM DRINK, CORRESPONDING TO THE MILK OF THE DUTCH COW OR THE TEA CEREMONIALLY TAKEN BY THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY ». (BARTHES, 1957).

or along the rivers Dordogne and Garonne towards Bordeaux and the Gironde; along the river Yonne from Burgundy to Paris then on to Rouen; along the river Rhine; across the Alps (as, following each grape harvest, heavy German carts, called carretoni by the Italians, come to procure the latest vintage from the Tyrol, Brescia, Vicenza, Friuli or Istria); from Moravia and Hungary towards Poland; soon, Baltic bound, from Portugal, Spain and France up to Saint Petersburg and the Russians’ fierce but untrained thirst¹ (Braudel, 1979, p.264).

The current boundaries of wine producing Europe broadly match those identified by Braudel for the 15th to 18th century period: “A line running from the Loire estuary on the Atlantic to Crimea and beyond, up to Georgia and Transcaucasia marks the Northern boundary of vine as a cash crop, that is one of the major axes of Europe’s economic activity and its inroads eastwards.” This “wine Europe” is thus made up of all the mediterranean countries “plus a zone winegrower’s persistence added to it northwards” (Braudel, 1979, p.262). In producing countries – France, Italy,

Spain, Germany, Portugal, Romania, Hungary, Greece, Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Malta¹ – wine is perceived as a marker of national culture. Taking up the term semiologist Roland Barthes applied to France, one could even say that wine is the “totem drink²” of these countries, as is beer, another fermented drink, in many North-European regions. Over and above its thirst-quenching (or comforting) virtues it entails a lore of ancestral traditions, roots, know-how and ways of life peculiar to the peoples involved in its production. Beyond the geographic and historical features attached to its fabrication and marketing, it is indeed its status as an “identity symbol” that brings wine under our scrutiny. More broadly, this study aims to understand how the sense of belonging to Europe and the values and images its citizens associate with the European integration process are forged.

1 Classified according to the volume of their production in 2004.

2 In *Mythologies*, Barthes starts his article on wine: “Wine is felt by the French nation to be a possession which is its very own, just like its three hundred and sixty types of cheese and its culture. It is a totem-drink, corresponding to the milk of the Dutch cow or the tea ceremonially taken by the British Royal Family ». (Translated by Annette Lavers)

Wine may not spring to mind as the most propitious lens through which to examine the issue of European identity understood here as a sense of belonging and identifying with a set of values. However it lends itself to our approach for a number of reasons. Firstly because we think that there is an enduring bond between representation and praxis: the analysis of tangible practices such as the production and consumption of wine may propose just as valid an angle to understand the ideological debates and conflicts inherent in the European integration process as a purely normative examination of “European values”. Pondering European identity starting from hard facts is the more justified since most people form their opinion on Europe precisely on the basis of the actual impact European integration has on their everyday life (rather than through abstract speculation). Furthermore, food is both an essential vector to the formation of collective identity – be it denominational, civilisational, national, local or even familial³ - and also ideally suited to the monitoring of changes. Far from repeating themselves unchanged, individual and group nutritional practices are in constant evolution over time – and recent years have witnessed an unprecedented acceleration of these changes. Intrinsic to vital cycles, a hallmark of identity, the act of eating has always been heavy with implications among humans. Technical progress, urbanisation and trade globalisation put a peculiar twist on individuals’ insecurities (as they afford new possibilities for the metonymic use of food as a way to speak of the alien, the foreigner “who does not eat the same as us”⁴). The case of wine is particularly interesting to grasp the identity factor in the confrontations brought about by the intensification of economic competition at the world level. Vine, traditionally the Mediterranean’s “plant of civilisation” has today earned credentials in countries far removed from its cradle. Europe is no longer its “land of choice”. Since the 16th century and the “feats” accomplished to acclimatize European grape varieties described by Fernand Braudel, the ground covered by New World producers is impressive. The top three, France, Italy and Spain, are today followed by the United States, Argentina, Australia and China – four countries whose production put together amounted, in 2004, to 20.5%⁵ of the world’s wine production. This new competition impacts directly on European vineyards. Furthermore, it elicits from European producers (and consumers too) harsh value judgements, to which this study proposes to pay due attention.

3 In the context of migration, home cooking is often the last stronghold of the transmission of cultural identity

4 Arguing against the admission of Great Britain into the European Community, General De Gaulle did not shrink from the contention that the British “Did not eat the same as us”. On this ongoing Franco-British culinary standoff see in particular Stephen Mennell’s excellent study: *All Manners of Food*, 2nd edition, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1996

5 Figures based on the 2004 statistics from the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV)

Thus wine gives us purchase to approach in a concrete way the all too frequently elusive question of European identity. Our study would no less have missed the mark if we had not given it a *setting*. Aiming to proceed from the analysis of authentic situations as they are experienced by European citizens in order to draw from them more general conclusions, we have settled on the method that seemed best suited to this ascending argument. European wine literature does not want for references or charm but, regrettably, it constitutes too “exceptional” a material for the requirements of our analysis. As for polls and other systematic survey methods, they hover in some history-free vacuum, which does not allow for the tracing of dynamics for change or for clashes. Instead, we undertook a long ethnographic research in a winegrowing region of Southern France, Languedoc-Roussillon. And thus, weighing up our observations against historical and economic data that seemed relevant, we have sought to follow the thread of European identity. In the process, we have evolved critical analysis data the archetypal value of which may, beyond the case in point, prove useful to anybody delving into the emergence of the sense of belonging to Europe.

Several elements make the Languedoc’s wine growing activity an ideal case study with regards to the way European construction is experienced by the people. First of all, as Member States have transferred a large part of their competencies regarding farming to the European level, the EU is currently the leading actor in wine growing policy through the creation, in the framework of the common agricultural policy, of the successive Common Organisations of Agricultural Markets⁶. This policy immediately gave rise to virulent protest against the new competitors: Italian, Spanish and Portuguese wines became the symbols of this otherness to be countered and it is fitting to wonder whether these perceptions evolved in the 1960s and 1970s still prevail. Next, as the sociological transformation of the local wine growing scene coincided with the upheaval in market scales brought about by the establishment of the Common Market and the free movement of persons, goods and capital, a “micro-Europe” came into being in the Languedoc-Roussillon region. Many European nationals live there cheek by jowl today, among whom are vineyard owners (British, German, Swedish, Belgian or Dutch), qualified workers

⁶ The CMOs (common market organisations). They govern the production of and trade in agricultural products in all the Member States of the European Union. They were set up alongside the implementation of the CAP to support markets in several sectors among which winegrowing. See annex for further details.

(often Portuguese or Spanish) and seasonal migrants (mostly Polish). Besides, the phenomena due to the Europeanisation of the wine market have been, over the past decades, overlaid with those brought about by economic globalisation – which local winegrowers are inclined to confuse with the former. All these changes entail new negotiation arenas (regions, European institutions, WTO) a reworking of the role of the State and that of elected representatives. The case of Languedoc-Roussillon enables us in particular to measure the fundamental role played by these representatives in the formulation of collective identities and to better appreciate the unease consistent with the current state of crisis of those political structures inherited from the welfare State era. Finally the analysis of the Languedoc’s wine growing activity helps in casting some light on the complexity and the dynamic nature of the relationship to Europe. The relation is complex: what may have at first appeared as the destructuring impact of European integration on local society also allows a glimpse of the possibility of new solidarities, of a renewal of the attitude to “tradition”, of novel forms of social and productive organisation (even though not all local actors are equally involved). It is dynamic, as the original rejection of European integration by many winegrowers has been known to evolve and as the end of our study shows to be the case for some of its protagonists.

Accordingly, our study will proceed in three phases and will observe the guiding principle of addressing together the economic, politic, cultural and social facets of the question in order correctly to grasp wine as a “total social fact” or perhaps rather as a “total merchandise”.

By means of a swift historical and sociological overview, we will attempt in the first phase to explain how single crop farming centred on wine growing has structured local society as a whole: what specific ties to the soil, to labour, to politics, to oneself and to others has this productive activity fostered? What are the identity issues associated with wine?

We shall, in a second phase, ponder the economic, social and political changes which went with the implementation of a European wine market: What, beyond the cliché, is at stake in the daily interaction between European citizens? What is to be learnt from this actual “Europeanization” experience?

Finally we will seek to give an account of the winegrowers' own take on the European venture as a whole and specifically on the European institutions' winegrowing policies: how do local actors see the changes their micro-society has undergone as a result of European integration and globalisation? How are overriding representations of Europe formed? Does competition from New World wines help reinforce a sense of belonging to Europe?

Methodology

The analyses presented in this study result from a **field study** carried out over regular stays in the Languedoc-Roussillon region from 2003 onwards. Unlike “quantitative” research based on the processing of questionnaires, an ethnographic study is conducted live by the anthropologist, immersed in the environment he studies⁷.

His analyses rest essentially on a long observation and interaction work with the actors involved in the winegrowing activity, those of the diverse trades plied around winegrowing (oenology, commerce, banking etc.), as well as with the political and administrative authorities involved in the management of the sector (elected local representatives, SAFER⁸, Chamber of Agriculture, etc...). The analysis of local papers (*Le Midi Libre*, *L'indépendant*, *La Dépêche*, *Le paysan du Midi*) and the perusal of a range of official leaflets also represented valuable sources for this research.

⁷ For more details on the case study approach in ethnology, c.f. Cefai, 2003

⁸ *Société d'Aménagement Foncier et d'Établissement Rural* (Land Improvement and Rural Settlement Company), SAFERs are responsible for the management of land attribution and cession.

Several “locations” were subjected to in-depth scrutiny. In particular, we studied about 10 **co-operative cellars** distributed around the region, conducting numerous interviews with winegrowers (also referred to as “**co-operators**”), their trade union representatives along with several historical figures of winegrowing trade unionism. Some cellars took precedence⁹ as their presidents hold union positions at county (*départementale*), regional, national and/or European level. This enabled us to observe the daily working of co-operative cellars (grape harvest, board meetings, general assembly) as well as crisis situations (demonstrations, etc...). We further questioned many winegrowers running **privately owned cellars**, giving precedence to foreign owners freshly arrived in the region (commonly known as “**neo-winegrowers**”).

An ethnographic approach is not confined to a localised study conducted in isolation in a village or a region. We extended our research to the different tiers where regional winegrowing activity is governed: in **Paris** where we attended various trade union meetings and negotiations; in **Brussels** where we followed in particular the vice-president of the powerful European co-operators trade union (Cogeca¹⁰), met its main leaders, as well as the Director-General for agriculture and rural development; in **Warsaw**, finally, where we ran a short survey on the conditions in which the Polish seasonal workforce was recruited.

Beyond the many formal interviews, we tried above all to indwell an environment where much informal conversation invariably lead to winegrowing, to trade union involvement, to memories of past struggles and winegrowing crises, to “Europe” and to globalisation.

⁹ In the villages of Névian and Leucate (Aude), in Générac (Gard) and in Valros (Hérault)

¹⁰ General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives in the European Union

I – Winegrowing: a “Total Social Fact”

In order to appreciate the impact of European integration on the Languedoc’s winegrowing activity, it is necessary to understand its historical specificity. For the record, its main features are a singular production system based on the co-operative model and the social organisation system resulting from it; a “local wine culture” encompassing traditions, symbols and collective rituals; and the political translation of this culture expressed in a distinctive relationship to politicians and to the State.

1.1. Single crop farming and social organisation

By its area (280 000 hectares¹¹) as well as by the volumes it produces (32%), Languedoc-Roussillon is today the most important winegrowing region in France. Winegrowing remains one of the major economic activities in the region, even though it no longer represents the main source of regional income, as was the case until the end of the 1960s. This production belongs in a specific historical context. The actual expansion of the Languedoc vineyard (Leroy-Ladurie 1967) is recent if

¹¹ Compare, to get an idea of the scale, with the wine growing areas for Bordeaux (110 000 hectares) and for Burgundy (25 000 hectares).

compared to that of other French winegrowing regions such as the Bordeaux region or Burgundy (Dion, 1977). Wine production did not grow significantly before the middle of the 19th century when it overtook cereal growing. Winegrowing took off at this point, destined for the production of ordinary wine for mass consumption within the national market. From the outset, Languedoc winegrowing is thus linked with the rise of agricultural capitalism and the beginnings of the food industry in France¹². After the Phylloxera crisis (end of the 19th century), large vineyards prevailed in the region but there were also very many smallholders, often farm workers who tilled land considered difficult (wasteland, hillside). This produced a significant split between large and small landowners and a singular meshing of these rural producers with the city merchants established in the towns of Béziers, Sète, Narbonne or Montpellier (Pech, 1975). The development of the waterways, then of the railways gave the South the opportunity to supply lavishly Northern France's industrial zones.

1.1.1. Co-operatives and mutualism

The rift between small and large vine owners¹³ hardened at a time when socialist ideals were spreading and proposing alternatives to the rise of industrial capitalism in European economies. Many experiments were conducted aimed at alternative organisations of production and labour relations. The “cooperative” approach as proposed by mutualist philosophers such as Proudhon or Le Play emerged as a preferred solution (Dreyfus, 2001). In the farming world the emergence of co-operatives is closely linked to the development of insurance or credit institutions such as the *Crédit Agricole*, the *Mutualité Sociale Agricole* or indeed the insurance outfit *Groupama*. Legally, a co-operative is a private company the capital of which is owned by its employees who elect the persons in charge. The shareholders of a co-operative are known as “partners” or “co-operators”. Whilst having a management team for the day to day running of the business, the partners elect a board of directors and take important decisions in General Assembly on a “one man, one vote” basis.

At the turn of the 20th century the co-operative movement went through substantial growth in the South where villages witnessed the burgeoning of co-operative

¹² To wit the *Compagnie des Salins du Midi* at that time redirecting its activity from salt production to wine and pumping massive sums into Languedoc, there to create a 2000 hectares vineyard.

¹³ Below 6 hectares for the smallest and over 100 hectares for the largest.

cellars¹⁴. They brought together small growers who together wanted to combat the dependency in which they felt held by the merchants and who shared a number of activities with a view to reducing their production costs. It was also a time of expansion for “buying co-operatives” in which new solidarity bonds were forged between producers and consumers, for instance when small wine growers arranged the direct sale of their produce to miners in Northern France (Sagnes, 1993). That era also saw the inception of a singular social project: that of a “*democracy of small vine owners, masters of their instruments of labour, individually or collectively*” (Milza, 1990, p.31). The great figures of French Socialism would, with Jean Jaurès, favour the emergence of co-operatives in which they saw evidence of the proletariat's capacity for self-organisation¹⁵. The first co-operative cellar was created in 1901 in Maraussan¹⁶, a small village in the Aude, which Jaurès visited in 1905 – and seized on that historical occasion to vaunt this social organisation model. Later Léon Blum, then *député* (MP) for the Narbonne constituency¹⁷ also viewed the Midi co-operatives as the cradle of a new society.

1.1.2. Tilling of the soil, foreigners' integration and spatial morphology

Historically, the organisation of wine production on the basis of a co-operative system made it possible for many Languedoc people to accede to land ownership and to draw from it an adequate income. Thus, local lore associates land with the notion of social advancement and emancipation through work thanks to a partially collective structure. For many workers arriving in the region during the 20th century, the vine has indeed been the medium of their integration into local society. Maffre-Baugé, a towering figure of winegrowing trade unionism recalls in a paper the “*beautiful land, but still the land of the low waged, the migrants*” (Maffre-Baugé, 1976, p.224). We are a long way off the patrimonial transmission mechanisms of estates and *Châteaux* typical of, say, the Bordeaux vineyard and its landed gentry. At the turn of last century the tilling of Languedoc's vineyard shaped the social connections between the diverse geographic areas of the Mediterranean amphitheatre, with the plains to one side and the hills and mountains to the other. At grape harvest or pruning time, the “gabaches¹⁸”, down from the Pyrenees or the

¹⁴ It is in the heyday of the *Front Populaire* (1936-38) that the cooperative cellar became the linchpin of wine growing in the Languedoc with more than 300 cooperatives in 1938 or close to one in each village (Pech, 1975).

¹⁵ He would further give his support to the novel experiment of the worker's glassworks in Albi.

¹⁶ c.f. Jean Jaurès' article «À Maraussan», *L'Humanité*, Sunday 7 May 1905, No 385.

¹⁷ First elected in 1929, re-elected in 1932 and 1936.

¹⁸ Local term (Pyrenées orientales) for those who are not local: incomers, strangers.

Aveyron foothills, arrived in the plain there to work at the vines. Some got married and decided to settle there as winegrowers/co-operators turning small strips of land into vineyards. After World War I, Spaniards, then Italian and Portuguese workers came to replace this labour force, making up for the dearth in farm workers created by WWI's slaughter and then for the rural depopulation which took hold in France from the 1920s onwards (Husher, 2005). A number of these seasonal workers also ended up settling down in the region. Nowadays, many a co-operators' surname bears the hallmark of the Portuguese, Spanish or Italian origin of parents, one-time farm workers who had joined the co-operative cellar system.

The norms and values conveyed by the co-operative system are perpetuated in spatial occupation and more specifically in the configuration of settlements and the collective forms of land use. The region's wine growing settlement is not usually given over to large estates in the midst of which houses stand alone, as is the case in other vineyards. The Languedoc winegrower's house is set at the centre of the village. As for the vineyard, it is not a depriving space: many footpaths allow access through the vine plots. Vineyards are perceived as a space open to walkers and gatherers (of almonds, mushrooms etc...). Boar hunters also enjoy a right of way through them. This spatial structure has implications for the **understanding of social relationships**. For winegrowers, the love of the soil does not go with the notion of property but of "appropriation", of joint use of a land on which collective pursuits prevail. Some types of games or popular pursuits (particularly rugby and boar hunting) for which social status is overlooked, also highlight the importance given to values of shared tenure, solidarity and equality. Thus, beyond their specific role in the organisation of wine production, the Languedoc-Roussillon co-operative cellars are the vectors of singular social norms and values. We are now going to turn to the **political translation** of these social norms and practices

1.2. Vine cultivation and local political culture

Co-operative cellars operate within a tight knit complex of representational structures, which dovetail right up to national level on an "inverted pyramid" model. Power rests with the partners in the base co-operatives whose representatives sit

in *département* federations¹⁹. They govern upper echelons the purpose of which is to defend co-operators interests at national level (CCVF: *Confédération des Co-opératives Viticoles de France* - French confederation of wine co-ops). These dovetailing structures are undoubtedly power structures too. At local level the co-operative cellar also represents a "political patch" to be reckoned with. Given the importance of wine production, cellar chairmen and their members have close relationships with local politicians (many chairs coincidentally hold local political mandates in their own right). We are therefore in the presence of a typical case of patronage system, several aspects of which are developed in the paragraphs below.

1.2.1. A Tight knit social network

In order to lead a trade union or a wine co-operative, you have got to be chosen by your equals. The region's wine bosses²⁰ do not understand their legitimacy as a birth-right passed down from father to son; Their influence within the cellar is not founded on the size of their land or the volume of their production. They are mostly of modest extraction and achieve their social rise through their work and their union commitment. The succession reference does exist but what current leaders lay claim to is a "spiritual filiation" to the founding fathers of regional trade unionism. The social microcosm of cooperation in Languedoc-Roussillon operates to some extent on the principle anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers refers to as "honour society"²¹ (Pitt-Rivers, 1992), a notion that helps sketch out a certain type of leadership. In such a society the *opinion* of the peer group is crucial to the definition of those who have influence. **Tight knit social networks** and **neighbourhood solidarity** also form two fundamental mechanisms. Peristiany says: "*great prestige is derived from a good reputation as a neighbour. Everybody wishes they were everybody else's creditor*". In this tight knit community, leaders must ensure frequent contact with winegrowers in order to uphold a legitimacy never secure. Thus Philippe Vergnes, chairman of the Aude *Syndicat des vigneronns indépendants* (independent winegrowers trade union), and jealous of his reputation does not tire of saying: "*I know where to find my vines and my tractor, unlike some who lose touch with reality; every day, I am in my vines. I am close to the rank*

¹⁹ At county level. The absence of representation at regional level has been noted and will receive attention further on in our study.

²⁰ Included here are chairs of cooperative cellars, trade union leaders, etc.

²¹ Conversely, in some societies, honour cannot be competed for as it is hard to conquer. Honour thus becomes opposed to grace which is the reference in a social system where power is usually subject to transmission, to a lineage/family heritage, to a cultural, financial or landed heritage.

and file.” At local level it also behoves to have a good memory for names and faces, to be “of service” to co-operators. The winegrowing leadership thus commits vast amounts of time to cellar meetings for they enable them to keep up personal ties with their people, solving problems for such and such (over indebtedness etc...). Denis Verdier, Chair of a Co-operative Cellar, observes: “*This is incidentally not without risk for once you have helped a winegrower in trouble, people will call you about any old thing because they wrongly figure that you are all-powerful*”.

1.2.2. Talk and Table

In an environment where power is not inherited but won, where legitimacy is built on opinion – neighbours’ and co-operators’ opinion – **oratory skills** are crucial. Wine growers’ leaders must imperatively master the art of public speaking in order to assert their leadership in this social environment. In the course of the numerous encounters and meetings crowding their diaries, they enter into verbal jousts with winegrowers and rehearse, in an ultra-democratic mode, their power as a temporary mandate, liable to be upturned at any time. An oral performance which entails resorting to the gravely Languedoc accent, the use of patois and the parading of male virtues – they put on a show. The leaders we observed are fully aware of these elements and readily refer to the great public speakers who marked the South’s winegrowing history: Marcellin Albert, leader of the 1907 Midi Wine Revolt, Ernest Ferroul²², député (MP) and mayor of Narbonne and Antoine Verdale, Chairman of the National Confederation of co-operators in the 70s. To win power, you have got to be able to address crowds, you must not be afraid of confrontation or to come under fire from your critics. The place given to public speaking also implies that political interaction depends on direct contacts with wine growers through closely maintained relationships addressing the full range of winegrowers’ social life: from the cellar on seasonal occasions (wine harvest suppers, festivals, meetings, General Assemblies etc...) to the regional and national scenes on the occasion of diverse meetings: Wine fairs and shows, assemblies, demonstrations and negotiations. So that, for trade unionists, “talking” also implies constant movement in the social space, “tilling”, as the saying goes, the electoral patch, the land of choice.

The **meals** shared between co-operators and their elected representatives consti-

²² During the uprisal, he had the black flag flying over the town hall: <http://www.thezandescorbieres.com/revolte1.htm>, <http://tinyurl.com/2ezsfb> (II,2, p12).

tute another fulcrum of local political interplay. The height of winegrowers’ civility, they play, among other things, a key role in the build-up of political clientele. Sharing a meal is the manifestation of a **reciprocal link** (votes for “services” rendered by the elected representative) but it also establishes the fact that those sitting around the same table relate as equals. Scottish anthropologist Jack Goody thus explains that “*those who eat and drink together are by this very act tied to one another by a bond of friendship and mutual obligation. (...) The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren, and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act*” (Goody, 1980). **Commensality** is thus a fundamental dimension of local life in Languedoc villages: it acts as **the catalyst of solidarity within the community whilst easing the creation and continuation of political connections** (which are also, in this case, **social relations**). Common references are also shared via constant referencing to rugby and hunting, pursuits that transcend all status differences between bosses and rank and file. Thus leaders stress their closeness to them and take good care, in other circumstances, conversely to heighten their differences with their “parisian” contacts (*Préfet*, Minister etc.).

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It should be added that these men, while making a great show of their cultural and social background, are fully conversant with other codes (dress, behaviour) and speech which they adjust according to the place: cellar or corridors of power. Winegrowing leaders are thus the indispensable **mediators** between two worlds that barely know each other. So time has come to figure how, through their action, the idiosyncratic relationship between the State and winegrowing Languedoc was arrived at.

1.3. “Midi Rouge²³” and Republic

The Languedoc people have traditionally been at the forefront of winegrowing structures created in France over the 20th century (professional associations for table wines, for country wines etc...). This has as much to do with the real import

²³ (Politically) Red South (trans.)

of Southern vineyards to French wine production as with the symbolic place of the Languedoc in French lore. The idiosyncrasy of the place is articulated in the name of “Midi Rouge” commonly given to the region (Sagnes J., 1982). This designation sums up a number of particularities associated in the French mind with Languedoc-Roussillon: a distinctive political shading on the national map, underscored by a strong implantation of left wing parties; a production structured along co-operative principles and a long tradition of dissent from central government; and a political opposition finding an outlet in violent protest.

1.3.1. Mediating figures: “Wine Députés” and “Wine Warriors”

Traditionally the *Languedociens* have wielded significant influence on the drafting and implementation of France’s wine policies. During the 3rd Republic, Minister Adolphe Turrel, Languedoc born, played an important part in the adoption of new wine laws. Later, Edouard Barthe, Socialist MP for the Hérault became the specialist of Southern wine production questions. In particular, he orchestrated, between the wars the so-called *statut du vin* (Wine Statute) bills designed to regulate the national wine markets. In this way, politicians and trade unionists were the go-betweens from local realities to central government. From the inception of the 3rd Republic to the 1960s their interface between local and national tiers was imperative, not without bestowing on them a degree of prestige. French anthropologist Marc Abélès spelt out how important it was for local politicians to be constantly on the move: “*It befits him to be constantly shuttling between Paris and his constituency. This to and froing reinforces his power: representation becomes circulation (...) the representative accrues his prestige from the mediation and from the medium.*” (Abélès, 1988, p. 100). Cellar chairs, trade unionists, and local politicians are thus forced into the perpetual motion that underpins the ongoing connections legitimating their power position on two fronts: on the local scene and in Paris’ corridors of power. Much in the way in which we saw them cultivate close links with their “local clientele”, their relationship to national political figures is also strongly personalised. André Castéra, top winegrowing boss in 1967 likes to tell how he “*had a personal relationship with the then Minister, Edgar Faure, because his grand-father had been the school teacher in my village. He asked me up to Paris, to his home and*

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asked how things were at Montredon-les-Corbières. I told him ‘Physically, fine and financially bad’. He promised things would improve. He summoned the main wine buyers at the time and told them to buy wine at 6 000 francs per hectolitre if they did not want fraud inspectors to crawl all over their business. Three days later wine prices were rising again...”

Until the 1960s these *Midi Rouge* politicians, be they trade unionists or MPs played a major part in the management of the relationship with central government, a part which becomes highly visible at the times of crisis, which recurred throughout the region’s 20th century history. The verbal facility of its representatives, colourful champions of their region’s interests on the floor of the lower house, the Assemblée Nationale, helped popularise their image as “*députés du vin*”, wine MPs, (Dedieu, 1995). They had the back up of winegrowing trade unions whose occasionally rowdy methods in their encounters with the State earned them the moniker of “*guerriers du vin*”, the wine warriors, (Juge, 1999). The pyramid structure of union instances culminating at national level serves a dual purpose. The chairman of the national confederation (CCVF), frequently a languedocien (as is indeed currently the case), is traditionally a consensual figure adept at negotiating and compromising with public authorities. At local level, the leaders who see themselves as representing the rank and file tend to be much more militant.

1.3.2. Violence as a means of political integration

The “Midi Rouge” is the outcome of an **almost systematically conflictual relationship with the French State**. Winegrowing thus became a true political issue, the political football kicked to and fro by a region steeped in left wing politics and governments which, with the exception of the Popular Front (the *Front Populaire* of 1936-38) and until the Socialist victory of 1981 leaned to the right. The 1907 slump crisis – when winegrowers rose in order to obtain greater State intervention and stricter fraud repression – kicked off this special relationship with the State (Napo, 1982). Starting in the Aude, the movement spread to the whole region. The Roussillon fell in behind the Languedoc. The winegrowers’ ranks were soon swollen by Languedoc’s lower classes. The Wine MPs came to the fore, populist mayor Ferroul threatening the government with a tax strike. On 9 June one million demonstrators marched in the streets of Montpellier. Ferroul cast away his mayoral sash, followed by many of his Languedoc and Catalan peers who, with this

symbolic gesture, lay all the blame for the crisis at the door of the State. Severely repressed by Clémenceau, these events set off a corporatist winegrowers' protest that would lead to the adoption of a legislative framework in 1936 (Bechtel, 1976). The creation of winegrower's co-operatives, intended, as we explained, to give small producers the means to weigh in the balance of power through the mutualisation of the means of production, was attended by a **paradoxical increase in the calls for public intervention**. From the mid-1930s, the State obliged with legislation defining the "wine product" and establishing specifications, creating notably one national institution (the *INAO*²⁴), stamping out fraud and regulating the market (through price setting). This process was associated to a tight import control and the implementation of surplus absorption mechanisms (controlled marketing and distillation if the stocks were too large). All these steps were designed to stall the overproduction recurrent in the region since the end of the 19th century and never fully rectified. The State also became one of the most important buyers of Southern wines: for the troops during the two World Wars but also *via* large nationalised enterprises who bought large quantities of cheap Southern wines for their employees.

As had happened in 1907, subsequent crises, at the beginning of the 1950s or in the 1960s and 1970s (protests against Algerian and then Italian wines) were periods of violent clashes with the State. At a moment of deadlock in the 1967 campaign, André Castéra, nicknamed the "Corbières Christ" by the press, goes so far as fuming: "*Tell Paris that, if necessary, Languedoc will be Cathare again*". Such local leaders relied on the striking power of a clandestine structure, the "*Comité d'Action Viticole (CAV)*²⁵". Not squeamish about violent action, they secretly mounted daubing operations against public buildings or "raids" against wine merchants. Philippe Vergnes, Chairman of the Aude co-operators and leading proponent of this type of unionised action was still hinting darkly in 2006: "*We are sick and tired of the keep fit walks, next time, we'll find another way...*". The man the French media called the Loxley of the Vine ("*Robin des Vignes*" to the authorities' more pedestrian "*ringleader*") upped the ante, warning: "*We are a demobilized army of*

²⁴ Created in 1936, re-branded «*Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité*» (National Institute for Origins and Quality control) in 2007, *INAO* is the institution allowing a producers' organisation to adopt a label *AOC* on a given winegrowing territory. The French State is thus strongly involved in the ranking of France's winegrowing regions.

²⁵ Winegrower's Action Committee: In 1962, the "Evian agreements", which confirmed Algeria's independence, should have placed Algerian wines in foreign production. But in a trade off for oil advantages, the French authorities agreed to continue purchasing Algerian wine. Then, Languedoc winegrowers created the *Comités d'Action Viticole*, which would be behind the actions and demos which, three years running would rattle the country.

several thousand soldiers ready to answer a call-up at any time. The French government knows it well." Beyond the hyperbole, it must be noted that this time honoured stage management of the tensions is the backdrop to the setting up of a national political geography within which, until the mid 1970s, ideological positioning, actors, places, and terms of negotiation were clearly signposted. Although conveyed in protest mode, **the voicing of winegrowing demands enabled local actors to take part in the construction of the national political arena** and was a factor in enshrining Languedoc's specific place in the French left's lore – as Jean-Louis Allaux reminds us when saying of the Corbières: "*The AOC grading in the Corbières was Mitterrand's thank you present for political involvement in his 1981 election*". Thus, paradoxically, a closely dependent relationship grew out of the conflictual relationships between the Republic and the Midi Rouge. The demonstrations and other coups conducted by the winegrowers' trade unions are key moments in a process which, by some sort of conflict resolution dialectics, has ended up with a reinforcement of the ties to the State and has somehow eased the integration of the region within the French Republic.

The bloody events at Montredon²⁶ in 1976 mark, in effect, the end of this stand off between the Midi Rouge and the State (Revel, 1996). The decline of the agricultural activity's share in the region's economy, the evolution of the wine market as a result of the joint effects of European integration and economic globalisation, along with the redefinition of the role of the State are today altering a great deal the economic and political rules of engagement. Since the onset of the 21st century, this vineyard is once again experiencing a major crisis characterised by a price collapse and a worrying increase in wine stocks. Winegrowers' unhappiness is further exacerbated by the commemorations, in 2006 and 2007, of the two most grievous episodes in Southern winegrowing history: the failed revolt of 1907 and the 1976 Montredon tragedy.

It will have escaped nobody's notice that the successive crises which beset the vineyard and provoked the winegrowers' wrath more or less tie in with the three

²⁶ On 2 March 1976, a winegrower's demo in Montredon (Aude) turned into an armed confrontation, during which a CRS (riot police) and a wine grower were killed.

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major stages of adjustment to a change market scale (Touzard, 2002). The 1907 slump crisis follows from the reorganisation of the French vineyard after the phylloxera crisis and of the creation of a national market; the 1967-1976 overproduction crisis is often read in the particular light of the restructuring of the market on a European scale (violent demonstrations then call for the authorities to control allegedly adulterated Italian wines). As for the current crisis, it follows from the unprecedented competition from New World wines on the world market. These milestones in the region's history create each time an occasion for winegrowers to clamour for the intervention of the authorities and, each time the same issues are at stake: overproduction, market regulation, (re)definition of the "wine product", fraud repression, and competition control.

In this first section, we have shown how wine is a product which commands know-how, praxes and specific social norms, a unique management of space and productive structures but also a complete set of values, a political lore singularly loaded with the memory of past struggles against the State. Failing this foray into the history of Languedoc society, we could not fully measure the local impact of the European integration process.

NOTA

Since the member countries of the European Communities' wine markets were brought together in 1962, the European wine sectors have come under the same regulations known as Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets (COM). Resulting from an initial compromise between distinctive wine productions, the wine CMO has evolved as a result of successive enlargements and of the fluctuations of a now global wine market. See the annex for further information on the contents and developments of the wine CMO.

II - Between europeanisation and globalisation

The pace of this history has brutally accelerated over the last decades which witnessed the overturn of structures inherited from a century of "tensile balance". This transition, another kind of "revolution" for the winegrowers, coincided with the upheaval in government tiers and market structures implied by the insertion of the Languedoc into the EU. We are now going to undertake the description and analysis of what is at stake locally in this transformation. What is the impact of the four freedoms inherent to the construction of the single market (free movement of people, goods, services and capital)? How has the European integration process affected the way the territory, the balance of power, the production structures and shared values are defined?

2.1. A "Miniature Europe" in the making

The demographic composition of French villages has changed a great deal since the 1970s and the winegrowing sector's position must be taken in the context of the overall evolution of the Languedoc-Roussillon region. This region which one of its first Presidents, Jacques Blanc, wanted to turn into "Europe's California" (Porcher,

2004) has, over the last thirty years or so, presented a high degree of attractivity resulting in a sustained demographic growth. This is partially explained by the relatively approachable prices of the land as compared to the other Southern regions, the attraction exerted over Northern European populations by the south and its mellow climes. The decline of the industrial basins in North and Eastern France has further affected the redistribution of industries and populations towards the cities of the West and the South which, like Montpellier, are expanding their service industries. These transformations imply a marginalisation of the relative share held by the winegrowing sector in Languedoc-Roussillon's economy but also a decline in its total weight marked by the fall in area under vines and in the number of winegrowers.

2.1.1. New inhabitants, new capital, new work force

The Languedoc-Roussillon region is noted for its important tourist presence, the unprecedented development of its coastline and a large number of second homes²⁷. This pull is coupled with a mass phenomenon in contemporary Europe: a periurbanization which is putting a lot of pressure on arable land. Population replacement in winegrowing villages does not only feature the adjunction of “neo-rurals²⁸” and workers employed in the tertiary sector. It is also marked by the “internationalisation” of local society with direct implications for the winegrowing community. J. Rambier, estate agent specialised in the sale of winegrowing properties in Montpellier indicates: “*Over the last ten years, I would say that 60% of my clients have been foreigners. I deal with a lot of English, German, Swiss, Dutch people, and more recently people from Scandinavia*”. **Europe has fallen in love with the “wine culture” which elicits vocations, especially among nationals from North European countries.** The archetypal “Neo-winegrower” from the scores we have met in the course of our research can be described thus: he is likely to be a city-dweller in his forties with no agricultural experience but a significant financial and cultural baggage, who has decided to pack in his original lifestyle in order to devote himself to a personal project – nay a passion – centred on wine.

At this point a distinction must be made between the implantation of these neo-winegrowers and the arrival of other actors motivated by economic rationality and

²⁷ It comes second in France for its proportion of second homes in the overall housing stock.

²⁸ City dwellers who choose to move to the countryside there to create a business (or who commute to the neighbouring town to work).

more impressed by the logics of financial profitability, and indeed of tax optimisation²⁹. This would apply in particular to a number of investors from the French food industry³⁰ who plough back the profits of their agricultural activity into a region where land prices have not yet reached the heights of other winegrowing regions. A second important phenomenon concerns investments effected by large international groups, hedge funds or pension funds. The “Mondavi affair” was represented in the media as a symbol of French resistance to this latter type of phenomenon consubstantial with globalisation. The famous Californian wine giant³¹ wanted to establish himself in the village of Aniane (Hérault), there to create a huge winegrowing estate. In the face of the villagers' fierce opposition, the group had to abandon its project. Aymé Guibert, who appears in the documentary film covering this episode (Mondovino), is not fooled³²: “*The Mondavi business is an accident but a less visible and more devious process is being implemented*.” The SAFER³³ actually favours the installation of these big investors, and has even created to that end, in Languedoc-Roussillon, a “large estates service”.

As has been seen, there is nothing new in resorting to a foreign workforce in the Languedoc vineyard. The gradual replacement of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese workers by North-African labourers marks no less a break in the momentum of integration achieved through working the land, which had hitherto prevailed. These labourers, mostly male, do not graduate to land ownership and the co-operative cellar systems. They arrive in France under contractual arrangements with the IOM³⁴; those who decide to stay on rather than return home tend to settle in the suburbs of big cities. Since the EU's enlargement to Central and Eastern European countries, the North-African workforce faces tough competition from Polish seasonal workers now in a majority³⁵ in Languedoc-Roussillon. These workers come at grape harvest or pruning time, organising with increasing efficiency their movement from Eastern Europe to Italy, Spain or France (De Tinguy, 2002). From June onwards, a multitude of minibuses hailing from Poland or Romania head for Europe's agricultural South.

²⁹ See article “Le vignoble et la fiscalité (vineyard and taxation)”, Le Monde, 2 May 2004

³⁰ Examples abound from a Normandie milk baron who purchased a winemaking domain in the Corbières to a Champenois winegrower settled near Limoux, or a Burgundy merchant close near Béziers.

³¹ Producer, among others, of Californian wine « Opus One ».

³² Interview conducted in October 2006.

³³ Société d'Aménagement Foncier et d'Établissement Rural (Land Improvement and Rural Settlement Company), SAFERs are responsible for the management of land attribution and cession.

³⁴ International Migrations Office. An intergovernmental organisation managing the provision of foreign workforce in France.

³⁵ Polish seasonal workers numbered 8500 in 2005 against 7500 Moroccans

These workers usually arrive in France legally under the framework of bilateral agreements³⁶: “*The IOM contracts for Poland have risen by more than 82% in three years*” says Stéphane Darmas in charge of the IOM office in Warsaw. Recruitment is then carried out by local leaders who take charge of those transiting groups of workers. It is not unusual for whole new networks to come into being. Their leaders usually speak some French, which eases the contact with the employer. Some, like Krzysztof, take charge along with a commission on the work contract, and thus gain social kudos in their hometown. Krzysztof explains: “*There are 89 of us leaving the village. I do the recruiting, I take on family members, neighbours and I answer for the quality of the work.*” A new labour market has thus come about with its own networks and actors who reproduce in their home regions patron-client practices.

2.1.2. New trends: privatisation, individualisation, entrepreneurship

The intensification of urbanisation, and of the attendant phenomenon of urban sprawl, directly affects villages and vineyards close to cities (Touzard, 2004). Land use conflicts are frequent between winegrowers and neo-rurals who seek rural peace, unbroken by the noise of machinery or other farming induced “nuisances”, and who have been known to object to local customs such as hunting. We have shown how Languedoc winegrowing fitted into a collective village experience resulting in a particular organisation of settlements and arable land. However these two population groupings do not necessarily conceive of the use of nature in the same way. Sociological change is thus coupled with the transformation of social spatial praxis which undergoes a marked **privatisation** process. As far back as the 1970s Maffre-Baugé noted the appearance of “*barbed wire, walls protecting private property*” in the winegrowing villages of the Vaucluse (Maffre-Baugé, 1975, p.206). Jean R. chair of a co-operative cellar and trade union leader in the Pyrénées orientales, thunders: “*That Parisian wanker who has just moved in next door thinks he owns the village. He has fenced off all his land without asking anybody’s advice. It is not done here; people can no longer hunt or go mushroom picking and that is utterly unacceptable!*” This phenomenon reaches far beyond this region. An American anthropologist (Wyllie, 1980) has studied this issue in the context of a pastoral village in the Lubéron where joint spatial management, that of pasture and footpaths, and livestock transhumance are endangered by the development of second homes with their hedges and walled or fenced off zones. Laurence Wyllie

³⁶ The contract between France and Poland was signed on 20 May 1992.

has shown how social and political relationships have been deeply shaken by this. Likewise in winegrowing languedoc, the advent of the “foreigners” is not only equated with a rise in the price of land but also with a social transformation of the spatial frame of reference. On arrival, many neo-winegrowers looked for the “estates” with a big house set deep in the vines rarely to be found in the region. Peter and Susan S., formerly accountants in London recall: “*When we arrived we found vineyards with no house. We were surprised because we had been looking for an estate with its vines but here, you don’t see much of that, so we found a house in a village and bought a cellar in another one.*” The development of conflicts within villages illustrates the **erosion of a single shared representation of the countryside.**

**SOCIOLOGICAL
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PRIVATISATION OF
PUBLIC SPACE.**

Thus the demographic and sociological composition of the winegrowing sector switched just as, at European level, the common market was being implemented – a market typified by the high mobility of persons, goods and capital – and in which the French government’s margin for manoeuvre in winegrowing matters was considerably curtailed. Neo-winegrowers’ implantation thus confirms the crumbling of the co-operative sector and exacerbates the tensions associated with the waning of a production model largely dependant on State support: “*I had not realised that, purchasing this estate, I was also taking upon me the weight of social history*”, explains Robert C., established in the Hérault after an Oxford and London School of Economics education, followed by work experience in the Napa Valley and in Burgundy. The newcomers, who are not enmeshed in the “local system”, prefer to establish themselves as privately owned cellars – structures which gratify their intent to be fully in charge of the production of “their” wine and which also seems to them better suited to the turn taken by the markets. Blandine J., once an administrator at the *Assemblée Nationale*, the French lower house, and her husband Pierre, a swiss architect report: “*The previous owner was a communist, he was in the village’s co-operative cellar. We bought and built in the contract clauses enabling us to get our vines out of the co-operative right away.*” This erosion of a local balance traditionally sympathetic to co-operative cellars has implications for the formulation of **territorial identities**. The production of a shared wine was consubstantial with a sense of belonging within the village and allowed for the distinction from co-operative cellars in neighbouring villages. A wistful co-operator

is clear: *“Before, we made the wine for collective pride, now everyone wants the distinction of wine made under their own steam, it’s all private competition.”* If co-operation still represents more than 70% of the volumes produced locally, the number of co-operative cellars is falling year on year³⁷. The village co-operative, once at the core of social life, is, to all intents and purposes, no more. The basis for territorial identity has had to evolve, with **parochialism surrendering to competitiveness’s diktats**. Mergers between co-operatives have taken place where cellars in trouble have been taken over by more competitive cellars. Denis Verdier, Chair of the Co-operative Cellar in Générac (Gard) explains: *“It took Kissinger’s diplomacy to achieve the merger. We carried it out in the 1980s between six cellars. Générac was the biggest and, finally we took over all the others. It’s a cultural revolution when confidential data has got to be shared with the neighbouring village cellar against which you have competed for years at rugby. We had to leave parochialism behind.”* In this dynamic, traditional modes of identification and antagonism, such as the opposition between Catholics and protestants in many Gard villages have taken on a very different complexion: *“Basically, before, there was an unspoken agreement in the village whereby the Protestants chose the cellar’s chairman and the Catholics chose the mayor. Today the split is much more pronounced between the newcomers and the villagers – which the newcomers aggravate with their private cellars”*, he goes on. This rise in privately owned cellars bears out a more general revival of individualistic values.

The newcomers’ approach reflects an individual and entrepreneurial outlook driven by an **attitude to risk** and a **concept of individual responsibility** foreign to the co-operative system. For these neo-winegrowers, establishing themselves is a “gamble” for, even if they often enjoy substantial front money; the investment they make is considerable and a big risk. The purchase of a winegrowing operation represents the choice of a radical change of life style, an “ad-venture” for the individual or the couple, underpinned by a powerful emotional commitment. Peter and Susan S. explain: *“One Saturday evening, we were in our London apartment; after putting the children to bed we had a few glasses of wine. We were tired of the crazy life we had. We did not have time to see each other, to see our children and we could see little sense in our professional activity (...) after a few glasses, we decided to drop everything and to launch on an exciting adventure: making wine.”*

³⁷ It has gone from 536 units in the 80s to 345 in 2005.

“Making wine”: The image, in the mind of these newcomers, is associated with the thought of **creating a highly personalised product, reflecting the taste and the individuality of its producer**. Their relationship to wine is usually rooted in a very idealised, nay mythified vision of the winemaker’s métier which may not match local perceptions. Wine has become the vehicle for a “life project”. Peter S. stresses: *“I confess to having been spurred on by a pioneering vision. That image is very powerful in England. In the case of wine, the pioneer leaves for Australia and makes good.”* The newcomers’ type of commitment further intimates a different relationship to the land, no longer the locus of ancestral rooting but the means to a temporary and reviewable end. Peter says: *“Paradoxically we have created a project but we will also destroy it for we do not wish to impose the continuation of the business on our children. That too is changing now. Here, there are overwhelming factors weighing on the continuation of a family tradition with whatever pain this implies. We come at it from a different angle, our children will probably do something completely different, and we may well one day drop the whole show.”* Julie S., established in the region of Pic Saint Loup after an Oxford education and several positions in the world of finance has this take on the situation: *“I would say that the difference is that we are here because we chose to and the others have been here for generations.”* Thus transitory modes of settlement are observably taking hold where land transmission, an obsessively pursued aim of rural societies, ceases to be a driving social factor.

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Finally the liberalisation of land markets and capital movements within the Common Market locally translates into a phenomenon which must be kept distinct from the advent of the neo-winegrower. It concerns the “big investors” referred to earlier and the creation of large winegrowing estates whose owners do not live in the region. On one of these large estates, recently bought by several Bordeaux investors, a Portuguese land agent manages the operation relying on two Spanish full time employees for the upkeep of the vines. Absentee landlord, Spanish or Portuguese qualified staff, Polish seasonal workforce, those are standard features of these large estates without a resident owner. This emerging formula is not unlike what already existed in the region at the end of the 19th century, when land owners, whom people called the “*Mossus*” (Pech, 1975) lived in Narbonne, Béziers or Montpellier and paid rare visits to their vineyards. Nowadays, such owners live

in Bordeaux, Paris or London to be seen only infrequently on their Languedoc properties. This “depersonalisation” of the winegrowing activity has much more far-reaching implications on social relationships than the appearance of the neo-winegrowers. The land, sought for its financial investment value, is perceived as an asset wholly unconnected to its social environment. Rumour abounds about these big landowners whom nobody knows, about “*that person who does not help with the school fair or the rugby club*”. The advent of these investors who could not care less about the fair or the neighbourhood heralds the end of the “patronage culture” typical of the region. When set alongside the conditions of stay of Polish workers – who, for memory, do not integrate (to date?) into the social fabric, barely speak French and live outside the villages – this phenomenon suggests that the Languedoc winegrowing sector is affected, to some extent at least, by what could, courtesy of Polanyi, be termed “**disembedding**” (Polanyi, 1944): the winegrowing activity no longer dovetails in the same way with the social, cultural and political dimensions of local life.

2.1.3. New Power Deal

Wine growing is no longer the region’s main economic asset and the French State has lost a fair share of its winegrowing prerogatives, so that Languedoc winegrowers’ political and social clout has considerably diminished. Big demonstrations aimed at forcing State intervention are not much use. We have shown in our first part how, for the best part of the 20th century, the relationship between the Republic and the Midi Rouge had been mediated by clearly identified actors maintaining the liaison between the winegrowing populations and State representatives. The role of the European institutions with the implementation of the COM in wine in 1962 and the more recent developments in regional administration leave these figures behind: “*The days when you climbed on a barrel to rouse the crowd with some great slogan against the State or the government are over. The economy has changed and now, for all that I am a “wine MP”, as they say, things are a lot more complicated for us, we are in a world where the State is no longer the leading actor,*” says Jacques Bascou, MP for the Aude. Furthermore, the Socialist’s accession to power in 1981 did away with the Southern MP’s traditional dissenting role. The Socialist Party’s espousal of new issues beyond the traditional defence of the “have-nots” has further muddled the Languedoc voters’ ideological framework. The solutions the left has proposed to certain societal evolutions

are not welcome: at the time of the debate of the Evin bill³⁸, some wine MPs found themselves compelled to defend winegrowers’ interests against their own party’s advice.

These changes also affect the dreaded “Wine Warriors” – who have trouble adjusting to the new order brought about by European integration. These union leaders have been slow in appreciating the significance of the European level. This is shown in the way power was broken down between the young trade unionists (the “sons”) when one of local trade unionism’s tenors, Antoine Verdale retired. Denis Verdier confides: “*We had to choose among ourselves who would succeed Verdale. The show had to go on so I was chosen as national rep because I was from the Gard and Verdale had been from the aude. Huillet had a big mouth so we kept him for the regional/local job. Castany was too young so he got Europe...*” The necessity, at European level, to take into account the interests of numerous actors induces a profound transformation of the terms but also of the “registers” of political representation. As anthropologist Jack Goody has shown, the changes in communication technology are both directly and indirectly linked with changes in human interaction modes (Goody 1994). And now, it turns out that the **growth in these communication technologies reduces the importance of relationships founded on tight knit social networks and leader’s rhetoric skills**. Moreover, the legitimacy of union bosses is increasingly disputed both by the *rank and file* and the *institutions* (at national and European level). The french government has recently excluded from national structures several Languedoc representatives. Thus, the co-operative trade unions’ men have lost their dominance in the *ONIVINS*³⁹, which became *VINIFLOR*⁴⁰ in 2005, the agency conjointly in charge of wine, but also of horticulture, fruit and vegetables. These developments betray the retreat of interbranch corporatist trade unionism. To be sure, a *Languedocien* has been given the leading position in the new bureau but he is far from enjoying the local backup his forerunners had. Besides, several new “collectives” have emerged in the local trade union landscape, which the authorities are treating as credible partners, regardless of the fact that their representative value is not proven. Often run by environmentally

³⁸ The Evin bill deals with public health. It expresses in particular the authorities’ intent to fight alcoholism by banning all alcohol consumption advertising or promotion.

³⁹ L’*ONIVINS*, the *Office national des vins* (Wine Bureau), this structure brings together the authorities and representatives of the winegrowing interbranch in order to regulate and define national policies.

⁴⁰ By a December 2005 decree the *ONIVINS* and *ONIFLHOR* (*Office des fruits et légumes et de l’horticulture Fruit/ Vegetables and Horticulture Bureau*) merged into a single office, called *VINIFLHOR*.

concerned winegrowing co-operators (“integrated farming”, organic farming etc...), some collectives reject the majority trade unions’ will to maintain, nay to reinforce, the industrial course Languedoc’s production has taken in order to respond better to markets globalisation. They counter with a small vineyard model which, they claim, guarantees access to property for all whilst linking the product to its soil and the social history it carries. So there we have the redrawing of the traditional line between privately owned cellars and co-operative cellars. Meanwhile, the “*winegrowing rank and file*” blames its leadership for the deadlock they are stuck in and for their ineffective challenge of national and European policies.

Local power remains fairly well rooted in the population’s “old” element for all that the latter is dwindling. Local politicians show no great urge to cultivate relationships with the newcomers. This illustrates the difficulties experienced in building new social relationships and new political representation models corresponding better to the new components of local society. Indeed, neo-winegrowers are inclined to break loose from the “local political system” the ramifications of which reach into most of the farming sector’s agencies: “*I discovered there were many agencies: MSA, Crédit Agricole, vintage syndicates, etc. All these organisations are wheels within wheels, they are protected power bases; we are on the outside looking in and we struggle to grasp the links existing between the actors,*” explains Frédéric J, formerly a musician from Switzerland. Robert C., in litigation with the *Crédit Agricole* goes further: “*The MSA, the Crédit Agricole and the rest, I have come to realise they are just a mafia. It is a very well organised power system with the same people in charge, wearing different hats and sitting at the top of a pyramid which spawns all sorts of dependencies.*” As neo-winegrowers cannot belong in the same structures as the co-operators, the growing power of the private cellars also has a bearing on a new balance of power within the vintage syndicates, traditionally controlled by the co-operative cellars. In some areas, these clashes have institutional implications. In the Corbières, Claude Vialade, daughter of a historic cooperative leader, but who has herself broken away from that scene, decided in 1990 to create around the private cellars a new syndicate named “*AOC Corbières Haute expression*”. She explains her decision aimed at counteracting the existing vintage syndicate’s power: “*There are operations, a structure culture, with a hierarchy which no longer includes some winegrowers. (...) We are a stratified society. The creation of this syndicate expressed the will to go beyond the mere*

defence of a stronghold, an area on which subs are collected, production specifications defined, men controlled.” Thus there is good cause to view union fragmentation and the crisis in traditional trade unions as a sign of the difficulties experienced by politicians to adjust, on the one hand, to the change in government tiers and market scales linked to the Europeanisation and the globalisation of the winegrowing market and, on the other, to the sociological transformation of local society.

2.2. Mutations in the relationship to local territory

Recent decades have seen the countries of Western Europe shift from a “supply economy” (standardised production, fixed price systems, stock management) to a consumer orientated “demand economy”. This mutation has had a direct impact on Languedoc producers. As it is no longer in the power of elected and union representatives to provide trade outlets for regional production on the country’s market, it is important to understand Languedoc wine’s new modes of insertion into a market turned global. This we propose to do *via* the analysis of a few phenomena observed in the field.

2.2.1. Law of the market and new mediation formulae

A growing number of Languedoc winegrowers, spearheaded by those who run privately owned cellars and neo-winegrowers, build their marketing strategies on their capacity to conduct its promotion themselves well beyond local or national settings. Robert C. explains: “*I am at odds with the co-operators. Things are tense but I’d rather say nothing. Anyway, I sell 80% of my wine abroad: before I bought my vineyards, I knew where I could sell it.*” Arriving with an “entrepreneurial” view of the winemaker’s trade divergent from the “operational” approach favoured locally, the neo-winegrowers seek to implement winemaking processes in step with what they know of new consumers’ expectations. They incidentally often maintain direct links with their clients, which partially release them from the dependence relationship imposed by their geographic neighbourhood. Thus Nick B., formerly an anthropologist who lost his job in the Thatcher years borrowed from fifty odd friends whom he paid back in wine for six years in order to make a go of his Corbières⁴¹ venture: “*A small club of Scottish and English friends made it possible*

⁴¹ Domaine des pensées sauvages, a name he chose as a homage to Claude Lévi Strauss.

for us to realise our project.” Julie S., who has launched from her holiday home an internet site marketing Languedoc wine explains: “To begin with, we relied on my personal and professional networks to sell the wine in Europe. The key is to create a direct link between the Englishman in his London armchair and the winegrower in love with his wine. We sell a dream. At this game, we have more trouble with the co-operative cellars who often produce an impersonal wine or are not really interested in relating to the client.” So, these neo-winegrowers hailing from all over Europe facilitate the success of their enterprise through the creation of “virtually direct” links with remote clients, which they “keep up” via the latest communication technology. In keeping with current marketing trends, they are not content to let the material quality of the product speak for itself but also vaunt its otherworldly, “dream” quality. The case of Aymé Guibert is also revealing. Featured in the film *Mondovino* as a traditional winegrower, a son of the soil, he had originally run a leather business in the Millau region, in the Aveyron. When his business failed in the 1970s he decided to switch to wine growing by establishing a vineyard in Aniane. He turned to one of his Aveyron contacts, a Bordeaux University professor of geography, to study the properties of the soils (deemed “ideal to produce a great wine”) and also consulted famous Bordeaux oenologist Émile Penault who advised the plantation of Cabernet Sauvignon, a vine variety non native to Languedoc and to which great Bordeaux wines owe their good name. Then, he used his professional leather network to market his product in the world. His wine was first well received in London: “That’s how it started: London, then New York. One day, Nicolas the wine merchant’s main buyer discovers my wine in a New York shop, tastes it, and calls. It took the anglo-American trade to achieve recognition in France!”

Such phenomena are highly significant. They show how those new entrepreneurs, almost always with previous experience in the service industry, will, most of the time, call in external know-how and create their own niche in the wine market through their previous socio-professional networks. The experience accrued in the course of their first professional incarnation has prepared them better for the fine tuning of communication and marketing strategies – whereas, in Languedoc winegrowers’ mindset, **only slowly has “the consumer” taken over from “the State”**. The strategies deployed for these changing “targets” are patently different (demonstrations have never been a compelling selling point with consumers...). The commercial take-off of neo-winegrowers’ wine often first takes place outside

the French market. The choice of the latest oenological practice is a measure of their determination to produce a quality wine in a region long associated with the production of an ordinary wine for the common people. This “quality shift” was in fact initiated as early as the 1970s, under the aegis of European and national authorities anxious to curb overproduction on the winegrowing market. The vintage syndicate is a tool: it brings together the producers from a designated area around specifications to which they are held if they want to use the syndicate’s label (it may further get them an AOC⁴²). Already in 1976, a private initiative led to the creation of the “Syndicat des Coteaux du Languedoc” which went on to earn its AOC in 1987: “Its aim is twofold: an alternative to the accepted nostrum of table wine must be put forward and opinion disseminators found locally who could spread the message around the area” (Genieys, 1998, p.15). The Corbières conflictual relations described above also come to show how the confiscation of power by the co-operators, exponents of a productivist attitude to wine, is being challenged in the vintage syndicates – structures designed essentially for the production of vintage wines. Though some co-operative cellars have successfully gone down the quality avenue (it is not uncommon today to find Languedoc co-operative wines on the shelves of wine outlets across the pond), it remains essentially the preserve of winegrowers operating in privately owned cellars.

The strength of these new entrepreneurs thus rests with their aptitude to produce quality wine and to find the outlets for it without needing the support of the locally elected representative or co-operative cellar. So that defining the taste of their wine and their trading strategy tie in with building a reputation to be established very far from where it is produced. Meanwhile the opening up of the rural environment thanks to the development of transportation links has contributed in no small measure to the modification of the local dimension and socialising modes. Blandine J. stresses: “We are a small group of late arrivals to winegrowing, so to speak. Some are winegrower’s sons but they left to study elsewhere and try with us to change things (...) I must also confess that we are often away. I often go to Nîmes to catch the TGV or a plane to Paris to see my family”. The latest developments in

42 The *Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée* came with the reorganisation of the French vineyards in 1935, and the decree law organising the production of quality wines. It is a wording which distinguishes a product the authenticity and typicity of which are tied to its geographic origin. Each AOC corresponds to a delimited area where the grape and therefore the wines with this label are produced. An AOC is granted by the *Institut National des Appellations d’Origine (INAO)* upon the recommendations of a commission of enquiry following the request of a producer’s grouping set up as a syndicate for the defence of the appellation.

low-cost airlines⁴³ has further enhanced the mobility of the European nationals settled in the region who are often to be seen in the neighbouring town and who also keep up a close relationship with their home country. New “transit corridors” (Tarrus, 2004) have thus appeared in the air and on the ground with the TGV or the buses of Polish seasonal transhumance.

2.2.2. *Terroir*, image and the inversion of tradition

Another important resource of the new wine entrepreneurs lies with creating an image of their wine as an “authentic” product, reflecting its home soil. In this, they endorse the French, but also European tenet that the features of an agricultural product are closely associated with the quality of the soil from which it came but also with the know-how which has for generations presided over its elaboration (what is referred to, in French, as the “terroir”). It has escaped nobody that **these neo-winegrowers play the “local” card even as they are almost entirely detached from their local social environment.** Paradoxically the Languedoc case presents us with a **reversal of the tradition principle.** The newcomers claim for themselves the defence of a French cultural tradition which worships wine, yet this does not fit with local winegrowing history. Jérôme, running a private cellar, says of the local winegrowers: “*They are never but grape tenders, we do not have the same job.*” Frédéric J., who hesitated between Spain and the Languedoc-Roussillon eventually to choose the latter remembers: “*I bought from a local family who despised the land; they were ashamed of their country roots. They were not interested in wine and lived in Toulouse.*” He is surprised and regrets the absence at local level of a traditional culture as he had imagined it when he left Geneva: “*Here, there is no local culture, we lack the ‘living libraries’, old folks who could pass on their know-how.*” The neo-winegrowers are also inclined to take on soils deserted by most of the local people. They generally choose the vineyards set on mountains and hillsides prized for their pedological virtues and better suited to the production of “vintage wines”, whereas at the local level, the hilly vineyards where the work is difficult are neglected in favour of the plain (deprecatingly known as “the boiler”) and its higher yields. Nick B. explains: “*People work the plain and have left the mountain and the hillsides even though they are fantastic soils. We are looking at a kind of dehumanisation of the land where named places are no longer remembered. There*

⁴³ Essentially centred on the airports in Carcassonne, Montpellier and Nîmes but also Girona, in Spain, which is one of the Irish airline Ryan Air’s main hubs.

is only the odd hunter to still know these names belonging to the oral tradition.” The *Mondavi* episode is also revealing of tradition’s impenetrable ways: Aniane’s winegrowers were in fact rather favourable towards the American investor’s project, which, they thought, would give the village its second breath. It is the mobilisation of the neo-rurals behind Aymé Guibert, the media-savvy neo-winegrower which, in the end, got the better of this mammoth settlement project. The neo-rurals fought the *Mondavi* project on the grounds that it would interfere with the landscape with its intended replacement of a forest by a vineyard. The local winegrowers, for their part, found their resentment in the aftermath of this business emphatically summed up by Philippe Vergnes: “*We do not want to be France’s gardeners.*”

EUROPEANS ARE ATTACHED TO THE IDEA THAT FOOD IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED TO THE SOIL FROM WHICH IT CAME, AND ASSOCIATED ALSO WITH THE KNOW-HOW, ACCUMULATED OVER GENERATIONS, NEEDED TO PRODUCE IT.

The necessity for a wine to achieve eminence, which is the way to ensure not only its visibility but also its “traceability” and therefore its success on the global market, does not only bring into play the strategies of small entrepreneurs seeking a niche market. The big investors mentioned earlier are to some extent subjected to similar forces, even if, for them, the line of attack is patently different. In this respect, a salient event has recently taken place in Languedoc-Roussillon, namely the purchase of winegrowing land by two major figures from the world of entertainment: actor Gérard Depardieu and rock star Johnny Hallyday⁴⁴. A long way away from the individual, small-scale approach of the neo-winegrowers, some of these establishments fit in with the financial drive of Big capital. For, under the guises (or rather the name) of two iconically French stars, the companies buying the Languedoc vineyards are financed by international capital. Given France’s high repute when it comes to wine, the use of these “names” (famous enough to have almost become brands in their own right) can rightfully be read as a highly effective marketing ploy revolving around France’s image. In this way, Johnny Hallyday plans to market *via* his company “*Hallyday Wine Diffusion*”, 50 000 bottles in association with his old mate, Roger Santa, shareholder in the agri-food group *Heineken*. The local press goes on to specify that “*two oenologists from France Boissons, a Heineken subsidiary*” will be in charge of its production. The French star’s project is far removed from the so-called “traditional” understanding of wine and a good deal closer to a drink whose roundly standardised features will suit the new global

⁴⁴ To whom could be added Luc Besson at Saint Chinian, Pierre Richard at Gruissan, or Jérôme Savary in the Fitou.

demand. It is worthy of note that the establishment of these celebrities with good French names did not meet with the same hostility amongst the local population as the project from a Californian giant more closely associated with the predatory globalisation image did.

Each modification in the size of the market has, as we have shown, implications for the formation of the “taste of the wine”. European wine growers today make wine for American, Australian or Japanese consumers, whose tastes are different from those of European consumers. Those new consumers apparently favour wines with a less complex taste, an aroma more wooded and fruity. The issue of the evolution of “taste” for wine has nothing remotely new about it in Europe. It would be a mistake to imagine that this phenomenon dates from European integration and the development of the Common Market, so frequently blamed by the Languedoc winegrowers. French historian Fernand Braudel vividly accounts for this age-old “Europeanisation” of the wine market: *“Europe can single-handedly summarize the problem with wine, which perforce takes us back to its northmost vine boundary, to this long Loire-Crimea watershed. To one side peasant growers and consumers accustomed to the local brew, to its misdeeds as to its good deeds; to the other the large demand of drinkers perhaps untutored but who do know what they like – usually high percentage wines. This is how the English made the name of malmsey wines, fortified wines from Candia and the greek islands. Later, they would launch Port, Malaga, Madeira, Sherry, Marsala, reputed wines, all with high alcohol content. The Dutch would, from the 17th century, make the fortune of all brandies. So: differing palates, and tastes. The South eyes mockingly these Northern drinkers who, in its view, don’t know how to drink”* (Braudel, 1979, p. 263). Now **the evolution of wine’s taste has in its turn implications for the link between the produce and its territory** (or *terroir*). Access to an *appellation d’origine*, recognized as an intellectual property right at European level, is very narrowly restricted to a geographic area where the product is created. In France, the AOC rubberstamps this intimate bond between the soil and the product. In their attempt to “simplify” not only the taste of their wine but also the label information by favouring the use of a single type of vine, some winegrowers are undermining the traditional assemblage practices typical in French AOC wines. The success of the “*syndicat des vins de pays d’Oc*”⁴⁵ is a good example of this. Created early in the 1980s after a concept

⁴⁵ www.vindepaysdoc.com

based on the success of New World wines, the brand “*d’Oc*” covers an area much larger than that of AOCs, since all producers in the region Languedoc-Roussillon may avail themselves of it. Jacques Gravegeal, chairman of this “*Syndicat des vins du pays d’Oc*” explains: *“We have got to evolve a global image for export purposes. We’ve got to stop running separate advertising campaigns. With a common brand we have more powerful ammunition.”* Such approaches, like those of the “*Vins de Pays*” (relying on the promotion of one or two vine varieties), are amongst attempts to enable local producers to address the competition from New World wines and the pressures in world demand, of raw customers who find it easier to identify branded wines or those from one vine variety.

2.2.3. The emergence of the Region

It has become relevant now to consider another important tier change as observed in our field of study, that of the emergence of the Region, a government tier at which a number of the processes described above take place. “*Decentralisation*”, that is the transfer of some competences from central power to the regional level, was implemented in France from the beginning of the 1980s. Alongside the increase in European initiatives requiring the active collaboration of the local authorities, this has sensibly increased the role of the Regions in the field of economic and local development. In the 1980s, the president of the Languedoc-Roussillon Regional Council, Jacques Blanc, a man from the Lozère (a non winegrowing *département*) was not renowned for his grasp of the wine issues. By contrast, the current President, Georges Frêche promptly embraced wine growing issues, with the launch of a peculiar initiative aimed at changing the name of the region to “*Septimanie*”. On the very day of his installation, in 2004 and following the furrow so often ploughed by those Midi elected representatives, speaking against Parisian power, the new President attacked the name of Languedoc-Roussillon as the fruit of an artificial identity determined by the French State (*“a corpse I do not wish to continue dragging”*) whereas his proposal of “*Septimanie*” would better suit the true regional identity. He also expresses a determination to make the action of the Regional Council more visible to the local people who, according to him are somewhat lost in the plethora of political authorities (local, regional, national, European) and no longer recognise the region’s competences in the muddle of political spheres. But this decision also met an economic and commercial development strategy which deserves closer analysis. For the President of the Region founds his

THE MEDIATION IS NOT SO MUCH PERFORMED BY THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AS BY THE TERRITORY ITSELF. TURNED INTO A "BRAND", THE TERROIR BECOMES THE OPEN SESAME TO THE WORLD MARKET.

approach in the following observation: At world level, nobody knows the Languedoc-Roussillon region or where it is; whereas the territories winning at the great game of world competition are those who have a visible identity, and the name of which is connected with a brand, like "*Roquefort*" or "*Champagne*"; therefore a brand with an evocative name must be created to back the promotion of the territory and local production. This response to the upheavals brought about by the globalisation of the markets is like a regional counterpart to the phenomenon observed on a lesser scale with the creation of the "*Syndicat des Vins du Pays d'Oc*". It is echoed in the current debates on the need to create a "regional syndicate" of producers which would call into question the delimitations currently in force (AOC). The idea of bolstering the regional drive had a fair consensus behind it as everyone readily recognises the need to unite in order to survive at global level. Accordingly, Georges Frêche had soon decided to call the leading actors of the diverse farming interbranches to persuade them to come together under the regional umbrella brand called "Septimanie", the promotion of which would be ensured throughout the world by vast communication exercises which the varied local vintages could not afford to finance alone. This proposal was not without attraction for the winegrowers who were seeking that very help from the authorities in order to win export markets. The greater competencies of the Region in the field of economic development give these initiatives the power to alter considerably the relationships between political actors but equally between economic actors. However these debates also give rise to many tensions. In the winegrowing sector, the chairs of the diverse structures in place – which are also political patches – and whose leaders manage resources (subscriptions), jobs and budgets (notably for advertising) started dragging their feet. In the end Georges Frêche had to give up his "Septimanie" idea in 2005 for another name "*Languedoc-Roussillon/Sud de France*" adopted in 2006. but the aim remains the same: it consists in leading under the auspices of the Region "*a proactive promotional policy to win new markets.*"⁴⁶

Thus the emergence of the brand "*Sud de France*" spells out a redefinition of the relationship to the regional territory. The mediation is not so much performed by

⁴⁶ Brochure for the Paris 2006 Agricultural Show, Languedoc-Roussillon Region's press pack.

the elected representatives than by the territory itself, which, turned into a "brand", becomes the support for the insertion of local produce into the world market. This shift is also an open door to practices currently forbidden in the legislation framework for the AOC⁴⁷. We should finally make clear that the winegrowing policy put forward by the Languedoc-Roussillon region does not rest on any consultation with its neighbouring wine-producing regions in France (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Midi Pyrénées). Depriving those from a name to which they were potentially entitled (they all clearly belong to the South of France) can be read as a kind of "coup" by President Frêche in the competition to grow in visibility and win market segments whilst reinforcing his local political clout. The phenomena analysed above do fit in with the necessity to address large scale structural changes in trade but also signal the regional authority's determination to take over the main agricultural and symbolic resource afforded by its territory.

At the end of this second section, we have a better picture of how the Languedoc village dweller "lives" day by day the European construction, and of the impact the implementation of the Common Market is having locally. The observation of this "miniature of everyday Europe" give a vantage into the broader phenomena at work in the European integration process: mobility, new trading formulae, the reframing of the relationship to politics, to the soil, etc... We now need to address this question of the European integration as it is seen and explicitly described by the people living in the region. What do the actors we met have to say about Europe? How do they view EU action in the winegrowing field? What can we learn from this in terms of European identity?

⁴⁷ The creation of new brands with a broader territorial definition is liable to have a bearing on the "assemblage" practices.

III - Complex and Contradictory Perceptions of the European Venture

We will focus on the perceptions of one section of the local population, that of Languedoc winegrowers belonging to the co-operative system. This for two reasons: firstly because this group of people is the most shaken by the structural changes and has developed accordingly the more abundant commentary on Europe; secondly because it is also among these winegrowers that the most paradoxical political behaviours can be observed. Our analyses would be vastly different if we had sought to reproduce the neo-winegrowers opinion – but a sound grasp of the most negative positioning towards the EU seems to us a more important issue for the future of the European construction.

3.1. Images of Europe

It is important, to begin with, to make a clear distinction between two types of perceptions: those revolving around the general talk of “change”, talk which gradually leads to Europe and to the role (real or fantasized) that is attributed to her in these transformations; and those which come through in talk covering specifically the actions of the European institutions in winegrowing matters. We will analyse below

some of these “typical views”, for although many facts are contrary to them, they remain a good indicator of the representations generally accepted by the actors of the world in which they operate.

3.1.1. European integration and the construction of Otherness

The image of Europe is linked, first and foremost, to two figures whose presence in Languedoc-Roussillon is often seen by the winegrowers as the consequence of the freedom of movement and residence in force in the European space: that of the Polish worker and that of the neo-winegrower. As regards Polish workers, one first contradiction can be observed between the generalities – frequently opposed to the principle of freedom of movement of persons – and comments on the solid experience of interaction with these seasonal workers. Interviews with employers summon a portrait of the Pole as a conscientious worker, not given to striking and not stingy with working hours, such as Joël Castany describes him: *“It is really hard to find the workforce locally. In the old days, if I did not employ (workers) from the village, my tractor tyres got slashed. The problem today is good attendance. Young people find that too hard. Some of them will let you down in the middle of the grape harvest. With the Poles, you can see they are used to work. The Poles are like the Spaniards, back in the day. They graft! In the morning at 7 a.m., everybody is there.”* As for some winegrowers’ infatuation with the Poles, it betrays a somewhat “culturalist” view of the world. An IOM official confesses: *“Some growers call us and have no qualms in telling us that they prefer the Poles because they are Christian and they say they don’t want Moroccans.”* These representations are to some extent endorsed by the French administration: *“The problem with the Moroccan workforce is that it does not go home”*, we were told by someone who asked for their name not to be divulged. According to Slovene philosopher Slavoj Žižek the West is witnessing a gradual shift from “class discourse” to a culture-orientated discourse: *“In today’s political discourse, the very term ‘worker’ tends to have disappeared from sight, substituted or obliterated by ‘immigrants’ – Algerians in France, Turks in Germany, Mexicans in the USA, etc. In the new vocabulary, the class problematic of exploitation is transformed into the multiculturalist problematic of ‘intolerance of the Other’, and the investment of liberals in the particular rights of ethnic minorities draws much of its energy from the repression of the general category of the collective labourer”* (Žižek, 2000, p.41). The problem would no longer lie so much with the labourers’ working conditions as with their

cultural make-up and home country. Contrary to the received wisdom regarding the broad “migrant” category (De Wenden 2003), the Poles applying for seasonal work are not the most destitute in their country. As a group, they are on the whole young, university educated, urban (although, since the turn of this century, the IOM observes a rise in the rural element). Stéphane Darvas (IOM) indicates: *“Before, we had mostly students, but a new phenomenon is coming into light with a growth among farmers who entrust their enterprise to Ukrainian employees in order to work a season in France. It’s like a new international division of labour.”* These migrant workers are usually attached to their own social background and view seasonal work and transnational mobility in Europe as a means to improve their standard of living in their home society. The stereotype of the immigrant determined to settle in Western Europe does not apply to the project of the people concerned here.

ACCORDING TO SLOVENE PHILOSOPHER SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK THE WEST IS WITNESSING A GRADUAL SHIFT FROM “CLASS DISCOURSE” TO A CULTURE-ORIENTATED DISCOURSE.

As for the neo-winegrowers, mostly natives of Northern European countries, we have already shown how they have unwittingly come to embody the waning of cooperative cellars. This phenomenon reinforces already existing local stereotypes – specifically those that associate private cellar with quality vintage wine, and cooperative cellar with mass-produced table wine. It thus is indirectly party to the creation of an image of European integration as a process which advantages the well-off. So the construction of differences is framed around a confusion between social and national registers. The image of the well-heeled foreigner holds fast in local eyes, the newcomers’ denials notwithstanding: *“My husband has the image of the loaded Swiss but people here don’t realise we have put everything we had in this, it is the mad gamble of someone with a passion but it is also risky, we could fail,”* says Blandine. The same feeling with Peter and Susan S.: *“We have invested all our wealth and even more for we are in debt up to our necks and beyond with the family and the bank. What is hard at times is the image we have on the ground: people think it’s just a game for us but we are taking big risks because, in financial terms, winegrowing is a bottomless pit.”* Local winegrowers’ perceptions can be further explained by the fact that the adjustments required by the European institutions, which encourage the production of finer wines, do not reflect their consumption habits. For many languedoc winegrowers, wine is first and foremost a daily drink with thirst-quenching and energizing qualities (“wine as food”); its

consumption is associated with work and not with celebrations or class as is the case with vintage wines. This story from an Aude MP is a good illustration of these representations: *“I remember, one day, whilst on a study tour in the Bordeaux region we were brought a glass of wine for wine-tasting. I down the glass, I like it but don’t find it full bodied enough... Then I look around and see the others rolling the wine in their mouth and then spitting it in buckets. It is clear that for us, wine just is not the same thing.”* In a region where wine has long been seen as a drink culturally associated with working class good-natured conviviality, **the dismissal of “wine as food” is experienced by winegrowers as a rejection of their person and their values.** These stereotypes survive in spite of evolutions in winegrowing society⁴⁸. They are like filters through which local representations of are arrived at. Thus the “quality revolution” encouraged by the European winegrowing policy comes to confirm in local winegrower’s eyes **the link between Europe and middle class values.** The newcomers are associated with “moneyed elites” well integrated in the European society now developing.

3.1.2. “Barbarians” and globalisation

The sentiment, pervading the local mindset, that the region is a country of refuge, gets exercised at every new migratory wave, not without ill-feeling. This is currently stirred up at the sense of invasion from Northern Europeans enabled by their cultural and economic capital to bypass the successive stages of integration – since, as a rule, they have immediate access to ownership. In his book, Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé was already writing: *“We are colonised by the Northerners”* and airing the *“problem caused by the development of Dutch second homes”* (Maffre-Baugé, 1975, p. 128). And the local media never misses a headline on the explosion of land prices, citing in particular the arrival of the “English”⁴⁹ – who epitomise extreme otherness. The identification of neo-winegrowers with Northern Europe ties in with a feeling, widespread among Southern winegrowers, that the European Union is being built on an unequal relationship between North and South: *“The European construction is being achieved to the detriment of the South and to the benefit of arable farmers and the North”* (Maffre-Baugé, 1975, p. 128). In that spirit, a number

48 These oppositions endure in the contrasting representations of privately owned and co-operative cellar, right and left, hillsides and plain, quality wine and wine-as-food etc. in spite of the diversification in their production initiated by co-operative cellars and of the numerous exchanges taking place between the two sets of co-operation and private ownership (such as the “grape on wheels” or unofficial purchase of grapes from a co-operative producer by wine-growers in privately owned cellars).

49 See for instance the book by journalist J.A Fralon, *Au secours, les Anglais nous envahissent !* [Help, the English are coming!] (2005)

of union representatives denounce the failure to re-address the issue of “chaptalisation”⁵⁰ in the current discussions on wine reform at European level, which they see as one more sign of bias in favour of Northerners. A big shot in the cooperative movement seethes: *“If Chaptalisation were banned, we could create a new European trend, advantageous to Southern winegrowers who could supply concentrated grape must to other European winegrowers and thus avoid relying on beet-growers⁵¹ to enrich wine... This could also be a way to mark the difference with our global competitors (...) but you can feel that the Northern lobbies are not prepared to go down that route.”* We have here another version of the “culturalisation” of difference which finds an outlet in the resurgence of an imaginary geography of Europe in which the South is subjugated by the North, cradle of economic liberalism.

CONFLICTS ARISING AROUND WINE FIND AN OUTLET IN THE RESURGENCE OF AN IMAGINARY GEOGRAPHY OF EUROPE IN WHICH THE SOUTH IS SUBJUGATED BY THE NORTH, CRADLE OF ECONOMIC LIBERALISM.

It must be stressed that the newcomers’ adherence to a somewhat mythified conception of the winegrower’s trade has not got the better, in the local psyche, of the enduring image pitching the “locals”, champions of an established tradition and a know-how, against the neo-winegrowers caricatured as “barbarians” from Northern Europe, agents of globalisation moving in to impose a standardised taste on the wine. For, in the mind of local winegrowers, the advent of the neo-winegrowers is of a piece not only with the European integration process but also with globalisation. Current changes are perceived most of the time as direct manifestations of this double process and its insufferable trail of brutal impositions, cultural standardisation and uniformisation of tastes and eating habits. Many winegrowers, who are also consumers, thus perceive New World wine competition and the growing acceptability of new norms of taste in a mode not uncommon in French opinion, for which globalisation rhymes with “loss”, “regression”, indeed “decadence”. Since French wine’s character does not meet with the tastes of the majority of new consumers, **the redefining, outside of France, of the taste of wine is then perceived as a slight on the national culture.** Conflated, these images create a paradox in so far as, as shown in the previous section, it was rather Aniane’s new residents who mounted a robust defence of “local traditions” in the “Mondavi episode”. A paradox also

50 Chaptalisation is the addition of sugar to stabilise some wines not sufficiently rich in alcohol. This practice is allowed for Bordeaux and Alsace wines or some German wines but is not used in Southern vineyards where the sunny climate yields wines naturally rich in alcohol.

51 The beet is the main source of sugar in France where it is part of arable farms rotation (trans)

because while neo-winegrowers work at the redefinition of the taste of wine locally, it is rather in the direction of “personalisation” than standardisation. Meanwhile a degree of consensus has recently emerged among the main Languedoc trade union bosses to move towards an even more industrialised production better suited to the globalised demand for a wine with a wooded and fruity taste⁵² – and the idea to produce a wine labelled under the umbrella brand “*Sud de France*” runs along the same line of thought. A paradox lastly because France remains, to date, the world leading wine producer. In spite of the crisis, Languedoc winegrowing – some of its co-operatives included – can be said to hold its own quite respectably on the world market. So the notion of a relentless decline of European leadership in the wine-producing sector, whilst not entirely compatible with the truth, is a clear expression of wine’s extreme sensitivity as, in its capacity as a “totem good”, it is liable to crystallise all the angst about cultural depreciation.

3.1.3. Europe or impersonal regulation

A fair amount of local talk is aimed directly at the European Union’s actions regarding winegrowing. This often comes through in speeches bemoaning “compulsory Europe”, a Europe who imposes by means of directives the diminution of production, the grubbing up of vines, the rise of quality, the conquest of new markets, the reduction of the winegrowing population. Winegrowers are wont to reify “Europe”, to give it intentions and a will external to their own. Thus as he harked back to the good old confrontational days between the Midi Rouge and the Republic, Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé had this arresting phrase: “*The European Union had not yet irretrievably muddied the waters*” (Maffre-Baugé, p.63).

It would appear that, to the mind of many winegrowers, wine growing has been changed into “a now abstract market”, devoid of its social and political dimensions. As Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé explains: “*You no longer do battle with the merchant you might meet of a Sunday at church or at the rugby game but against giants such as the big distribution channels. Something abstract that bears no resemblance to the person you know. The French government surrenders its role in the economy and the Minister for Agriculture bows to European Union policies.*” The European decision centres (which, to the mind of the Languedociens should

⁵² Several union leaders have called on the authorities to allow reforms in that direction, seeking in particular the permission to add wood shavings to the wine.

also be deliberation centres) also remain in the realm of abstraction. Brussels is perceived as “mis-placed”⁵³ (Augé, 1992) in that it belongs to no “lived in” geography. The European capital does not belong on the winegrowers’ mental map, which is the more critical since local power is on the contrary powerfully “grounded”. Neither do European directives appear to them to be the result of a real negotiation with the interbranch’s actors. The already described sidelining of orality signals a redefinition of political praxis wherein social connection is no longer at the heart of representativity. For these men, social and political relations cannot be restricted to the written word. They find it hard to accept the “directive politics”, these decisions conveyed by no known mediator: “*We are fed up with paperwork. Now the winegrowing business consists in filling in forms. With all the European standards and directives, we’ve got to spend our time reading and writing because half the time, we don’t understand a word,*” one says. Joël Castany, union representative with a Brussels “mandate” goes on: “*Oratory flourishes have no place in Brussels. In the South, we are used to talk, to argue; here, in Brussels, with their simultaneous translation, it just doesn’t work!*” **In European debates, multilingual, urbane, the grand tradition of public speaking loses its rationale.** Whereas Languedoc leaders’ speeches are pitched at an emotional, nay mythical level and exude personal charisma, the “language of Europe” neutralises, for the purpose of multinational negotiation, all flamboyance – only allowing through translation the information relevant to the debate. Like Joël Castany, trade union representatives increasingly tend to be seen as “specialists” of the winegrowing case. Gradually, technical expertise and the written word are getting the better of rhetoric.

Winegrowers find it hard to make these institutions their own, operating along principles wholly foreign to them (“green papers”, “white papers”, etc...) and on which the conflict resolution formulae which typified the Midi Rouge have no influence. The format of European negotiations, which takes into account actors with sometimes vastly different interests are likewise stigmatised. In February 2006, the Directorate-General for Agriculture, wishing to associate a range of bodies from “civil society” to the winegrowing debate, organised in Brussels a

⁵³ The word *non lieu* normally connects in French with a court case dismissed, a non-suit, which does not take place, reinforcing the sense of non place, of unreality (trans).

THE SIDELINING OF THE ORAL TRADITION ALSO CORRESPONDS TO A REDEFINITION OF POLITICAL PRACTICES WHEREBY SOCIAL CONNECTIONS ARE NO LONGER AT THE HEART OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.

“forum” on the latest reform of the wine COM. These discussions brought together the winegrowing professions but also associations fighting alcoholism, consumer groups, etc.... These debates, which did not get adequate exposure within the diverse European winegrowing regions, lay themselves open to all sorts of more or less justified criticism. Broadly speaking, the process frequently used by the Commission and consisting in the organisation of consultations calling on NGOs and associations who have been rubberstamped “representative” by “civil society⁵⁴”, raises questions. For, traditionally, in Languedoc-Roussillon, *the whole local society* felt engaged in the winegrowing debate. This notion of a “representativity” based on rather blurred criteria, sometimes exempts the European institutions from organising a much broader public debate on the European agenda. A number of criticisms Languedoc winegrowers make of the Union are indeed related to the fact that **the democratic processes implemented at European level have not yet bridged the gap opened up by the regression of traditional intermediate bodies**. The political forms associated with the European integration do not strike them as equal to the task of accounting for the interplay between social forces. The situation is the more worrying since this gap allows for all sorts of manipulations from local and national politicians for whom it is only too easy to blame all troubles and crises on a remote and ill-understood Europe.

3.2. Paradoxical political transpositions

The political positioning of the diverse actors on Languedoc’s winegrowing scene are less tied to truly ideological considerations than to the always shifting and relative perceptions the different parties have of the relationship between the South, the French State and the European Union – constructs which often lead to very paradoxical political behaviours.

3.2.1. Ideological imbroglio

The sociological turnover in Languedoc villages has had a marked part in modifying the traditional political boundaries. The advent of the neo-winegrowers further brings out differences, sometimes of scales, between the political make-

⁵⁴ There is no scope here to develop this issue of a civil society conception often reduced to associations or NGOs, cf. Kilhani (2000).

ups of different EU Member States. Robert C declares: “*When I was in England, I belonged to the Labour left, when I lived in the USA, I felt like joining the far left, and in France, I am so fed up with this mutualist system that I feel in sympathy with the liberal right.*” And Nick B. adds: “I have always been on the left but I feel no common ground with a left exercising its patronage through the co-operative cellar system here, and I have nothing to do with it.” When it comes to the “native” winegrowers it is shocking to observe how the awareness of their own marginalisation goes hand in glove with the rise of the protest vote – vote which takes on different shades depending on whether it is aimed at Paris or Brussels. Thus Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé who makes no secret of his right wing and Catholic allegiances decided to stand on a Communist ticket for the European election of 1979: “*I chose the Communist party for one simple reason: it was alone to oppose the enlargement of Europe to Spain and Portugal*”. The most striking political phenomenon remains however the advances of the far right vote. Since the beginning of the 1980s, Jean-Marie Le Pen’s Front National (FN) gets good results in the Languedoc at presidential elections, especially among winegrowers (Négrier 2001). Michel Bettane, an expert on winegrowing society, explains: “*The Évin bill provoked the first wave of discontent. The winegrowers, who have, for 2000 years been a channel of civilisation, felt stigmatised more harshly than poppy growers.*” Other observers speak of the swing of the Midi Rouge to the far right in reaction to the winegrowing sector’s problems, to the mass influx of foreigners and to the explosion of land prices – an analysis which calls for qualification as this radical vote in national polls is counteracted by the persistence of patronage which advantages the left in local consultations. What this shows in any case is **the instability inherent in all transitory situations when social, political and cultural orders go through a crisis with no new political medium to step in and give them an articulation**.

The FN vote can be set alongside the plethora of references to the soil and the values of rootedness. We have earlier explained this phenomenon of the **territory-based approach** as a new mediation formula in the context of a crisis in political life and its traditional intermediary bodies. It can also be seen as a means to allay the fears stirred up by ongoing transformations, notably the increase in flows (of people, goods etc...). The *Septimanie* episode can undoubtedly be interpreted as an attempt to establish a framework with a supposedly coherent historical grounding at the very time when borders came crashing down within the EU

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and when that region experienced an unprecedentedly mixed population influx. The reference to history and the distant past became at the time an important dimension for the new power tier represented by the region in its efforts to bring its citizens together within new parameters of belonging. In this respect, the slogans President Frêche used in his communication campaign speak for themselves: *“Septimanie was the name of our region from Roman times to the Middle Ages”* or indeed *“Septimanie is both roots and future to us”*, *“Septimanie, a new identity shared by Occitans and Catalans”*. This historical case elicited in turn its own paradoxes: Catalan movements, normally set against the French government turned their wrath, in this instance, on regional power. Many Catalans rejected the new president’s initiative which disposed of the name of “Roussillon” which has long designated French Catalonia.

What is interesting to note here is that the changes in tiers of government brought about by European integration and the emergence of the region as a political actor entails a sense of broadening of the range of options. Whilst the erosion of national borders and the enlargement to Spain in 1980 had fed the hopes of minority groups who dreamt of the reunification of Northern and Southern Catalonia, Georges Frêche opens another avenue by his choice of a Roman name pre-dating the existence of Catalonia. **This regional political mythology highlighting a native past must be read against the attempt to recreate symbolic borders amidst the landmarks upheaval.** This type of message makes the traditional political parties’ task the more difficult since the alternative ways of figuring a new social contract between the diverse populations today sharing the land are hard to come by. It would appear that the Languedoc-Roussillon citizenry’s receptivity to these native mythologies is in direct proportion to the region’s geographic situation. The geography of extremist ballots in France, noticeably widespread on the Southern, Eastern and Northern fringes suggests that border porousness – be it maritime, like on the Mediterranean, or continental – cannot but exacerbate fears. **More than potentially fruitful, their trans-border position seems a cause for concern** to the majority of winegrowers. In broader terms the immigration issue is explosive throughout Europe. The Europeans are slow in coming to terms with the awareness of their continent as a migration space. In contrast with most American states, structured around the lore of immigration, the European nation-States today members of the

EU built themselves partly on the mode of nativeness. As we write, political and media-talk is slow in catching up with the major demographic changes affecting today’s Europe.

3.2.2. Of political bad faith

Local and national politicians’ speeches consistently flaunt their double standards when it comes to Europe. For instance, in France, the discrepancy is striking between the farming sector’s benevolence towards Polish workers and the official line. *“French farming is disadvantaged by the policies restricting the entry of foreigners, whereas, everywhere else in Europe, where our competition is, the policy is one of open borders.”* Thus speaks an FNSEA⁵⁵ representative encountered in the course of our research. And Joël Castany, who employs twenty odd Poles annually, has nothing but praise for neighbouring Spain: *“Cross the Pyrennées and you’ll find between two and three thousand Romanians working in the villages and keeping farming going whereas here, you see nobody in the fields, the legislation is too complicated.”* Many union representatives from the farming community are thus pressing for the opening of the borders to seasonal workers even as several prominent figures of the political and the media scene warn against the prospect of opening our borders to East-European workers. On 1 May 2006, France partially lifted its moratorium⁵⁶ on the free movement of workers, responding to the pressures from some professional sectors – such as farming and the building trade. There is no evidence that lifting the moratorium was followed by a flood of East-European workers into the country, although it may still be rather early to draw conclusions on this matter.

In this region where clashes with central government is a solid tradition, Brussels has broadly speaking taken over from Paris for scape-goating purposes. The facelessness of European political power gives locally and nationally elected representatives full scope for censuring European technocracy and using Brussels as a screen for deflecting local discontent. This ambiguity in French politicians’ behaviour has not escaped the notice of all trade unionists. In the 1970s Maffre-Baugé was already pointing out that *“the government shelters behind Brussels in order to justify viticulture’s predicament”* (Maffre-Baugé, 1975, p.196). It is

⁵⁵ Fédération nationale des syndicats d’exploitants agricoles, the main French farmers’ union .

⁵⁶ France had asked for a moratorium on the free movement of people to accompany the last European enlargement, in 2004.

sometimes out of ignorance that some local leaders perpetuate confusions about the role of the European institutions – as happened at this public meeting for the people of the “*Communauté de communes*” (a parish bloc) of the Piémont d’Alaric, which called on winegrowers to “*fight and resist*” and bid the “*Council of Europe*” (in this instance confused with the European Council) to “*make a stand in the face of skewed competition and the organised chaos of international trade*”. At national level, the government is now in an awkward position since it wants both to fight the national winegrowing corner and to advance a European policy which transcends national interests. The most glaring expression of the ambivalence which presides over the winegrowers’ relationship to Europe is the episode of the Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE). The Mediterranean bloc, including the Languedoc-Roussillon region, had already voted against the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The prospect of the 2004 enlargement gave rise to much alarmist talk on the consequences of the free movement of persons as had been the case at the time of the integration of Spain and Portugal. But in September 2004, a demonstration brought before Narbonne’s Préfecture saw several hundred wine growers clamouring for more Polish seasonal workers. The same winegrowers were marching en masse on 25th May 2005 in Nîmes to call for a NO vote in the TCE referendum. In 2005 the entire Languedoc-Roussillon region showed massive support for the NO campaign (more than 60%). The geographic breakdown of the regional vote does however point to a distinct split between urban zones, which rather favoured the YES vote, and the countryside. In the light of what we know of the attitude towards the Poles, it would be hasty to reduce this rejection of the European Constitution to the winegrowers’ mere rejection of foreigners and their fear of enlargement. It is more likely that this winegrowing population feels – for complex reasons, some of which have become apparent – excluded from the construction of Europe while the city people in the region appear more in tune with the values of “Europeanity”.

As a result, it is important to dissociate the – possibly legitimate – criticisms aimed at the European institutions from the protest strategies which are not as such a radical questioning of European membership or a refusal to engage in the European venture. The Midi Rouge’s dissenting tradition was the instrument of its integration into the French State so it is not entirely fanciful to interpret the tensions between the winegrowers and the European institutions as the sign that a political relationship is falling into place between the EU and its citizens.

Conclusion

On the basis of Max Weber’s typology, we can analyse the relationship between the European leadership and Languedoc’s winegrowers and their spokespersons in terms of conflict between two forms of authority: the “rational-legal” authority of the former, founded in technical expertise and associated with a written culture (directives, regulations...); and the “charismatic” authority of the latter, resting on personal connections, the spoken word and a ready forthrightness. As they do not share a deliberation culture where these two political praxes can be harmonised, exchanges are difficult. And it is not for want of consultation outfits with names laying claims to an oral and live practice of democracy (“forums” and the like) being set up at European level. European decision-makers, adept at consensus and compromise seem afraid of confrontation and show little taste for forays outside their Brussels offices and the job of explaining their decisions to the citizens or weighing up public opinion. Yet, as we have shown, confrontation and conflicts are also a mode of political relations

This political and cultural clash echoes the dialectics between Europe as a space and Europe as a territory. Although these two conceptions complement each other, it is mostly the former which seems to be accomplished *via* the gradual enlarge-

ment of Europe which abolishes internal borders and allows for the free movement of citizens, goods and capital. This process gives rise to much of the winegrowers' criticism as they denounce a Europe "disconnected from its territory". Now a territory happens to be the geographic area with clearly established borders, which its inhabitants have "appropriated" (if only figuratively) and which they stand ready to defend against foreign intrusion. This conception, which is fundamental to the construction of Western nation-States, does not *a priori* sit well with the European project of an open community of peoples and countries. This flexibility of the European model further exacerbates winegrower's insecurity. Let it not be forgotten also that the Common Agricultural Policy, the largest budget item, has from the outset been run by means of regulatory tools similar to those set up within the States (distillation, grubbing-up bonuses etc...). Winegrowers' (and more generally farmers') hostility to Europe can be read as the reaction of a population category which, more so than others, had grown accustomed to protection from free competition. Accordingly, the reforms of the wine COM currently in progress and aimed at the liberalisation of the winegrowing sector through the ending of some interventionist practices inspires fierce opposition amongst them. This opposition can be viewed as resulting from disappointed expectations regarding the EU's capability to create a territory internally but also *externally*. As collective identities are always achieved in relational terms, the notion of territory raises, by necessity, the question of external relations and of the meaning of new borders. As a counterpart to cancelling out many internal barriers in the process of European integration, the winegrowers expect that their political leaders show off, value and better defend the historical, cultural and social singularities of European winegrowing.

If the integration of markets is not coupled with a systematic recognition of its attendant social and identity transformations as well as with a reinforcement of the democratic deliberative processes at European level, there are strong odds that, in these troubled transitional times, the "disembedding" phenomenon described above could have disastrous political consequences. In the case of Languedoc-Roussillon, we would however point out that the current deconstruction of social relationships informed for over a century by the politico-institutional architecture of the welfare State has not translated into anomy or irretrievable atomisation of the social structures. To be sure, the reconfiguration of the market at a European

scale, the shift to a "demand economy", the corrosion of the singular historical relationship between Midi Rouge and the French Republic have upset the *status quo*. But at the same time they allow for the construction of a new social order, new co-operations, new non-commercial relationships (Touzard, 1998). The neo-winegrowers projects also carry new "embedding" possibilities. To wit their relationship to the territory and to "tradition", the relations with local private cellars and the personalised contacts they maintain with clients all over Europe. Likewise, the commercial strategy initiated by the Region could be the sign that a new embedding is being implemented at different levels (Region/ Europe).

It is not possible to conclude this study without observing that the hard experience of European mandates has considerably modified the European vision of some "Wine Warriors". Strong of their position, they have circulated the information downwards towards their rank and file and have played a major role in the ongoing reform of the co-operatives, helping to define strategies better adjusted to the market's new specificities and to the constraints imposed by the authorities. Several among these trade union bosses have actually been won over to the European project: *"I no longer see Europe in the same way, my Brussels experience has completely changed me, I have changed my mind, I am now pro-Europe,"* Maffre-Baugé now admits; for his part, Joël Castany says: *"I want even more Europe, my experience in Brussels has changed my outlook, I have met wonderful people, European farmers with whom we share a fight (...) Besides, in Brussels, it is easier to meet the Commissioner or the Director-General for agriculture than to meet the Minister or his principal private secretary in Paris."* These trade unionists have thus gradually acquired an awareness of the common issues that bind them to their Greek or Spanish opposite numbers.

These winegrowing leaders' resources, the collective mobilization models they can resort to, the huge sympathy "wine culture" enjoys in Europe have turned these men in potential agents for the European authorities in an educational capacity. It is foreseeable that with time, if these mediators continue to be involved in Brussels negotiations, the winegrowers' opinion of Europe will evolve in the same direction. Already, the days when Italian wines – synonymous for the Languedoc winegrower's with Common Market unfair competition – were poured down the drain are in the distant past. More so than Portugal or Hungary, the New World countries

are today's cause for disquiet. And yet, this transferral does not appear to induce a sense of belonging to Europe. Often ill-informed, most Languedoc winegrowers are unable to recognise their interests in the positions fought over by the Union, for instance on intellectual property rights against Australia or the United States in multilateral trade discussions. The love of the soil, the lore of alchemic nuptials between Sun and vine stock, the Dionysian ecstasy the drink induces are close to the heart of all the "wine peoples" in Europe. If European officials were less shy of the field and/or had sound local spokespersons to explain the fight conducted by the EU within such bodies as the WTO, if they started speaking a more evocative language rather than that of figures and charts, then perhaps wine would stop being a bone of contention to become the leaven of a shared European identity.

Annex

Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets (COM) in wine

Sharing the wine market

The CMOs govern the production of and trade in agricultural products in all the Member States of the European Union. No sooner was the common Agricultural Policy (CAP) implemented in 1962 that the CMOs were set up to bolster the markets in several production sectors¹ by means of mechanisms adapted to each. They set the price fixing mechanism, the rules of intervention and the trade mechanisms with sector's non-EU countries.

The CMO in wine has generated one of the most far reaching and complex set of rules in the CAP, for three reasons:

- 1 – Unlike primary agricultural productions, wine is a process product and a highly differentiated one.
- 2 – European vinicultures and national legislations pertaining to them until 1962 were very diverse.
- 3 – In 1962, for a range of reasons (taxation, anti-fraud activity, quality objectives), the six Founding States wished to uphold many provisions concerning the production and marketing of wine products.

1 Common Market Organisations cover: cereals, animals, meats, shellfish, fish et molluscs, eggs and fowls, fruit and vegetables, bananas, wine, milk products, rice, olive oil and olives, sugar, floriculture, hay, processed fruit and vegetables, tobacco, linen and hemp, hops, seeds, tea, coffee and spices, etc.

Today, the wine CMO manages missions shared by all the CMOs but also the control of the winegrowing potential, wine production, oenological practices and processes, rules on designation and presentation, rules governing the movement and release for consumption of wine products, protection of the designations of origin, etc.

The wine CMO, results from a compromise

The wine CMO came into being thanks to a political agreement between the founding States. A fine balance was found which would respect the singularity of climate-wrought viticultures, of production methods and of the diverse legislations. The original compromise worked around three great fault lines:

1 – The principle of national market organisation. While some countries have a different treatment for quality wines and table wine (France, Italy), others (Germany, Luxembourg) do not apply this distinction. So as to accommodate both parties, the regulatory differentiation is recognised and each Member State enjoys considerable room for manoeuvre for wine classification.

2 – Chaptalisation. Traditional in several of the six founding counties (specifically those where sun exposure is limited: Germany, Luxemburg and some French regions), wine enrichment by means of added sugar is forbidden elsewhere (Italy and some French regions). Observance of established practices has thus been recognised by the CMO.

3 – Freedom of plantation. In 1962, whereas Italy did not restrict plantation, France stringently regulated planting rights. The CMO accepted the principle of planting rights but excluded quality wines from the market management mechanisms – such as distillation or storage – and subjected them to a tighter discipline in terms of production and control. In order to counteract overproduction, planting rights were finally suspended in 1976.

The three ages of the CMO: European vineyards in transition

Over the last fifty years, the wine market has undergone a constant evolution impelling the decision makers to reform the CMO. These transformations can be broken down into three stages. In a first period, the market was stable: the CMO was accordingly liberal, with only a few regulation tools. But planting rights,

matched with quasi-guaranteed outlets, generated structural surpluses in the 1970s. In order to stem the tide, the CMO resorted to intervention, introducing a planting ban in 1976 and compulsory distillation of the surpluses. Throughout the 1980s, in answer to the steady drop in consumption and the growth in demand for quality wines, financial inducement towards the permanent abandonment of areas under vines were reinforced. Reforms started during the 1990-2000 aimed at re-establishing a balance between supply and demand on the community market, in which it did not succeed. Production surpluses were the more difficult to correct since the world market was also over-supplied.

The EU, a leading position in the world wine market

The increased supply coming from the New World notwithstanding, the old continent still holds today its world leader position in terms of areas under vine, production levels and wine consumption.

In 2005, the EU represented 45% of the world vineyard acreage. Over the last five years, the EU-25 has yielded an average of 178 millions hl/year, that is 55 to 60 % of world production. On the chart of producing countries, the top three are France, Italy, and Spain (51.4% of world production between them in 2004); out of the 10 major world producers, five are EU members.

According to the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV)'s figures, world consumption, which kept dropping until the end of the 1990s, has since begun to grow again (though not enough for a return to the earlier situation to be envisaged). Europe drinks some 60% of world wine, but her consumption continues to fall steadily in absolute terms whilst the relative share of quality wine is growing.

In the context of international trade liberalisation, initiated with the GATT agreements, wine exports are in constant progress: exported wine amounted to 33,4% of world wine consumption in 2005, against 18,1% at the beginning of the 1990s.

2006-2007: towards a sustainable European wine sector?

In the face of endemic structural surplus, systematic resort to distillation grows more and more onerous. €1.27 billions went into the wine CMO in 2005. Transformation of the surpluses alone, including that of quality wines, into ethanol or vinegar costs close to €500 millions/year. In 2006, the European Commission and the European wine actors have taken note of the evolution of European and world markets, and indicated their intention to restructure in depth the European vineyards to adjust to the new deal.

The proposed reform aims to improve European winegrowers' competitiveness, to reinforce community wines reputation, recover market shares, balance supply and demand, simplify regulation. Although the Commission affirms its will to preserve the best traditions in wine production, to consolidate social fabric and to preserve the rural environment, its statements give rise to deep concern as they recommend massive grubbing-up (400 000 ha). The current CMO reform (February 2006-June 2007) is at the centre of an explosive debate between conflicting strategies for change, the sole aim of which is to help European wine growing to hold its own in these days of wine market globalisation.

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