

# **The London School of Economics and Political Science**

*Wine In Their Veins: France and the European Community's  
Common Wine Policy, 1967-1980*

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A thesis submitted to the Department of International  
History of the London School of Economics for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy, London, December 2013.

## Declaration

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## Abstract

This thesis analyses the impact that the European Community had on table wine growers in the Midi region of France in the 1970s.

This work is divided into the following parts: the negotiations leading to the creation of the Common Wine Policy (CWP) in 1970, its operation in the early 1970s until its first major crisis in 1975-1976, its drastic transformation from liberal policy to one of restrictive control in the late 1970s, the reaction of table wine producers in Languedoc-Roussillon to these changes over the decade, and the change in political relationships and governance at three levels - Brussels, Paris, and Languedoc-Roussillon - as a result of this process.

It argues that the first decade of the CWP changed relationships between different groups at the European, national, and local level in two major ways: first, national French government institutions voluntarily decreased their power over a key national industry – this was the most marked feature in the French wine industry of this time period. Second, the CWP helped facilitate the rise of sub-national and non-state actors in policy circles from which they were previously excluded. Empowered by the new responsibilities given to them by the French government, particularly via a newly-created national office of wine, French vignerons began attempting to bypass the national French bottleneck to the Community and directly lobby European-level institutions, either via their own organisations or as part of transnational endeavours. Given the French government's particularly adamant control of who represented the country at the Brussels levels in the 1960s, this change in only a decade was a significant shift. In analysing this process, this thesis also makes broader comments on the integration process as a whole, adding particularly to the literature on the Community's agricultural integration, and is the first comprehensive review of the history of the Common Wine Policy, and the first to make an extensive assessment of the impact on local farmers in the Midi during this time in relation to the European Community's policies.

To Darian

## Acknowledgements

If I were to thank everyone who has supported me during this doctorate and contributed to this work, these acknowledgements would run on for many pages. There are a large number of people who have been helpful to me and my thesis during the course of my research, and I hope they will forgive me for not naming them all here. I am indeed grateful for each person with whom I have discussed and shared my work.

There are some people I must thank for their support and help during the course of this thesis:

My deep thanks to my supervisor, Piers Ludlow, who has been patient, insightful, and steadfastly encouraging through the whole process of the doctorate. My advisor Heather Jones has been an excellent confidante and has often shared her academic wisdom with me. At the London School of Economics and Political Science, Daniel Strieff, Aurelie Basha i Novosejt, Marie Julie Chenard, and Paul Horsler have all been important to me in my time there.

My work has entailed a lot of travel, and with this, thanks that likewise travel far and wide.

In London, John-Paul Muir, Shahrokh Razmjou, Erik Chavez, Tom Bartlett, and Nicholas Tam were, in diverse ways, my work's champions.

Across Canada, Tara Faria, David Marples, Rebecca Fletcher, Brendan Brown, Matthew Weigel, Jim Barnes, Kate Lowndes, and P.E.O. Chapter H have been unceasingly supportive.

During my research in Paris, the Chavez family has been a fount of kindness, generosity, and hospitality.

The kind and cheerful staff at The Burn Manor in Scotland were excellent company during an extended writing sojourn.

Of the many conversations I have had about my work, the ones with Katja Siedel and Marion Demossier stand out as important ones that set me on the course of my research.

My entire extended Van Leeuwen family in Mariekerke, Belgium have given me their full and utmost love and care.

The staff members at the Archives Patrimoine in the Médiathèque Emile-Zola in Montpellier were truly supportive of my work and went the distance to make sure I had the documents I needed.

This work could not have been undertaken without the funding with which I was so generously provided and my thanks go out to the many organisations that aided me. During the course of this research, I received funding and support from a variety of sources, including the LSE International History Department Fellowship Scheme, the Mackenzie King Scholarship Foundation, the Government of Alberta through the Sir James Lougheed Award of Distinction, the London Goodenough Association of Canada, the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence through the Sørensen Grant, and PEO Chapter H.

Finally, my deepest and most heartfelt thanks go to my mother Jennie Shao, my father Siguo Chen, and my brother Darian Chen for their continued, unwavering support of me during my many years abroad for the doctorate. I dedicate this thesis to my young brother, the absence of whose company was the greatest sacrifice of my undertaking this work. He may rest assured, however, that this need not compel him to read it – until he is of legal drinking age.

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## Selected Abbreviations

CAP – Common Agricultural Policy

COGECA – General Committee for Agricultural Cooperation in the European Union (now the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union)

COPA – Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles (Committee of Agricultural Organizations)

CSA – Comité Spécial de l'Agriculture

CWP – Common Wine Policy

DG – directorate-general (under the European Commission)

DG VI – Directorate-General of Agriculture

EC – European Community

ECU – European Currency Unit

EEC – European Economic Community

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FNSEA – Fédération National des Syndicats des Exploitants Agricoles (National Federations of Farmers' Union, France)

FVTP – Fédération Nationale des Producteurs des Vins de Table et de Vins de Pays (It should be noted that this Fédération in French documents has also variously been given the shorthand FNPVTP.)

GATT – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

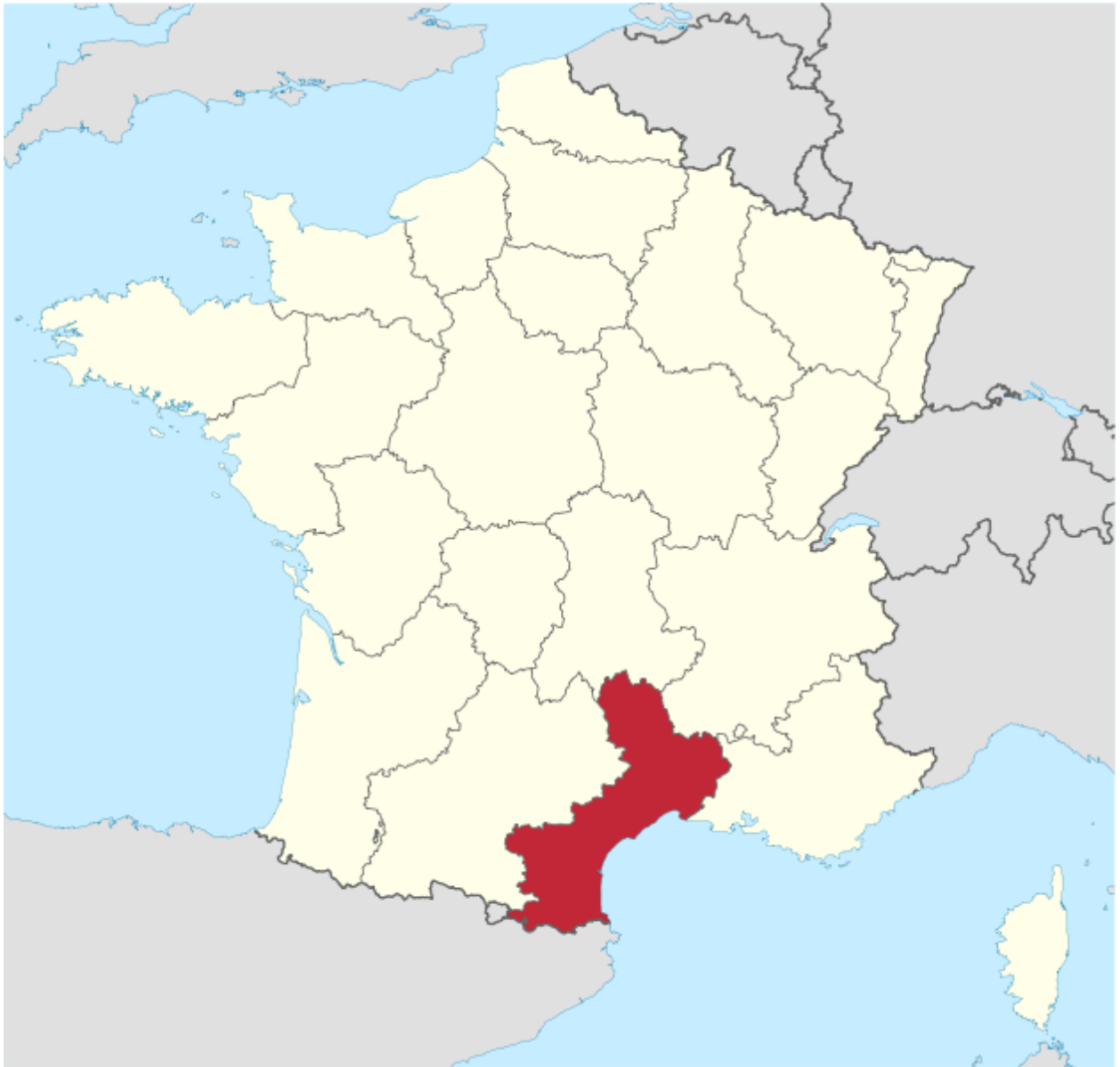
MCA – monetary compensatory amount

ONIVIT – Office National Interprofessionnel des Vins de Table

SCGI – Secrétariat général du Comité interministeriel pour les questions de coopération économique européenne

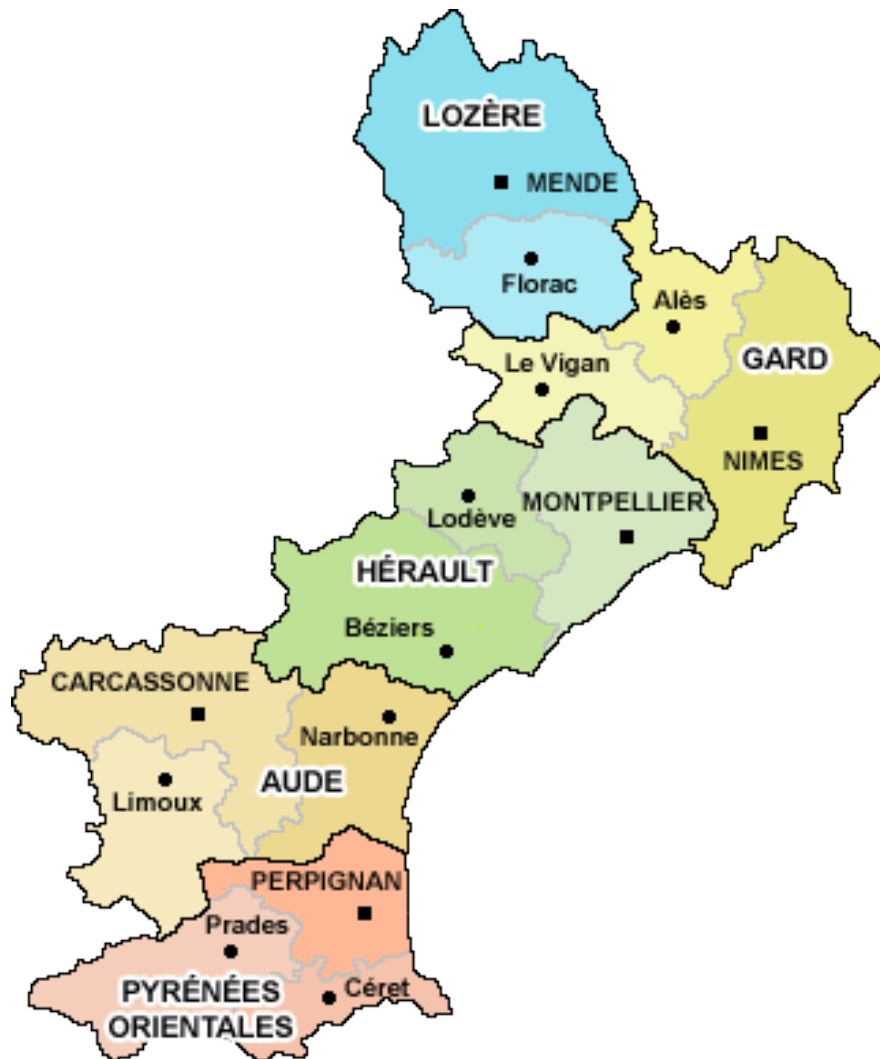


## Map situating Languedoc-Roussillon in France



Source: Wikicommons

Map of Languedoc-Roussillon and its *Départements*



Source: Cartograf.fr

## Preface

I have always been fascinated by European integration and curious about its effects on the day-to-day lives of individuals, as well as its effects on individual perceptions of self. Before I began the process of researching for my doctoral thesis, I was interested in the historical evolution of the European Union's policies on geographical indications. In preparation, I searched back through the short history of the official regime on geographical indications and it led me quickly to the regime that was its basis – the *appellation d'origine* system in France on wines.

Armed with curiosity about the this system and the resultant Community wine policy, as well as the desire to know how affected individuals had reacted, I searched through over fifteen archives and specialised libraries in four countries, allowing the documents to guide me and continuing to ‘press until it hurt’. This proved useful in sharpening the focus of my question, which had been, ‘What effect did the European Community have on wine producers in France?’ During one of my early archival visits, I went to the the departmental archives of Gironde, in which the wine-growing area of Bordeaux is located. I uncovered plenty of material on wine there, as one would expect, but very little of it pertained to or mentioned the European Community. My initial confusion gave way to the understanding that the European Community's effects on viticulture was highly uneven throughout France, as was the case with many of the Community's other policies. But this phenomenon was more unique in wine than it was in other agricultural policies for products that were, particularly when finally delivered to the consumer, more uniform, such as the other major common markets of milk, butter, or wheat.

Wine is highly variegated and differentiated throughout Europe, and without a doubt throughout French regions. Bordeaux and similarly, most other quality-wine growing regions, had little contact with or need for the European Community's new policy, as it was aimed mostly at helping poorer farmers, who in the wine world were those who largely produced table wine. Where the European Community had the most direct effect on French vignerons was in the region of Languedoc-Roussillon – roughly synonymous with the Midi when referring to viticulture – and it was there that I could best study the changing relationships between centres and periphery – I say ‘centres’ because of course this also necessitated a study of the role of the national French government. The largest table wine producing region not only in France but in Europe was the Midi. So it was that the question became, ‘What effect did the European Community have on the table wine producers in the Midi in France?’

The Common Wine Policy has had no comprehensive historical examination before my research, and the documents pertaining to its policy evolution in Brussels show intense and lengthy negotiations, often technocratic and busily bureaucratic. But the voice of vignerons was rarely heard. There would have been enough at the Community level for a thesis, but I was not satisfied. In so many seminal works on European policy, it seems the voice of affected citizenry is drowned out, and I was determined to include them. The difficulty in so doing was that farmers do not leave archives. A conscientious farmer might keep meticulous administrative records, but this would not tell us what they thought or felt. Letters from Midi farmers to the Ministry of Agriculture which were conserved and a powerful newspaper source, the daily *La Journée Vinicole*, together with the memoirs of a vigneron who wrote directly about the European dimension, with which he engaged directly as a Member of the European Parliament, allowed me to create space for the opinions and reactions of those for

whom this architectural structure of the broad-reaching and intensive wine policy was created.

My topic has lent itself to all manner of comments throughout my years of research. In social settings, it most usually prompted people to either begin discussing their favourite wines or to smile wryly and in an envious tone ask if I tasted plenty of wine for my research (one can dream I suppose); I've had many interesting conversations as a result, if not always about the substantive part of my research. But while people may have felt more inclined to engage me in light-hearted conversation than the average PhD student upon hearing about the topic of my doctoral research, the topic of wine in France is no joking matter to the French. Part of the precipitation of the 1789 revolution involved anger about the privatisation of agricultural land, including viticultural ones. With the threat of German invasion, French vigneronns put themselves in great danger to protect their wines and crops. In 1984, a violent and militant viticultural organisation from the Midi burned down a shopping centre in Carcassonne to protest lack of sufficient action for their ailing table wine sector. Whenever I have discussed my topic with those from France, the reaction is markedly different to those coming from other countries. These conversations are marked by seriousness and concern about the subject of my research, and a universal agreement about its importance, and, if not agreement on their views of Languedocien wines, a general belief that these wines are improving where once they were not particularly good, or as some had quietly insisted, barely drinkable.

A kind French professor on a train back to Paris from the National French Archives in Fontainebleau discussed French wine and politics with me in the early stages of my research. He insisted that ultimately, viticultural attitudes and behaviours were explained by economics; the effect of the European Community's wine policy on French wine growers was

simply economic. I resisted him on this point, aware of French wine historian Leo Loubère's reminder that we should not wax too romantic about wine growers who on a day-to-day basis make wine for the basic purpose of selling it. This is true, but I instinctively did not believe economics could explain the entirety of this situation. In the 1970s, in the midst of global economic turmoil and with financial government incentives to leave certain agricultural sectors, it would have made sense for the table wine producers to abandon their farms in the Midi and either retire early or move to urban centres and seek new professions; those who did not wish to leave farming even had the viable option of changing over their vineyards – with government support – to grow other crops. Given the hardship and difficulty they faced at a time when their overproduction of wine coincided with a permanent shift away from table wine drinking culture, economics would have dictated that the Midi table wine industry shrink or even collapse.

The French intervention is better explained by a desire to protect a patriotic and nationally symbolic industry; the European intervention is better explained by a welfarist perspective on the Common Agricultural Policy. The attendant opinions, reactions, and changes in self-perception of vignerons reveal nuance and complexity that address more than the economic effect of the European Community. Though the economic effect of the European Community was undoubtedly important and loomed large in the lives of these vignerons, the effects on their social and political identities were marked and tangible. The latter is harder to measure, but worthy of the study. The European Community engendered change in regional feeling, professional ideology, and cleavages within the wine community that is important to analyse, and has implications for understanding the dynamics of governance, the evolution of policy, and the complex rise of regionalism.

My work is divided into the following parts: the negotiations leading to the creation of the Common Wine Policy in 1970, its operation in the early 1970s until its first major crisis in 1975–1976, its drastic transformation from liberal policy to one of restrictive control in the late 1970s, the reaction in Languedoc-Roussillon to these changes over the decade, and the change in political relationships and governance at three levels – Brussels, Paris, and Languedoc-Roussillon – as a result of this process, as well as the direction of European policies in agriculture toward one of quality, which was largely influenced by the experience of dealing with the wine sector.

## Introduction

The cultivation of vines has always been, financially, a most hazardous enterprise, and it was a rare occurrence for farmers, even when they called themselves vigneron, to rely entirely on grapes for a livelihood. Not until the second half of the nineteenth century did growers, chiefly those along the Mediterranean coast, resort to a monoculture of vines. They left to their children and grandchildren an agricultural legacy that became a style of life, not easily or voluntarily abandoned when no longer profitable because work habits and human values became intimately commingled.

- Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 38.

The interest of the French in developing a common wine market is curious. Prior to the 1970s, French control of the country's wine industries, and indeed of several industries deemed to have particular national significance<sup>1</sup>, was strict and incisive. French vineyards in the modern era have been rigorously controlled and organised by the state since the adoption of the *Code du vin* in 1936. Yet at the Stresa Conference of 1958, at which participants formally agreed that agriculture was not only an essential part of economy but 'un facteur

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Ernest Shalom Hayward, ed. *Industrial Enterprise and European Integration: From National to International Champions in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).



essentiel de la vie sociale'<sup>2</sup>, the six original member states, France included, maintained that wine was one of the essential agricultural products needing an integrated common market.

The Six had different ideas about classifications of wine and oenological processes, and their vineyards, for which regulations had evolved organically through traditions and heritage, operated under diverse imperatives. This was especially true of the two major wine producing states, France and Italy, who together produced around 90% of the Community's wine at this time. Even from the outset, the European wine industries seemed very difficult to integrate. That this policy was created and maintained is a puzzle. The policy came about in the 1970s, a time of economic crisis and a period commonly thought of as involving little new ambitious policy activity against a backdrop of stagflation, high unemployment, and a sense of reserve toward European integration.

The difficulty of negotiating the Common Wine Policy (CWP) proved immense. One of the interests of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was the strong promotion of the modernisation of farms – this made wine a difficult matter to discuss. European Commissioner for Agriculture Sicco Manholt's introduction of wide-ranging reforms in 1968, though reduced in scope when implemented in 1972, were all underscored by the idea of modernisation, in particular, reducing the number of small farms in favour of larger, more efficient conglomerations. But wine-making has remained relatively unchanged over hundreds of years of viticulture. While there have been some changes in production and an increase in new labour-saving technologies, the production of wine is not particularly mutable. In fact, many wines also derive their value specifically from traditional, un-modern

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<sup>2</sup> 'Résolution finale adoptée par les délégations des six États membres de la Communauté économique européenne (CEE) réunies pour la conférence agricole de Stresa, du 3 au 12 juillet 1958.' July 12, 1958. Collection of documents of the Agricultural Conference of Member States of the European Economic Community in Stresa from 3 to 12 July 1958. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

methods, and their production on small, family farms, or *châteaux*. Despite these important and engaging issues surrounding the CWP, the Community's wine policy, though the subject of much economic and technical analysis, has been largely ignored by historians.

### *Aims of Thesis & its Contributions to Existing Scholarship*

This thesis is the product of an interest in investigating how the European Community (EC) affected wine growers in France. However, this impact was highly uneven and some groups initially had little need for interaction with the Community – this included Bordeaux<sup>3</sup> and Champagne<sup>4</sup>, for instance, along with other predominantly quality wine producing regions. Instead, the design and goals of the European Community's wine policy, the creation of which are discussed in chapter one, meant that it affected table wine growers in the main in its initial decade at least. One place where the influence of the European Community was very much felt was the Languedoc-Roussillon region. The region in the 1970s makes for an excellent case study because Languedoc-Roussillon's economy has traditionally been heavily dependent on viticulture and its inhabitants' livelihoods and cultural traditions were deeply tied up with wine growing and the family farm. Their wine growers also largely produced table wine, and they were the major contributors to the European Community's 'wine lake'. This was the term given to the continued surplus of wine, which began in the 1970s and which this thesis argues was exacerbated by the policies of the Community.

The aim of this thesis more specifically is to answer the question, 'What effect did the European Community have on the table wine producers in the Midi in France in the 1970s?'

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<sup>3</sup> For more on wine politics in the Bordeaux, see for instance Andy Smith, Jacques Maillard, and Olivier Costa, *Vin et politique: Bordeaux, la France, la mondialisation* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> A thorough history of wines in Champagne, and their use in the formation of identity, is given in Kolleen M. Guy, *When Champagne Became French: Wine and the Making of a National Identity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

This requires an analysis of the development and operation of the first decade of the CWP, and its operation in the most prominent and established wine producer at the time in the EEC, France. As a result, the thesis first reconstructs the historical narrative of the creation of the wine policy in Brussels before examining how these policies affected local and regional actors. This approach is necessary because a coherent narrative of the CWP at any level is currently missing, and needs first to be filled out at the most basic level, its creation, before moving to that of its impact. After this, the thesis analyses the impact that the implementation of the CWP had on the Languedoc-Roussillon region. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between different levels of government, and the changes in political and social identities as a result of policy-changes to a product rooted in tradition and cultural importance.

This work intends to contribute to the broader existing debates in related scholarship in three major areas. First, this thesis is interested in the impact of the European Community on local actors, an area of study it contributes to by looking at changes in organisational behaviour and political as well as professional identity amongst *vignerons* in direct or indirect response to the Community. Second, it adds another element to the study of the development of European and national policy-making interactions, by looking for the first time exclusively and comprehensively at the creation of the Common Wine Policy, a policy area concerning a product imbued with cultural significance. It is also the first historical assessment that disaggregates the CAP by looking at one strand of the markets that make it up. Third, it intends to contribute to the literature on French and European Community engagement with regions, and in a similar vein, comments on the place of France and the place of regions in the Community in the 1970s. At its core, this thesis blends social and political history, and combines a top-down and bottom-up approach, by looking at both the European

Community's effect on local actors, and local actors' responses to and engagements with their government and the Community.

The first ten years of the CWP was a very difficult period for wine-growers. This period was marked by the beginning of what would later be termed the 'wine lake', continuing structural surpluses aggravated by naturally abundant harvests, such as the very serious ones in 1974 and 1975. The creation of the policy was recognised by the Council as having angered farmers, yet there has not been any analysis of the perspectives of these farmers, though they constitute an important party to the affairs. Wine-growers were faced with massive changes in their profession, some of which threatened their livelihood. For example, financial incentives were provided for farmers not only to give up certain farm land but also to encourage older wine growers to retire sooner. Land was classified according to its suitability to grow certain wines. Mandatory distillation and aid for stockpiling were introduced in 1974. In 1978 the European Commission proposed measures which were later accepted to prohibit until 1985 new planting of any kind for table wine. Pricing for wine was set and changed within the internal market. There was even the introduction of campaigns to increase consumption, paradoxically occurring alongside a rise in anti-alcohol lobbies. It seems obvious to wonder what wine growers said about this, yet most of the examination of the subject thus far has been strictly economic and technical. How did affected farmers deal with the national governments attempting to ratify and implement this policy and did they engage with Brussels-level decision-makers? Why did the EEC favour quality over table wines in their policy-making and what influence did their policies have on table wine growers?

Wine negotiations were seen as essential to the success of the CAP – one French agricultural bureaucrat declared it was tantamount to the success of the entire European integration

process.<sup>5</sup> This dramatic statement demonstrates both the importance of creating a wine market and the interest in the French in the manner of its creation. However, the national wine policies were so different as to make the creation of a common wine policy very tumultuous, and national governments, particularly France and Italy, had vested interests in satisfying the strong agricultural lobby groups within their countries. This would have been easier to do without the onerous bureaucracy of the EEC which required contemplation of what was best for the Community as a whole. Why was the creation of a common wine policy seen as essential? Why did it not go the way of the common alcohol market? After all, the latter proved to be too difficult to realise, and so became a loose overhead system of tariff and quota elimination and tax harmonisation among member states' own ethyl alcohol markets.

Wine was connected to ideas of tradition and identity for many in the European Community. While alcohol production, for instance, could be viewed as an industry much more than a branch of agriculture, wine, it seemed, could not be treated this way in a continent with countries having centuries of oenological practices. Wine had a prominence in terms of the labour force involved and the problems related to varying production conditions and the size of production units, which made the wine issue more the domain of agricultural purview and lent itself to greater intervention mechanisms. Wine production was also symbolically central to the life of certain European farmers, and certainly so in the popular mindset of Europeans proud of their viticultural heritage, and could not be easily excluded from the CAP, in spite of difficulties in its inclusion.

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<sup>5</sup> 'S/967/1968 CSA 272: Position de la délégation française à l'égard de l'établissement d'une politique commune viti-vinicole.' November 11, 1968. CM2 1970/638, CMA.

### *Scope, Source Base & Limitations*

The study is French-centered, and while it references the opinions and actors of several other countries, notably Italy and Germany in chapters two and three, it does not aspire to fully articulate the stories of countries other than France. This thesis is interested in the effect of the Common Wine Policy on French vigneron and their sense of self, and it strives to examine and include their voices in a variety of ways. However, this work is not anthropological or sociological. In historian Peter Scholliers' introduction to the collected work *Food, Drink, and Identity: Cooking, Eating, and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*, he examines the relationship between food, identity and belonging, and suggests that this study ought to be more frequently undertaken in history, where works of this sort are far sparser than those in the rich corpus of sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. He makes the excellent argument that as a mutable and flexible instrument, 'identity does not form a separate, consistent tool for historical understanding'<sup>6</sup>; instead, it must be studied in specific contexts and generalisations must be avoided. He laments that 'few historians have looked at questions of how food was used to build identities in the past'.<sup>7</sup> Though my work cannot comment on the building or shaping of identities, particularly as it is not an ethnographically-based work, this work is in part interested in taking up this challenge and comments on the shifts in the political identity of viticulteurs. In particular, it attempts to address political and professional identities of vigneron through their organisational behaviour in the 1970s, in which the thesis argues the CWP played a direct role. There are a very large number of agricultural organisations in France; this thesis focuses primarily on voluntary state-aided associations of wine-growers in the Languedoc-Roussillon.

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Scholliers, *Food, drink and identity : cooking, eating and drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

The most significant challenge facing this project was the relative dearth of primary sources capturing the voices of farmers. The archived records belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture, conserved at the *Archives Nationales de France, site contemporaine Fountainebleau* were sometimes helpful, but haphazard and uneven. The document series on wine conserved by Christian Bonnet's office, was particularly useful, offering up several personal letters written by vigneron to Bonnet when he was Minister of Agriculture from 1974–1977.

Farmers unfortunately do not leave archives. Conscientious farmers might keep meticulous administrative records but these dry documents, if they are actually created, available, and retained for posterity, would not have been useful for this thesis, as they do not shed light on these farmers' thoughts, feelings, and opinions of the political situation around them. A very lucky find indeed was the powerful source, *La Journée Vinicole*, which is a French national daily newspaper – the only daily newspaper on wine at the time in France – aimed at all wine professionals and which certainly had wide geographic reach. The majority of its readership, though, was wine growers located in the Languedoc, making it ideal for this thesis as a rich source of the voices and opinions of Midi vigneron at this time. That the readership was made up in this way was unsurprising, as French viticultural journals, in the main local or regional, though widely read by professionals across the country, were 'concerned chiefly with Languedoc and the producers of ordinary wines'.<sup>8</sup>

This thesis therefore uses *La Journée Vinicole* in large part to represent the voices of farmers at the time. This is not without its limitations, of course, but has been the best alternative

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<sup>8</sup> Leo A. Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 85.

option for a group that left few primary documents behind. Had an anthropologist working in the 1970s asked the same broad research questions this thesis has done, it is possible there might have been considerable overlap between his or her work and this one. But no such work exists, and furthermore, it would still not address the historical dimension of explaining the changes over the 1970s. The work that has most closely attempted to do an anthropological survey in a similar vein to this thesis is Winnie Lem's *Cultivating Dissent: Work, Identity and Praxis in Rural Languedoc*. She focuses on one village in the Languedoc (she does not tell us which, naming it for ease in the book 'Broussan') where her interest is in demonstrating how rural people have dealt with the 'processes of disintegration brought on by the development of capitalism and the modernizing imperatives of the state'.<sup>9</sup> Her anthropological work very well challenges the popular view of small farmers as being conservatively or averse to reforming – this work agrees with Lem in this regard. However, her work has a very narrow scope, covering as it does only one unnamed village, makes little mention of the European Community, and covers a different time period (the late 1980s and early 1990s) to the one this thesis is concerned with.

Another fortuitous find was 'The Vine Remembers: French Vignerons Recall Their Past', a fine volume of considerable effort in which the editors present the transcriptions of a wide range of detailed interviews conducted with French vignerons. In contrast with *Cultivating Dissent*, which saw an anthropologist working in the Languedoc area but in a more recent time than that of this thesis, *The Vine Remembers* sees historians working in the 1970s on the lives and thoughts of vignerons across France. These interviews took place in 1978 and 1979 (with the exception of a few that took place in 1973), and the people interviewed belonged to three different generations – those of 1910–1914, 1940–1945, and 1975–1980. The creators

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<sup>9</sup> Winnie Lem, *Cultivating Dissent: Work, Identity and Praxis in Rural Languedoc* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), ix.



of the collection do not attempt to analyse the interviews themselves – they simply present these pieces to be recorded for posterity to give scholars who study individuals in the past a way ‘to go back in time in order to discover...[these] ordinary people.’ Despite the French state’s enthusiasm for administrative record keeping in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the result of which is large and often bloated archives filled with government reports and statistics, most ordinary French people ‘did not leave behind narrative descriptions of their daily lives and of the forces which shaped them. Those who have studied the people of the vine, the society and culture of winegrowing communities, are only too aware of this lack even for the more recent past....Indeed, neither historians nor sociologists have undertaken systematic studies of grape growers as people with a specific culture of their own’.<sup>10</sup> Whether this is because there has not been academic interest or because of source difficulties – quite likely, both – it is a shame. This thesis has attempted to fill this gap, but it goes beyond this useful collection’s desire to ‘hear their stories....in their own words’<sup>11</sup> and attempts to analyse what vigneronns have done as well as said. The interviews from *The Vine Remembers* are used through this work as another primary source alongside *La Journée Vinicole*.

### *Existing Literature*

There are three strands of existing literature that relate most closely to this thesis. The first is the historical literature on the development of the EEC with relation to the CAP; the second is the political science and economic literature on the development of wine regulations; the third is a discussion of broader historical works on the interconnections between agriculture, wine, and identity, mostly in food history. Through these works, it is clear that the lack of writing directly relevant to this work is a repeated issue.

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<sup>10</sup> Leo A. Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, ed. Leo A. Loubère, SUNY Series in Modern European Social History (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

To consider the Common Agricultural Policy in the 1960s and 1970s is to consider the foundations of the European integration project. In fact, it may be as legitimate to wonder about the importance of the CAP to the European Community as it is to wonder about the importance of the European Community to the CAP. This is not an overstatement; for some authors, the CAP underscores the path from proposed integration to the European Community and eventually the European Union (EU): John S. Marsh and Pamela Swanney for instance, state that ‘the most important achievement of the CAP is that without it there would have been no Community.’<sup>12</sup> It has in many ways attained a symbolic status representing a unified Europe; there were times when challenging the progress of the CAP, once established in the 1962, was akin to challenging European solidarity. In the environment of the 1950s and 1960s, where the collective memory of food shortages caused many Europeans anxiety, the CAP emerged as a highly integrated and serious answer, though not without its political entanglements.<sup>13</sup> From its infancy, the CAP dominated the Community agenda, taking a disproportionate amount of the time and energy of new Eurocrats and representing about half of the Community’s expenditures.

That the integration process was so heavily channeled through the focus on agricultural issues has not gone unremarked. Piers Ludlow, Ann-Christina Knudsen, and Marsh and Swanney have all commented on the characteristic trend shared by the six original member states as being the continuing decline in the economic slice of the farm sector.<sup>14</sup> A considerable

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<sup>12</sup> John S. Marsh and Pamela J. Swanney, *Agriculture and the European Community* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), 74.

<sup>13</sup> Kiran Klaus Patel, ‘Europeanization à contre-cœur: West Germany and agricultural integration, 1945-1975,’ in *Fertile Ground for Europe? The History of European Integration and the Common Agricultural Policy since 1945*, ed. Kiran Klaus Patel (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), 139.

<sup>14</sup> See N. Piers Ludlow, ‘The Green Heart of Europe? The rise and fall of the CAP as the Community’s central policy, 1958-1985,’ in *Fertile Ground for Europe? The History of European Integration and the Common Agricultural Policy since 1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), 83; Ann-Christina L. Knudsen, *Farmers on*

motive for the European integration process was the political desire to have a peaceful, progressive, and unified continent, one which intended to ensure the second half of the twentieth century had none of the bloodshed that marred the first. That the architects from participating nation-states and the Council of Ministers chose integration through economic means was largely a result of the failure of initial political and defense integration efforts.<sup>15</sup> But why they chose economic integration through a sector which seemed to be ailing in almost all of the EEC Six economies is not at all straightforward.

The strongest explanation for this was that the European Community was seen by state leaders as a site of rescue for the agricultural welfare state. A proponent of this idea is Alan Milward, whose work is best encapsulated in his book *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, published first in 1992, with a second edition in 2000. Milward criticizes political integrationist theory, from neo-functionalism to intergovernmentalism, arguing that these are part of ‘abstract political debate and utopian speculation about European unity’.<sup>16</sup> He argues that the development of the European Community rescued, amongst other sectors, protectionist agricultural policy in Europe. However, his argument that the nation state remains the principal actor despite the development of the EC is in some ways challenged by this thesis. This thesis demonstrates there was at least some change in the way the nation-state engaged with local citizens – the change even includes local citizens becoming involved

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*Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2009), 50-56; and Marsh and Swanney, *Agriculture and the European Community*, 14.

<sup>15</sup> The failure of the European Political Community is covered by Richard T. Griffiths, *Europe's First Constitution: The European Political Community, 1952-1954* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000); and Rita Cardozo, 'The Project for a Political Community (1952-1954),' in *The Dynamics of European union*, ed. Roy Pryce (London: Croom Helm, 1987). There is a contribution too by Marsh and Swanney, *Agriculture and the European Community*. For the failure of the European Defense Community, see Edward Fursdon, *The European Defence Community: A History*, vol. London (Macmillan, 1980); Kevin Ruane, *The Rise and Fall of the European Defence Community: Anglo-American Relations and the Crisis of European Defense, 1950-55* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000); Michel Dumoulin, ed. *La Communauté Européenne de Défense, Leçons Pour Demain ? The European Defence Community, Lessons for the Future ?* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2000); and Anne Deighton, *Building Postwar Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948-63* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Alan Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 1.

with Brussels precisely because they believe that the nation-state was no longer the principal actor in their profession. There was, too, a sacrifice of sovereignty in the French state's relinquishing of control over its vineyards, which was voluntary and a result of choosing other imperatives.

The research in this thesis strongly lines up with the major idea espoused in one of the most recent major publications on CAP history, Ann-Christina Knudsen's *Farmers on Welfare*. In this lucid piece of work, Knudsen sets out to dispel the standard creation story of the CAP, which she states traditionally emphasises the bargain between French and German national economic interests. She focuses on values and ideas as transmitted through historical institutionalism to explain the logic of the EC heavily funding an ailing economic sector in its bid to undertake serious integration. The central argument of her work is that welfarism and redistributionism were the instrumental values common to many European countries and that the realisation of this led to the belief that the protection of the agriculture sector would best take place at a cooperative supranational level, rather than a competitive national level (where the subsidies of one nation fought with others to be effective.) She demonstrates that it was not competing national interests and strategising national statesmen who primarily set the agenda on the creation of the CAP, but rather the collective recognition by European states that their shared belief in agricultural exceptionalism required serious intervention and group action.

A major criticism of Knudsen's work, however, is that she systematically understates the importance of political actors and downplays state differences in order to demonstrate her point that common ideas and social values were paramount for the creation of CAP. Her treatment of de Gaulle, for instance, does not seem to underscore adequately the great

concern he generated over France's genuinely uncertain future in the CAP during that time, and thereby the future of the entire European integration project. In this sense, more attention could have been paid to pivotal national interests that really did count. There are historians who would dispute her ideas about common values; Gisela Hendriks for instance states that the intrusion of Community institutions into agricultural policy-making was not only 'bitterly resented by some member states'<sup>17</sup> but 'threatened the fundamental existence of the EEC itself'.<sup>18</sup> Knudsen also says nothing about wine, and instead looks at the formative years when the focus of the policy lay elsewhere. Her work is also top down, and draws heavily on diplomatic history, and does not consider the impact of the policy on Europe's farmers.

However, Knudsen's attempt to move beyond a state-centric history is successful and her argument that the CAP was essential welfarist in nature is the most compelling of current CAP histories explaining the 'why' and 'how' of the eventual CAP policy paradigm. She does this particularly well by adding substance and nuance to the CAP evolution story by offering a narrative that does not simply revolve around French and German interests.

For France and Germany to reach agreement was of great importance for the creation of the CAP, but to focus so heavily on a model with these two actors is insufficient. For example, Thiemeyer and Hendriks both follow this line. Thiemeyer's argument is that the French government benefitted most from the CAP and thereby supported it, and that the Germans accepted the CAP for diplomatic reasons. He differs from Knudsen in saying that the only political actor with any interest beyond a national one was Sicco Mansholt. He and Hendriks both claim the French government was particularly enthusiastic about a large and intrusive

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<sup>17</sup> Gisela Hendriks, 'The Creation of the Common Agricultural Policy,' in *Widening, Deepening and Acceleration: The European Economic Community, 1957-1963*, ed. Anne Deighton and Alan Milward (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1999), 142.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

CAP because of the fear of growing German industrial power.<sup>19</sup> To keep balance on the continent, the French had to be agriculturally strong. Though there are alternative methodologies like Knudsen's, the majority of CAP analysis seems to invoke Franco-German relations. This thesis attempts to move beyond this analysis by looking at an area of the CAP where French-Italian relations were centrally important instead and where the German influence was comparatively very small indeed.

Downplaying key political actors is perhaps less egregious than the outright omission of important parts of society affected by the policies of Brussels. Most of the CAP histories focus on negotiations in Brussels with an emphasis on nation-states and major diplomatic actors. The works attempting to elucidate technical processes at Brussels might be forgiven for leaving these actors outside of the scope of their work – for instance, Edmund Neville-Rolfe's *The Politics of Agriculture in the European Community* was written with the intent of explaining how the CAP and the British national policy took such different routes from the late 1940s until the year the work came out in 1984. His political history focuses on how national political attitudes influenced the progression of the CAP, as well as the interplay of these different states. He traces the complexities and technicalities of policy-making with regards to a common agricultural policy. Rather than making any particularly strong historical statements about the CAP, Neville-Rolfe seems more interested in elucidating the technical process for those who are not familiar with the daily run of life in Brussels.

However, Neville-Rolfe exhibits a narrow treatment of nations which is shared by other key CAP historians. His analysis uses the state as the primary actor and is in many ways a

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<sup>19</sup> See Guido Thieme, 'The Mansholt Plan, the Definite Financing of the Common Agriculture Policy and the Enlargement of the Community, 1969-1973,' in *Beyond the Customs Union: The European Community's Quest for Deepening, Widening, and Completion, 1969-1975*, ed. Jan van der Harst (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 216; and Hendriks, 'The Creation of the Common Agricultural Policy,' 144.

traditional diplomatic history. Clean divisions are retained around each of the states and the Commission; highlighting the response to the Commission's common external tariff proposal, Neville-Rolfe tells us, '...in Germany...The Dutch, on the other hand...On this basis, the Netherlands...with French support...the benevolent neutrality of Italy and Belgium...'. Little is provided in terms of developments within the country or the actions of lobby groups, for instance – this thesis attempts to address that gap.

This focus is problematic because it tends to blur a potentially critical distinction between different units of analysis. For example, Thiemeyer states that 'the German perspective on CAP was completely different from the French,'<sup>20</sup> which he claims is a clearly unified enthusiasm. He goes on to say that the Germans were ambivalent about it and that the Ministry of Agriculture, because of the strong influence of the *Deutscher Bauernverband*, obviously supported it 'in principle'.<sup>21</sup> This betrays a tendency to conflate the opinions of two groups with, even if potentially overlapping, still separate interests and modes of operation. It should not be taken for granted that the Ministry of Agriculture will accede to a powerful agricultural lobby group. Even though Thiemeyer states that the *Deutscher Bauernverband* had such an influence over the Ministry, he does not analyse the situation from the perspective of either the DBV or, more broadly, farmers themselves. Thiemeyer, though, is only writing one contributory chapter and its physical limitations obviously prevent him analysing a large number of actors. But that he, and many others, do not tend to find an analysis of sub-state actors important is a drawback for CAP historical literature, considering the obvious importance of farmers, public servants, and consumers in this regard.

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<sup>20</sup> Thiemeyer, 'The Mansholt Plan, the Definite Financing of the Common Agriculture Policy and the Enlargement of the Community, 1969-1973,' 207.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

Recent historical works about the CAP argue it was more of a social policy vehicle than an economic one. Milward, Knudsen, Marsh and Swanney, and Thiemeyer all make reference to the CAP as a social policy. The research in this thesis on the Common Wine Policy certainly supports this but goes further, agreeing with Knudsen that the objective of closing the farm-income gap was the *raison d'être* of the parties involved in the CAP in facilitating continued commitment to ongoing discussions and meetings: it was in fact what 'glued negotiations together'.<sup>22</sup> Most historians agree that the pressure of technological and social changes in the eighteenth century meant a shift from income gained primarily through agriculture to income gained primarily from industry and services in Europe. This caused the relative decline of farm income. Milward mentions that a basic level of agricultural income had become the standard policy across each European nation. Thiemeyer argues that overproduction, though highly expensive, was necessary for the Community because 'agricultural policy in this period was not designed to secure the supply of goods to the European population but to guarantee the revenues of workers in the agricultural sector'.<sup>23</sup>

Identity and values are underdeveloped themes in CAP histories generally. If the CAP is related to identity concerns, what are these exactly? Despite the fact that cultural and identity issues have been flagged as being important, there is little literature on this. For example, the particular significance of the national agricultural sector in France – so crucial to the historical reasoning as to why France was such a proponent of the CAP in its full and final form – is often explained as being embedded deep within the French mentality.<sup>24</sup> This is then supposed to account for a variety of ideological motivations, but historians have not provided a sufficient account of this idea, nor have they elaborated as to how this bears on decision-

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<sup>22</sup> Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*, 21.

<sup>23</sup> Thiemeyer, 'The Mansholt Plan, the Definite Financing of the Common Agriculture Policy and the Enlargement of the Community, 1969-1973,' 212.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.



making. There has been some attempt to study institutional identity<sup>25</sup> and more work in this regard would be useful.

Though the previous works mentioned have emphasised at some point in their texts that these abstract ideas are important, they have neither done more than make allusions or quick statements nor have they attempted to demonstrate how these bear on the actual reasoning of, perceptions towards, and ideas developed about the CAP. Knudsen refers to the new idea of the family farm and discusses how farmers exist as real entities, legal entities, and in the myths of the nation. But how do these myths and identities function empirically (if indeed they do)? This question deserves some research. The non-economic impacts of the CAP have not been well-documented. The economic and political ramifications have been discussed at length, but not the impact of these new policies from Brussels that were introduced to family farms and their workers.

Most of these works also focus on ‘big agriculture’, such as cereals, and the way Europe needed to modernise its agriculture by increasing the size of the unit. The unfortunate lack of attention on smaller markets, like wine, has resulted in this important and characteristically-European market product lacking its own analysis in these histories.<sup>26</sup> This thesis argues that the wine market did not fit neatly alongside the rest of the agricultural product markets, because of the complexities of wine as an economic good, as well as its cultural and, especially in France, national importance. During the construction of the Mansholt Plan, for instance, were there any provisions or discussions regarding farms producing specialty

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<sup>25</sup> An exception is Katja Seidel’s analysis of the Directorate General for Agriculture or DG VI. Her study leads her to conclude that socialisation occurred amongst those in DG VI through a war generation identity, homogenous educational and professional backgrounds, and previous international networks on post-war negotiations relating to agriculture. Katja Seidel, ‘Making Europe through the CAP: DG VI and its high officials,’ in *Fertile Ground for Europe? The History of European Integration and the Common Agricultural Policy since 1945*, ed. Kiran Klaus Patel (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), 177.

<sup>26</sup> Neville-Rolfe has a five-page appendix cursorily addressing ‘the wine problem’.

products, which essentially could not modernise? After all, the qualities of these goods are derived from their traditionality, so they do not fit into the regular debate about modernising versus subsidising.

Finally, most of the CAP literatures end their discussions in the 1960s. The relevant works tend to be interested in the initial negotiations, but the negotiations for wine did not begin in earnest until 1967, and the regime itself did not begin until 1970. As well, using a flexible set of units of analysis can help in assessing the non-economic impacts of the initial decades of the CAP, and helps shed light on these informal processes that seem to be missing from political or economic discussions of the CAP. Breaking from the emphasis on actor-centered histories can help us understand how farmers, consumers, lobby-groups, economists, lawyers, and public servants were part of the CAP process.

The political science and economic literature related to my work focuses mostly on the development or the state of wine regulations, whether in France or in the Community. The majority of these pieces were designed for better contemporary understanding of the European wine market and serve this role admirably. However, while their analysis helps sketch out the narrative of the Common Wine Policy, they have shortcomings, some of which clearly demonstrate the need for a historical treatment of the CWP. Some works are also more technical than analytical.

Timo Kortteinen, a sociologist, wrote his 1984 article ‘Wine Production in the European Community since 1975’ on the economic integration of the Community with reference to wine. He discusses the mechanisms of the pricing system, the measures of tax harmonisation, and the effects of integration on trade and production. His key argument is that the structural

policy of the Community was paradoxical, as many of its components did not reduce wine production at all but rather increased yields (for example, new cultivation methods and new vine varieties both accomplished this in the 1970s). He argues that the wine problem was symptomatic and part of bigger problems in the 'whole agricultural system in the Community.'<sup>27</sup> He also complains that the wine issue had been 'so far treated in the Community solely as an economical and political problem, i.e. how to get rid of the surplus wine with the lowest cost both economically and politically.'<sup>28</sup> Though his concern is that the public health point of view should be examined, in regards to what Kortteinen sees as the Community's attempts to increase consumption, his complaint highlights an important issue: that the economic and political treatment of the issue have dominated the agenda, and other important factors, like social aspects, have been neglected.

His follow-up piece in 1990, 'Alcoholic beverages and agriculture in the European Community' is very similar to his previous piece, with additional discussion on the Community policies towards ethyl alcohol beverages. He blames the inability to create a common market in ethyl alcohol on the inability to achieve balance in the wine market, which he argues could only be solved by prioritising the restructuring of alcohol production over price and farmers' income policies.<sup>29</sup> Both of his works however were meant as contemporary overview pieces, and his analysis is not historical, nor does it comment on the evolution of the policy, but only on certain technical aspects.

Jeffrey Munsie's writing provides a good overview of the legal aspects of the regulation. His legal history paper is a review of the international regulations on wine, so his section on the

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<sup>27</sup> Timo Kortteinen, 'Wine Production in the European Community since 1975,' *British Journal of Addiction*, no. 79 (1984): 325.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Timo Kortteinen, 'Alcoholic beverages and agriculture in the European Community,' *Contemporary Drug Problems* 17, no. 4 (1990).

EEC is relatively short but does make important remarks; it also makes good use of the texts of the EEC regulations. Munsie's narrative clearly demonstrated the centrality of wine-making to the European continent, where he claims wine-making 'thrived for centuries before being introduced to the rest of the world.'<sup>30</sup> He highlights how very divergent the wine-making traditions of the European countries were, particularly of the main four -France, Italy, Germany, and Spain,- and how they protected their national interests in their markets. The rise of international trade in wine in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, caused problems. His work also notes that the CWP was created partly because previous agreements were still encumbered by 'customs duties, quotes, and excise taxes,'<sup>31</sup> which raises the rather interesting question why the CWP did not just become a simpler, loose free-trade policy; this question, however, is not answered in his work.

But despite the historical aspect of his work, Munsie's piece still lacks a sense of the progression and development of these regulations. His work takes the regulations at their face value and as static pieces; he also maintains the same kind of technical interest that Kortteinen displayed. He makes no reference to the impact of these policies beyond the national level, his agents are 'France', 'Italy', 'Germany', and so on, and he does not delve into individual actors nor the interests of other groups, like agricultural lobbies. He also has some unsupported and unclear assertions about consumption and production levels in the EEC, which is not surprising, given that some of the reports from within the EEC itself are also unclear and sometimes contradictory regarding these issues. This is one aspect that my work aims to redress.

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<sup>30</sup> Jeffrey A Munsie, 'A Brief History of the International Regulation of Wine Production,' (Harvard Law School, 2002), 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

The book that is likely the closest relative of my study is Pierre Spahni's 1988 book *The Common Wine Policy and Price Stabilisation*. His is currently the most comprehensive analysis of the CWP, covering the background of French interventionism before discussing the CWP in the context of the creation of the EC and the rise of the CAP. Spahni's work tries to fill the gap on missing economic and econometric analysis of the policies to stabilise the wine market (though it fills the gap on studies of the CWP in general at the time.)

Spahni's work, however, is another very technical piece. An excellent economic study, his central aim is to 'analyse wine market fluctuations from a price stabilisation perspective'.<sup>32</sup> Though he makes reference to the germination of his book being in watching the 'bewildering scenes of farmers waging a war on wine imports from Italy', his work cannot, unfortunately, hope to answer why people would react so violently to the 'readjustment of trade and production patterns within the Community',<sup>33</sup> though he very admirably explains what the underlying mechanisms were of the market wherein these producers were raging.<sup>34</sup> His already haphazard narrative is further interrupted by the very detailed econometric analyses, though these support his conclusion that the difficulties in the market were from 'shocks in supply and resulting price instability, in other words from *risk*'.<sup>35</sup> He also notes that the CWP's objectives and principles seem to have shifted, but he does not elaborate.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Pierre Spahni, *The Common Wine Policy and Price Stabilisation* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1988), xi.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>34</sup> Oddly enough, probably the best (and certainly one of the only) works discussing and analysing the wine lake crisis of 1975 is 'The European Community: An Exercise in Decision-Making', a 1977 release of an educational simulation of the crisis for students. The book gives a solid overview of the viewpoints of the nations involved in the wine crisis, identifies the major actors involved, describes the basic mechanisms of pricing in the CAP, and explains the measures available to combat surpluses in short- and long-term ways. The appendix is particularly good. The book's drawbacks for my purposes are fairly obvious: it is didactic, greatly oversimplifies complicated situations for the purposes of ease of understanding and use, and the structure of the piece, as a game, highly limits its academic utility and cohesion. See M Clarke et al., *The European Community: An Exercise in Decision-Making* (London: UACES, 1978).

<sup>35</sup> Spahni, *The Common Wine Policy and Price Stabilisation*, 77.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-132.

The existing literature on the French wine market situation is dominated by political science and economics works. *L'économie viticole française*, published by the *Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique*, covers over a hundred years of French agricultural history in one chapter before moving on to elucidate the characteristics of the current wine market in France, the actors in the wine economy, and its organisation and operation. The very short section on the EEC helpfully illustrates the different levels of apprehension on the French side towards the new Common Wine Policy of 1970, by, for example, referencing the opinions of the Minister of Agriculture, a journalist, and a farmer.<sup>37</sup> It covers the crises of the 1970s briefly, making the considered statement that social and technical concerns should be taken together in analyses of the difficulties.

*Viticulteurs en crise*, published by the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique : Centre Regional de la Publication de Toulouse*, is another government-commissioned piece. Its authors claim their position was that of participant-observer in attempting to discover the socio-economic causes of the *crise viticole* in the Midi-Pyrénées. The attempt to go beyond the Community and national levels and address the impact on farmers is appreciated; however, it does not analyse if the farmers were involved in influencing further decisions at the Community level, or what their mutual relationship was like. That is, the work still treats the relationship in one direction – the influence of the Community and its policies on local and regional groups. The work also takes quite a sympathetic line with the viticulteurs and their families, which is likely a result of its anthropological methodology. Both books tend to be descriptive rather than analytical, a result of their origin as government reports and not academic ones.

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<sup>37</sup> P Bartoli et al., *L'économie viticole française* (Paris: Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, 1987), 24.

A good overview of contemporary interest mediation between farmers and the state over agricultural decisions is provided in John T.S. Keeler's 1987 book *The Politics of Neo-corporatism in France*. In this clear and broad-ranging monograph,<sup>38</sup> he focuses a good deal of attention on the politics of the most powerful French farmers' union, the *Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants d'Agricoles* (FNSEA). This is unsurprising, given the organisation's stature in France and the wide reach of the books, but it does obscure some of the farmers who were not part of FNSEA or otherwise felt the FNSEA did not represent them or their interests. The Midi vigneron were, taken together, resistant to FNSEA and participated little in the organisation.<sup>39</sup> Where Keeler's work is particularly illuminating is in his close study of the agricultural politics of three different *départements*, for it is an excellent demonstration that French national studies of agriculture can sometimes paint broad brushstrokes that obfuscate important regional differences. In these cases, regions need their own narratives. To go even further, the narratives of these regions, once told, should be integrated into a broader narrative on a national level, and if applicable, a European level – which is how this thesis is structured.

Finally, Andrew Moravcsik's work, *The Choice for Europe*, is an important political science work on the origins and evolution of European integration. He argues that 'economic interests, relative power, and credible commitments'<sup>40</sup> are what accounts for the integration process. His central thesis is that the analysis of competing domestic interests demonstrates that rational self-interest led to intergovernmental bargaining based overwhelmingly on economic terms. He is not generally incorrect about the economic need to create the Common

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<sup>38</sup> John T. S. Keeler, *The Politics of Neo-corporatism in France: Farmers, the State, and Agricultural Policy-making in the Fifth Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>39</sup> Jean Philippe Martin, 'Wine Growers' Syndicalism in the Languedoc: Continuity and Change,' *Sociologia Ruralis* 36, no. 3 (1996).

<sup>40</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 4.

Agricultural Policy – De Gaulle’s attempts in the 1960s to make and support the CAP were incisive<sup>41</sup> – but can it account for its continuance, particularly in certain areas? Moravcsik’s rationalistic argument about economic national self-interest propelling integration forward does not help explain the creation and continuation of the Common Wine Policy. In the very different climate of the 1970s, during a time of world economic crisis, and currency fluctuations, there does not seem to nearly as much impetus to undertake cooperation in the area of wine. The French had economic apprehensions about the creation of the CWP: production was increasing in both France and the creation of a policy which required the free flow of products meant less ability to control exports. Taxed exports would have been one of the best options to get rid of products; with Italian production on the increase, the French knew there was a risk of inflow of Italian wines. France’s viticultural traditions are also deeply ingrained and upsetting them meant politically risking the wrath of the strong agricultural lobbies. It seemed in the French interests to retain control over their wine market. In this situation, a loose policy removing some custom tariffs and quotas seems a better option, but the policy adopted was far more comprehensive and integrationist.

The historical literature related to wine, agriculture, and identity, the third strand being assessed, is quite limited and, given its subjective nature, less straightforward than some of the previous literature, but provides important insight into wine as a social good. Here, four major historical pieces are assessed – a broader review of works from other disciplines is provided in the next section, where these pieces are drawn together to demonstrate key links between France, French identity, and agriculture.

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<sup>41</sup> Moravcsik treats this further in a part-two article relating to De Gaulle, where he distinguishes between De Gaulle’s political and economic considerations. Andrew Moravcsik, 'De Gaulle between Grain and Grandeur: The Economic Origins of French EC Policy, 1958-1970,' Part I, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2000); Andrew Moravcsik, 'De Gaulle between Grain and Grandeur: The Economic Origins of French EC Policy, 1958-1970,' Part II, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2, no. 3 (Fall 2000). A good response is found in N. Piers Ludlow, 'Challenging French Leadership in Europe: Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the Outbreak of the Empty Chair Crisis of 1965-1966,' *Contemporary European History* 8, no. 2 (1999).



The social significance of wine in Europe is evident throughout centuries of wine-growing in Europe; yet essential aspects of the wine regime have not been sufficiently addressed. The role of non-state actors and of the agency of regions is often marginalised in the political history of the EEC. One contribution which attempts to deal with this is Kolleen M. Guy's *When Champagne Became French*, where she looks at one narrow topic through a longer time frame. Her book is a thorough analysis of the progression of champagne from a rare sparkling wine to an exalted, celebratory, upper-class symbol, one which became inextricably tied to 'Frenchness.' Guy's work aptly demonstrates that regional identifications persisted even in the face of market forces and national integration in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century; my analysis helps determine their prevalence in the 1970s, in the face of market forces and supranational integration. The highlight of Guy's work's approach is her identification of sub-state actors. She traces how local forces and private companies worked together, though not always harmoniously, and how they in turn as individuals or as a unit worked with or against the state. Her weakness is the myopia of her work- she uses the story of champagne to make far-reaching statements about the nature of the French national project. The strength of my research is to be able to make some broader comments, through carefully analysing changing power relations, about France's experience in integration.

Another social history which highlights non-state actors and regional issues is Eugen Weber's final opus, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*.

Impressive and sweeping, it attempts a comprehensive survey of rural France's integration into modern France. Weber argues that rural France in the first two-thirds of the 1800s was a collection of individuals *pays* which were distinct linguistically, geographically, and even culturally. He then attempts to demonstrate how these groups managed to integrate into the

modern world, as exemplified by Paris, from 1880 until the beginning of WWI. Ultimately, the 'Frenchman' was born by 1914; the experience of war then cemented such an identity.

Unfortunately, an interesting discussion of wine is quickly terminated with Weber's statement that his purpose is 'not to chronicle the growth of the wine industry or of any other'<sup>42</sup> but simply demonstrate how accessibility to good roads and tracks changed the distribution of goods in France. His focus, however, on non-state actors and on French regions is interesting and enriching, even though his methodology includes a haphazard patchwork of mostly folkloric primary sources. Weber's explanation of the mechanisms of change at this time in France are not necessarily novel, but his insights about the national project and the integration of regions being akin to colonialisation by an imposed centralisation are important, as they begin a dialogue about the nature of the relationship between the French state and its *départements* and *régions* to which mine contributes, half a century after Weber terminates his discussion.

Guy and Weber, though linked in their approach to studying the rural component of French nation-state integration by identifying and analysing a variety of governmental and non-governmental actors, differ in their ideas about the agency of regions. Guy disagrees with Weber by challenging the idea of rural France as being passively colonised culturally by the core in Paris.<sup>43</sup> She suggests the communities took a greater, more active role in this integration than might have been previously accredited by standard modernization histories. A main part of my methodology is the use of actors from not only the national and supranational levels, but also sub-national and non-state actors. My research will elucidate what the situation is like in the 1970s (both previous works conclude their analyses at 1914),

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<sup>42</sup> Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernization of rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976), 217.

<sup>43</sup> See for instance Guy, *When Champagne Became French: Wine and the Making of a National Identity*, 185.

what tools the regions have then at their disposal, how they interact with the metropolises of Paris and Brussels, and how successfully they do this.

Finally, Leo Loubère's *Wine Revolution in France*, a socio-economic history of the French wine industry in the twentieth century, has been a useful general reference throughout this work. Loubère's comprehensive and long-term range is both engaging and informative. His work is focused on understanding the broad transformative aspects of what he terms the French 'wine revolution' of the twentieth century, particularly since 1945. A variety of pressures, including the volatility of pricing, declining consumption, changing tastes, and emerging new markets, pushed French wine industry to respond. This response, however, was uneven, Loubère argues, because of the inherently regional nature of wine growing in the country. The greatest drawback of Loubère's work, however, is however, his lack of primary resources. In a way, his deep, personal immersion in the history of wine has meant a book which is rich in stories and under-referenced throughout – Loubère himself admits that he had 'not spent much time in public archives'<sup>44</sup>. While he claims this is 'in part because recent collections are not yet open to the public'<sup>45</sup> (many of them are now, which is one advantage of my work over his), he also claims that it is 'in part because the documents are accessible, chiefly quantitative data, have appeared in publications located in national and local agencies of the state'<sup>46</sup>. But this admission, which suggests Loubère thought quantitative data was primarily what needed to supplement his vast personal knowledge, does not sufficiently make up for the lack of primary sources when it could add considerable academic depth to the treatment of his topic, particularly those of a qualitative, political nature found in the national and local agencies he refers to.

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<sup>44</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 6.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

## *Understanding the Links between French Identity, Wine & Agriculture*

This thesis is underscored by the assumption that wine was and is an important part of French identity. The French have had a longstanding interest in protecting wine partly because of a broader interest in protecting agriculture. But distinct from, if complementary to, this point, the French cared about wine itself as a means of connecting them to both a conceived culture and a shared history. There are a number of broader works, particularly from anthropology, sociology, and political science, which this section will draw together to explore the connections between agriculture, wine, and identity.

French agriculture in the twentieth century was based on a foundation of agricultural exceptionalism, and was characterised by heavy state control.<sup>47</sup> The concept of agricultural exceptionalism holds that agriculture is a special sector in the modern economy, different from most other sectors because it serves broader national interests, and as such, should be subject to heavy state intervention if necessary.<sup>48</sup> The role of the state in modern French agriculture was established as early as 1880, when Prime Minister Léon Gambetta created a ministry with which he envisioned cutting out the middlemen at the time – local notables and lords – and having the state and peasants deal directly with each other.<sup>49</sup> The origins of the structure of French government intervention in the twentieth century lay in organising the

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<sup>47</sup> See chapter two of Adam D. Sheingate, *The Rise of the Agricultural Welfare State: Institutions and Interest Group Power in the United States, France, and Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), in particular pp. 54 – 56. As well, see Henri Mendras, *La fin des paysans: changements et innovations dans les sociétés rurales françaises* (Paris S.É.D.É.I.S., 1967). For an overview of the role of government intervention in the transformation of rural France in the twentieth century, see chapter one of Mark Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>48</sup> This is covered in detail by Grace Skogstad, 'Ideas, Paradigms and Institutions: Agricultural Exceptionalism in the European Union and the United States,' *Governance* 11, no. 4 (1998); Wyn Grant, *The Common Agricultural Policy* (Houndsmill: Macmillan, 1997); and Darren Halpin, 'Agricultural Interest Groups and Global Challenges: Decline and Resilience,' in *Surviving Global Change? Agricultural Interest Groups in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Darren Halpin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> Sheingate, *The Rise of the Agricultural Welfare State: Institutions and Interest Group Power in the United States, France, and Japan*, 54.

war-time economy. Though this intervention would subside for other sectors after 1920, it increased for agriculture: 'Legislation on agricultural credit, farm reorganisation, new forms of property rights, agricultural education and the provision of technical and advisory services have marked this role. With the expansion of the Ministry of Agriculture, national and departmental advisory services have become an important cog in the machinery of agricultural improvement'.<sup>50</sup> Through the 1920s and 1930s, this state involvement continued apace, and from 1945 in particular, it expanded considerably. Western European governments began to favour modernisation and technocratic decision-making, and growth and investment characterised the years from 1945 until the early 1970s.<sup>51</sup> While in the 1970s, France roughly maintained its relative economic position amongst Western European countries, even through the two oil shocks of 1973 and 1979,<sup>52</sup> French politicians and policymakers began to rethink the state's heavy and expanding commitments to agricultural policy, both in terms of scope and cost.

This increase in and then normalisation of state intervention was accompanied by changes in the relationship between state actors and institutions and a variety of organisations seeking to represent farmers' interests.<sup>53</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, this included an increase in agricultural syndicate groups, associations which were able to provide credit, group-owned tools, and could sell and buy the produce of its members. Yet while the rise of cooperatives has been recognised, its causes have not been explored. In 'The Vine Remembers', the editors discuss a particular theme described by the last of the three generations they interviewed, which included farmers active in and recalling events from the period 1975 – 1980. They constituted

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<sup>50</sup> Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers*, 17.

<sup>51</sup> Pierre Sicsic and Charles Wyplosz, 'France: 1945-92,' in *Economic Growth in Europe since 1945*, ed. Nicholas Crafts and Gianni Toniolo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 223-224.

<sup>53</sup> For a good treatment of the relationship between the state and agricultural associations in France in the twentieth century, see Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers*.

the group that largely ‘turned to cooperative wine-making, most intensively in areas which produce common table wine’<sup>54</sup>, but why do they do so? The explanation for has not yet been sufficiently provided. I make the argument that the European Community had a measurable influence.

This French state control of agriculture can explain part of its control of wine, but not all. The French connection to wine is deeply engrained in the popular sense of self for many French people. Both because wine is a differentiated product, with regional character, and because it is produced in many regions across France, and drunk by inhabitants in all, wine has played a part in bringing together a country composed of distinct *pays*; it was ‘one of the elements that helped to form the French nation on the foundations of its regional diversity’.<sup>55</sup> In Roland Barthes’s *Mythologies*, he presents a series of essays on the myths informing contemporary French identity.<sup>56</sup> His work provides examples and a kind of theoretical framework for how the French use, interpret, develop, and ingest (in some cases – as with steak, milk, or wine – literally) their modern mythologies.

To Barthes, waxing romantic about the importance of wine to the French has been done ‘a thousand times in folklore, proverbs, conversations and Literature...[and] this very universality implies a kind of conformism: to believe in wine is a coercive collective act.’ For instance, a Frenchman who ‘kept this myth at arm’s length’ would face ‘minor but definite problems of integration....The universality principle fully applies here, inasmuch as [French] society calls anyone who does not believe in wine by *names* such as sick, disabled or depraved: it does not *comprehend* him (in both senses, intellectual and spatial, of the word).’

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<sup>54</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 8.

<sup>55</sup> Marion Demossier, *Wine Drinking Culture in France: A National Myth or a Modern Passion* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), 24.

<sup>56</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Noonday Press, 1972).

By contrast, a French person who had *savoir boire* (the know-how of drinking) would be seen as a good and trustworthy citizen, and a known entity.

Barthes argues that wine is bound up with the affairs of French society and the state:

Wine is a part of society because it provides a basis not only for a morality but also for an environment; it is an ornament in the slightest ceremonials of French daily life, from the snack (plonk and camembert) to the feast, from the conversation at the local cafe to the speech at a formal dinner. It exalts all climates, of whatever kind: in cold weather, it is associated with all the myths of becoming warm, and at the height of summer, with all the images of shade, with all things cool and sparkling. There is no situation involving some physical constraint (temperature, hunger, boredom, compulsion, disorientation) which does not give rise to dreams of wine. Combined as a basic substance with other alimentary figures, it can cover all the aspects of space and time for the Frenchman.

As soon as one gets to know someone's daily life fairly well, the absence of wine gives a sense of shock, like something exotic: M. Coty<sup>57</sup>, having allowed himself to be photographed, at the beginning of his seven years' presidency, sitting at home before a table on which a bottle of beer seemed to replace, by an extraordinary exception, the familiar litre of red wine, the whole nation was in a flutter; it was as intolerable as having a bachelor king. Wine is here a part of the reason of state.

Barthes's evaluations about the importance of this mythology to the French seems borne out by French self-evaluation of their own identity. In a modern study commissioned by the French government as to what makes the French identity 'French', which spawned a seven volume publication, the first three on the list were first, having France as one's birthplace, second, the defense of liberty, and third, speaking French; in close fourth place was being knowledgeable about and drinking wine. To explain what to some readers would have been a very high ranking for one specific food product – and to some as well, a superficial indicator of identity, particularly given the more apparent and universal seriousness of the first three – the survey's unsurprised authors stated 'wine is a part of our history; it's what defines us.'<sup>58</sup> It is tempting to consider the study of the wine market, which was one market of several that

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<sup>57</sup> 'M. Coty' is French president René Coty, who was president when *Mythologies* was published in 1957. In the end, he was actually in office for five years (from January 16, 1954 to January 8, 1959), and did not serve the maximum term at the time for French presidents, which had been seven years.

<sup>58</sup> Donald Kladstrup and Petie Kladstrup, *Wine and War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2001), 6.

occupied the time and energy of the Ministry of Agriculture, as unwarranted without comparable comparative reference to cousins cereals and milk. But wine has a place in the hearts and minds of the French that was and is above their attachment to other kinds of agricultural products. While the French are very attached to their agricultural roots and produce, and the way of life that is connected to it, their most emotional attachment is to wine. That the French government relinquished control over it at all was surprising.

If the identity of French people in general was heavily tied up with wine, this was no where more intense than the attachment of certain vignerons to their farms, vines, and wines, particularly small family farm owners. After all, one might very well wonder why wine has remained the dominant economic force in the Languedoc. For this, there are 'social and psychological as well as economic factors. The Mediterranean vigneron places a high value on viticulture. His ancestors cultivated grapes and made wine centuries before the unprecedented spread of vines in the nineteenth century, and much of his cultural life and his festivities were and still are integrated with the annual routine of the vineyard. There is an attachment to the soil that is deeply embedded in the vigneron's psyche which helps explain why so many of them, despite their impecunious condition, remain on the land'.<sup>59</sup> While this is unlikely to be limited to winegrowers – the argument could be made of other farmers too – it seemed the Midi vignerons did not think of themselves as being like other farmers. When interviewed in the late 1970s, a vigneron, M. Guillemard, from Côte d'Or was asked if there was such a thing as a viticultural mentality. He was quick to respond that there certainly was, saying 'it's a spirit that welcomes you; it loves fun, but it is the honor of the village, of wine,

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<sup>59</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 161.



of the reputation of great growths,' with his wife, who worked alongside him, adding, 'it is entirely different from the mentality of farmers'.<sup>60</sup>

There are a number of anthropologists, sociologists and historians (though admittedly far fewer of the latter) who have studied the connection between food and identity.<sup>61</sup> For almost all of them, their starting point is Claude Fischler's statement that 'Food is central to our sense of identity'.<sup>62</sup> Marion Demossier's anthropological work, *Wine Drinking Culture in France*, aims to examine 'the various discourses and practices shaping [the] consumption' of wine in France.<sup>63</sup> She analyses the changes of drinking culture, consumption, and cultural identities in a time of rapid modernisation in France. Her work provides many important insights into the culture of consumption of the country; she argues that wine has only since the 1960s become much higher in quality, and that wine consumption, from the 1970s to the present day, has become intertwined with intellectual consumption and specialised study and less a popular, middle-class beverage.

There are several edited volumes which are generally of interest and, if not necessarily methodologically relevant, are still useful for their general observations. Incorporating a greater understanding of insights from food history helps give my work a rounder, more human aspect to a work that might otherwise be entirely focused on dry policy analysis. Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, in *Food and Drink in History*, remark that there are three approaches to the subject of food and history, the study of which allows investigation into a wider culture. One of these is economic, an approach which 'emphasizes not only the production, processing, and marketing of food, but also consumption, including consumer

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<sup>60</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 170.

<sup>61</sup> There are a large number of books in this field, but some of the most important include

<sup>62</sup> Claude Fischler, 'Food, Self and Identity,' *Social Science Information* 27, no. 2 (1988): 275.

<sup>63</sup> Demossier, *Wine Drinking Culture in France: A National Myth or a Modern Passion*, 8.

choices and tastes'<sup>64</sup>; though my work is not cultural history, it fits well into the concept of this approach. For example, *Food in Global History* stresses the theme that exchanges between regions and states led to changing identities. In the forward, Raymond Grew argues that the analysis of the production of food lends itself well to broader narratives of historical change: 'the study of food demonstrates how deeply processes of political and social change can reach into society. No wonder then that commentary on contemporary cuisine is often also a comment on politics, commercialisation, the ecology, and cultural decline.'<sup>65</sup> Finally, as I have previously mentioned, the collected work *Food, Drink, and Identity: Cooking, Eating, and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*, edited by Peter Scholliers, contains thought-provoking pieces, but it is Scholliers' introduction that yields most fruit.

#### *Notes on Methodology, Terminology, and Translation*

The worlds of French wine and of Brussels institutions alike are filled with a significant number of abbreviations and a list is included to help readers in that regard. A few terms require some more detailed explanation or discussion, however.

This thesis will use the metric system to refer to vineyards and quantities of wine, as this is what is traditionally used in France and therefore in the primary sources. In the wine industry, the usual unit for wine is the hectolitre. A related unit is the hectolitre-degree or *degré-hectolitre* in French, which is the standard unit used in prices and taxes on wines. A price is set per hectolitre of pure alcohol of the finished product. It can appear as '*degré/hl*' and is often shortened to '*par degré*' or 'per degree' in the English. Vineyards are measured in hectares (with one hectare being approximately 2.46 acres).

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<sup>64</sup> Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, eds., *Food and Drink in History: Selections from the Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), vii-viii.

<sup>65</sup> Raymond Grew, ed. *Food and Global History* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1999), 2.

As the hectolitre appears so frequently, it might be useful to attempt to visually conceive of the hectolitre – thinking of ‘one hundred litres’ may not be very helpful. A hectolitre is roughly the contents of a barrel fifty centimetres in diameter and sixty centimetres long and holds roughly eleven cases of wine (that is, 132 bottles of wine). Loubère helpfully adds a further dimension by asking us to consider that ‘To a modest consumer this is a lot of wine, about a year’s supply. To a producer of simple table wine of about ten degrees alcohol, it is scarcely enough to feed, house and clothe his family for more than two days. To a vineyardist of fine grapes, it would allow him a decent living for perhaps seven days if the harvest were of high quality. Volume, therefore, must be viewed not only as magnitude but also as sustenance, as wherewithal.’<sup>66</sup>

A hectare – that is, 10,000 square meters – is roughly 1.4 international football fields<sup>67</sup> and 2.25 American football fields. This would be considered a very small vineyard in France without further qualification. For a family farmer growing table wine, a vineyard of roughly ten hectares could be suitable. But this is of course very different from place to place, for in Champagne this would be an expensive and large property, and in the Languedoc, this would be a smaller than average holding on which a family of four might subsist.<sup>68</sup>

The French term for a grower or producer of wine is a *viticulteur* or *vigneron*. A viticulteur is strictly speaking someone who produces grapes which is later on used for either wine or grapejuice – from the title alone, one cannot conclusively deduce whether or not the individual is involved in the vinification process, that is, the conversion of grapes to wine. A

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<sup>66</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 4.

<sup>67</sup> This is based on the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup parameter ranges for fields for international games.

<sup>68</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 5.

vigneron (the closest English translations are probably ‘vintner’ or ‘wine-maker’) is a grower who is typically also involved in some aspect of converting the grapes to wine (whether that is by performing the fermentation and then later on having someone else be involved in storage, bottling, and potentially blending, or by doing all the steps of the process himself.) In practice, the terms are rarely differentiated. While it may sound strange, and certainly is not entirely logical, as grapes are grown and wine is made, the terms winegrower and winegrowing are used as well. They are justified compromises as English terms to indicate, in the former, a grower of grapes *that are to be used for wine*, and, in the later, the undertaking of producing these types of grapes (with no presumption about further involvement beyond growing). In this thesis, the terms grower, producer, wine-grower, viticulteur, and vigneron are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

Though this thesis focuses on growers, merchants are a small part of the story as well. Merchants or *négociants* at this time were traditionally involved in the entrepreneurial side of wine-making. They were responsible for marketing wines and selling them either domestically or finding foreign buyers. Some also bottled and labelled wine, such as those merchants involved in blending wines. These merchants were known as *négociant-éleveurs* or merchant-blenders (the ‘éleveur’ portion refers to the fact that they mature the wines in their own cellars), and they would work out contracts with producers for this.

The terms viticulture, viniculture, and viti-viniculture appear throughout this thesis. Viticulture refers to the growing of grape vines, whereas viniculture broadly relates to the body of knowledge of making wine. Viti-viniculture refers to both. The terms table wine and quality wine are heavily used throughout the text. Table wine is sometimes also called ordinary wine, common wine, or wine for current consumption (*vin du consommation*

*courante*, or VCC). It embodies the kind of wine which was once part of a particular French culture – it was drunk daily, by the family, over meals. By the 1960s and 1970s, this image and use was waning and table wines, for a variety of reasons discussed in this thesis, were becoming less frequently consumed. Instead, quality wines were becoming much more favoured. These were wines that had been produced in a particular location and with particular characteristics and techniques. The untranslatable French term for this is ‘*terroir*’ which ties taste to place – it refers to a combination of factors, including geography, geology, and climate, but this basic description would doubtless be unsatisfactory to many French people who would likely find it too clinical.

The official term for quality wines under the CWP is in the English known as QWPSR (‘quality wine produced in a specified region’) but it is far more commonly referred to in all languages by its French acronym VPQRD (‘*vins de qualité produits dans des régions déterminées*’). For wine to be recognised as VPQRD, winemakers had to apply first to their government with their claims to the status – the member state government then submitted their VPQRD list to the Commission for final approval. This allowed national governments to set stricter regulations than the minimum regulations provided for by the eventual common wine policy.

This thesis analyses a part of France that lies in the south-east which is formally known as the *région* of Languedoc-Roussillon. Languedoc-Roussillon, which as previously mentioned historically produced a great deal of French table wine, has four wine-producing areas – Aude, Hérault, Gard, and Pyrénées-Orientales. The formal name for each of these four political units is *département*. The region of Languedoc-Roussillon actually has five *départements*, but the fifth, Lozère, produces negligible amounts of wine. Often, ‘Languedoc’

is used as a shorthand to mean the wines in the general area of the south as France – similarly, so is the term ‘Midi’. This is because the historical province of Languedoc contained Aude, Hérault, and the Gard, which together produces the vast majority of the wine in Languedoc-Roussillon. But it is also because the term ‘Roussillon’ in ‘Languedoc-Roussillon’ is actually a nod to the history of the general area, as the historical Roussillon, long since abolished under the *ancien régime*, roughly corresponded to the modern département of the Pyrénées-Orientales, which through organic and repeated grouping and association, became amalgamated with Languedoc. This thesis uses, as most of the sources do, the terms Midi, Languedoc-Roussillon, and Languedoc interchangeably to refer to this wine-growing area in the south-east of France, unless specifically otherwise noted.

The terms referring to the grouping of the six Western European countries ought to be clarified as well. The term ‘European Economic Community’ (EEC) is the official name for the creation in 1957 of the organisation founded by France, Belgium, Luxembourg, West Germany, The Netherlands, and Italy. When the Treaty of Maastricht came into force in 1993, it introduced a new system of three pillars which together constituted the newly-coined ‘European Union’. These three pillars were the European Communities pillar, the European Foreign and Security Policy pillar, and the Justice and Home Affairs pillar (later re-named the Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters pillar). The EEC was renamed the ‘European Community’ (EC) and subsumed under the first pillar, alongside the European Steel and Coal Community as well as the European Atomic Energy Committee. In 2009, the Treaty of Maastricht was replaced by the Treaty of Lisbon, and the European Union, unchanged in name, became a consolidated legal entity. It is commonplace for those who write on European integration history to refer to these various groupings before 1993 as the

Community, the European Community, the European Economic Community, and Brussels rather interchangeably; this nomenclature practise is also adopted by this thesis.

The primary source base for this work is almost entirely in French. When cited phrases are short or translations considerably improve ease of reading, the text has been translated into English (this is particularly the case with wordy government documents in the French, especially in chapter two). Otherwise, they are retained in the French. All translations are the author's own. The first appearance only of foreign terms in each chapter is italicised.

### *Outline of Chapters & Archival Base*

This thesis addresses the impact that the European Community's wine policy had on table wine growers in the Midi region in France in the 1970s through the following structure:

This introduction has introduced the overall thesis question, 'What impact did the European Community have on table wine growers in the Midi region in France in the 1970s?' It has also established important links between agriculture, the French state, and French identity. It has examined secondary literature primarily from anthropology, sociology, and political science to demonstrate the great importance of agriculture in France, but beyond this, how conceptualisations of agriculture and wine more specifically have affected the sense of self in France. Frenchness has long been tied up with the myth of the roots of a rural peasant idyll, and the place of wine in this popular image is highly symbolic and crucial. It also shows the dearth of literature specifically addressing the development and impact of the CWP from a historical point of view – this is one of the major gaps that this piece of work is intended to fill.

The first chapter focuses on the emergence of a common European wine policy and charts the course of negotiations from 1967 to 1970. However, as it was meant to be constructed partly to safeguard farmers' incomes, those framing the wine policy faced a serious issue: should it forcibly reduce wine production to rebalance the market or should it focus on optimising the welfare aspect of the policy? The initial chapter suggests that the inability of the Community to find a solution resulted from the differences encountered in properly conceptualising the nature of the problem. The source base of the chapter is primary documents on the European Commission and the Council of Ministers from 1962 to 1970 collected from the Historical Archives of the European Commission (HAEC) and the Council of Ministers Archives (CMA), both in Brussels. It also includes primary documents from the French diplomatic service from 1967 – 1971 from the La Corneuve site of the Archives Diplomatiques de la Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de France (AD).

The second chapter looks at the operation of the Common Wine Policy through its first decade. The most noteworthy event of the 1970s was the Franco-Italian wine war which started at the beginning of 1975 and would last through 1976. The war was triggered by a large flood of Italian wine imports into France in January and February of 1975, to which neither the French national government nor Brussels and its CWP could adequately respond. The incident prompted a round of negotiations over foundational aspects of the Common Wine Policy, during which time it was heavily revised to be closer in substance to the desires of the French delegations. The CWP became much more restrictive – it curbed planting rights, introduced grubbing up or the uprooting of vines, and laid down more rules about what could be planted and where. The source base of this chapter is primary documents on the European Commission and the Council of Ministers from 1970 – 1982 from the HAEC



and CMA, supplemented by more Community level documents originating from these institutions but also including documents from the European Parliament from the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), located in Florence. In addition, there are extensive primary documents used from the French diplomatic service from 1974 – 1976 from the La Corneuve site of the Archives Diplomatiques de la Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de France (AD), which is located in Paris. The chapter also uses primary sources from the archive collections of the London School of Economics and Political Science. The LSE archives contain an almost complete record of the transcriptions of the sittings of the European Parliament, and the Bulletins of the European Communities, and a number of other important documents published by the Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

The third and fourth chapters examine the reactions of vignerons in Languedoc-Roussillon to the Common Wine Policy. Though they were aware of the entry into force of the CWP, the attentions of Languedoc-Roussillon vignerons were first truly captured by the Franco-Italian wine crisis, which had after all taken place in their region. The chapters trace how new political relationships developed, through the process of the implementation of new national and Community wine policy. Wine production had a long history in this region, was central to its economy, and to the livelihood of millions of its viticulteurs, who were monoculturalist farmers – they grew grapes for wine and nothing else. Most of the viticulteurs there produced table wine. The Languedoc-Roussillon was arguably the region not only in France but in the whole Community that was most centrally affected by the CWP. Its table wine producers took to demonstrations and violence to express their anger with some of the Community's policies. The Midi was by far the greatest single contributor to the EEC 'wine lake.' How did the viticulteurs understand their predicament, and who did they blame? Did they point to the

EEC or to the French government? What prompted them to shift from taking their grievances to French officials to more lobbying at the Community level?

The third chapter examines the local and regional reactions in the Languedoc-Roussillon to the changes instituted at the European level from 1975 – 1976. The Wine Crisis prompted the beginning of the genuine engagement of Midi vigneronns with the Common Wine Policy. The Midi vigneronns saw the CWP and actors in Brussels as being responsible for their plight, wherein cheaper and comparable quality Italian table wines were flooding into the French market. They reacted in the initial period from 1975 – 1976 by acting through the French state, lobbying in particular the Ministry and Minister of Agriculture to help them. The Ministry of Agriculture, together with top level officials, in a hasty attempt to pacify demonstrations in the south, responded by placing an illegal tax on Italian wines. They thereafter created a national office for wine to allow vigneronns to be engaged in the policy-making and policy-implementation process for table wines. However, this project was not sufficient to address the concerns of vigneronns – despite some successes, the gap between producers and merchants as well as the perceived gap between south and north proved too wide at times for productive consensus. The source base of this chapter is primary sources from the Archives Nationales de France, Centre des archives contemporaines (AN) in Fontainebleau, particularly those originating from the French Ministry of Agriculture from 1962 – 1983, and a wide variety of regional and local documents consulted at the Archives départementales de l'Hérault (AH). The Hérault archives were chosen because Hérault contains Montpellier, which is the capital of Languedoc-Roussillon, and therefore the archives contains all the attendant bureaucratic paperwork important to the region, making it the richest record source. As well, every day of the daily newspaper *La Journée Vinicole* for the years 1974 – 1980 was consulted at the Archives Patrimoine in the Médiathèque Emile-

Zola in Montpellier. Documents were also consulted at the Archives municipales de Sète (AMS), Sète being the port at the epicentre of the 1975 – 1976 crisis.

The fourth chapter continues the analysis of local and regional reactions to the Common Wine Policy, and in particular looks at the way the CWP affected organisational behaviour amongst Midi vigneron. The interventionist turn in the CWP from 1976 involved Brussels more deeply with the Midi vigneron, and after the breakdown of an already rocky relationship with Paris, these vigneron began to organise at the local and regional level to lobby at the Community level. This did not mean that various viticultural groups no longer took their grievances to French officials, but rather that they realised that many of the policy decisions affecting them were being taken in Brussels and they felt they ought to engage at that level. This was a significant break from the traditional French government imperative of speaking with one official voice in the European Community at the time. The source base of this chapter is the same as for chapter three.

The conclusion brings together different arguments from the previous chapters to explore some broad themes relating to the change in the role of national French government institutions towards their country's wine producers, as well as to the rise of sub-national and non-state actors in particular policy circles. It also highlights how the case of the vigneron in the Languedoc-Roussillon runs counter to the idea that local and regional distinctiveness was lost against the forces of globalisation and the pressures of modernisation in the 1970s.

## Chapter One

### Negotiating Wine at the European Community, 1967–1970

It used at one time to be said that if you scratched an American politician he would start dripping oil. In the European Community, politicians would be more likely to be found to have milk or wine in their veins.

- Neville-Rolfe, *The Politics of Agriculture in the European Community*, vi.

The need for an organised common market for wine was established at the Stresa Conference in 1958, alongside those for fruits and vegetables, milk and dairy products, cereals, and meat, but it became a true *enfant terrible*. Few predicted that the policy would require three years of ‘extremely arduous negotiations.’<sup>1</sup> These negotiations and the resultant policy were unique amongst the markets because of the traditional and cultural importance and symbolism of wine amongst Member States, and due to the complexities of wine as an economic good. This chapter charts the course of and analyses French involvement in the

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<sup>1</sup> 2965/X/70-E: The Background to the Common Organisation of the Market in Wine, 1970. European Commission. Luxembourg: Division for Agricultural Information in collaboration with Directorate-General for Agriculture.

negotiations over the Common Wine Policy (CWP) from 1967 until its conclusion on April 28, 1970, and discusses the broader issues related to European integration that it throws into relief.

*Basis for a unified European Wine Policy and its Halting First Steps, 1961-1967*

While there was plenty of earnest talk about the necessity of its inclusion in any integrated European agricultural policy in the years following the Stresa Conference<sup>2</sup>, serious discussions on the wine policy would not occur for many years. However, the Stresa Conference introduced an important mandate which would later burden wine policy negotiators with a moral imperative: the Stresa resolution ‘introduced a number of important new concepts, such as...of course, the importance of the family farm.’<sup>3</sup> Quick progress on other common markets in the early 1960s left the one for wine quite behind. On May 31, 1961, a proposal for a common cereals market was put forward by the Commission to the Council, as was one for milk and pig meat. A few months later in July, there were formal proposals for markets in fruits and vegetables, eggs, and poultry meat. But wine policy proposals were delayed, with the Commission citing concerns over the availability of statistical evidence to understand the scope of what they were dealing with.

On January 14, 1962, after the 140 hour ‘agricultural marathon’ of negotiations over the propositions for various integrated markets, the decision to create six agricultural markets was approved. This was an enormous undertaking – Rolf Lahr, who had been Germany’s negotiator, wrote in a letter four days after the announcement of the approval that ‘Almost

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed treatment of the Stresa Conference, see Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*, 122-130.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Neville-Rolfe, *The Politics of Agriculture in the European Community* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1984), 205.

every day ended in nightly sessions. When the last session ended yesterday morning at half past five it had lasted for twenty-one hours. Two French experts suffered heart attacks, others returned to their hotels....But the Belgian foreign minister Spaak is right that this session, instead of becoming the largest failure of the politics of European cooperation, has become the largest success'.<sup>4</sup> Sicco Mansholt, then Vice-President of the European Commission and in charge of the agricultural portfolio, declared on the occasion that the six member states had 'consciously burnt our national boats behind us in order jointly to steer a European course'.<sup>5</sup> This joint European course in name included a comprehensive European wine policy, but at this point it was still underdeveloped. Commission President Walter Hallstein and Mansholt envisioned at this juncture that an eventual wine policy would fall under a lower level of protection relative to the other common market organisations (CMOs) which would see it mostly subject to customs duties and levies on imports.

As a very preliminary step, in the same year, a regulation came out with four major provisions, mainly administrative, to lay the foundations for the eventual creation of a common wine policy. The four provisions of Regulation 24/62<sup>6</sup> were first, each country was to establish a vineyard register, second, a central authority was to keep track of annual production levels, third, strict rules were to be established regarding quality wines produced in specified regions, and fourth, future estimates of resources and requirements were to be compiled annually. This regulation was appropriately named '...on the eventual establishment of a common organisation of the market in wine'. In contrast with this rather minimalist series of measures, the other markets had preparatory arrangements for their upcoming

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<sup>4</sup> Letter written by Rolf Lahr, January 14, 1962. As cited in Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*.

<sup>5</sup> Bulletin of the European Economic Community, No 3, 1962. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>6</sup> 'Regulation (EEC) No 24/62 on the progressive establishment of a common organisation of the market in wine,' in OJ 30, 989-990: Journal Officiel des Communautés Européennes, 1962.

market organisations which were considerably more wide-ranging. For instance, the creation of the milk market was first addressed after Stresa in 1964 with the establishment of Regulation 13/64. This preliminary text already contained detailed and solid plans for a price levy system for imports, as well as pricing mechanisms for the Community support structures, such as how often a threshold price would be established, and even included a timeframe for the abolishment of intra-community tariffs on milk and milk products. At twelve pages, the document was six times longer than the wine regulation. Four years later, the common market organisation for milk was rendered in full.<sup>7</sup>

There was not to be a similar trajectory for the wine policy. After a lag of five years, the negotiations for a common wine market finally began in earnest in 1967. The negotiations for the cereals sector took much of the attention of the Commission and Council before this – after the May 1961 proposal, discussions progressed quickly and the Council agreed unanimously with the Commission’s proposal on cereals. But while the Council expected to have the market running in July 1962, the inability of Germany to come to an agreement by 1964 with the other members over the fixing of wheat prices meant a long delay on the matter. An unsatisfied de Gaulle prompted the 1965 ‘Empty Chair Crisis’, which then loomed large over the wine negotiations.

In fact, a series of difficulties surrounding the integration project in general may explain in part the determination of the actors in continuing with negotiations even when it seemed quite impossible to reach consensus. The oft-repeated claim of Commissioners and Members of European Parliament (MEPs) – that the Common Agricultural Policy was tied to the fate of the European integration project as a whole – came to be used to discuss the CWP. Achieving

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<sup>7</sup> 'Regulation (EEC) No 804/68 of the Council of 27 June 1968 on the common organisation of the market in milk and milk products,' in L148/13, Official Journal of the European Communities, 1968.

an integrated policy on wine began to be discussed and spoken of as being integral to the success of the CAP. This chapter is concerned with two main questions – how was an agreement managed and why was a common policy on wine so difficult to negotiate – and concludes with broader insights into the integration process in general.

After the establishment of the provisions in 1962, there would not be another major movement toward a unified wine policy until a meeting of the *Groupe de travail 'vins'*, the Council's group of wine experts which reported to the *Comité Spécial Agriculture* (CSA). The Groupe was composed of key decision-makers for the Common Agricultural Policy. While the *Comité des Représentants Permanents* (COREPER) was typically thought of as the major organ where French leadership is exercised in European policy, when it came to the Community's agricultural decisions, it was the CSA and 'not the COREPER, that from 1960 onward functioned as the forum for high-level representatives in the Community.'<sup>8</sup> This argument, also advanced by Knudsen, was borne out in the course of archival research for this thesis and explains the relative dearth of COREPER files. The CSA announced that in February 1967, the upcoming Council of Europe meeting would include the first meeting of the Comité de Hauts Fonctionnaires's sub-committee on wines; COREPER and the Council wanted to present a unified, coordinated attitude of the Six there.<sup>9</sup> This was particularly noteworthy, as the Council was a body with no agricultural remit and yet it was this group that in part was responsible for triggering a new move forward in European agricultural policy. These kinds of external pressures would prove to be vital for keeping up the momentum of the discussions on the wine policy.

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<sup>8</sup> Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*, 88.

<sup>9</sup> '70/67 (RP/CRS 2)', COREPER minutes from its 410th meeting in Brussels, January 17-19, 1967. CM2 1967/134, CMA.



### *Earnest Negotiations for Creating a Common Wine Market Organisation from 1967*

In June 1967, triggered by the Council of Europe meeting a few months prior, the Commission finally picked up from the 1962 regulations that laid down the basic administrative foundations for a *marché commun viti-vinicole*, recalling its propositions for a common wine policy in 1960 based on its belief that a general common market could not work without an integrated wine policy. The Commission admitted that, because of the lack of movement on a common wine policy since 1962, the situation in the Community continued to be characterised by very strong protectionism and divisions between the different national viticultural policies, due to ‘natural and historical’ reasons.<sup>10</sup> External pressure repeatedly pushed forward halting discussions. The Council and Commission wanted an agreement before the meeting on December 11, 1967 of the *Comité des Hauts Fonctionnaires sur les vins et spiritueux du Conseil de l’Europe*.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, at a Council meeting on July 16, 1969, the German delegation drew attention to the fact that the six member states would be required to give their definitions on oenological methods at the upcoming meetings on October 13 and 19, 1969 of the *Organisation internationale de la vigne et du vin* (OIV). The OIV was an international intergovernmental organisation dedicated to dealing with scientific and technical aspects of viticulture and viniculture (as laid out in the introduction, viticulture refers to the growing of grape vines and viniculture to that of the knowledge of making wine.). The Germans pressed the Council for a resolution, pointing out that the issue that needed to be decided at the OIV meetings corresponded precisely with the decisions that needed to be taken on the Community’s

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<sup>10</sup> COM (67) 289 final: Proposition d’un règlement du conseil portant dispositions complémentaires en matière d’organisation commune du marché viti-vinicole, le 23 juin 1967, CM2 1970/634.

<sup>11</sup> 70/67 (RP/CRS 2): Comité des représentants permanents projet de compte rendu sommaire de la 410ème réunion, Bruxelles, les mardi 17, mercredi 18 et jeudi 19 janvier 1967. February 1, 1967. CM2 1967/134, CMA.

proposed wine policy, and that this would be an ideal time to move forward with the latter. At this same meeting, the Groupe de travail 'Vins' followed up the German point by saying it wanted to call to the attention of COREPER the necessity of coordinating the attitude of the Six ahead of the meeting of the Comité 'Vins' of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).<sup>12</sup>

The force of external pressure was internalised in the Community – these international meetings were important political chances to demonstrate a unified Communitarian stance; the Members knew that if they could not demonstrate this, they would face further threats to their ability to create a unified market. Decisions made at other non-Community organisations that were binding – such as those at OIV, where changes had to be ratified by all its members and all Six Member States were members – could potentially place unwanted restrictions on decision-makers in the Community when creating policy for this already complicated area.

### *A Major Obstacle: The Difference between the French and Italian Wine Systems*

The most serious obstacle to integration was the profound difference between the French and the Italian wine-production systems, which was to plague the Council and Commission negotiations. The French wine system had been strictly organised since the Code du Vin was adopted in 1936. The French had severe regulations on planting, as well as a market geared towards reducing the production of poor quality wines, and the French government regularly intervened in the case of pricing issues due to harvest fluctuations. The French also had a rich heritage of agricultural cooperatives, which are of significant importance because around this

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<sup>12</sup> 'Problème posé par les travaux de l'Office International du Vin (O.I.V.) en matière de définitions et de pratiques oenologiques'. July 16, 1969. BAC 3/1978 No. 1451, HAEC.

time they accounted for 42% of total production in France, and 70% of production in the Midi, the largest wine-growing region by volume in the world at the time.

The Italian system, however, was ‘marqué par un très grand libéralisme; bien plus, la vigne étant considérée comme une plante colonisatrice, sa culture en est largement encouragée, dans certaines conditions du moins’<sup>13</sup> as the Italians encouraged the planting of vines and the development of vineyards as a way to improve the living conditions for farmers in poor rural areas. Their wine market produced a large amount, comparable in the 1960s and 1970s to France, but was still very much in its infancy as far as having a modern, national, and regulated market was concerned. Most wine produced was consumed in the country, and was of table wine quality. In 1963, the Italians developed the *Denominazione di Origine Controllata* (DOC), in response to the re-organisation required by the Council regulation of the previous year. In 1965, in part due to trade pressure from the French, the Italians enacted policies to counter fraud. But for them, their principal policy aim was to encourage the spread of wine-growing as a national economic and social development tool. Both France and Italy wanted to reproduce their national models at the European level. Finding a compromise between these two approaches would not prove easy.

The Commission’s proposal for the development of a common wine policy was initially a result of three major lines of thought – that any policy produced should address ‘the adjustment of production and consumption’, that it should undertake to improve the quality of Community wine, and that it should harmonise the divergent national legislation. In practice, these three aims resulted in their own individual debates. The first of these was reflected in debates conceptualising the nature of the problem for which a common wine policy would be

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<sup>13</sup> COM (67) 289 final: Proposition d'un règlement du conseil portant dispositions complémentaires en matière d'organisation commune du marché viti-vinicole, le 23 juin 1967, CM2 1970/634.

a solution. The resultant problems achieving this were partly because of lack of or the misreading of evidence, and the differences between economic and political aims in the CWP. The second issue turned around the debate that eventually solidified around table vs. quality wine. The compromise later reached that would have adverse effects on both table wine producers and market balance. The third issue became about problems understanding historically different methods of making wine.

By July 1968, a year after negotiations had begun, the fixing of prices for the common markets of milk, beef and veal, sugar, rice, oilseeds and olive oil, and cereals had all been established, but not for wine. The French complained about the lack of progress, but the gridlock was largely due to their lack of agreements with many aspects of the proposal. In a long, detailed, special report to the CSA<sup>14</sup>, the primary argument of the French delegation was this: to maintain balance in the wine market, one ought to control the level of production and the level of imports, which the French insisted could only be effective if at the same time there was a determined push to eliminate and discourage the production of poor quality wines.

The French worried that the Commission's rather liberal attitude towards the use of distillation in the case of high yields (which is itself an expensive measure) would encourage an 'intensive production of mediocre wine.'<sup>15</sup> The French claimed that without efforts to curb the large surpluses sure to rise from new plantings, without certain rules regarding quality standards and limitation of planting, and without sufficient protection of the market and pricing, the result would be disastrous for the Community. The French were not wrong to have been concerned about the impending consequences of a liberal policy for the

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<sup>14</sup> 'S/967/1968 CSA 272: Position de la délégation française à l'égard de l'établissement d'une politique commune viti-vinicole.' November 11, 1968. CM2 1970/638, CMA.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*d

Community as a whole, but this attitude stemmed as well from a concern far closer to home. A liberal policy with no restrictions on planting would certainly have been great trouble for them further down the line with the production trends in France's southern vineyards; even the inclusion of some sort of built-in price support system of a future CWP, which would mean subsidies would for the country's farmers, would be unlikely to adequately abet the situation of further projected rises in production.

There was good evidence that the increase of production in both France and Italy over the previous decade was symptomatic of a systemic overproduction as a result of domestic welfare policies within both Italy and France, with Italian encouragement of the development of rural areas and the continued French protection of wine-growers in the Midi, who produced a great deal of the poor quality table wines against which French themselves were arguing. (It was, interestingly enough, the Germans who through 1968 and 1969 repeatedly try to argue that this was the case, and were rebuffed by the other two.) The French at times used Brussels as a place to dump unpopular domestic problems they could then later say would have to be pursued in the name of being European. It would seem later that the French government intentionally wanted to develop a more restrictive policy on planting at Brussels and not in Paris so as to avert in part potential blame from *vignerons*; the effort of the French government to 'discourage the cultivation of inferior grapes was a political and not a scientific one: [it was] the need to curb the subsidies that drained the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 263.

In response to continued problems with negotiations, a series of CSA meetings in November 1968 were reserved for the wine policy negotiations,<sup>17</sup> where the frustrated Germans suggested a simple, basic coordination of national legislation, akin to a customs union, as a first step for the wine market. Both France and Italy were committed to the process of creating a full, proper CMO; they refused a partial integration, citing the relative importance of wine to their countries and to Community integration as a whole. Domestically, the French faced pressure from wine cooperatives, which had started to become relatively well-organised through the 1960s, and who would have been particularly displeased with a loose, unstructured policy at a time when prices and consumption of table wine were falling. The suggestion by the Commission representative at the meeting that it might become necessary to simply copy-and-paste the more technocratic models from the organisation of the markets of other major agricultural sectors was ignored by other representatives. Despite the many pressing difficulties, the central line was still that ‘organisation of a common market for wine is indispensable for completing the integration of the agricultural economies of the Six member states’.<sup>18</sup>

### *Problems Agreeing on Pricing*

The problem of reaching agreement on pricing was the major sticking point from November 1968 onward. At the beginning of 1969, reaching a sound agreement on pricing mechanisms for wine seemed to be out-of-reach. The model proposed by the Commission at the time was a loose price support system complemented with supplementary price supports, safeguard clauses, and a Community tariff. The Germans, along with the Belgian and Dutch

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<sup>17</sup> CM2 1970/638, various documents on and related to the November 6 & 7 and November 18, 19, 20, 1978 meetings.

<sup>18</sup> 'S/967/1968 CSA 272: Position de la délégation française à l'égard de l'établissement d'une politique commune viti-vinicole.' November 11, 1968. CM2 1970/638, CMA.

representatives, found even this basic system to be too much – they expressed their ‘réserve plus approfondi des mécanismes’ and went on to state they were ‘pas convaincues de la nécessité de prendre [ces] mesures.’<sup>19</sup> To the Germans, the measures taken for the wine policy ought to be more ‘à caractère conservatoire’<sup>20</sup> than the current Commission proposals. This was at stark odds with the French position – that the system in its current conception was not nearly wide-ranging or incisive enough, as yet ‘insuffisante aux objectifs d’une politique viti-vinicole commune’,<sup>21</sup> and further to this did not contain any steps in the direction of the promotion of quality in the wine industry.

On January 15, 1969, the Secretariat General prepared a summary of the major points of contention amongst delegates regarding the wine negotiations.<sup>22</sup> The four key issues still requiring resolution were first, what the guiding objective or objectives of the wine policy ought to be (would it be balancing production and demand, following a policy of quality, or administratively directing production policy?); second, what the links should be between the market organisation, the harmonisation of existing legislation, the regulation of quality wines, and the organisation of a market for alcohol more broadly speaking; third, how to arrange the trade regime with non-Community countries; and fourth, what legal form the market organisation for wine should take (should it be a common market organisation, or, as the Germans continued to suggest, a ‘simple coordination des organismes nationaux’<sup>23</sup>?). In addition to this list of difficult conceptual problems at the top of the fifth year of negotiations

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<sup>19</sup> ‘S/1034/68 (CSA 293)’, Proposals for a regulation laying down additional provisions for the common organisation of the wine market and the report of the Groupe de travail ‘Vins’ to the Comité spécial Agriculture on the system of production pricing. CM2 1970/639, CMA.

<sup>20</sup> ‘R/2025/68 (AGRI 696)’, Proposals for a regulation laying down additional provisions for the common organisation of the wine market and the report of the Comité spécial Agriculture to the Council. November 22, 1968. CM2 1970/638, CMA.

<sup>21</sup> ‘S/1034/68 (CSA 293)’, Proposals for a regulation laying down additional provisions for the common organisation of the wine market and the report of the Groupe de travail ‘Vins’ to the Comité spécial Agriculture on the system of production pricing. CM2 1970/639, CMA.

<sup>22</sup> Points for the order of the day, Secrétariat général du Conseil. January 15, 1969. CM2 1970/639, CMA.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

was the difficult technical problem of how to manage the ‘régularisation du marché communautaire’ for while all delegations agreed in principle with interventions of some sort, ‘des divergences profondes sont cependant apparues en ce qui concerne l’ampleur, la nature et le caractère des mécanismes à prévoir.’<sup>24</sup>

At this meeting, the matter of whether or not overproduction was a potential problem in future was heavily debated. The French delegation, supported on this point by the Germans, argued that overproduction was a great possibility and could only be averted with strict Community control emphasising quality of vines and *terroirs* – this uniquely French word, when applied to wine, encompassed such diverse aspects as geology and climate, such as sun, slope, soil composition, precipitation, and is tied together in a particular locality which gives it a sense of ‘place.’ This word is usually used in the context of quality wines. The French were adamant that a system not be designed in which there was ‘une sous-protection pour les vins de qualité et une sur-protection pour les vins médiocres’.<sup>25</sup>

The French were insistent on this point, as they had been since the beginning of negotiations, for the national mandate issued to them had itself been particularly resolute on the same issue. The French stance during all negotiations was set by the *Secrétariat général du comité interministériel pour les questions de coopération économique européenne* (SGCI), the Paris-based national governmental body that liaised with different relevant French ministries to coordinate the official French line in Community institutions. Even if its detractors claimed it was not particularly transparent – one commentator quipped it was ‘une officine

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> ‘R/77/69 (AGRI 25)’, Proposals for a regulation laying down additional provisions for the common organisation of the wine market and the state of work in the Council and issues submitted to it by the Comité spécial Agriculture. January 15, 1969. CM2 1970 639, CMA.



administrative au rôle inconnu et à l'importance considérable'<sup>26</sup> – the SGCI, staffed predominantly by those from the Ministry of Finance, was the reason why French coordination and consistency of goals in the European Commission was widely considered the most efficient of the member states.<sup>27</sup> In fact, it was the strict rule that 'French ministries were not allowed to accept agendas of meetings in Brussels without the agreement of the SGCI',<sup>28</sup> despite the fact that it did not have official decision-making powers. The SGCI had most recently set the formal agenda on wine negotiations by stating that delegates were to make three points clear: first, that, given the French overview of their own domestic situation, overproduction was likely and could degenerate quickly – but delegates were to make this point about the Community situation in general (that is to say, they should also argue that this could happen in Italy); second, that production had to be limited at all costs, but this point might have to be made in a nuanced way because the Commission had taken the line along with the Italians that planting should be allowed to continue freely; and third, that the French delegates were to counter any continued German demands against comprehensive, built-in Community intervention measures in wine with the line that it needed to be 'communautaires et obligatoires.'<sup>29</sup>

The document urgently noted that 'la délégation allemande soutient, d'autre part, que le Conseil avait décidé, lors de l'adaptation du règlement financier, en mai 1966, que l'organisation commune du marché du vin ne ferait pas l'objet d'un financement communautaire'.<sup>30</sup> This was unacceptable for the French, for their aim was to transfer policy-

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<sup>26</sup> Jean-Luc Sauron, *L'administration française et l'Union européenne* (Paris: La Documentation française, 2000), 85.

<sup>27</sup> N. Piers Ludlow, 'The Making of the CAP: Towards a Historical Analysis of the EU's First Major Policy,' *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 3 (2005): 352.

<sup>28</sup> Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*, 87.

<sup>29</sup> 'Conseil des ministres des Communautés Européennes des 25 et 26 novembre 1968 - Agriculture', Secrétaire Général du Comité Interministériel. November 22, 1968. Affaires économiques et financières: Coopération économique, 714 (1967-1975). AD.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

making power, and in particular the hefty and difficult financing of their national wine industry, to the Community institutions. The document pressed delegates to make the point that the May 1966 resolution ‘laisse...entièrement ouverte la possibilité d’un financement communautaire.’<sup>31</sup>

The Italians argued instead that reaching equilibrium between production and consumption was possible, and that the other delegations were setting a dangerous precedent by trying to limit planting rights, declaring that this would be an attack on Italy’s cultural, economic, and social sensibilities.<sup>32</sup> In response, the Commission representative stated that the Commission was not unwilling to adopt temporary ‘mesures contraignantes’ to help alleviate an imbalance, but stated that the position of the Commission was that ‘elle considèrait qu’une telle situation de déséquilibre n’existait pas encore.’<sup>33</sup> The solution the frustrated parties found was to intervene on a case-by-case basis; this mechanism was unique to the wine market as other similar common markets had automatic interventions.

The negotiations for pricing on the cereals market were infamously complicated as well, and negotiators did not arrive at case-by-case pricing. Why did this happen in the wine market? There was in part considerable pressure to arrive at a solution quickly, and thereby, more pressure to relinquish national goals in favour of compromise, because the wine market was the last of the original markets left to be unified. The free circulation of wine within the Six was meant to be in effect from November 1969; further to this, earnest and intensive enlargement negotiations were planned for the 1970s, and it was incumbent to have the markets running before then, including this final problem child. This also made the eventual

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> ‘R/77/69 (AGRI 25)’, Proposals for a regulation laying down additional provisions for the common organisation of the wine market and the state of work in the Council and issues submitted to it by the Comité spécial Agriculture. January 15, 1969. CM2 1970 639, CMA.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

CWP much more prone to criticism and open attack because it required incisive ‘hands-on’ action each time pricing became problematic as it could not depend on automatic interference like other markets.

In early 1969, the situation looked bleak. The Commission and Council sustained a long discussion on the definition of the word ‘wine’. The FAO remarked that the Community’s common wine policy as it stood ‘has indeed made very little progress and the major problems remain still to be resolved.’<sup>34</sup> The Council continued to express doubts about the Commission’s proposal, citing problems with the application of appropriate measures for production policy, the character of protectionist import measures, and the measures to balance a common wine market. In the midst of difficulties, greater clarity was achieved by splitting issues of concern into general problems and technical problems, which allowed the delegation of in-depth and now extensive technical matters to the Commission and Council’s own individual expert wine groups, which had been confusing and laborious for non-specialists to discuss. At the tail end of the previous year, this mandate had been explicitly conferred to the Groupe de travail ‘Vins’ by the Comité spécial Agriculture at the Groupe’s meeting of November 25, 1968 for the purposes of allowing the latter to take charge of making ‘une étude approfondie des aspects techniques’<sup>35</sup> of the wine policy proposals. But the real breakthrough, though it came reluctantly, was when Germany helped France and Italy take steps towards a compromise on pricing mechanisms and financial aspects of the CWP in early 1970.

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<sup>34</sup> Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, ‘The World Wine and Vine Products Economy: A study of trends and problems,’ Commodity Bulletin Series (Rome 1969), 21.

<sup>35</sup> ‘S/1034/68 (CSA 293)’, Proposals for a regulation laying down additional provisions for the common organisation of the wine market and the report of the Groupe de travail ‘Vins’ to the Comité spécial Agriculture on the system of production pricing. CM2 1970/639, CMA.

It was not until February 1970 that the Council approved the Commission proposal, announcing that after negotiations which were ‘wearisome, often profitless, and largely dominated by a clash of national interests’, they were reaching the end and that the implementation of what would be regulation 816/70 was close at hand. But this they did without particularly satisfying anyone, least of all France, whose desire to keep the Community’s vineyard to its current size had been quashed. To get Italian agreement on financing meant France made greater concessions, resulting in a much more liberal regime that allowed both free trade and free production of wine. In mid-April 1970, the process looked like it would fall apart again, during a very stormy meeting in which the Italian proposals to ban the addition of sugar to grape to increase alcoholic content was met with fierce resistance by both the French and Germans, who both used chaptalisation with some of their best-selling wines.

In the end, five major agreement areas were in regulation 816/70 which set down common rules for the organisation in the Community’s market in wine. The first was prices and intervention – it was agreed that price fixing would only be done for table wines, and that quality wines would not be subjected to such a process. Rules concerning production and control of planting enshrined the freedom to plant. High import rates were imposed on trade with none-EC countries, as well as more stringent regulations on the type of wine that could be imported. Blending of EC wines with non-EC wines was strictly banned. The final two rules were about oenological processes and general provisions, such as definitions. One particularly important arrangement was the division of Europe’s vineyards into five geographical categories, as outlined in the following table.

**Table 1.1 European Community wine growing zones as set out by Regulation 816/70**

Zone name	Zone A	Zone B	Zone CI	Zone CII	Zone CIII
Areas covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• German wine regions, with the exception of the Bade</li> <li>• Luxembourgise wine area</li> <li>• areas not covered by any other categories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• German region of Bade</li> <li>• French regions of Alsace, Lorraine, Champagne, Jura, Savoie, and Val de Loire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vineyards of the Centre-Ouest, Centre, and Sud-Ouest in France, with the exception of those vineyards in those areas already covered under Zone B</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Midi in France</li> <li>• all Italian vineyards, with the exception of those specified for inclusion under CIII</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corse</li> <li>• certain vineyards in the Midi region of Pyrénées-Orientales and the Var</li> <li>• certain vineyards in the south of Rome and the islands in Italy</li> </ul>

The Commission welcomed the birth of the CWP in April 1970 with this announcement:

‘Given these different [national] interests, often diametrically opposed, a single approach to the wine market problem was only possible because all sides made considerable concessions. Growers in Italy, France, and Germany are bitterly critical of the Council’s resolution: they all feel that their own Government has given too much ground. It might be said indeed that everyone is equally dissatisfied, which proves that the agreement by the Ministers is a genuine compromise.’<sup>36</sup>

*External Pressures, Push to Complete the Common Agricultural Policy, and Belief in Wine as Part of the European Integration Project*

<sup>36</sup> 2965/X/70-E: The Background to the Common Organisation of the Market in Wine, 1970. European Commission. Luxembourg: Division for Agricultural Information in collaboration with Directorate-General for Agriculture.

Three themes emerge from tracing the arc of the negotiations over the Common Wine Policy. These were the lucky well-timed external pressures which forced a coordination of the attitude of the Six, the pressure to complete the agricultural project bringing the French and Italians to a disgruntled compromise on the issue of wine, and a persistence in seeking a common market structure, despite repeated setbacks and suggestions of a simpler customs union, which was based on the unqualified but largely unchallenged belief that wine was integral to the Community agricultural project. What had significant bearing on the tone of the wine negotiations, however, were a series of decisions taken many years earlier, while the Common Agricultural Policy's structure was being established. Earlier discussions from 1957–1962 on the Common Agricultural Policy eventually came to centre around 'prevent[ing] farm incomes from falling more and more behind incomes in other sectors' and addressing the 'disequilibrium between production and consumption... problems which have become almost insoluble within the frontiers of a single state'.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, as Member of Belgian Parliament Maurice Van Hemelrijck from the Belgian Christian Social Party stated, in attempting to explain the principles underpinning discussions on the future European agricultural project,

Le fonctionnement et le développement du Marché commun doit, pour l'agriculture, aller de pair avec une politique agricole commune. Grâce à cette politique agricole commune, on espère développer la productivité de l'agriculture, assurer un niveau de vie équitable à la population agricole, stabiliser les marchés, garantir l'approvisionnement alimentaire et assurer des prix raisonnables de livraison au consommateur. On tiendra compte, dans l'élaboration de la politique agricole commune, du caractère spécial de la production agricole dû à la structure sociale de l'agriculture....<sup>38</sup>

The language used and ideas generated during this earlier time set into motion the increasing legitimacy of a discourse that was based on ensuring that farmers' incomes did not fall further behind those in other sectors. In particular, the discourse included the need for the

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<sup>37</sup> Bulletin of the European Economic Community, No 3, 1962. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>38</sup> Maurice Van Hemelrijck, 'Le Marché commun et l'agriculture,' *La Revue politique* (March 1957).

preservation of the family farm as a recognised component of any European agricultural order that was to be established, which was to be pursued through various measures like price support and balancing consumption and production. These early ideas pushed a social policy agenda onto the stage, and by the time serious discussions began on the creation of a common wine policy, the environment created by these prior discussions added pressure to the course of the wine negotiations, while also limiting their scope.<sup>39</sup> This, for instance, was why the technocratic ‘copy-and-paste’ offered by the Commission was unacceptable. It would not have addressed the social policy aspect as it related to the wine industry, for the industry operated in a more complicated fashion than the other sectors. This also explains the unique mechanisms within the Community market for wine. For example, the automatic pricing and intervention schemes which were an essential and basic part of the milk and cereals markets, were not used in the wine market. Wine was far more subject to variations in both annual harvest sizes and in market fluctuations, which taken together made it a more volatile agricultural market than its comparable cousins.

### *Wine's Fit within the Common Agricultural Policy*

The Common Wine Policy was difficult to negotiate because of three major reasons – first, wine was not a good fit with the rest of the products for which common markets were being created, second, agreed best practices for wines in Europe were lacking, making compromise particularly difficult, and third, tension existed between economic and political imperatives, which exposed broader uncertainties about the goals of the Common Agricultural Policy.

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<sup>39</sup> A full treatment of this argument is contained in Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*.

The inclusion of wine amongst those agricultural products for which markets were being created was not a good fit. Part of the difficulty of creating the wine market lay in the fact that wine was a different creature to the rest. Though this was never quite so explicitly stated, it was clear this was the case in both the delay of the project and the statements in the first half of the 1960s decrying the fact that ‘la création du marché unique [du vin]... sera de nature à atténuer ces difficultés’ not least because ‘organisées sur une base nationale, conformément à la situation propre à chacun des pays, les économies viticoles des Etats membres sont différents considérablement entre elles.’<sup>40</sup>

Wine’s difference to the other agricultural products which were to have analogous markets to it is most obvious when looking at its most closely related agricultural markets, which were those for milk and cereal, the former of which suffered through the milk lake and butter mountain, akin to the headache-inducing wine lake. Even then, there were important differences. While milk and cereal are base agricultural products, wine is not – it is a processed product. Grapes that were to be converted to wine could simply have remained with their grapes-for-eating brethren under the fruit and legumes market. In contrast, milk has a common market, but its derivatives cheese or butter do not.<sup>41</sup> One particularly compelling reason to believe that the wine industry was accorded a special kind of place in the pantheon of Europe’s agricultural products because of its identity was that a market was created for it amongst these other base agricultural products and to the exclusion of one or several alcohol markets.

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<sup>40</sup> ‘Communauté Economique Européenne - Règlement portant établissement graduel d’une organisation commune des marchés dans le domaine viti-vinicole - final.’ July 24, 1961. CM2 1962 620 ac, Consilium Archives.

<sup>41</sup> There were and are some limited regulations on butter under the Community’s milk policy, and to a lesser degree, cheese, but they were no market organisations for them.



One commonality to most wine growing in Western Europe is the practice of monoculturalism, which made those in the wine growing profession particularly vulnerable. A bad harvest would represent a devastating loss of revenue for those who had no other sources of income or had not diversified with other crops. This was particularly acute in the region of Languedoc, where a large percentage of the economy of the region was tied up with the wine industry. Most other farming sectors were hybrids and those who had such operations were sometimes derogatorily-termed 'polyculturists' by Midi vigneron. As M. Soulié, a vigneron in the south of France commented,

The viticulturalist, in monoculture, is more open, more evolved than the polyculturist. We, the viticulturalists, we work to produce and we're in search of improving that production. The polyculturist who grows three or four crops, there's always some disappointment; he can't advance his research, his reflection, as we can advance ours, to always do better...produce better. Governmental projects want us to become polyculturists, because monoculture is quite dangerous in a system like ours where there's no guarantee, no minimum [income] to live, because in socialist countries the state intervenes. But here, when there's a bad harvest, it's explosive.<sup>42</sup>

A frequent occurrence was that those who produced milk, even chiefly, would do so often in combination with something else, such as raising pigs or poultry (with the notable exception of dairying in mountainous regions, which tended to be small-scale monoculturalist pursuits yielding low income.) These polyculturists also tended to join and be represented by general agricultural groups, like the powerful *Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants d'Agricoles* (FNSEA), which the Midi vigneron in particular eschewed. In fact, in spite of FNSEA's considerable status and growth during the 1960s and 1970s, 'the wine growers [of the Languedoc] did not feel as if they belonged to this organization and participated little in its initiatives'.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 174.

<sup>43</sup> Martin, 'Wine Growers' Syndicalism in the Languedoc: Continuity and Change,' 337.

The different measures taken for the milk and cereals markets did not politicise them to the same degree as similar measures for the wine market. Part of the reason for this was that the introduction of quotas had a fairly immediate effect in the intended direction: the quotes halted what had been a continuous increase in milk deliveries, but without effecting a dramatic decline, thereby averting a potential backlash from dairy farmers.<sup>44</sup> But even more important than this was that the wine market was more complicated and exposed than the other agricultural markets (though fruits, particularly in the Mediterranean, were a strong contender for such a position too.) Wine as a whole was more exposed to global processes and pricing than any other sector with a common agricultural market. Table wine and quality wine alike were more exposed to international pressures and determinants impacting the end-price of their product,<sup>45</sup> while the same was not true for milk, meats, or cereals. The lack of consistency in pricing or of the stability of markets in wine, which was more readily-achieved in the previous markets, perpetuated in many ways the ‘feast and famine’<sup>46</sup> cycle of wine.

Another major reason why agreeing on a wine policy was so particularly difficult was that there were no established best practices in wine. To observers from non-wine producing countries, such a statement would probably seem common sense. But to those from countries with strong wine producing backgrounds, there *was* rightness or wrongness in wine growing traditions which, without objective standards by which to measure these, meant that compromise was particularly difficult to reach, because compromise entailed ‘giving in’ to another country’s ways of doing things. Another impediment to dealing with this issue more

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<sup>44</sup> Eric Naylor, 'Milk Quotas and the Changing Pattern of Dairying in France,' *Journal of Rural Studies* 9, no. 1 (1993): 60.

<sup>45</sup> In speaking of end-prices, it is important to note there are different end-prices for different groups, but all are variously affected by international pressures. Firstly, there were the prices paid to producers, either through purchase by merchants or less frequently, by consumers directly. Secondly, there were the end-prices of wines as paid to merchants, usually by large firms, such as supermarket chains or international wholesale buyers, which could be negotiated annually. Thirdly, and once again quite differently, were end-prices for consumers, though they faced the least volatile end-prices, but it was possible for them to pay different prices for the same wines in different years.

<sup>46</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 141.

openly was the seeming inability of countries to simply say that there were different cultures of wine growing – in a technocratic economics-based environment, the currency in Brussels was that of languages and not sentimental idealism or identity issues in negotiations. Even in those negotiations that merited it, and in particular merited discussions on culture and tradition, in a post-war context of creating a new European order, they were not particularly welcome.

This was not an area where one could uncover an agreed-upon set of best practices. Wine in the member states was about tradition, heritage, organic processes of development, and culture. A good example was the acceptance of the practice of chaptalisation, the process of adding sugar to unfermented grape must<sup>47</sup> in order to increase the alcohol content after fermentation. There is no particular rightness or wrongness to this process, but the Italians disliked it and the French and Germans had permitted this in certain wines for many generations. Chaptalisation is used traditionally in cooler areas where white wine grapes are grown to improve the final taste and reduce acidity. This climate-related tradition did not grow up in Italy, for Italians did not encounter the issue for which it was a solution, whereas it was a useful way to improve taste in certain German and French regions. Likewise, different opinions about *edulcoration*, the addition of concentrated grape must to sweeten a wine which is otherwise finalised, were presented as technical facts by Italy and France during a CSA meeting in July 1969, with the resultant ‘solutions’ each party gave to the problems simply being references to what was done at home; a standstill was then hardly a surprise. The process of negotiating wine was essentially more akin to negotiating over value and dominance of cultural practices in a final European wine policy. The creation of the other markets, particularly those for cereals, were, if still difficult, more straight-forward, more

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<sup>47</sup> Grape must is freshly pressed grape juice containing stems, skin, and seeds.

technocratic, and less imbued with symbolic value, identity, and culture than the one for wine.

### *Economic vs. Political Imperatives in Negotiating Wine*

The tension between economic and political imperatives facing the European Community institutions was a significant problem impeding progress during negotiations over the Common Wine Policy. The question ‘whither the CAP?’ was uncomfortably present throughout the discussion, to which the answer in the early 1960s had been to prioritise political and welfarist imperatives, over economic ones. Ann-Christina Knudsen’s arguments about the moral economy of the Common Agricultural Policy<sup>48</sup> are particularly apt in this discussion: the value of maintaining parity in farmers’ incomes and of supporting the continuation of the family farm were part of the design of the fabric of the nascent CAP. By the time the CWP negotiations began, the direction of the overall agricultural project was set, and within its structure was a moral compass that harboured difficulties the wine policy negotiations exposed.

The CWP negotiations, already plagued by disagreement because of lack of best practice, and wine’s poor fit with the other agricultural products under the purview of a European policy, were hampered by the difficulty of dealing with wine as an economic good. Table wine and quality wine were two different economic products, and operated under different economic pressures, yet the two were subject to the same policy. Quality wine increasingly behaved as a luxury economic good, for which demand increases more than would be proportional as

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<sup>48</sup> Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*.

incomes increase; by contrast, table wine began to shift from being a normal good to being an inferior economic good, for which demand decreases as incomes increase.

The difference between quality wine and table wine is crucial to understanding the course of the CWP, particularly in the policy's first decade. Much as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, wine desirability is in the subjective tastes of the drinker. Undoubtedly there is some truth to the idea that ascertaining the value and quality of wine – if otherwise free from faults like being corked – is inherently a subjective analysis. Some would go so far as to say that 'the quality of any wine is socially and politically constructed.'<sup>49</sup> Certainly, in the process of even claiming there ought to be one category for wines considered to be high quality and one category of wine considered to be low quality – euphemistically 'table wine', and previously in France also known as '*vin de consommation courante*' – signalled a process of political construction.

This political construction was partly responding to changing social constructions of wine, where alongside the decline in wine consumed per capita in Mediterranean countries<sup>50</sup> came the 'the development of a new wine drinking culture in France...[in] the 1970s.'<sup>51</sup> The change was propelled by the tastes of the growing middle classes, who drank less wine to begin with and furthermore did so, and also selectively chose their wines, to '[enable] them to differentiate themselves from other social groups by adopting the ways of drinking that were once the preserve of the *haute bourgeoisie*.'<sup>52</sup> The criteria that was used to develop the two

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<sup>49</sup> Andy Smith, 'Quality, who's quality? The impact of the EU's 2008 wine policy reform in France and in Spain,' in *Actes de colloques du 9e symposium international d'oenologie de Bordeaux* (Paris: Dunod, 2012), 22.

<sup>50</sup> Demossier, *Wine Drinking Culture in France: A National Myth or a Modern Passion*, 70.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

different wine categories used a combination of alcohol percentage<sup>53</sup> and geographic locale<sup>54</sup> to designate a wine as being in a better category: even the nomenclature itself – assigning one category as ‘quality’ surely suggests the other is not, regardless of cosmetic euphemistic attempts to avoid this – was evidence of construction. Yet this political construction was also partly responding to another imperative: table wine and quality wine were operating differently as economic goods in the market.

The CWP did not reconcile this growing economic difference between table and quality wines, for it would have made sense for there to be two sets of economic policies. From a political point of view, it would have been tremendously difficult, not to mention unpopular, to institute two sets of economic policy to wine grape growers, whose products were ostensibly the same, even when the products were subject to different kinds of economic pressure in markets. A small effort made to differentiate the two projects was taken with the establishment of regulation 817/70, which complemented 816/70, the principal body of the CWP. While 816/70 was the focus of the Community’s efforts to intervene in the European wine industry and is what is largely being referred to when discussing the CWP, the Commission created 817/70 to lay down additional provisions for quality wines. This regulation was largely a formal exercise, for 817/70 straightened some administrative lines in quality wine labelling and naming as in article 12,<sup>55</sup> which regulated the use of ‘quality wine produced in a specified region’ (in English known as QWPSR and – as it was more commonly referred to in all languages – by its French acronym VPQRD for ‘*vins de qualité produits dans des régions déterminées*’), but had little other impact on quality wine growers.

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<sup>53</sup> Rather roughly, wines with an alcohol content of 9% or higher – up until the maximum of 14% – were considered to be better quality than those with an alcohol content of below 9%.

<sup>54</sup> To be more accurate to their wishes though, the policymakers’ full criterion was ‘character derived from geographic locale’. Again, this is a subjective assessment.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Regulation (EEC) No. 817/70 of the Council of 28 April 1970 laying down special provisions relating to quality wines produced in specific regions,’ in L99/20, 20-25: Journal Officiel des Communautés Européennes, 1970.

Overproduction of wine was a serious concern. Despite confusing and conflicting statistics suggesting it was permanent, temporary, or indeed, no longer an issue, the Council of Ministers stated formally as early as 1961 that ‘des excédents à caractère permanent sont la cause de graves difficultés dans l’économie viticole’.<sup>56</sup> Particularly with poorer quality wine, the route that would have made most economic sense was to forcibly cut down on wine production through methods like grubbing up vines, or allow those wines to bear the brunt of the market, which would have forced producers of these wines to find other employment or to relocate to urban centres. But, coupled with statistical and informational problems, the political problem of buttressing farmers’ incomes was given more weight. The policy went through, even though the mechanisms of this policy encouraged further production of wine, with the promise of Community support in the case of poor sales or overproduction through price fixing for income support and costly measures like distillation and storage. The disagreement between the French and the Italians subsisting on this point bogged down negotiations.

### *Conclusion*

During negotiations, the French government was well aware that the advantage of the Common Wine Policy was that it would be the Community, rather than the French Ministry of Finance as it stood at the time, that would ‘supporterait de graves risques financiers’<sup>57</sup> that taking on the care of the wine industry would entail. But the French government was nervous

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<sup>56</sup> 'Communauté Economique Européenne - Règlement portant établissement graduel d'une organisation commune des marchés dans le domaine viti-vinicole - final.' July 24, 1961. CM2 1962 620 ac, Consilium Archives.

<sup>57</sup> 'Compte rendu: Organisation commune du marché viti-vinicole.' Secrétaire Général du Comité Interministériel, January 19, 1968. Affaires économiques et financières: Coopération économique, 714 (1967-1975). AD.

– at an interministerial meeting on January 17, 1968, the SGCI relayed its analysis of the situation: ‘La construction du texte de la Commission repose sur l’hypothèse d’une situation déficitaire de la production viticole dans le marché communautaire. Un analyse plus approfondie met en évidence que ce marché est en fait en une position d’équilibre qui se romprait, si aucun remède n’y est porté, pour aboutir dans les prochaines années à une situation d’excédent permanent.’<sup>58</sup>

The issue of the political and economic perspectives on wine was aptly highlighted by the different stances taken by the French Ministry of Agriculture and the French Ministry of Finance: the former, well aware that it would be unpopular with farmers to have such a divide, ‘ne pense pas qu’il soit opportun de séparer dans la négociation le règlement sur les vins de qualité et celui sur les vins de table’,<sup>59</sup> which the latter had also suggested, on the premise that this would be the sounder and more financially viable route. As the French Ministry of Finance representative argued, ‘notre principal intérêt commercial se trouve dans l’exportation des vins de qualité. Des concessions faites dans le domaines des V.P.Q.R.D. nous permettraient d’être d’une rigueur intransigeante sur les vins de table.’<sup>60</sup>

That the CWP was created at all, given divergent views on vine-growing, wine production, labelling, unique traditions and customs in oenology, was a significant feat of national harmonisation and will. As mentioned previously, as late as in 1969, the FAO had remarked that the Community’s common wine policy ‘has indeed made very little progress and the major problems remain still to be resolved.’<sup>61</sup> They had seemed to think there was not a good chance of a common wine policy emerging, at least any time soon. Yet less than a year later,

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, ‘The World Wine and Vine Products Economy: A study of trends and problems,’ 21.



the expansive and ambitious CWP emerged. Wine, as the last of the markets negotiated, was negotiated under a kind of ‘pressure to complete’, because it was seen as necessary to include vigneronns – the inclusion of wine in the common markets was affected by identity pressures stemming from European notions of the image of the family farm. But while the negotiation of wine’s inclusion in the CAP was difficult, the course of its policy became more problematic yet.

## Chapter Two

### From Calm to Crisis to Intervention: France and the European Economic Community's Common Wine Policy in the 1970s

Whenever a great wine crisis erupts, no one has the courage to say that the real problem is the need to rip up a third of French vineyards ... not at all, the problem always appears to come down to the fact that the French are bad citizens who shirk their national duty, which is to drink up the production of their vines.

- François de Closets, *La France et ses mensonges*, 1977.<sup>1</sup>

*Vinum incendit iram.* (Wine causes anger.)

- Seneca

This chapter looks at the first decade of the Common Wine Policy and discusses its implementation amidst economic downturn, the problems encountered with overproduction in 1973 and 1974, and the wine crisis faced by the Community with the March 1975 French

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<sup>1</sup> As cited in Demossier, *Wine Drinking Culture in France: A National Myth or a Modern Passion*, 1.

blockade of Italian wines at the port of Sète and the subsequent ‘wine war’. It then analyses the interventionist turn from 1976–1977 through to the end of the decade.

This chapter argues that overproduction, already systemic, was made worse by the CWP, and that the first five years of the CWP caused grave concern about the feasibility and potential longevity of the policy. By 1976, however, the Council and Commission shifted their opinion on the problems with the continued overproduction, known as the ‘wine lake’. They had initially characterised the issue as an economic imbalance and belatedly recognised that the problem was structural and more long-term than first presumed.

This chapter also argues that the wine crisis, in pitting France and Italy against one another, made their positions on both the CWP and the CAP difficult to maintain. During the wine crisis, France and Italy were required to act carefully and strategically; France and Italy had similar interests in the favourable continuation of the CWP and realised that too strong and public a dispute might expose the policy’s underlying weaknesses and problems, thereby jeopardising the policy in the medium term. Analysing the wine crisis also highlights the significant amount of attention paid to the CWP, despite the fact that only 2% of the Community’s agricultural budget went to the wine sector in 1975, up from 1% the previous year.<sup>2</sup> This suggested that it was not simply economic interests at play but that the social significance of the wine sector caused politicians to give it this special attention.

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<sup>2</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

### *The Implementation of the Common Wine Policy in 1970, its Assumptions and Problems*

As was argued in the last chapter, the birth of the Common Wine Policy in 1970 was the outcome of ‘extremely arduous negotiations’<sup>3</sup> from 1967 to the beginning of 1970. The long process was ‘wearisome, often profitless, and largely dominated by the clash of national interests’,<sup>4</sup> particularly the central issue of uniting the French and Italian camps. But the process was seen as essential and the rationale for a common wine market had long been established. In the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the architects decided that the social significance of wine was such that it was necessary for it to be included in an eventual common agricultural policy.<sup>5</sup> But the differences between national wine production methods, as well as a stubborn resistance to compromise during the negotiations meant a policy was hard to come by. Even after the CWP has been created, the Directorate-General for Agriculture declared that it was ‘not surprising...that wines from different areas of the Community often have very little in common as regards distinctive features, price, or markets.’<sup>6</sup>

Though negotiations and discussions had occurred throughout the 1960s related to the wine market, most of the process was related to moves towards harmonisation of tariffs. The major regulation to predate 816/70 was 24/62, which called for the establishment of a vineyard register in each member state and the collection of statistics on annual wine production levels; it attempts to establish some regulations on quality wine. The importance of wine to the community was emphasised, but the Community recognised even then in their preamble

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<sup>3</sup> 2965/X/70-E: The Background to the Common Organisation of the Market in Wine, 1970. European Commission. Luxembourg: Division for Agricultural Information in collaboration with Directorate-General for Agriculture.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Antonio Niederbacher, *Wine in the European Community*, ed. European Commission (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1983), 33.

<sup>6</sup> 2965/X/70-E: The Background to the Common Organisation of the Market in Wine, 1970. European Commission. Luxembourg: Division for Agricultural Information in collaboration with Directorate-General for Agriculture.

that ‘the wine policies followed by the different Member States at their national levels presented significant divergences.’<sup>7</sup>

On April 28, 1970, after the Hague Summit in which a trade-off between the Italians and the French resulted in agreements on the financing of the Common Agricultural Policy and the extension of the policy to wine, the Council released a comprehensive programme for the genuine beginnings of the common wine market. Regulation 817/70 supplemented this, with provisions specifically for quality wine management. The new Common Wine Policy was ‘liberal...along the lines of the management system in the Italian wine-making sector’,<sup>8</sup> which had far fewer restrictions, particularly in planting and replanting, than the French system.

As laid out in the previous chapter, the common wine market was intended to manage the following areas: price controls and interventions, foreign trade, the production from and the control of the development of planting, and issues related to oenological practices and preparation for consumption. Though the market had some protectionist and interventionist aspects, it was still overall a liberal policy in scope. It established regulations for trade with non-Community countries and pricing mechanisms. It removed tariffs and taxes, requiring the free and unencumbered flow of wine within the Six. Provisions for private storage and distillation methods were also outlined, along with the establishment of five wine-growing regions. Very importantly, planting was not restricted by this regulation. Instead, the right to freely plant was a principle well-enshrined in the document.

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Regulation (EEC) No 24/62 on the progressive establishment of a common organisation of the market in wine.’

<sup>8</sup> Classification of Vine Varieties in the European Community and the Common Organisation of the Market in Wine.,12.

The main difference between the Common Wine Market and the other regimes covering agricultural products, like grain, beef, or milk and milk products, was the operation of its intervention policy. Target prices for CAP products were set before the upcoming season to allow farmers to aim for a good set return, also known as the *prix d'orientation*. An intervention price, or *prix d'intervention*, was also set; when prices fell to this level, intervention by national bodies was automatically triggered. However, the CWP was the exception to this established rule – intervention and decisions about actions to take in the case of overproduction were to be taken on a case-to-case basis by the Commission and the Council. This was to put the wine market into a different category than the other markets, as it required constant management and control by the Community organs.

#### *The Initial Issue: Overproduction or Imbalance?*

The first few years of the CWP were marked by relatively stable conditions as Member States adjusted to harmonising their national wine policy to the common one. The most prominent change since the introduction of the CWP was that wine growers were not meeting the new instated target prices of the policy and so were able to receive financial support from the Community for it. The 1970 harvest was larger than that of the previous year, and so storage aid was granted by the Community very soon after the policy came into effect. However, this did not prove enough and a round of exceptional distillation, quite a costly measure, was permitted in addition to storage, with 3.4 million hectolitres of wine distilled in ethyl alcohol in the 1970–71 wine year.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Spahni, *The Common Wine Policy and Price Stabilisation*, 58., and Niederbacher, *Wine in the European Community*, 44.

On March 28, 1972, French Permanent Representative Étienne Burin de Rozières sent an urgent telegram to the Council stating that the French were concerned about the ‘perspectives peu encourageantes’<sup>10</sup> of the new wine policy, and presented the French request to have an extraordinary session of the CSA dedicated to the topic as soon as possible. At this meeting, the French wished to discuss having a round of exceptional distillation, which they had previously told the Council was a request that was a direct result of the fact that the CWP as it stood had not been crafted to address the concerns the French had consistently raised – it was instead ‘pas suffisamment rigoureux’ especially when it came to ‘le classement communautaire des cépages, la fixation des titres alcoométriques naturels minima, l’enrichissement par sucrage.’<sup>11</sup> It was notably the French region of Languedoc-Roussillon that was one of those most obviously benefitting from this lack of rigour. As a result of the case the French brought forward, the crux of which rested on the insufficient income of wine-growers from current table wine pricing, another round of distillation – this time for 3.5 million hectolitres – was called for.<sup>12</sup>

Even with consumption insufficient to meet growing production, officials believed the situation was manageable after the second season under the CWP; it seemed to them that ‘balance was restored’.<sup>13</sup> But this was primarily a result of lower production (see below) after an initially high year depressed prices – both French and Italian prices dropped at the end of 1970 and French prices continued to fall the next season. This made the gap between production and consumption appear less troubling, though as previously discussed, many indicators pointed to systemic overproduction. The immediate and frequent use and need of

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Situation viti-vinicole de la Communauté: mesures de distillation’. Telegram from Étienne Burin de Rozières to the Council of Ministers. March 28, 1972. CM2 1972/860.1, CMA.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Memorandum relatif au secteur viti-vinicole.’ Memorandum establishing French position on the Community’s wine policy. Undated. Forwarded to Council Secretary General Christian Calmes by Emile Cazimajou, Deputy Permanent Representative for France. May 18, 1972, CM2/1972 860.1, CMA.

<sup>12</sup> Spahni, *The Common Wine Policy and Price Stabilisation*, 44.

<sup>13</sup> Niederbacher, *Wine in the European Community*, 44.

the intervention mechanisms concerned the Council and even prompted them to introduce measures to make storage easier.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 2.1 Production in hectolitres<sup>15</sup>**

	1970-71	1971-72
France	75,401,800	62,245,100
Germany	10,110,000	6,356,000
Italy	68,874,000	64,210,000

*Compiled from information provided by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's Statistics Division, accessed at [www.faostat.fao.org](http://www.faostat.fao.org).*

The issue of systemic overproduction was aggravated by the economic environment. The early 1970s were pockmarked with economic uncertainty and downturn that was to continue through the decade. International currency problems were the foremost of the early issues. Richard Nixon unilaterally closed the gold window in April 1971, centre-piece of the international economic order of the previous two and a half decades. He suspended dollar convertibility and moved from fixed to floating exchange rates, effectively collapsing the Bretton Woods Accord.<sup>16</sup> Bretton Woods was a carefully negotiated international monetary order which championed fixed exchange rates – this system depended on an economic

<sup>14</sup> This was done by amending 816/70 to include Article 6a in 1971, which allowed easier recourse to storage aid.

<sup>15</sup> Production of wine was negligible enough in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg as to neither be very important in this context to the overall total in the EEC, nor to merit any record in FAOSTATS.

<sup>16</sup> For more detailed treatments, see Jeffry A. Freiden and David A. Lake, *International Political Economy: Perspectives on Global Power and Wealth, 4th Edition* (London: Routledge, 2004).; Eric Helleiner, *States and the Reemergence of Global Finance: From Bretton Woods to the 1990s* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1994).; Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).; and Jr. Eckes, Alfred E., *A Search for Solvency: Bretton Woods and the International Monetary System, 1941-1971* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975).



powerhouse to which all other countries were pegged. Nixon's decision to float the dollar unhinged the system and other countries quickly followed suit and were forced to float.<sup>17</sup> The dollar, already suffering, was unable to sustain the OPEC oil crisis of 1973; the result was, after two devaluations of the American dollar, the switch to floating in March 1973 by the European central banks. In this atmosphere, the threat of currency fluctuation was a pressing concern. To safeguard against this in the common market, in which free movement of goods was fundamental, a monetary policy was set up in the EEC. Alongside this, to protect agricultural goods in the Community, Monetary Compensatory Amounts (MCA) were introduced in 1969, a system of border taxes and subsidies of imports and exports which was to become an important component of CAP operations. MCAS were introduced to account for the differentials arising from the conversion of national currencies into the European Unit of Account (EUA), and were meant to be based on a single uniform price across the Community and it was this system that was dealt a particularly painful blow by the onset of exchange rate fluctuation.<sup>18</sup>

As the European currencies underwent oscillations due to significant changes in the international currency system, European currencies shifted noticeably in relation to the EUA. The franc was an exception in that it was fairly stable at this time, though it was classed as a weak currency, reflecting the fact that it had lost twenty percent of its value vis-à-vis the Deutsche Mark in 1969, given the relative strength of other currencies like the deutsche mark. Weak currencies had imports subsidised at the border while strong currencies had exports subsidised. The franc, classed as a weak currency, was therefore particularly susceptible to impact of Italian imports, as a direct result of the depreciations of the lira against the franc;

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<sup>17</sup> Joanne Gowa, *Closing the Gold Window: Domestic Politics and the End of Bretton Woods* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

<sup>18</sup> Robert W. Ackrill, *The Common Agricultural Policy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press for the University Association for Contemporary European Studies, 2000), 31.

the franc was simply not properly protected by the MCA system from a flood of cheap imports from a country that had an even weaker currency, like Italy. This made Italian goods more competitive in foreign markets and accounts for the considerable flood of Italian wines into the French market. This had serious repercussions for farmers, particularly those involved in table wines, as the majority of the wines in the Midi were. The issue was exacerbated by the experience of overproduction in 1973 and 1974 in the EEC wine-producing countries.

In September 1973, the Commission issued a report to the Council in which it raised concerns about the new common wine policy. This report highlighted that wine production had been increasing steadily since 1959–1960 but claimed consumption in the Community was on the increase.<sup>19</sup> It notes that, according to their figures, the Italians saw a steady increase in wine consumption and the French had only had a drop-off in the last year. Thereby, according to the report, there did not seem to be the trend of a decrease in consumption; the major problem was in the increase in the productivity of existing vineyards. But observers would shortly highlight falling consumption levels in much of Western Europe. The Commission characterised this issue as a temporary imbalance, for which their solution was ‘confirm[ing] the importance of business-cycle measures designed to meet such fluctuations’,<sup>20</sup> not, as it were, deeper structural changes, like limiting planting or grubbing up vines (known as *d’arrachage*), despite the French firmly stating one year previously that ‘étant donné le caractère pérenne de la vigne, il paraît indispensable d’éviter une extension du vignoble qui conduise à la constitution d’excédents structurels pour de nombreuses années...le problème se présente déjà avec une acuité particulière...’ and accused the Commission and the Council

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<sup>19</sup> SEC (73) 3079: Commission report to the Council on foreseeable changes in vine planting and replanting in the Community and the ratio between production and utilisation in the vine sector, September 28, 1973

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

of allowing expansion of planting.<sup>21</sup> The French were not against planting entirely however – with the profitable, largely exporting vineyards of Bordeaux and Champagne in mind, their caveat was that ‘les plantation nouvelles devraient être limités aux productions de qualité pour lesquelles les débouchés sont en expansion.’<sup>22</sup> The French charged the Commission with making the decision they undoubtedly did not want to make at a national level: ‘Il convient que la Communauté manifeste son choix contre une politique de masse et pour une production de qualité.’<sup>23</sup>

The analysis of consumption patterns made by the Commission was problematic. Looking at the Statistical Office of the European Community reports between 1966–67 and 1971–72 that the Commission used, from year to year, it may not appear there was a marked downward trend. Analysts writing in the early 1970s might be forgiven for using figures running up until the end of the 1960s to suggest there might not be such a trend – and this could explain the Commission’s complacent response if they were responding only to this information. But given the period as a whole from 1966–67 to 1972–73, both the French and the Italians consumed 3% less wine. When placed against the broader context of wine consumption trends, it displayed a downward trend for France, particularly when held constant against population growth from 1968–1972.<sup>24</sup> Given the Eurostat-EC Commission’s own statistics for Directorate-General Agriculture showing the average of the past 30 years, pooled in average batches over five-year periods, it appears the French per capita wine consumption had been decreasing quite significantly over that period of time. The Italian per capita wine consumption appears to be fairly stable.

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<sup>21</sup> 'Memorandum relatif au secteur viti-vinicole.' Memorandum establishing French position on the Community's wine policy. Undated. Forwarded to Council Secretary General Christian Calmes by Emile Cazimajou, Deputy Permanent Representative for France. May 18, 1972, CM2/1972 860.1, CMA.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> World Bank, World Development Indicators, Population Growth for France, accessed at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW>.

**Table 2.2 Per capita consumption of wine in the EEC, 1951-1975 (litres)**

	Average 1951-55	Average 1956-60	Average 1961-65	Average 1965-1970	Average 1971-75
France	135	130	121	111	105
Italy	99	108	108	110	100

*Adapted from Eurostat-EC Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture, 1983*

In light of this, for the Commission report only to concede that the French consumption has ‘declined slightly since 1968–69’<sup>25</sup> was to ignore the evidence that the Community had on the decline in consumption. The Commission did warn, however, of ‘an undeniable risk of imbalance between production and domestic consumption in the future.’<sup>26</sup> One solution for this issue was the push towards quality wine production, which the Council agreed upon in principal. But the European Economic and Social Committee’s Working Party on Wine surprisingly criticised the hasty appraisal of the wine sector and insisted that ‘fears expressed by the Commission regarding the future imbalance between production and utilisation should be allayed.’<sup>27</sup> It also downplayed the concerns about unexpected price increases up until June 1973, which it said were not part of a true trend but rather part of ‘general speculative economic’<sup>28</sup> conditions. Taken together, conflicting information led to an environment where it was difficult to ascertain the nature of the problem.

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<sup>25</sup> SEC (73) 3079: Commission report to the Council on foreseeable changes in vine planting and replanting in the Community and the ratio between production and utilisation in the vine sector, September 28, 1973

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

But how could this have been so? The concerns about overproduction seemed to have been noticed a while earlier. In the 1962 regulation, the Council claimed in one of the preambles that the wine market was necessary to deal with the ‘permanent character of the surpluses which were the cause of great difficulties’<sup>29</sup> to the economies of producer countries and that these surpluses existed. However, Regulation 24/62 did not make measures to address the surplus problem, which accounted for its lack of impact.<sup>30</sup> In 1969, a third party, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, remarked even then that for the upcoming period 1970–1975, given projections on import and export data in Europe, that its producer countries would face ‘excess of supply over demand at constant prices.’<sup>31</sup> It lamented that the largest surpluses would likely be in the European Community, which the FAO predicted, with what would become great prescience, the intensification of protective measures under the CAP for fruit and vegetables.

The FAO report was particularly critical of the wine market in France, which it used as a prime example of a country that had still not produced proper ‘control measures and limitation of production.’<sup>32</sup> It charged France with chronic overproduction and the steady decline in the quality of vineyards in the Languedoc area.<sup>33</sup> According to the statistics the FAO compiled, it was clear that in France ‘consumption has constantly decreased’,<sup>34</sup> taking data spanning from the beginning of the century. The French themselves certainly knew that

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<sup>29</sup> ‘Regulation (EEC) No 24/62 on the progressive establishment of a common organisation of the market in wine.’

<sup>30</sup> It was hardly mentioned in the context of the start of a common wine policy.

<sup>31</sup> Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, ‘The World Wine and Vine Products Economy: A study of trends and problems,’ 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>33</sup> This was largely a result of viticulture shifting from hillsides to plains in the Languedoc as vineyards were hastily replanted after the phylloxera crisis of the late nineteenth century which destroyed many French vineyards.

<sup>34</sup> Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, ‘The World Wine and Vine Products Economy: A study of trends and problems.’ This was certainly interesting, given that in the Community and Council press releases, for instance, there was often confusing and sometimes contradictory information about the levels of consumption. Some suggested that wine consumption increased in the early 1970s.

overproduction was a serious and systemic – this was clear during the CWP negotiations. At the announcement that agreement had been reached by the Six on the wine policy, François Seydoux, the French Ambassador to Germany, commented, ‘La Communauté va-t-elle se noyer dans une mer de vin?’<sup>35</sup>

In 1970, as a result of serious negotiations over the previous three years, Regulation 816/70 came into effect. But it no longer mentioned anywhere, even in the ample three-page preamble, the necessity of combating overproduction,<sup>36</sup> which was, after the generic mention of the need to create a common market for agricultural goods, the first justification listed by its predecessor Regulation 24/62.<sup>37</sup> Why was this no longer mentioned? Though the regulation itself contains mechanisms on price interventions and on distillation and stocking procedures, clearly aimed at the issue of overproduction, the preamble now claimed the policy’s goal was to deal with rationalising the market and helping it achieve balance.

Member States, in negotiating such a regulation, seemingly changed tack on the perception of the problem. If they genuinely believed that rationalising and balancing the market was the new and true goal of a common wine policy, they made no attempt to respond to the fairly widespread data which at the time seemed to clearly point to continuing increases in production and stable or declining consumption levels. The more likely explanation, given that the FAO was able to garner data through a variety of reliable and public sources, through its own statistical office, the bulletin of the International Vine and Wine Office (OIV), and

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<sup>35</sup> Telegram 2901/03, report from François Seydoux to Diplomatie Paris, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. April 23, 1970. 19971469/131, AN.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Regulation (EEC) No 816/70 of the Council of 28 April 1970 laying down additional provisions for the common organisation of the market in wine,’ in L99/1, 1-19: Official Journal of the European Communities, 1970.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Regulation (EEC) No 24/62 on the progressive establishment of a common organisation of the market in wine.’

the Statistical Office of the European Communities in the areas of agriculture and trade, was that Member States were uncertain how to deal with the issue but recognised that a common market for each of the key goods produced in the EEC required a common political and market structure.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, up until 1969 during negotiations, the Council members held ‘very diverging views’ on whether or not equilibrium could be reached without serious policies aimed at the control of production.

The positions they had held during the negotiations, as established in the previous chapter, were still the positions they held to now – the French wanted strong control of production and the curbing of planting rights and the Italians wanted a policy permitted unrestricted planting, though all parties wanted intervention measures if prices fell below a rate which would endanger the incomes of farmers. The issued was repackaged as a problem of resolving an imbalance, and the solution was the emphasis on a set of short-term solutions, like distillation and stockpiling, though long-term solutions like the grubbing up of vines and financial incentives for relinquishing vine-farming were introduced but much less seriously implemented.

This later became the crux of the problem. The policy used short-term measures which were to fix a temporary imbalance, but which could not properly address the continuing overproduction, which required substantial structural reorganisation. One such structural change would be more flexible pricing policies. This would seem to make more sense, as it could better reflect the rather inherently more volatile and riskier-than-average market of wine production. But this could not have been a real option to the policy’s architects and

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<sup>38</sup> Preambles of Regulations 24/62 and 816/70.

executors. The CWP, under the umbrella of the CAP, was still about maintaining parity in farmers' incomes.<sup>39</sup>

The issue of decreasing consumption was an important factor to examine and account for. The CWP, in attending to the welfare of wine growers and introducing aspects of farm modernisation, such as encouraging efficiency measures like larger conglomerate farms, increased its own costs as well as the productivity of the wine industry.<sup>40</sup> Since planting was not quantitatively restricted, and farmers were given greater assurances of support (even if this support was not automatic, as in the case of most other product common markets), planting increased, particularly in Italy. The Italian market had at this time only recently been better organised, to a standard more like that of France, the traditional leader in this regard. In fact, the modernisation of the Italian market was such that its efficiency gave it an 'embarrassment of success'; in the decade from 1948–49 to 1958–59, Italian wine production had jumped from 40.5 to 67 million hectolitres, an increase of over 60%.<sup>41</sup>

The wine consumption per person in France decreased steadily from 1951 to 1976 and the Italians did not, as hoped, consume enough to absorb their own production (and consumption from the second half of the 1970s onward would show a clear downward trend). Forced to reconsider, the Commission and Council pinned their hopes on a new assumption. They presumed that the new markets provided by the first enlargement in 1973 of the European Economic Community would ease the problem of overproduction by having new consumers take in excess wine. But the markets of Denmark, Italy, and the United Kingdom did not actually take in more alcohol as the Community had hoped in the years immediately after

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<sup>39</sup> See Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*.

<sup>40</sup> This was made quite obvious by the fact, noted by the Commission Report of September 24, 1973 on vine planting in the Community, that despite the total wine-growing area in the Community diminishing over the years, 'Community wine production has continued to rise since 1959-60'.

<sup>41</sup> Niederbacher, *Wine in the European Community*, 33.



their accessions. Though wine intake per capita was generally on the increase in the UK at the time, for example, the potential for this market to take in wine from France and Italy was limited given the high taxes that the United Kingdom placed on its wines, which were contrary to EEC regulations and for which they were asked repeatedly to conform to EEC standards.<sup>42</sup>

One explanation for the change in consumption patterns, particularly this decrease in France, is sociological shifts. The 1970s witnessed the first signs of a massive transformation in the French diet as a result of rapid modernisation and a rural exodus due to increased prosperity.<sup>43</sup> Wine, traditionally consumed in large quantities at family meals, had its centrality challenged by the growing popularity of beer, soft drinks, hard liquor, and bottled water.<sup>44</sup> It was around this time that the conception of what wine was began to change. Wine began to be viewed as a bourgeois symbol and became increasingly the focus of intellectual obsession; 'wine snobbery' was on the increase, with wine becoming less a popular working-class drink and more the object of a kind of specialised study, in which consumption was tempered by intellectual appreciation and moderation of intake.<sup>45</sup> In this atmosphere, general wine consumption, and particularly that of table wine, went down. During this same time period, the state intensified advertisement campaigns about the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption; there is some evidence that this lowered consumption levels.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> David E. Smith, Hans Stubbe Solgaard, and Suzanne C. Beckmann, 'Changes and trends in alcohol consumption patterns in Europe,' *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics* 23, no. 4 (December 1999).

<sup>43</sup> Demossier, *Wine Drinking Culture in France: A National Myth or a Modern Passion*, 45.

<sup>44</sup> Smith, Solgaard, and Beckmann, 'Changes and trends in alcohol consumption patterns in Europe,' 252.

<sup>45</sup> Demossier, *Wine Drinking Culture in France: A National Myth or a Modern Passion*, 45-65.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 93. and Smith, Solgaard, and Beckmann, 'Changes and trends in alcohol consumption patterns in Europe,' 251.

One early attempt to deal with the problem of the high levels of wine production in France was introduced by then Minister of Agriculture Jacques Chirac in 1973. The Plan Chirac, as it was called, targeted the Midi vineyards producing table wine. It was aimed at having producers groups in the area encourage their adherents to eliminate vineyards planted with certain varieties and modifying the others to encourage higher quality and lower yield. The plan ran into two problems – first, the plan ‘allait connaître de sérieuses difficultés d’application du fait de la persistance du mécontentement des producteurs’<sup>47</sup> and second, the plan was given barely time to have an effect,<sup>48</sup> due to the outbreak of the wine war of 1975. Interestingly enough, the Plan Chirac still made an impact, for several of its points and certainly its direction was a model for French negotiators in 1976, during negotiations that was to create a more restrictive CWP.<sup>49</sup>

The French and the Italians initially had a mutually helpful partnership when it came to issues of the wine market, which emerged as a result of their own high production levels and the importance of wine to their economies and rural way of life. They found themselves defending the CWP’s continued existence and progress, though not always agreeing, given their different predilections with the French system more interventionist and restrictive than the more open Italian system. As the wine market expenditures increased very significantly each year from 1973 to 1975,<sup>50</sup> the major benefactors continued to be Italy and France, who had both relinquished some of the national financial and administrative burden. Their impetus was to keep the market and to maximise the income for their farmers, in spite of German concerns about its increasing budget.

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<sup>47</sup> P. Campagne, ‘Les politiques de prix et de subvention en Languedoc-Roussillon: l’exemple de la politique viticole.’, in *Prix et subventions: effets sur les agricultures familiales méditerranéennes* ed. N. Aksebi and N. Maraveyas (Montpellier: CIHEAM, 1997), 195.

<sup>48</sup> William K. Crowley, ‘Changes in the French Winescape,’ *Geographical Review* 83, no. 3 (1993): 253.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Niederbacher, *Wine in the European Community*, 41.

When the Italians complained in the Commission about the general lack of wine knowledge within Community negotiations on wine, which led to increasing referrals to the Special Committee on Agriculture (CSA) and eventually the creation and use of the Working Party on Wine, in the French they found a knowledgeable ally with similar interests. They often found themselves on the same side of the table. For example, in September 1973, the French and Italian delegations pushed on with detailed recommendations for the aid of the processing of grape must into grape juice or into concentrated must.<sup>51</sup> But instead of responding to the technical suggestions by their enthusiastic counterparts, the Belgian, German, and Dutch delegations expressed a wider reluctance: they were not simply opposed to the measures proposed in this instance, but all measures which would ‘gradually strengthen the intervention system applicable for wine.’<sup>52</sup> In fact they wanted an ‘overall examination of all the machinery of Regulation (EEC) No 816/70’<sup>53</sup> to prevent its increasing interventionism. As well, the calls for preventative distillation were made in strong unison by the French and Italians.<sup>54</sup>

But there was some disagreement over the treatment of Italian wines at the French border as early as 1972. The Italians early on were displeased about the treatment of their wines at the French border. In June 1972, the Italian Minister for Infrastructure Lorenzo Natali complained about the ‘abusive customs checks’ that Italian wines were subjected to. These customs checks were the result of early fears regarding the quantity of Italian wine entering the French market, as Italian market efficiency in this area increased. The French side-

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<sup>51</sup> 'S/1006/73 (CSA 148)', Report by the Working Party on Wine to the Special Committee on Agriculture. September 11, 1973. CM2 1973/955, CMA.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> 'Compte-rendu du Conseil des communautés Européennes des 24 et 25 septembre 1973 - Agriculture', Secrétaire Général du Comité Interministériel, September 25, 1973. Affaires économiques et financières: Coopération économique, 714 (1967-1975). AD.

stepped this issue by stating that these were a precautionary quality-control check, and were not intended to be discriminatory. Michel Cointat, the French Agricultural Minister, in the last few days of his tenure, gave Natali the empty assurance this would be eased.<sup>55</sup>

*The Outbreak of the Wine Crisis: The Blockade at Sète and Franco–Italian Relations*

After the upheavals with the abnormally large harvest in 1973, in November 1974, the Council of the Agricultural Ministers faced yet another bumper crop. The Council decided to allow seven *départements* in France to carry out special emergency distillation of surplus wine. But despite this, sizeable extra stocks still remained at the beginning of the 1975, and the continued depreciation of the lira resulted in the Italians seizing the moment to capitalise on their competitive pricing. Almost 200 million litres of table wine was imported into France in the two months of January and February 1975 alone; this was a very sharp and sudden increase, given that the import of wine from Italy for the entire 1974 year was approximately 240 million litres. In February and March, wine prices in France were slightly above the intervention price, while the Italian prices remained below it.<sup>56</sup>

This resulted in much more advantageous Italian market prices, resulting in a sudden spike in French imports of Italian table wine. The buyers were French wholesalers hoping to making a bigger profit from the lower prices of the Italian wine, which was predominantly used in blends. Previously, Algerian wine had filled this role – so much so that in the Languedoc in the 1950s, signs imploring ‘Stop the flood of Algerian wine’ could be found everywhere.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Telegram 1644-56 from Delfra-Bruxelles to Ministry of Foreign Affairs. June 1, 1972. Direction Europe, 38/2/3, Questions Internationales Européennes, Questions économiques, Marché commun questions agricoles, AD.

<sup>56</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>57</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 134.

However, in the late 1960s, the government of newly liberated Algeria, prompted by religious considerations about the potential impropriety of a Muslim country being so dependent on foreign exports of wine, encouraged winegrowers to replace their vines with cereals.<sup>58</sup> This the Algerian winegrowers took up enthusiastically (hardly any of the wine produced in Algeria had been consumed domestically, so any ‘loss’ was largely of an economic nature, and could be abetted with successful conversion and government support), and in response *négociants-éleveurs* – these merchants, sometimes also called merchant-blenders – quickly changed over to suppliers in southern Italy.<sup>59</sup>

Through March, these imports increased still further and despite further distillations authorised by the Council, the situation did not improve. Furious farmers, facing very poor sales of table wines as a result of the cheap Italian imports, together with local officials, succeeded in blocking eleven ships carrying Italian wines to French purchasers. Violent demonstrations commenced in the Midi, collectively the largest and one of the most important wine-growing regions in the Community.<sup>60</sup> Upon arrival at Sète, one of the region’s main ports, the ships were not permitted to unload their wares; they were to remain there for the next several months.<sup>61</sup> The Italian government immediately threatened to take the French government to the Court of Justice under Article 170 of the Treaty of Rome, regarding the need for members to fulfill their duties and the enabling of one member state to bring another to the Court of Justice where an obligation of a member state is not fulfilled. In this case, the duty in question was the free circulation of wine in the Community as per 816/70, particularly Article 31 preventing quantitative restrictions or measures with

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<sup>58</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 10.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>60</sup> It is comprised of Aquitaine (which includes the Bordeaux wine-growing region), Midi-Pyrénées, Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, Corsica, Rhône-Alpes, and Languedoc-Roussillon.

<sup>61</sup> Telegram 1130-1133 from Francis Lott to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. March 28, 1975. Direction Europe, Relations Exterieur, 38/2/3: Questions internationales européennes, questions économiques, Marché commun questions agricoles, AD.

equivalent effects. The Italian government reserved the right to detail the damages they had already been subjected to at the initial instance of the blockade; the Italians declared clearly that they held the French government responsible for this action.<sup>62</sup>

The French government did not yet think the Italians would necessarily have the support of the Commission in its attempt to take France to the ECJ. When the Italian government brought before the Commission the memorandum announcing their intention to appeal to the Court of Justice over this matter, as well as their reasons explaining why they were pursuing it, the French thought it would be very important to hear what they had to say. This could show the likelihood of the Commission opinion strongly supporting Italy or the Italians going to court with the absence of a Commission response. The fast-travelling knowledge that the Italians were taking the French to court came as ‘a certain surprise’<sup>63</sup> to Paris; French Permanent Representative to the European Communities Luc de la Barre de Nanteuil noted, on the same day the Italians announced their intentions, that this would be the first time in French knowledge that this particular clause of non-fulfillment of obligations, Article 170, had been invoked.

The French ambassador to Italy, François Puaux, particularly noted this point as well. The initial French line on this issue was that the responsible authorities had taken measures regarding these Italian goods while in the course of ‘controlling the situation in the Midi and the behaviour of viticulteurs’ and furthermore that ‘[the public authorities] acted to best fulfill their responsibilities and duties which include the maintenance of order and public peace, which are the same conditions necessary for the application of any economic regulation,

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Telegram 242/45 from Luc de la Barre de Nanteuil to AmbaFrance Rome. March 28, 1975. Direction Europe, 38/2/3, Questions Internationales Européennes, Questions économiques, Marché commun questions agricoles, AD.

including Community law.<sup>64</sup> This same sentiment was expressed the next day by Puaux, who shared in the surprise felt in Paris by the news of the referral to the Court of Justice.

Awkwardly, however, he claimed this surprise arose from the fact that the prevention of the unloading of Italian wines at Sète had not been due to the actions of French authorities. But Nanteuil's telegram already makes it clear that the French authorities were involved in some degree.

However, Nanteuil emphasised the tenuous situation of the French situation if the court case advanced, particularly if the Italian case was advanced with the sympathy of the Commission. Finding a mutually satisfying solution was not just necessary to main the 'ties of cooperation and friendship' existing between the two parties, but because maintaining a spirit of reciprocal trust enabled the genuine vested interests of both countries to be best served. Both countries knew that it was incumbent upon them as principal wine producers in the Community to work towards the continued survival of the common wine policy.<sup>65</sup> Only working together could they hope to bring equilibrium to the fluctuating wine market, which was seen as essential for the common market as a whole.

Counsellor to the French Permanent Representation to the Community Francis Lott's report to the French Foreign Ministry was rather calmer. According to the Cabinet of the President of the Commission, the Italian authorities had actually said they did not expect an immediate reaction from Commission staff on their request, but they did state that they thought the procedure regarding Article 31 under question of violation ought to begin on April 2, 1975. Lott wrote that in dealing privately with the Italian Permanent Representation, this information was confirmed to him, and that the Representation also minimised the scope of

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

what was happening: the Italian government had only applied to the Commission on this issue.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Lott was certain that the prospect of actual referral to the Court of Justice, the principal fear of the French government, was ‘plus lointaine.’<sup>67</sup>

It is this small but important exchange between the French and Italian Permanent Representatives that provides insight into the Italian government’s motives. The blockade by the French was illegal and required the Italians to react swiftly. But they were restrained and had to consider their steps carefully. They chose not to favour faster and potentially more punitive measures to solve the problem by, for example, dealing one-on-one with France, during which time they could threaten to close their markets to the many French industrial products usually finding their home there. Eleven boats of wine would have represented a significant amount of income for Italian wine producers, of whom the Italians were quick to say that many were poor and were finally finding their stride, with improved production methods. But it was not necessarily enough to justify the much wider Franco-Italian trade relationship. Instead, the Italians used a multilaterally-pressuring position. This way they not only demonstrated Community-mindedness, but they won the moral and political high ground; the French blockade was clearly untenable and the Commission did not accept the weak French bluster that the local authorities were correct in keeping the peace in the situation and the implication that this was not a national issue. The Director-General of Economic Affairs at the Commission Cesidio Guazzaroni made it clear to Puaux that ‘the

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<sup>66</sup> Telegram 1127-29 from Francis Lott to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. March 28, 1975. Direction Europe, Relations Extérieures, 38/2/3: Questions internationales européennes, questions économiques, Marché commun questions agricoles, AD.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*



responsibility of the French was implicit once they omitted acting or failed to act. Measures should have been taken by them to allow the unloading of the wine.’<sup>68</sup>

More importantly, this Italian choice of action under Article 170 meant the delay of potential legal procedures. In this situation, invoking Article 30 of the Treaty of Rome would have made more sense, as it was related directly to the freedom of movement within the internal Community market. Invoking Article 170 first required the Commission to examine the request of the complainant Member State, and then to provide an opinion in up to three months’ time, after having collected observations from both parties. The threat of the referral to the Court of Justice was a necessary bluff on the part of the Italians. The Italians did not want to take the French to the Court, but it was necessary for them to make certain they stood their ground publically during the clumsy French move to respond to the ever-growing cries from the viticulteurs. This opinion seems to have been shared by the DG Economic Affairs, himself Italian: Guazzaroni’s counsel to Puaux was that the ‘the referral to the Court of Justice is explained by the necessity of the Italian government, when placed in front of a dangerous political situation, to ‘do something.’’<sup>69</sup> That is to say, they did not have to do something severe or rash, but some fitting action had to be taken. He added that ‘this Article is meant for the Commission, as it has before, to exercise its good offices between Member States’,<sup>70</sup> which did not sound threatening. However, having the case in the Court would not only be lengthy and time-consuming, but it would most importantly expose the Common Wine Policy to the close scrutiny and criticisms of not only the court but those observing the court case. Both Italians and French had a strong incentive to avoid this.

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<sup>68</sup> Telegram 856/859, very urgent, from François Puaux to Delfra-Bruxelles and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. March 29, 1975. Direction Europe, 38/2/3, Questions Internationales Européennes, Questions économiques, Marché commun questions agricoles, AD.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

### *The 'Focus of Attention' on the Continuing Wine Crisis*

The wine sector became the 'focus of attention'<sup>71</sup> in April 1975. Commissioner for Agriculture, the Dutchman Pierre Lardinois, claimed that the French blockade was 'such a serious breach of the Treaty of Rome, such as had rarely occurred in the past.'<sup>72</sup> In response to an urgent request presented by a parliamentary group composed mainly of European Progressive Democrats and Communist Party Members, the European Parliament held a debate on April 10 dedicated to the difficulties being experienced by the wine market. The debate was introduced by Lardinois, who explained that the Commission had initiated the proceedings relating to Article 169<sup>73</sup> of the Treaty, as it was of the opinion that the French government had indeed violated the Treaty with the blockade.<sup>74</sup> The Commission had proposed a round of distillation at its April 8 meeting in response to the closing of French borders to Italian table wine, a step which it believed would temporarily ease the market, and planned to submit to the Council a report relating to the substantial modification of the wine regulations to prevent such an occurrence from happening in the future. The Commission made reference to the potential need to modify the wine policy. The focus, however, was still on distillation, which was mentioned as the first measure. Structural measures, like regulations on planting and replanting, were mentioned only as a possibility.<sup>75</sup> This is because distillation, while very expensive, would have an immediate effect on the amount of wine in circulation, whereas limits on planting or grubbing up of vines would take much longer to have an effect.

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<sup>71</sup>Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>Article 169 is similar to Article 170. Article 170 stipulates that a Member State who considers another Member State not to have fulfilled a duty may have recourse in bringing the matter to the Commission and to the European Court of Justice. Article 169 stipulates that the Commission itself may provide an opinion and take the Member State to the ECJ, if it considers a Member State to not have fulfilled a duty.

<sup>74</sup>No. 189, Sitings of April 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament. and Conseil des ministres, le 18 avril 1975, 484/75 (ASS 256), Brussels: Archives de Conseil de l'Union européenne.

<sup>75</sup>Procès-verbaux 334, séance du 8 avril 1975. BAC 259.80, HAEC.

The Parliament held different and rather agitated views on the matter. The resultant debate in the Parliament heavily criticised the shortcomings of the wine regulations and argued that the Council's efforts were not enough as the difficulties experienced by the market resulted from the 'structural character' of the CWP.<sup>76</sup> Parliamentarians complained that the Community, through the Common Agricultural Policy, had not properly given the attention to Mediterranean products – like wine, olive oil, and durum wheat – that it devoted to other major agricultural crops. The safety of harvest crops and the security of revenue were not nearly as robust as that for grain or beef producers, they charged; this was a justifiable line to take as the vagaries of the weather heavily affected vine output, and guaranteed intervention for the northern produce markets helped maintain a steadier income from year to year for farmers. They also complained about the heavy taxes placed on wine which they claimed reduced opportunities for 'the consumption and flow that the viticulteurs were entitled to expected from the creation of a market encompassing a space as large as the Community.'<sup>77</sup>

During the debate, Mario Vetrone, an Italian Christian Democrat, raised the immediate issue of the wine blockade by telling the French government that it was incumbent on them to 'reconsider certain decisions [they had taken] in order to calm the situation and to avoid retaliatory measures sought by Italy.' He also mentioned that 'difficulties were predictable for a long time but parties were too slow in countering them' by which he was referring to the overproduction of the previous two years. In response to this, Cointat again set out the French line that this action was not to be blamed on the French national government or its Brussels representatives, and attempted to avoid the brunt of the responsibility; he claimed that this

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<sup>76</sup>No. 189, Sitings of April 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament. and Conseil des ministres, le 18 avril 1975, 484/75 (ASS 256), Brussels: Archives de Conseil de l'Union européenne.

<sup>77</sup>No. 189, Sitings of April 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament.

‘conflict is much more from the local level than from the French government.’<sup>78</sup> He justified the French position of fairly openly supporting the local authorities blockading the ships carrying the wine by claiming that in these exceptional and serious circumstances ‘as often is the case, one could not but seek short-term conservative measures’.<sup>79</sup> But his most damning comments were saved for the entire European attempt at a common wine market: that it had come to French farmers having to defend themselves this way meant the ‘the wine regulation has been a total failure and constitutes at the same time an obstacle for European integration’.<sup>80</sup>

The French seemed to realise the problem was structural and unsustainable<sup>81</sup> and it is likely the Italians knew this as well. Under the bridge of their tentative partnership, French and Italian interests were not convergent. While both the French and Italians shared an apprehension of further wine imports from other Mediterranean countries, feeling they would place further stress on the already fragile common wine market, the Italians preferred to keep the CWP as it was, blaming economic circumstances for the situation. So it was that Italian Members of European Parliament directed their comments towards the need to protect ‘people who are often amongst the poorest in the community’ and blamed the economic conditions, particularly ‘speculators and large capital flows’<sup>82</sup> for the difficulties of the wine market. The Italians were more concerned about defending viticulteurs on the basis that they were often the poorest in the Community, and who were directly impacted by the French blockade. Certainly, this was the Italian defence of their liberal wine regulations – that only

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Telegram 2473/2484 from Étienne Burin des Roziers to Ministry of Foreign Affairs. July 21, 1974. Direction Europe, 38/2/3, Questions Internationales Européennes, Questions économiques, Marché commun questions agricoles, AD.

<sup>82</sup> Conseil des ministres, le 18 avril 1975, 484/75 (ASS 256), Brussels: Archives de Conseil de l'Union européenne.

in the last decade had Italian viticulteurs had begun to make more efficient and profitable wines, and that Italian wine growers were still below the average standard of living in the Community amongst their profession, particularly as compared to their counterparts in France.<sup>83</sup>

The French, instead, wanted a system which reflected their quantitative and qualitative restrictions on planting, and which incorporated measures to promote the grubbing up of poor quality vines.<sup>84</sup> This was not something they wished to have to introduce themselves, but it was clearly necessary to address their main concerns, which was curbing overproduction in Languedoc-Roussillon while having a policy which allowed expansion for its profitable, export-driven vineyards. In pushing for this at the EEC level, the French government would be able to deflect primary responsibility from itself for having introduced what was bound to be a highly unpopular policy with French viticulteurs in the Languedoc-Roussillon. This was most clear when the French claimed that it was the Community that ought to, in applying the policy, take all viticulteurs together as one group and then, punish those that could not meet ‘les besoins du marché,’<sup>85</sup> for it was not overproduction in general that was the issue to the French – it was the overproduction of the ‘wrong’ kind of wine.

The divergence between the French and Italians became clearer over the next several months of negotiations over the matter. Lardinois closed the EP debate by reiterating the conviction with which the Commission would address the issues; the Commission intended to submit to the Council a solution by April 15 which aimed to meet the approval of all parties. Thereby,

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<sup>83</sup> Niederbacher, *Wine in the European Community*, 33-34.

<sup>84</sup> 2965/X/70-E: The Background to the Common Organisation of the Market in Wine, 1970. European Commission. Luxembourg: Division for Agricultural Information in collaboration with Directorate-General for Agriculture.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Memorandum relatif au secteur viti-vinicole.’ Memorandum establishing French position on the Community’s wine policy. Undated. Forwarded to Council Secretary General Christian Calmes by Emile Cazimajou, Deputy Permanent Representative for France. May 18, 1972, CM2/1972 860.1, CMA.

‘the free movement of goods would be re-established in the following days.’ This, unfortunately, did not happen; a solution was not found by the Commission, and the free movement of goods was not to be restored for months.

In response to this issue, the Agricultural Council largely focused on the wine issue at their April 15 meeting, in which they conducted a detailed discussion of the short-term economic and structural problems and agreed that the wine issue needed to ‘hav[e] priority.’<sup>86</sup> In this meeting, it was decided that to deal with the overloading of the French market, the Council should permit a round of table wine distillation from June 7 to July 31; in a panic, on May 7, the Commission moved the distillation period back to May 12 to June 5 in hopes of settling the market faster.<sup>87</sup> The Council also began to suggest that distillation could not be a permanent solution but that it was an ‘exceptional measure...to permit a rapid improvement’,<sup>88</sup> a concession, given its position that distillation and the promotion of quality wine production could help fix the imbalance issue. It also agreed with the Commission on the need to shift its focus to regulations regarding planting to ‘prevent the formation of structural surpluses’<sup>89</sup> but it spoke very vaguely and non-committally about it: what was needed were ‘general options...for wine in the years ahead’ and ‘new guidelines to rebalance the market...focus[ed] on putting production growth on a sound footing and enhancing quality.’<sup>90</sup> The Council’s primary aim was still ‘to secure a finer balance between supply and demand by improving the intervention system...to be consolidated by other measures.’ It was still of the opinion that this problem was cyclical, despite the new ‘cyclical versus structural

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<sup>86</sup> 337th Council Meeting on Agriculture, 462 c/75 (Presse 43), Council of the European Communities General Secretariat, Luxembourg.

<sup>87</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 5, 8th year, Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>88</sup> 337th Council Meeting on Agriculture, 462 c/75 (Presse 43), Council of the European Communities General Secretariat, Luxembourg.

<sup>89</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

problem' debate that had sprung up over the course of April in the various Community organs.<sup>91</sup> The Council also made the surprising declaration that a rise in the per capita consumption in the Netherlands, along with the three new Member States, 'has simply offset the fall in the main consumer countries, France and Italy.'<sup>92</sup> But as discussed before, this was not the case. It decided that the new measures, very vaguely delimited, would be in place by August 1, 1975.

In meetings through June and July, the Commission members made concerted efforts to tackle the issue of wine. Lardinois drew up a proposal to halt new planting of vines until July 1, 1977, and fixed new prices for preventative distillation.<sup>93</sup> However, there were growing concerns about the soundness of the principles of the CWP. In restricted meeting minutes, German Commissioner Wilhelm Haferkamp considered it of central importance to discuss modifying 'the very principles'<sup>94</sup> of the CWP, given the consistent problem with surpluses; he did not think the Commission's recommendations to the Council for another distillation round went far enough. The resultant debate demonstrated the Commissioners were not of one mind about this. A similar situation was faced by the Parliament, which had a furious debate over the Commission's proposals. Dissatisfaction was rife; parliamentarians called the proposals 'inconsistent and inadequate', 'absurd and impracticable'; some welcomed the attempt at planting control, while several Italian Parliamentarians opposed them and did not believe they would be effective.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> 337th Council Meeting on Agriculture, 462 c/75 (Presse 43), Council of the European Communities General Secretariat, Luxembourg., No. 189, Sittings of April 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament., and Procès-verbaux 334, séance du 8 avril 1975. BAC 259.80, HAEC.

<sup>92</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>93</sup> Procès-verbaux 348, séance du 15 juillet 1975. BAC 259.80, HAEC.

<sup>94</sup> Procès-verbaux spéciaux 345, séance du 25 juin 1975. BAC 259.80, HAEC.

<sup>95</sup> No. 193, Sittings of July 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament.

When the August 1 deadline the Council had set itself loomed closer, then came and went with no answer in sight, the Council was forced to concede that it had failed in finding appropriate short- and long-term measures to manage conditions on the wine market, ‘where every month sees more and more disruption caused by surpluses’,<sup>96</sup> and with Italian ships still prevented from unloading their cargo in southern France. But it was not so much that Council members had failed to find a solution so much as failed to agree on what the problem was. Having not had a clear idea of what the issue was, they were unable to decide where to go. They provisionally agreed to the August 12 Commission’s proposal to grant aid for storage.

Angry Parliamentarians began to call the CWP the ‘Cinderella of the CAP’,<sup>97</sup> decrying its lower funding and lack of automatic intervention relative to other product markets; it certainly did not suffer for want of attention, however. Yet another special meeting set exclusively to deal with wine-growing problems was scheduled for September 9, as the matter dragged on without the market clearing sufficiently. It was the Council’s inability to agree on a coherent solution and to act on it that caused them repeatedly to delay dealing with the issue. This was remarked on by Jorgen Brondlund Nielson, Liberal Parliamentarian, who scathingly charged that the Commission and the Council were ‘still in a state of total confusion. We know that wine confuses the mind, but prolonging the delay in this way – and I can only regret this as a rapporteur and a Member of this Parliament – is irresponsible.’<sup>98</sup> The breakdown of the CWP seemed a serious possibility; the Commissioner for Agriculture himself bleakly commented that these difficulties, if not fixed, could spell the end: ‘if we do not conduct a balanced policy, it would be better for us not to conduct a policy at all.’<sup>99</sup> He in

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<sup>96</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 7 & 8, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>97</sup> No. 193, Sittings of July 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament.

<sup>98</sup> No. 192, Sittings of June 16-20, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament.

<sup>99</sup> No. 193, Sittings of July 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament.



turn blamed the Council,<sup>100</sup> claiming the Council ‘has never wished to take any measure at all and is unusually apprehensive on this point.’<sup>101</sup>

At the end of the September 9 meeting, this point on the inability of the Council to find a proper solution was forcibly highlighted. The Agricultural Council found ‘no solution that would regularise the wine trade between Italy and France.’<sup>102</sup> The next day, Lardinois warned the Commission that the furious French government, feeling they had walked away disappointed and empty-handed again, had threatened to instate a tax on Italian wines entering its borders;<sup>103</sup> this occurred the very next day. In the subsequent two Commission meetings on September 15 and Oct 1, harried Commissioners began ‘great deliberations’ over the wine situation and policy as a whole, with President François-Xavier Ortoli and Lardinois promising to deal with the situation rapidly.<sup>104</sup> But through until the close of the calendar year, despite successive Council and Commission meetings, no solution was found, even after the French were charged as the Commission exercised their rights under Article 169 of the Treaty. The situation became increasingly dangerous, with pressing attention from observers on the grave nature of the French tax, given that the foundation of the European Community at the time was centrally economic and necessitated the free movement of goods.

In January 1976, in restricted meeting minutes, the Commission stressed the ‘extremely serious disadvantages, not only as regards the sector itself, but also in terms of the general situation of the community which results from the lack of progress in implementing new rules

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<sup>100</sup> Though this may have been Lardinois’s tactic of gaining sympathy and support from the Parliament, which often felt marginalised by the then much more powerful Council.

<sup>101</sup> No. 193, Sitings of July 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament.

<sup>102</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 9, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>103</sup> Procès-verbaux 350, séance du 10 septembre 1975. BAC 259.80, HAEC.

<sup>104</sup> Procès-verbaux 351, séance du 15 septembre 1975. BAC 259.80, HAEC.

for the wine sector'.<sup>105</sup> The President urged Lardinois to push the Council and 'advise the Ministers of Agriculture of the sentiments of the Commission...with a pressing emphasis on the need to resume their deliberations with the true desire to reach an agreement.'<sup>106</sup> It seemed to have struck the Council that the failed measures through the year and the fact that the wine crisis was unresolved almost a year later required a drastic shift, as this problem could not easily be rectified. On March 6, the Council finally adopted measures for a stricter new regime on wine: the planting of new vines was forbidden until at least 1978, harsher quality measures were put into place, and guaranteed intervention prices were granted to farmers who followed these new Council disciplinary measures for the next four years.<sup>107</sup>

### *Broader Implications of the Wine Crisis*

The wine crisis demonstrated certain key characteristics of the CWP which would last through the 1970s. The wine crisis showed quite clearly that the policy turned on the Franco-Italian relationship. This was not particularly surprising, given that between them, they produced around 90% of the Community's total wine output. But that all Member States seemed focused on the CWP demonstrated it was important beyond the ken of simply the major wine-producers; they were left to chase the French and Italians when problems arose, and would continue to do so in years to come. Lardinois claimed was the unsatisfactory compromise between French and Italian viewpoints during wine negotiations required 'everybody now...to bear the consequences.'<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Procès-verbaux spéciaux 367, séance du 16 janvier, 1975. BAC 259.80, HAEC.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Clarke et al., *The European Community: An Exercise in Decision-Making*, 193.

<sup>108</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

The wine crisis demonstrated quite clearly that the policy which had been set up five years earlier did not properly give clear treatment of short-term cyclical issues or long-term structural issues.<sup>109</sup> Both these issues converged in the wine war between Italy and France. The crisis also demonstrated that nationalistic economic motives were not the only driving incentive for integration.<sup>110</sup> In fact, the CWP monopolised a significant amount of time, which would seem very economically inefficient for a policy amounting to so little of the CAP budget. Instead, it was the social significance of this area, and the dedication of Community officials to maintain the welfare of farmers<sup>111</sup> that warranted the focus on the CWP.

At this time Germany, along with the Benelux countries, was displeased with the unlimited ceiling and rising costs of the Common Wine Policy; the success or otherwise of the CWP, a highly visible and attention-receiving policy, became a shorthand for the success of the Common Agricultural Policy as a whole for many. The other four Member States were concerned about the distillation suggested as a temporary aid by France and had hoped the price offered to the viticulteurs would be lower and that the total volume to be distilled would be smaller. But they realised that the situation was severe and – with the exception of Germany – seemed acquiescent, as they were ‘very concerned about the effects it may have for the whole common market.’<sup>112</sup> In this regard, the French had a strong interest. Their moves from Sète in April through to the diplomatic battles they fought on wine in Brussels,

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<sup>109</sup> Clarke et al., *The European Community: An Exercise in Decision-Making*, 80.

<sup>110</sup> See, for example, Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*.

<sup>111</sup> For a full treatment, see Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*.

<sup>112</sup> Telegram 1288-1301, urgent, from Étienne Burin des Rozières to Ministry of Foreign Affairs. April 18, 1975. Direction Europe, 38/2/3, Questions Internationales Européennes, Questions économiques, Marché commun questions agricoles, AD.

however, could have quite palpably damaged relations with a Member State which lent itself to being a natural ally on issues of the funding and operation of the CWP.

In discussing the wine war, Parliamentarian Pier Luigi Bersani lamented that ‘we are now seeing the consequences of neglecting such an important sector as wine’<sup>113</sup> within the Common Agricultural Policy. Despite the efforts of the Community at creating a policy, it seemed that to Bersani, the liberal nature of the policy was tantamount to neglect or possibly too that the years in the 1960s when the a wine policy was left on the backburner had sown the seeds of current distress. The importance of the wine sector within the CAP, however, was surely not financial, constituting at this time only 2% of the CAP budget (though from 1973 to 1975, the amount itself went up twelve-fold.<sup>114</sup>) It took up an inordinate and disproportionate amount of time relative to its financial size, given the discussions and special meetings called mainly for and sometimes solely for the CWP which suggests that some other aspect of it merited great attention and effort in the Community. It was the social importance of the CWP, and this social importance was linked in the minds of EU officials to the overall capacity of the CWP. The policy, faced with currency fluctuations, resulted in significant problems for France. The initial compromises displeased many farmers and Member States. Yet they rallied around this policy because they believed it was tied to the success of the entire CAP project. Lardinois repeatedly stressed that the dangers of the wine crisis ‘could rock the whole edifice of agricultural policy.’<sup>115</sup>

*The Interventionist Turn: The Common Wine Policy’s Change in Direction, 1976 – 1980*

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<sup>113</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>114</sup> Niederbacher, *Wine in the European Community*, 41.

<sup>115</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

After the crisis faced by the Common Wine Policy, negotiators worked doggedly to change the CWP to better address the problems of the wine market and to prevent such an incident from happening again. The Commission and the Council finally admitted that the imbalances during this period ‘were indisputably caused by structural problems’.<sup>116</sup> This propelled the first major review of the entire wine policy, and led to an agreement in March 1976, officially published as Regulation 1160/76 on May 17, 1976, between the major parties involved as to the resolution to the problems of the new CWP. Beginning September 1, 1976, the European Community would also have what was called a ‘*garantie de bonne fin*’ introduced for wine. In the same year, Regulation 1162/76 was introduced which ended the ‘right to plant’ principle embodied in 816/70.<sup>117</sup> An outright ban on all new planting was imposed until the end of 1978 and a new classification of varieties and strict permissions for their planting and replanting was introduced. Premiums were also introduced in this year to encourage farmers to grub-up vines either to abandon them temporarily for a six-year period or to replace the vines entirely with another crop.<sup>118</sup>

The Commission and Council finally came to realise that the difficulty with the Common Wine Policy rested at least in part on systemic overproduction and much of the new Regulation 1160/76 was designed to deal with these problems. But the economic environment certainly exacerbated the situation. Monetary Compensatory Amounts that were meant to protect against differences in currencies and the effect they would have on the prices of agricultural products were introduced for table wine in 1971. However, by the eve of the wine crisis, MCAs had failed to offset these fluctuations in the wine industry because of the

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<sup>116</sup> Classification of Vine Varieties in the European Community and the Common Organisation of the Market in Wine.

<sup>117</sup> L135, Council Regulation (EEC) No 1162/76 of 17 May 1976 on measures designed to adjust wine-growing potential to market requirements.

<sup>118</sup> L135, Council Regulation (EEC) No 1163/76 of 17 May 1976 on the granting of a conversion premium in the wine sector.

lack of an effective minimum price for wines; this was a problem almost uniquely affecting the wine market, for, while MCAs might not have operated very well in all other markets, the pricing system for the other CAP commodities had minimum pricing and automatic interventions.<sup>119</sup> The substantial revisions made to the common wine policy bore these two major problems in mind.

The new policy of 1976 saw a number of changes, the centrepiece of which was the introduction of a ‘garantie de bonne fin’ or a performance guarantee. The measure, touted as being the principal innovation of the revised wine policy<sup>120</sup>, gave viticulteurs who respected the Community’s disciplinary measures as regarding preventative distillations, long- and short-term storage contracts, and so on, the guarantee that at the end of the year’s campaign, they would receive at least the trigger price for their wine. For wines that had been under long-term contract during the course of the year’s wine campaign, three types of measures were now available if quoted market prices were not satisfactory (meaning the wine would not be released onto the market). First, the extension of the storage contracts could be sought if the prospect of improvement during the weeks after the end of the official campaign made this a good option (as the Commission decided was the case in 1977); second, distillation measures were available for which qualifying wines were then paid what was considered a ‘strong price’ (anything equivalent to or greater than the trigger price); and third, the Community offered some help with wine export, including the possibility of refunds for costs incurred.

A notable, but quieter change, was the nomenclature the Commission began to adopt for reducing the production of poorer quality wine in the Community – in a Commission memo

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<sup>119</sup> INRA-ENSA-Montpellier, 1987.

<sup>120</sup> ‘Le Marché Européen du Vin.’ Memo from the European Commission. February 1978. BAC 48/1984.1132, HAEC.

giving a comprehensive overview of the legal revisions, under the heading '*Qualité de vin*'<sup>121</sup> were the major measures to combat overproduction. One such measure was a 0.5% increase in the blanket minimum alcohol percentage any wine to be circulated in the European Community could have, now to be set at 9% alcohol by volume. Wine containing less than this percentage was strictly forbidden from entering the market. This was a measure obviously only aimed at table wines, for no quality wines had alcohol percentages nearly so low (with the near exception of some German white wines before chaptalisation).

The next measure was the cessation of planting rights – all new planting was suspended until at least the end of 1978 (except for quality wines), and new classifications were drawn up for vine varieties. There were three major categories – varieties that were recommended, varieties that were authorised, and finally, varieties that were temporarily authorised but in the long-term were to be eliminated. These varieties, along with several wine-growing areas, were to be eliminated either before 1979, for those varieties obtained from direct producer hybrids, and before 1983, for most other varieties. Varieties that were in the third and least favourable category were given 15 years from 1976 to be eliminated.<sup>122</sup> Not only was the phrase 'quality of wine' euphemistically and enthusiastically adopted as a way to headline measures that were in fact about cutting down the amount of table wine, but the general policy change was built around the concept of moving in the 'direction of quality.' For instance, before coming to the point about the 'interdiction de plantations', a Commission memo explained that the Nine were undertaken measures to 'd'agir avec vigueur sur le potentiel de production.'<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> 'Regulation (EEC) No 1160/76 of 17 May 1976 amending Regulation (EEC) No 816/70,' in L135/1, Official Journal of the European Communities, 1976.

<sup>123</sup> 'Le Marché Européen du Vin.' Memo from the European Commission. February 1978. BAC 48/1984.1132, HAEC.

The Commission's attitude to the CWP had changed considerably since the early 1970s, when they had believed that the overproduction of wine was temporary, a concern but not a particularly seriously or alarming one, and that economic instability was a major cause, which would be ironed out in other ways or would eventually pass. But it was not these larger ancillary issues that were the problem – it was the wine industry itself that was the problem, abetted unfortunately by the inefficient as well as expensive measures of the CWP. The Commission was now very concerned about the breadth and scope of the problems in the wine policy, and the potential social and cultural issues that were tightly connected to them:

La Commission ne cache pas son inquiétude face à l'évolution prévisible de la production de vins dans la CEE, à savoir la tendance persistante au déplacement de la vigne des collines vers les plaines et la recherche de rendements élevés que permettent les techniques modernes... un état de crise endémique risque de persister dans le secteur viticole. Cette évolution est d'autant plus inquiétante qu'elle se développe dans un contexte social et économique défavorable. La viticulture est une culture qui absorbe, particulièrement dans un milieu traditionnel, une main d'œuvre abondante. Le remplacement de la vigne par d'autres cultures nécessitant moins de main d'œuvre, pourrait avoir des conséquences très graves pour l'emploi et déplacer le problème de l'équilibre des marchés vers d'autres secteurs. Les alternatives économiques sont peu ou pas existantes. Le problème de la viticulture ne peut donc trouver sa solution que dans un cadre qui dépasse la simple organisation du marché du vin.<sup>124</sup>

The Commission realised that these social and cultural issues would need to be unravelled and addressed of their own accord if a common wine policy were to be functionally useful. This was outside the scope of the originally conceived CWP, which was meant predominantly to smooth wine's entry into a unified European market. These issues were particularly pressing in light of the prospective new Mediterranean member states Spain, Portugal, and Greece – all three of which were wine producing. Spain, a very large wine producer indeed who had applied for membership in 1977, was unsurprisingly by far the most concerning to the French and Italian wine growers.

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*



The French government was very wary of Spain's entry, not least because of pressure from the country's leading agricultural lobby group *Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants d'Agricoles* (FNSEA), who insisted that because of Spain's competing production of wine, fruits and vegetables, and olive oil, the country 'ne peut être accueillie dans la CEE'.<sup>125</sup> Opposition was widespread across agricultural groups in France. The 1983 riots incited by vignerons in the south-west of France against Spanish entry, wherein trucks and cars were overturned, led then Minister of Agriculture Michel Rocard to compare the situation to the Jacquerie, a particularly bloody peasant revolt in late medieval France.<sup>126</sup>

### *Considering and Involving Wine Producers in Policy*

It was at this most difficult juncture that the European Community's agenda first seriously took into consideration the plight and concerns of the producers, initially through the fact that they hoped that encouraging the formation of '*groupements de producteurs*' or producer groups would involve farmers themselves in improving the quality of wine production, and thus helping to support the Commission's new policy direction of quality in wine. They also hoped that favouring organisations of producers in the distribution of aid would encourage them to group together locally, thus allowing the Commission to make demands of the group (such as asking them for target production levels or encouraging them to have their members grow recommended varieties and to police them in general).

Further to that, the Council and Commission began considering a way to group together all table wine producers in the Community. The Group de travail 'vins' was charged to discuss, at their meeting on February 22, 1978, the creation of a European interprofessional

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<sup>125</sup> Matthieu Trouvé, *L'Espagne et l'Europe: de la dictature de Franco à l'Union européenne* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 419.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

organisation for table wine on February 24, 1978, after the Commission and Council's proposals on February 13, 1978 both for additional minor changes to 816/70 and for a potential interprofessional organisation. This organisation would, 'disposant d'une structure communautaire, nationale et régionale, réunirait les producteurs, les commerçants et les transformateurs de vin de table. Elle devrait être l'interlocuteur unique entre les professions et les instances communautaires, et serait appelée à participer à la préparation de certaines décisions à prendre dans le cadre de la politique viti-vinicole commune.'<sup>127</sup>

This group would be called on to advise the Brussels institutions and give their opinions on matters previously the Commission and Council decided on rather without earnest consultation with producers and merchants at least, with the exception of their small, selective, and technically-oriented expert groups like the Groupe de travail 'Vins', the section of the Comité Spécial Agriculture (CSA) dealing with wine which gave technical advice to both the CSA and directly to the Council. The Groupe de travail 'Vin' was a very small group composed of technical specialists picked by their national governments and was meant to be a politically-neutral advisory group – in contrast, this interprofessional group was meant to be a much larger, mostly self-organising group that was representative of producers from across the Community. This group's responsibilities – and indeed, they could be seen as privileges – included participation in discussions on the delimitation of wine-growing zones, the policy of increasing quality of table wines, and intervention measures in the case of another crisis (interest groups were not consulted in the 1975 wine crisis).

However, this plan never came to fruition, despite the Commission's fervent efforts, which, in spite of much criticism from delegates through even the nascent stages of the plan, resulted in

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<sup>127</sup> 'S/389/78 (CSA 84) (MED)', Proposal for a Council regulation on the establishment of an interprofessional European organisation of table wine and meeting of the Groupe de travail 'Vin'. February 22, 1978. BAC 48/1984.1133, HAEC.

a detailed formal proposal submitted to the Council on February 13, 1978.<sup>128</sup> Almost all parties had reservations about the plan and rejected the idea of such an organisation. The French, Germans, and Italians in particular stressed the necessity of keeping certain competencies within the exclusive purview of public powers – in particular the French were adamant that ‘certains services nationaux...devraient en tout état de cause garder leur complète indépendance.’<sup>129</sup> They all preferred to keep their own institutions. The Groupe de travail ‘vins’, in desperation to keep the discussion on a potential organisation afloat, asked the French delegation to submit a document detailing their experiences with their own existing national interprofessionnal viti-vinicultural organisation. This was provided but no further action was taken – an interprofessional European wine organisation was not created.

Discussions between 1978 and 1980 focused predominantly on how to change the pricing mechanisms of the wine system. One of the major concerns was what to do in case of another table wine crisis. The Commission proposed that, were there to be a serious crisis for a type of table wine because of pricing that the table wine in question, at the discretion of the Council and Commission, it would be strictly prohibited for a predetermined period of time from being sold at a price inferior to a fixed ‘floor price’. These ‘floor prices’ would be effective for 1978 until at least 1982, and would be calculated to be 70% of the corresponding prix d’orientation or target price. At the same time, there would be a Community-wide distillation of the troubled table wine at that year’s floor price.

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<sup>128</sup> ‘Proposals for Council Regulations: 1. establishing a European Joint-Trade Table Wine Organization II. amending Regulation (EEC) No 816/70 laying down additional provisions for the common organization of the market in wine.’ in C 71/2, Official Journal of the European Communities, March 22, 1978.

<sup>129</sup> ‘S/389/78 (CSA 84) (MED)’, Proposal for a Council regulation on the establishment of an interprofessional European organisation of table wine and meeting of the Groupe de travail ‘Vin’. February 22, 1978. BAC 48/1984.1133, HAEC.

This was a very welfarist plan, and several delegations protested – the Dutch claimed that this was at odds with the Community's stated policy in the direction of quality for wine as it could be taken advantage of by farmers who preferred to rely on this considerable price support rather than strive to produce better quality wine.<sup>130</sup> The French, 'toute en étant favorable en principe à l'introduction d'un mécanisme de prix'<sup>131</sup> were the most vocal about expressing their support for the idea, though not in its conception at the time – the other delegations had many objections, and it was the Germans who were most blunt in explaining why they disagreed with the idea of a financially generous and cushioning floor price, pronouncing that they were entirely against the flavour of these now clearly welfarist measures; they were 'contre la mise en oeuvre de toute mesure de garantie permanente des revenus' and were instead in favour of 'une politique de co-responsabilité croissante des producteurs dans le secteur viti-vinicole.'<sup>132</sup>

By contrast, in the milk market, co-responsibility quotas had already been introduced in 1977. These were levies placed on the milk delivered to dairies with the aim to decreasing the price and thereby, shrinking the milk lake. There was already evidence of success after a year, even if this was rather limited – however, by 1980, it was markedly making a difference.<sup>133</sup> But this was not applied to the wine sector as a way to cope with the wine lake. One of the other suggested changes, by contrast, was far better received, and involved increasing the amount of preferential aid given to groupements de producteurs, including the introduction of a 'système

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<sup>130</sup> 'S/401/78 (CSA 91) (MED)', Proposals for Council regulations modifying Regulation 816/70 and report on the meeting of the Groupe de travail 'Vins' of February 22, 1978. February 24, 1978. BAC 48/1984.1133, CMA.

<sup>131</sup> 'S/478/78 (CSA 102) (MED)', Proposals for Council regulations modifying Regulation 816/70 and the results of the initial investigations by the Groupe de travail 'Vins',. March 9, 1978. BAC 48/1984.1133, HAEC.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Katja Seidel, 'Contested Fields: The Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy ' in *European Community 1973-1986. Histories and Memories of an Institution* ed. Vincent et al. Dujardin (Luxembourg: Official Publications of the European Union, Forthcoming 2014).

de primes de qualité'<sup>134</sup> and continuing to encourage the formation of these groups across the wine-growing regions in the Community.

The final measure taken for the Common Wine Policy at the end of the 1970s was a formal and longer-term '*Programme d'Action*' which was to cover, for the first time, a span of five years, from 1979 to 1985, rather than one. It was this final programme, the last of those devised for the wine industry in the 1970s and which was to set the tone for the next decade, which made it clear that the problem of the wine industry was not only overproduction, but overproduction of the wrong kind of wine. The text drawn up by the Commission explicitly laid out the permissions and directions in each of three wine-growing categories. The vineyards producing wines in the second category, which were predominantly table wines, were expressly forbidden from new planting (though they were allowed to replant over grubbed up vines with the specific determined varieties). The vineyards in the third category, which were those producing on the whole table wines of poor quality, were not only forbidden from new planting, but also forbidden from receiving national aid for investing in replanting or improvement of the vineyard.

However, those with vineyards in the first category were allowed new planting, as well as national and Community aid to help improve the structure of their vineyards, and even aid for replanting and new planting. But more than this even, extraordinarily, 'Les bénéficiaires de ces régimes recevront de plus une prime forfaitaire d'amélioration du vignoble d'un montant situé entre 1500 et 2.500 UC/ha, montant correspondant, dans cette fourchette, aux coûts de

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<sup>134</sup> 'S/478/78 (CSA 102) (MED)', Proposals for Council regulations modifying Regulation 816/70 and the results of the initial investigations by the Groupe de travail 'Vins',. March 9, 1978. BAC 48/1984.1133, HAEC.

l'opération de replantation.'<sup>135</sup> It was clear that the Community's priority was not simply a blanket reduction in the amount of wine produced in the Community, or new planting – which entailed expansion – would have been expressly forbidden across the board, or at the very least, forbidden at the second and third levels, and discouraged at the first. The economic and long-term consideration of wines that were profitable was as important to the Commission as the welfarist interests they were concerned about protecting.

### *Conclusion*

The wine crisis of 1975, the first major challenge facing the CWP, caused a sharp change in the direction of the policy, where more incisive management style, as long argued for by the French, was introduced. But the price of this for France was the loss in closeness with an ally on issues of defending the CWP. Both the illegal tax and blockade made the French unpopular and their short-term victory of sorts resulted in longer-term disadvantages.

Beyond this strain on the Franco–Italian relationship was a much more precarious situation. This situation threatened the continuation of the whole principle of a common market where goods could circulate freely among member states. That a major member state was allowed to flout these rules, and to do so for over a year, was thereby a threat to the integration regime as a whole. As this was a period of severe economic downturn, similar protectionist pressures also existed in other sectors and other member states. Disruptions or policy changes in one market – or the suggestion of them – could have spill-over effects into other markets which would be problematic for all Member States. If a serious breach of EC rules were permitted

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<sup>135</sup> 'COM(78) 260 final. Volume I: Programme d'action 1979-1985 en vue de l'établissement progressif de l'équilibre sur le marché viti-vinicole.' Brief from the Commission to the Council. July 31, 1978. BAC 48/1984.1133, HAEC.

for wine, perhaps a shaky industry like steel would be next, and not far behind that, car manufacturing.

Another reason that the CWP could have ramifications on the entire CAP was that to open serious discussions about forcibly decreasing the amount of wine produced would lead to a discussion on making other markets smaller, to deal with the ‘butter mountain’, ‘the beef mountain’, and the ‘milk lake’. There was, for instance, no response to the remark by the Communists within the Parliament that ‘production controls were needed not just for wine but for all farm products’,<sup>136</sup> as this would counteract the income-increasing factor of the CAP the French wanted to keep.

The wine crisis made clear that the CWP as it stood was not able to deal with serious overproduction, and that the overproduction was not a temporary imbalance that could be solved by year-to-year, one-off measures, like emergency distillation. As a result, in 1976, the CWP became much more interventionist, a characteristic which was to mark the CWP for the rest of the 1970s.

One key feature highlighted by the crisis which persisted beyond the 1970s with the CWP was the tension between different imperatives of the CAP. The modernisation policy aim of the CAP, Directive 159, directed at making farms larger and more efficient, was problematic for a sector that the EEC recognised was characterised by many small farm holdings.<sup>137</sup> But Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome established not only the increase of farm productivity as a goal of the CAP, but also made this a precondition for the increase in farmers’ income.<sup>138</sup> The

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<sup>136</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 4, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.

<sup>137</sup> Newsletter of the CAP, No.5: The CAP Serves Farmers and Consumers in a Time of Economic Instability.

<sup>138</sup> Article 39, Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community, 1957.

modernisation goals the European Community enshrined in the CAP, designed also to increase international competitiveness, locked horns with the welfarist policies to help family farmers stay on their land and to keep or raise incomes to parity with those in other sectors. In no other sector was this tension so clear than in wine. The modernisation policies strove to reduce the volume of table wine produced, while the welfarist policies, through their aim in raising wages, encouraged more production. One of the goals of the CAP was even to increase productivity but the table wine industry was clearly too productive in this period.

The interventionist changes from 1976 onward were ‘very unpopular’<sup>139</sup> with farmers, but at the Community level, little was discussed about the farmers whose incomes and livelihoods were on the line as a result of the policy changes at the European level of governance. It took until 1978 for the Community to seriously discuss involving producers in the policy-making process. Instead, despite the growing strength of particular French agricultural lobbies, the anger of the viticulteurs, which was noted by European presses, was hardly a subject discussed beyond a passing mention at the Community level before the late 1970s, despite the fact that these growers’ livelihoods were very much at stake and that furthermore, for certain regions, wine-growing ‘constitutes the basic and sometimes sole income of millions of producers.’<sup>140</sup> The angry reaction from French wine growers in response to this episode set the scene for their more assertive behaviour and an increase in their autonomy, which actually both the European Community and French government were responsible for facilitating. The efforts of vignerons to change from lobbying for their cause only at the French level to lobbying there in conjunction to moving to the European level will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>139</sup> No. 193, Sitings of July 7-11, 1975, Debates of the European Parliament.

<sup>140</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities, No 7 & 8, 8th year. Luxembourg: Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities.



### Chapter Three

#### Table Wine and Riots in Languedoc-Roussillon, Part I: The response of vignerons in Languedoc-Roussillon to the wine crisis, 1975–1976

Si toute l’histoire de la monoculture viticole en Languedoc est rythmée par des crises conjoncturelles répétées, dont la région trouve toujours plus ou moins bien à sortir, la période 1970–1980 marque sans conteste l’apparition et la prise de conscience progressive d’un état de crise structurelle... Entre les comportements des viticulteurs, convaincus de la «légitimité» d’une monoproduction régionale très protégée et les règles générales de fonctionnement des marchés en France et dans le monde, vont apparaître et se développer un certain nombre de distorsions ou de contradictions.’

- Yves Gilbert, *Le Languedoc et ses images*, 18.

Le Languedoc-Roussillon est la région de ces trop célèbres vins du Midi qui ne valent guère mieux que ceux qui nous proviennent d’Italie, bien souvent vin sacrificiel des viticulteurs en colère de l’Hérault et de l’Aude.

- Michel Dovaz, president of the Institute Œnologique de France, *Livre du vin*, Paris 1976.

During the initial decade of the Common Wine Policy, government initiatives and major sociological trends collided to cause years of anxiety and frustration for many French vignerons. The place where this was most dramatically felt was in the region of Languedoc-

Roussillon, which historically produced a great deal of French table wine, and whose four wine-producing areas<sup>1</sup> – Aude, Hérault, Gard and Pyrénées-Orientales – also had a reputation for fiercely independent vignerons. Throughout the latter half of the 1970s, the adverse effects of the CWP caused vignerons to begin agitating for change through local and regional groups while they also adjusted to the new, still shifting order of power between the European Community and its member states. The European Community introduced another bureaucracy to French farmers, which for the vignerons in the Midi propelled the fast growth of local groups, such as syndicates, to disseminate information to help farmers better cope with the many ensuing legislative and practical changes.

The exposure to global political processes via the Community meant that affected regions were under pressure to adapt. In this context, where regions had a strong attachment to a particular way of life or cultural objects (in this case, wine-growing not only as a profession but as an extended social practice, and wine as not only the main produce of the area, but as a celebrated regional and national symbol), these changes forced a re-examination and renegotiation of self and profession. The outcome of this process for the vignerons of the Midi was a trend of increased regionalism, even with exposure to and, in a more limited way, engagement with, decision-making on the national and supranational levels.

This process is explained in two chapters – this first chapter looks at the immediate reaction of vignerons in Languedoc-Roussillon to the Franco-Italian wine crisis in 1975 and then the

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<sup>1</sup> It may be useful here to recall from the introduction that the formal name for each of these political units is *département*. The region of Languedoc-Roussillon actually has five *départements*, but the fifth, Lozère, produces negligible amounts of wine. Often, ‘Languedoc’ is used as a shorthand to mean the wines in the general area of the south as France (similarly, so is the term ‘Midi’). This is because the historical province of Languedoc contained Aude, Hérault, and the Gard, which together produces the vast majority of the wine in Languedoc-Roussillon. But it is also because the term ‘Roussillon’ in ‘Languedoc-Roussillon’ is actually a nod to the history of the general area, as the historical Roussillon, long since abolished under the ancien régime, roughly corresponded to the modern *département* of the Pyrénées-Orientales, which through organic and repeated grouping and association, became amalgamated with Languedoc.

ultimately unsuccessful efforts of the French government, through 1975 and until the end of 1976, to respond in a way that satisfied their constituents in the south. The second chapter then looks at the reorganisation of political relationships between local and regional wine groups, Paris, and Brussels from 1977–1979 in the midst of a breakdown in the relationship between the French national government and the Midi table wine producers.

*Enthusiasm alongside Trepidation in the Midi at the Introduction of the Common Wine Policy*

The Common Wine Policy's creation was at first greeted with enthusiasm, though not without murmurs of skepticism. Languedoc-Roussillon was a place where many still proudly clung to regional rural values and championed the Langue d'Oc dialect. The towns were as independent and proud as their vignerons were reputed to be: 'Le Languedoc-Roussillon est rempli de capitales. Les villes, un peu jalouses les unes des autres, comme les cités grecques, s'y sont développées...sans voir leurs forces vives s'étioler au profit d'une seule, tentaculaire...'.<sup>2</sup> Despite these petty jealousies, the towns of the region together forged a strong sense of regionalism, born out of a sense of victimisation. Through this, there had been a long history of dislike of the centre of power, for which Paris stood as a beacon above all others, a site of bureaucracy and the 'folie de tous ces Parisiens technocrates'.<sup>3</sup> It seemed to those in Languedoc-Roussillon that they had always been marginalised or mistreated by the state, and this was in a way their historical fate. Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé, a major figure in Midi viticulture, expressed it thus:

Un lien existait-il entre les difficultés économiques que nous subissons et nos origines ethniques? ...Certes, des phrases toutes faites venaient à la pensée: les barons du Nord...Simon de Montfort...Toulouse...Queribus...Montségur...les Cathares...l'Inquisition...les dragonnades...l'écrasement des paysans cévenols...Toujours l'Etat, celui de tous les temps,

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<sup>2</sup> 'Images du Languedoc-Roussillon,' *La Journée Vinicole*, September 8, 1976

<sup>3</sup> Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé, *Vendanges amères* (J.-P. Ramsay, 1976).

monarchique ou républicain, avec son comportement restrictif à l'égard des méridionaux, des Sudistes. Brusquement, à la façon des animaux de sable surgissant de leur trou, ces pensées affluaient dans ma tête. Elles s'y promenaient désagréablement, gênant un certain confort intellectuel. Connaître à fond ses dossiers économiques est une chose. Aborder ceux-ci selon une nouvelle perception, en fonction d'éléments surajoutés provenant de notre hérédité raciale était bien différent.<sup>4</sup>

One particular aspect then of the attitude of these vignerons later on, as we shall see, of expecting help from Paris seemed at odds with this independent streak. This was in great part due to the legitimisation of the idea of regional monoculturalism in the region. But the difficulty that faced the southern French viticulteurs that differentiated them from many of their other counterparts across the country lay in the fact that, for all the former's desire for independence, French vignerons in general have since the mid-nineteenth century been more heavily subject to the influence of national and international trade by virtue of being – and needing to be – well-integrated into the national market.<sup>5</sup> Those who had been successful at negotiating this – those in Bordeaux and Champagne, for example – were far removed from the kind of dilemma facing those in the Midi and regarded their war cries as petulant. As one viticulteur from Upper Provence, whose view was ostensibly 'shared by nearly all producers, from Châteauneuf-du-Pape to as far north as Champagne – a long chain of prosperous vineyards', commented:

I'm going to tell you, I'm a peasant, a viticulturist, we are unfortunately inclined to complain, to moan....It's certain that in Languedoc there were crises there, there were true crises, but to say that they're always in crisis, there are all the same, some moments when they lived well, they were comfortable. There is a proverb...that runs: 'Help yourself, and heaven will help you.' Now, you understand, if you always wait until manna falls, often you'll miss out. Above all I think, when there are problems, you must tackle them boldly and there's always a solution to problems. You have to will it, and you must sometimes make some sacrifices...you always hold a part of the solution.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Maffre-Baugé. *Vendanges amères* (J.-P. Ramsay, 1976), 94-95.

<sup>5</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

The vigneronns of the Midi may have been more intertwined with national paths by virtue of their product, largely sold in urban areas, but this did not mean they were outward looking. Their emphasis, relative to other French vigneronns, was far more on adapting what happened on the national plane to their regional needs. But this way of acting faced a pressing need for change when farmers faced the confluence of the reorganisation of the political overhead for their profession, abnormal harvests, and the declining popularity of their product. But French vigneronns still held out hope that the new CWP, inaugurated in 1970, would mean an increase in exports via more open markets. As a vigneron put it, ‘In the period preceding the Common Market, they told us, “You know, we must enter the Common Market because you will see the free exchange of your produce, you won’t have any more problems sending a case of wine to Belgium, England, and Germany”’.<sup>7</sup> They were to be disappointed.

Both a downturn in the drinking of table wine, which optimists in the European Commission and Council and the affected French wine-growing regions believed incorrectly was temporary, and overly abundant harvests in 1973 and 1974 conspired to make the first few years of the CWP a scramble. As discussed in previous chapters, this scramble was as much for solutions as for an understanding of what the problem was. Unable to clearly pinpoint why these abundant harvests were happening, in the light of a CWP which was liberal with planting rights and loose on production control, the first wave of solutions were temporary band-aids in the form of expensive rounds of emergency distillation and government-funded storage.

The initial belief that these supersized harvests were a natural and occasional problem was replaced with the grim realization, upon examination, of systemic overproduction which was

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<sup>7</sup> M. Darricade, as interviewed by Leo Loubère in 1978-1979 in *ibid.*, 176.

likely to worsen, most directly in the table wine producing areas of France, of which Languedoc-Roussillon was and is the major part. The first moment of dramatic crisis came when furious French vignerons responded with brute force to an alarming new situation: in the first two months of 1975, at 200 million litres the imports of Italian wine into France were approaching the level of the entirety of wine imports for the previous year. The port at Sète, through which the vast majority of wine exports arrived, ‘a été cernée par les viticulteurs’<sup>8</sup>, who together with local officials, successfully blocked the unloading of eleven ships carrying Italian table wine for several months.

This incident was considered by protestors as being the direct consequence of the CWP, which was continuing to ‘financer l’entrée de plusieurs millions d’hectolitres de vins d’Italie’ – though some darkly speculated that this was also possibly the responsibility of the French government, acting ‘derrière l’écran de Bruxelles’.<sup>9</sup> In response, the vignerons of the Languedoc-Roussillon acted in two major ways: through planned violence and demonstrations, largely instigated by the *Comité régionale d’action viticole* (CRAV), and, more sustainably, by organising more strongly on a local and regional level with the intent to have a united front. What these two broad waves had in common was where they initially directed their expectation of change: viticulteurs lobbied, complained to, and demanded redress of their national representatives, principally expecting the Ministry of Agriculture to solve this problem, and for French representatives in Brussels to fight against the effects of the CWP.

Initially, the majority of French farmers waited on their national government to create solutions for them. With the eyes of the Community’s other member states and those of many

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<sup>8</sup> ‘Sète a été cernée par les viticulteurs,’ *Midi Libre*, February 27, 1975.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Après la Journée d’action des viticulteurs,’ *Midi Libre*, February 28, 1975.

French vignerons on them, French officials scrambled to appease their citizens first, and respond to Community questions later. Their support of the situation at Sète was, despite their clumsy attempts at hiding it, quite apparent, as detailed in a previous chapter. Their next step was to levy a tax on Italian wines imported into the country. This illegal stop-gap measure, instituted September 10, 1975, temporarily calmed a situation that had become violent – and it was to this that the French government spoke when they attempted to defend their actions. It was an issue of national security, they exclaimed, and though they may have flirted with the term that they picked up from the vignerons, who began to use it in earnest from early 1976, they did not fully push the case that this was ‘dumping’<sup>10</sup> by the Italians.

But the French government knew its position was ultimately untenable – it faced a true dilemma, caught between the obligations they had made at the Community level, which they appeared to be flagrantly flaunting, and the demands of a powerful left-wing bloc of voters who were drawing progressively more attention to their plight. By now the evidence pointed clearly to systemic overproduction, which would grow worse if French vignerons were allowed to keep producing table wine, particularly if that table wine was readily converted to ethyl alcohol or stored, both at government expense. But forcing – or even asking – these proud, heritage-conscious vignerons to abandon wine-making was tantamount to declaring war on table wine. The government was not prepared to do so and decided to approach the situation first in an ad hoc manner.

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<sup>10</sup> This is a form of predatory pricing in international trade whereby a country deliberately sets the price of a good below the price set in the domestic market of a competitor. This is done with the intent of having the products flood the other market and be purchased preferentially because of its better price.

*Asking for Help at Well-Established Platforms*

Local political groups initially voiced their concerns at the various department levels. The Conseil Général Hérault, the most powerful Conseil of the five regions, which also contained the capital of the Languedoc-Roussillon, Montpellier, had heated discussions on the issue of viticulture, in which the viticultural groups showed themselves to be fairly well-informed of what was happening in Brussels, if perhaps misguided about the changes the French national government could and was willing to make there. The Communists, who were the dominant political party in French southern farming areas, spoke directly about the Community being the problem, and insisted the French national government was using it as a pretext for industrial interests, as ‘L’Europe est un prétexte pour favoriser les entreprises multinationales au détriment des petits cultivateurs....Ils préconisent le retrait de la France du marché européen viticole....Leur hostilité déclarée à l’Europe doit composer avec leur alliances socialistes et radicales....’<sup>11</sup> The Independents wanted the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State to open a dialogue as to how necessary it would be to continue to take Europe into account as regarded actions for resolving the crisis in the Midi. Viticultural leaders, particularly from Hérault and Aude, believed that the crisis was a direct ‘conséquence d’un choix politique en faveur de l’Europe.’<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps most alarming was that moderate leaders, especially those heads of coopératives, were beginning to align themselves with more radical ones, as they were no longer able to deal with their unsold surpluses. But these groups still showed considerable concern for the chain of command; the Préfet responded to their concerns with three points that were by this

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<sup>11</sup> Telegram from Préfet Région Languedoc-Roussillon to the Prime Minister, Minister of State, Minister of the Interior, Minister of the Economy and Finance, and the Minister of Agriculture. Undated (very likely January 16, 1976). 19920339/4, AN.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*



point hardly novel – that the decisions the government was undertaking with continued negotiations, the tax, and the discussion on creating a national office of wine were ‘le maximum face aux règlements Européens’<sup>13</sup>, that these national policies were in favour of small and medium property-owning vignerons (this would not have been an easy point to make, given the emphasis on modernising farms, which often take place through knitting together smaller, less inefficient ones), and that they favoured a policy of quality. These rather feeble replies were however still accorded ‘la plus grande attention et courtoisement saluées’<sup>14</sup> by the gathered parties.

On November 22, 1975, at the meeting of the Fédération Nationale des Producteurs des Vins de Table et de Vins de Pays (both FVTP and FNPVTP are used variously as acronyms – the former will be used throughout this work), the viticultural leaders asked the government for either the total ban on the entry of Italian wines into France, or a minimum tax of 12.50 francs per hectolitre-degree, with the threat that ‘des actions particulièrement violentes risquent d’être déclenchées, à brève échéance dans tout le midi viticole.’<sup>15</sup> Their heightened determination stemmed from their feeling that they were ‘conscients de lutter pour leur survie’<sup>16</sup> against the Italians and charged that the Italians were attempting to bring about ‘la ruine des vins français de consommation courante en vue de se substituer, dans les cinq ans, à notre production nationale.’<sup>17</sup> These demands were impossible, however, for the government to comply with, without breaking Community commitments. Almost as if in an effort to pre-emptively respond in kind, the FAVF told the Ministry of Agriculture that in fact it was the

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> ‘Les viticulteurs méridionaux demandent une plus grande rigueur à l’égard des importations de vins italiens, faute de quoi une violente agitation ne manquera pas de se produire à brève échéance’. Internal Ministry of Agriculture report on the November 20, 1975 meeting of the general assembly of the Fédération Nationale des Producteurs de Vins de Table et Vins de Pays. November 22, 1975. 19920339/4, AN.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

Italians who were in contravention of *their* Community duties, insisting the they were practicing ‘dumping’ and vaguely stating that the Italian government unfairly gave substantial aid to their vigneron (as did the French!).

### *A Violent Swell*

With no movement forthcoming from the French government, a group of Midi leaders in existing local groups, along with some of their committed followers, came together and planned through December and January 1975 to undertake serious action to make their cause known. Working thoroughly and carefully on a local level, and calling themselves the Comité régional d’action viticole, CRAV officials distributed pamphlets<sup>18</sup> via ‘tous les responsables de village’<sup>19</sup> with the intention of gathering together all professional groups ‘of the region’ to prepare for mass demonstrations. The aggressive pamphlet requested first that each cave cooperative make its intentions known, before distributing sheets to each of their members (those not belonging to a coopérative could directly reply on the individual sheet).

The cave coopérative form, which was to be returned to the Fédération des Caves Coopératives de l’Hérault, acting on behalf of CRAV, asked whether or not the cooperatives agreed to different actions, including demonstrations, the refusal to pay the Mutualité Sociale Agricole, and the total refusal to discipline or control their members. The individual reply sheet asked for one thing only: a signature by the statement that the viticulteur had the intention to follow CRAV’s agenda for the defense of viticulture. They were collecting this information to differentiate between those who were indifferent, ‘chez qui une intervention

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<sup>18</sup> ‘CONSIGNES DU COMITE REGIONAL D’ACTION VITICOLE A TOUS LES RESPONSABLES DE VILLAGE.’ 19920339/4, AN.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

amicale sera faite'<sup>20</sup>, and those who refused to show their solidarity, who would be shamed out of the business community 'en bloquant toutes leurs demandes et tous les services qui pourraient leur être rendus par les organismes professionnels existant dans les villages....'<sup>21</sup>.

CRAV had likely been operating from around the spring of 1965, though very little is known about them.<sup>22</sup> They continued to be active in the late 1970s, and then appeared to become dormant. They reappeared in 1998, or more likely, viticultural leaders in the Midi borrowed the name, face, and legacy of CRAV when periods of particularly high tensions were faced again, and continually engaged in attacks, threats of assassinations, and even bombings for the next decade. One of their first attempts to work outside of a regional context and address those at a national level was an open letter to French Minister of Agriculture Christian Bonnet on July 30, 1975. In it, they claimed he was doing too little and what little he was doing was simply to 'ward off the blows, get a few crumbs not to lose face' and accused him of endorsing the proposals of the Commission's 'stateless senior officials [who are] far from the problems'; casting doubt on his professionalism, they told him that he was trying to 'save his own position without taking the personal initiative to save the future of southern viticulteurs.'<sup>23</sup> CRAV blamed Bonnet for not defending the interests of the vignerons in Brussels and menacingly concluded: 'Voulez-vous pousser les viticulteurs de Midi à bout après les avoir sacrifiées aux échanges intra et extra communautaires. Sur ce sujet vous êtes moins loquace. Aujourd'hui nous en avons assez de vos "boutades", il vous faut prouver votre sérieux et votre compétence ou vous serez renvoyé au "vestiaire"'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> When Andrew Smith's PhD thesis is made publically available, a great deal will undoubtedly be known about CRAV. His thesis, entitled *The Comité Régional d'Action Viticole (CRAV): Regional identity, violence and the challenges of modernisation in the Languedoc (1944-1992)*, submitted at the end of 2013 to Queen Mary University, was unavailable at the time of writing.

<sup>23</sup> Open letter from le Comité régional d'Action viticole to Christian Bonnet. July 30, 1975. 19920339/4, AN.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

CRAV blamed both the French government and the European Community for the problems they were facing: ‘L’Administration de la viticulture et de la répression des fraudes étant indispensable à la moralisation du marché viticole, les viticulteurs du Midi ne supportent plus la discrimination qui leur est faite tant que partout en France et dans la C.E.E. les mêmes contrôles ne seront pas mis en place. En cas de contrôle surprise la sirène ou les cloches du village serviront à mobiliser les agriculteurs au travail sur leurs exploitations qui devront à ce signal rentrer immédiatement au village’.<sup>25</sup> They acted by moving as locally as possible – distribution of various pamphlets and posters through cantons, to villages, and directly to caves coopératives. All problems were to be directed toward the official at the lowest level of CRAV – the local representative.

Their interest was clearly regional – ‘vous n’ignorez pas les difficultés de plus en plus grandes de la viticulture de notre région’ – and expressed their disappointment with the last meeting they had had with Prime Minister Jacques Chirac. Without their two requests being granted, ‘LA GARANTIE DE REVENUE par une garantie de prix rémunérateur, et la MAITRISE DES IMPORTATIONS italiennes, véritable concurrence déloyale’, they insisted they had no option but to ‘AGIR et REAGIR, tous ensemble, afin d’obtenir du gouvernement français les mesures nécessaires demandées par le syndicalisme pour compenser la pénalisation que la Communauté fait subir à l’agriculture de notre région’.<sup>26</sup>

Though the level and intensity of violence CRAV introduced was novel and unprecedented, the Midi was no stranger to the French proclivity for striking. The 1970s was even the beginning of what the French socialist historian Stéphane Sirot has called the ‘troisième âge

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<sup>25</sup> ‘CONSIGNES DU COMITE REGIONAL D’ACTION VITICOLE A TOUS LES RESPONSABLES DE VILLAGE.’ 19920339/4, AN.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

de la grève’ – one in which strikes were institutionalised and characterised by both their immediacy and brevity.<sup>27</sup> In February 1970, during the final stages of negotiations for the CWP, vigneron from the three ‘capitales du gros rouge’, Carcassonne, Montpellier, and Perpignan, protested against the special privileged relationship that Algeria was going to have with the Community pertaining the import of their wines when the CWP came into effect. The general feeling of hopeful, if tentative, expectation that the CWP might open up new markets that was prevalent amongst many of the Languedocien vignerons<sup>28</sup> was not shared by CRAV members, then still a small group, even if gaining in number. In May, they protested against the coming into force of the Common Market for wine, set for 15 June 1970. In January 1971, violence broke out anew when viticulteurs very likely associated with CRAV barred the roads of the Midi to protest both against ‘la mévente de leurs produits’<sup>29</sup> and against foreign imports from Algeria and Italy. In February 1971, more than 80,000 viticulteurs in the Languedoc-Roussillon protested against the ‘marasme sur le marché du vin.’<sup>30</sup> In April, they then forcibly barred the roads at the border to imports from Italy and Spain on the grounds they these were part of ‘la concurrence internationale déloyale’<sup>31</sup>.

But while their counterparts in other agricultural or industrial syndicates were able to use their newly entrenched positions to leverage the government into action through demands followed by strikes, the wine industry was less able to effect their desired response even in mobilising in this way. Where the absence of a service provided is not immediately felt, the power is greatly taken out of a strike movement. Sète was as close to achieving the effects of a ‘strike’ as the vignerons could get. While this got them attention, it did not get them the changes they desired, though they helped intensify the atmosphere. They continued therefore

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<sup>27</sup> Stéphane Sirot, *La grève en France* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 134.

<sup>29</sup> *La Journée Vinicole*, March 6, 1976.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

with a combination of violence and demonstrations, which followed the same pattern until 1976. The situation was so alarming at this point that at a secret meeting to discuss the wine situation at the Matignon on December 12, 1975 with President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Minister of Finance Jean-Pierre Fourcade, Bonnet, and Bonnet's secretary of state Jean-François Deniau, it was decided that despite the public embarrassment of the continuing illegal tax, the French government would continue to keep the tax in full effect until the European Court of Justice had actually made a ruling.<sup>32</sup> Both Deniau and Prime Minister Barre were former European Commissioners, so top French leadership could hardly be accused of not knowing how the EEC rules functioned. The crisis in Languedoc-Roussillon was one of the only three points discussed; they were the only region discussed or mentioned at all by name.

The growing salience of CRAV's aims with other vignerons in the Midi during the first few months of 1976 alarmed more moderate vigneron leaders. In concern over the agitated state of affairs, Jean-Baptiste Benet, who was secretary general of FAVF used his position as president of the Comité consultatif viti-vinicole of the EEC to have a meeting with Louis Rabot, the Director-General of Agriculture for the European Community, and his team. Benet followed this February 19 meeting with a proposition to Rabot in the Commission on March 2 about throwing open the scope of negotiations for the common wine market. His major point about guaranteeing revenue to all European producers of wine was underpinned by the qualification that this would be until things 'returned to normal' – but it was an assumption there was such a thing to return to. On March 4, Maffre-Baugé, who was not only president of FAVF but involved with CRAV, sent a telegram to the president of the Council of Ministers of Agriculture, warning him that 'La situation actuelle de crise grave dans les

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<sup>32</sup> 'SECRET: Relève des décisions du Comité Restreint du vendredi 12 Décembre 1975 à 10.30 - Organisation du marché du vin.' December 15, 1975. 19920339/4, AN.

régions viticoles spécialisées exige des mesures d'urgence telle que l'interdiction de commercialisation et de distillation immédiate des vins anormaux, le respect immédiat des prix d'intervention révisés dans le commerce européen'.<sup>33</sup> His message arrived in Brussels during the agricultural marathon to fix prices for agriculture in the 1976 – 1977 farm year, which was largely taken up with trying to find a compromise on wine.<sup>34</sup>

The next day, a tragedy occurred which seriously shifted the mainstream influence of CRAV. Emile Pouytès, viticulteur in Corbières à Arquettes-en-Val, and Joël le Goff, a commander with the national police (that is, the Compagnies républicaines de sécurité or CRS), were killed during a violent mass demonstration led by CRAV in the small town of Montredon-des-Corbières in the department of Aude; 30 others were injured. A writer for LJV solemnly opined that 'Depuis maintenant plusieurs mois, on sentait que la crise viticole ne pouvait s'enliser indéfiniment dans des discussions stériles. Manifestations dans le calme ou la houle, opérations «villes mortes», autant d'avertissements – sans résultats efficaces d'ailleurs. Les viticulteurs du Midi n'arrivent plus à écouler leur vin. C'est pour eux une question de vie ou de mort. Mais ils ne veulent pas mourir pour rien, en subissant une solution suicidaire qui à plus ou moins long terme entraîne leur disparition. Mourir pour pouvoir vivre. C'est le triste bilan des derniers événements de Narbonne.'<sup>35</sup>

Giscard d'Estaing met with Jacques Chirac, who, after his term as Prime Minister had ended, was then the Mayor of Paris, and Minister of the Interior Michel Ponistowski regarding the incident, and the French government's ambivalence towards the situation was captured in Ponistowski's vague statement to the press: 'Le gouvernement, avec fermeté, mais aussi avec justice et modération, entend assurer la sécurité.' The events shocked many fellow

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<sup>33</sup> *La Journée Viticole*, March 4, 1976.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> .

demonstrators, who, even if they still sympathised with the group's ideals, distanced themselves from CRAV (though it should be noted its membership has always been deliberately obfuscated). After all, 'A présent, le Languedoc est en deuil. Un lourd silence succède aux bruits stridents des fusillades. Le sang a coulé. Espérons que ce ne sera pas en vain.'<sup>36</sup> As M. Soulié, a vigneron heavily involved in the demonstrations and politics at the time, said two years after this incident, 'After '76, it was over, with Montredon, and at Montredon...really there was a massing of forces.'<sup>37</sup>

### *The Community, the French National Government, and Midi Vignerons at Odds*

This was a situation in which neither party understood the other. The Community wondered why those in the Midi were behaving the way they were, and especially why the vignerons were not able to understand the changes occurring at the Community level at the time. The bureaucrats had attempted to build policy structures which protected farmers as best they could, over several years of frustrating negotiations. The vignerons could not understand why their national government would expose them to the vagaries of the Community market like this, after leading vignerons to believe they would benefit from increased sales. The vignerons also believed that the Italians were being protected by their national government<sup>38</sup> – and so should the French then be.

The argument advanced by many in the Midi was that the Italians were practicing dumping, and this position was best summarised in a letter Jean-Baptiste Benet, president of the

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 173.

<sup>38</sup> For example, this was the very thing starting an open letter from CRAV to Bonnet on July 30, 1975: 'Tandis que le Ministre Italien de l'agriculture, pour défendre ses ressortissants et son rôle, attaque, tempête, "roule les épaules" et, "a coups de poing sur la table, "jamais je n'accepterai ceci, jamais je n'accepterai cela," vous Ministre français de l'agriculture ne défendez même pas les propositions unanimes des professionnels de la Fédération Nationale des vins de table.'



Confédération Générale des Vignerons du Midi, wrote to Bonnet on August 6, 1975.<sup>39</sup> In this letter, Benet scoffed that the government did not know its facts, as Bonnet had reported a French intake of 300,000 hl of foreign wine, but Benet argued the reality was closer to 500,000 hl by only July 21 (the latter was more likely correct, as the records at Sète alone indicate an intake of 378,000 hl for the total month of July 1975.<sup>40</sup> Other ports, with considerably less traffic than Sète include Nantes, Cherbourg, Rouen, and Dunkerque.) The ‘scandalously elevated’ volume of wine arrived at ‘ridiculously low prices’, some at 6.50 to 7 francs per degree-hectolitre<sup>41</sup>, which was below even the official trigger price of 8.88 francs. (This trigger price, or ‘prix d’intervention’ should ostensibly have set into motion government price protection policies. This protection was automatic for all agricultural markets except for wine. Instead, the trigger price for wine triggered discussions over potential amounts and forms of aid and storage to be given by the Council to affected table wine producers.) He blamed both the négociants and the Italians for the problems and declared that, if respect for the cohesion of the price of wine in the Community was desired, then ‘[ils] doivent eux-mêmes pratiquer des prix conformes aux règles officielles.’ Benet seemed well-versed in Community wine policy, but chose to address national officials, and it was to them that he directed his final plea: ‘Le Gouvernement Français suspendra-t-il les importations, les taxera-t-il d’office? Soutiendra-t-il une plainte de notre profession en Cour de Justice de Luxembourg, pour pratique italienne de dumping en deçà du prix officiel de déclenchement d’intervention?’<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Letter from Jean-Baptiste Benet to Christian Bonnet. August 6, 1975. 19920339/4, AN.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Importations - Sète’. 1259W/78, Archives départementales de l’Hérault.

<sup>41</sup> The unit ‘hectolitre-degree’ or ‘degré-hectolitre’ in the French is the standard unit in prices and taxes on wines. A price is set per hectolitre of pure alcohol of the finished product. It can appear as ‘degré/hl’ and is often shortened to ‘per degree’.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from Jean-Baptiste Benet to Christian Bonnet. August 6, 1975. 19920339/4, AN.

The bureaucracy faced by the French vignerons made it much more difficult for them to be profitable, they argued, as they held to the rather blanket belief that the Italians benefitted from a liberal planting regime and also made poor quality wine that was filled with additives. The French were convinced of the basic truth that, above all else, the French made better wine than others. In the French collective imagination at the time (and indeed, even now), the seldom-examined idea that France made the best wine was taken as fact. This was part of the response of vignerons to the influx of Italian wines: it was not only that this had a negative effect on the French wine industry, but also, that the offending wine was inferior. In other words, the French imagined that the only reason that Italian table wine was being bought over similar grade French wine was because it was much cheaper.

This idea started to face threats to its credibility; there was beginning to be some compelling evidence that, even given the fact that wine drinking was generally on the decline, the French were not producing wine competitive enough to do well on the market in its own right. When, in the middle of the Midi crisis, the news was leaked that the Marine Nationale, the French navy, had made a purchase of 7000 hl of Spanish wine in the fall of 1976, not only Midi vignerons but many segments of the viticultural industry across the country felt betrayed by this most basic of national disloyalties. To them, the French military purchasing any wine that was not French was treacherous. When Bonnet wrote to Minister of Defense Yvon Bourges, clearly exasperated that his colleague did not avail himself of the opportunity to support French viticulture at such a sensitive time, Bourges wrote back a letter on 28 Oct 1976 that was highly classified. In it, he relayed to Bonnet that the wine that was purchased by the navy for consumption on board and also on overseas expeditions needed to ‘présenter une aptitude certaine à la conservation’ (because of the conditions of being at sea and other transport concerns before consumption) and also be reasonably priced. Laboratory testing

commissioned in June by the Ministry of Defense of samples provided by French négociants of French, Spanish, and Moroccan wines revealed that the French samples ‘présentait une médiocre aptitude à la conservation, et ce en dépit d’un prix supérieur de 62% à l’échantillon espagnol retenu dont l’aptitude à la conservation était reconnue satisfaisante.’<sup>43</sup> Bourges was apologetic, and there was good reason to believe he was being sincere. A year ago, he had sent a confidential internal memo to top personnel in his department, including his chiefs of staff of the navy, air force, and army, that continually favouring foreign companies for contracts, ‘même si elle a pour effet d’économiser – dans une optique à court terme mais pas nécessairement à moyen terme – les deniers de la Défense’<sup>44</sup> was depriving them of a chance to help the ailing French economy. It was important, he stated, not to aggravate French trade balance and the subsisting unemployment levels.

The French government was sympathetic to the plight of the Midi vignerons, but less apt at addressing it in a way that satisfied all the demands on them. While specialist and general press alike sounded the siren of the ‘crise du vin’, a parliamentary task force, which received the approval of the French National Assembly on 19 June 1975, was charged with examining economic problems related to wine. During this time, the newspaper *L’Indépendant du Gard* – rather unhelpfully for their fellow vignerons – ran the headline ‘Il n’y aura jamais de crise pour le bon vin’, distancing themselves from their Midi counterparts and well-encapsulating the pervasive idea in the Gironde, the region in which quality-wine producing Bordeaux was found, that the Midi’s contribution to the overproduction of wine was directly a cause of their

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<sup>43</sup> Letter from Yvon Bourges to Christian Bonnet (confidential), 28 October 1976. Côte 19920339. AN.

<sup>44</sup> Internal memo (confidential, very urgent) from Yvon Bourges to top Ministry of Defense staff members. July 22, 1975. 19920339/4, AN.

poor wine,<sup>45</sup> which went unbought. This group was chaired by Mr. Maurice Cornette, the Deputy North of the Union of Democrats for the Republic, and devoted a meeting at the beginning of July to hearing from professionals in the wine industry about the root causes of and possible solutions to the wine crisis at the time. This very important and representative meeting included dozens of members of various departments. It also included key personalities in the wine and spirit industries, such as Hervé Bélédin, president of the CNVS, Paul M. Cremieux, president and CEO of the Société des vins de France, and Mr. Boisset, Director of Purchasing for Nicolas, the pre-eminent chain of French wine shops.

The group's conclusion was that 'the organisation of the European production of wine and the opening of borders, before the harmonisation of product regulations and trade, are largely responsible for the wine crisis in France'. They also blamed the national government, stating that 'under-investment over many years in France in the wine sector has had debilitating results', and believed the solution required that 'all the links in the wine chain' come together to develop a comprehensive diagnosis and policy.<sup>46</sup> This simple suggestion would have been insidiously difficult to implement – the wine industry professionals in France had complicated relationships amongst themselves which prevented a banding together of this nature. Underpinning this was the divide between growers and merchants. Not everywhere was the relationship between growers and merchants one of enmity, but amongst those involved in table wine in the Midi, this was the case, and many a Languedocien vigneron

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<sup>45</sup> Even speaking in passing about another subject, Bordelais vignerons revealed their attitude to wines from their southern counterparts, as this likely inadvertent insult demonstrated: 'Normally appellation wines of good quality, which have escaped the anonymity of lesser wines, like those of Languedoc, normally they should have a good future before them.' From an interview recorded in Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 164.

<sup>46</sup> 'Le redressement du secteur français des vins', *La Journée Vinicole*, July 6 & 7, 1975.

dreamt of the day he could be free of his reliance on the middleman between him and his consumers – the merchant.<sup>47</sup>

The relationship between growers and merchants of wine, the two major families in the wine business, had always been tendentious, which was ‘in the old tradition of their relations.

Since World War II this conflictual relation has continued, but is largely if not exclusively limited to areas of gros rouge and gros blanc. In the Midi especially, growers’ organizations are forces of combat. They view merchants as the enemy, indeed as subversive elements, as the equivalents of a Trojan horse, allowing the enemy, Italian wine, to enter the city.’<sup>48</sup>

Merchants were known as *négociants*, or, in the case of those merchants who were also involved in aspects of the wine-growing process (usually maturation), *négociants-éleveurs*, together made up the *négoce*. This imagery of the Trojan horse was not entirely unwarranted.

Merchants were habitually more interested in the low-cost, low-alcohol ‘gros rouge’ of the Languedoc-Roussillon, which they blended with low-cost, high alcohol Algerian or Italian wines, selling them as superior table wines. They were not particularly interested in encouraging innovation to improve the quality of wines in this area while the products they churned out were still profitable, banking as they did on consistency and decent value for price. Rather unfortunately, before the 1970s, ‘cooperatives for decades did nothing to change this situation, since most of them churned out simple reds.’<sup>49</sup>

The vignerons in the south sought ways to wrest some power from the hands of merchants, and their movement to join and increase the mandate of organised local groups in the 1970s

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<sup>47</sup> Paul Arnaud, a grower from Ste. Cécil in the Côtes-du-Rhône, remarked, ‘...when I was president of the winery, my dream was to expand direct sales [to customers] as much as possible, because otherwise we’re subject to the will of wholesalers...we’re still under the thumb of merchants.’ From an interview recorded in Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 149.

<sup>48</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 190.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

was certainly connected to their desire to cut out the middleman and was greatly intensified by the introduction of the CWP. The pressure of the Languedocian vignerons reacting to the CWP caused this issue to become a top priority for the government – the Prime Minister and Bonnet decided that they would need to ‘recherchera en permanence ‘la moralisation’ du négoce et de l’importation du vin’ and that it seemed essential that ‘d’une manière générale, les négociants seront soumis à une procédure d’agrément’,<sup>50</sup> the idea being that, even if the details of a situation like the one above might be difficult to flesh out, in principal, the négociants should decrease their import volume, which would be another way to aid efforts to decrease imports in general, and possibly increase the consumption of domestic wine.

### *Charting the Rise of Syndicates in the Midi*

One of the major results of the experience of the Common Wine Policy for the Midi was the rise of the regional syndicalism movement. *Syndicats* were the broad term for unions of individuals involved in a particular trade. This movement in the Midi took form in the increase in the number of local and regional groups, of which two major types had existed in the wine industry: syndicates and wine cooperatives (*caves cooperatives*).

Syndicates had the longest history of these groups. Their legality was established by the Waldeck-Rousseau legislation of March 1884, which allowed industrial workers, merchants, and the agricultural sector to form syndicates to defend their interests. Syndicates were primarily known for defending the interests of their members, for example by lobbying politicians, and for disseminating important information on new regulations and directives affecting growers subscribed to them. The syndicate system drove the creation and

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<sup>50</sup> 'SECRET: Relève des décisions du Comité Restreint du vendredi 12 Décembre 1975 à 10.30 - Organisation du marché du vin.' December 15, 1975. 19920339/4, AN.

development of several other closely linked organisations, primarily wine cooperatives, mutuals, and rural banks, as syndicates helped establish the stability of the wine profession.

The first cooperatives appearing in 1902 were largely created by syndicates to buy and sell pooled agricultural goods and produce consistent volume which would have a reliable consistent buyer. Members in cooperatives would mix their grapes together, which a *négociant-éleveur* would expertly blend, bottle, market, and then sell. In the 1970s, the average *vigneron* faced the serious challenge of modernisation, which for them meant purchasing new equipment or upgrading existing ones. Cooperatives allowed many of these farmers to pool together resources in existing organisations in which they trusted and cooperatives as a result became important sites of equipment sharing. *Vignerons*, through this decade in particular, were putting their liquid capital into land purchases, modern equipment, and replanting. The high cost of new farm equipment required to modernise, such as tractors or mechanical presses, meant it was prohibitively expensive for many farmers to buy and maintain this equipment themselves, and by 1975, 45 percent of French wine was made in cooperative cellars. The French government looked encouragingly upon these endeavours and as a result, these cooperatives were practically exempt from government taxes. The interest of various segments of the French government and political elite were sparked by cooperatives not only because they were useful for decentralisation but also because they were seen, for the Left, as sites of socialist experimentation.

There are two major existing interpretations of the rise of syndical movements in France. The agrarian thesis of syndicates, advanced by Pierre Barral, suggests that these syndical movements were part of a general agriculture movement reacting against urbanisation and

industrialisation.<sup>51</sup> He emphasises in particular the myth of the unified rural community and its use in galvanising those in the countryside to unite despite class differences. In contrast, Philippe Gratton emphasised the particular importance of class conflict in rural areas, an analysis missing in the agrarian movement interpretation, and discusses the nature of inequality in the context of rural areas and the idea of the universal opposition to the urban as a deliberate attempt by powerful leaders to prevent the depth of the inequality in the countryside itself from being fully recognised.<sup>52</sup>

A newer interpretation, of which the best proponent is Marc C. Cleary,<sup>53</sup> emphasises the development of the relationship between syndicates and the state: 'If, at their inception, most organisations sought to remain independent from the state, the pace of change in the post Second World War period, and the increasing involvement of the state in agriculture has meant that syndicates have inevitably been drawn inside the apparatus of state intervention and management. What this has meant is that government policy on such issues as land reform, price support, the development of new markets, and installation of young farmers has increasingly been mediated through and implemented by farming groups.'<sup>54</sup> Cleary is right to argue that 'the history of the movement cannot be understood without reference to its broader political and ideological context. Policy towards the rural exodus, on the issue of family farms as against large, capitalist units, on national and European farm policy inevitably involves broader political considerations.'<sup>55</sup> However, Cleary's work has scant analysis of the European dimension.

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<sup>51</sup> Pierre Barral, *Les Agrariens français de Méline à Pisani* (Paris: Presse de la Fondation nationale de sciences politiques, 1968). and Pierre Barral, 'Le département de l'Isère sous la Troisième République, 1870-1940,' *Presse de la Fondation nationale de sciences politiques*, no. 115 (1962).

<sup>52</sup> See both Phillipe Gratton, *Les Luites de classe dans les campagnes, Paris, 1971* (Paris: Anthropos, 1971). and *Les Paysans français contre l'agrarisme*.

<sup>53</sup> Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers*.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*



While wine cooperatives and syndicates have had a longer history of sizeable influence in the Midi, a new group that came to prominence in the 1970s under Community pressure was the interprofessional group, which was aimed at creating links between members at all stages of production, processing, marketing, and distribution, and were given significant support by the French government through the enshrining of the principles of interprofessions in the 10 July 1975 Law of Interprofessions, in the thick of the feverish debates and negotiations over the wine crisis and the illegal French tax on incoming Italian wines. Interprofessional groups exercised a kind of disciplinary control over their members, and more often had quality requirements. This greater emphasis on quality and restriction seemed to have been picked up as a way forward – a major article in LJV announced that the issue of the coming years was quality and that the way to achieve this was via interprofessional groups: ‘There is no doubt that the only way not to find ourselves in the current situation again is to develop interprofessional measures which engage in certain disciplined methods to return to more normal quantities and assured quality.’

Before the creation of ONIVIT in 1976, the major organisations operating in the Midi were local and mostly represented growers. There was the FVTP, of which Maffre-Baugé was famously president for several years, and the Confédération Générale des Vignerons du Midi (CGVM), whose birth on September 22, 1907 was an outcome of the massive protests against serious price drops of 1906-1907 as a result of overproduction. The producers believed this situation had come about as a result of fraudulent methods in vinification, such as adding sugar or using dried grapes to make wine. The creation of CGVM, and the conditions under which it happened, set the tone for the kind of fiercely independent and militant-leaning groups which would soon characterise the Midi agricultural scene. CGVM wished to

represent all wine growers in the Languedoc area but a challenge to their dominance came in the interwar period, when wine cooperatives began to organise on a departmental level. The CGVM was the lead organisation during the wine crises of the early 1950s, but its behaviour during this time prompted cooperatives from 1953 onwards to set themselves apart, as they criticized the CGVM for being neither aggressive nor firm enough in its demands, and for favouring large producers.<sup>56</sup>

One particularly strong national organisation that had a markedly unimportant position in the Midi was the *Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants d'Agricoles* (FNSEA), whose aspiration was to be the only 'voix des paysans et réunir sur sa tête représentativité, légitimité, et unité' and the organisation, solidifying power through the 1950s and 1960s would 'finir par s'imposer comme représentant officiel de la profession.'<sup>57</sup> But a region that would defy the power of the FNSEA and the trend of its subsuming other local and regional syndical groups was Languedoc-Roussillon, whose wine growers continued apace with creating and expanding the influence of their organisations, operating mostly independently from national agricultural syndicalism.<sup>58</sup> CGVM joined the FNSEA in 1946, but this was really only in name.

For example, both the *Confédération nationales des caves particulières* (CNCP, since 2003 the *Vignerons Indépendants de France*) and *Confédération nationale des coopératives vinicoles* (CNCV, since 1989 the *Confédération des coopératives vinicoles de France*) were created by those in the Midi. CNCP was created in 1978, and CNCV made major changes to respond to the dual pressure of Brussels and modernisation by protecting its members against

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<sup>56</sup> Martin, 'Wine Growers' Syndicalism in the Languedoc: Continuity and Change,' 333.

<sup>57</sup> Ronald Hubscher and Yves Rinaudo, 'France: L'unité en péril,' in *Les syndicats agricoles en Europe*, ed. Bertrand Hervieu and Rose-Marie Lagrave (Paris: Harmattan, 1992), 100.

<sup>58</sup> Martin, 'Wine Growers' Syndicalism in the Languedoc: Continuity and Change.'

market fluctuations and helping with vinification. The first cooperative winery, *Les Vignerons Libres*, which was founded in 1905 in Mauraussan, a commune in Hérault, underwent several operations and expansions in the 1970s in response to the increased wine production of other southern European countries and the grubbing up policies of the CAP. Despite their efforts to respond to these pressures by attempting to improve their production capacity, such as by introducing electronic weighing systems and holding vinification workshops, this was insufficient to deal with the changes of exposure to the currents of free Community trade and new policies.

Les Vignerons Libres responded by looking towards more successful neighbours. The *Centre d'Expansion et de Promotion des Vins du Haut Biterrois* (CEPRO), centred in a larger close-by town, Beziers, was itself founded in 1973 through the union of two local caves cooperatives. Their ability to reach official status as a ‘groupement des producteurs’ on July 5, 1976, signaled to less successful groups that, despite the reluctance the two local groups may have had at giving up their independence, there was strength in numbers. ‘Groupements des producteurs’ were groups whose members provided the same product under a joint organisational structure, and who received priority in government aid and other benefits, in return for controlling their collective production level and preferably operating with set targets and quotas in mind. Between 1977 and 1979, six new cooperatives joined CEPRO, including Les Vignerons Libres, losing its proud marker as the first French wine cooperative in folding into the larger local organisation.

Through the second half of 1975, French vignerons decided to wait on Ministry of Agriculture representatives to come up with a solution to their problems. While the government appeared slow to come up with a solution, different local groups reacted by

trying to strengthen their own local and regional organisations. At the pivotal third congress of CNCV, one of the most important national viticultural groups which brought together roughly 870 French caves coopératives, the organisation chose to focus on ‘le rôle de la coopération dans la défense de la viticulture face à la crise et à son avenir.’<sup>59</sup> At this year’s meeting, they also had, for the first time, two commissions instead of one; they split into a group for table wine and a group for VQPRD (vins de qualité produits dans des régions déterminées) because, as they delicately stated, ‘cette innovation était indispensable tant les domaines administratifs sont différents pour ces deux types de vins’.<sup>60</sup> The VQPRD commission unequivocally decided not to pursue the establishment of a national wine office for quality wines, while the meeting ‘pour le moins animé pour ne pas dire passionné’<sup>61</sup> of the table wine commission decided that the answer to the major problem facing them – ‘le règlement communautaire et...les problèmes de potentialité’<sup>62</sup> – was the creation of a national office of wine. The basis of this office was in fact a proposal from within the Languedoc-Roussillon, more specifically the Fédération audoise.<sup>63</sup> In the proposal, the Fédération audoise argued that the way the CWP had been structured resulted in surfeits of production because of its liberalism which favoured production over quality. Their solution was the creation of a national wine office that guaranteed a level of income to French wine producers and controlled wine imports. So it was directly in response to the CWP that the project of a national office was addressed. By the first few months of 1976, major viticultural groups had solidified their demands and come to the almost universal agreement that the two major things they wanted from Paris was first, the banning of Italian imports for a certain time, and second, the national guarantee of income for vignerons.

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<sup>59</sup> 'Le 3ième Congrès de la CNVS,' *La Journée Vinicole*, July 3, 1975.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> 'Lu ici ou là: Une office des vins?,' *La Journée Vinicole*, July 3, 1975.

### *The Creation of a National Office for Wine*

On April 7, 1976, the decree for the establishment of a national wine office was passed by the Assemblée Générale and the Office national interprofessionnel des vins de table (ONIVIT) was created. ONIVIT replaced the Institut des vins de consommation courante (IVCC) which had been founded in 1954 with a more technical mandate to form a vineyard registry, and to research and disseminate information on wine production and on a more limited level, marketing. ONIVIT replaced the loosely structured IVCC and was a public establishment with industrial and commercial purview with legal and financial autonomy. ONIVIT went beyond the powers of IVCC, particularly with storage aid for table wine and the issuing of import licenses for wines from third countries – it also had the power to investigate and settle requests for assistance, particularly in the conversion of vineyards. It was a marked and decided turn to both intervention and devolving power from the traditional site for these types of policy decisions, which would normally have been handled by the Ministry of Agriculture. ONIVIT was created directly in response to the European Community wine regulations, and had in its purview the responsibility of largely handling European Community wine regulations and their implementation in France.

In a secret Matignon meeting shortly before Christmas 1975, Bonnet, Fourcade, and Giscard d'Estaing had agreed that a new national wine office, which should be named ONIVIT 'pour des raisons psychologiques'<sup>64</sup> ('table wine' sounded marginally better than 'wine for current consumption', and 'national office' sounded grander than 'institute'), should serve the purpose of making 'interventions sur le marché prévues par la réglementation en vigueur (qu'il s'agisse de la réglementation actuelle ou de celle qui résultera des négociations

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<sup>64</sup> 'SECRET: Relève des décisions du Comité Restreint du vendredi 12 Décembre 1975 à 10.30 - Organisation du marché du vin.' December 15, 1975. 19920339/4, AN.

communautaires)'. Though they specified that they should do this with strict compliance with the limits and conditions set by the latter, it was clear that the national government expected to hand over a great deal of the responsibility of decision-making in this complicated and controversial area to others.

Speed was of the essence: the French government scrambled to come up with a strong response in the face of the previous month's 'fusillade' at which a police officer and a vigneron from Montredon had been killed. The representative group gathered to run ONIVIT was created amidst some controversy, as the balance of growers against merchants was a topic of considerable negotiation. This historically sore point was exacerbated by the existing tensions faced by the new organisation, as high hopes were placed by table wine producers on this organisation to satisfy their two major common demands. The producer–merchant divide made negotiations difficult – on July 1, 1976, for example, an ONIVIT in its infancy faced the storming out of the growers, led by Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé and Jean-Baptiste Benet, acting respectively as the president and secretary general of the FVTP. In perhaps a rash move, both announced their resignations from FVTP in anger over what they now believed ONIVIT to be: a 'miroir aux alouettes qui sert d'une part à les berner, d'autre part à s'appliquer les décisions communautaires', a smokescreen that indeed they began to perceive the merchants and Parisian bureaucrats were in on creating. Leading viticulteurs out with the war cry of 'C'est la loi de la jungle communautaire!', Maffré-Baugé later explained that 'nous ne cautionnons pas l'absence de politique viticole, c'est ce qui explique notre départ de l'Office'.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> 'L'Office du vin continue...mais les viticulteurs ont quitté la séance' *La Journée Vinicole*, July 1, 1976.

This disenchantment over a national office in which such high hopes had been placed might have lifted in due course to allow the Office to begin working again after some negotiating and after tempers had cooled. However, a major public dispute was also responsible for the way in which growers continued to spurn full engagement with this national project, which had been created under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and with great involvement of the Minister of Agriculture Christian Bonnet and even indeed Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's personal oversight. A few days before Christmas of 1976, Bonnet, in an interview with Sud Radio regarding the increasing dire wine situation, declared that the problem was that the Midi produced a great deal of 'bibine' (a colloquial word used to describe table wine of poor quality, roughly akin to 'dishwater' in English). He said that the real solution for this overproduction of bibine was 'qu'ils crèvent!'. This was perhaps a slip of the tongue – but it was the first public proclamation of the kind of frustration that Bonnet had been feeling for a while. The situation had become untenable – how much longer could Bonnet's office manage to keep the chariot intact when two of its horses were trying to move in different directions? The French commitment to the Community project was publically under strain and scrutiny with the affair of the blockade at Sète and the consequent illegal tax they had placed. But there was no ignoring the crescendo of complaints from their citizenry.

### *Letters to the Ministry of Agriculture*

The furious roars of disapproval began immediately, intensifying an already difficult situation. Bonnet received a flood of letters, many from heads of cooperatives and syndicates, and from individual vignerons themselves, running the gamut from angry to rude to downright vitriolic, with an occasional quiet supportive letter for his 'courage' in voicing his

opinion. This occasion opened up an important space in which a great variety of French public and private citizens expressed their views and opinions.

For some, Bonnet had become the Grinch of Christmas. The mayor of Narbonne, an important viticultural township in the Midi, wrote to say ‘A la veille de Noël, pendant que les hommes de bonne volonté cherchaient à se comprendre et à s’estimer, j’apprenais qu’un Ministre déclarait à propos de certains viticulteurs: “si ces gens-là doivent “crever, qu’ils crèvent!” .... ils sont scandaleux si vous aviez ‘a l’esprit la production de la plaine narbonnaise et biterroise, qui n’est pas “l’affreuse bibine” dont vous auriez parlé....Lorsqu’on est Ministre de l’Agriculture, il est inadmissible que certains problèmes viticoles aux raissonances lourdes de conséquences, notamment ceux de la vaste plaine narbonnaise chargée d’histoire, puissent être évoqués avec une telle désinvolture.’<sup>66</sup>

Likewise, in response to Bonnet’s saying it had simply been a bad choice of words, which were now being taken out of context, someone wrote in to say ‘[si un] Ministre ne peut plus maitriser ses nerfs’,<sup>67</sup> he had to go.

A particularly revealing letter<sup>68</sup> was sent from President A. Crouzet of the Association de Propagande pour le vin, who was also Vice-President of the Conseil Régional of Languedoc-Roussillon. He wrote to Bonnet, on behalf of ‘les Maires, les Conseillers Généraux, les Professionnels’ to express their collective ‘stupéfaction’ in the face of the Sud Radio interview. Crouzet’s letter played on the historical animosity the Midi vigneron felt against Paris, as he insisted that Paris was unfairly targeting only those in the region with their push for the grubbing up of vines: ‘C’est là que réside votre erreur! Nos vins sont tous naturels car

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<sup>66</sup> Letter from Hubert Mouly to Chrisian Bonnet. December 27, 1976. 19920339/5, AN.

<sup>67</sup> Letter from an accountant based in Paris (illegible signature) to Bonnet. December 28, 1976. 19920339/5, AN.

<sup>68</sup> Letter from A. Crouzet to Bonnet. December 28, 1976. 19920339/5, AN.



nous n'avons pas le droit de chaptaliser. Notre région est incontestablement à vocation viticole. Et c'est à elle, une fois de plus, que vous voulez réserver vos coups! C'est elle qui doit supporter les arrachages que vous jugez indispensables, alors qu'il faudrait arracher d'abord en France, les cépages prohibés qui existent toujours.<sup>69</sup> He insisted that there were vines across France that 'pissent le vin, un vin qui ne mérite même pas son nom' but that Bonnet, like those Parisian bureaucrats before him in the same position of power, had targeted only the Midi: 'L'expérience a été tentée; relisez notre histoire viticole depuis 1953, que vos services vous énumèrent les expériences abandonnées.... Dans tous nos villages les essais ont eu lieu, ils ont été lamentables'.<sup>70</sup>

Crouzet demonstrated his belief in the legitimacy of monoculturalism by insisting that the region's unique combination of soil and sun could often not produce anything but vines, and, he pressed on, good wine. Above all, it was a heritage that lived in those that worked the vines that gave them both the right to derive their livelihood solely from grape-growing or wine producing, and the right to demand the support of the government in times of difficulty: he argued it was 'le rôle d'un gouvernement... [de] sauver ceux qui travaillent dans les vignes et qui ne vivent que de ce travail.' After all, 'le viticulteur est attaché à son vignoble, le vigneron est amoureux de son vin.'<sup>71</sup>

Crouzet blamed, as many others did, 'speculative international capital flows' for the problems – some variant of this phrase was used to pepper many of the letters to Bonnet, and in various newspapers at the time, including *Le Midi Libre* and *La Journée Vinicole*. Crouzet had insisted elsewhere that 'le "bibine" que n'aime pas M. BONNET est achetée à bas prix par le commerce spéculatif pour des coupages économiques avec les vins italiens de haut degré

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

meilleur marché. Le bon vin, y compris souvent les V.D.Q.S., restent dans nos caves et, en fin de campagne, quand la crise est insoluble sont distillés en catastrophe.’<sup>72</sup> He insisted that a national wine office with an expanded mandate could change the situation by defending a policy of quality and reining in imports. But the idea of ‘speculation’ was often dropped in like an exciting buzzword and far less often did its users explain how these flows were actually affecting their market. It did make sense, however, for counterparts who produced quality wine who were exposed to external markets. For example, those in Bordeaux, who exported a significant share of France’s quality wine at the time, produced at the time approximately 8% of the total wine in France, but about a third of its AOC wines. Of the wine they produced, approximately 30% was exported out of France, including to within the European Community, and principally to the United States and Germany. At the end of 1972 and into the beginning of 1973, the prices of quality Bordeaux wines underwent a sudden speculative rise, some of them quadrupling within a four week period – then, in the middle of 1973, there was a sudden drop, causing the prices to crash. Bordelais wine leaders publically declared themselves and their wines as ‘the victims of external, international speculation which nowadays can occur via extremely powerful means and in a very brutal fashion.’ But speculation did not occur on table wines. Referring, however, to speculation in the agitated 1970s atmosphere where such a term was charged with tension was a useful way to pull in more listeners who might be snagged by such a term.

Crouzet’s damning reproach at the end of his letter reads, highlighting the expectation on behalf of vignerons that the government act, the sense of Paris being against the Midi, and ultimately, the answer in the form of a national office of wine:

Ne détruisez pas cette richesse [de vignes de Midi], protégez-la. C’est le rôle d’un gouvernement qui connaît l’économie de son pays et qui refuse de se laisser guider par les

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<sup>72</sup> Letter from Association de Propagande Pour le Vin to Bonnet. December 24, 1976. 19920339/5, AN.

intérêts spéculatifs de ceux qui veulent nous réduire à ne rester qu'un réservoir de matière première, c'est-à-dire à demeurer écrasé, non pas par la mauvaise qualité qu'il produit, mais par les mauvais vins qui sont produits un peu partout, et encore plus en dehors de notre région que vous connaissez mal et que vous conduisez inexorablement au désespoir et à la ruine. A plusieurs reprises, nous vous avons alertés. Sans réponse de votre part. Puissiez-vous comprendre et doter notre pays d'un office des vins capable de jouer son véritable rôle et de sauver ceux qui travaillent dans les vignes et qui ne vivent que de ce travail.

He insisted that a true national wine office, given real powers, could change the situation by defending a policy of quality and reining in imports.

There were a few voices in support of what was perceived as Bonnet's stance against the poor Midi table wines, but they were far fewer, mostly from outside the Midi, and from private citizens. For instance, a health inspector from Brittany wrote to tell Bonnet that he fully supported him as he thought 'ces industriels de la "bibine" [sont des] producteurs sans scrupules de ce "gros rouge" qui est le vrai poison utilisé si largement par les toxicomanes de notre région'.<sup>73</sup> A letter to the editor in *France-Soir*, describing 'bibine' as French wine that is not even wanted by foreigners, announced 'Noël aura été marque cette année par un événement important: un homme politique, et qui plus est, un ministre, a osé tenir un langage antidémagogique, conforme aux intérêts de la nation...Oui, Monsieur le ministre, vous avez raison'.<sup>74</sup>

Likewise, M. Lévêque, describing himself as a long-time wine consumer from L'Etang-la-Ville in the north of France, congratulated Bonnet on his choice of words, saying that for too long, viticulteurs had tried to make their fellow Frenchmen drink 'mauvaise piquette' that none among them 'n'oserait mettre sur sa table'.<sup>75</sup> Aptly expressing the turn in the attitude of many French wine drinkers, Lévêque explains that he 'bois encore du vins de temps à autre, mais seulement du vin de qualité, dont le prix malheureusement ne me permet pas d'en faire

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<sup>73</sup> Letter from Dr. J. Lejards to Bonnet. December 29, 1976. 19920339/5, AN.

<sup>74</sup> 'Nos lecteurs ont la parole: Maxime Conter, Montrouge, Hauts-de-Seine,' *France-Soir*, January 4, 1977.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from M. Lévêque to Bonnet. December 27, 1976. 19920339/5, AN.

un usage journalier'.<sup>76</sup> In the interwar period, he had travelled across France, drinking wines in Alsace, Bourgogne, Savoies, Beaujolais, and Vaucluse, each of which had wine expressing the character of the area; on the other hand, he thought the viticulteurs of the Midi with both their overproduction of 'détestable' wines has made it so that 'le français n'aime plus le vin, et...l'Etranger ne croit plus aux bons crus de France. Il est temps de réagir'.<sup>77</sup>

Jean Mendras from *Le Figaro*, a Languedocien himself, wrote to Bonnet's brother-in-law to say that 'Ce trafic du vin, ces coupages, ce gel, cette alchimie pratiquée tant dans mon midi natal...est un véritable scandale connu et su de tous, mais personne n'a pris de mesures impopulaires'.<sup>78</sup> Even more uncharacteristically for someone of the region, he insinuated the worst wine in the area was inferior even to similar grades of wine in other countries: 'A l'heure de l'Europe est-il impossible que le gros rouge qui tache soit moins bon en France qu'en Italie ou en Espagne? Oui, qu'ils crèvent les démagogues qui, le coeur sur la main, prennent la défense de la viticulteur en général, sans faire le départ dans cette grande famille de ceux qui méritent aide et encouragements, et ceux que l'on devrait laisser tomber une fois pour toutes.'<sup>79</sup>

The suspicions many in the Midi had had of Paris not truly having the interests of table wine producers at heart seemed to them now to be highlighted in undeniable clarity. French politicians in the opposition too, like Socialist Abel Sempé in the Senate, seized on this moment to declare, 'Nous avons l'impression, monsieur le ministre...je vous le dis franchement, que le gouvernement n'aime pas les vignerons. Or, dans des départements

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Letter from Jean Mendras to Christian Bonnet. January 19, 1977. 19920339/5, AN.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

comme ceux dont vous entendiez parler tout à l'heure, il n'est pas possible de produire autre chose que du vin.<sup>80</sup>

Antoine Verdale, the president of the Fédération de caves coopératives de l'Aude, was one of the earliest leaders to see the full extent of the shift in policymaking power as it pertained to vignerons' concerns: 'A l'analyse, il apparait donc que la solution de nos problèmes ne dépendent plus du plan national mais bien du plan communautaire. Ainsi donc, alors que nous demandons des dispositions nationales pour corriger «les imperfections libérales» de la réglementation communautaire, le gouvernement français nous renvoie à Bruxelles.'<sup>81</sup> The solution proposed by the Fédération, voiced by the secretary general Denis Phalippou, was to continue the regional awakening underway: '«La question régionale se pose avec acuité. Entre le discours parisien et les réalités locales, jamais le fossé n'a été aussi profond...C'est toujours cette organisation technocratique de la société moderne qui éloigne des centres de décision ces viticulteurs qui vivent les réalités quotidiennes.» Vivre au pays, c'est-à-dire, pour un viticulteur, vivre des revenus de sa vigne, tel est l'objectif que se propose la Fédération audoise.'<sup>82</sup>

Vignerons were interested in developing a national office of wine because they hoped to be able to take over the reins of policymaking, and at the least, have more influence over their fate by being a part of or more exposed to the policy-making process. This had meant getting a more direct line to Paris. When growers returned to ONIVIT in the beginning of 1977, the attitude, at least at the moment of re-entry, was now that ONIVIT, for all its problems, was still the best national platform for them to use, though it needed much extensive reform in their view. But it now needed to serve them as a better conduit both to Paris and to Brussels,

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<sup>80</sup> 'Au Sénat,' *La Journée Vinicole*, May 18, 1976.

<sup>81</sup> 'A la Fédération des caves coopératives de l'Aude' *La Journée Vinicole*, May 26, 1976.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

for the exposure they had, however unevenly, to the complex terrain of policymaking in the era of a wine policy that operated under the Community, forced them to realise that Paris was now the wrong site for some of the changes they desired to make.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter presents the reactions, opinions, and thoughts of those in the Languedoc-Roussillon to the Common Wine Policy from the first juncture that they truly took notice of the policy in 1975, due almost exclusively to the build-up, course of, and fall-out from the Franco-Italian wine crisis, to the breakdown of their relationship with Paris in December 1976.

Paris was not unaware of the seriousness of the dilemma and in many ways, this was a case study of how long a government could allow an untenable situation to continue. What these French local, regional, and national groups were asking for was impossible in the context of Community regulations – the French government could not hope to suspend Italian imports for a long period of time. How did the French government behave when their citizens demanded of them actions that were decidedly not permissible under the Community? Where did their loyalties lie?

The French had invested time and energy into this new European project which in many ways, at the time, they were the veritable leaders of. While the French government may at times have overstepped the line with temporary, and in some ways, showy measures, like the illegal tax it placed on Italian wines, its tacit support of the physical blockade at Sète, or Bonnet declaring that he would not allow the Brussels meetings to end without a happy result

for the French vignerons, the government drew the line at making any official or formal steps like those asked for by major, powerful organisations like CNCV, FVTP, or ONIVIT. In fact, the creation of the CWP was largely the work of France and Italy, and the French arguably used the CWP and its Brussels origins as a way to deflect some of the blame they knew would likely come around when table wine sales continued to fall. In a letter on 31 December 1976, made in reply to the one sent by Président Crouzet, Bonnet claimed that ‘les Pouvoirs Publics étaient décidés à mettre fin à la situation inadmissible que nous avons connue [*sic*] ces dernières années. Vous savez en effet très bien, comme moi, qu’il était plus intéressant, sous l’empire de l’ancien règlement communautaire 816, de faire 200 HL à l’hectare et de conduire à une distillation à 8,66 ou 8,78 un liquide qui méritait à peine le nom de vin, que de s’attacher, avec amour, comme le font les viticulteurs de tradition, à produire de la qualité avec des rendements très inférieurs’.<sup>83</sup> The Minister of Agriculture’s statement during the radio interview in December 1976 came at the time when vignerons had been waiting in agitation for serious responses to the wine crisis from their national leaders. The complaints over the slow pace or ineffectiveness of particular measures were genuine, but not nearly as serious in the end as feeling that the French government might not in fact be truly willing to help their plight. Their growing suspicion of this was, to them, confirmed by Bonnet’s words, and the result was an eruption of anger across the Midi which introduced a rift between the French national government and the Midi vignerons. The consequences of this rift, and in particular the major alteration of tactics it produced on the part of the vignerons, will be at the heart of the next chapter’s analysis.

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<sup>83</sup> Letter from Bonnet to A. Crouzet. December 31, 1976. 19920339/5, AN.

## Chapter Four

### Table Wine and Riots in Languedoc-Roussillon, Part II:

The response of vignerons in Languedoc-Roussillon to the Common Wine Policy, 1977–1980

La vigne, ce n'est pas une richesse, c'est la compagne de tous les jours, avec ses humeurs, ses opulences et ses dépouillements. La vigne lourde de végétation des basses terres, ou celle ciselée de nos coteaux, comporte sa mystique comme le vin comporte son incantation. Ils sont mystère et transcendance. Folie de tous ces Parisiens technocrates de croire que la vigne pourrait être partiellement arrachée du Midi, comme si l'ensemble de corps ne mourrait pas si l'on en arrachait la peau.

- *Vendanges amères*, Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé

Il y a une civilisation du vin. C'est celle où les hommes veulent se connaître afin de ne pas se combattre.

- Gabriel Delaunay, member of the French Resistance and writer

This chapter looks at the period 1977–1980, and the reactions of vignerons in the Languedoc-Roussillon to the Common Wine Policy, which took place in a tense atmosphere characterised by a breakdown in the relationship between Languedoc-Roussillon and Paris. The Languedoc-Roussillon reaction during this time notably involved wine-growers grouping



together at the local and regional level, and becoming more aware of policy negotiations and lobbying at the Brussels level. The disappointment felt by the vignerons in the new national office of wine caused a proliferation of alternative organisations to be either created or enhanced in terms of power and visibility. This was aided by the European Community's interest both in regionalism in general (a 'Europe of regions' movement was underway), and in encouraging and legitimising the grouping together of vignerons into 'groupements de producteurs' who were then given preferential aid over individual vignerons.

This period marked the beginning of a change in the general attitude of the vignerons to the European Community. The general tone of Midi vignerons towards the European Community from the start of 1977 moved from a frequent and often aggressive refrain of suggesting France leave the Community, to accepting, if in some cases grudgingly, that the Common Agricultural Policy was a permanent venture, and accordingly learning how to cope with it. Henri Albert, a regular columnist for *La Journée Vinicole*, writing in February 1977, marked this new phase by pronouncing 'Encore ne peut-on oublier que l'Europe existe, qu'on le veuille ou non, avec ses mécomptes, sans doute, et ce n'est pas dans ces colonnes qu'il y faut insister, mais aussi avec ses avantages. La libre circulation de marchandise deviendra de plus en plus une réalité, et nul ne peut l'ignorer'.<sup>1</sup>

This was reflected in the themes that dominated major wine conferences that year. The main theme of the *Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles* (FNSEA), the most important and powerful general collective farm lobby in France, was 'le malaise communautaire'. The key report was delivered by the Secretary General of the Central Paysanne, M. François Guillaume, who was also a member of ONIVIT. His speech focused

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<sup>1</sup> 'Henri Albert,' *La Journée Vinicole*, February 12, 1977.

on the Common Wine Policy, in which he stated he believed the moment had come for the Common Market to find ‘un deuxième souffle’.<sup>2</sup> He conceded that there was good progress with Green Europe, and with the expansion of provisions for stable prices for consumers, but problems continued to plague the Community: ‘la tourmente monétaire, l’absence de politique d’exportation, le problème des excédents, le régime d’exception dont bénéficie la Grande-Bretagne et enfin la perspective d’élargissement vers le bassin méditerranéen ont grippé cette mécanique communautaire qui était ambitieuse et complexe’.<sup>3</sup> They were tired of waiting on the French government, because with them their ‘espoirs sont toujours déçus’.<sup>4</sup> While disappointed with the recent failure of the European negotiations to fix agriculture prices for the 1977–1978 season, they held to an ‘attente attentive’<sup>5</sup> with Brussels. The FNSEA conference was also ‘la première sortie officielle’ of the new Minister of Agriculture, Pierre Méhaignerie, Bonnet’s replacement and someone who had long worked for Bonnet’s office.

Under Méhaignerie, in an effort to address the issue of essential agricultural restructuring, the Ministry of Agriculture’s organisation Association nationale pour le développement de l’aménagement foncier agricole et rural (ANDAFAR), which had been created in 1972, released in April 1977 an instructive brochure regarding vineyard restructuring. The brochure, along with the general issue of restructuring, was raised at a round table debate convened by the chef de service of the Institute National des Appellation d’Origine (INAO), Marcel Lugan. He invited the ‘principaux intéressés dans cette affaire’, M. Murret-Labarthe, the director of ONIVIT, Yves Bentegeac, the commissioner for the restructuring of Languedocien vineyards, and Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé, the president of the regional

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<sup>2</sup> ‘L’agriculture française dans l’impasse,’ *La Journée Vinicole*, April 5, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> ‘L’agriculture française dans l’impasse.’

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

chamber of agriculture and also the widely acknowledged 'porte-parole des viticulteurs du Midi', all well-known figures from the Languedoc. All there agreed that restructuring was in principle an excellent idea – however, the question remained whether this was to be 'volontariste ou dirigiste.'<sup>6</sup> They complained too that administratively, the wine policy was already heavily-layered and complicated, and that this could add another difficult burden for discontented wine growers.<sup>7</sup> Maffre-Baugé insisted that the most difficult issue was the human factor because it was not possible to establish a complete separation 'du mode de vie et du revenu des viticulteurs.'<sup>8</sup> As he explained,

La restructuration, on en parle beaucoup, mais elle s'asphyxie et se perd dans les dédales des procédures administratives. En 1973, M. Chirac avait lancé une première action portant sur 2000 hectares contrôlés par an, en précisant que les choses iraient vite. On en est encore aux balbutiements. Quant aux modalités de ré-encépagement elles n'ont cessé de varier et de se contredire. On a recommandé successivement plusieurs cépages sans voir leur évolution sur les divers terroirs. Aussi les viticulteurs sont-ils complètement découragés.<sup>9</sup>

Wine-growers might indeed have been completely discouraged with their national government, as Maffre-Baugé suggested, and they quickly turned to discussions with those they had formerly maligned in an effort to resolve the difficult situation of their decreasing revenues. A delegation of Italian wine cooperatives met with the representatives of the *Confédération nationale de la coopération françaises* (CNCV) on March 9, 1977. The goal of the meeting was an examination of the viti-vinicultural situation in the common market, and to confront the different points of view on the propositions presented by both sides. The previous round table between the two groups had been over a year ago. They ultimately did not see eye to eye on the issue of Italian wine imports into France, which the French claimed were unfair competition. As one report on the conference acknowledged 'Rien ne semble avoir beaucoup changé sous cet angle. Les Italiens se retranchent derrière le sacro-saint traité

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<sup>6</sup> 'La restructuration du vignoble,' *La Journée Vinicole*, April 7, 1977.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> 'La restructuration du vignoble.'

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

de Rome et le libre échange; les Français parlent de concurrence déloyale...un dialogue de sourds.<sup>10</sup> However, they very firmly declared their solidarity and joint commitment to preventing the entry of Greece, Spain, and Portugal from disturbing the already fragile Community wine market.

Both delegations shared their mutual concerns about the entry of the Mediterranean countries. Not wanting these new additions to disturb the wine market, they instead suggested their policymakers consider the bulk of the Franco-Italian wine legislation together, in the hopes that better understanding it would prepare them for these entries: 'A cet effet, elles ont été d'accord pour désigner une commission commune.'<sup>11</sup> They were not in agreement when it came to free circulation and 'formulations commune.' The Italian delegation reaffirmed their belief in the principle of free circulation of goods in the Community, but acknowledged again that one of the causes of the disturbance of the agricultural markets and the limits of circulation were in effect the monetary disparity existing between the two countries. They once again argued that 'tout accord de groupes sociaux tendant à limiter la circulation des produits agricoles est une violation des règles communautaires.'<sup>12</sup> The French response was that a liberal 'réglementation communautaire' in wine was an existing menace to French viticulture and that moreover the monetary disturbances and the economic and social disparities of the two countries had contributed to the situation: 'La délégation française demande en conséquence une révision fondamentale des textes communautaires, dans leur esprit et dans leur forme, dans une optique résolument dirigiste, afin d'aboutir à une véritable organisation du marché et à l'assainissement et à la réglementation de la production.'<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 'La coopération vinicole,' *La Journée Vinicole*, March 17, 1977.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

At the same time, the disappointment of vignerons in both the state and the new state-sponsored apparatus ONIVIT spilled over in this tense atmosphere of disillusionment and breakdown in the relationship with Paris. In mid-March 1977, the producers walked out of ONIVIT again, rendering it once more incapable of meeting its aim of bringing together representatives from different strata of the wine industry to come to joint agreement on wine policies. Instead, the producers ‘on décidé à nouveau de s’abstenir de siéger à l’Office [du vin] tant que des mesures concrètes ne seront pas prises pour assainir le marché’<sup>14</sup>, and expressed a desire to cut ties with both ONIVIT and the Ministry of Agriculture in a letter they sent to the Ministry of Agriculture explaining why they had temporarily left the office over the complicity of both in the ‘situation en péril avec de plus une recrudescence inquiétante d’importations de vins italiens.’<sup>15</sup> In response, Director Murret-Labarthe angrily replied, ‘Je n’interprète absolument pas que les gens viennent ou ne viennent pas à l’Office....Je ne juge pas les raisons pour lesquelles les viticulteurs sont venus ou ne sont pas venus....Je constate toutefois une antimonie : ils prétendent ne rien reprocher à l’Office, et c’est à l’Office qu’ils ne viennent pas.’<sup>16</sup>

This shift in attitude towards the Community in 1977 coupled with the increasing distance with Paris on the part of Midi vignerons was well-timed, for in 1978 the Community would undergo a serious re-examination of the CWP, which resulted in a major revision of the policy and introduced strict measures on planting, production, and grubbing up of vines, in an effort to reduce the overall vineyards in the Community, reduce the amount of table wine produced, and increase the quality of table wine overall. The vignerons in the Midi were

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Les représentants de la viticulture expliquent leur décision de ne plus siéger temporairement à l’ONIVIT,’ *La Journée Vinicole*, March 26, 1977.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

better prepared to follow and try to influence these negotiations over regulation 816/70, the fundamental text underpinning the Community's wine policy, than they had been with earlier stages of the CWP's development.

The plan, enacted at the beginning of 1977 by the Council of Ministers, had as its top guiding priority to 'promouvoir les vins de qualité', which the project manager for Languedocian regional land development (*Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale*) wryly commented was a euphemistic way to say 'décourager la production des vins de table indifférenciés obtenus par mélange'.<sup>17</sup> The Community envisaged effecting this change in four major ways: first, through the restructuring of vineyards through the improvement of grape varieties and property structures, second, through the improvement of the aid scheme for the facilities of wineries, particularly for those designated as 'groupements de producteurs' or those making quality wine, third, the strengthening of marketing structures, which for the table wine producers ONIVIT would be taking the lead in France, and fourth, the voluntary conversion of vineyards into farms producing other goods. The programme cost was to be shared: 'Ces quatre actions vont s'enrichir ensuite par un va et vient entre la France et la CEE, avec une prise en charge partielle des coûts par le FEOGA, va et vient qui a démarré avant ce Conseil.'<sup>18</sup> The fourth and last point involved some heavy national assistance. The French government had in fact created a special 'Programme Spécial Languedoc-Roussillon', and one of the aims of this programme was to reduce the overall vineyard total in Languedoc-Roussillon by 2000 hectares per year for which 'une aide spéciale sera accordée en plus du régime CEE.'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> 'Note sur la Politique Viticole.' D. Maquart, chargé de mission de l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale. January 17, 1979. 1084W/171, Archives départementales de l'Hérault.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> 'Note sur la Politique Viticole.' D. Maquart, chargé de mission de l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale. January 17, 1979. 1084W/171, Archives départementales de l'Hérault.

However, experience with Brussels had led local entities to be more aware of what was happening with changes to wine policy. While still being passed around as a proposal in the Commission, a potential addition to the CWP caught the attention of local Languedoc-Roussillon officials. The August 1978 Commission proposal was for a comprehensive restructuring of the Community's viticultural set-up. For this the Commission proposed using a system of three physical criteria – altitude, slope, and levels of sun – to define three zone classifications which would be applied across the CEE. Zone 1 (labelled 'very good') would be given new planting rights, zone 2 ('average') would not be given new planting rights but would possibly be required to restructure or grub-up, and zone 3 ('poor') would be designated for grubbing-up only. Using the Commission's criteria, most of the Midi fell under zone 3, to which the head of the mission of the Languedocien regional land development group responded, 'C'est un tollé en France.'<sup>20</sup>

While officials caught this rather late – they first took notice of it in early January 1979 – nevertheless, this was one of the first instances of a new approach to Brussels. Better to catch these proposals while still in gestation, than to find out about them when they were official policy. The office of the Mission Régionale noted that the issue, first brought up by a lower office, was alarming and issued their agreement with the Italian position that wanted a fourth category included, that of terroirs as evidenced by both historical quality of products and objective conditions (like soil composition, for instance.) They lamented that the lack of clear information, as before, meant 'les viticulteurs ne savent pas exactement qu'elles seront les modalités d'application de la directive CEE.'<sup>21</sup> A circular had appeared which was heavily discussed and criticized by the wine growing profession and Minister of Agriculture Pierre Méhaignerie 'a été attaqué à ce sujet lors de son passage à Montpellier et n'a pu répondre,

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> 'Note à l'attention de M. le Chef de la Mission Régionale.' From the office of the Mission Régionale, Hérault, Languedoc-Roussillon. January 23, 1979. 1084W/171, Archives départementales de l'Hérault.

ignorant l'existence de cette circulaire'<sup>22</sup> with the result that many of the vignerons did not know how to implement this new CEE directive, or had simply decided not to. The office warningly noted in particular that regarding the fourth point of the new proposal, the conversion of vineyards, the mindset of Languedocian vignerons would make the implementation of this difficult: 'Reconversion du vignoble: il faut bien rappeler que les viticulteurs languedociens, persuadés que s'ils font beaucoup de vins, font pourtant de plus en plus de produits de qualité, estiment que ce n'est pas à eux d'arracher: aussi disent-ils que les aides à la restructuration les intéressent, mais que les aides à la reconversion devraient être attribuées aux zones viticoles marginales dont, affirment-ils, ils ne sont pas.'<sup>23</sup>

This issue touched upon a more broad-ranging issue with communicating Community policy to affected citizens. Vignerons faced an environment of constantly changing regulations and directives relating to what they could plant, what they could not plant, what they needed to grub up, and what prices were being offered for what kinds of wine produced. Even outsiders noticed this: remarking on the European Community wine policies – especially as at this time, the Community was attempting to impose regulations in its own likeness on the kinds of wine being imported and one of the countries running afoul of these fairly inflexible policies was the United States – CNCV president Chandou reported that a journalist in New York had remarked to him that the Community 'avez tendance à exporter plus de règlements que de produits.'<sup>24</sup> Alongside the bureaucracy-inducing processes involved in a managed market, the extension of the European Common Market to the wine sector perpetuated an existing problem: 'Wine statutes and rabbits seem to share a common destiny, that is, both reproduce prolifically.'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> 'Président Chandou des coopérateurs,' *La Journée Vinicole*, February 2, 1977.

<sup>25</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 35.



This change in attitude towards the Community is likewise reflected in the new, more outward looking purview of the previously insular Midi. For example, on February 11, 1979, Jean-Baptiste Benet, a Midi vigneron most well-known in France for being secretary general of the *Fédération nationale des vins de table et des vins de pays* (FVTP) and president of the *Comité consultatif viti-vinicole*, oversaw a meeting where the French delegation consisted almost entirely of Midi wine personalities.<sup>26</sup> It was a meeting that was very different to the Comité meetings of the past, in which members were more active in using the group to meet their aims, and in the cooperation between particular groups. The meeting saw the Italian and French producers acting, as they had increasingly over the previous two years, in concert, staunchly protesting against the propositions of the Commission for a price freeze on agricultural products. The French producers were unhappy with the minimum pricing – which they considered too low to sustain a decent income – as well as the ‘super-prestations viniques’ project, which established an obligatory preventative distillation at the lowest price and further provides different rates and price levels for producers in different nations, which they considered to be ‘contraire à l’esprit et à la lettre du Traité du Rome.’<sup>27</sup>

Despite complaints about the shortcomings of the Comité as a result of its ‘méthodes de travail pitoyables d’un comité viti-vinicole qui ne rend pas les services qu’il pourrait nous rendre’<sup>28</sup>, the French producers were pleased with some of their successes they made through their lobbying work in the Comité – for example, they were happy with the Commission decision to accede to the demands of producers to provide aid for storage and the use of concentrated must for the year. On the topic of extending this aid to ‘élaborateurs de British

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<sup>26</sup> ‘L’éternel refrain d’une vieille complainte?’, *La Journée Vinicole - special supplement*, February 10, 11, 12, 1979

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

wine’<sup>29</sup> – they were quite adamant about not calling them ‘producteurs’ – the Italians and French producers at the meeting ‘ont fait les plus expresses réserves, estimant que ces produits non conformes à la réglementation européenne, doivent cesser d’être fabriqués afin d’être remplacés par des vins loyaux et marchands issus de la fermentation du jus de raisins frais’.<sup>30</sup> The producer representatives from both countries also expressed to the group at large their condemnation of ‘toute politique de diminution systématique et définitive des superficies de vigne en Europe’ especially ‘dans l’éventualité d’un élargissement de la C.E.E. à trois pays viticoles’.<sup>31</sup> This was not a position shared by the *négoce* or merchants, and it was, in fact, a position that the French government had been very active in promoting for not only the entire decade, openly or otherwise, but had during negotiations, established as one of their interests in creating a European wine policy. In light of the deepening concern with the entry of Mediterranean Members – ‘l’élargissement menace’<sup>32</sup> – the French and Italians even came to an important compromise before the meeting, announcing at it that their ‘pointes de vues...se sont considérablement rapprochées sur le problème de critères de détermination des zones viticoles en trois catégories’<sup>33</sup>, which had previously been an issue of considerable contention between the two parties. They were determined to resist the current categories and push for the inclusion of a fourth that encompassed *terroirs*. The Commission was not bound to the decisions and stances the Comité consultatif took on issues, but were promised by the Directorate-General of Agriculture to be taken most seriously in policy decisions. They were certainly afforded more attention after the wine crisis of 1975, though the Comité still sometimes grumbled about being limited ‘à un rôle seulement académique.’<sup>34</sup> Likewise, the

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> ‘Assurant l’avenir de son vignoble le département de l’Aude deviendra-t-il «le réservoir des semences en Europe»?’, *La Journée Vinicole - special supplement*, April 17, 18, 19, 1979.

<sup>33</sup> ‘L’éternel refrain d’une vieille complainte?’

<sup>34</sup> ‘Le Comité des professionnels viticoles de la CEE et e Comité consultatif viti-vinicole étudient sous la présidence de M. Benet les mesures propres à équilibrer le marché,’ *La Journée Vinicole*, November 15, 1976.

Working Group on Wine in the combined major European agricultural lobby group, COPA-COGECA, saw a number of active Midi vignerons.<sup>35</sup>

There was also particular interest in the European Parliament which, despite its lack of power relative to the Commission or Council in the 1970s and 1980s, was the forum the vignerons seemed to feel was most accessible to them. In fact, on July 17, 1979, two Midi vigneron leaders themselves became Members of European Parliament – Georges Sutra de Germa, the president of the Cave de Tourbes who became an MEP allied with the Parti Socialiste, and Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé, a member of the Parti communiste français. Earlier in the year Maffre-Baugé had released a book in which he had very clearly expressed his dislike of ‘Bruxelles...ce palais de la paperasse, cette capitale-Babel, où vivent de hauts fonctionnaires courtois, discrets, «neutres»’.<sup>36</sup> What had driven these Midi leaders to finally engage at the Brussels level, despite their distrust of the European Community,<sup>37</sup> was their unhappy belief that ONIVIT and its equivalent for merchants ANIVIT<sup>38</sup>, were no longer of use as organisations to Midi vignerons if ANIVIT could continue to violate regulations on restrictions of imports while ONIVIT was unable to do anything about it.

The incident Sutra de Germa and Maffre-Baugé are referring to was one where ANIVIT had loosely set a suggested limitation, to be on the whole self-policed by négociants, of 400,000 hectolitres of wine imported per month – which should have meant around 5 million hectolitres in imports in the 1978-1979 season. Sutra and Maffre-Baugé insisted it was more

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<sup>35</sup> COPA, the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de l'Union Européenne), was formed on September 6, 1958 shortly after the agriculture-dominated Stresa Conference by farmers concerned about the previous year's Treaty of Rome, which contained major portions of the coming Common Agricultural Policy. COGECA, the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives (Comité Général de la Coopération Agricole de l'Union Européenne), was formed almost precisely a year after COPA, and the two merged in December 1962.

<sup>36</sup> Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé, *Face à l'Europe des impasses* (Toulouse: Privat, 1979), 48.

<sup>37</sup> This was also extensively documented in Maffre-Baugé's book 'Face à l'Europe des impasses'. (*ibid.*)

<sup>38</sup> The full title of ANIVIT, the national French organisation for merchants, is Association Nationale Interprofessionnelle des Vins de Table.

likely to be 8 million by the close of October.<sup>39</sup> Apparently, Maffre-Baugé intended not to be one of his disliked ‘hauts fonctionnaires aux froids regards, aux sourires dilatoires, aux paroles évasives, sur lesquels votre faim de clarté, de prise en charge des problèmes posés, s’use et s’érode’.<sup>40</sup>

While Maffre-Baugé’s line of argumentation was traditional in claiming that the ‘«marasme du marché» est lié aux importations d’Italie, faites à bas prix, à la diminution notable du pouvoir d’achat des Français, à la «libéralisation anarchique des prix avec un distorsion entre prix de production et prix à la consommation»’,<sup>41</sup> and it was these beliefs – along with his impressive oratory and penchant for drama (his nickname was ‘Emmanuel le Flamboyant’) – that won him his very strong support amongst conservative French table wine producers, the situation was at the end of the 1970s not as complicated as Maffre-Baugé made it out to be. Even as staunchly pro-Midi vigneron as it was, *La Journée Vinicole* conceded in May 1979 in a significant front-page article that the major issue facing vignerons was that the wine market ‘traverse une crise d’adaptation avec un changement de style de consommateur (on boit moins, quoique mieux, la qualité gagne sur la quantité)’,<sup>42</sup> a marked shift in tone and attitude to the previously espoused view usually held to in its pages that the Brussels institutions and their policies were either apathetic or harmful.

It was Brussels, again, that was the cause of occasional alliances between producers and merchants, as Marcel Laugel reported that, in response to the new and explicit Brussel line that reducing production was the way to achieve market balance, ‘Il va de soi que viticulture et négoce ne partagent pas du tout ce point de vue. C’est précisément en diminuant la

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<sup>39</sup> ‘Les importations Italiennes remises en cause,’ *La Journée Vinicole*, August 30, 1979.

<sup>40</sup> Maffre-Baugé, *Face à l’Europe des impasses*, 49.

<sup>41</sup> ‘Les importations Italiennes remises en cause.’

<sup>42</sup> ‘«Un véritable partenaire pour les professionnels du vin»: Entretien avec M. Jean Perroux,’ *La Journée Vinicole*, May 8, 1979.

production qu'on risque de désorganiser, de déséquilibrer un marché. La production étant tantôt insuffisante, tantôt abondante, on crée soit une pénurie, soit un surabondance : on crée ainsi des fluctuations de cours, en encourage la spéculation et finalement on lèse producteurs et consommateurs. Diminuer la production, c'est décidément la plus mauvaise manière l'équilibrer le marché'.<sup>43</sup> Laugel instead reported that the solution was to reduce taxes on wine, have progressive custom taxes on wines from non-EC countries, develop international marketing for European Community wines, encourage the viticultural family farm, and pull back the anti-alcohol campaign (he added that 'les professionnels du vin sont les premiers adversaires de l'alcoolisme'<sup>44</sup>). Laugel finished his article that stating that 'Il est inadmissible qu'on cherche à imposer l'arrachage, la destruction, pour faire diminuer la production...dans la Communauté. Pour équilibrer l'économie viti-vinicole européenne et mondiale, il n'y a qu'un seul moyen : faire augmenter la consommation!'. This last point was a line of weak argumentation quite often presented by vignerons in response to the wine situation in the 1970s, but one which was rarely accompanied by any kind of explanation. Laugel's proposed solutions too all stressed the impetus on the state to act to improve the situation in the Languedoc; despite these types of views continuing to be espoused in the public arena, they were becoming less popular, as through 1978 and 1979 the tone of articles in *La Journée Vinicole* changed to one that was more cosmopolitan and outward looking in nature.

Looking outward, however, meant having to confront some views on the wine of the Languedoc that were less than complimentary. Against a backdrop of decreasing wine consumption domestically in France, French vignerons also faced the consequences of the steadily increasing quality and appreciation of wines beyond the traditional French and Italian ones. Spain and Portugal were in particular making notable efforts with their wineries and

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<sup>43</sup> 'Quelle réglementation du marché communautaire des vins en Octobre?,' *La Journée Vinicole*, September 4, 1979.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

there was some wariness of French wines generally that had spilled over after a Bordeaux fraud crisis in 1973, where the prominent Cruse family, owners of Château Pontet-Canet, was accused of having blended Rioja with their own wine, and attempted to pass off the mixture as Bordeaux, in response to which one of the family members committed suicide.<sup>45</sup> As well, the confidence in quality and in particularly quality for price in Bordeaux wine was also deeply affected worldwide after the crash in Bordeaux prices in the early 1970s. At the end of 1972 through to the beginning of 1973, the prices of Bordeaux wines underwent a sudden speculative rise on the international market, some of them quadrupling within a four week period. Then, in the middle of 1973, there was a sudden drop, causing the prices of red but especially white wines to crash. This caused great chaos in Bordeaux, and their leading organisational unit, the *Conseil Interprofessionnel de Vins de Bordeaux* (CIVB), fell apart and disbanded in the midst of the storm. Before retreating further still into an already regionally insular shell, the CIVB declared themselves and their wines to be ‘the victims of external, international speculation which nowadays can occur via extremely powerful means and in a brutal fashion.’<sup>46</sup>

Further to this was a shocking watershed moment for French wine in 1976 at a tasting which would afterwards become known as ‘The Judgement of Paris’. Steve Spurrier, a British wine enthusiast and importer of French wines, held a tasting in Paris designed to showcase the increasing quality of Californian wines. He purportedly did not expect the wines to do very well, but thought the Californian wines, ranked next to some reputationally outstanding French wines – including some exclusive first growths from Haut Brion and Mouton Rothschild – would not be obviously and immediately differentiated from these stars of the wine world. There were eleven judges, of whom nine were French and all of whom were

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<sup>45</sup> Lars Holmberg, 'Wine Fraud,' *International Journal of Wine Research* 2(2010): 108.

<sup>46</sup> Meeting minutes of the General Assembly of the Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux (CIVB), 1977. 29J CIVB (37, 38, 39), private archives of the CIVB.

notable personalities, including Gascon chef Raymond Oliver and Odette Kahn, editor of *La Revue du vin de France*; the other two judges – Spurrier himself and American Patricia Gallagher – participated in assessing the wines along with the French judges but their votes were excluded from the final ranking. The results publically appeared in an article on Monday June 7, 1976 in *Time Magazine* by George M. Taber, which began: ‘Americans abroad have been boasting for years about California wines, only to be greeted in most cases by polite disbelief – or worse....Last week in Paris, at a formal wine tasting organized by Spurrier, the unthinkable happened’<sup>47</sup>: a Californian wine topped each tasting category.

The result of all these incidents, amongst others, was the start of a general suspicion that France was not necessarily the undisputed world leader in wine. In 1979, this very particularly came to affect the Midi, when a *New York Times* article had appeared which skewered wines in the Midi, calling them, ‘exécrable breuvage’, ‘vin maigre, âpre, sans caractère’, and ‘saloperies produites dans le Midi.’ Again, despite the prominence and wide-reach of the article, it was a while before the region got word of it – the article appeared August 26, and it was a month before a daily regional newspaper and thereafter, *La Journée Vinicole*, got word of the story. The heads of the *Comité économique agricole des vins de table et de pays du Languedoc-Roussillon* (CEVILAR) and the *Centre méridional de promotion de l’agriculture par la coopération* (CEPRACO), M. Courret and M. Crouzet respectively, gave interviews to *La Journée Vinicole* in response. The ultimate question the flabbergasted newspaper asked was how this could have happened. Both Courret and Crouzet responded without hesitating that the blame belonged to Bonnet. As they said, ‘«Comment dans ces conditions ne pas se souvenir des propos de M. Christian Bonnet sur la «bibine» et les considérations qu’il tenait sur l’avenir des viticulteurs languedociens : Qu’ils crèvent»...Il

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<sup>47</sup> ‘Modern Living: Judgment of Paris,’ *Time*, June 7, 1976.

est évident qu'un journaliste américain n'aurait pu rédiger un article aussi scandaleux sans «l'exemple» ainsi donné par un ministre français de l'Agriculture'.<sup>48</sup> Three years on, the words that Bonnet had uttered in that fateful radio interview were still ingrained in the popular Midi mindset. In fact, Bonnet's words reverberated even over a decade later, entering local lore about the north-south divide; while being interviewed in the late 1980s about the differences between the Midi and other French regions, small-farm vigneron Marcel Mas stated, 'Those people up there (in Paris) don't care about us down here. They only care about the rich farmers of the north who have power and the money and so they gear their policies to make them happy. The state buys their votes. Do you know what the Minister of Agriculture once said about us, down here in the midi. Let viticulture die! (Que la viticulture crève!) So now do you see why we Occitan wine growers are against the state?'<sup>49</sup>

Both Courret and Crouzet, however, in presenting their suggested solutions, exemplified the new direction of Midi vignerons – relying more on themselves and acting via their local and regional organisations. They claimed this was the moment that their profession, particularly those in cooperatives, 'a mis sur pied les instruments efficaces de coordination de son action commercial,' which was traditionally the role of merchants. Likewise, they championed rallying around regional options to help promote their international image – for instance, they thought that CEVILAR (interestingly enough, funded by the French government) 'doit être l'outil privilégié de toute politique d'exportation des vins de notre région. C'est autour de cet instrument que doit être organisée, aux Etats-Unis comme dans les autres pays étrangers, une action commerciale de grande envergure'.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> 'Coincidence troublante... : Un article violent et mensonger du New York Times contre les vins du Midi,' *La Journée Vinicole - special supplement*, September 29, 30, October 1, 1979.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Marcel Mas as recorded in Lem, *Cultivating Dissent: Work, Identity and Praxis in Rural Languedoc*, 92.

<sup>50</sup> 'Coincidence troublante... : Un article violent et mensonger du New York Times contre les vins du Midi.'



### *At Brussels, Around Community Institutions*

Midi vigneron engaged with the policy process not only with Brussels institutions, but also around Brussels institutions. They joined different groups at the European level, making use of a new – and to them relatively unknown - political platform. In the early 1960s especially, they were near channels of influence, but were kept outside of halls of principal decision-making. Here, the initial structure of key lobby institutions reflected structures and pressure points in the French wine industry. There were two major organisations: the first was the *Comité des professionnels viticoles de la CEE*, which had existed since roughly 1956 and which aimed at bringing together all the viticultural syndicate organisations in the Community with the goal of defining the position of producers ahead of the Comité consultatif meetings; the second, its counterpart in trade, was the *Comité vin*. The Comité des professionnels viticoles de la CEE was the first major non-governmental body bringing together all vignerons in the European Community and who attempted to lobby the Community institutions in the collective interests of vignerons.

The major group within the Comité des professionnels viticoles de la CEE organising, directing, and speaking on behalf of the Comité was the *Fédération des Associations Viticoles de France* (FAVF). On May 5, 1962, Mme. Muller, a general delegate of FAVF requested a representative of the Division in charge of relations with non-governmental organisations attend the general assembly meeting of the FAVF.<sup>51</sup> Her request being turned down, she issued a second invitation a month later in her role as secretary general of the Comité, which was again turned down.<sup>52</sup> Little exchange occurred except for formalities on

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<sup>51</sup> Letter series between Muller and the Community, BAC 71/1984.20, HAEC.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

sending copies of Community meeting minutes on the creation of a wine market, at which agricultural stakeholder groups were conspicuously absent.

By 1977 however, rather than channel displeasure through the Comité des professionnels viticoles de la CEE or use conduits in Paris, groups such as CNCV were directly addressing Brussels. For example CNCV sent direct invitations to Brussels for representatives to join their annual general meetings beginning in the mid-1970s, which from 1977 were actually taken up by Brussels functionaries. In his report on their July 19, 1980 AGM, Pierre Pignot was careful to observe factions among the group, noting that two members in particular, M. Couré and M. Soulié, did not appreciate the speech given by M. Villain, who was considered, together with Antoine Verdale, not to have addressed the European Community's 'l'apologie du libéralisme laxiste.'<sup>53</sup> Drawing ire from some of the assembled constituents, Mr. Villain's speech in particular had praised three men above all for helping address the 'véritables problèmes viticoles': M. Méhaignerie, the French Minister of Agriculture at the time, M. Marcora, the Italian Minister of Agriculture, and Finn Gundelach, Commissioner for Agriculture and Vice-President of the Commission. He noted at least for the first time in several years that the meeting seemed for the most part to be conducted in some serenity, and that the majority of presidents of the caves seemed to appreciate what had been accomplished in the last four years. However, he commented that the Community's wine policy, as it affected table wine, was heavily criticised still for being too lax, not addressing intra-community imports, and its pricing policies. He complained too that 'il est difficile à certains dirigeants très anti-marché commun de reconnaître les faits'.

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<sup>53</sup> Note from Adrien Ries to M. Villain, attached to the official report from Pierre Pignot on the July 19, 1980 general assembly meeting of the Confédération Nationale des Cooperatives Vinicoles, BAC 71/1984.20, HAEC.

In a bid to have one representative group for those in the wine industry, the Comité consultatif viti-vinicole auprès de la Commission de la CEE was created, which was supposed to be the major advisory board to the Commission. The Commission intended this group to bridge the gap between the two current non-governmental groups existing, with producers on one side and trade on the other. Both groups immediately attempted to install one of their own as head. For instance, the major – and unqualified – request from the Comité des professionnels viticoles was that the president of the group be a representative of the producer family (either a ‘viticulteur ou coopérateur’). The Comité consultatif viti-vinicole, which was a working group composed of wine professionals – in the form of growers and trade representatives – provided advice on the organisation of the Common Wine Market to the Commission. In the usual style of confusing nomenclature in the Community, the Comité consultatif viti-vinicole should not be confused with the Comité vin<sup>54</sup>, which was comprised of government representatives for each member state, nor the Comité de Gestion des vins, which was the wine management committee that was part of the Commission and through which it made decisions on wine-based issues. A close cousin was the meetings of government experts on viticultural issues (‘experts gouvernementaux des questions viticoles’) who were not a formally organised group as such but who tended to meet before Comité de Gestion des vins meetings.

*‘Les viticulteurs mal aimé du Midi’*

Despite their increasing engagement with both Paris and Brussels, however, Midi vignerons felt picked on by both groups. The Midi vignerons may have forged new paths, but the relationships they had were still prickly. This served to heighten the sense of Languedoc-

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<sup>54</sup> Its full title was the *Comité de la Communauté économique européenne des industries et du commerce des vins, vins aromatisés, vins mousseux, vins de liqueur*.

Roussillon identity, despite exposure to policy-making processes at the national and supranational levels.

In June 1978, reaction to new proposals of the Community to grub up vines, the office of the Mission Regionale of Languedoc-Roussillon commented on the reactions of the viticulteurs, who, ‘tout en reconnaissant certains mérites au programme de restructuration et de reconversion de la viticulture établi par la directive du Conseil des Communautés du 19 Juin 1978, le critiquaient vivement parce qu’il ne prévoyait de reconversion que pour le vignoble du Midi de la France : ils estimaient, en effet, que cette région ayant une vocation viticole affirmée, il eût été plus judicieux d’envisager l’arrachage d’autres vignobles, marginaux, et réclamaient au moins une généralisation du programme’.<sup>55</sup>

Likewise, in September 1978, the issue of whether or not chaptalisation would be allowed that year for the Languedoc-Roussillon was being discussed by the Ministry of Agriculture. Many were asking for chaptalisation in the south, hoping to improve the alcoholic content in their wine that year. A worried, Maurice Lambert, Préfet de Languedoc-Roussillon et l’Hérault wrote to Paris to say they needed to quickly decide for dallying would aggravate an group that already felt maligned: ‘Je me permet tout particulièrement d’appeler votre attention sur l’urgence...tout retard risque, en effet, d’aggraver encore l’état d’esprit du monde viticole et ne pourra que renforcer la position des responsables professionnels au regard de l’opinion publique, en leur permettant de développer encore davantage le thème selon lequel “les viticulteurs mal aimés du Midi n’ont d’autre ressource que de prendre eux-mêmes en main une situation dans laquelle les Pouvoirs Publics sont défaillants”’.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> ‘Nouvelles Propositions de la Commission de la C.E.E. (Rapport du 31/07/78).’ From the office of the Mission Régionale, Hérault, Languedoc-Roussillon. Undated (likely beginning of August 1978). 1084W/171, AH.

<sup>56</sup> Letter from Maurice Lambert to Pierre Méhaignerie. September 5, 1978. 1084W/171, AH.

### *The Close of the Decade*

This new attitude of both relying more on themselves, investing energy in local and regional outfits both new and old, and using them to reach for solutions either at the Brussels level or with Brussels was expressed at the end of the 1979 growing season in October when the largest harvest yet of the decade – at 83 million hectolitres of wine, it was 13 million more than expert groups like ONIVIT had estimated only a month and a half earlier – faced French vignerons. The response of Midi vignerons was that they were counting on the interprofessional structures and the Community mechanisms for wine – the French government was not mentioned.<sup>57</sup> The immediate action taken by the French government was, for the first time, to provide ONIVIT with a budget for the promotion of French wines – the provision of this sum of 15 million francs was a far simpler solution than devising policy and also had the added benefit of requiring that the growers and producers worked together.

In looking over and assessing the 1970s as the decade came to a close, *La Journée Vinicole* declared that the 1970s was most prominently marked by the rise of cooperatives in wine and that ‘la coopération est définitivement sortie de sa longue période d’immobilisme’.<sup>58</sup> In 1979, cooperatives accounted for approximately 70% of overall wine production in the region. As well, the decade was notable for growers and merchants working together in earnest for the first time. The beginning of November 1979 marked the first anniversary of CEVILAR, which was working on ‘prolonger les accords interprofessionnels par des négociations «complémentaires» entre les groupements de producteurs et un certain nombre de grandes

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<sup>57</sup> ‘L’ONIVIT face à une campagne problématique et à 15 millions pour la promotion,’ *La Journée Vinicole*, October 25, 1979.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Les vins de table consommables en l’état devraient faire l’objet d’un accord-cadre entre les groupements de producteurs et une partie du grand négoce,’ *La Journée Vinicole*, November 7, 1979.

firmes...négociations qui aboutiraient éventuellement à un accord cadre ou accord préférentiel pour essayer d'assurer une opération portant sur une production consommable en l'état, par un circuit semi-direct et dans le cadre d'une politique de prix différente. Le président Courret pense qu'une dizaine de grandes firmes pourraient être intéressées à négocier, avec le Languedoc-Roussillon....'<sup>59</sup> The reason that the négoce and the vigneron had needed to and continued to need to work together was that 'plus la situation du Languedoc-Roussillon se dégrade en matière viti-vinicole, plus cela se fait au détriment des petits, qu'ils soient dans la production ou le négoce. Mais ici, la solidarité est difficile, puisque les intérêts ne sont pas les mêmes. Nous ne situons pas le problème à un niveau coporatiste, mais, agissant dans l'intérêt de la région, nous ne pouvons sombrer dans le sentimentalisme'.<sup>60</sup> Working together in cooperative movements, producers hand in hand with merchants, with less reactive agitation against the state but rather taking advantage of the Community mechanisms devised through the past ten years was, taken together, the new mandate of the Languedoc vignerons, 'dans un contexte de «survie de la région»'.<sup>61</sup>

The European Community was the new site of interest for vignerons, as they had finally and resignedly accepted the Community institutions and bureaucrats as the key decision makers in agriculture. Despite the fact that they were skeptical of its goal of trying to 'restreindre la prolifération de la production vinicole n Europe' especially 'qu'on imagine ce qu'il en ira lorsque la Grèce sera devenue le dixième membre de la Communauté...puis plus tard le Portugal et l'Espagne'<sup>62</sup>, they were much more disillusioned with Paris, while also more generally aware that the national government was no longer the dominant player in terms of policy creation for table wine producers. Their loss of confidence in the French government

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.s*

<sup>62</sup> 'Le Vin en Europe,' *La Journée Vinicole*, November 22, 1979.

to fix the situation was poetically encapsulated when, in speaking of their recognition that decision-making had moved to Paris, they talked about the political shift as being ‘la solution [qui] a, avouons-le, quelque chose de mystérieux, car l’alchimie du verbe d’Etat n’a tout de même pas le pouvoir de transformer ainsi les événements.’<sup>63</sup>

Vignerons continued to be heavily critical of the European Community however, and had cried that its solutions for table wine ‘ne sont du goût de personne.’<sup>64</sup> In speaking about tastes, however, the vignerons exhibited both their sense of heightened regional feeling and identification, but also their feeling of being different to their neighbours. To the Midi vignerons, the difference in wine drinking and attitudes to wine was implicitly symptomatic of larger and more serious differences between the French and their Community colleagues (for they were often alarmist about these differences without explaining what the larger problems they potentially pointed to were). Midi vignerons felt that there ought to be a general appeal to ‘patriotisme européen pour...absorber la production’ if they indeed were going to be forced to be Community members together. Yet, southern French vignerons complained that despite the global average of drinking 49 litres of wine per year per European, it was very unevenly distributed – those in Luxembourg drank this amount, but the Dutch drank ‘11 misérables litres’ as did the Danish, the Belgians drank 15 litres, and the Germans 23 which ‘pour leur train de vie et leur capacité stomacale [sont] consternant!’. They declared the Italians to be ‘plus honorables’ at 97 litres per person – and, in ‘leur première place traditionnelle’, at 101 litres per person per year, was France. The importance they placed on wine drinking in this assessment was in essence the ultimate extension of the Frenchman’s burden, which was to drink up the production of his nation’s vineyards. The underlying assumption, which remained unanalysed in several similar articles concerns, was

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<sup>63</sup> ‘À Matignon : une conférence agricole nouveau style, mais toujours le même langage,’ *La Journée Vinicole*, November 28, 1979.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

that Europeans, and especially the French, ought to drink wine, and in fact, ought to drink more wine particularly in the face of the fact that certain members of this shared community were suffering because of decreasing consumption. This was presented as a duty, a part of being French and European; for instance, this argument was levied to implicitly accuse the British of not really being European because of their lack of wine drinking.<sup>65</sup> This was added as one more important difference between the British and those in continental Europe.

This quality direction in Europe was questioned by the Midi vignerons, however. At this time, approximately 70% of the wine produced in Europe was table wine, and the rest quality wine. But the Midi vignerons were not entirely convinced that a reduction in quantity would necessarily result in quality for ‘qu’on veuille les désigner sous les vocables infamant de «gros rouge», «gros bleus», «picrate», «bibine à Bonnet», n’y change rien. De là à conclure que les producteurs produisant moins produiraient mieux, il n’y a qu’un pas, facile à franchir et franchi allègrement d’ailleurs...sans qu’on cerne de plus près la réalité pratique pour autant!’<sup>66</sup> Their legitimation to deal with Brussels was reinforced by the increased state-like responsibilities the French government gave them which began in 1980 when they were given a much larger budget and much more autonomy than before. ‘L’ONIVIT va disposer en 1980, du fait de l’ouverture de crédit, au titre du plan du Grand Sud-Ouest, d’un budget beaucoup plus important: 368 million alors que celui de cette année n’était que de 212 millions. La réunion du 27 novembre a d’ailleurs permis le vote de la ventilation d’une partie des crédits qui n’avait pas été affectée.’ In addition, ONIVIT was also expecting 10 million francs in compensation from the value-added tax (VAT), 170,000 from the state for the l’Institut coopératif du vin, and from the Community, 1 million for the pre-financing of vineyard conversion, a 15 million bonus as a premium for converting, and 10 million for the

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<sup>65</sup> ‘Le Vin en Europe.’

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*



restructuring of vineyards. But despite the increasing fluency that Midi officials attained on Community matters and protocol, and despite efforts at the Community level to ease import problems, the summer of 1979 saw a second spike in Italian imports. 102,410 hl of Italian wine was taken in at Sète the week of July 15-21, followed by 87,869 hl the next week, and 190,279 hl the week after. In contrast, around this time, the Midi produced roughly 29 million hl per year.<sup>67</sup> The decade closed with a second wine war soon to come.

### *Many Hats: Carrying Multiple Roles*

Those who were most successful in managing this new terrain and these new relationships were leaders who took on a multiplicity of roles. This was vital in both understanding and influencing policy. The increase in strength of and membership in cooperatives and syndicates during the 1970s was in no small part due to their excellent placement and ability to disseminate practical information about adhering to the complicated additional layers of regulations set out by the bureaucracy introduced by the CWP. But individuals who thrived were far more active and began to wear many hats in this arena that was created by the inclusion of wine in the common market, accompanied as it was by confusion and a considerable period of settling.

In having more exposure to policymaking, and due to the increasing necessity for many previously independent or small-time vigneronns to join larger overhead organisations, these farmer-bureaucrats were able to develop a new consciousness which affected their sense of self and their perception of their status relative to their line of work. Before, those who worked the vines saw themselves as, were seen as, and were most commonly called

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<sup>67</sup> Areas Under Vines: Results of the annual surveys 1979-1989, Eurostat. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1991.

‘peasants’ – through the late nineteenth century, a series of changes propelled them to become units of a nation’s whole. This was the premise of Eugen Weber’s book ‘Peasants into Frenchmen’ and his assertion about the pace of change is certainly correct in that ‘over great parts of France the process of politicization was slower than we think; that, though many regions did indeed move at the pace historians indicate, others took more time’.<sup>68</sup>

Weber asserts that peasants became Frenchmen between 1870 and 1914, but this not quite the case for Languedoc-Roussillon vigneron. In fact, if we look at Weber’s definition for the transition, he asserts it was a change from ‘tradition local political to modern national politics [which] took place when individuals and groups shifted from indifference to participation because they perceived that they were involved in the nation...It meant that men and women, as private persons and as members of particular groups, had to be convinced that what went on in that wider entity mattered to them and had to be taken into consideration’.<sup>69</sup> But the transition, conceived of this way, never fully happened until the 1970s for the Languedoc-Roussillon. It was oddly enough the pressure from a supranational entity that caused the Midi vigneron to see beyond their narrow environs.

In the late nineteenth century, the government and the state in France were seen ‘dimly as agencies for the exaction of taxes, occasionally interfering to impose public order (not necessarily identical with local custom) and to mete out justice (not necessarily identical to equity)’.<sup>70</sup> In some ways this is exactly what the European Community became – akin to the old bureaucratic France as seen from the vantage point of farmers. What is particularly interesting about this is, as mentioned before, vigneron were not disconnected from national lines or from experience with the higher or broader levels of government due to their integration into the national market. Despite their being well-connected through the veins of

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<sup>68</sup> Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernization of rural France, 1870-1914*, 241.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

commerce, they still did not seem to be part of a national France. The change occurs because of the threat of the CEE acting to affect them – this does not mean that these locals taken as a whole trusted Paris, but that they saw themselves as needing to engage on a national (and eventually supranational level), which required banding together and breaking out of their regionally-focused independence.

Farmers became farmers *and* bureaucrats. By doing so, these particular vigneronns were also the first to confront the fact that there were not insurmountable constraints as to what could be implemented and changed at the national level. This led the Midi vigneronns to grudgingly accept the idea of the irreversibility of the Community agreements and the Community project as a whole, though this mindset change would not come about fully until the early 1980s, and arguably not until after 1983, when the European Court of Justice ruled against France again for violations of the CWP with regards to import restrictions. Those Midi vigneronns who managed to successfully stay in their profession were required to change tack in a few major ways: they would need to follow the turn to a policy of quality, and their leaders would need to engage at multiple levels – local, national, and supranational – to understand new policy. Here, Grace Skogstad's comment seems particularly apt: 'There is evidence that the power of the French farm lobby transcends the ideology of the governing party, which suggests the need for an argument that goes beyond the organizational strength of French farmers and their linkages to political parties. It requires recognition of the role that ideas about the multifunctionality of agriculture play in agrarian politics in France and the European Union more generally'.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Grace Skogstad, 'Review of Adam D. Sheingate's *The Rise of the Agricultural Welfare State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003),' *The American Political Science Review* 96, no. 1 (March 2002).

It was necessary to increasingly turn negotiating efforts and lobbying energy to Brussels to influence aspects of policy at the European level (rather than wait until proposals were directives and regulations and then experience them only when they were being implemented by their national government). This disruption of the strict hierarchy, which was established not only by the traditional millefeuille of French administration, but also by the way the French government had deliberately designed a chain-of-command to ‘speak with one voice’ at Brussels, was facilitated by disappointment of the Languedoc-Roussillon vignerons with not only the speed of progress but the inadequate proposals to come out of Paris.

### *Conclusion*

Chapter three and chapter four together present the reactions, opinions, and thoughts of those in Languedoc-Roussillon to the Common Wine Policy in the 1970s, with the first looking at the reaction to the wine crisis in 1975 and reaction to it through until the end of 1976. This second part has analysed the local and regional reactions from 1977-1979. Through the 1970s, the regional wine crisis garnered national attention and became an international problem. The Languedoc-Roussillon wine growers wanted Paris to defend it by reverting to using unilateral nationalistic measures to forcibly decrease Italian wine imports.

The crux of the matter was that these demands were impossible for the French government to meet while maintaining its imperatives. While these imperatives involved keeping the heavily socialist populace in the south of France happy and appearing to support the identity of Frenchness by supporting a nationally symbolic sector, they also included strong French leadership in the European Community, which was ultimately challenged by a flagrant violation of the free movement of goods. This resulted in inaction, though various small and

temporary measures to placate the Midi were used while a search for a permanent solution was undertaken. During the delay, there was an upsurge in regional feeling and activity that would last well beyond the 1970s, which was directed against the French government for failing to protect them from the vagaries they were exposed to as a result of the Community policies. It is important to note that when vigneron in the Midi reacted to what they saw as the Community's actions or the result of their actions, they were not always correct in identifying their causal agent – but this does not invalidate the importance of using these reactions to understand how they felt about the Community, its institutions and politics.

An analysis of their reactions demonstrated that the Midi farmers, in contrast to what might be presumed, were relatively well-informed about what was happening in Brussels. They were also not, as popular conceptions of farmers hold, conservative and unreforming – those in the Midi were heavily socialist and communist, and they made attempts to modernise while protecting their traditions and regional ways of life, engaging most prominently in this period in cooperative syndical ventures. Cooperatives, groupements de producteurs, and interprofessional groups were encouraged and given financial support both by the French government initially and then by the Community; various laws and regulations through the 1970s helped enshrine their places within or alongside state agricultural apparatus. These groups also played a role in the rise in regionalism. This gave Midi vigneron additional tools with which to maintain their sense of local and regional identity and culture in spite of being subjected to national and international market flows, global commercial pressures, and the ongoing European integration process.

## Chapter Five

### Regions, Actors, and the Experience of the Common Wine Policy in the 1970s

Nobody can, in my humble opinion, organise grape production.

- M. Gardère, a wine-grower interviewed in *The Vine Remembers*, 162.

After the experience of the first decade of the European Community's Common Wine Policy, interactions between actors and institutions resulted in dynamic changes in the relationships between the Midi, Paris, and Brussels. The French national government was one of the principal architects of the CWP – in helping to create it, it attempted to decrease its responsibility for France's wine sector by devolving enforcement of the policy upwards to the European Community, and after the wine crisis of 1975, devolving implementation downwards to vignerons. The French government also created an environment which was conducive to local agitation and mobilisation, by encouraging the grouping together of the wine community's leaders and the promotion of both existing groups and the creation of new

ones, which was solidified in various new or enhanced laws for agricultural organisations in the 1970s. While this may have happened alongside comparable process for the milk and cereals industries, the relinquishing of control over this important ‘patriotic industry’ was surprising and unnecessary. It was, however, very helpful for a government under continuing financial strain from subsidising table wine producers who were only looking poised to produce more, while on the horizon the drinking of quality wine in lieu of table wine (whereas before these two had coexisted) loomed. But economics alone does not explain the French decision: the dance was more intricate and difficult because of the ever-present thread tying wine to French identity that French policymakers were forced to consider, however obliquely.

This chapter will bring together different arguments and examinations from the previous chapters to explore several broad themes. It argues that the first decade of the CWP changed relationships between different groups at the European, national, and local level in two major ways: first, national French government institutions voluntarily decreased their power over a key national industry – this was the most marked feature in the French wine industry of this time period; second, the CWP helped facilitate the rise of sub-national and non-state actors in policy circles from which they were previously excluded. Empowered by the new responsibilities given to them by the French government, particularly via a newly-created national office of wine, French vignerons – not only those in the Midi – began attempting to bypass the national French bottleneck to the Community and directly lobby European-level institutions, either via their own organisations or as part of transnational endeavours. Given the French government’s particularly adamant control of who represented the country at the Brussels levels in the 1960s, this change in the following decade, and their seeming

acceptance, even in some ways encouragement, of this was a significant shift. This chapter, in contrast to previous ones, is organised thematically, rather than chronologically.

### *Justifying the Examination of a Strand of the Common Agricultural Policy*

Before delving into the two principal influences the CWP had on French vignerons in the Midi in the 1970s, it is important to re-examine the question of why the Common Wine Policy ought to be examined of its own accord. The chapter on the negotiation of the CWP makes two things plain – first, that the French had a great influence over the process and were, alongside the Italians, the principal architects of the policy. Therefore, their ability to direct the negotiations was significant and sometimes almost unilateral. Second, all parties took for granted that a common market for wine ought to be created – in taking it for granted, it was presumed by extension that an alcohol market would at some point be created, either subsuming the wine market, or alongside the wine market.

However, the creation of the CWP, given the difference between its operation and the other common markets, was not necessary for the completion of the CAP. It does not fit as well into the structures of the CAP as its close cousins milk and cereal, for instance. It seems more compelling to consider that the CWP was created because of its necessity in a sociological sense. Given the strength of its position as one of only two major wine producers in the Community, it would have been entirely plausible for France to have forced an exclusion to be made for wine when it came to the common markets. Wine is not a base agricultural product – it is a processed product, akin to cheese or even liquor. While milk has a common market, its derivatives cheese or butter do not. Neither was there a community policy for a variety of agriculturally-derived liquor – such as whisky (derived from wheat, rye, or barley)



and vodka (derived from potatoes). One particularly compelling reason to believe that the wine industry was accorded a special kind of place in the pantheon of Europe's agricultural products because of its identity was that a market was created for it amongst these other base agricultural products and to the exclusion of one or even several alcohols markets. The grapes themselves, for the producers' sakes, might have been included under the fruit and legumes market. And if wine were to be included, then it seems natural to consider including at least a market for other alcohol derived from agriculturally important products in the Community, such as whisky, especially after the United Kingdom's admission into the Community. Instead, there was no community policy for liquor, despite plenty of discussion during negotiations in the late 1960s and even in the 1970s after the common market had been created that such a thing would be necessary and would be a powerful and buttressing homologue of the wine market<sup>1</sup>; despite industry pressure, it was not until 2001 that a Commission proposal was published for a simple 'framework of common rules in the form of a "lightweight" common market organisation for agricultural alcohol.'<sup>2</sup> Instead, the common wine market, one of the *enfants terribles* of the Common Agricultural Policy, was pushed through because it was spoken of, but not adequately justified as, being the final piece of a unified agricultural policy in the Community, primarily by the French national government.

*The Common Wine Policy's Effects: A Voluntary Decrease in French Government*

*Involvement In the Wine Industry and Greater Legitimacy for Vignerons*

The French national government, in helping to create the Common Wine Policy, appeared to act against tradition. After all, the control of wine by the French government and indeed by syndicates themselves was in some cases so strict that vignerons complained – it was the

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<sup>1</sup> Early on it was taken for granted that an alcohol policy was going to be created, which was what the Six expressed to other gathered countries at a Council of Europe meeting on August 16, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission Press Release, IP/01/238, February 21, 2001.

reason for the exodus of some French wine-growers to California, for instance. In under a decade, a policy heavily tied up with French identity and seemingly carefully controlled by the French government was, by the end of the 1970s, largely the purview of the European Community's institutions. The French government voluntarily and strategically decreased its role in its domestic wine industry, by first devolving power upwards to the Community via the CWP, and then, after the 1975 wine crisis, also downwards to local and regional groups.

## I. French Agriculture: Costs and Conceptions

The primary reason why the French government wished to do this was because subsidies to wine growers were expensive<sup>3</sup> and they wanted to relieve themselves of a historically-ingrained system which had propped up key national industries at all costs. The French government has had a long history of 'explicit, assertive, continuous, and comprehensive'<sup>4</sup> state intervention, particularly with its post-war *dirigiste* economic policies, reaching its zenith in the late 1960s with the Fifth Plan, whose main objective was assuring the international competitiveness of French firms via government support. In the first few decades of their creation, the Chambers of Agriculture, for which legislation was enacted in 1920, were an advisory and consultative body in the regions; but since the 1950s, their role had increased considerably, becoming that of the 'prime agencies of state intervention in agriculture, acting as coordinating bodies for structural reform programmes.'<sup>5</sup> At the end of the 1960s, they were responsible for continuing to support the costs and structures of programmes which were ever increasing.

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<sup>3</sup> Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers*, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Hayward, *Industrial Enterprise and European Integration: From National to International Champions in Western Europe*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers*, 21-32.

More broadly speaking, costs across the different agricultural sectors – not only in the wine industry – needed to be scaled down. Costs by the 1970s were becoming prohibitive: the French Ministry of Agriculture's expenditure increased tenfold from 1950 to 1979 with massive spending on rural structural and social programmes.<sup>6</sup> The wine industry had in many ways been treated by the French national government in the same way as their other national 'industry champions.' Political scientist Jack Hayward's assertions about the changing pressure and operation of French national industries are reflected in important ways in the wine industry. He lists serious changes that major firms in Europe have faced since the 1960s, of which several affected the wine trade: national firms were increasingly losing their market monopoly and national protection; when in deficit, firms that used to have recourse to overt or covert subsidisation were more required to be self-sustaining; and these firms were being pushed to adopt more international strategies by contracting transnational alliances. However, there are two vital differences between the industries Hayward uses to exemplify these trends and the wine industry: first, French wine groups largely had no recourse to international capital markets if the government or national banks were unwilling or unable to help, and second, whereas other industrial firms were 'no longer the...projections of national identity, so that the sometime national champions of the 1960s have perforce tended to acquire a transnational identity', the wine industry remained – necessarily, and by choice – rooted in France.<sup>7</sup>

The twentieth century was a time of transformation and upheaval for not only wine growers but for French farmers in general. There were attempts by the Vichy government, and indeed successive French governments, to protect the component of 'rural idyll' in the French identity. Mark Cleary's work *Peasants, Politicians, and Producers*, in its attempts to trace the

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>7</sup> Hayward, *Industrial Enterprise and European Integration: From National to International Champions in Western Europe*, 2.

development of peasants and in particular their organisations relative to the state and capitalism in twentieth-century France, dissolves the myth, stemming from economic generalisation, of 'Rural France...as unified [or] monolithic.'<sup>8</sup> Instead, he contends there were 'huge spatial and social contrasts' before World War I which were widened by both the shifting priorities of the French government and then the European Community.<sup>9</sup> It is on the topic of the Community that Cleary's otherwise excellent book gives little illumination – despite his repeated suggestions that the Community was important, his discussion of the Community or the Community's impacts, direct or otherwise, on French farmers is limited.

The desire, however, to alleviate the increasing costs and support structures in the wine industry, as in other agricultural industries, ran against several other French ideals that made dismantling or even reducing the state apparatuses that supported table wine a difficult and delicate task indeed. The French government's policy of *aménagement du territoire*, for which there is no accurate English translation, was created to manage French national territory through spatial planning taking into account community, landscape, and identity. In the more poetic words of Eugène Cladius-Petit, who presented the seminal piece 'Pour un plan national d'aménagement du territoire' in 1950, which guided resultant aménagement policies in France, the policy was to 'substituer un nouvel ordre à l'ancien, de créer une meilleure disposition, une meilleure répartition dans l'espace de ce qui constitue les éléments de fonctionnement d'une société ; meilleure par rapport aux buts, c'est-à-dire non seulement à des fins économiques, mais davantage encore pour le bien-être et l'épanouissement de la

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<sup>8</sup> Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

population ; termes vagues mais qui définissent néanmoins clairement la finalité sociale, humaine, de l'aménagement du territoire.'<sup>10</sup>

An essential piece of this work involves preserving 'a network of agriculturally-oriented villages throughout much of [France]'.<sup>11</sup> This rather uniquely French state mission was called upon to justify the continuation of state-aide for agriculture, and in particular, for small farmers, which the Midi table wine growers very largely were. In this conception of the role of farmers – against the broader imperatives of aménagement – they were not only providing a role by producing food for the state and playing a role in its economic machinery, but they were also a part of the fabric of the nation, by being keepers of the rural and traditional ways of life and the guardians and tenders of the landscape. Michel Débatisse, who was president of the *Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants d'Agricoles* (FNSEA) from 1971 to 1978, expressed this very sentiment by saying that the role of the farmer needed to be protected by the state for it went beyond food production and security – it was also about 'de l'occupation du territoire, de la présence des agriculteurs dans toutes les régions, d'une certaine conception des relations de l'homme et de son travail, du mélange de l'économique et du social, que je partage avec d'autres, et qui, selon moi, est gage d'efficacité (pas seulement économique) dans un certain tissu social.'<sup>12</sup>

The French cultural conception of agriculture as a social good is crucial to understanding and explaining the Midi reaction.<sup>13</sup> The Midi reaction can only be understood against this larger

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<sup>10</sup> Eugène Claudius-Petit, 'Pour un plan national d'aménagement du territoire - 1950,' in *Les grands textes de l'aménagement du territoire et de la décentralisation*, ed. Christel Alvergne, Pierre Musso, and Délégation à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale (DATAR) (Paris Documentation française, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Susan Carol Rogers, 'Farming Visions: Agriculture in French Culture,' *French Politics, Culture and Society* 18, no. 1 (2000): 57.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Alphandery, Pierre Bitoun, and Yves Dupont, *Les champs du départ. Une France rurale sans paysans?* (Paris: La Découverte, 1989), 252.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance, Sheingate, *The Rise of the Agricultural Welfare State: Institutions and Interest Group Power in the United States, France, and Japan.*; Rogers, 'Farming Visions: Agriculture in French Culture.'; Marion

framework, which contained normative ideas about the appropriate place of agricultural in the state, and the ideal relationship between the state and farmer. In the French collective consciousness is a ‘belief that agriculture is not reducible to mere economic calculus or tradable merchandise. It is also about past and future identity, a national heritage in which all French people are implicated as trustees.’<sup>14</sup> This belief does not merely reflect an idyllic attachment to heritage – it has had and continues to have tangible ramifications. In the early 1990s, this French belief ground the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) to a halt for three years. It has been used by politicians in making various stands (in the same vein, for example, are Gaullist Jacques Chirac’s arguments that ‘Les actuelles négociations au sein du GATT sont capitales pour l’avenir de notre pays et ne peuvent se réduire à quelques ratios statistiques....On ne négocie pas son identité comme on négocie une marchandise’<sup>15</sup>). Likewise, it has gained great salience in the French public sphere – the rhetoric, wide-ranging appeal, and credibility of arguments that draw upon the idea of agriculture as not only bound up with national French identity, but as ‘l’âme de la nation’ have caused the French for instance to believe that their agricultural system is a world apart from the American agricultural system, despite similarities between the two.<sup>16</sup> It is the strength of the ‘cultural resonance of farming...in the political life’<sup>17</sup> of France that accounts for the persistence of the agricultural welfare state there and then the stake in a European-level agricultural support system.

Conceptions of French agriculture were so important that appeals to it provoked deep and defensive reactions from the French. Central to this idea was the symbolism of the French

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Demossier, 'Culinary heritage and produits de terroir in France: food for thought,' in *Recollections of France*, ed. Sarah Blowen, Marion Demossier, and Jeanine Picard (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000)..

<sup>14</sup> Rogers, 'Farming Visions: Agriculture in French Culture,' 51.

<sup>15</sup> *Libération*, October 22, 1993.

<sup>16</sup> Rogers, 'Farming Visions: Agriculture in French Culture,' 62-63.

<sup>17</sup> Sheingate, *The Rise of the Agricultural Welfare State: Institutions and Interest Group Power in the United States, France, and Japan*, 34.

family farmer. The exalted 'French peasant' was seen in the nineteenth century as being the guarantor of social harmony and in the twentieth century as being a national champion and steward of the rural landscape against sprawling and unsightly industrialisation.<sup>18</sup> This conception of agriculture has led to the continuing belief in the duty of the state to provide for and protect agriculture – Susan Carol Rogers summarises this aptly by saying that 'making the claim that something is necessary to general social health amounts to a demand that it be made available by all to the collectivity and provides justification for subsidies or full coverage from the public treasury, as well as management by public authorities operating in the collective interest. As illustrated by contemporary French discussions of agriculture, once it has been established that a service is crucial to the well-being of society, the obvious solution to a perceived crisis in its delivery is more or better state intervention'.<sup>19</sup>

This, then, explains the thoroughly French habit that wine growers were engaging in when turning repeatedly to the state for help throughout the 1970s. The problem they faced during this time was that they were in the midst of the transfer of jurisdiction over policies related to their profession to the European Community, which was complicated, uneven, and often – especially in the first half of the decade – misunderstood by locally-focused Midi farmers. But Roger's assertion that the European Community 'has not been notably inclined, to date, to treat agriculture as a social issue to any significant degree'<sup>20</sup> is incorrect. The European Community from the 1950s to the 1970s justified the high costs of its agricultural policy by appealing to images of a cultural Europe fortified with family farmers.<sup>21</sup> This thesis has argued that the Community's policies in so doing were in good part responsible for the scale of the wine lake. Despite the fact that the French ideals about agriculture and state

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Rogers, 'Farming Visions: Agriculture in French Culture,' 64.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>21</sup> Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*.

intervention was not entirely congruent with those held by all Community member states, the Community also justified the high costs of its wine policy on the premise that they were supporting family farmers. The desire to protect the family farmer ran against the desire to permit the free trade of agricultural produce within the EEC.

The perceived need to maintain a comparable standard of living for wine growers drove the French national government to continue to support the wine industry through various subsidies, even though it privately admitted that ‘notre principal intérêt commercial se trouve dans l’exportation des vins de qualité’.<sup>22</sup> It was to this point that the Ministry of Finance spoke, during the course of the negotiations for a community wine policy, when it maintained its position on separating discussions in the Community negotiations which had been on wine as a totality into one on table wine and one on quality wine. However, the Ministry of Agriculture was particularly against this proposal, citing the need to address both together to create ‘une véritable politique commune des vins’ but in the end, the Ministry of Finance’s proposal was carried forward in the French position to the Community and ultimately, in the post-1975 environment, enacted.<sup>23</sup> This shift in focus to their ‘principal intérêt commercial’ of quality wines emerged clearly through documents gathered that discuss the French side of the CWP negotiations from 1967 to 1970 in chapter one.

### *The Process of Decreasing the Role of the French Government*

This process required a decrease in the role of policy-making sectors of the government – predominantly the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance – that were previously

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<sup>22</sup> 'Compte rendu: Organisation commune du marché viti-vinicole.' Secrétaire Général du Comité Interministériel, January 19, 1968. Affaires économiques et financières: Coopération économique, 714 (1967-1975). AD.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*



heavily involved in all facets of the French wine industry. The handover of the reins of French table wine took place in incremental phases through the 1970s and was a systematic, voluntary decrease in the role of the French government. From 1967 to 1970, the French government negotiated to have the wine policy handled elsewhere, and their desire for this to happen was great enough that it overrode both concerns about wine's fit in the Common Agricultural Policy (though importantly, wine's inclusion was generally taken for granted by all parties) and the French government's dislike of the Italian government's proposed mechanisms for the CWP, which were more popular with other member states during Community negotiations. From 1970 to 1974, the French government prepared legislation dismantling governmental control over the French national wine industry, which were quickly pushed through under the pressure faced in 1975. The first few months of 1975 saw the spike in Italian imports and, soon after, the start of the wine war. In June 1975, the French interprofessional law was enacted, and in the summer of 1975, the French national government, scrambling for solutions to pacify the angry and violent viticulteurs demonstrating in the south, placed a tax on Italian wines which violated terms of the Treaty of Rome and caused the country public embarrassment. In 1976, the French government encouraged the vignerons to engage in policy themselves by creating a national wine office, structured to bring together producers, merchants, and other representative groups of the wine family to respond to and enact Brussels policies. In 1977 and 1978, French delegations in Brussels pushed for more measures at the Community level for wine, certainly ones that were stricter and would decrease the amount of table wine produced, including price support systems, during a round of major revisions to the CWP. Through 1979 and 1980, the French continued to relinquish control while pushing for quality wine.

## I. De-politicising Wine: The Encouragement of Technocratic Decision-Making

When analysing the decreased role of French government institutions in the wine industry through the 1970s, a major theme that emerges is one in which various government officials attempted to de-politicise the issue of wine during this process. They did this predominantly by trying to develop a more technical role for government in the industry. The national costs of agriculture in general were indeed high, as they were across Western Europe, but table wines especially so because modernisation and improved technology were contributing to an increase in volume output, but sociological changes were decreasing demand and consumption of table wine. These kinds of pressures were absent or far more minor in other agricultural markets. While there was a general surge in production in most of the agricultural markets with the implementation of the CAP, demand was fairly level, while table wine was particularly affected by declining demand. With the French government having good evidence that table wine overproduction would likely only worsen, as outlined in chapter two, they wished both to alleviate themselves of the pressure of continuing to pay out to wine growers but wanted to avoid being immortalised in posterity as the government that had taken negative, if necessary, action against vigneron. In a bid to reach the same intended outcome however, in the form of less production, the French government attempted to de-politicise their role, transforming it into a more bureaucratic one, whereby decisions were made in Brussels (however unpopular), and the French government dutifully implemented them, as per their Community commitments.

This tactic went fairly untested in the early 1970s, though a few particularly large harvests in 1970, 1973, and 1974 resulted in some minor successes for the French government, whereby the built-in requirement to negotiate year-by-year allowed them easily to argue for more

financial aid from FEOGA, the principal instrument of Community funding. They eventually created a national wine office to de-politicise and decrease their role further, moving powers of implementation and some degree of policy-making to the socio-professionals themselves. Other national offices were created, but the national office for wine was the earliest (save for the one for livestock and meat, for which ONIBEV was created two years before in 1974, and whose mandate – overseeing general production and guiding changes in technology – was more limited than ONIVIT's.) Even the one for milk, ONILAIT, was not created until almost a decade after the one for wine, despite the fact that they faced similar issues of overproduction. The government also strengthened local and regional power by law, through initiatives designed to encourage the development and proliferation of groups at that level. A notable law was *Loi n°75-600 relative à l'organisation interprofessionnelle agricole*, which codified on July 10, 1975 recognition by the state for those groups composed of the most representative organisations of agricultural production – and where appropriate, also for processing and marketing – into interbranch organisations.<sup>24</sup> The initial law was principally created to recognise these as lawful entities, but later on these recognised units could also apply for priority funding from the government. Another such group was the '*groupement de producteurs*' (now known by the name '*organisation de producteurs*'). They were created for the purpose of encouraging farmers producing a common product to group together and create a host structure, preferably setting official quotas and targets for the group. If groups demonstrated a strong and cohesive organisational structure, the government would recognise them as legal groupements de producteurs and they would be prioritised when it came to the distribution of aid.

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<sup>24</sup> Act No. 75-600 of 10 July 1975 on agricultural trade organization.

While general legislation for a framework for groupements de producteurs was created for agricultural sectors across the board in 1962 in France, in some sectors, the groupements de producteurs were actually based on aspects of Community legislation, which is to say specific provisions in their common market organisation under the CAP provided for them. This was the case for fruits and vegetables, tobacco, and wine – so it was that groupements de producteurs had little relevance for wine producers until the creation of the CWP. These kinds of organisational groups were purposefully created as ‘it was so much more convenient for government economic ministries to aggregate their interventionist activities, dealing with trade associations and peak organizations’.<sup>25</sup>

This movement towards de-politicising wine policy and promoting a technical role for government was part of a broader movement under Giscard d’Estaing to introduce small changes that included consulting with local government more often without heading in the direction of earnest decentralisation.<sup>26</sup> Despite having a reputation for favouring decentralisation and being seen as someone who might usher in such change upon election in 1974, during a meeting with regional representatives in 1975 in Dijon, for example, Giscard d’Estaing informed them that the role of the region was not to manage itself but rather to help coordinate the overall economic development of the country.<sup>27</sup> Administrators were more emphasised than before, such as through the increase in status for prefects, who oversaw the local and regional representatives of the national ministries. By subordinating political and moral imperatives to ones that were technically-understood and justified, the government could move governmental decisions and state institutions from being politically-oriented to

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<sup>25</sup> Hayward, *Industrial Enterprise and European Integration: From National to International Champions in Western Europe*, 1.

<sup>26</sup> This is well documented in Michael Keating and Paul Hainsworth, *Decentralisation and Change in Contemporary France* (Aldershot: Gower, 1986).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

being technically-oriented. (Indeed, the Parti Socialiste in the 1981 election had criticised the atmosphere under Giscard for being overly technocratic.)

This shift was clear in the policies on wine in the 1970s, and went hand-in-hand with an increasing emphasis on a particular kind of technocratic bent<sup>28</sup>, which found expression in the growing ‘sciencification’ of the wine industry. A technocratic environment coupled with serious pressure from the European Community via Mansholt in the 1960s to modernise agriculture, particularly small, inefficient family farms led to an increase in technical programmes in France which churned out an academic bureaucracy to complement the ministerial bureaucracy of the wine regulations in France. This was reflected in the rising number of and members in specialist schools and institutions in this period like the *l’Etablissement National Technique pour l’Amélioration de la Viticulture* (ENTAV), *l’Institute Technique du Vin* (ITV), and the *Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique* (INRA). These institutions naturally complemented the general government push towards improving quality in wine. The rise in specialised language to discuss what heretofore had been an everyman’s drink in France was picked up by some vigneron, if rather awkwardly. For example, a columnist for *La Journée Vinicole* decided that romanticism was not the appropriate way to counter the complaints of detractors of wine at the time, some of whom were saying that wine was an evil associated with drugs and alcoholism. In his article<sup>29</sup>, the columnist then decided instead to ‘examiner [la] composition chimique [de la vin]’ to respond to their concerns: wine has ‘des propriétés biologiques’ and is ‘un liquid complexe formé d’eau: 800 à 950 grammes et contenant un dissolution ou en suspension un grand nombre de substances minerals organiques ou mixtes’; he described in depth constituent parts, like ‘les aldéhydes (acétiques, viniques, éthyliques), les acides (‘de deux sortes : ‘les

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<sup>28</sup> Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> *La Journée Vinicole*, January 26, 1979.

acides volatiles et les acides fixes’). This limp defence, with hardly any elaboration as to how it actually addressed the concerns of those believing wine drinking to be increasingly a social ill, was a reflection of the need to talk the new language of technocracy in wine.

## II. The Creation of a National Office of Wine

The Common Wine Policy enabled the rise of French sub-national and non-state actors in policy circles from which they were previously excluded. The crisis of the Franco-Italian Wine War abated only when the negotiations at the European Community resulted in a revised Common Wine Policy which was decidedly more stringent, with required uprooting, restrictions on grape varietal planting, retirement bonuses, and aid for both converting and structuring vineyards. The French government largely pushed through these negotiations at the European Community level, and continued its process of handing over responsibility for the wine policy to other parties. In the late 1960s, this had been to the European Community, but from the point of the initiation of the Common Wine Policy onward, it was also a devolution of power downward. The French government began including French non-governmental groups, particularly local and regional groups. After initial angry, defiant, and even violent reactions and appeals to the national government which provided unsatisfactory outcomes, a new and unique kind of body in viti-vinicultural regulation was created. This was the national para-public body ONIVIT for the table wine industry, complete with government funding, which largely took over implementation of the wine policy regulations from Brussels. This process legitimised the involvement of French non-governmental, unelected stakeholders in the wine policy process.

The creation of ONIVIT, a new national body of wine, included a few key characteristics. First, it ostensibly devolved power from the national government to a public institution. Second, the office was responsible for the implementation of European Community regulations, previously the job of the Ministry of Agriculture and its Chambers of Agriculture. Third, the office was run by the different producer and merchant groups the government had invited, who were previously divided in the Midi. While civil servants from the Ministry of Agriculture were involved in the running of ONIVIT as well, as it was formally under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance, it was dominated by those in the Languedoc-Roussillon. This is particularly clear when looking at its Languedocien leaders in the 1970s – from 1976–1983, Jean-François Breton was president, and from 1976–1980 Pierre Murret-Labarthe was director. ONIVIT was both a more direct line to Brussels – as they were responsible for implementing Community policy in France – and a more direct line to Paris – as ONIVIT brought them into regular contact with government officials from two important ministries. As such, Languedociens were anxious to use and influence this body. As a journalist for *La Journée Vinicole* wrote, during a time of frustration with the pace of change, despite the creation of ONIVIT:

La grande difficulté de l'organisation du marché des vins, c'est qu'il n'existe pas d'homogénéité de la profession. Son aspect diffère en fonction des catégories de vins élaborés, de la structure de la région. Il est soumis aux aléas du temps et de l'économie en général. Les frais varient très sensiblement suivant l'important de l'exploitation et le volume, suivant l'éloignement et la dissémination des propriétés. Là-dessus se greffe un autre problème, c'est la disproportion entre la régression de la consommation et la profession de la production, disproportion qui tend à s'accroître et à accentuer ainsi le déséquilibre du marché des vins de table. D'où la nécessité d'une politique à la base et cela regarde l'ONIVIT. Il faut résorber les excédents et rétablir l'équilibre. C'est la seule chance de survie d'une réelle interprofession.<sup>30</sup>

Under the auspices of a kind of early test case for decentralisation, this prototype allowed the French national government to step out of the line of some of the fire, whilst waving the

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<sup>30</sup> *La Journée Vinicole*, November 4, 1976.

banner of decentralisation and the attendant imagery and language of empowering local and regional entities and engaging them in the policy-making process. Pierre Muller argues that the basic model of France government was the centrality of the state in decision-making, specific forms of interest representation, and a privileged space for the state in the implementation of public policies at the local level.<sup>31</sup> Muller states this basic model was unchallenged until the 1980s; Robert Ladrech agrees, citing 1988 as a particular turning point.<sup>32</sup> However, it is clear that the wine industry began challenging this model in the 1970s.

This might have been because the methods pursued by the European Community to combat overproduction were not new and older vignerons recalled earlier attempts to curb production. In fact the methods the Community used, which were pushed by the French delegation, were previously attempted by the French themselves in the 1950s. The French government offered compulsory distillation to many small-time growers in the early 1950s, during which time indemnities were also promised to them, in exchange for uprooting vines for other crops. The policy also restricted the right to plant new vines. The uprooting programme was suspended in 1957 after it seemed to help achieve low yield. However, this low yield was only seen in the previous two years harvests – but the programme was so unpopular, the government hastily cancelled it. In 1962, there was again a large surplus and this convinced some vignerons that ‘a reduction in acreage was not enough to solve the chronic wine problem’.<sup>33</sup> However, the French government quietly disagreed – they believed it was effective and fought instead to have the policy remade in Brussels.

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<sup>31</sup> Pierre Muller, 'Entre le local et l'Europe. La crise du modèle français de politiques publiques,' *Revue française de science politique* 42, no. 2 (1992).

<sup>32</sup> Robert Ladrech, 'Europeanization of Domestic Politics in France,' *Journal of Common Market Studies* 32, no. 1 (1994).

<sup>33</sup> Gordon Wright, *Rural Revolution in France: The Peasantry in the Twentieth Century* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1964), 237.



### *Consequences of the Decreased Role in the Ministry of Agriculture*

Two consequences of this decrease in the role of the Ministry of Agriculture were, first, the legitimisation of non-elected, non-governmental representatives to make political decisions; the proliferation of specialist groups which gain new quasi-political powers was a new feature resulting from this decade. The second consequence was the rise in legitimacy based on territory and identity, with claims relating to social justice rather than claims based on level of power. Carter and Smith argue that ‘the politics of regulation is not just about setting policy instruments; it also legitimizes eligibility to govern significant parts of the EU polity’<sup>34</sup>, and furthermore that legitimisation during governance changes to sectors is ‘a fundamental political process through which actors seek to determine and justify who should make decisions about which aspects of public affairs’.<sup>35</sup> Political authority on wine, in the 1970s, was in a state of flux, and ‘up for grabs’.

Carter and Smith’s arguments for the discussion of ‘territory’ in policy-making, which is often incorrectly treated as uncontested, are salient. This helps elucidate the difference between, for instance, the Bordelais and Languedoc wine growing areas and their engagements with the European Community. The former were far less engaged with the European Community during the 1970s when the focus was on policies for table wine, but became suddenly alerted to its actions in 1990s when the CWP instituted quotas on quality wine export. This then led the *Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux*, along with its equivalent body in Bougogne, to place an ad in *Le Monde* expressing their anger.<sup>36</sup> But this

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<sup>34</sup> Cairfriona Carter and Andy Smith, 'Revitalizing public policy approaches to the EU: 'territorial institutionalism', fisheries and wine,' *Journal of European Public Policy* 15, no. 2 (2008): 265.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>36</sup> The ad read ‘La filière viti-vinicole en danger: Les Européens sont surprénants...Ils ont inventé les Grands Vins et les ont fait découvrir au monde entier. Maintenant, ils s’apprêtent à tout faire pour en produire de moins en moins...Les vignobles du monde entier sont ravis.’ *Le Monde*, October 5, 1994.

only highlighted that they had been too late – they had failed to recognise the potential agency of Brussels and thereby failed to foresee the shift in power centres of decision-making, which affected them when the policy began to affect quality wine producers in the 1980s and early 1990s. Bordeaux and Languedoc-Roussillon had also clashed over the issues of plantation rights; Bordeaux argued that it ought to have more of the French quota of plantations after planting restrictions introduced in 1976, on the basis that its wines contributed most to France's exports. In response, the Languedoc-Roussillon reacted to this 'depoliticizing of the issue of plantation rights...by invoking arguments of social justice'<sup>37</sup> for their part in reducing vineyards to bring down France's overall production.

### *The Rise of Subnational Actors and Change in the Profession of Winegrowing*

This important and notable deviation from previously well-entrenched French state control for a key cultural industry happened over a short period of time. At the beginning of the 1970s, after the Common Wine Policy had been created with very little input from non-governmental groups, the French exercised careful control over the preparation of the French line for all of the wine-related groups and meetings. A representative preparatory meeting in October 1970 in advance of assorted Community wine discussions in a variety of forums was composed of officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, the *Secrétariat général des affaires européennes* (SGCI), the tax directorate, fraud prevention agency, customs, and others, but without a single representative from the wine industry itself.<sup>38</sup> By the end of the 1970s, a meeting like this would have been very unlikely. There were two key characteristics which differentiate national level meetings before ones at the Community at the end of the decade.

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<sup>37</sup> Carter and Smith, 'Revitalizing public policy approaches to the EU: 'territorial institutionalism', fisheries and wine,' 276.

<sup>38</sup> 'Groupe de travail préparatoire aux réunions viti-vinicole Communautaires,' meeting minutes. October 30, 1970. 19971469/133, AN.

The first was the presence of vignerons, through the success of a forceful push for inclusion by vignerons' associations. Hardly a decade later, French vignerons were far more involved in both national discussions and European level discussions. The inclusion of these stakeholders in these kinds of political meetings on issues directly affecting them may in hindsight seem completely legitimate, but this would be a post-hoc rationalisation. Their legitimisation happened in great part over the course of the 1970s, though in part also in the 1980s. These kinds of formal coordinating meeting structures were weakened in favour of one which allowed more flexible, more direct contact between different levels of governance.

### I. Rise in Regional Feeling

As the mainstay of the Languedoc economy has long been wine-growing, the expression of regional identity tends to be bound up with the condition and political sentiments of the winegrowers in the area. The Languedoc-Roussillon area has had a history of opposition, as previously discussed. In particular, the character of the opposition is based on the idea of oppressed working-class people of the Occitan region who have had to repeatedly fight against the upper-class bureaucrats in Paris who attempt to harm their way of life through the imposition of capitalism and modernisation. In his classic work on the French peasantry, Henri Mendras argued that political changes engendered transformations in farming, markets, and businesses that then altered the mindset of the farmer.<sup>39</sup> Certainly, regional consciousness was heightened by the European Community on a number of occasions because of wine policies. In response to the negotiations over the enlargements to include wine-growing countries Spain and Portugal, growers protested the Community with banners bearing the emblems of Occitan, such as the Occitan cross, as well as slogans written in the *langue d'oc*,

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<sup>39</sup> Mendras, *La fin des paysans: changements et innovations dans les sociétés rurales françaises*.

the old dialect of the area, which few still spoke. The most popular slogans were ‘Volem Viure al Pais!’ (‘We Want to Live in Our Region!’) and ‘Volem Viure y Trahabar al Pais!’ (‘We Want to Live and Work in Our Region!’) The late 1970s saw a considerable swell in not only the learning and use of *langue d’oc* by young people, but a ‘micronationalist movement’ in the region based on cultural, political, and economic demands, expressed principally through demands regarding wine policy.<sup>40</sup>

## II. The Engagement of Actors at Different Levels

This rise in regional consciousness was likewise accompanied by a rise in involvement beyond the region. While previously it was that many smallholding winegrowing families could subsist by having members of the household engage in small and occasional instances of remunerated work,<sup>41</sup> that model became much less sustainable after the changes implemented by the European Community through the Common Wine Policy. The Common Wine Policy enabled the rise of French sub-national and non-state actors in policy circles from which they were previously excluded. The story of the winegrowing profession from the late 1960s through to the 1980s is also about a movement from being a member of the French peasantry, as a farmer, to being a *vigneron-vinificateur*. The successful ‘neo-viticulteurs’ adjusted to the fact that they were now part of a socio-professional world which was defined by international market flows, global economics, and their rise in specialisation, which occurred through the 1970s.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Michael Keating, ‘The Rise and Decline of Micronationalism in Mainland France,’ *Political Studies* 33, no. 1 (March 1985).

<sup>41</sup> Lem, *Cultivating Dissent: Work, Identity and Praxis in Rural Languedoc*.

<sup>42</sup> William Genieys, ‘Le retournement du Midi viticole,’ *Pôle Sud* 9(1998): 17.

Those who were most able to cope with the changes were those who could and were willing to adjust to the quality of policy and who were able ‘à faire le lien entre ce qui est sectoriellement possible (niveau central et européen) et ce qui territorialement probable (niveau local et régional).’<sup>43</sup> This was not an easy task, for these ‘neo-viticulteurs’ had an expanded professional world with expanded responsibilities: they had to understand new, complicated, and changing wine policy from the Community – for which many joined cooperatives to gain help in understanding and implementing – and they were required to stay up-to-date on new scientific or technical approaches to wine-making, or possibly learn about marketing, and they might need to attend the conferences of regional or national organisations they were a part of, like the *Mouvement pour la défense de l’exploitation familiale*. Those who did this well became the veritable leaders of the viticultural movement in the Languedoc. For instance, the concentration of representations in Antoine Verdale, previously discussed in chapter three, made his ability to negotiate these new spaces far more efficient. As a leader in the Aude in the 1970s, Verdale was the president of both the vigneron association *Fédération Départementale des Caves Coopératives de l’Aude* (a post he held until 1992) and the governmental *Chambre d’Agriculture de l’Aude*. With this territorial legitimacy established,<sup>44</sup> he then went on to hold several regional and national posts, such as President of the *Fédération Régionale des Caves* and President of the *Confédération Nationale des Caves Coopératives* in 1980, and even President of the *Groupement de la Coopération Viticole de la CEE* in 1986.

However, there were side effects to this inclusion in policymaking which some wine industry leaders may not have foreseen. The relationship between professional agricultural organisations, like ONIVIT or the *groupements de producteurs*, and the French national

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

government grew more important in the 1970s as the former began to take part in the restructuring policies of the government. However, the role of the professional agricultural organisations in these policies resulted in an uncomfortable contradiction: their mandate was to represent and defend the interests of all farmers in their purview, and yet they were also complicit, by adopting these measures, in the elimination of some of these farmers.<sup>45</sup>

This rise in sub-national actors attempting to reach Brussels was accompanied by another kind of change, which was the rising challenge within France to dominant powerbrokers in the 1970s, most often a result of a new multiplicity of organisations, particularly specialist organisations. FNSEA was the foremost national syndical group in France, whose desire to vigorously push forward with modernising structural programmes threatened small-landholding farmers. In turn, small farmers used the vehicle of the *Mouvement de défense des exploitants familiaux* (MODEF), originally formed to protect small farmers in 1959 from the tyranny of FNSEA and national agricultural policies, to provide an alternative syndical organisation. They had modest success in the 1960s, but in the 1970 and 1976 elections they clearly reached a significantly larger audience. In 1970, they expanded from previously only presenting candidates in the south and west to presenting them in 64 different departments, where they gained almost 33% of votes cast therein, as well as representation in 23 departmental Chambers of Agriculture. Six years later, they gained a quarter of the vote in 71 departments.<sup>46</sup>

The importance of the European Community and the Common Wine Policy to vignerons was that it provided a new referent against which to measure, compare, and act. MODEF was primarily motivated against the European Community, fiercely outspoken on the issue of the

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<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Jacques Cloarec, 'Un exemple d'intervention de l'Etat: le financement public de l'agriculture,' *Etudes rurales* 69(1978).

<sup>46</sup> Cleary, *Peasants, Politicians and Producers*, 137.

widening of the markets to include Spain and Portugal in particular, and derived much of its support and power base from those farmers believing their products had been adversely affected because of greater exposure through the Community. Unsurprisingly therefore, MODEF has a strong support base in the south with producers of wine and fruit. Whether or not the European Community was actually ultimately responsible for the adverse effects on these producers in the 1970s and indeed later on is not of primary importance in terms of assessing its impact on the behaviours and beliefs of these farmers; it was enough that these farmers believed themselves to be negatively affected by the Community – principally via the combination of the free market flow, monetary fluctuations, grubbing up policies, and modernisation pressures sometimes inconsistent with needs of small-time farmers – and correspondingly, reacted with it as a new referent.

Despite the increased political reach of Midi vigneron and their leaders, who were agitating for a change to their sometimes desperate situation in the 1970s, on the whole they did not develop warm ties at either the French or Brussels levels. Instead, the process through the 1970s increased their sense of self and led to heightened regional feeling.<sup>47</sup> An awakening of Occitanian consciousness led to the popular slogan ‘Volem viure al pais!’ (‘We want to live in our region!’), which was written on picket signs and spray painted on buildings across the Languedoc. Some scholars, like Winnie Lem, have argued that the Languedoc-Roussillon wine-growers, despite the forces of capitalism and state modernisation, have not abandoned their struggles to keep their regional identity and way of life.<sup>48</sup> Robert C. Ulin is in agreement, stating that a long, embedded tradition of political radicalism has helped the Languedoc keep its identity.<sup>49</sup> This thesis agrees with Lem and Ulin, but goes further to say

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<sup>47</sup> Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France*, 264.

<sup>48</sup> Lem, *Cultivating Dissent: Work, Identity and Praxis in Rural Languedoc*.

<sup>49</sup> Robert C. Ulin, 'Work as Cultural Production: Labour and Self-Identity Among Southwest French Wine-Growers,' *Royal Anthropological Institute* 8(2002).

that it was in considerable measure *because* of, not despite, the various forces imposed by the European Community that the Midi vigneron reacted as strongly as they did to keep and even augment their regional distinctiveness.

*The Common Wine Policy and the European Turn to Quality in Agricultural Policy*

The two broader changes which were in part brought about by the CWP – the voluntary decrease in the role of French institutions in an industry in which they had previously had tight control, and the rise of sub-national and non-state actors amongst the Midi vigneron – together fed into a broader change on the direction of agricultural policies in the European Community. The desire of the French government, who were, along with Italy, overwhelmingly the dominant group in Brussels negotiations on matters of wine, to avoid insulting or upsetting the vigneron led them to adopt the policy of an emphasis on quality in viti-viniculture. Rather than frame the situation as one in which unpopular or even outright mediocre wine was attacked through various Brussels policies to reduce table wine production, which would have involved dealing with political high dudgeon, the public packaging of the policy involved a relentless stream of jargon and justification which focused on the term ‘quality’.

This continued intensive use of the term ‘quality’ by the French government in negotiations and debates on the wine policy, both in Brussels and domestically, eventually spilled over to discussions on the direction of agriculture in Europe in general, though this occurred in earnest in the late 1980s, with the introduction of Green Europe. The influence of the wine policy was felt in future discussions and justifications of the geographical indications regime in the European Community, which from its formal induction in 1992 onwards, was to be a



distinctive feature of the European Union, and one which caused the EU to face several clashes in the international arena, as the legality of such a protectionist regime was debated. Ultimately, the debates and discussions around the CWP seemed to have fed into a broader trend in the European Community toward an increased attention to quality of goods, and in particular, encouraging the production of quality goods as a way of increasing the value of and decreasing the volume of production. This final observation is unfortunately outside the scope of this thesis to justify or analyse fully, but is a potentially rich area for further research.

## Conclusion

Je ne connais de sérieux ici-bas que la culture de la vigne.

- Voltaire

## *Thesis Overview*

To recap what this thesis has covered, the introduction presented the overall thesis question, which is ‘What impact did the European Community have on table wine growers in the Midi region in France in the 1970s?’ This initial chapter also established the link between agriculture, the French state, and French identity. It brought together secondary literature primarily from anthropology, sociology, and political science to demonstrate the great importance of agriculture in France, but beyond this, how conceptualisations of agriculture and wine more specifically have affected the sense of self in France. Frenchness has long

been tied up with the myth of the roots of a rural peasant idyll, and the place of wine in this popular image is highly symbolic and crucial.

Chapter one explored the emergence of the integrated wine policy at the European level. This chapter argued that one of the more complicated integration aspirations of the Common Agricultural Policy was its wine policy, which required the nation-states of the Six to consider relinquishing sovereignty over their wine industries. The Six, led by major wine producers France and Italy, tackled what became an increasingly complicated issue on laying down ground rules for a common wine market and its operation, given nationally divergent policies and interests. It traced the difficult and lengthy negotiations in the European Economic Community over this policy from 1967 to the beginning of 1970, when the policy – the last of the major Common Market Organisations originally discussed in the Stresa Conference – was finally established.

During the negotiations over the European Community's Common Wine Policy, the European Community vignerons were not legitimate policy players. They were largely kept at arm's length by elected and non-elected government officials alike while decisions were made by French representatives in Brussels. The Common Wine Policy was largely a Franco-Italian creation. It was termed a compromise but principally took the liberal shape that the Italians preferred.

The thesis then looked at the first decade of the Common Wine Policy, which has two distinct phases. The first five years of the CWP was a liberal policy which focused mostly on short-term policies to help beleaguered farmers with abundant harvests, mostly via rounds of cost distillation and storage, as well as direct monetary aid with pricing mechanisms. In the last

half of the decade, the policy became more restrictive and planning became about longer term structural changes to reduce certain vineyards and wine production.

Chapter two analysed the Common Wine Policy at the Brussels level in the 1970s, focusing focusing in particular on the major event of the decade, the Franco-Italian Wine War in 1975. This first major stress test of the Common Wine Policy occurred as a result of the sudden flood of Italian table wines in France in January and February of 1975. This spike occurred because of a depreciation of the lira against the franc, creating a more favorable environment for import of Italian goods. This table wine was brought in by French *négociants*, who cut French wine with more alcoholic Italian wine to produce a product with higher alcohol (which generally sold better than those with lower alcohol percentage.) This propelled the Franco-Italian wine war.

This so-called wine war lasted over the course of 1975, which resulted in lengthy and stressful negotiations in the European Community, and cast concern over not only the Community's Common Agricultural Policy but the European integration project as a whole. The French national government, unable to satisfy either the demands of the Community or of their *vignerons*, initially reacted by instituting an illegal tax on Italian wines, which further deepened the seriousness of the situation. The French were arguably the leaders of the European Community project in the 1970s, and were in breach of its commitments to free circulation of goods. Given that integration was largely along economic lines at the time (with the hope of increasing spillover into political integration) , the effect of the Common Wine Policy reached far beyond the ken of bickering French and Italian wine professionals.

The French tax on Italian wines caused them embarrassment when they were called to the European Court of Justice for violating Article 170 the Treaty of Rome, regarding the fulfillment of obligations contained therein, the first time a member state had been so accused. The French were found guilty and were forced to pay reparations to the Italians. The incident prompted a round of negotiations over foundational aspects of the Common Wine Policy, during which time it was heavily revised to be closer in substance to the desires of the French delegations. The CWP became much more restrictive – it curbed planting rights, introduced grubbing up, and laid down more rules about what could be planted and where.

Chapter three analysed the local and regional reactions in the Languedoc-Roussillon to the changes instituted at the European level from 1975 – 1976. The Wine Crisis prompted the beginning of the genuine engagement of Midi vigneronns with the Common Wine Policy. The Languedoc-Roussillon region was where much of the violence in the Midi occurred and was also by far the greatest single contributor to the EEC ‘wine lake.’ Wine production had a long history in this region, was central to its economy, and to the livelihood of millions of its viticulteurs. The CWP had a marked effect on table wine growers in this area for the policy predominantly involved changes for table wine. The Midi vigneronns – whose reactions to the Community policy in the 1970s are comprehensively represented in academic work for the first time in this thesis – saw the CWP and actors in Brussels as being responsible for their plight, wherein cheaper and comparable quality Italian table wines were flooding into the French market. They reacted in the initial period from 1975 – 1976 by acting against the state, lobbying in particular the Ministry and Minister of Agriculture to help them. The Ministry of Agriculture, together with top level officials, in a hasty attempt to pacify demonstrations in the south, responded by placing an illegal tax on Italian wines. They thereafter created a national office for wine to allow vigneronns to be engaged in the policy-

making and policy-implementation process for table wines. However, this project was not sufficient to address the concerns of vignerons. Despite some successes, the gap between producers and merchants – where for those in the south it is a particularly clear and old divide – as well as the perceived gap between south and north proved too wide at times for productive consensus.

Chapter four continued the analysis of local and regional reactions to the Common Wine Policy, and in particular looked at the way the CWP affected organisational behaviour amongst Midi vignerons. The interventionist turn in the CWP from 1976 involved Brussels more deeply with the Midi vignerons, and after the breakdown of an already rocky relationship with Paris, most vividly captured in the widespread condemnation by Midi vignerons and politicians of Minister of Agriculture Christian Bonnet following a fateful radio interview in December 1976, these vignerons began to organise at the local and regional level to lobby at the Community level. This did not mean that various viticulteur groups no longer took their grievances to French officials, but rather that they realised that many of the policy decisions affecting them were being taken at Brussels and they felt they ought to engage at that level. This was significant because the French had traditionally had a bottleneck to the Community<sup>50</sup> – various vignerons broke with this carefully structured chain of authority to assert themselves in Brussels. They were not always successful – but this change was important for it demonstrated that they felt they had the ability and legitimacy to act at this level without asking for or receiving permission from the official French representatives. There were also attempts by viticultural leaders in the Midi, even if weakly, to engage directly with their Italian counterparts, which was an active and unconventional role for representatives of an industry in a French region to undertake. Taken together, these

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<sup>50</sup> Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy*, 87. Also, Anne Dulphy and Christine Manigand, 'Le Secrétariat général du Comité interministériel pour les questions de coopération économique européenne,' *Histoire@Politique, Politique, culture et société* May - August no. 8 (2009).

actions were a subversion, even if unintentional, of traditional diplomatic and state-based politics and relations.

Chapter five brought together the previous chapters under broader themes, and in particular looked at how the first decade of the CWP changed relationships between different groups at the European, national, and local level. It argued that the changes occurred in two places – first, in the French government’s decision to reduce its own control over its national wine industry, and second, in subnational and non-state actors playing a greater role in policy circles.

### *Situating this Thesis in the Secondary Literature*

#### I. Addressing the Politics of Wine

This thesis has generally made a distinction between different actors and organisations at three levels of governance – the local and regional (or subnational), the national French level, and the European level. This use of levels of governance in analysis is not uncommon in political science, where it is referred to as multi-level governance or MLG. Likewise, the method is not without its detractors. Caitríona Carter and Andy Smith have argued that MLG is too simplistic to explain the dynamics at play in European Union policy-making, and they particularly emphasize that in France for instance, the French national position is often defined by well-placed socio-professional actors.<sup>51</sup> This may be true now in contemporary accounts, but this was not the case in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This suggests that a period of legitimisation was required before the process evolved and could be understood the

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<sup>51</sup> Carter and Smith, 'Revitalizing public policy approaches to the EU: 'territorial institutionalism', fisheries and wine.'

way Carter and Smith have argued. Using these different levels as ‘stages’ that different groups accessed, as this thesis has done, is relevant in the 1970s because these different political levels were still clearly defined then. The end of the 1970s saw a move toward a different kind of order based on a new understanding of what actors had authority, and this was when the ‘who’ become increasingly important relevant to the ‘where’.

The rise of cooperatives and the changes in the political relationships between actors during the 1970s has had a lasting effect. Commenting on the contemporary politics of wine, Tyler Colman comments that: ‘Surprisingly, voluntary associations have taken the lead in governing the production of quality wine [in France]. The fact that more Americans are “bowling alone,” in the words of the social critic Robert Putnam, makes this finding doubly surprising....But what escapes many English-speaking observers is that those regulations are imposed by the producers themselves, not by “heavy-handed regulators.”’<sup>52</sup>

This work helps explain some aspects of the current state of the Languedocien wine industry. It supports, for instance, the work of Chiffoleau et al., who suggest in their work that cooperative governance does not only allow for collective learning but also for the preservation of a local and regional identity.<sup>53</sup> In particular, their work on contemporary wine cooperatives in the Languedoc-Roussillon observed that ‘local networks and clusters have specific characteristics when agricultural cooperatives are concerned’. They note for instance these wine cooperatives are more motivated to act with regard to ‘common cooperative values, rules and culture’ which explains why they are interested in cooperating with other

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<sup>52</sup> Tyler Colman, *Wine Politics: How Governments, Environmentalists, Mobsters, and Critics Influence the Wines We Drink* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 39.

<sup>53</sup> Yuna Chiffoleau et al., ‘Networks, Innovation and Performance - Evidence from a Cluster of Wine Cooperatives (Languedoc, South of France),’ in *Vertical Markets and Cooperative Hierarchies: The Role of Cooperatives in the Agri-Food Industry*, ed. Kostas Karantininis and Jerker Nilsson (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007). See especially p. 54.



cooperatives rather than investor-owned firms that, while riskier, could be much more profitable. The authors remark, but are not able to explain, how this is particularly pronounced in the case of older, traditional cooperatives. The wine cooperatives they mean are those with longer histories, such as the many that were born in the 1970s. At least part of the explanation for this lies in the story told in this thesis of the struggle of the decade and the rise of cooperatives in that atmosphere.

## II. Addressing the Study of Identity

This thesis has tried in part to make some careful – but not overt – additions to our understanding of identity, and some methodological discussion is in order. The upswing over the last decade in research on European identity has been interesting and troublesome. The topic of identity in the context of important historical European change can be fruitful, pertinent, and above all, fascinating. Yet the major standard works on identity are currently in sociology and political science.<sup>54</sup> Social scientists bring a different set of tools to bear on the topic, and their academic assumptions can make it hard for historians to relate to their work. In seeking to overtly study ‘European identity’, authors often have a previous and sustained interest in it, and this interest might lead sometimes to presupposing that a European identity does exist and that the search is to look for its manifestations thereof (there are, of course, *some* manifestations of such a thing) – or vice versa. The imprecision of the idea of

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<sup>54</sup> For instance, Michael Bruter, *Citizens of Europe? : the emergence of a mass European identity* (Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein, *European identity*, Contemporary European politics (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Marion Demossier, *The European puzzle : the political structuring of cultural identities at a time of transition* (New York ; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007); Neil Fligstein, *Euroclash : the EU, European identity, and the future of Europe* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Richard K. Herrmann, Thomas Risse-Kappen, and Marilyn B. Brewer, *Transnational identities : becoming European in the EU*, Governance in Europe (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); Willfried Spohn and Anna Triandafyllidou, *Europeanisation, national identities and migration : changes in boundary constructions between western and eastern Europe*, Routledge advances in sociology 5 (London: Routledge, 2002); Willfried Spohn and Atsuko Ichijo, *Entangled identities : nations and Europe* (Aldershot ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

‘European identity’ and the multiplicity of approaches to it seem to make its study interesting but currently underdeveloped.

That there is rather less identity-related work in the field of history is at least in part because historians feel that these topics are best covered in its tradition arenas of sociological or anthropological examination, and that the tools of those disciplines serve it best. This is changing, however – historians Kolleen M. Guy and Eugen Weber’s attempts for instance, who both have looked at identity-formation in France in the nineteenth century. The advantage of a historian in studying identity is that he or she is able to marshal empirical evidence to show the gradual process of change. In this way, historians can help the field of European identity studies by walking the middle ground between being too quantitative and too quotidian. There is plenty of current emphasis on either analysing elites or analysing citizens, but less so studies of their ongoing interactions. Guy, for instance, identifies multiple key actors at higher and lower levels, by looking at relationships between local forces, private companies, and the nation-state. Likewise, this thesis has identified multiple actors at the local and regional, state, and European level, and the relationships between new or reinforced regional and national organisations, the French national government, and the institutions and players in Brussels.

Overt studies of European identity seem less fruitful than considered multi-angled studies around the topic. Studying a complicated and multifaceted topic like European identity overtly and broadly often leads to ultimately unhelpful and ambivalent statements like ‘Process and project involve publics and elites; they are shaped by and shape states; they are open-ended and have no preordained outcomes; and they serve both worthy and nefarious

political objectives'.<sup>55</sup> A historian might do best to keep in mind the conclusions from overt work on European identity that strongly suggests it is not static but contextual and bound by time and values, and that identity is best conceptualized as being multiplistic, often with layers or 'nests' of various identities. This thesis has hoped that the advantage of a historian contributing to the debates on identity in Europe is that they could approach the topic with a nuanced reading without a direct attack.

This thesis has tried to include the voices of a group of people who have often been marginalised, not only in the context of their own time, but in subsequent histories. It has also discussed a change in the sense of self as it pertains to vocational and political identity. As discussed in chapter four, those Languedocien viticultural leaders who were best able to negotiate the changes of the time – we can extrapolate to argue this was also the case for many average vigneron in similar circumstances growing similar crops – were those who became more professionalised in their positions, such as by joining cooperatives, learning new techniques through attending specialist fairs and conferences, investing in modern equipment, and adopting some scientific understanding of winegrowing. In essence, when growing table wine grapes no longer afforded the steady return it had their ancestors, table wine growers in the Midi could no longer afford an attitude of thinking they could make grapes and give little thought to the processes that followed. Not everyone was successful – a number of areas facing difficulty in adjusting to the sociological and political changes, such as those in the Alpine region, the Massif Central, as well as the Pyrénées, saw their vineyards 'nearly...erased in the last quarter century.'<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Checkel and Katzenstein, *European identity*, 213.

<sup>56</sup> Crowley, 'Changes in the French Winescape,' 254.

The pressure of the European Community's quality-oriented policies, which successfully forced a decrease in vineyard surface area from 1976 onward (French acreage shrank 31% between 1968 and 1988<sup>57</sup>) required adaptation and with this came a change in political behaviour. For it was this 'génération d'innovateurs' who managed to succeed where many left their vineyards: their secret was to combine, into a 'double registre de légitimation', involvement in those institutions that could be encouraged to move in the direction of the new policy of quality along with 'la capacité à s'intégrer dans les multiples espaces de négociation' of the local and regional, Paris, and Brussels.<sup>58</sup>

### III. Addressing Key Theories of European Integration

Alan Milward's argument that the European Community was a vehicle to advance economic and domestic policy in a more efficient and cost-effective way is supported is somewhat supported by this thesis but his explanation is rather too simple. In Milward's *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, which devotes considerable attention to the CAP, he argues that it is because the European Community abets the continued existence of the nation-state that it has been allowed to develop as it has.<sup>59</sup> While this is borne out in some ways by the fact that the French government faced impending pressure with the financing of their table wine industry, it still does not, in itself, explain why they would involve themselves in this European policy.

The link this thesis has established between agriculture, identity, and tight French control over key national industries considerably complicates the situation. Creating the Common Wine Policy breached some important French values of agricultural state control and national

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>58</sup> Genieys, 'Le retournement du Midi viticole,' 11.

<sup>59</sup> Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*.

self-identification. Furthermore, the policy angered rather than pacified potential voters. And finally, the form of the initial Common Wine Policy was against the desires of the French national government, despite their very strong negotiating stance, suggesting that the state is not always able to retain its interests in pursuing policies at the level of the European Community. In essence, Milward provides an explanation of economic rationality, but not the motivation for ultimately pursuing such policies, particularly for sensitive, culturally-linked segments of the economy.

Andrew Moravcsik's central argument that national economic interests were the principal driver of European integration is also challenged by this thesis. If, as he posits, the rational self-interest of nations led to intergovernmental bargaining based overwhelmingly on domestic economic terms, why would the French government choose to pursue a policy that was very likely going to cause displeasure amongst the lobby groups of key domestic industries? The French were motivated to save the ailing wine industry, and knew they were unlikely to be able to cope with the growing financial cost of it. But choosing the European Community as the vehicle for this was not a straightforward choice.

The French had considerable economic concerns about the creation of the CWP, for a policy which needed to operate under a broader economic requirement of the free flow of products meant less ability to control imports and exports. Maintaining control over the flow and taxation of imports and exports would have been useful to the French, particularly given the knowledge that Italian production was on the increase and thereby, the risk of the inflow of Italian wines. France's viticultural traditions are also deeply ingrained and upsetting them meant politically risking the wrath of the strong agricultural lobbies. Overall, it seemed in the French interests to retain control over their wine market. In this situation, a loose policy

removing some custom tariffs and quotas seems a better option, but the policy adopted was far more comprehensive and integrationist.

There were certainly economic motivations for the creation of the Common Agricultural Policy – the welfarist European states were effectively competing with each other's national subsidies, until the creation of the CAP solved this problem – but this explanation rather falls short when it comes to motivations for the inclusion of certain sectors in the CAP. There does not seem much impetus to undertake cooperation in the area of wine, particularly given the economic climate of the start of the 1970s. Further, it is even harder to account for, in the context of Moravcsik's analysis, the amount of energy devoted to a sector worth such a small part of the CAP budget (for the first half of 1975, it was between 1 – 2%) .

Both Milward and Moravcsik's theories for European integration would suggest the high likelihood of a European community that was something more akin to a super-customs-union or a large, administratively-complex free trade area. But that the European Community project has taken on such a different form indicates these theories are somewhat deficient in providing a full explanation. The negotiation, creation, and evolution of the European Community's wine policy does not fit particularly well into either theory, and is a case study of an economically-minor, culturally-significant sector of the Common Agricultural Policy that persisted despite major challenges not only in the 1970s but in the following decades.

### *Final Remarks*

At the centre of the question about the success or otherwise of the Common Wine Policy is the question of the validity of its hybrid model. The European Community's competing aims

were reflected in the design of its wine policy; the competing aims of the CWP caused confusion for vignerons, who were in turn distressed by but also the material benefactors of different parts of the policy. In attempting to be both a social policy and an economic policy, the CWP faced internal and external contradictions. It wished to increase wages but also reduce production. The vignerons felt the competing aims in two ways. First, in an effort to increase their wages, they received various supports, such as pricing or storage aid, for their production, even if it went unsold. This caused wine production to continue to increase. Second, because of efforts to reduce production by punishing table wine producers by favouring quality wine producers, and modernisation which threatened small, inefficient holdings, the predominantly small family farmers created wine cooperatives and producer groups to keep their livelihood against conglomeration pressures. Interestingly enough, this was in part paid for and supported by both the European Communities and the French national government. The rise of cooperatives was particularly significant for they were as important as any technology in the modernisation of wine growing in France, especially that of table wine.<sup>60</sup> As such, the EEC did reach their goal of promoting modernisation, even if in this case indirectly, through inciting a local movement which found expression in the grouping together for support against the perceived threat of the Community in cooperatives and other organisations.

European Community's influence in French rural transformation was noteworthy because it was so unprecedented in a country that had such strong control over its agriculture, as a result the fact that French identity was tied to its images of idyllic *pays*. But beyond this, it was noteworthy for it very likely saved the Languedocien wine industry in the long run. The French purses, as with other countries mired in the economic downturns of the 1970s, were

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<sup>60</sup> Loubère et al., *The Vine Remembers*, 137.

not deep, and it would have been very difficult to keep up with the growing subsidy demands from the table wine industry. This CWP was arguably a major reason for the continuation of Midi viticulture where otherwise it may have collapsed – despite the inherent cyclical ups and downs of the wine industry, in both production and profitability, overproduction of wine became systemic in the 1960s and in the face of serious sociological changes in drinking habits and tastes, the table-wine producing region of Midi would have faced potential ruin.

This process was akin in some ways to the cooperatives saving the livelihoods of small-time vigneronns in the first half of the 20th century. In the 1980s, the Languedoc-Roussillon vigneronns began to adopt in earnest the policy of quality that the bureaucrats in the CWP had been pushing for since 1978 (and in some instances, even earlier.) Along with a general turn in European Community agriculture to a policy of quality that included foods – which would become accompanied by an upswing in the interest of identifying and protecting foods from particular regions, under the geographical indications regime – the Midi began to make serious and sometimes fruitful, even if slow, transformative efforts towards adopting the policy of quality to produce more *appellation d'origine contrôlée* wines. In this regard, the category *vins de pays* very much benefitted the Languedocien producers.

Historians who have previously worked on wine-growers in France have lamented that ‘We know little about the living and working conditions of grape growers, about their states of mind, precisely because the written evidence largely ignored them’<sup>61</sup> – certainly it is true too that farmers by and large did not engage with the written record. The primary sources presented in this thesis have attempted to address this gap. Transforming an industry in a country where the industry was unevenly distributed, and in certain quarters, where people

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.



involved resisted change and distrusted policymakers, was a quagmire for the French government; indeed, ‘the question was: how does one transform a rural country with a large peasantry and where small, private businesses proliferate around a modern industrial state, without destroying the fabric of society?’<sup>62</sup>

The response the French chose was to use the machinery of the European Community to deal with an ailing agricultural sector, much as Alan Milward asserts that France, along with other Western European countries, did with the whole of their agricultural welfare systems. But this thesis has argued that the wine sector was distinct in a few important ways from the other markets, that it was not necessary for wine to have been included under the Common Agricultural Policy, and that the heavy influence of the French over the course of the wine policy negotiations meant they could have forced an exclusion for wine to be made. That they continued to seek the European Community, despite the political importance of wine in France and its place in the French cultural psyche, spoke volumes about their need to unburden themselves of the national wine sector. This was not without consequence – the reaction from the Midi was angry and even violent to what vignerons from there saw as abdication of state responsibility. Though initially scattered, their movement in response to the changes in wine policy quickly became, by 1980, both more locally and regionally organised and outward looking, even if with mixed results as to effectiveness. The pervasive idea of the isolated and independent French rural farmer, particularly those who could not reform or adapt to modern pressures, is challenged by this thesis.

In William Shakespeare’s *Othello*, Cassio shouts, ‘O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil.’ Perhaps this was the sentiment felt at times

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<sup>62</sup> Elie Cohen, ‘France: National Champions in Search of a Mission,’ in *Industrial Enterprise and European Integration: From National to International Champions in Western Europe*, ed. Jack Ernest Shalom Hayward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 27.

by those involved in the complications of creating and then maintaining the Common Wine Policy. But Iago is quick with a reply to Cassio: 'Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature if it be well-used; exclaim no more against it.'

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