

CHAPTER 1

The Place, the People, and the Land

The village of Broussan is located in the department¹ of the Hérault on the coastal plain of Mediterranean Languedoc.² It is situated northwest of the town of Béziers in a nearby canton.³ The village is enclosed on all sides by fields of vines and farmers make a daily trek from their homes in the village to their minute parcels of land that are often widely scattered over the calcareous hills, valleys, and the exposed briny plains that are characteristic of the landscape of Languedoc. Indeed, throughout this region, seemingly endless expanses of vineyards yield the notoriously low-grade wines—the “*vins ordinaires*,” of France that have periodically glutted the national market and contributed toward the creation of the notorious “wine lakes” of the European Union. Reaching crisis proportions from time to time throughout the twentieth century, this periodic saturation of the wine market was a consequence of the development of the commercial monoculture of vine growing, initiated around the midnineteenth century.

Before the mid-1800s, an essentially subsistence-oriented peasantry generally prevailed throughout Lower Languedoc and farmers in villages like Broussan practised a mixed agriculture of wheat production, animal husbandry, and grape cultivation. Wine produced both on peasant holdings, as well as the large estates of the region was meant primarily for domestic consumption. Only

surpluses of wine that remained after the satisfying the needs of the families of the smallholders and estates owners, as well as those of the workers on the estates were sold on the market. As the mid-1800s approached, however, smallholders and estate owners alike began to convert increasingly from a mixed agriculture to the cultivation of grapes alone. For example, in Broussan, from about the beginning of the 1800s to the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the land devoted to viticulture more than doubled, rising from about 280 to 600 hectares out of a total of 2,500 hectares of arable and nonarable land (Durandeu 1983). The economy of Broussan, like that in many other villages on the Languedoc plain was becoming progressively transformed from a subsistence-oriented polyculture to a market-oriented monoculture.

Several developments stimulated owners of both large estates and small farms in Languedoc villages to expand vine holdings and transform plots that produced wine largely for domestic consumption into vineyards that produced a commodity primarily destined for sale on markets. Crop conversion was originally initiated by the growth of an international sea trade in the mid-1800s as well as the decline of local wheat production. Competition from cheaper Russian imports reduced the demand or higher priced local grain and the market collapsed for Languedoc wheat, giving impetus to producers to switch to the cultivation of a more saleable crop.

Later in the century, the increased conversion to commercial monoculture was hastened by the opening up of the national market, through the construction of a railway system that linked producers in the south to centers of consumption in the north. Growing demand for Languedoc wines in urban centers of France prompted growers to switch over to vine cultivation en masse especially in the face of unsaleable wheat. While the decline of wheat production and the opening up of the international and then national market accelerated the development of Languedoc vineyards, the thorough transformation of agriculture to monoculture in the region was in fact induced by the phylloxera⁴ blight of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The blight that destroyed France's vineyards resulted in an acute shortage of wine on the national market and prices soared in the last half of the 1800s for available stores.

In the aftermath of the epidemic, the restoration of France's devastated vineyards became an imperative both for growers and the state. The state offered various subsidies and forms of

aid to producers to help defray the costs of reconstituting vineyards. Languedoc farmers, who were already on the road to conversion were poised to take advantage of government schemes and subsidies, and they undertook replantation on an unprecedented scale. Not only did they replant with more and more vines, but because they had incurred heavy debts over the years of crisis and also because subsidies only partially offset the costs of vineyard reconstitution, growers replanted with varieties of grapes that would ensure maximum yields per hectare in order to take advantage of the high prices wine was commanding. In viticulture, the cultivation of high-yielding varieties of grapes necessarily produces low-grade wines. In Languedoc, then the production of great volumes of low grade wines has contributed to a series of crises in the economy of wine growing, in which periodic booms were often followed with busts and crises of over-production.⁵

Languedoc farming then became transformed from a largely subsistence-oriented polyculture to a market-oriented monoculture and a peasantry became transformed into petty commodity producers. Languedoc, itself, not only came to be a region that specialized in a monoculture of grape cultivation but it also became a region that specialized in the production of large quantities of *vin ordinaire*. Now on the littoral that spans almost the entire shore of the Golfe du Lion, in villages like Broussan, volumes of plonk are produced by a highly differentiated rural population with the labor of smallholders, agricultural laborers and tenants on the small-scale family-run farms and large estates that characteristic of the region. Viticulture and wine growing then has become central to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of Broussan and the lives of a good majority of people in the village orbit around the cultivation of grapes and the manufacture of wine.⁶

Work and Belonging in Broussan

The collective experiences of working in the vines and living within a community whose daily and yearly routine was organized around the viticultural cycle made farming fundamental to a sense of the shared identity as people of Broussan—*les Broussanais* and *Broussanaises*." While, in fact, most of the inhabitants of Broussan, farmers and nonfarmers alike, actually made a living through a variety of means, the social, political,

and cultural life of the village revolved around grape growing and the manufacturing of wines. Everyday talk was replete with concerns about viticultural policies, the prices of wines, the conditions of the soils, how to execute specific tasks, recruiting labor, the price of land, equipment, inputs—in short—every aspect of viticulture.

One particular topic that loomed large as a conversation piece among villagers was the lingering fear about the decline of Languedoc villages and viticulture, which was a byproduct of the changes experienced by villagers in the immediate post-World War II period.

In the 1950s and the 1960s, the aging of the farm population combined with the flight of young families, as well as the failure of many farmers fueled concerns that Broussan would stagnate. The introduction of the tractor, which reduced the need for laborers and displaced women on wine-growing estates, combined with the revival of the industrial economy under the Marshall Plan as well as efforts made to restructure agriculture through various state programs (see chapter 2) prompted an exodus from the countryside in many parts of France and its reverberations were felt in Broussan. During those years, the population of the village fell significantly, while the proportion of elderly people increased over the years rather dramatically.⁷

In the 1980s this worry continued to find expression among the people of Broussan in discussions and conversations about the future of the village and farming. In interviews with women and men of the village whose experience of work in agriculture spanned the postwar period, gloom-and-doom scenarios were frequently offered on the future of the village and Languedoc farming. One elderly grower, Henri Boher commented about his son, André, who had taken over the family holding:

André belongs to the last generation of people who will have work in the vines. After, his generation very few, maybe only the rich, will be able to stay in farming. Anyway, the young don't want to stay. I have watched them leaving for a long time, since farmers started buying tractors. There is no future here.

Despite the tenacity of this particular view of future of farming and village life in Broussan among a certain generation of farmers, the threat of stagnation was declared by many to have been stemmed. Indeed in the Municipal Bulletins of the 1980s, village

officials were at pains to emphasize the importance of the small but significant rises in the population of Broussan after several decades of decline. In-migration clearly acted as one of the factors that allayed fears that the village would suffer the fate of many rural settlements that had become almost deserted villages of dilapidated houses, boarded-up shops inhabited only by the elderly found in the more mountainous areas of Upper Languedoc and the Massif Central.

New migrants to the village accounted for some of this "recovery," however, a second related development also served to diminish that haunting specter of ghost villages. Village sons and daughters were returning to settle in Broussan. The economic recession that gripped France in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the restructuring of the national economy, which initiated the deindustrialization in urban areas gave impetus to these developments. Factory closures and the down-scaling of industries have resulted in high levels of unemployment in industrial centers, propelling many out of the cities to search for work elsewhere. Moreover, the relocation of industries to the regions as well as the promotion of regional poles of development in the 1980s has fostered a detectible urban exodus of sorts in which members of the urban working classes are relocating to the regions in a search for work (Jenson 1988, Lem 1997). In contrast to the postwar decades, in which village youth were forced to search in the north for employment in industry, many of the young now either arrive, return or remain in or nearby Broussan. Such developments in the national political economy brought of Anthony Giraud a native of Paris to Broussan. Anthony was 25 years old, unmarried, and worked as a day-laborer in the village. He briefly sketched his work history:

After finishing two years of military service in 1977, I began to train as a shepherd in the Aveyron. It was part of a course of study for an agricultural diploma. I decided not to return to Paris after serving in the army because the possibilities of employment in the city were not very good. Also, I found the overcrowding and the general pace of life too hectic in the city.

I left the Aveyron finding husbandry very difficult as I was not used to the lifestyle it demanded, not having been born on a livestock farm. I gradually made my way to Broussan after finishing the agricultural degree to look for work in viticulture. I found a job in the vines and began to

train as a vine worker. I want to be able to save enough money to buy a small parcel of vines.

I want to stay here in wine country, since the life of a wine-grower suits me. It has many advantages over the kinds of work that were available to me. In viticulture one can work unsupervised and in the open air and there exists the possibility of one day owning a vineyard. I can set myself up as an independent grower someday with some careful planning. This is much preferable to the life of a factory worker, since you would never become your own boss. One would be crazy to choose that over wine growing, if one had the choice.

In many respects, Anthony occupied an ambiguous status, in the village. While he was from Paris and the north (see chapter 3), he was an outsider to be viewed with some suspicion. Nevertheless, he also participated in the viticultural economy working as a laborer. Like many agricultural laborers who arrived in the village and region before him, Anthony aspired to landownership. Like many of the labor migrants from the mountains of Upper Languedoc and Spain, Anthony was on the road to becoming assimilated to the way of life of those who have committed themselves and their labor to vine cultivation. Unlike other migrants unconnected to the economy of wine growing, he perforce partook in the concerns and priorities that govern the world of Languedoc wine growers by virtue of his work.

The limited possibilities for securing work in cities in the 1980s have also prompted men and women who had originally left the village of Broussan in the 1960s and 1970s to return. Philippe Dolques is one example of a native son who had returned to Broussan from other parts.

Philippe left the village in 1975, at the age of 20, since there was little work for him to do on the very small holding run by his parents and work as an agricultural laborer was scarce. After his father retired in 1980, Philippe inherited the small family vineyard and a house. He retained this property despite his absence from the village, intending to make enough money by working in the city to eventually take over the family holding and to begin to expand it into a more substantial enterprise. However, his efforts at securing lucrative forms of work were only partially successful as he was tossed about by an unstable labor market:

When I first left Broussan, I worked as waiter in a restaurant in Paris. I didn't like the coldness of the climate and

the people, so later on I moved back south to St. Tropez and started to work again as a waiter. I got tired of this kind of work and began to look for something different and that paid better. I found work in construction in Marseille. It paid more than being a waiter. I met my wife in Marseille and as jobs were getting scarce around here, we traveled to South America to work for a couple of years in the construction of a subway. I had heard that it was possible to make a lot of money in a short period of time working abroad. There was nothing here, so we packed up and left and sure enough managed to save up quite a bit of money.

I am now back with a wife and two kids and I am beginning to work on the land that was left to me. I have only 1.5 hectares of vines which I rented out while I was away. I also inherited the house that we are now living in. We have been using it as a vacation home and a kind of base while we have been away. We are now in the midst of restoring this old house which needs a lot of work before we can feel comfortable in it. I am working toward expanding the farm so I take on building jobs and my wife works as a tutor.

Cases of migrants returning to the village, such as Philippe, have prompted many to echo a comment made by Philippe's mother, Huguette, in a rather triumphal tone that: "Many of our young have gone up to Paris. They took a look around, hated what they saw. And now they've come back." Philippe harbored the hope, as did many owners of small parcels of land, to eventually become an independent smallholder. He subscribed to the ideology of land ownership that pervaded this agrarian context and his participation in the economic mainstream of the village fostered a sense of belonging in the community of Broussan.

While viticulture represented the main livelihood activity in Broussan, very few of the wine growers in the village worked exclusively on the farm. Indeed, the presence of a rural inhabitant who pursues a multiplicity of livelihood activities or is involved in pluriactivity is as pervasive in the village as it is in many other French and European contexts (see Holmes 1989, Blim 1990, Weber 1989).⁸ Members of wine-growing households were involved simultaneously in very diverse forms of work and often in locations outside the village. Many women and men from wine-growing households commuted daily to Béziers and other towns and villages to work as wage earners in local factories, government offices, hospitals, as well as in shops and business as clerks and waiters. They set themselves up in local businesses as hairdressers, builders, and painters, baby sitters

and cleaners in the village and often this is done in the informal economy. The involvement of women and men in a diverse array of livelihood earning activities is a phenomenon that was as prevalent in the distant past and it has been in recent decades. For example, J. H. Smith (1984) writes of smallholders in the late 1800s in the village of Cruzy, just west of Broussan, making a living through a "dual family" economy of wage and nonwage forms. Similarly, Frader (1991) notes in her study of Coursan in the Aude that women particularly were involved in bring cash in households through a multiplicity of means around the turn of the twentieth century. Despite the fact that a good number of women and men in Broussan were involved in an economy of pluriactivity, what often united them in terms of their interests and political inclinations was the commitment of their labor to farming. This unity encompassed independent cultivators who worked their own holdings, with the help of their kin and neighbors as well as agricultural laborers and tenants, who often operated small parcels of whole working land belonging to other larger farmers and estate owners.

Large and Small

Though the entire region of Lower Languedoc appears to be covered with one vast carpet of vineyards, vines are cultivated on relatively small farms. In Broussan, holdings can be arranged on a continuum of size that extends from less than 1 hectare to over a 100 hectares. The majority of holdings however would be clustered around the lower end of the continuum, from 1 to 30 hectares. Of a total of around 550 holdings, in fact, only four holdings exceeded 30 hectares. Even the largest holdings in the community were relatively small on a national scale, for example in comparison with the wheat farmers of the north whose holdings were often hundreds of hectares in size.

The largest holding in Broussan was Château X, which consisted of 113 hectares jointly owned by a brother and sister team and their spouses. The chatelains, the S. and B. families, were considered the wealthiest members of the community. There was a drastic drop in size for the next largest holding which was also a château, but consisted of 55 hectares. This domain was owned by a corporation. Other large enterprises in the community were run by a local people and absentee owners who ran their opera-

tions either with a labor force supervised by stewards or using share tenancy arrangements. While such enterprises were considered the largest by regional standards, they occupied only about 10 percent of the land under cultivation. A situation of a high degree of land concentration did not exist and the predominant characteristic of land tenure was ownership of small, often minute, parcels of land that were often less than .25 hectares. The owners of the minutest parcels of land were in the main the elderly members of the community who kept a small parcel to produce wine for home consumption. While size of the holding is some indicator of the types of enterprises that were present in Broussan, two structural types could be distinguished that roughly correspond to a distinction between large and small operations—the family-run farm and the capitalist farm.

Two Types of Enterprises

The basic distinction between the family farm and the capitalist farm is that the former is run primarily using the unpaid labor of members of the household, that is, it uses unpaid or “non-commodified labor” (Friedmann 1980). The capitalist enterprise is run exclusively through the employment of a permanent force of paid laborers. Hence, the relations of production on the capitalist enterprise are “commodified.”

Most of the viticultural operations in Broussan were family farms and 90 percent of the 500 or so farms were run using family labor. As a rule of thumb, it was held by growers that one person using one tractor could run a holding of about 8 hectares for the greater part of the year without the aid of extra labor. On family holdings larger than 8 hectares, additional labor was required and members of the household, when available, were recruited to help in the production process. According to one informant, the owner of a 7-hectare operation, an 8-hectare holding should generate at least 7,000 francs a month (i.e., roughly \$2,000) which was approximately the minimum needed in order to sustain a household and to keep the farm in operation. The actual income generated from any individual holding apart from size will depend on a combination of factors such as location of the vineyards, fertility of the soil, the vine-plant varieties, age of the plant, and yearly weather conditions. A holding of 8 hectares was seen as generally sufficient to weather

the fluctuations in the amount of income due to variations in average yields in any given year. While in theory, holdings of this size were generally considered sufficient for households to become established as independent smallholders, in fact, as I mentioned earlier, very few lived solely from revenues of their viticultural enterprises alone. The pressure exerted by what Bernstein has identified as the "simple commodity production squeeze" drove smallholders to seek supplementary sources of income, even among those with the minimum requirement for farm self-sufficiency.⁹ On smaller holdings it was essential for the survival of the farm to obtain additional income from other sources. On many holdings then spouses, children, and often extended kin living in the household brought in additional income through a variety of types of employment. Members of smallholding households did this often in addition to working on the farm, when additional labor was required. If household labor was unavailable to be deployed to the fields, a variety of modes of gaining access to other sources of unpaid labor was put into effect. These involved reciprocal exchanges and many forms of mutual aid that drew on kin and friends from other households. The question of how the dynamics of the household economy and ways in which labor both from within the household and between households is deployed is discussed in Part 2.

Operations that were larger than 30 hectares could not be run but with a permanent force of wage laborers. Château X, for example, employed a permanent labor force consisting of three families, migrants from Spain, who made up the domestic labor force and three day-laborers who lived in the village. On holdings this size, owners seldom contributed their labor to working the land. Although no wine-growing enterprise that exceeded 30 hectares was run using family labor, on many holdings slightly smaller in size, owners often worked alongside laborers who were employed on both a permanent and part-time basis as well as seasonally and occasionally. Seasonal and occasional labor was hired during the very labor intensive periods of the agricultural cycle, such as pruning and during the harvest. Often a permanent and part-time labor was hired in due to the absence or insufficiency of family labor to run holdings that required more than one person and one tractor. So for example, many of the holdings between roughly 10 and 25 hectares consistently moved in and out of wage relations. While the presence or absence of wage relations was a truer indicator of the nature of an operation than the simple size of the holding, in Broussan qualitative

and structural distinctions were difficult to maintain on many medium sized farms, because of this constant movement in and out of wage relations. Moreover, agricultural workers were themselves often also *petits propriétaires* (small owners) and they have labored alongside employers for well over a century. This merging of occupation and identities had distinctive implications for the kinds of political orientations and practices in the region (see chapters 2 and 3). Despite the difficulties in drawing distinctions between capitalist farms and family farm in that ambiguous middle-size range, operations located at extreme ends of the continuum can be contrasted in a significant number of ways.

Château X, a purely capitalist operation, for example, occupied the most fertile and flat land in the municipality, whereas, the holdings of the family farmers were often located on less fertile land on hill sides with difficult access. The vineyards of the domain were consolidated into one unit and concentrated around the château. This contrasts with small-scale family holdings, whose fields were usually scattered in small parcels throughout the canton. Equipped with the most advanced machinery, the production process was highly rationalized on the large capitalist estates. For example, individual vines on the Château have been planted in straight rows with enough space between them to allow various large and modern machines to pass through. On family-run farms, vines were often planted in very narrow rows, on small nonadjacent parcels of land dispersed through throughout several communes. Despite these contrasts, the operators of family farms and large capitalist operations, alike, positioned themselves immediately in the occupational universe as wine growers. What united smallholders and capitalist farmers in many of their interests and perceptions were landownership and their participation in the operation of a viticultural enterprise. Still, this shared occupational identity did not elide differences that existed in the ways in which operations were run, the size of holdings, and who committed their labor directly to the production of grapes and those who did not. The owners of capitalist farms were not engaged in the direct cultivation of the soil, while the owners of family enterprises operated their farms with the contribution of their physical labor. In other words, wine growers were highly differentiated and were divided by class. Large landowners and smallholders each had a very different relationship to the process of production. These similarities and differences as well and the ambiguities created by the commonality of *petits propriétaires* working as laborers alongside owners

contributed to the intricate patterns of political practice and expressions of identity (see chapters 2 and 3).

Large Landowners: “*Les Propriétaires*”

The largest landowners in Broussan represented a pure landowning class who ran their operations strictly using wage labor. There were two categories of landowners, those who lived in or near the village or on the estate and those that were absentee. Absenteeism was a phenomenon that became accelerated in the late 1800s, when wine production on the Languedoc plain took on increasingly capitalist character. In that period, large landowners often removed themselves from their domains and the production process altogether, concentrating their efforts on keeping the accounts and on marketing, while residing in the centres of commerce. Authority on the estates was often delegated to stewards, a new position emerged on the estates with the transition to capitalist agriculture (J. H. Smith 1975).

In Broussan, for example, production on the 29-hectare holding owned by a businessperson who lived and worked in the town of Pézenas (a few kilometres east of Broussan), was supervised by steward who was roundly despised by workers. He was recruited from the village and once worked as an agricultural laborer on the same estate. When he rose to this position, many workers in the village became very wary of him, finding him untrustworthy as he now worked hand-in-glove with the bosses, “*les patrons.*”

Altogether in Broussan there were about 30 landowners who ran their operations by hiring wage workers on a permanent basis, year round. Even landowners who lived in the village or on the estates were frequently absentee, preoccupied with the marketing and publicizing wines grown on the estates. One of the owners of Château X, for example, spent much of the agricultural year attending wine fairs nationally and internationally to publicize the estate wine. Much of his time was also spent negotiating deals with distributors and merchants, who have sold his wines to North American restaurants and liquor stores. His partners on the estate, who resided in Broussan year round assumed mainly a managerial role in the running of their operation. While pure landowners tended to run farms that were generally larger than 30 hectares, some among this class owned

holdings that were much smaller. Many of these smaller owners ran businesses or were employed in the fairly lucrative professions of law, medicine, or dentistry. Such landowners acquired their vineyard properties either through inheritance or by purchasing land for the purposes of investment. For example, one holding in Broussan that consisted of about 24 hectares was owned by a doctor who lived near the village. He had inherited this property from an uncle who had no children of his own to take over the property. Another 22-hectare vineyard was owned by a lawyer who lived in Broussan while practising in Béziers. He had inherited a portion of the vineyard but also acquired more land as his practice became more and more successful. Moreover, a 20-hectare operation was owned by local businesspeople and worked by two laborers. By and large, this class of owners regarded their holdings in land as an investment, or a source of retirement income and seldom committed their own labor to the cultivation of vines on a sustained basis.

In the village there was another significant group of landowners who similarly did not make a direct contribution of their labor to the cultivation of vines but who derived revenues from wine holdings. They consisted of elderly residents of the community who were no longer able to work the land and who were widows or single women. For reasons of household composition or because of the constraints of the sexual division of labor (see chapter 5), they hired labor to run their holdings or rented out their property.

Direct Producers: “*Les Exploitants*”

On the family-run farms of Broussan, the owners of the enterprise tended to be engaged in the direct cultivation of grapes. However, like their predecessors in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, most of the smallholders ran their farms combining farmwork with many other forms of work, including wage work and running businesses. The direct producers in Broussan operated holdings that varied greatly in size from very minute parcels (less than 1 hectare) to more substantial operations of more than 20 hectares. While by and large, members of smallholdings households worked in other sectors of the economy while running their farms, this did not necessarily imply that they owned marginal units of production that generated insufficient incomes. A number

of the part-time growers, in fact, had very sizable holdings and through a variety of arrangements with family members and kin, operated their wine-growing farms while pursuing other livelihood concerns at the same time (see chapters 4 and 5). Many of members of the petty bourgeoisie in the village—the shopkeepers, the café owners and shop managers, then, ran sizable holdings in addition to running their own businesses. For example, the household that operated one of the village hardware stores ran one of the largest owner-operated holdings in the village (34 hectares). It was run by a father-and-son team with the help of a hired laborer. Still, such sizable units were by no means the rule among all businesspeople who operated farms.

Some members of the petty bourgeoisie actually operated very small agricultural enterprises in the village. For example, the family that owned and operated the small electrical appliances shop ran only a 4-hectare vineyard. Many other operators of small businesses and shopkeepers ran holdings of around this size. These observations having been made however, the possibilities for the expansion of farms owned by members of the petty bourgeoisie were greater than those for many family farmers and laborers. This group generally had access to larger capital resources. Furthermore, the ways in which labor was mobilized within and between households of the petty bourgeoisie and households of the smallholders marked very different trajectories of development in the overall process of reproduction.

Share Tenants: “*Les Fermiers*”

For the smallholding sector of the village population, one of the most common ways of gaining additional income from within agriculture was to take up a share tenancy contract.¹⁰ The smallholders of the village both rented out parcels of land and took on tenancy contracts. There were two kinds of contracts in Broussan. One involved a division whereby the owner of the land received one-third of the income yielded from the harvest while the tenant received two-thirds. A second kind of contract, the *Indemnité Viagère de Départ* (IVD), involved the payment of an annuity by the tenant to the owner, who, on death relinquishes ownership of the land to the tenant. The payment of the annuity was made in addition to the regular payment division. Under both contracts, the tenant was expected to provide labor, equipment, and inputs. In the village, approximately 65 owners

had rented out some portion of their land and in many cases, to several different tenants. For example, one retired grower, Etienne Bascoul, rented his entire holding consisting of 11.7 hectares to three different households. The Cros family rented about 4.5 hectares, while another individual, Marcel Mas, worked 6.7 hectares of Bascoul's land. The remaining 0.6 hectares were rented by the Vias household. All tenants were in fact owners of vine properties in their own right and they worked rented land in addition to their own holdings. Approximately 75 holdings in the village included rented land and inasmuch as one property was often worked by several tenants, tenants themselves often rented land from several owners. For example, holdings of the Vias household consisted of 11 hectares of vineyards. About 7.2 hectares of the holding consisted of land rented from three different owners. 1.6 hectares belonged to Julien Mas, 79, a retired wine grower who was also agricultural laborer and Marcel Mas's father. Another 5 hectares belonged to Jean Cot, a butcher in Béziers. The remaining 0.6 hectares belonged to Etienne Bascoul, mentioned above.

Roughly one-fourth of the contracts were IVD agreements. While the municipal records and the registers of the cooperative showed that only one-fourth of the growers were engaged in share-tenancy arrangements, in fact 40 percent worked as share tenants. The discrepancy in the statistics can be accounted for by the fact that many of these arrangements were made between households on an informal basis without formal, written contracts and thus they were not declared to official sources. Such arrangements existed between households also connected by kin ties, but not exclusively so.

A few landlords who were party to such agreements were in fact owners of the larger holdings in Broussan. However, for the most part, the majority owned fairly small units. A large proportion of landlords lived and worked outside the village but wished to retain ownership of land in the municipality. Philippe Dolques the returned migrant, we met earlier, was one example of this group. During his absence from the village his small holding was rented by Marcel Mas, a friend of the family.

Elderly and retired wine growers represented the second largest group of landlords, followed by widows and single, separated, or divorced women. For the majority of elderly landlords, income derived from renting out land supplemented their retirement benefits. In some cases, the elderly resorted to renting out vineyards since their children were reluctant to take up farming

and have migrated out of the village. In other cases, the lack of heirs, forced some old folks into share tenancy. Many such landlords in fact lacked the necessary equipment to cultivate vines, hence share-tenancy arrangements were made with those who have access to such machinery and tools.

The majority of tenants were, in fact, owner-operators who wished to increase income derived from viticulture without expending large amounts of capital to buy additional parcels of vines. In many respects, in terms of livelihood strategies, it was the line of least resistance for wine growers. Share tenancy neither required the deployment of labor to tasks altogether different from vine cultivation nor capital expenditures on machinery. Many tenants also worked as agricultural laborers. In these cases, a considerable number of these agricultural laborers *cum* tenants were landless. Access to the equipment to work the vineyards was obtained in a variety of ways—through borrowing from kin and from employers and renting (see chapter 6). For many of the landless laborers in the village, share tenancy represented an intermediate step between landlessness and land ownership, especially for those who had succeeded in striking IVD contracts. Not all agricultural workers were landless, however, as the possibilities for mobility from a landless status to one of being landed were realized through a variety of means from multiplying income-obtaining strategies to mobilizing networks of kin and friends. This is discussed in the case studies in later chapters.

Agricultural Laborers

There were roughly 90 permanent agricultural laborers in Broussan and most were actually day laborers who lived in the village by night and traveled to work in the larger vineyards and estates on a daily basis. Day laborers generally put in an eight-hour day, returning to the village at 6 P.M., often to work on their own little holdings before the sun set. Over half of the permanent agricultural laborers owned land in the village running very small holdings that were generally from just less than 1 to 4 hectares.

At least three of the permanent laborers in the village were women who worked as members of the domestic workforce (*les domestiques*) at Château X. Two were married to the male domestic workers at the château and one was the unmarried daughter of one of the families of the estate workers. These women

were generally responsible for the preparation of the meals for the estate workers and also worked in the fields occasionally. Workers resident on the estates did not own any land in the community.

On the large estates in Broussan, there was a division of labor between skilled and unskilled workers. The day laborers tended to perform the more skilled tasks, such as grafting, planting, pruning, and maintaining the equipment. Day laborers were usually the sons of wine growers or, very often, wine growers themselves and so were familiar with the specialized tasks in vine cultivation. The tasks requiring less skill were conferred to the domestic workers, mainly migrants from Spain, who usually lived on the estates with their families. There was also a hierarchy of wage rates that corresponded to skill levels. Day laborers earned about 3,500 to 4,000 francs a month, about 40 percent higher than the guaranteed minimum wage, which in the mid-1980s was about 2,500 francs a month, earned by the unskilled domestic workers. The costs of accommodation and food were taken into account in calculating the wages paid to the domestic labor force and as a consequence their earnings often fell below the minimum wage.

Before the capitalist transformation of Languedoc agriculture the workforce on the large estates of the region, such as Château X was largely undifferentiated. Day laborers and domestic workers worked side by side and performed similar operations on the estates. Where a division of labor existed, it involved a division by gender. The day labor force often included women (*journalières*), who worked at tasks that were considered lighter and more delicate (see chapter 5).

The capitalist transformation Languedoc viticulture, however, brought on a more rigidly defined division of labor between skilled and unskilled work, between different labor forces and an arrangement of tasks on the estates based on a hierarchy of wages, responsibility, and power. A division of tasks came to prevail between the *journaliers* and *domestiques*, the domestic workforce also became divided according to task and differentiated in terms of power and authority as small retinues of supervisors emerged. For example, the *ramonet*, appeared and acted as foreman or the head of the domestic labor force executing orders given by the steward (*le régisseur*). While he held this post, and carried out his duties and tended to the horses, his wife, the *ramonette*, came to be in charge of the preparation of meals for the estate workers and supervised the wives of

domestiques. As was mentioned earlier, the steward, a new type of employee, began to appear more frequently with the development of absenteeism. The steward was primarily responsible for the supervision and planning of work on the estates; the control of the labor force; the payment of salaries and payment for the supplies and provisions for the workers (Pech 1975, 375–78). As was noted earlier on a contemporary domain in Broussan, stewards were often recruited from among small farmers and estate workers. Many, though were simply men who had no experience in viticulture and had to be trained on the job. The great degree of familiarity with the workforce and the accounts of the estate made the position of steward fairly powerful and often loathed by workers.

A process of capitalist transformation on the estates held other implications for workers in the villages of Languedoc. The people of Broussan remarked that there was less and less work for agricultural laborers and as a result, over the years the number of laborers in the village has declined (Durandeu 1983). This decline can also be traced to the overall process of capitalist rationalization that has taken hold of the viticultural economy over the past century, first introduced on the large estates of the region. On the largest domains of the region, for example, techniques of production used came gradually to be more rationalized and capital intensive. Generally on local estates, work routines were altered, so that certain jobs could be done during the winter, a period of lower wages. New techniques were used to render wine production more efficient and cost-effective, which led to the displacement of skilled vine dressers who were comprised of day laborers from the village. Their methods of tending the vines were found to be outmoded and too slow. Landowners imposed a managed work system that relied almost entirely on unskilled laborers who could be paid less, supervised more closely by estate stewards, and who would work longer hours than day laborers. Through these means, then, economies of scale were achieved and estates became more economically efficient (Pech 1975, J. H. Smith 1975).

While jobs on the estate for day laborers began to diminish, temporary work and piecework appeared. Women day laborers were hired from time to time on the estates when there was a need for extra labor, for example, for pruning, collecting branches, and spraying. Since they were generally paid half the wage earned by male day laborers, the hiring of women represented a cost-effective measure. Moreover, migrant workers who traveled from

area to area in search of work either as individuals or in groups were hired to perform piecework. Often the piece workers were paid salaries that were higher than those of day laborers and there was some degree of antagonism between the two types of workers. Moreover, day laborers blamed the presence of piece workers for the unemployment among day laborers.¹¹ The amount of work available and the nature of work done by agricultural laborers then was deeply contoured by the transformations brought on by the development of capitalism in agriculture in Languedoc and in Broussan. As employment as agricultural laborers was in decline other ways of making a living or getting by sustained the people of Broussan as much in the past as now.

Other Work

While women and men were preoccupied with many forms of work, providing services both inside and outside the village, other preoccupations were a very important part of the local and household economy. While producers were largely involved in the production of a commodity for sale on the market and not for domestic consumption, the major part of the household food supply came from the market. Still, a good proportion came from self-provisioning. Many families kept chickens in the cellar or garage to obtain a supply of fresh eggs and meat. In one case a goat was also kept to provide the household with milk. A large number of households kept a fruit and vegetable garden on small plots of land on the residential property or on garage rooftops. The activities in this economy were mostly undertaken for self-provisioning, in an effort to reduce consumption costs, but small surpluses were sometimes marketed. Eggs, for example, were sold to neighbors below the market price. Producers often placed a notice with the mayor's office that a certain product, such as artichokes, will be sold at the home of a particular grower. Local stores were also supplied with a variety of fruits and vegetables grown in home gardens. These products were sold to local retail outlets at prices below the wholesale prices. Often retailers took goods on consignment. As the market in wines is often uncertain and unpredictable, many growers tried to hedge their bets against a bad year by diversifying their enterprises by taking on market gardening on a scale more expanded than that required for autoconsumption.

Women were primarily responsible for maintaining the economy of autoprovisioning. Gardens were cultivated mainly by

women and small animals were raised by women. Marketing of garden and home-grown products was also usually done by women who were often seen early in the morning in the center of the village driving small trucks and cars loaded with small quantities of asparagus, artichokes, cherries, peaches, eggs, lettuce, and other seasonal items to sell to local stores and regional markets.

One striking characteristic in Broussan was that among many households, a secondary house was maintained that tended to be fully equipped. These residences were used to house seasonal workers during the harvest, and more important, served as rental accommodation for tourists who flooded the area during the summer, especially since Languedoc has been designated a region for the development of tourism. These houses consisted of either a separate apartment in the same house or some separate dwelling units altogether. Women by and large tended to occupy themselves with the rental and maintenance of tourist accommodation and, as will be discussed in chapter 5, were pivotal in a village economy of pluriactivity.

Local Political Inclinations

Broussan is a communist village and has had a longstanding tradition of following left politics. For a period of at least 30 years the formal political structure of the villages has been dominated by members of the Communist party and its sympathizers. The mayors for the past few decades were members of the Communist party as were many of the people who served on the municipal council. The people who tended to occupy the seat of local government did not necessarily represent a power elite of the large landowners or wealthy professionals in Broussan. They tended to hail from a broad spectrum of occupational and class categories. The mayor of Broussan throughout the 1980s and into the early years of the 1990s, was himself a wine grower who worked as the mayor on a part-time basis. He had three deputy mayors. Over the years, his deputies have been teachers, laborers, and even pensioners. The members of the council have been made up of a railway employee, bank employees, postal workers, builders, housekeepers, as well as wine growers. The list of opposition candidates in the election that was held in 1983, for example, was similarly composed of a broad range of men and women. The person who was defeated as a mayoral candidate