Structuring Taste: 
*Narratives of Terroir and Climate Change in Mosel Winemaking*

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Spring 2017
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Abstract

According to the idea of terroir, the taste of an agricultural product derives from various features specific to its place of production. Terroir is especially related to wine. Different wine producing regions, for instance, is often associated with certain expressions or aromatic profiles. The local climate is an aspect of terroir particularly believed to influence a wine’s characteristics. However, according to a large share of climate researchers, the global surface temperature is increasing. Climate change is said to have both negative and positive implications for winemaking. The wines of the Mosel region, Germany, is by many believed to have benefited from increased temperatures. Simultaneously, others claim some expressions are being lost, partly due to these changes. Through conducting fieldwork in the Mosel region, the cultural embeddedness of taste and how it was connected to place, as well as issues of climate change was researched. Over a span of ten weeks during the fall of 2016, I carried participant observation with two, and interviews with ten local winemakers. Earlier research scrutinizing the concept of terroir has focused on how the idea has been institutionalized in wine laws, for instance in France. Few scholars have researched the meaning given to taste and place on an individual level, however. To analyze the social aspects of ‘Mosel terroir’, a theoretical outline is developed, building on practice theory and theory of structuration. While ‘Mosel winemaking’ is viewed as a distinct social practice, constituted by a shared set of beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge, the wine expression associated with the Mosel is studied a social structure. Especially Giddens’ notion of structuration, and his conception of structures as rules- and resource sets are applied in the analysis. It is found that attitudes and beliefs towards, as well as knowledge of winemaking that supports what is considered the typical style of Mosel wine, circulated among winemakers of the region. These represented ways of understanding the physical surroundings and were organized in narratives, where the aromatic profile of Mosel wines was explained and justified. Moreover, an extensive set of rules regulating acceptable behavior in the practice of Mosel winemaking that actively drew region’s natural resources, were frequently pronounced. Although a cool climate was largely used to explain the ‘Mosel wine style’, climate change was not considered threatening. In fact, the cool climate was used to discard worries about global warming having consequences for the taste of Mosel wine. Because the Mosel was so far north, other regions would be worse off than the Mosel, in case temperature rises would accelerate.
Preface

First, I want to thank my beloved Dasha. You have shown me love every day, and been supportive of all my decisions, from doing fieldwork to spending many late nights at the campus. I owe you the world. I also want to express deep gratitude to my academic supervisor, Dag Album. Your guidance and enthusiasm have been simply invaluable. Thanks also to my assistant supervisor Milda Jonusaite Nordbø, who has been most supportive. You have encouraged me to follow my ideas, while simultaneously provided me with good advice. Thanks to Simon Roland Birkvad for laughing at my jokes, and Eli Melby, who has, although laughed less, been a helpful friend and fellow student. Thanks to Victor Lund Shammas for good methodological input. Thanks to Kåre Inge Hansen for your engagement in my project, and for your hospitality in the Mosel. Thanks to my mother and father, who always have faith in me, and has shown so much enthusiasm towards my research. Last, but not least, thanks to all informants for volunteering to participate in this project. This thesis could not have been written without you.
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# 1 Introduction

The IPCC states that the world surface temperature has increased by 0.85 degrees Celsius from 1850 to 2012.\(^1\) By 2100, it is predicted to have reached somewhere between 1.6 and 4.3 degrees. Climate change is expected to have fundamental consequences for social and human systems, such as for instance the world’s crops. In fact, the IPCC holds that there will be a big shift in the production areas of food and non-food crops across the world. Furthermore, they claim that negative impacts of global warming on crop yields so far have been more common than positive (2014). The production of wine is also said to be altered by climate change. However, several journalists reporting from the ‘world of wine’ have suggested that the impacts of increased world temperatures for winemaking include enabling aspects (Robinson 2016). In the Mosel region, Germany, there is said to be more stability between vintages today, due to temperature rise. This again has made the overall quality higher, it is claimed (Pincus 2003). However, not everybody agrees with such an assertion. Negative impacts have also been pointed out by some. For instance, global warming is believed to be part of the reason that many Mosel wines do not taste and smell the way they used to. These are claimed to be marked by riper fruit character, and lower levels of acidity, than earlier. Some ‘styles’ or expressions of Mosel wine are feared to be threatened by extinction (Reinhardt 2012). Thus, it is held that climate change is causing cultural loss. This implies temperature increase having consequences for the taste of Mosel wine.

In this thesis, I explore the meaning ascribed to taste in Mosel wine by the winemakers. By studying these issues in the Mosel, from the perspectives of those involved in winemaking themselves, I scrutinize the cultural embeddedness of flavor in wine. My research questions throughout the process were aimed at Mosel winemaking and climate change, while continuously being revised according to new findings, as well as directions taken both related to theory and analysis. These can be divided into three separate questions, each explored in three separate chapters of the analysis. First, what are the narratives of resources in Mosel winemaking? Second, what are the rules of Mosel winemaking? Third, what are the narratives of climate change within Mosel winemaking? In the following, I will provide an account of

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\(^{1}\) 0.85 is a mean of multiple independent datasets showing results between 0.65 and 1.06 degrees Celsius (IPCC 2014)
how I developed the idea for this thesis, why it is relevant, as well as briefly discuss the theoretical, empirical, analytical and methodological approaches pursued underway.

1.1 Wine and Climate Change

There is a growing literature within disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and human geography, researching cultural implications and consequences of climate change. Factors often analyzed is cultures’ capacity for adaptation and mitigation (Adger, Dessai, Goulden, Hulme, Lorenzoni, Nelson, Naess, Wolf and Wreford 2008). Several such studies argue societies’ limitations concerning adaptation and response to climate change for various reasons. Wine production is claimed to be more sensitive to climatic changes than the production of other agricultural commodities. Jones and Webb (2010) argue this on basis of the ripening process being critical for a winemakers’ desired wine style. Jones, White, Cooper, and Storchmann (2005) suggests that this sensitivity of winemaking has got to do with the growing of wine grapes being constrained to a narrow range of climatic zones. Webb, Phetton, and Barlow (2008) point to how grapevines have a life expectancy of 50+ years, and that climate change, therefore, will have major implications for winemaking concerning the predicted increased temperatures for the next 50 years.

Several scholars have analyzed wine production’s vulnerability to climate change. For instance, Belliveau, Smit, and Bradshaw (2006) illustrate how climate change is threatening the wine industry of Oregon, Canada. Some contributions have also highlighted opportunities for winemaking introduced by climate change, such as Jones and Webb (2010) and Pincus (2003). As mentioned initially, climate change is often made topic within the popular literature on wine, too. Widely known wine journalist Jancis Robinson, among others, has published numerous articles on the subject, see for instance The changing shape of the wine world (2016). Robinson’s main assertion is that global warming already has, and in the future, will have implications for wine and its production, both negative and positive.

1.2 Mosel Wine

Mosel wine refers to wine made in the Mosel region of Germany. The region is named after the Mosel river. A tributary of the Rhine, it runs from France, through Luxembourg and the western

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2 These do not, however, represent the literature of social science.
parts of Germany. The vineyards of the Mosel region are usually situated on the steep slopes of the Mosel valley, close to the river. Thus, Mosel is the name of both the river, as well as its surrounding valley, and the wine region. The region also includes the Mosel’s two tributaries, the Saar and the Ruwer. Earlier the name of the wine region was Mosel-Saar-Ruwer before it was shortened to Mosel in 2007 (Decanter Magazine 2007). Mosel wine is often used synonymously with Mosel Riesling. Steinberg (2012) puts it like this: “Numerous Mosel producers are now producing good wines from Burgundian [grape] varietals (…) but almost every fine white wine in the Mosel will be a Riesling”. Although there are other grape varieties grown, the view that it is Riesling the region does best is typical. In this paper, Mosel wine and Mosel Riesling, therefore, are used synonymously.

1.2.1 ‘The Mosel Style’

Mosel wines are regularly described as ‘light bodied’ wines with low levels of alcohol, high acidity and ‘cool’ notes of fruits.³ ‘Body’ in wine refers to numerous characteristics, where alcohol level is said to be most significant. A wine’s ‘body’ is determined by how ‘thick’ it feels in the mouth (Johnson and Robinson 2013). Furthermore, the Mosel is known for its wines with some residual sugar. This expression has been given many names. ‘Fruity style’, ‘sweet style’ and ‘residually sweet style’ are among them. In this thesis, I will use the term ‘fruity style’. By that, I refer to wines that are not dessert wines but have an amount of residual sweetness. Although dessert wines are also made in the Mosel, the ‘fruity style’ makes up most of the wines produced. Terms used on the label to classify ‘fruity’ wines, and thus are associated with this expression, are the Prädikat categories of Kabinett, Spätlese, and Auslese. The Prädikat system is a classification system introduced with the German wine law of 1971. There are three Prädikats in addition to those already mentioned, namely Beerenauslese, Eiswein, and Trockenbeerenauslese, which are usually associated with dessert wines, rather than ‘fruity’ wines. Most of the production, however, consist of wines labeled Kabinett, Spätlese, and Auslese. Wines are categorized according to these on the background of the grapes’ levels of ripeness measured at the time of harvest. Each Prädikat is ‘defined’ by a minimum limit of ripeness, measured by sugar content in the grapes, often referred to as must-weight or so-called Oechsle. The limits increase with each Prädikat, in the order mentioned above. The only exception is Eiswein, which formally has the same requirement to sugar levels as

³ This is an uncontroversial description of Mosel wine typically found in wine literature.
Beerenauslese, but which grapes must be harvested in frozen condition, at a minimum temperature of minus seven degrees Celsius. This system applies for all thirteen German wine regions. However, its use has become more widespread in the Mosel, than in the other regions (Ronold and Mønster 2015). Additionally, it is said to be increasingly used to classify ‘fruity’ style, and decreasingly for the dry wines. Consequently, the Prädikats are often associated with wine from the Mosel (Schildknecht 2016).

1.2.2 Climate Change in the Mosel

The Mosel is one of the regions that, according to some, have benefited from climate change. Johnson and Robinson (2013) and Ronold and Mønster (2015) are among those who claim so. They hold that several parts of the Mosel region, and especially the Saar and the Ruwer, earlier in many vintages failed to reach sufficient levels of ripeness. During the last decades, however, all vintages have been successful, it is asserted. As already indicated, some point to negative consequences of climate change for Mosel wines as well. The phenomenon of declassification is one of these. The term refers to a development addressed by many writers on wine, where for instance a wine that legally qualifies for Auslese is labeled and sold as a Kabinett. This is possible as the usage of each Prädikat is regulated only by minimum requirements for must weight or ripeness. In other words, the categories are not equipped with maximum limits of ripeness. Consequently, wine tasters and journalists can report that today’s Kabinetts taste like the wines they formerly knew as Spätlese, and in some cases Auslese (Steinberg 2012). Kabinett is often associated with notes of green fruits and citrus. A little riper in style, a Spätlese is typically described with more yellow fruits. An Auslese is expected to portray an even fuller expression. Crafted with a certain amount of botrytized grapes, they often show aromas of tropical, dried fruits and honey (Johnson and Robinson 2013).⁴

Steinberg (2012) discusses this development at length. While it has become more common to harvest fruit with more ripeness since climate change has been a fact, he writes, it is unclear how big part of the tendency can be ascribed to higher temperatures. He questions if not winemaking decisions also have contributed to declassification. Reinhardt (2012) has written an appeal to preserve ‘the Kabinett style’, as he stresses its existence is threatened, both by climate change and winemaking trends. With great passion, Reinhardt holds that this expression

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⁴ Botrytis or so-called ‘noble rot’ is a fungus that makes the water of the grapes evaporate, and leaves the grapes with an increased concentration of sugar, acids and aromas (Bird 2010).
is so unique for the Mosel that its winemakers abandoning it is synonymous with its death, and a significant cultural loss. Reinhardt even jokingly suggests it should be listed a World Heritage by UNESCO. Taste in wine is, as done by the two authors above, often linked to the place of its production. This connection represents the basic idea behind the notion of terroir. Writing a thesis about wine from a certain area, the concept of terroir cannot be ignored. In the following, I present the idea of terroir, the central discussions on the issue, as well its relevance for this thesis.

1.3 Terroir

The concept of terroir has been made subject to numerous definitions (Vaudour 2002). The basic idea upon which the notion is built is the assumption that place of origin can be reflected in the taste of an agricultural product, and especially wine. Wilson (1998) argues that terroir captures the microclimate and soil conditions found in a specific piece of land. The Oxford Companion to Wine provides a similar, but more detailed definition, as it is stated that it encompasses “the total natural environment of any viticultural site”. Furthermore, these are listed:

Major components of terroir are soil (as the word suggests, Terra being Latin for ‘earth’ or ‘land’) and local topography, together with their interactions with each other and with macroclimate, which in turn affects mesoclimate and vine microclimate. The holistic combination of all these is held to give each site its own unique terroir, which is reflected in its wines more or less consistently from year to year, to some degree regardless of variations in the methods of viticulture and winemaking. Thus every small plot, and in generic terms every larger area, and ultimately region, may have distinctive wine-style characteristics which cannot be precisely replicated elsewhere (Robinson and Harding 2015: 737).

Trubek (2008) argues terroir can both be defined narrowly and broadly. A scientific approach such as those above represents a narrow definition of terroir. To understand the cultural aspect of terroir, Trubek claims, a broader definition of the concept is needed:

The broader definition of terroir considers place as much as earth. According to this definition, the people involved in making wine, the winemaking traditions of a region, and the local philosophy of flavor are all part of terroir (2008: 69).
In this thesis, I pursue such a definition. Rather than focusing on the technical aspects of terroir such as those of geology and meteorology, I investigate the ‘local philosophy of flavor’ among Mosel winemakers. For more empirical precision, I develop a theoretical outline for researching how taste is linked to place among my informants. In the following, I provide a brief, but detailed account of this theoretical approach.

1.4 Theoretical and Analytical Focus

To better to be able to grasp the cultural implications of climate change for Mosel winemaking, I investigate the ways in which winemakers of the region talk about taste and place. While the idea of terroir is a multi-faceted cultural phenomenon that, as I have shown, can and have been analyzed from a multitude of perspectives, my analysis focuses on one of these, namely the one of taste. In the following, I will briefly discuss the implications of my approach.

1.4.1 Structuration

To explore the ideas of terroir among Mosel winemakers from their individual perspectives, I build on the thoughts of Burnham and Skilleås (2012). They argue that terroir is thought to exist when the wines from a specific area exhibit a distinct aromatic profile, that has been produced and reproduced over a certain amount of time. By aromatic profile, I am referring to aromas and tastes, as well as other characteristics such as level of alcohol, acidity, and tannins, perceived in a wine. For instance, wine from Barolo in Piedmont, Italy is often said to show aromas of dark red fruits and berries, such as cherries and plums, as well as scents of tobacco, licorice, truffles, and mushrooms. Furthermore, they are known to have relatively high levels of alcohol and tannins, perceived as full-bodied, structured and powerful on the palate. Following Burnham and Skilleås’ thinking outlined above, Barolo can be said to have terroir, because the wines produced there are made with stylistic consistency.

To develop this approach further, I employ perspectives from practice theory, and particularly from Giddens’ theory of structuration. Giddens (1979, 1984) claims that structures are the product of social practices, but that they cannot exist externally of the individuals that carry out these practices. Applied on winemaking, this permits a focus where a specific winemaking approach in a specific area, with inherent stylistic goals and strategy to reach these, is regarded as a social practice. An approach in this sense refers to a quest to make a wine with one’s desired
characteristics. To take the example of Barolo once again, one could imagine a winemaker’s goal was to make a full-bodied wine with sufficient alcohol and tannins, rather than a light bodied wine. Emphasizing ‘area’ implicates not only that a style is pursued a certain place, but that the physiological attributes of place also plays a role. Furthermore, terroir, as resulting from this practice, can be viewed as a social structure. When a Barolo is known for being full-bodied for instance, it implies a \textit{structured taste profile}. Resulting from a large group of individual winemakers participating in the social practice of making Barolo by applying such an approach, taste is subject to the process of \textit{structuration}. In turn, this expression is believed to represent the terroir of Barolo.

\section*{1.4.2 Taste and Place in Germany}

In this thesis, three aspects of terroir that until now has been largely overlooked by other scholars is investigated. The first follows from Burnham and Skilleås’ definition of terroir and is the analytical attention I give to taste. By taste, I am referring to expression, style or aromatic profile as outlined above. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the thesis. Few studies of social sciences have considered the \textit{meaning} given to terroir and taste, by those involved in winemaking. However, numerous scholarly contributions have attempted to grasp the social and cultural aspects of \textit{institutionalized} terroir. A topic that particularly has been covered, is the political, economic and cultural implications of laws aimed at legal protection of geographical indications appearing on wine labels (see for instance Barham 2002, Ulin 1987 and Fourcade 2012). Such classifications, discriminative by nature, are typically associated with France, such as the 1855 classification in Bordeaux and the AOC system, developed in Burgundy. This leads me to the next aspect of this thesis that remains uncovered in the literature.

The number of studies on terroir focusing on France is simply overwhelming. This is perhaps as expected, considering terroir being a French term, and that it is said to have emerged in France. In fact, some have claimed its French origin hampers translations to other languages, and that the existing attempts have failed consequently (Trubek 2008). But the way in which terroir is used in this thesis is its simplest form, that is the connections made between taste and place. This idea is far from constrained to France, however. Even in Norway, links between taste and place has been institutionalized, by giving a handful of agricultural products legally protected geographical indications (Amilien, Torjusen and Vittersø 2005). Furthermore, Germany and the Mosel region’s history with winemaking stretches back as far as that of
France. In wine literature, the taste in German wines too, are frequently connected to the place they are made. In the scholarly literature, however, few studies have explored the way this is done, and on what basis. My research covers this from an *individual* perspective. A typical approach applied in the studies mentioned, especially those focusing on the institutionalization of terroir, is political processes. I will argue that the perspective of those that are themselves involved in winemaking, is valuable for several reasons. My thesis thus differs from those already existing within terroir research on these accounts. I investigate the meaning given to taste on an individual level among German winemakers. In the following, I will present my research method and strategy, before I provide a more detailed account of the already existing research, and the theoretical outline employed in this thesis. Thereafter I will present my analysis, and discuss my findings in relation to those of other scholars before I conclude.
2 Research Method and Strategy

My intention with this thesis has been to understand how climate change is perceived in the Mosel, by those involved in producing the wines of the region. A technical analysis comparing the predicted consequences of climate change and today’s climate could have been done from anywhere, but would neither be of much sociological interest. Several researchers have in fact pursued such a perspective and sought to identify all aspects of wine production in a distinct area that are vulnerable to temperature change (Holland and Smit 2010). Reading this type of research left me with questions regarding the cultural implications of climate change for wine production. If it is correct, that for instance wine from Southern Rhône have higher alcohol today than thirty years ago, and therefore have changed in character, then what implications does this have for the culture surrounding this wine production? Contrary to the type of research outlined above, a cultural analysis done by proxy did not seem advantageous. An intimate focus would have to be applied to grasp the cultural embeddedness of Mosel wine production.

To study a local culture relatively distant from my own Norwegian context, going there would be essential, it seemed to me. Furthermore, I was interested in the perspectives of those involved in the winemaking themselves. The literature scrutinizing the concept of terroir often lacks such an intimate perspective. How were ideas connecting taste to place represented at an individual level? Were there large variations among the winemakers? Were there any production methods customized to the Mosel climate ascribed with cultural significance? Such questions would have to be explored first hand, on site. To understand more about social implications of global warming, I would have to witness and participate in social practices carried out, as well as have as many conversations with members of this culture, as possible. I concluded, therefore, that data for my thesis would best be collected through the method of ethnography.

2.1 Data

I conducted fieldwork in the Mosel over a time span of ten weeks during the fall of 2016. About a third of that time was spent working alongside winemakers, doing participant observation with two different producers of wine while harvesting the grapes of the vintage. Additionally, 12 semi-structured interviews were carried out. Two of these were done in Norway, with two Norwegian wine professionals. In the Mosel, ten winemakers, heads of wine estates, or assistant winemakers were interviewed. These all were involved in winemaking. Although ‘winemaker’
usually refers to *the* person in the winery who is responsible for the winemaking process, I will, in the lack of a better collective term, refer to all informants involved in winemaking as winemakers. Moreover, about a dozen shorter conversations were held with others working within winemaking and the wine trade.

**2.2 Gaining Access**

My initial research focus was both questions related to terroir, or the Mosel’s culture of taste, as well as issues of climatic change, my goal was to gain data that both had depth and width. Corresponding with one of the wineries prior to leaving, the plan was to do interviews for a few weeks, until the start of harvest. Thereafter I would spend the entire harvest with them, which they assumed would last somewhere between four to eight weeks, depending on the weather. However, their harvest was postponed for nearly a month due to lack of ripeness. To avoid wasting my time, I contacted numerous producers in the area meanwhile and set up interviews. I also agreed with another producer to help to pick grapes and do observation. In other words, weather conditions became crucial in my collection of data material. Consequently, I did less participant observation, and more interviews than I had planned. At the time, this was worrying, as I feared for not being able to collect the data I needed. In retrospect, however, it is clear, that interviews made a better source for answering my research questions. While working with the harvest, picking grapes and assisting winemaking provided me with some elementary insight about the practice of making wine, it was the interviews and conversations that became most valuable to my analysis. Without having the ability to gain access to my informants’ discursive definitions of Mosel wine and hearing about their personal experiences, it would have been complicated to grasp implications of climate change from their point of view. Answering such questions by participant observation would in case have required an extensive amount of more time spent in the field. This insight was gained by doing the harvest. There were in general little time for conversations. The second winemaker I worked for, besides had quite a strict policy on talking while working in the vineyard. The other winery was far more relaxed, but picking grapes were just as hard work there. Everybody would be exhausted after a day’s work, too.
2.2.1 Recruiting Informants

Interviewees were recruited somewhat pragmatically. Some I got in touch with at tastings and wine presentations, while others were contacted simply because I knew their name and had heard of them. Most rejected my request on basis of being too busy. About two out of five accepted. The wineries I worked for were also contacted according to pragmatic considerations. Hans, I had heard of and visited for a tasting some months earlier, vacating in the Mosel with friends. We went there to taste because we had read that his wines were good, and because his estate was situated rather close to where we resided. Additionally, his family was friendly. Thus, they seemed like a good choice to do participant observation together with. I got in contact with Andreas through signing up for a tasting that was being held in a Mosel village in September. In the e-mail, I gave a brief description on my project and wrote that I would like to speak to winemakers. Andreas, who was organizing the event, replied that he would love to discuss Mosel wine and climate change. We had some conversations the following day, in which he said I was welcome to do participant observation in their harvest team, too, if I was interested. Andreas and his winemaker Julie thus became central to me when Hans’ family continuously postponed their harvest. Several informants also gave me advice on others they believed I would gain from talking to. Albeit having some concerns about the width of my data, recruiting informants via other informants, this also represented certain doors opening to a social world that I did have challenges gaining access to on my own. However, it was only on a few occasions that these situations developed as far as appointments being set up.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

Wine production is far from the most controversial topic a sociologist can investigate. While climate change is disputed by some, there seems to be large consensus on its existence within the ‘world of wine’. For this reason, I had no expectations of the winemakers to get into the debate on how ‘real’ the increased temperatures are. The consequences of global warming, however, could potentially be a source of greater disagreement. But to regard the various opinions on climate change among winemakers in the Mosel as a sensitive information in a social scientific context, seemed far-fetched. Although some informants did criticize others’ approaches of winemaking, as my analysis will show, this was regularly done in a general manner, where producers’ names usually were not specified. In the only example where this happened, an informant mentioned a producer by name, who was also one of my informants,
and said he “sometimes had trouble drinking his wines”. On the other hand, Carl made it clear that they were good friends and that “I have so much respect for him”.

Albeit my study did not touch upon questions of particularly sensitive nature, my research was conducted in line with what Ryen (2007) refers to as ‘the standard ethical issues’. First, all informants were informed about being subject to research. This was somewhat tricky while doing participant observation with the harvesting teams, as twenty or close to thirty people could be present. Additionally, many did not speak English. To be sure all was informed, I checked with Andreas and Hans, who were in charge, of their respective teams. They ensured everybody was aware of my role. As I had little chance of telling if, and how this had been done, I trusted my superiors on this issue. Second, I treated my informants with confidentiality as far as possible. While I was determined to keep informants isolated, many of them knew each other personally, which I came to learn at wine presentations and other events. They often introduced me to new people too, and told others about my project. This made confidentiality complicated. On the other hand, this was the effort of my informants, who apparently found my project to be uncontroversial. All informants have been given ‘pseudonymized’ (Tjora 2017) in this thesis, however. Third, I established entrusted relationships to my informants. While several of which I never met again, I made sure to conduct myself correctly, as to not risk ‘spoiling’ the field for future researchers. My study has been notified and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

2.4 Participant Observation and Interviews

My stay in the Mosel took on the form of ethnographic fieldwork. Although my planned balance between interviews and observation was made subject to change, and ethnography often is associated with observation, the reason for this challenge was quite ethnographic indeed. Waiting for good weather became a way of walking in the shoes of a winemaker. My assignments in the wineries were mostly picking grapes as part of their harvest teams. At one estate, I also helped to perform tasks in-house, after the picking was finished each day. Here, I spent my nights as well as days. With the other producer, there was only a handful of workers who participated in the cellar after the harvesting was finished each day. The remaining crew, including me, usually went home in the evenings. My total stay was not as extensive as those of many other studies, but as Madden (2010) points out, shorter versions of fieldwork have become more common today, than earlier. Had I had the opportunity to spend more time in the
Mosel, I would, but unfortunately, the time available for a master’s thesis did not allow me to conduct a more extensive fieldwork. However, ten weeks did provide me with a lot of material. While time partly became an issue being in the field, there were other challenges more pressuring. I will elaborate on these next.

2.4.1 Reflexivity

Essential for scholars conducting ethnographical fieldwork, is to reflect upon one’s own beliefs and conviction about the social world one is investigating. Personal assumptions can have great influence on how we see things. Therefore, it is unrealistic to be objective in one’s outlook as a researcher. Marcus (1998) claims there are four types of reflexivity active within the method of ethnography. The first is the null form, which is the subjective, self-critical personal quest. Second, you have the sociological reflexivity, which Marcus ties to ideals of sustaining objectivity and distance. Third, is the anthropological reflexivity, where the reflection of one’s own position is critical. Fourth and last, is the feminist reflexivity, where it is argued that descriptions of subjectivity can tell us more about the social world than seemingly objective, totalizing accounts. My fieldwork related most to what Marcus refers to as anthropological reflexivity. My own preconceptions and assumptions were not made an object itself in the process. But full objectivity was neither a goal, as my personal interests have clearly had implications for my research focus. This became an issue as it was easier said than done gaining a distance to my data for analytical purposes (I will elaborate more on this challenge in the upcoming paragraph). My personal interests, as already implied, is likely to have had consequences for my analytical focus on several accounts. First, wine ranks among my central passions. I have, over the past couple of years been collecting, tasting and reading about wine, as well as attended social wine events frequently. Some months before I left for fieldwork, I visited the Mosel, only to establish a close relationship to the region and its wines. My personal devotion to wine surely influenced my research attention in the direction of wines’ aromatic characteristics, rather than focusing on political and economic aspects of wine, as is often done in the literature. Second, I have long been concerned with issues of climate change, both personally and politically, as well as scholarly. Additionally, climate change is repeatedly made subject within wine circles, such as by writers and journalists. Third, having experienced the Mosel up close just some months earlier, I read a lot about the region’s wines and on several accounts discovered examples where climate change is said to have positive consequences for Mosel wine. The combination of these resulted in the scope of this thesis. In what sense could
the taste and production of Mosel wine be said to be culturally embedded, and what possible implications could climate change have on such a culture?

### 2.4.2 Troubles of Acquiring Analytical Distance

One of the key challenges of doing ethnography is balancing the ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ perspectives. While an emic understanding echoes the informants and participants’ point of view, the etic reflects the researchers’ perspective (Madden 2010). While my personal engagement in wine enabled me to apply a fresh perspective, it also presented me with some challenges. First, within the ‘discourses’ that circulates in the wine communities, I am part of, taste is largely associated with place. The idea of terroir, that place is decisive in a wine’s taste, is widely accepted here. In analyzing my data, where the informants often highlighted the same place-taste connections I know from the circles of wine enthusiasts, it was crucial for me to take a step back. Rather than accepting their stories at ‘face value’, as I perhaps usually would, I had to question the social aspects of how my informants talked about their products. For instance, how were stories of Mosel wine constructed, including specific elements and excluding others? Second, under my fieldwork, I developed somewhat of a friendly relationship to some of the informants. Moreover, I experienced nothing but positive situations around the interviews, perhaps with some minor exceptions. Thus, in many cases, I sympathized with them. Additionally, I was thankful to everybody who agreed to participate. Important for me, carrying out my analysis, therefore, was doing ‘justice’ to the people I had met. Deconstructing their statements and taking a critical perspective on their positions seemed somewhat unfair. Also, I found their reasoning in many instances to be well founded. Consequently, it became crucial achieving a balanced approach where their views were treated with respect, but simultaneously sufficient sociological distance, reflecting my position as a researcher.

### 2.5 Research Strategy

Although my research questions early in the process were rather vague, I was cautious when doing literature searches prior to doing fieldwork. As mentioned, many of the studies carried out on social questions related to terroir lacked taking taste into account. Those researching wine and climate change have seemingly been carried out under the preconception that increasing temperatures will be critical for wine production. However, some effects of global warming have been praised, for instance by Pincus (2003). Here, a more complex picture was
painted. Pincus emphasizes significant positive consequences of temperatures increasing specifically for the Mosel. Such has also been done by certain journalists, such as Johnson and Robinson (2013), as I have already mentioned. Moreover, I wished to approach the field \textit{inductively}, but still have some main ideas guiding my research, so that my analytical attention was strong enough to separate relevant data from the non-relevant. Applying an inductive research strategy implies starting the process by collecting data, before proceeding to generalizations (Blaikie 2010). Reading literature in some cases disrupted my initial focus. Albeit having assumptions about Mosel winemakers deriving from my personal experience with wine in general, but also specifically with Mosel wine, this contributed to an empirically informed research focus, rather than theoretical. Prior to my departure, it became important to sustain and enhance this outlook. Additionally, most other studies had not been concerned with the aspect of taste, which represented a vital part of my academic interest in the topic. Therefore, in the weeks before I left for fieldwork, I continued to do mostly empirical research, reading about Mosel wine and conducting two interviews with Norwegian wine professionals. My intention in the Mosel was to do an explorative cultural study. By “walking a mile in the shoes of others”, as Madden (2010) summarizes the core idea behind the ethnographic research, I hoped better to be able to grasp what constituted Mosel winemaking from the perspectives of those who carried it out themselves. How did they ascribe meaning to making wine in the Mosel? Recognizing cultural elements potentially vulnerable or resistant to climatic changes, I wished would provide me with a solid foundation for answering questions regarding cultural implications of increased temperatures.

\textbf{2.5.1 Revising Research Focus}

The idea for my thesis remained relatively unchanged throughout the research process, with one significant exception. While issues related to climate change was my primary focus, my interest in exploring cultural aspects of Mosel wine as a product, grew as my project progressed. Or rather, my impression of how crucial intimate knowledge of Mosel wine culture would be to provide well-founded sociological answers to implications of climate change, grew rapidly. Before I left for fieldwork, my attention was more diffuse. My questions were much directed at what Mosel winemakers would consider being ‘traditional’. Whether related to product or production, my goal was to gain insight in how climatic changes challenged existing notions of traditions. As my fieldwork unfolded, however, it became evident that such a focus was too wide and diffuse, because of the numerous diverging conceptions of what represented tradition,
I found. Furthermore, while I expected that tradition would be something all informants would actively draw on to describe their winemaking, only some did. History and tradition were of importance, however, but more in relation to taste in wine, than the production behind it. I will return to this topic in chapter four. But neither in questions of taste, traditions were ascribed the decisive role I was expecting. The emphasis seemed to lie on the ‘Mosel style’ as is produced today, which thus represented the axis ‘everything’ revolved around. Although some informants reflected on the ‘traditional Mosel wine’ in comparison to today’s style, the leading narrative was constructed around the Mosel’s physical features. Additionally, albeit traditional methods of making Mosel wine was also a topic for some informants, implementing new techniques was equally important. Thus, my research questions addressing cultural aspects of Mosel wine and winemaking were directed more towards today’s typical expression of Mosel wine, than the various definitions of tradition among Mosel winemakers. Put otherwise; my notion of culture shifted, from being directed towards the historical embeddedness of today’s practices to contemporary attitudes and beliefs about wine quality and wine style. In some respects, however, notions of tradition became relevant from the perspective of today’s taste in Mosel wine, as will be illustrated in the upcoming analysis.

2.5.2 Research Questions and Flexibility

My research questions were primarily ‘what’ questions. ‘What’ questions aim to provide descriptions of characteristics and patterns of social phenomena, as explained by Blaikie (2010: 60). In my case, the goal was to provide descriptions of the culture surrounding Mosel wine production. I wished to grasp the cultural or social aspect of making wine in a specific place, and that my descriptions would provide insight on the significance given to that place. My research questions were gradually revised throughout the entire process of research, analysis, and writing. As the research focus, my questions were flexible, and several factors contributed to their continuous revision as my fieldwork and analysis unfolded. Three specific issues played a role. First, the development described above ensured my research questions to focus on the aspects of taste and wine style being practiced in the Mosel. Second, my use of theory had consequences for formulating my research questions. As I developed a theoretical framework for analyzing the ‘structured taste’ in Mosel wine, my questions were more directed towards Giddens’ concept of structure as constituted by rules and resource sets. The theoretical outline applied in this thesis will be extensively discussed in chapter three. Third, doing a narrative analysis of the interviews and conversations with my informants also influenced my research
questions. What kind of stories were told about Mosel wine and the typical Mosel style? How were different aspects of Mosel wine linked together, to forming stories with a specific structure? Were distinct stories told about climate change? Or were the issues of climate change spoken of within the same contextual frames as other features of the physical environment?

2.6 Analyzing Data

2.6.1 Coding and Processing

In processing my data, I drew on Tjora’s SDI-model (2017). SDI is short for Stepwise Deductive Inductive. It is meant to capture a process where the researcher starts with raw data before working towards development of concepts or theories. Going from the empirical to the theoretical, the purpose of Tjora’s model is to work in steps, starting with raw data, processing them to codes, then to grouping codes, to concepts, and in the end, theory. Tjora emphasizes the importance of going ‘back’ to do empirical checks, assuring the theoretical development does not deviate from the original data material. As I have explained, my research strategy was inductive in its character. Post-fieldwork, processing data by coding in Hyper Research was carried out. Coding, grouping codes and discarding irrelevant material helped me sort and get an overview of the material. However, the groups of codes were not reflected in the categories that ended up structuring my analysis, as Tjora (p. 208) points out is often the case. Rather, it was applying a theoretical perspective, that shaped my analysis. As my research questions became more and more theoretically informed, the analysis was arranged accordingly. Furthermore, the categories used in the analysis were constructed to correspond with the research questions.

2.6.2 Narrative Analysis

The interviews I conducted with people involved in making Mosel wine, as well as with the Norwegian wine professionals, were very much of optimistic character. They were positive in the sense that Mosel wine was considered something unique. This was the main message presented to me, through a set of constructed narratives. Labov and Waletsky (1967) define a narrative as “an account of a sequence of events in the order in which they occurred to make a point”. The stories or narratives, two words which I will use interchangeably, presented to me during my fieldwork, were constituted by a certain structure. First, they had a beginning, a
middle and an end. Second, the different aspects were depicted as events. Third, the events were organized according to each other, as one deriving from another. These narratives were not private and intimate but rather appeared as being shared, as a type of property available to all ‘cultural members’. My informants’ stories corresponded with each other to a surprising degree. Thus, they seemed to represent a cultural form for common knowledge and views. However, these stories were not common in the sense of being available to those not familiar with Mosel wine. Whether one was on the ‘inside’ or the ‘outside’ was crucial. Being in the field represented a challenge, in terms of gaining the ability to grasp the central issues that were made subjects in these stories. As Polletta, Chen, Gardner, and Motes (2011) note are typical for narratives, irrelevant information was let out. The stories in most cases consisted of elements or events that always had significance for their plots or outcome. White (1980) emphasizes how narratives often point towards the future, with negative or positive connotations. As mentioned, Mosel winemakers were fundamentally positive about their situation, not only when addressing the current states of affairs, but also for future development. Maintaining the current expression of the Mosel was emphasized too, in relation to questions of future development. But how should one go about to interpret the cultural mechanisms behind this ‘taste of place’? In the following chapter, I develop a theoretical outline for analyzing terroir. This has allowed me to scrutinize the idea from a perspective that until now has remained unexplored. It is this framework that I apply in my analysis.
3 Theorizing Terroir: Exploring Culture of Wine Production from the Perspective of Taste

In this chapter, I explain how I arrived at the theoretical outline applied in the analysis of this thesis. I will argue why the framework I have developed, by building on several scholars within social thought, is well suited to research questions related to the notion of terroir. First, however, I will briefly summarize the dominant perspectives of the research existing on the topics of wine and terroir.

3.1 Tendencies Within Terroir Research

In the existing literature on wine production and the concept of terroir, there is an overwhelming number of studies focusing on the institutionalization of the ideas linking taste and place. Many sociologists and anthropologists have shown how terroir is used in developing wine laws. Such laws, especially some of those of France, classify vineyards and producers of wine according to quality. Examples are the 1855 classification in Bordeaux and the AOC system developed in Burgundy. Others merely serve to protect the use of geographical indications. These can be regarded as ideas of terroir put into system. Both causes and consequences of wine laws are made subject by researchers. Especially how classifications functions as ‘discriminative’, by declaring certain pieces of land or certain producers of wine higher than others, is scrutinized. Under, I outline some of the central contributions within this research, before I present some of the few studies that have explored ideas of terroir from an individual perspective.

3.1.1 Exercising Power

The leading perspective within studies researching the social aspects of terroir is that of power and dominance. These contributions can roughly be divided into two directions. First, terroir used as a mean for economic influence. Second, terroir as a mean for cultural sovereignty. Exemplifying the former, Whalen (2009) argues that linking place with product was done in the inter-war period in Burgundy as measures to meet the challenges of selling wine. Festivals, parades, and auctions were held to draw attention to the alleged uniqueness of the region’s wines. The strategy was so successful, Whalen claims, that it was later used to develop the AOC
classification system, where the idea of terroir is systemized through legal measures. An imagined commercial regional identity was constructed around the region’s natural resources, historical memory, marketing strategies and cultural performances. Fourcade (2012) argues that various forms of discourse on terroir have been shaped through economic struggles. Classifying land has been carried out as a strategy to handle threats of competition and fraud. However, he writes, ideas of terroir cannot be reduced to a tool for economic positioning. The financial battles that have resulted in specific ideas of terroir have also had cultural implications, which have manifested over time. These very much centers around the local landscape, and represent meaningful ways of interpreting the relationship between people and their surrounding physical environment. Exemplifying the latter, Guy (2003) has researched the history of Champagne and holds that private interests were active in constructing a distinct cultural identity of the region. This imaginary portrayed Champagne as a luxury product, and as such was used in constructing a French national identity in the 1820’s and 1830’s. Ulin (1988) describes how the wealthy in Bordeaux were active in legally protecting the regions’ highest classified estates. Josling (2006) has illustrated how the diverging practices of classifying geographically protected agricultural products in the USA and the EU spurred somewhat of a conflict of trade.

These studies have, first and foremost, aimed their attention at the classifications of land, and political and economic consequences of this practice. While this is certainly relevant to grasp the implications of terroir, legal classifications should not be regarded synonymous with terroir. Terroir rather represents an idea, namely that taste can be explained by place (Trubek 2008). Classification systems based on this represents the institutionalization of terroir. Juxtaposing terroir with its institutionalized features much overlook the meaning given to terroir on an individual level. How the idea of taste and place is presented and pronounced by the people that engage in winemaking, is left out of the equation. There are, however, some contributions that have scrutinized conceptualizations of terroir on a micro level.

3.1.2 Conceptualizing Definitions of Terroir

As already indicated, few scholarly contributions have attempted to understand the concept of terroir from the point of view of those who are involved in winemaking. As one of the few, Sarah Daynes (2013) conceptualizes the understandings of terroir observed in her fieldwork among Bordeaux winemakers. She introduces three categories of thinking around terroir. The first is what she calls magnified terroir. Daynes observes how the winemakers emphasize the
role of the vintner when speaking about terroir. Terroir is thus seen as something that has got to be mediated by humans. Instead of focusing exclusively on the area's natural characteristics, this is merely viewed as a starting point for a great wine with an address. Furthermore, “it is up to the viticulturist to reveal it”, as she writes. Human activity is not regarded as being part of terroir, however, but rather as a mediator of it. Friendly terroir refers to vineyards regarded less prestigious. As famous vineyards are highly expensive, those of less eminence is easier to appropriate. Consequently, they are more open to experimentation. A winemaker can here, without having considerable financial means, be freer to make his or hers ‘dream wine’. What Daynes calls borrowed terroir, captures the peculiar Bordeaux way of juxtaposing terroir with chateaus. The expression of land through wine is a matter of property. Who owns it, is thus crucial. Daynes describes how a terroir in Bordeaux is thought to transform upon changes in ownership. When shifting from one's property with a specific terroir, and becoming part of a different property, or chateau, with another known expression, how this newly appropriated land is perceived, changes. On the contrary, in regions like the Mosel, Burgundy, and Piedmont, terroir is thought to differ from vineyard to vineyard, and in most cases, each site has multiple owners and producers. While vineyards in Bordeaux also will be ascribed with specific characteristics, this is much dependent upon the owner. The crucial feature is who makes the wine, rather than what the vineyard is called. Single vineyard names do not appear on Bordeaux’ wine labels either, such as is common practice in the other regions mentioned.

Demoissier (2011) argues that including human agency to the understanding of terroir is a recent development, resulting from a tendency in Burgundy from the 1990's onwards, where the share of negociants (producers who make wine from bought-in grapes) fell, and the share of domaines (producers who make wine from grapes grown in their own vineyards) grew drastically. Prior to this, she claims, terroir was mainly restricted to include the attributes of the physical environment the wine was made. As the ‘Burgundy definition’ of terroir gained a foothold, the winemaker was more and more regarded to be the ‘mediator’ of his or hers, surroundings. Thus, the emphasis put on the human contribution for a wine’s characteristics have increased, she argues.

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5 Chateau refers to a Bordeaux estate producing wine
3.1.3 The Perspective of Taste: A Missing Account?

These contributions are among the few that consider the cultural meanings given to terroir by those that are involved in the process of winemaking themselves. While not opposing findings that discourses on terroir can be active in processes of cultural distinction and in strategies of marketing, they illustrate that the concept of terroir is constructed and built on certain perspectives on the relationship between people and their surroundings. Thus, the ideas constituting terroir have important philosophical, moral and social implications. What these studies lack, however, is taking into account the crucial role given to taste in wine. Wine, although made an object to trade, speculation, and storage, is a beverage. Hence, in most cases, the defining feature of a wine will be its aromatic profile. Especially from the perspective of consumers, producers, taste, and smell are vital in judging a wine’s quality. Furthermore, while terroir from an abstract point of view has cultural and philosophical implications, it is first and foremost used in attempts to connect the taste of a wine to the place it was made. This is done by specifically referring to the qualities found in a wine, such as components found in its taste and smell. However, studies researching the cultural embeddedness of taste and smell of wine produced in a certain area, are scarce. How is ‘terroir’ or attributes of the physical environment, and specific modes of production that are employed in an area, used to explain the sensory profiles of the wines that are produced there? Furthermore, what implications does climate change have for the meaning given to the place of taste in local wine cultures? To better to be able to answer such questions, I work out a theoretical outline for terroir research under.

3.2 Theorizing Taste

How should one go about to understand terroir? While the existing contributions indeed provide insight into certain aspects of the phenomenon, they do not suggest any larger framework for comprehending the mechanisms that constitute terroir. If we strip terroir of all its political and economic implications, what is left, is the idea of ‘taste of place’, or the idea that place can be used to explain taste. As terroir is thought to differ from place to place, explaining taste varies across space. In other words, it is reasonable to assume that terroir is given a different ‘content’ in the Mosel compared to Burgundy, for instance. But how does such a content appear? And of what is terroir constituted, in the case of the Mosel? In the following, I develop a framework for interpreting terroir from a specific theoretical point of view, which is later applied in the analysis of this thesis.
3.2.1 Terroir as Social Reproduction

Taking considerations of ‘taste’ to the core of their thought, Burnham and Skilleås (2012) suggest that a wine can be said to have terroir when a specific stylistic expression of a place, is produced and reproduced across an extensive period. A stylistic expression refers to a distinctive set of tastes, aromas and other characteristics such as levels of acidity, tannins, and alcohol, perceived in wine. By arguing so, they emphasize both the contribution of the winemaker, as well as the relevance of the surrounding physical conditions. They argue that terroir represents a dual relationship where both nature and winemakers shape the wine style, and where the wine style influences the winemakers back. This happens as a style becomes associated with a place, hence shaping certain expectations whenever wine from a distinct geographical area is poured into a glass:

The terroir, be it as local as a site or more general as a village or even a whole area like Champagne, becomes a tradition with its own norms for what the sensory identity of its terroir is, and takes on something of the character of canons in the arts. (...) Traditions and taste profiles that appear to be ‘natural’, like what a typical Meursault tastes like, need to be the result of the operation of a feedback loop between natural factors, like soil, aspect, climate, and the human forces that interpret and seek to enhance the characteristics deemed desirable and typical for a kind of wine. (...) We suggest that terroir arises when the artifice has acquired over time the kind of constancy and unique identity that we would otherwise associate with natural phenomena (Burnham and Skilleås 2012: 203 - 206).

Terroir here is thought of as a wine style, a specific expression, that has been shaped over time. Created in a symbiosis between man and nature, interaction with markets and consumers, a socially interpreted and communicated pattern of wine expression, has thus been established. Upon crystallization, and becoming a social structure, as it shapes and influences action within the geographical area in question, back. Perception of a wine style among consumers, professional tasters and journalists are significant for how it will be understood by others. As a stylistic pattern is established, the expression of a specific place gradually is regarded as inevitable. Hence, a certain wine style produced within a delineated geographical area is reproduced across time, it comes to be considered the expression of that place.

By suggesting that terroir arises when a specific stylistic approach is repeated over time in a delineated area and becomes its dominant expression, Burnham and Skilleås’ analytical
definition is also capable of capturing the diverging understandings of terroir found in different regions. The difference between the notion of terroir practiced in Bordeaux compared to that of Burgundy, as described by Daynes (2013) can function as an example. Burnham and Skilleås accept that one can speak of terroir in relation to expressions associated with distinct vineyards, villages, or even regions, rather than engaging in a debate addressing which of these contrasting definitions that are to represent the concept. Furthermore, as the pursued expression in an area sometimes gradually changes, terroir might be more about time than space, they conclude (2012: 206).

Arguing that terroir ‘arises’ slowly through the production and reproduction of a distinct ‘expression’, have several implications for researching the connection made between taste and place in wine. First, terroir is here thought of as a social practice which existence is dependent upon the persistence of the associated stylistic winemaking approach. Second, while Burnham and Skilleås choose to compare terroir to the ‘canons in the arts’, sociologists drawing on their reasoning could gain from investigating terroir from the perspective of structuration. Regarding terroir as the outcome of actions performed by a large number individual agents can provide a fruitful base for researching how the cultural embeddedness of taste within a definite geographical area. Under, I present the main ideas within theory of practice as outlined by Reckwitz (2002), before I elaborate on some of Giddens’ contributions to theorizing social practices, as well as his concept of structuration.

3.3 Practice Theory

In practice theory, as developed by sociological theorists such as Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1977), analytical attention is aimed at social practices, carried out by individual actors. Social actions are, according to practice theorists, not to be regarded as isolated events, but rather as part of practices, which Reckwitz (2002) defines as routinized behavior. Practice theory builds on Wittgenstein and his idea of language-games from Philosophical Investigations (1972). His notion that speaking a language implies participating in a meaningful activity alongside other individuals is used actively by Giddens (1984), who thinks of social practices in much the same way. Reckwitz (2002) provides a synthesized presentation of this theoretical approach. He places practice theory as one of four main directions within cultural theory. Cultural theory, he claims, appeared as an alternative to, and a middle way between individually oriented action theory, and collectively oriented theory of social order. Cultural theories seek knowledge that
is embedded in collective cognitive and symbolic structures. Shared knowledge and collective forms of interpretation make up the basis for mutual world views among individuals. Within practice theory, it is believed that such knowledge is to be found in the social practices, performed by individuals. Not to be confused with habits, practices consist of several elements, interconnected with one another. Activities of both body and mind, the use of objects, knowledge, and understanding, emotions and motivations, all constitute practices. These are performed by individuals, who operate on basis of a shared interpretation and understanding of the world. Practices are thus carried, by the single individual, as a bodily and mental agent (2002: 50).

**Bodies and Minds**

Practices are carried out by movements of the body. Rather than being an instrument, however, the body represents aspects of practices that are learned physical activities. Individuals must be trained and skilled to perform the routinized actions of practices. Thus, social phenomena can be studied through physical, bodily operations. Simultaneously, practices are mental activities. Repeated actions suggest routinized understandings of the world, motivations, and knowledge. To engage in winemaking, one must be physically able. Farming grapes (viticulture) and making wine (oenology) is done both physically, through physical labor, such as pruning, harvesting, and fermentation. Additionally, those involved must have knowledge about the significant norms, regulations, and the aims of winemaking. The mental aspect is not something that exists internally in every individual, but rather a property of the practice itself, Reckwitz claims. As such, these activities are not private or subconscious thoughts, but rather the collective knowledge that is shared by the agents. They are essential elements that are integrated into the practices. “A practice”, Reckwitz writes, “thus crosses the distinction between the allegedly inside and outside of mind and body” (2002: 252).

**Things**

Physical objects are fundamental elements of many social practices. Performing practices often require using specific things in specific ways. Reckwitz returns to the example of football. The ball and the goals are objects, inevitable for the individuals to participate in the game. Implementing an analytical view of things, he also argues, in one respect differentiates practice theory from classical sociological thought, where the connection between subjects always have
been given priority, rather than connections between subjects and objects. Furthermore, this allows exploring the cultural implications of nature (2002: 252-253). Being analytically sensitive to the significance of things, objects and nature can be critical for researching the culture of wine production, and particularly when focusing on the concept of terroir, as in the connections made between taste and place.

**Knowledge**

Specific knowledge is also essential for individuals to engage in practices. In addition to practical knowledge, it includes certain modes of perception, goals, and feelings, that are all linked to each other. This type of knowledge can be summarized to a specific way of understanding the world. It is mainly implicit in the actions, as well as being historically- and culturally specific. Such forms of interpretations are, also in some sense collective properties, in that they are shared by the agents of practice. More specifically, the practical aspect involves how to carry out the operations and doings of practice. Furthermore, every practice has implicit goals that are routinized and pursued by the agents. Some things are wished to be achieved, others avoided (Reckwitz 2002: 254). When focusing on the aspect of taste or sensory profile in wine, exploring forms of shared knowledge becomes highly relevant. Applying the perspective that terroir or established wine styles result from winemaking decisions carried out by numbers of individual winemakers, calls for an analytic approach to the collective views, knowledge, goals, and feelings of winemakers. For instance, what are the opinions on how a wine made within an area, should taste like? Are there any aromas that are preferred over others? Are the wines made to represent anything? What significance is given to tradition? What are the views on drawing on scientific observations in the winemaking process? These are some of the questions that perhaps can give indications to some of the mechanisms behind a specific expression of a place subject to production and reproduction.

**Agency and Structure**

Reckwitz also points out that individual agents are the performers of practice. To recap, they carry out practices using their bodies and minds. According to practice theory, it is practices that permit agency. Individuals are neither autonomous agents that act free for any outside influence, nor unfree and overruled by others. They are competent about themselves and their surroundings, they have knowledge about the activities in which they engage and the goals and
motivations related to them. Practice theory considers social structure to be a result of routinization. Routinized actions, thoughts, feelings, and knowledge that are interconnected in practice, is where to ‘look’ for structure. Structures are temporal, however. Only as the routines of practice are upheld, does structures exist. Thus, changes in structures must be the outcome of changes in practice (Reckwitz 2002: 257). Burnham and Skilleås’ (2012) thoughts on terroir as a specific wine expression carried out in a specific place, resonates the paths taken to study practices and structures within practice theory. A wine style cannot be detached from the production. Winemaking as practiced within a defined geographical area, implicate certain modes of production and knowledge about these and their consequences for the finished product. In other words, the goals, motives, and knowledge of winemakers are significant for the stylistic approach pursued, and thus, for a wine’s taste profile.

3.4 Theory of Structuration

Giddens’ *The Constitution of Society* (1984), provides what is perhaps one of the most influential contributions to practice theory. Central to his task is to grasp how social structures come about. In attempting to do so, he brings practice to the core of his thought. Activities reproduced by individuals across time and space is what constitutes practices, and the structures they are part of. One of Giddens’ main claims, is that actions are not carried out independently of one another. Human action is part of a continuous flow, similarly to cognition. Therefore, social action should be studied as such. Intentions, motives, and reasons, too, rather than isolated, are to be regarded as social entities. Understanding these mechanisms is crucial to grasp the constitutions of social structures. Giddens refuses to accept the functionalist conception of structure. In classic functionalism, such as Durkheim (1899-1900), structure is believed to be a framework for action that is external to individuals. Rather than having any enabling features, structure is here considered to mainly be of constraining nature, Giddens claims. Thus, he regards the biological analogies of functionalism to be naive and too simplified. Structures do have constraining features, he admits, but they are also enabling. In fact, structures or established patterns of social action represents possibilities for agency. By this, he means that through acting, individuals draw on the experiences of others. Giddens refers to this as the duality of structure. Structures are both the medium and the outcome of acting individuals. Thus, structures are reproduced continuously, by those engaging in the social practices that constitute structures (1984: 69).
Rules and Resources

More specifically, Giddens by structure refers to the rules and resources of social practices. These he also calls structural properties. It is these that allow the reproduction of situated practices, and thus the process of structuration. A structure exists exclusively as the practices are constantly being carried out and repeated by individual agents. The significance of repetition leads us to another aspect of structure. Sets of rules and resources provide individual agents with the memory of practice. By representing a framework for meaningful and competent action and participation, structures allow individuals to participate in activities that draw on a foundation laid by others before them. Structures help agents to be knowledgeable, and to be aware of how to act meaningfully within varying specific contexts (1984: 17).

To specify what rules are meant to capture, Giddens warns against confusing the term with other meanings it has been given in the literature. First, contrary to rules in games, the rules implicated in the reproduction of social systems, are subject to far more interpretation. They are contested, discussed, and can be of controversial nature. This is the case for both formal rules, that is laws, as well as rules of more informal and non-discursive character. Second, rules are rarely connected to specific actions. Instead, they are loosely organized general codes of conduct. Third, rules cannot be parted from resources. Resources refer to the “modes whereby transformative relations are actually incorporated into the production and reproduction of social practices”. By this, Giddens means that it is the same elements that permit agents to act within a practice and thus draw on the actions and choices done by others, as that enables them to create such patterns in the first place. In addition, agents are capable of transforming structures, post establishment. “Structural properties”, he writes, “thus express both forms of domination and power”. In other words, he ascribes both a constraining and empowering aspect to structure, hence the dichotomy of rules and resources. Fourth, Giddens builds on Garfinkel (1963) and argues that rules not only regulate action but also procedure. In other words, how things are done, in addition to what is done. Such practical frameworks for action often is implicit in the situations where the individual agent finds him- or herself, requiring considerations taken and choices made ad-hoc. Rules, in other words, exist both explicitly, on the discursive level of human consciousness, and implicitly, concerning practical knowledge that isn't, or that doesn't have to be, discursively formulated. Fifth, rules can, in addition to sanctioning modes of conduct, refer to “the constitution of meaning in practices”. In other words, it is Giddens' view
that many tacit rules are to be found in the way practices are given meaning by those who carry them out (1984: 18).

In *Central Problems of Social Theory* (1979), Giddens provides some clues to what is meant by resources. Closely related to resources are power and domination. But contrary to what many other contributions to social theory have done, Giddens claims, when speaking of resources, one should distinguish between *authorization* and *allocation*. While the former refers to possessing power over other people, the latter refers to power over objects or other physical materials (p. 100). Like rules, resources can be sources for both stability and change. Rules are constantly interpreted and reinterpreted and are never written in stone. Therefore, they can be used to legitimize divergent practices. Such social codes function to specify what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in the use of allocative resources (p. 104). Researching wine production from the perspective of terroir, the crucial question thus becomes which *allocative resources* that are viewed as significant for producing the preferred expression, as well as how, and to what extent *rules* are active in regulating the way in which these very resources are applied.

### 3.5 The Rules and Resources of Terroir

Many scholars have made attempts to comprehend the conception of terroir and its social implications. These have largely directed attention to how discourses on terroir have been institutionalized and served purposes of marketing and sales. Moreover, terroir has been criticized for being a conservative idea used to protect the interests of ‘old world’ producers of wine at the expense of those representing the ‘new world’. However, these studies have ignored the perspective of cultural meaning given to the linking of taste and place. While some contributions have explored various definitions given to terroir from the viewpoint of winemakers themselves, so have been done without considering the significance of taste. By building on Burnham and Skilleås (2012) suggestion that terroir is not something that *exists*, but is *established* through stylistic production and reproduction, I explore interpretations of taste among Mosel winemakers. Moreover, my analysis scrutinizes the way in which place is used to explain and provide meaning to Mosel wine and its associated flavors and aromas.

Viewing the winemaking of the Mosel as a social practice that involves making use of the physical surroundings and tools or methods, where the agents have certain stylistic goals they
seek to achieve, a knowledge they apply, I hope to illuminate some of the attitudes and beliefs inherent in the production and reproduction of Mosel wine. Applying the perspective of practice theory to winemaking allows for a fresh conception of the phenomenon. By viewing winemakers as being carriers of a social practice, one can begin to investigate shared knowledge and conceptions circulating among and between them. The theoretical notion of structuration enables us to investigate a so far unexplored area within wine research, which is how a wine style becomes crystallized and thus takes on the form of a social structure.

Furthermore, I place a strong emphasis on the concept of rules and resource sets, as developed by Giddens. What is presented as the enabling and constraining aspects of Mosel winemaking? Focusing on the cultural embeddedness of taste especially becomes necessary in the perspective of a changing climate. Which flavors are wanted in Mosel wine, and which are not? Again, within discourses of terroir, place is frequently used to explain the taste profile found in wine. Climate is often regarded to be the most defining physical attribute of a place, for a wine’s taste. How are such explanatory stories told by Mosel winemakers? What degree of significance is given to the climate, and which other resources are stressed as influential? Last, but not least, how are these stories challenged by climate change?
4 “This is what makes the Mosel special”: Narratives of Resources

In my analysis, I have focused on two aspects of Mosel winemaking. Applying Giddens’ terms, I classify these as rules and resources. In this and the next chapter, I describe and illustrate how my informants constructed narratives where rules and resources represented central elements. In chapter six, I discuss the implications of and reactions to climate change, in light of the two preceding chapters. Here, I will describe how, and explain what was presented as resources in these stories, and how these constituted vital parts of different narratives. What I refer to as resources are those features my informants depicted as enabling aspects of being a winemaker in the Mosel. The resources were especially focused on why Mosel wine tasted and smelled the way it did. They were introduced to me as explanations of the character of Mosel wine. More specifically, the expression of the Mosel, found in the wines produced, was by many considered as unique. In other words, the resources were the features that made Mosel wine, as it appears, possible. Furthermore, the reason why Mosel wines taste the way they do was winemakers taking advantage of these resources. A causal chain was thus created. First, existing resources enabled their use. Second, their use resulted in a specific wine style. Moreover, the resources were used to give meaning to the wine and its production. They functioned as means to contextualize the work of the vintner, as in regarding Mosel winemaking as part of something larger. Resources were actively used to justify choices made to achieve the ‘correct’ expression. As I show, some ‘wine styles’ were preferred over others. While there did exist variation, my informants had remarkably coherent opinions on many issues. I identified three distinct groups of resources that my informants drew upon. An overarching narrative constructed around taste in Mosel wine, which I will refer to as the style narrative, functioned as a frame for these groups. Three specific sub-narratives, one devoted to each type of resources, was also recognized. Most informants drew on all these sub-narratives when seeking to define Mosel wine. The relevance ascribed to each, however, differed in between them. In the following, I will describe these sub-narratives shortly, before illustrating in detail how they were told, and how they constituted the encompassing style narrative.
Three Sub-Narratives of Resources

The narrative of Mosel’s natural conditions was directed as one distinct type of resources. Making Mosel wine was, by many, merely considered as providing the local physical environment with a voice, and letting it speak. Especially by using the Riesling grape, these informants regarded their work as expressing their surroundings through wine. Certain attributes of the environment were emphasized as playing a vital role for the wines produced. Particularly humidity, climate, and soil were regarded as crucial. Wine characteristics claimed to derive from these, made “the Mosel special”. It was presented as if not a single winemaker in other areas could achieve what was done in the Mosel. By doing this, a boundary to other regions and countries was drawn. Features of the Mosel were actively used in constructing a distance to ‘others’. The distinctiveness of the Mosel region lied in its physical surroundings. However, while this was used as an explanation for the wines’ characteristics, it could not be achieved without using these physical features.

Through the narrative of winemaking, the importance of another type of resources was emphasized. In this narrative, methods of winemaking were the central factor. The opinions on which techniques that were crucial to the Mosel style, to some extent varied between informants. What they had in common, however, was the reason given for their relevance: they were all implemented to lift forward characteristics stemming from the physical environment. These were not offered by nature or God, but science. Specific methods of viticulture (farming grapes) and oenology (making wine), were presented as enabling. What they made possible, more specifically, was their preferred expression of the Mosel. Moreover, although these tools were available to winemakers in other regions too, they had special significance in the Mosel, and some were especially suited for the making of its wines. Thus, they were regarded as fundamental to Mosel wine.

The third kind of resources was presented via the narrative of history and tradition. Accounts of the Mosel’s history and tradition of winemaking were actively used to justify various approaches. Informants regularly made the long history of Mosel winemaking to a subject. Thus, they viewed themselves as carrying on these traditions into the future. This too was spoken of as representing a resource. Because winemaking had been carried out certain ways, these practices should be continued. The fact that Mosel wine production today represented history, was used as a reason for defending approaches and choices made today. The producers in this sense had a desire of taking care of a cultural heritage, tethered to Mosel as a physical
entity. However, this was not used to explain the style of Mosel wine. Rather, it was presented as a historical fact, that helped their wines to be unique, in the sense that they had a history different from other wine producing regions. While I had strong expectations that ‘traditions’ would stand out as pivotal for wine style from my informants’ perspective, this was not the case. Rather, it was a resource in the sense that it allowed them to be part of something larger and exclusive. However, for some informants, especially Carl and Jürgen, the history of the Mosel region also represented a significant part of the style narrative.

4.1 The Sub-narrative of Natural Resources

Within the narrative of natural resources, three features of the local environment were treated as the main resources of the Mosel. Each of these was ascribed certain enabling aspects that were used to explain distinct characteristics of Mosel wine. As such, their importance for practicing Mosel winemaking was emphasized, as well as how they made the Mosel unique.

4.1.1 Cool Climatic Conditions

The climate of the Mosel is often said to be cool in the context of wine production (Johnson and Robinson 2013). This was depicted as the crucial resource they drew upon making Mosel wine. Thus, it was made the center of the style narrative, and as such given a leading role in constituting the established Mosel wine style. Climate was used to explain a wide range of characteristics typically associated with Mosel wine, such as high levels of acidity, low levels of alcohol, a light bodied appearance, ‘drinkability’ and ‘ageability’. Simultaneously as these were presented as attributes of the cool Mosel climate, other factors sometimes were used to explain the same features. One example was how some partly ascribed the high acidity to the slate soil. Thus, it was not regarded to be wholly a product of the low average temperatures. Therefore, the topic of acidity, among others, will reappear later in the analysis. By drawing on attributes of the climate, Mosel wines were ascribed a long list of characteristics. Put differently, the features these wines are widely known to exhibit were continuously regarded in the context of the climate. Even though informants also frequently discussed the relevance of winemaking decisions, and highlighted that these had major significance for the outcome of the wine, attributes of the physical environment were the explanation factor they usually turned to. While features such as climate indeed were narratively treated as enabling and causing the Mosel style,
certain winemaking methods were also presented as crucial for making a successful and representative Mosel wine.

**Acidity**

As described, Mosel wines are known for having higher acidity than wines from most other regions and countries. While wines from Burgundy for instance, which also is considered to have a cool climate, often have less than three grams of acidity per liter, it is not unusual for wine from the Mosel to have 8-9, even 10 grams, and sometimes more (Ronold and Mønster 2015). High acidity was considered an essential component in Mosel wine, by my informants. Carl, who was perhaps the one of my informants who was most eager to define ’the Mosel’, when speaking about one of his next favorite producer of the region, said it like this: “The wines, they just have precision, yeah. They have, yeah, they just have a lot of character. Good acidity. Mosel wine for me should have [high] acidity (...) Without the acidity, it’s not Mosel Riesling, to me”. Christoph, too, found comparatively high levels of acidity to be essential. He was concerned that the 2016 vintage not would live up to his expectations: “I'm afraid the wines will not have enough acidity. It’s not looking very good. I always want to have high acidity. But in warm years, it can be difficult”. Sarah claimed that the typical Mosel style couldn’t be done as elegant other places: “The sweeter styles can’t be made outside Germany as good. Sweet wines need high acidity, and such high levels can only be accomplished in the Mosel because it’s so far north”. While some informants focused on that sugar was needed to balance the high acidity, Sarah's explanation was the other way around; acidity was needed to balance the sugar. That the high acidity was made possible and caused by the Mosel climate, however, was uncontroversial.

**“Low in alcohol with a light body”**

A comparatively low level of alcohol was also considered rendered by the cool, northern climate. The long growing season was enabled by low temperatures, I was told. The grapes would be able to ripen, without the sugar levels, which are synonymous with the potential alcohol level, escalating too fast or too much. Slow sugar production meant that aromas were given sufficient time to develop. “Mosel wine is naturally low in alcohol! The cool climate enables us to make these light wines”, Nicolas said. The low temperatures and the long season were thus presented as some of the most important resources, and features of the region’s
physical environment. Essential to take advantage of this resource was harvesting late. But harvesting too late could also have critical consequences. Wine made from grapes that were over ripe would result in too high alcohol levels, some claimed. However, low alcohol was ascribed to another factor as well, which I will return to later in this chapter.

‘Drinkability’

So-called ‘drinkability’ was regarded partly as an attribute of low alcohol levels, and partly as resulting from certain methods of wine production. Or rather, certain methods that were to be avoided. Wine should be easy to drink, several claimed. Jürgen said it like this: “Wine is supposed to be drinkable! It’s those wines we love to drink, so it’s also what we want to make, you know”. Carl elaborated on what was meant by this rather abstract notion:

It’s about being light, being drinkable. It’s like a quaffing wine, but serious. It’s not like a quaffing wine because it’s a quaffing wine. It’s a quaffing wine because it has naturally, it’s a serious wine, it’s from old vines. It’s from low yields. But it’s easy, it goes down easy. It’s delicate. Those attributes.

Juxtaposed with ‘drinkable’ wines were ‘powerful’ wines. Carl had a lot to say about this too, and his opinions on the subject were strong. When speaking about a winemaker we both knew, he said: “Some of his wines have 13, 13,5 % alcohol. 13,5 % alcohol and thirty grams of residual sugar! What am I gonna do with a wine that has 13,5 % alcohol and thirty grams of residual sugar? I can’t drink that!”

This was one of Carl’s many ways of demonstrating that light wines, was what he preferred. But lightness was not only something that made wine good, it was a characteristic of what he found to be ‘true Mosel wine’. His opinions also addressed specific winemaking methods. Two he held should be avoided, was maceration and malolactic fermentation. Maceration refers to extracting color and flavor from the grape skins (Bird 2010: 104). Malolactic fermentation, also known as ‘the secondary fermentation’ and ‘malo’, is a process that occurs following the primary fermentation, where the malic acids, said to taste ‘harsh’, is converted into lactic acids, that are said to taste ‘soft’. Malolactic fermentation thus ‘softens’ the wine, and provides it with more body (Bird 2010: 85). This was, by Carl, contrasted with the classic, light bodied Mosel wine. When speaking about another specific producer, he said: “He would say he makes the old style. But I would argue that he doesn’t. The wines are just too full bodied, they go through
malo…” (I will return to this topic both in relation to the narrative of winemaking and in the chapter addressing rules).

When speaking to Eric about changes he had employed due to climate change, he uttered his frustration over producers who picked too late, and not had adjusted to the ‘new’ climatic tendencies: “I mean, okay, if people want to do it as their grandfathers, you know, not starting before first of November to pick, and let everything hang and get overripe… Sure they will have problems!” Eric’s example illustrated how picking late was a Mosel tradition, although he made it clear that you had to pick a couple of weeks earlier today so that the grapes would not suffer from over-ripeness. This would, again, result in too ‘heavy’ wines, he held. Harvesting at the right time was a key move, to keep the wines ‘light’ and ‘easy going’. It was the way to ensure that the reward from the cool Mosel climate was reaped. In other words; to take advantage of this important resource.

‘Ageability’

Another aspect of Mosel wine that was often attributed to low alcohol, was ‘ageability’. Mosel Riesling is known for being long-lived, and to evolve in the bottle over years and even decades (Johnson and Robinson 2013). This is illustrated for instance on literature covering Mosel wine, where relatively long so-called drinking windows are recommended. Jürgen had a system for this: “Usually we say that Kabinett should be drunk after ten years, Spätlese twenty, and Auslese thirty”. Eric highlighted the connection to alcohol, and used Californian wine made from the grape variety Cabernet Sauvignon as an example: “But nowadays, they are all 15, 15.5 alcohol, they are already tired after ten years, you know. Cause it’s too ripe, too overripe, you know. They can’t age as well”. Later, he explicitly emphasized the importance of wine being able to age for long: “We try to balance everything you know. To make wines that are drinkable somehow after only two or three years, but that is ageable at the same time. I think ageability is very important for the wine”. Peter too, as already described, made the connection between alcohol and ageability, when explaining the problems, they had experienced with the 2011 vintage: “While 2010 saw high acidity, and is built to last, the 2011’s evolve much quicker”. In other words, Peter’s view was that acidity also had implications for a wine’s ability to age. Their wines from 2011, in addition, had seen high alcohol. The combination of these was critical: “Tasting these wines today, the 2011’s seem so much older than the 2010’s when they, in fact, are a year younger! They have already evolved a lot”. Sugar levels were also presented
as influencing ageability. Visiting a local wine shop, I witnessed Samuel, who had worked there for many years, turn down a couple who asked to have a tasting of aged, dry wines. “Sorry”, he said, “but we don’t have any. The dry wines do not age very well. The fruity styled wines are another story”.

4.1.2 Slate Soil

Minerality

Minerality in wine refers to aromas assumed to derive from the soil the vines are planted in. Whether it really is possible for a grapevine to transport flavor from the soil to the grape and be detected in wine, is disputed, however (Maltman 2013). Nevertheless, a ‘slaty minerality’ was regarded to be an essential component of Mosel wine. The soil in most Mosel vineyards consist of slate, I was told. My informants ascribed certain aromas in their wines to be a product of exactly this. Furthermore, these aromas were considered a pivotal part for the distinctive character they held Mosel wine to exhibit. Sarah placed the minerally feature of Mosel wine at the core of its distinctiveness. Moreover, she undoubtedly regarded it to be an attribute of the slate soil. When I asked her what Mosel wine was to her, she said: “The soil is very important. Slate is not found outside of Mosel (...) Mosel wines also have a deeper minerality than other German Rieslings”. Carl believed the reputation of Mosel wine was threatened by growers who planted grapevines on the valley floor, instead of the steep slopes, because of less slate in the soil, and thus, in his view, the wines lacked minerally character:

I don’t believe in this, “Oh I’ll plant on the valley floor, and I can make a great wine.” No, it’s bullshit! You’re doing it because you’re lazy, and you have no interest in history... (...) But actually, to me, a Mosel Riesling. It has to be called Mosel Riesling, or a Mosel wine from Riesling, should be from a slate soil. Otherwise, it’s not Mosel. It’s something else.

Despite the fact that a wine made of Riesling, from the Mosel valley floor, technically would be a Mosel wine, or Mosel Riesling, Carl regarded the slate-driven minerality to be such an important part of the history and identity of Mosel wine that such wines should not even be allowed to be called Mosel. Eric disagreed. He held that minerality also appeared in wines made
from grapes from the valley floor. The soil was not first class, but good enough to produce his cheaper wines. By arguing so, he too demonstrated the relevance of slate minerality to Mosel terroir:

It’s slate again, you know. Because it’s all slate here, you know (laughs). And so, from that point of view, it’s all slate, you know. But, to be frank, I mean, I, you can do nice, I mean, not, I wouldn’t say grand cru, but estate Riesling, you know.

While there were diverging opinions on what had to be done to achieve aromas of slate minerality in the wines, they agreed that it was one of the essential components of the Mosel expression. Ole, the Norwegian wine writer, found it to be so crucial that he held it was something that would make Mosel wine distinct from others, no matter how radical climate change eventually would prove to be:

I believe that because the special slate soil in Mosel contribute to give the wines an aromatic, a special aromatic profile, that they most likely to some degree will be able to maintain. So, I don’t think that the Mosel, how should I put it, with its unique expression, distinct from other German Rieslings, will disappear.

Simply put, the slate soil found in Mosel vineyards was one of the key allocative resources of Mosel terroir and its expression. As demonstrated by my informants, the characteristics associated the slate soil of the steep Mosel valley slopes, played a vital role in providing Mosel wine with distinctive features. An essential quality of the slate, I was told, was that it was so decomposed, it permitted the vine’s roots to dig deep down between its layers, and transport nutrition as well as aromas to the grapes. The result was described as ‘stoney’ aromas of crushed rocks, slate, and sometimes wet slate, providing a ‘salty’ component to the aromatic profile of the wines. What was thought of as the appropriate way of taking advantage of this resource, was growing the Riesling grape.

**Acidity and pH-levels**

Some informants drew a connection between soil and acidity. It was not only the cool climate that enabled the ‘crisp acidity structure’, but also the low pH-levels of the slate soil. Jürgen was one of these and explained: “The meager soil of the region... The vines thrive in stone, in slate. They have low pH-levels... This goes hand in hand with the high acidity levels in Mosel wines.
This makes the Mosel special”. Nicolas, too, underlined this: “I’m thankful for the low pH-levels here. It’s one of the Mosel’s big strengths”.

### 4.1.3 Humidity and Botrytis

Another aspect of the ‘Mosel terroir’, presented as central in the narratives my informants practiced, was comparatively high levels of humidity: “There is much more humidity here than many other places. That is why we get Botrytis. But we get good Botrytis!”, Christoph said. Fredrik elaborated somewhat on the meaning of the high occurrence of the phenomenon:

> There they [Mosel winemakers] have another opportunity. It’s like, what should they do because botrytis will always be part of the grape material you get. That occurs in the Mosel. And then it’s like, they easily make an Auslese or a wine with relatively high Oechsle weight. That’s a bit more problematic for producers from Rheinhessen or Pfalz, where there’s warmer. What should they do with their Botrytis? They can also make an Auslese, but they will often become so heavy and unfresh, that the quality isn’t that good. Especially compared to the Mosel.

Botrytis too was something that made the Mosel unique, according to Fredrik. While other regions could also make wines from Botrytized grapes, these could not be compared to the ones of the Mosel. He thus held this to be an advantage of Mosel winemakers, over others.

### 4.2 The Sub-narrative of Winemaking

Scientific knowledge of viticulture and oenology was also given a pivotal role in Mosel winemaking. Although not claimed to be the source for as many characteristics as the climate, it was presented as crucial, for some features. In other words, according to the stories that circulated among my informants, Mosel wine would not be what it was today, had it not been for the resources represented by certain technological advantages. Such methods were especially argued to enhance many of the characteristics regarded to be attributes of the Mosel’s physical surroundings. Therefore, the use of some techniques in Mosel winemaking was presented as deriving from the features of the physical environment. Moreover, these helped to create the Mosel style. In other words, they were given a role of causality.
4.2.1 Arresting Fermentation

By far the most frequently mentioned attribute of productional methods for the character of Mosel wine was the process of ‘arresting fermentation’, also referred to as ‘killing the yeasts’. When wine ferments, the sugars in the grapes are converted into alcohol. The more sugar there is in the grapes, the greater the potential alcohol level is. The longer the wine ferments, the lower the sugar content, and the higher the alcohol level will be. Arresting, or stopping fermentation, is thus done to prohibit some of the sugars converting into alcohol. The wine will thus maintain some of its natural sweetness, usually referred to as ‘residual sweetness’ or ‘residual sugar’, and the alcohol will be stopped at a lower level than if the fermentation process had continued (Bird 2010).

Several expressions could be made by arresting fermentation. Julie, the winemaker at Andreas’ winery, who I did participant observation with during the harvest, told me that she arrested fermentation for all wine styles, including dry. She would taste the barrels every day, and intervene when she found the wine had ‘balance’. Generally, however, the method is often associated with sweet, or ‘fruity’ styled wines. Again, the ‘fruity’ style is perhaps what the Mosel is most widely known for. Wines classified as Kabinett, Spätlese, and Auslese will regularly be what is referred to by ‘fruity’. These are not sweet like a dessert wine, as they possess a smaller amount of residual sugar. Most of my informants both preferred to make fruity styled Riesling and regarded it to be one of the attributes that give Mosel its distinct character. Apart from Carl, few were eager to discuss what was traditional. Instead of focusing on what Mosel wine had been, they were more concentrated on defining what Mosel wine is, today. And the fruity styled Rieslings was presented to me, as being of defining value to the region. In other words, something that to them made the Mosel special.

Many winemakers desired a touch of sweetness in their wines, they told me, to help balance acidity. There were diverging opinions on exactly when the practice of arresting fermentation had come about, but most held it to be an innovation of the post war era. Jürgen insisted it had been used prior to World War II. Nevertheless, it was a resource that not always had been available. I was explained that it was usually carried out by cooling the fermenting wine down, as this slowed down the fermentation, before adding sulfur, that would kill all the working yeasts. The views on sulfur exhibited by my informants will be discussed in the following chapter about rules. What is essential here, is that this operation, performed by using specific technological equipment, was declared as crucial to represent Mosel in the correct manner.
Arresting fermentation was thus suggested to be a vital resource. My informants held that it helped create balance in wines that naturally had high levels of acidity. Nicolas told me: “Mosel wine need the sweetness like the painter needs the paint”, and used acidity to argue such a view. In his opinion, sweetness was the resource that enabled balance. But its practice was also argued the other way around. The high levels of acidity were, by some, suggested to be enabling. Because of acidity, one could make wines with residual sweetness. Especially Christoph held this view: “Here in the Mosel we can make balanced wines with sweetness, because of the acidity levels we get”. In his opinion, acidity was the resource that made balanced wines with sweetness possible. Whether it was a question of arresting fermentation, to produce the ‘fruity’ style, or fermentation coming to a halt on its own, as I was explained could happen sometimes when making ‘nobly sweet’ wines, also known as dessert wines. Such a view, however, was more a part of the sub-narrative on environmental resources, although rarely made a prominent point compared to the others described.

4.2.2 Sulfur Dioxide

The use of sulfur dioxide, hereafter referred to as sulfur, in winemaking is another winemaking practice that was given great significance within the narrative surrounding technology and methods of wine production. Despite sulfur being, in opposition to arrested fermentation, widely used within most wine regions and for producing most styles, it was given a key role in Mosel winemaking, through the narrative of technology. Two main reasons were given for its indispensability. First, it was a crucial tool in arresting fermentation, as described above. Hence, it was regarded as enabling the ‘fruity style’. Second, the wine was sulfured again, after bottling, for ‘stabilization, to prevent a second fermentation in the bottle. This would allow it to be stored for many years, to age and develop further. In other words, sulfur was portrayed as vital for achieving a key characteristic in Mosel wine, namely the one of ‘ageability’. (I return to the subject of sulfur in chapter five.)

4.2.3 Oak vs. Steel

The ability of Mosel wine to age well, and improve in the bottle could also be influenced by certain methods of production. Paul explained that he used steel tanks, instead of oak barrels, to improve this feature: “Fermenting in steel prohibits the micro oxidization that occurs when you use oak. When the juice doesn't get any air contact, its ability to age in the bottle, increases”.
By doing so, he emphasized the role of winemaking decisions. In other words, he held that ‘ageability’ was something the winemaker could have a certain influence over and that it was a characteristic that deserved to be enhanced and kept. Sarah claimed the opposite, however. She fermented her wines in oak barrels. The micro oxidization permitted by the barrels resulted in wines better suited for aging.

4.2.4 “I don’t make Riesling. I make Mosel”

As noted, the most widespread grape grown in the Mosel is Riesling. It was obvious that cultivating Riesling was essential to my informants. However, what grape variety they grew, was often not made subject explicitly. Rather, it was implicit in the narratives told. Several informants did not even mention Riesling. It seemed as if it was taken for granted that one understood that it was this Riesling, and no other, that was the variety central to these narratives. Riesling was presented as a resource. But although it was said to have been discovered growing wildly in Germany (Robinson, Harding and Vouillamoz 2012), it was not thought of as the other natural resources, such as climate and soil. Riesling was a tool. In fact, it remained the best tool to express the features of the natural Mosel environment. More precisely, Riesling was the best way to express the Mosel. Christoph said it like this: “The combination of Riesling and the slate soil is just unique. It is through the Riesling grape that the Mosel is best represented”. Nicolas took this way of thinking even further: “I don’t make Riesling. I make Mosel. Riesling can be made anywhere. Only in the Mosel, you can make Mosel”. As Riesling was a grape that could be grown ‘anywhere’, he did not wish to be associated with ‘anything’. To specify that it was Mosel he made, rather than Riesling, he narratively avoided being put in the same stable as producers from other regions, countries, and continents. This became another way of pronouncing the great and unique character ascribed to the Mosel.

4.3 ‘True Mosel’: Narratives of History and Tradition

4.3.1 “It was dry! It couldn’t have been anything but dry!”

Carl was one of several people working with winemaking I met that turned to history to argue how Mosel wine should be made, how it should smell, taste and look. In opposition to certain others, he claimed, he had really researched the history of Mosel wine and studied how the
wines were described earlier, especially towards the end of the 19th century, a period he held had been important for Mosel wine gaining worldwide reputation:

C: In this book, there's actually a list, it could be an auction list. And it shows a Scharzhofberger. It shows the alcohol of the wine, and it was like 11%. It was like, a very expensive Scharzhofberger. 11%.

H: And that was dry?

C: It was dry! It was dry! I mean, it couldn't be anything but dry!

This type of thinking had even been decisive in which winery Carl had ended up working for: “I work there not only by chance, I work there ‘cause I believe the way they work and the way they try to make wines, is based a little bit on this philosophy. They have old tools, they have old equipment”. Describing the ideal Mosel wine was for him synonymous with describing one of the winery's own wines:

Not thin wines, light wines. (...) And it’s about drinkable wines. It’s about gulpable wines. (...) Our Kabinett Trocken is like really razor sharp, and it’s got a lot of saltiness, but it [only] has 11% alcohol. That is to me, what is true Mosel wine, in its purest sense would be. Totally lean and without being show off-y.

Today, a big percentage of Mosel wines have residual sweetness. Carl did not fully approve, as he held that dry was the historically true, and thus the most accurate way, of representing the Mosel. For Carl, continuity was important. He spoke in awe of what he called the ‘heydays of the Mosel’, which he placed around the 1890’s. The Mosel’s international recognition was thanks to different things that had occurred during that period. His arguments sometimes gave the impression of having a moral aspect; wines that broke with the profile known from this period did not take the heritage of Mosel winemaking seriously in his opinion. But rather than being constraining, the role of history was enabling to Carl. Although he claimed nobody was interested in making this style today, to him it represented a resource for being able to be part of a long history of winemaking. This clearly was meaningful to him.
4.3.2 “Fruity prädikat wines are important for the Mosel”

Paul used a similar way of thinking for arguing the opposite of Carl. Even though his winery today mainly focused on dry wines, he wanted to continue producing fruity styled wines classified according to the Prädikat system, as he held that was the true Mosel tradition: “Of course we continue to do Prädikat wines. There is a market for that, you know. And people know it. They know a Kabinett, a Spätlese. They expect it. And these wines are important for the Mosel”. Keeping up the production of Prädikat wines was thus justified by two main concerns. First, that it had been established over time, and thus had consequences for their markets. The customers were used to it and thereby expected it. Furthermore, they had associations to the terminology. This implied having specific expectations to the sensory profile of a wine, based on which Prädikat it was classified under. Second, Paul’s statement also points to another idea; that some things should be kept as they are, because of the consequences of their cultural embeddedness. He regarded ‘fruity’ Prädikat wines to be a fundamental part of Mosel wine, and thus part of the Mosel wine identity. In other words, the consequences of the structuration of this style were used as reason for its reproduction.

4.4 Explaining and Legitimizing Taste

The three sub-narratives outlined above together helped constitute what I have called the style narrative. Each of them represented resources for Mosel winemaking. Those of natural and productional character was used to explain the aromatic profile of Mosel wine. Especially the features thought to make Mosel wine distinct from other types of wine was given significance. The first two sub-narratives described, namely those of climate and soil, illustrated wine partly as a product of its natural environment. Characteristics such as high acidity and slate-driven minerality were regarded as attributes of the cool climate and the slate soil of the area. The Mosel’s surroundings were, therefore, presented to me as the main resources of ‘the Mosel style’. Moreover, they made the Mosel special, my informants claimed. Thus, the practice of winemaking became a way of being part of something bigger. It perhaps served as a mean of being in touch with one’s surroundings. But equally important, seemed to be the cultivation of uniqueness. Through emphasizing what ‘they’ had, and ‘others’ lacked, distinctions were drawn, actively secreting ‘the Mosel’ from the surrounding world. This was also practiced through the third sub-narrative, that of the Mosel’s traditions. The knowledge of the past, too, was depicted as a resource. Learning from one’s ancestors was presented as enriching. The
resources of which these sub-narratives were constructed, all seemingly represented something abstract and distant. Drawing on what one believed to be ‘traditions’, provided meaning to winemaking.

Furthermore, a *narrative structure* was created within the style narrative. The sub-narratives, which I now have illustrated, were depicted as *events*, together forming the style narrative. These events were sewn together as if deriving from one another. First, the attributes of Mosel’s physical surroundings, such as the cool climate and slate soil, were portrayed as the ‘starting point’ for Mosel wine. Second, by responding to these features, a certain approach had been established. Such an approach consisted of various methods of winemaking. These had been developed and adopted because they were regarded to represent the Mosel appropriately. Moreover, they were considered being part of Mosel winemaking, after having been carried out by many individuals, independent of each other, repeatedly, over an extensive period. Third, this had resulted in the distinct wine expression that today is associated with the Mosel. Part of these narratives, was also what I call the rules of Mosel wine. Rather than attempting to ‘explain’ Mosel wine, these addressed how it should be crafted. During my fieldwork, I found a vast and complex set of rules, specifying acceptable and unacceptable approaches of making Mosel wine. These are the topic for the next chapter.
5  The Rules of Mosel Winemaking

In this chapter, I describe how rules of Mosel winemaking were advocated by my informants. While those features I refer to as resources were presented as enabling, the rules were seemingly of constraining character. Although my informants did not take such a word into their mouths, the rules undoubtedly functioned or at least had the intention to function to regulate the certain aspects of Mosel wine production. The rules took on several different forms, from addressing specific winemaking methods and instructions directed at characteristics in the finished wines, to more abstract ideas about the purpose of making wine. These sets of rules functioned to split the world of Mosel wine in two: the acceptable and the unacceptable. While all informants expressed opinions on how they believed things should be done, they differed in their level of engagement. Some stood out as being more enthusiastic in such questions than others. I found three distinctive ‘groups’ or sets of rules to be at work. Each of these was centered around specific issues, seemingly crucial to the practice of making Mosel wine. Some rules were slightly controversial and were seemingly aimed at other winemakers of the region, while other rules functioned to create a distinction between the Mosel and other wine producing areas and thus were in accordance with the approach pursued by many Mosel winemakers. The disputes I found were of somewhat subtle character. Nevertheless, the divergence between rules illustrated a battle for the power of definition. Moreover, contrasting standpoints on how Mosel wine should taste and smell, sometimes were argued by different informants referring to the same resources. In general, the rules and the issues they addressed, were closely related to the resources, and in some cases, more, or less intertwined. Thus, the rules, while not making up narratives of their own, were embedded in those already described. In the following, I will present the rules of Mosel winemaking briefly, before giving a more exhaustive illustration of each, showing how they were used in attempts to regulate the making and the meaning of Mosel wine.

First; independent of the approach taken, wine should reflect and represent the place it was made. Whether it was a matter of sticking to the established expression of Mosel or proving to the world that other styles also could be done successfully. While for instance, Christoph serves as an example of the former, Peter and his family wanted to accomplish the latter. Although they all emphasized the importance of winemaking choices and did not view Mosel wine simply as a function of the natural environment, climate and soil undoubtedly represented the fundamental starting point for Mosel winemaking. Here, the sub-narratives of climate and soil,
and the overarching style narrative was obviously drawn upon. This was especially obvious for those advocating a ‘natural’ approach with a minimum of intervention. Simultaneously, Mosel wine as a finished product represented the winemaking choices taken, and thus helped create a pattern for other individual winemakers to follow and be part of. This rule also had an extensive set of sub-rules, specifying the criteria for a Mosel wine to represent the Mosel in a correct manner. Minerality, acidity, some residual sugar and low alcohol were among those included.

Second: failing to use the resources of Mosel terroir correct was considered a mistake, and triggered strong reactions. To call these sanctions perhaps implies that they were carried out in a confrontational manner, but I did not experience any of such nature. Rather, these were ‘mildly disapproved’, as Giddens (1984) points out are also to be considered sanctions. Chaptalizing, using cultivated yeast, making full-bodied wines, and wines that lacked minerally character, were issues that certain informants viewed to be misrepresentations of the Mosel. Why was this so important? My analysis points to one especially significant factor: To maintain a distinct style, helping the wines of the region to ‘stand out from the crowd’. Not using a natural resource, enabling an expression that was considered unique, would be a shame, not giving justice to both the human and non-human aspects of the Mosel.

Third: wine should preferably not be ‘manipulated’. Behind the idea of manipulation, an extensive construction of rules addressing the process of winemaking was hidden. Some interventional practices were considered part of Mosel winemaking, while others were regarded manipulation. What seemed to be the decisive aspect for something to either be judged as acceptable or unacceptable or rather, as manipulation or not, was whether it was viewed as being ‘true’ to the Mosel. For instance, if the vintage had not provided sufficient ripeness, chaptalizing was accepted by some informants, to improve the wine so that it corresponded with the expression usually achieved. To chaptalize with the purpose of making a ‘big’ wine was deemed unacceptable for Carl and Christoph for instance, as big-bodied wines represented a clash with the typical Mosel style. Thus, it did not reflect the physical environment of the Mosel and its winemaking history.
5.1 “Mosel wine should be Mosel wine!”: Wine Reflecting its Origin

5.1.1 ‘Elegance’ vs. ‘Power’

Discussing Mosel winemaking with my informants, some aspects of the sensory profile in Mosel wines were made a subject more often than others. One of these was the relationship between ‘power’ and ‘elegance’. Should a wine be elegant or powerful? While this is a well-known topic in wine literature, and sometimes a wine’s greatness is expressed through declaring it exhibits both qualities, hence the expression ‘iron fist in a velvet glove’, many informants treated them as mutually exclusive. Furthermore, they argued that Mosel wine should be light bodied and elegant. These characteristics were referred to by several different notions. ‘Light’, ‘easy going’, ‘quaffable’, and ‘drinkable’, were positive, while ‘heavy’, ‘plump’ and ‘powerful’ were negative ones. Numerous factors were claimed to be deciding whether a wine was ‘light’ or ‘heavy’, ‘elegant’, or ‘powerful’. Alcohol content, acidity level, residual sweetness, and other characteristics of the finished wine, were among those used to judge a wine’s ‘weight’. But production methods were a topic too. How the grapes had been pressed, how the juice had fermented, in what kind of barrel, and other methods were claimed to have implications for this feature. When addressing this question, my informants often seized the opportunity to criticize winemaking approaches pursued by other Mosel producers, that they did not approve of. Sometimes names were mentioned, but usually, they were not. Many exhibited a critical attitude especially towards winemakers who sought to produce powerful expressions of the Mosel. This was not considered to be ‘true’ to the Mosel’s physical environment and local winemaking heritage.

Eric, quoted above, was frustrated over winemakers who focused too much on having low yields. Lowering the yields in the vineyard makes the wines more concentrated. Eric claimed that the yields must be adjusted to the weather of the vintage. Lowering the yields too much would make the wines too powerful, he claimed. Carl disagreed. He found that low yields were essential making quality wine, and had strong opinions on how Mosel wine should be light bodied. He did not agree that too low yields would make the wines powerful, and thus at conflict with the typical Mosel style. As we were drinking a wine he had helped to make, I commented that the color was exceptionally light: “Yeah, that’s what we want. We want this light color. And it’s totally low yields! We have like 30 hectoliters per hectare. We have extremely low
yields”.6 The color was an important indicator for the body, or weight, according to Carl. Furthermore, he did not like it when Mosel wine became too golden in color, as that indicated richness and power, rather than elegance, as he demonstrated when speaking about the wines from a certain producer, contrasting 2014 with the 2015-vintage: “Although I have to say I love the 14-vintage, like for the Kabinett Trocken, more. Because I thought the 15 was a little richer, even the color was a little more golden”.

**Alcohol**

Perhaps the best-represented indicator of ‘body’ or ‘weight’ where power and elegance were contrasted, was alcohol content. This is not only the case among my informants, neither. It is a common conception that by judging a wine’s ‘body’, alcohol is one of the key questions (Ronold and Mønster 2015). My informants frequently spoke of wines with high alcohol levels in a negative manner: “I want to make wine with low alcohol”, Christoph told me. “I have never liked wines with high alcohol”, he said while frowning his nose. Eric, too, was engaged in this question:

> I don’t criticize them, I mean, I criticize only things I don’t like, you know. Cause I don’t like wines with high alcohol. I don’t buy them, I don’t collect them, you know. So, I wouldn’t produce them, say it that way, you know. I like rather wines with more moderate alcohol levels.

While he, on the one hand, said he did not want to criticize others, he was, on the other, clear on what he did not like, as illustrated by the quote above. Eric claimed that making powerful wines had been a trend for quite some time. This was not limited to the Mosel, however. It was a worldwide development, he believed. Carl agreed. They both brought up the influence of American wine critic Robert Parker in this context. His personal taste, and tendency to favor ‘big’ wines have been discussed by many (see for instance Hommerberg 2011). It has been claimed that he has such an impact, that winemakers across the globe have chosen a distinct taste profile, adjusted to his preferences. The title of journalist Elin McCoy's book from 2006 illustrates this well: *The Emperor of Wine: The Rise of Robert M. Parker Jr. and the Reign of American Taste*. Parker is by many believed to have promoted a taste for big wines, that has had fundamental consequences for the wine world. The implication is also that Parker

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6 Hectoliters refer to hectoliters per hectare (Robinson and Harding 2015: 830). 30 hl/ha equals 3.000 liters per 10.000 square meters.
represents America and the cliché that Americans favor ‘big’ things, is drawn upon. But some informants believed this assumed trend had turned around. Eric argued this by exemplifying how he recently had been to America and tasted many wines with surprisingly low alcohol levels:

And there’s also movement and now, so young winemakers in California, and so, they’re also starting this thing lower alcohol, you know. I saw now wines with 12 even, you know. They go even the other way, you know (laughs), too extreme. But I mean, not too bad, you know. So, Cabernets with 12.5 again, and Chardonnays with 12, 11.5 even, recently I had a Chardonnay. And they get big, big fans, you know. People start ‘oh, wow, fantastic’, you know.

Carl too, believed the trend was changing: “It’s still about a certain level of ripeness (...) I think there’s a certain, I think it’s changing, for the better. I think people are realizing alcohol is not a good thing.” Although Eric criticized those who made and liked powerful wines, he insisted that nobody wanted to see high alcohol on the label and that alcohol had been downplayed, as it had never been ‘trendy’ itself. I asked Christoph the same question. As Eric, he drew a connection between the tendency of making ‘big wines’, and alcohol levels being high in many wines. But neither he thought that high alcohol itself had been considered a good thing. Rather, it was a ‘big body’ that impressed people, which again was a consequence of high alcohol in some wines. Put otherwise, it was a question of people’s sensory encounter with high alcohol in a wine.

The Prädikats and ‘Declassification’

The alleged phenomenon of ‘declassification’ was, as pointed out in the introduction chapter, one of the topics that awoke my academic curiosity about Mosel wine and climate change. The opinions on its cause were many. Few, if any, informants solely blamed climate change. While higher temperatures were assumed to have contributed, the tendency towards more ‘power’ and ripeness, was portrayed as the ‘sinner’. Among my informants, the topic was well-known, and seemingly often debated. All agreed it was taking place. However, none acknowledged doing it themselves. Instead, it was others that were to blame. Eric regarded declassification to be a big problem. While admitting that he had done it himself, in some vintages right after he took over his family’s estate thirty years ago, today he stuck to the ‘classical’ expressions of each Prädikat, he claimed:
People always tell me, you always have your mouth wide up, you know, because you always declassify. That’s true, when I started, I declassified. (...) So, I could sell, like I said, since ten years, we are reducing our must weights, we want to go back to the traditional Kabinett again.

The reason many continued to declassify, he held, was that richer wines tended to receive higher scores among wine critics, and rank higher in competitions:

I’ll tell you the problem, I mean, I think it’s one of the big problems, you know. Because all the wines which are going to competitions are not real Kabinetts, are not real Spätlese, are not real Auslese (...) Because they declassify Beerenauslese to Spätlese! A Beerenauslese is not a Spätlese! And if the people are allowed, to declassify Beerenauslese to Spätlese, and put it into the competition as a Spätlese, sure it’s the biggest wine! And in the competition, this wine sticks out, and everybody say it’s a 95 or a 98 point Spätlese!

Eric ascribed the problem to the fact that declassification was allowed, both according to the Prädikat system (part of The German wine law of 1971), and in the competitions. This was allowed, as the categories only had minimum levels concerning ripeness, and no maximum limits, he said. The consequence was that a wine legally qualified to be labeled Beerenauslese, could be classified as Kabinett. Fredrik, too, regarded declassification to mainly be a trend in the Mosel. While he regarded that it, to some extent, already had turned around, the wines classified as Kabinett today, reminded him of those labeled as Spätlese, he had drunk during the 1990’s:

Yes... Absolutely. It is true that Kabinett today, is... Have higher Oechsle weight, higher must-weight in the grapes, and often slightly lower acidity. It is... There has been a stylistic change. Especially in the vintages 2005 – 2010 there was... There was a lot of Kabinett that was almost mini Auslese. But now you also have producers that think the other way around.

Hence, Fredrik held that it had much to do with winemaking decisions, rather than climate change. He explained how a winemaker he knew, intentionally made lighter Kabinett than most other producers:
He’s very eager to... Harvest quite early, and he probably does his harvest a bit earlier than the others, and he makes Kabinett that’s more in line with how Kabinett was earlier. He does... Simply uses less ripe grapes and a little more freshness.

Declassification was thus considered a stylistic tendency, ascribed to methods chose by winemakers, and not a product of climate change. Albeit climate change perhaps was regarded to have made it easier to produce wines of richer character, declassification was a trend that could and should be fought. Power and ripeness were considered to clash with the light bodied style depicted as ‘true Mosel’.

5.2 Using the Mosel’s Resources

The view that the Mosel had unique possibilities for winemaking resonated with all the producers I met. The enabling features of its physical environment were emphasized again and again. On some occasions, my informants started talking about other producers from the Mosel, who they reckoned did not take advantage of these resources. This question was, naturally, closely related to the one described above, that wine should reflect its origin. Hence, these issues were often mentioned in relation to one another. However, there were slight variations, which is why I describe them separately. The rules of ‘using what was available’, were more general codes of conduct, and often addressed methods of winemaking, rather than wine characteristics. While great emphasis was put on which methods were correct, perhaps even more attention was paid to those that were incorrect, and thus should be avoided. These rules specified how to do things in the correct manner. Stories about ‘others’, who did not acknowledge and make use of the Mosel’s resources to a satisfying degree, were used to illustrate how wrong it would go if one did not conform to the rules.

5.2.1 “They should focus on keeping acidity, but they’re not”

Carl was, as pointed out earlier, engaged in the question of acidity. Mosel wine should have high levels of acidity. However, he was frustrated by those who didn’t keep acidity, as he said:

[If I was them] I’d be looking at trying to keep acidity, trying to keep the wines really…
And I think a lot of growers are doing the opposite. They’re not keeping acidity, they’re trying to impress with power. They’re trying to impress with, in their minds, serious wines. In depth, in German, ‘truck’. You know like, power...
To represent the Mosel correctly, production methods that were used to ‘tame’ acidity, or others that not necessarily were employed for that very purpose, but had such consequence, should be avoided, was Carl’s opinion. Especially maceration was a method he did not approve of:

A lot of people are doing maceration, which lowers acidity. You know, they macerate the grapes, which creates more potassium, which. It lowers the acidity. That’s why a lot of people macerate, it’s not just because of aromatics or having a little more body, it’s also to buffer the acidity. But of course, a lot of people de-acidify. That’s what most people do (...) There’s different techniques, but one of them is to add chalk, or what’s called doppelsalz.

To Carl, using these methods was synonymous with misrepresenting the Mosel. Albeit other informants also gave high acidity a constituting role in their idea of ‘Mosel wine’, few gave as detailed notions of this as Carl.

### 5.2.2 Keeping Lightness

I have already outlined how pivotal the role given to the rather abstract conception of ‘lightness’ was, attempting to define ‘Mosel wine’. Again, few demonstrated as strong opinions as Carl and Eric. I have already described how Eric shook his head when speaking about winemakers who lowered their yields too much. He insinuated that there was a myth-like, widespread belief among winemakers:

‘As lower the yield, as better the wine’. That is the biggest bullshit! (...) some say ‘Ohh, I have just thirty hectoliters, that must be the ultimate yield’. You have shitty wines, usually after that! Because if you go and prune on thirty hectoliters, you get earlier rot, you get earlier botrytis, you know. You get over-ripeness. It’s a disaster!

Pruning too much would result in rich, luscious wines that were not true to the Mosel, according to Eric. The wines should be light in character, and stay ‘true’ to the Mosel, reflect its cool climate and be a continuation of its winemaking history.⁷

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⁷ ‘Pruning’ refers to a specific method for lowering yields (Bird 2010: 13).
5.3 “We don’t make wine, we assist nature”

A topic that was important to many, was the role of the vintner. As noted in the previous chapter, some advocated an approach to winemaker where their task merely was ‘letting nature speak’. Nicolas was the one among my informants who expressed this idea the clearest. Several others articulated similar perspectives on winemaking, some more explicit than others. Views addressing how Mosel wine should be made often became apparent through discussions about winemaking in general, and vice versa.

5.3.1 ‘Non-interventionism’

Nicolas, as mentioned, was special, in that he articulated his winemaking approach remarkably clear: “Since taking over the estate, I have pursued a non-interventionist policy in the cellar”. He went on to clarify his position:

You see, there are two types of winemakers. The first sees himself as the creator of the wine. He has a big production and makes the best out of what he has available. The second sees himself merely as one who helps nature making wine. When grapes are fully ripe, they’ll fall to the ground and start fermenting anyway, even if humans are not involved.

Nicolas argued that because nature would make wine independently of humans, the only right thing to do was to help improve the wine. Man could help nature to develop this product further, and guide its journey along the way, to make it the best product possible. “We are an extended arm of nature”, he said. “This is something that only humans can do! I have never seen a monkey making wine (...) This was a gift to us, by whoever put us here”. This way of thinking about the winemakers’ role in winemaking, he used to argue his approach. Nicolas in other words wished to let ‘nature’ speak through his wines. The wines should thus not be manipulated. Chaptalizing, for instance, would be interfering, and thus, silencing nature. He was clear about what he found made the Mosel special, too: “It’s our climate and the slate soil that makes these light, but complex wines so easily achieved”. His point was, therefore, that the winemaker should involve as little as possible, as to be sure not to disturb this process. “I want to make wine that can’t be copied or imitated other places… I want to make unique wine”, he added. Letting the physical conditions to put their specific signature in the wines was the correct way to achieve this goal (Goldberg 2011 gives an interesting historical account of what he claims is the roots of this winemaking philosophy in Germany).
5.3.2 Sulfur and ‘Natural Wine’

The term ‘natural wine’ usually refers to wines that are made from organically or biodynamically grown grapes, without any additives, spontaneously fermented, and made without the use of sulfur (Cohen 2013). This approach was enhanced by many Mosel winemakers, with one exception. They all opposed the rejection of sulfur made by ‘the natural wine movement’. While I and Carl were having dinner together, an acquaintance of his, Tom, came by and stopped for a chat. He worked for Nicolas, which he later put me in contact with. Tom said he had recently been to Oslo and was impressed by the wine scene there:

T: They knew more about Riesling than me! (laughs).

C: Yeah, I hear in Oslo there is a real scene for Riesling and especially dry German Riesling. Whereas Copenhagen is more the natural wine thing.

T: Yeah, that’s interesting. But I like to say, when people talk about natural wine, I always say; well, that’s what we at the Mosel have been doing for a couple of hundred years! Not add anything, we don’t take anything away.

C: But then they’ll say sulfur, and you’re like: ‘Sulphur’s a good thing! It stabilizes the wine. It's been used for centuries!’ (laughs) It’s so ridiculous. Of course, you can have too much sulfur and it sucks. But sulfur is not... It’s made a scapegoat!

Carl’s statement reflected a standpoint taken by several informants: Using sulfur was not breaking with ideals of making wine according to the premises of nature. Additionally, using sulfur was, as I have shown, considered essential for Mosel winemaking, as it was held to enable both arresting fermentation, and the wine to age in the bottle.

About a month later, I was staying at Andreas' winery. Together with his winemaker, Julie, he controlled the operation at the estate. One of my first days there, Julie invited me to come along as she was adding some cultured yeast to one of their tanks of newly pressed grape juice. In other words, this wine was not spontaneously fermented. They used cultured yeast for their cheaper wines while letting their more expensive wines ferment from wild yeasts. Before she was going to add the yeast, she prepared a can of sulfur to stop fermentation in another tank. I asked if they always used sulfur when arresting fermentation, as I have heard about other methods as well, as for instance temperature control. She answered that in their winery, it was...
always sulfur that was used. I asked if it would be a sweet wine, as I had mostly heard of sweet wines being the result of arrested fermentation. But Julie told me that it would probably be more dry tasting. Contrary to my impression, this practice was in other words employed to make both dry and sweet wines. Julie said they simply stopped the fermentation process when they found the wine to be balanced. Frankly, they used their taste in deciding whether the wine should keep fermenting, or not. We went outside together. The can of sulfur had a sticker with a health warning on it, about being a toxic substance. Julie held it to be ridiculous:

Just a couple of years ago they didn’t use this... But now, only because there’s like two or three people in every country that’s allergic to sulfur, they stick this on. It’s absurd! This whole resistance to sulfur is so ignorant. People don’t know what they’re talking about! They think sulfur is bad, but if they ever taste a wine without sulfur, they hate it!

It was obvious that she was making fun of the natural wine scene. Otherwise, Julie was very pro-organic. All their grapes were farmed organically, and they used no additives, apart from sugar and some cultured yeast. She often mocked non-organic grape growing, too. To deal with problems in the vineyard with herbicides and pesticides was silly, she believed. She could ironically say things like “Just spray and kill the bugger!” with a funny voice, to demonstrate her skepticism. One day, right after we had finished picking, one of the guys in the harvest team found an earthworm in the middle of the road. “Throw it into the vineyard!” , Julie yelled. “But not the poisonous parcel, throw it into ours!”

5.4 Preserving the Mosel’s Unique Attributes

The rules or norms of Mosel winemaking were diverse and many. While there more or less existed consensus among my informants that Mosel wine should be ‘light’ and ‘elegant’, these abstract notions were used to address several approaches. As shown, Carl held that Mosel wine should be light, but dry. Others, such as Jürgen, claimed that light wines with residual sweetness were the ‘true Mosel wine’. As I illustrated in the previous chapter, the cool climate was used to ‘explain’ the light bodied expression of the Mosel. While the sub-narrative of the natural environment portrayed Mosel wine to be a product of its natural environment, the defining importance of winemaking was emphasized within the sub-narrative of productional methods. The rules of Mosel wine bridged these perspectives. By stating that Mosel wine should reflect the Mosel, strong emphasis was both put on the wine’s physical origin and the winemaking.
Furthermore, the winemaking approach deemed acceptable was justified by drawing on features of the physical environment. In other words, these rules represented a link between place and production. Place legitimized production.

Furthermore, expressing the Mosel correctly through wine was often argued to be done best by *avoiding* numerous winemaking methods, such as chaptalization, malolactic fermentation, and maceration. Employing such techniques would result in wines that were considered to misrepresent the Mosel. Some informants mentioned winemakers they claimed practiced such methods by name. These producers were ascribed other motives than those deemed acceptable, as they were depicted as deviants that rejected the ideas of Mosel wine being ‘light’ and ‘elegant’. According to the rules of Mosel winemaking, wines that lacked these qualities did not reflect the physical environment of the area. Hence, my informants drew on the narratives constructed around its supposedly unique possibilities for winemaking. Because the climate was cool, wines should be slender. Those regarded to break with this way of thinking did not take seriously the potential of the Mosel and was portrayed as though they did not understand ‘anything’.

Put differently, the rules of Mosel winemaking much seemed to be directed at preserving and enhancing a distinct group of physical features of the Mosel’s natural environment, that were depicted as representing key resources, inevitable for the production and reproduction of Mosel wine. Seemingly used to support this view, was the narrative presentation of uniqueness. The Mosel had something that was unmatched by anyone. Consequently, not taking advantage of this privilege or gift, was nearly considered a sin. Moreover, these features provided winemakers of the Mosel with the opportunity of crafting a product unlike anything else. As illustrated, my informants actively distanced themselves from other wine regions. The great attention paid to stand out in the context of ‘wine style’, reflected the same tendency. Only the Mosel could be the Mosel.
6 “So far, so good”: A Changing Climate

As I have shown in the previous chapters, the style narrative placed fundamental emphasis on the attributes of the cool climate. This specific feature of the local physical environment was talked about as providing the fundament for producing Mosel wine, and the aromatic profile associated with them. Furthermore, the importance ascribed to the climate within the style narrative and the sub-narrative of the Mosel’s natural resources, was essential in linking place and product, as it permitted a perspective where wine first and foremost was considered a function of its surroundings. Following this reasoning, a cool climate was of indispensable value for the continued reproduction of today’s Mosel wine. While soil, too, was actively employed to explain certain components of Mosel wine, namely those referred to as ‘minerally’, and thus functioned to establish yet another connection between place and product, it is a feature that is less likely to change. As Ole said, when I asked about his thoughts on climate change accelerating: “I think that because of the unique slate soil they have in the Mosel, that contributes to giving the wines a very aromatic profile, that they, to a certain extent, will be able to maintain”. However, climate change is expected to have consequences for the levels of humidity, and according to some informants, the impact was already being felt. If climate change has implications for the humidity of the Mosel, it could also be of significance for the accounts given about the humidity’s relevance for the Mosel style, as presented in the style narrative.

I found there to be a distinct narrative addressing climate change, circulating among my informants, constituted by a dominant share of positive allegations addressing issues associated with climate change. For simplicity, I have called this the narrative of climate change. I have separated these into three different sub-narratives. The first two revolved around aspects of climate change respectively argued to be enabling and enriching. The third was made up by a specific way of speaking about the negative aspects of climate change, thus constituting a separate sub-narrative, which stories were actively dissociated from those of the positive sub-narratives. Under, I will explain briefly what I found, before further elaboration, and illustrate how I arrived at this conclusion.

First, through the sub-narrative of stability, my informants held that global warming had eliminated the occurrence of ‘disastrous vintages’. This claim was the first story told by nearly
all winemakers I met, whenever climate change was made a topic. Every decade prior to the late 1980’s, had included between two to five vintages so cold that they resulted in thin and failed wines. 1987 was the last of these vintages, surprisingly many held. Global warming had made the Mosel climate more stable. This was claimed to enable them in many respects, such as in cultivating and improving the typical Mosel expression, expand the range of expressions produced, especially being able to produce dry wines of high quality, a more constant production, as well as making more wines ‘naturally’.

The second was the sub-narrative of the cool climate. This was used to deny that climate change represented a challenge to the established, typical expression of the Mosel. Even though the cool climate was presented as Mosel wine’s main resource, global warming did not threaten this, they held. Two main arguments were used to defend this position. First, temperatures were ideal at the time being. Climate change was far from critical. Temperatures had not increased sufficiently to represent any threat. In fact, climate change had made Mosel wine better, as winemakers of the region previously had longed for a slight increase in temperature. Second, most informants did not fear climate change in the future. While a few acknowledged that too high temperatures would not be good, they all argued that other regions would be hit worse than the Mosel. Because they were so far north, they would always be comparatively well off. In other words, while it would seem evident that global warming represented a threat to a wine producing culture known for ‘cool climate wines’, the cool climate was in fact used to discard such worries.

The third narrative, I have named the sub-narrative of practical challenges. All informants said that some new problems had risen along with the climatic changes. However, neither of these were believed to challenge the expression of the Mosel. Rather, they were described as practical challenges. While not being trivialized nor downplayed, these challenges had few, if any implications for style, or taste. New types of rot, viruses, and insects were assumed to have invaded the Mosel since its climate had gotten warmer. Most informants were positive about solving these issues. They were compared to other types of vineyard issues and thus viewed in a larger perspective. Such challenges of practical character had always been a plague to winemakers, it was held.
6.1 “We don’t have these crazy vintages anymore”: Climate Change as Enabling

6.1.1 Change as Stabilizing

Despite how global warming has implications that stand in direct opposition to what is considered the core of Mosel terroir, which is the cool climate, most of my informants did not think of climate change as a threat. On the contrary, many were positive and told me that they wished a slight increase in temperature welcome. So far, the effects of climate change were enhanced, rather than rejected. My informants, in some respects, uttered themselves exceptionally consistent about temperature change. Carl spoke on behalf of the winery he worked for when he said:

The father always says, when he started the winery in the early 80’s, he said like in the 80’s, it was very difficult, until 1988. ‘87 was the last vintage, I think you’ll hear this from a lot of growers, certain wine critics still say, ‘88 was the, since ‘88 we haven’t had a bad vintage. It’s always been ripe enough!

Carl was right. I would hear the same from many informants. In fact, nearly every winemaker I asked about global warming said precisely the same; that 1987 was the last ‘bad vintage’. By this term, they referred to vintages where the lack of ripeness was disastrous. Every year, since 1988, had been good. This meant that the weather had been good enough to get ripe grapes. Additionally, all these informants regarded this as a phenomenon caused by climate change. In this respect, a line was drawn between ‘then’ and ‘now’, based on such experiences. “In the old days” was a term used often too, rarely defined, but seemingly referring to the post-war period and until the late 1980’s. Crucial to the narrative where climate change was presented as an enabling phenomenon, was this construction of two different eras, standing in opposition to each other. While the ‘old days’ often was associated with many negative tendencies, ‘today’, was in many respects portrayed as perfect.

Paul too, like many others, was eager to speak about climate change. He had been running his family’s winery for nearly fifty years, from the late 1950’s to the early 2000’s. The way he spoke about the subject made it clear that to him, the main consequence was the disappearance of the disastrous vintages of the past. He immediately started listing up all the ones he had experienced since he took over his family’s estate:
Okay, so climate change... You see, earlier we had so many bad vintages. In the 1950’s, it was ‘56 and... In the 60’s, it was ‘65 and ‘68. In the 70’s we had ‘72 and ‘74. And in the 80’s, 1980 and ‘84 wasn’t very good. But ever since 1988, things have been good! Compared to these early days, all vintages now, are above average. You know, historically Mosel has been as far north as winemaking can be done. But who knows, maybe in 100 years, we will have Riesling from Copenhagen! (Laughs)

Climate change was not the only factor used to distinguish the ‘old’ from the ‘new era’. Another one was quality. Several informants claimed that a massive qualitative shift during the last two or three decades had occurred in the region. This was ascribed to several tendencies, claimed to be parallel in time. A bigger focus on quality among winemakers and improved viticultural science and knowledge was important. But higher temperatures had made everything easier. Not only that, but rather than being regarded as having challenging implications for the Mosel style, it was depicted as a source for new opportunities, first to strengthen the established Mosel expression, and improving it, as well as opening new doors for exploring new styles.

6.1.2 Structuration

The higher temperatures experienced since 1988 was thus not regarded as a challenge to the established expression of Mosel. Climate change had made Mosel wine better. Eric said during our conversation that global warming had created more stability. Earlier the weather of the vintage had been essential in deciding which wines his winery produced. In cool years, such as in 1972, ‘73 and ‘74, they had not been able to produce any Auslese. Today, however, they were capable producing wines in every Prädikat or category, every year, Eric held:

You can do all the Prädikats if you want to do all the Prädikats, but you can also produce, every year now, a very nice dry wine! With the fruit, you know. That wasn’t possible in the old days. So now, I think, therefore, that we also can be more continuous. We produce better wines nowadays. We can produce continuously the quality, every year, as we needed, you know.

As the German wine law specifies the minimum degree of ripeness for labeling wine under each Prädikat, it seemed as this had been regarded as a limiting aspect in the ‘old days’ as Eric called it. Today, however, ripeness was not an issue. Every vintage was successful in terms of sugar levels. Nicolas said it like this: “When I was young, everybody jumped up and down and were
super happy if we reached 80 Oechsle! Today nobody wants to make wine with anything less than that”. Eric told me that in the 1970’s, they had as much as four disastrous vintages: “No ripeness. Very low sugar levels and very high acidity levels. Barely no Kabinett even!” In other words, earlier the climate had been viewed as, in addition to being the crucial factor that permitted the Mosel style, something limiting. The weather of each vintage then would decide which wines the winemaker would be able to produce. As each Prädikat is associated with a specific expression, distinct from others, the varying aspects of the physical environment, the weather, played a decisive role in how the Mosel style would be perceived from year to year.

Today this was radically changed, it was claimed, and the main factor was increased stability. Although there still existed variation between vintages, both stylistically, qualitative and quantitative, it was easier to be consistent today, because of global warming. The different styles associated with the Mosel regarded as typical for the area could be produced every year. Thus, the limiting aspect of the physical environment was regarded as far less prominent. In fact, the Mosel climate of the past was presented as fundamentally constraining, whereas today’s climate was considered fundamentally enabling. This way, Eric held that climate change had permitted a level of consistency, as he today was able to produce a wide range of wines, in almost all the Prädikats every year. Moreover, following Eric’s argument, it’s clear that climate change had supported ‘Mosel terroir’, as in making it easier to produce and reproduce the expression of the Mosel, as the quality had become evener. In other words, according to Eric, climate change had been a structuring factor of the Mosel style. Also, he at least partly ascribed the dry wine tendency to the increased temperatures. Making good dry wines was not possible ‘in the old days’. Global warming had thus enabled Mosel winemakers in this respect.

6.1.3 Enabling Changes

Eric was not the only one who claimed that climate change first and foremost had been of enabling character. Jörgen, as many of the others, idealized making wine ‘naturally’, and believed this had become easier with higher temperatures: “Wines no longer have to be chaptalized or de-acidified. Our wines are no longer sour! The grapes are riper, but the wines are still elegant. Especially compared to the international competition”. Paul held that climate change was what Mosel had always needed and longed for: “Finally, we can do what we always have wanted!” In this manner, global warming was claimed to have strengthened the ideas of
‘natural’ winemaking. These ideas were presented as being relatively constant, as existing prior to temperatures in the Mosel increasing. Climate change had enabled winemakers of the region to ‘finally’ make wine according to rules opposing ‘interventionism’.

### 6.1.4 Consistency and Quality

The stories about climate change creating stability are also found in *The World Atlas of Wine*, written by wine journalists Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson (2013). They write that ‘prior to climate change’, especially along the Mosel’s tributaries the Saar and the Ruwer, many vintages were so cool that wines became extremely thin and sharp. Making quality wine was possible in perhaps only three or four years per decade, they claim. Traces of the same narrative can be found in Loeb and Prittie's book *Moselle* (1972). Although the recent decades naturally aren't described in the book, the authors present a rating of all vintages from 1900 to 1970. Numerous vintages are portrayed as ‘poor’. The chapter entitled ‘Vintages – Good and Bad’ is opened as follows:

> Every year the wine-growers of the Moselle pray for the impossible – exactly the right weather for them to produce the very best wine imaginable. What they want, but can scarcely hope to get, is a spring which is neither too early nor too late but with no frost from the moment that the first blossom is on the bough; a long, hot summer, with showers of rain at convenient intervals; a warm, sunny and even muggy autumn, with early morning mists in October and November presaging the fine day to follow; no frost, finally, before the end of November. (…) Records of wine-growing in past centuries say little about good years, less about average ones, but a great deal about any natural catastrophe or other miserable circumstance (Loeb and Prittie 1972: 140)

Their description of the Mosel climate corresponds with the narrative claims I was met with. The ‘old climate’ was presented as being partly enabling, but more constraining. All the winemakers I spoke to, agreed that temperatures had gone up. Some, however, questioned whether it would continue. But as mentioned, although the warmer temperatures had made the production of Mosel wine more consistent from year to year, there was still variation between vintages. Ole made this clear in the first interview I conducted. I asked him about the alleged decreasing acidity levels in Mosel wine. He answered:
Yes, well, that’s true, but with some modifications. In the old days, acidity levels around 10 grams per liter were the norm, so to speak. And that has decreased somewhat. But it depends very much on the vintage. So, for instance, in 2010 and 2013, the old acidity levels were back. But it is, average wise, it’s true that the levels have gone down some. But not as much that it has damaged, what shall I say, the quality of the wine. And again, it’s very depending on the vintage.

As he made it clear he did not regard the somewhat decreased acidity levels as a bad thing, I asked if he thought it had had any positive consequences: “Yes, you know, there are some people who have a hard time enjoying very acidic wines, so. In that perspective, you could say that Mosel wines have become a tad friendlier”. Without having ‘lost’ anything, in the sense that climate change had not had any negative implications for the wines produced in the Mosel, Ole considered that a positive characteristic had been gained with higher temperatures. Fredrik too, viewed Mosel wine to have increased quality wise within the last decades. However, he was careful about concluding why:

Today, there is a bigger focus on viticulture. But it’s a difficult discussion because the temperature is probably part of it. And of course, there’s a lot of things you can do in the vineyard [to handle the challenges of higher temperatures] (...) In the future, I think you will not see the worst quality made in the 1950’s and 1960’s, but I don’t think anybody misses that anyway. It’s obvious that there’s a tendency towards higher Oechsle levels and slightly lower acidity levels. That is two trends. But not as in changing the Mosel style, no. But it’s true that there are small physiological changes in the wines.

The ‘then vs. now’ stories that were prominent in the discussion of issues like quality, were in other words pivotal in the question about consequences of climate change. In fact, climate change was in many respects considered one of the factors, perhaps the most important, for drawing the line between these constructed periods. The relatively abstract notion of ‘today’ was thus created by putting the increased temperatures of the region in the ‘behind the wheel’. While a bigger orientation towards quality among Mosel winemakers, too, was emphasized as crucial, again implying that some intervention is needed to produce quality wine, it was presented as though this reorientation could not have happened, had it not been for climate change. Thus, climate change had enabled the winemakers of the Mosel to better their product. Furthermore, instead of speaking about climate change as challenging, it was spoken of as another resource, adding to those already existing, such as the cool climate, rather than posing
a threat to it. The sub-narrative of environmental features was, in other words, seemingly unaffected by the experience of increasing temperatures. A new narrative was constructed, around the enabling features claimed to be found in global warming.

The narrative of climate change had two main similarities to that of the ‘original’ climate. First, climate change was primarily defined as a resource. Just as the narratives of the climate, soil, and humidity, climate change was treated as an enabling feature, which my informants expressed gratitude towards. Second, climate change was used to explain certain factors of Mosel wine. These included a greater amount of successful wines produced, more stability between vintages and better continuity, as well as a more consistent expression of the Mosel. Climate change, therefore, had strengthened the Mosel style, according to its surrounding narrative, and contributed to its structuration, in Giddens’ terms.

6.2 “I’m sorry, I don’t see the problem in the Mosel. It’s the warmer countries that have problems!”

In the second sub-narrative told about climate change, higher temperatures were presented as posing a threat to other winemaking regions, but not the Mosel. Peter represented an exception as such, as he gave climate change the responsibility for the high levels of alcohol their wines reached in some vintages. By doing this, he acknowledged that global warming, to some extent, represented a challenge to the sub-narrative of Mosel’s physical conditions. First, their wines from the 2011 vintage that had reached a level of 14 % alcohol, was too heavy. Although he wanted to make dry wines with slightly more body than many other Mosel wines, thereby rejecting some of the narratives I have described, by stating that 14 % was too much, he, too, signalized a certain position in the issue of ‘weight’ in wine. In other words, he partly conformed to some elements of the sub-narrative of physical conditions, more specifically, those stating that Mosel wine should be light bodied. Second, as I have described, he was far from satisfied with how the wines of 2011 developed. After five years, they had developed more than their age suggested. As my other informants who were involved in winemaking, Peter wished his wines to have ‘ageability’.

However, very few agreed with Peter. As Eric told me about ‘tools’ to be used ‘against’ high temperatures, I asked if he did these things more today than earlier. This seemed to make him
slightly irritated, as if I had misunderstood, and was implying that Mosel winemakers were having problems:

We do it in, not here... We have… Sorry, I don’t see the problem in the Mosel! I have no problem in the Mosel! I mean, I don’t know who, I mean, possibly you saw people with obviously a problem, with over-ripeness here in the Mosel, but I mean, to be frank, I don’t know... Who could this be? (laughs)

Although Eric found there to be new ‘problems’, he had everything he needed to solve them. Hence, they did not represent ‘real problems’. By this, he meant that Mosel wines did not give off scents or aromas of overripe fruit. They did not lack a firm acidity structure. They did not reach high alcohol levels. This was because the winemakers of the Mosel had the ability to, and in fact did react to the changing climate, Eric held:

I think the only thing we can do, we are faced, with this kind of global warming, that creates certain problems. Well, and we have to get used to the problems because we can't change the global warming (...) I mean, I can’t believe it that we will ever stop it, you know. So, from that point of view, I think we have to face the problem, we have to find out how we react to it. But it is also, I mean, I don’t know why the people always say, ‘oh global warming and everything, and everything is so bad’, and so, that is bad enough, you know? But there are enough tools to react to it, you know!

Partly to thank for this, was the cool climate, as well as the methods of winemaking, or especially viticulture. I will elaborate more on the ‘tools’ my informants entrusted with meeting climate change in the upcoming paragraph about climate change presented as practical challenges. As shown above, Eric turned to the narratives of the Mosel climate and viticulture to argue that climate change represented no real problems in the Mosel. Again, it is illustrated that the ideas advocated in the narrative of the cool climate were not regarded as challenged by climate change. Rather, Eric argued that climate change had added to the Mosel’s set of winemaking resources. Furthermore, he made it clear that other countries were not as well off with climate change, as one was in the Mosel:

We know it, all the wines, it if comes, which are coming from the new world, are all 15, 14.5 % alcohol, you know. Cause they need the hang time, but with the longer hang time, they get the over-ripeness. We still have a long hang time, but we get the perfect ripeness
(...)

If anybody gains, it’s all the countries like Germany, England, all the northern regions, you know. I mean, it’s all, that’s the reason, that’s the only reason why England can grow 800 hectares nowadays.

Eric, among others, constructed a narrative where the message was that climate change did not threaten the wine style being practiced in the Mosel. But it did represent a problem to winemakers in many ‘other places’. This statement was usually argued by alcohol levels being too high, acidity levels too low, and the fruit character being plump, over-ripe and too rich, in the wines coming from ‘other places’, or ‘other regions’. Sometimes these were specified. Alsace and Southern Rhône were specifically mentioned by Eric and Carl. Usually, however, these stories referred to abstract notions of ‘the others’. The characteristics used to describe these wines stood in direct opposition to the ones my informants used to describe the wines they made, the wines they wished to make, and Mosel wine more generally. Moreover, as shown in the previous chapter, how they believed Mosel should be represented through, and reflected in the wines produced there. As also shown in the chapter about the rules of Mosel winemaking, my informants actively distanced themselves from winemakers in different regions and countries. The uniqueness of the Mosel and the wines it enabled them to produce was a crucial idea in several of the narratives that circulated among my informants. When not made explicit, the attributes of the Mosel and the product of Mosel wine was implicitly depicted as unparalleled by any ‘others’.

Jürgen, too, clearly expressed the view that while global warming was unproblematic, in fact, positive for the Mosel, it had negative implications for others: “Climate change is no problem here. I mean, you don’t see those kinds of problems [over-ripening etc.] here. That’s more in the Mediterranean wine countries, Italy, Spain…” Nicolas portrayed climate change as having both positive, as well as negative consequences in the Mosel, and argued that even if temperature rise would accelerate, it would be less critical for them, than many others:

I’m not especially concerned about it. So far, so good. Climate change has been good for us. Temperature rise is not bad here. But of course, it can get dramatical. But anyway, in that case, we would be better off than those in most other regions.

Both Jürgen and Nicolas, as Eric, pointed to the Mosel’s cool climate when arguing why global warming was better for them than for winemakers elsewhere. Thus, they drew on the views circulating within the sub-narrative of environmental conditions, as described over. But the sub-
narrative of winemaking too was used to discard worries related to increasing temperatures. Where there were problems, there were solutions.

6.3 Problems as Practical Challenges

While climate change was depicted as a phenomenon having positive consequences for Mosel wine, and among other things strengthening the ‘Mosel style’, few, if any, denied it also had negative consequences. However, these issues were actively separated from those concerning quality or character in wine. Again, and again, the problems of climate change were portrayed merely as challenges of a practical character, having little or nothing to do with the expression found in Mosel wine. To repeat, while the positive consequences of climate change were seen to enrich and better Mosel wine, and thus partly were treated within the same narrative initially used to describe Mosel wine, the problems global warming was seen to carry along with it did not threaten their product, but rather their everyday work. For this reason, I argue that the way in which these issues were presented, constituted a sub-narrative on its own, isolated from questions of quality and character.

6.3.1 Viruses, Diseases, and Insects

Doing the harvest together with Andreas and his team, I, on some occasions, worked alongside him in the vineyard. One day we were picking grapes in each our row, and speaking about climate change related issues. Andreas pointed his hand and said: “Right over there, many vines have been killed by ESCA”. The subject of ESCA was brought up by most winemakers I met. It was difficult to grasp what it was, as my informants said they did not know themselves. Eric told me that researchers believed they had found out it was a virus of some sort. Wilhelm said it spread from vine to vine via the soil, and caused a slow death of the vines affected. All held it to be a big problem, although this too was presented as a worse plague for other regions. The views on whether it had something to do with climate change, differed. Eric said that concluding there was a connection between the two was “reading out of the crystal ball”. Wilhelm, too, expressed that he thought it was way far-fetched to say that climate change had caused ESCA, or helped it to spread. “That’s one theory [among others]”, he said. Andreas and Christoph, however, felt sure the two phenomena were related: “It’s a fungus. All fungus thrive in high temperatures”, Christoph told me. Andreas said the same was the case with several types of
new diseases such as black rot, and new insects such as fruit flies, also known as Suzuki flies. They were believed to invade Mosel, from other regions, as the temperatures increased.

That rot, viruses and new types of insects represented plagues and challenges, was, in other words, pointed out often. Although most of these were associated with global warming, there was some disagreement whether all could be said to be caused by it, such as in the question of ESCA illustrated above. However, that these problems were occurring more and more frequently, was an established claim, part of this narrative. There seemed to be little resistance towards making these problems subject during our conversations. In fact, I knew very little about such issues in advance. ESCA was, by far, brought up the most frequently. And while some informants expressed themselves with some care, these were all part of the same narrative, of challenges imposed by climate change. They did not represent any threats to Mosel wine, however, neither stylistically nor quality wise.

### 6.3.2 Extreme Weather and Flexibility

Central in the narrative on practical challenges, was the claim that climate change had created more ‘extreme weather’. While, as pointed out, many held that instability between vintages was believed to have decreased, instability within vintages, was believed to have increased. In other words, the climate had stabilized some, the weather had gone in the opposite direction. By ‘extreme weather’, they referred to hail, thunderstorms, excessive rain, floods, frost, and snow among other things. Climate change was portrayed as the ‘sinner’ in this respect and thought to be their cause. My informants displayed great concern about such issues. Especially hail was a theme frequently brought up. These could have terrible consequences, Sarah explained:

> Global warming has given us more extreme weather. And therefore, we fear an acceleration. Today it’s harder to keep the grapes healthy. Our vineyard manager is in checking up on them constantly (laughs). But that’s just the way it is now. Hail is what we fear the most. One of our vineyards was hit this summer, and we lost around 60% of the crop there.

Paul, too, emphasized the growing importance of being present in the vineyard: “The extreme weather is very worrying. This spring, it was pouring down! Which meant we had to work hard, and spray whenever needed”. There was a lot of issues that could occur during the autumn, too. Because the weather had become more unstable, they had to be ready every day, around harvest
times. The pace of the ripening process could go up and down rapidly. Therefore, there were different requirements towards producers of wine, today, he claimed: “Oh, we have to be much more flexible today! The harvest also has got to be done a lot quicker. We have much bigger harvest teams today, to finish as quickly as we can”.

6.3.3 From Sun to Shade

Another story told about the change between ‘then’ and ‘now’, was how one had worked with or against sun and shade in the vineyard. Earlier, Mosel winemaking had been greatly focused on fighting for each block of shade, I was told. Today, however, especially in some vintages, there was too much sunlight. As a result, the grapes could suffer from sunburn. Sunburn again might give off phenolic aromas, which refers to bitterness from the grape skins (Bird 2010: 25). Carl was engaged in this question and held that some winemakers de-leafed (removed the leaves from the vines) too much. Moreover, this could result in over-ripeness. If the ripening process happened too quick, one had to harvest earlier to avoid over-ripeness. But this, again, could mean that the grapes lacked aromatic ripeness. Fredrik also discussed this issue, and spoke about a winemaker he knew who had started working differently with the leaves, as the climate had started to change:

He doesn’t come from the Mosel, and earlier he’s worked in New-Zealand, where they are used to thinking different because it’s so much warmer. And there they used... And they do that many places that are warmer than Europe, use the leaves in a completely different manner. While the traditional way of tying up leaves in the Mosel is that... You tie it up to free the grapes, so they get as much sun as they can. And that’s a tradition because you’ve always had to struggle to get ripe grapes. That’s always been the work of the vintner in the Mosel, to fight for every... For every degree of Oechsle, to get the grapes riper... That has earlier been the [indicator of] quality.

This was depicted as representing a transformed way of thinking about how the environment should best be used and expressed through wine. However, this too was considered a technical question. Accordingly, it was treated ‘by itself’, separated from the narratives addressing climate and the Mosel expression. While some of the hypothetical consequences of over-ripening, for instance, did represent a clash with the ideas of how a Mosel wine should taste and smell, it was presented as an ‘easy fix’ by Carl, Fredrik, and others.
6.3.4 “We can handle it!”

The way in which my informants talked about the three types of issues described above, constituted a sub-narrative where the problematic aspects of climate change were discussed frequently. Although presented as obstacles to their daily work, causing severe headaches, all informants demonstrated a confident attitude about solving or handling these issues in the future. Research institutions making scientific progress within viticulture and oenology, as well as winemakers’ associations functioning as platforms for exchanging experiences and knowledge, represented a firm belief in their future ability to meet new challenges. Therefore, the narrative of problems associated with global warming, despite addressing something negative, was presented in a positive manner. Whether it was viruses, pests and diseases attacking vines, extreme weather or sunburn, they were not regarded to have any significance for the Mosel style or its quality. Rather, a vine killed by ESCA, or a plot in the vineyard hit by a hailstorm, would have consequences for quantity.

6.4 Narratives of Mosel Wine Meeting Climate Change

As Eric was telling me about what he, along with many others, considered to be the most encompassing consequence of climate change in the Mosel, namely the disappearance of catastrophic vintages, he said:

In the 1960’s, we had four to five bad vintages. 70’s, four bad vintages. 80’s, two bad vintages. Since that… In the 1990’s, no bad vintages! 2000’s, you know. 2010’s, not a single bad vintage. I mean, in comparison… Each vintage was difficult, you know, but that was for different reasons.

Hence, Eric drew a line distinguishing ‘bad vintages’ from ‘difficult vintages’. While the last 28 vintages had all been good, they had been difficult. This distinction was the key in how my informants described their meeting with climate change. When addressing the positive consequences of climate change, the sub-narratives of climate and science was heavily drawn upon. Increased temperatures represented no challenges to the stories told about the Mosel climate and the quality and character of the wines. As I have shown, the notions of the cool climate given in the sub-narrative of natural resources were widely used to explain many of the aromas found in Mosel wine. The low Mosel temperatures were treated as a resource, that
enabled the winemakers to produce what they did. Furthermore, these resources were used to
discard the possibility of Mosel wine, style and quality wise, being challenged by a changed
climate. My informants in this matter managed these issues in an original way. While one
intuitively perhaps would think that the big strength of the Mosel was under threat by global
warming, the narratives introduced by my informants presented it otherwise. The cool climate,
which one perhaps should think represented the aspect where Mosel winemaking was the most
exposed to change, was used as a reason for arguing why they were not vulnerable. Rather, the
ideas advocated in the narrative of climate change borrowed from the narrative of Mosel’s
natural environment and depicted the low temperatures to be the reason why Mosel was
resistant to climate change. Furthermore, a distinct sub-narrative was constructed to discuss the
troubling features of a changing climate, ensuring the sub-narrative with its stories about the
Mosel’s great physical surroundings was not under threat.

Simultaneously, climate change, as the cool climate and the slate soil, was portrayed as a
resource. Higher temperatures had not disabled them in making the typical Mosel wine, initially
permitted by the cool climate. Rather, it was presented as another enabling aspect, opening new
doors that until now had remained closed. Climate change was in fact presented as an event, in
the story or narrative of Mosel wine. As the resources which the three sub-narratives described
in chapter 4 was constructed around, climate change was depicted as something that had
happened to the Mosel. Moreover, it had occurred along the path towards today’s situation.
When climate change was brought up as a topic, the features considered its positive
consequences, described in the narrative constructed around climate change was implemented
into the style narrative. Thus, it was portrayed to represent ‘the final chapter’ of the story of
Mosel wine. Climate change was used to explain the style and the quality of today’s wines from
the Mosel.
7 Discussion: Structuration of Taste

7.1 The Taste of Terroir

In my analysis, I focus on stories of terroir circulating among winemakers of the Mosel region in Germany. Again, by terroir, I am referring to the way in which taste is connected to place. As indicated by the title of Trubek’s book *The Taste of Place* (2008), the concept of terroir implies that taste *derives* from place. A wine’s place of origin is thus critical for its characteristics. Terroir, as I have shown, has been subjected to numerous diverging definitions. Some are restricted to the attributes of the physical environment of a place. Others include winemaking methods that are regarded as traditional and special for a specific place. While such debates illustrate that the definition of ‘place’ is contested, how to understand ‘taste’, is not. Furthermore, it is taste one seeks to explain. Taste is thus the dependent variable. Therefore, it seems strange that the taste aspect of terroir has not been made subject to more social scientific analysis.

My intention here is not to mistrust the significance of those contributions that have been given to the research of terroir. The economic or political magnitude of establishing legally protected geographical indications, for instance, should not be underestimated. Neither is there any reason to doubt that certain processes of cultural domination are involved when certain pieces of land are given higher formal status than others. However, I would warn against reducing the analytical focus on terroir to the institutionalization of its ideas. Juxtaposing the beliefs of terroir with the laws they are used to advocate represents, at best, a narrow approach to the subject. Moreover, this ultimately ignores the complexity and the many ‘faces’ of the phenomenon. Again, the notion of terroir reflects the idea, or belief in that place can be tasted. Furthermore, these studies have much been concerned with the *consequences* of terroir. Contrarily, I have in my thesis scrutinized the ideas and practices that *constitute* terroir. That such an approach so far has been overlooked in the social sciences, illustrates that the phenomenon of terroir has yet to be fully understood by scholars. My findings, however, contribute to filling this gap of knowledge. Under, I elaborate on the implications of my analysis for research on wine and terroir.

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8 Ranking vineyards with regards to quality is done through certain wine laws, especially in France. Examples are the 1855 classification in Bordeaux and the AOC system of Burgundy.
7.1.1 Empirical and Analytical Implications of Findings

The perspective of structuration allows for exploring terroir as a crystallization of the acts of individuals. Thus, it can be considered a phenomenon existing on a macro level. Consequently, theory of social practice and structuration is well equipped for an analyzing terroir. Giddens’, among others’ ambition, is to grasp how the structures, systems, and institutions come about. The theoretical outline I have proposed, in other words, allows researching the phenomenon of terroir from an until now absent perspective. Implementing this perspective supplies terroir research with new findings especially concerning views, beliefs, and attitudes that circulate within a specific local culture of wine production. As I have pointed out numerous times by now, the wines produced in the Mosel are widely known for displaying a certain aromatic profile. The shared cultural norms and views on winemaking I have described supports this ‘wine style’ and is of fundamental importance for understanding the mechanisms and processes that contribute to the structuration process of the typical expression of Mosel wine.

A Local Philosophy

My analysis shows how the wine style that is associated with and widely practiced in the Mosel, is rooted in ‘local philosophies of flavor’, in Trubek’s words. This philosophy consists of values and attitudes addressing both general guidelines on what makes a wine good, but also what makes a Mosel wine successful. They are embedded in narratives, constitutted by stories where Mosel as a place and Mosel wine are connected. More specifically, the taste of Mosel wine is depicted as deriving from its physical surroundings. Simultaneously, an extensive set of rules aimed at how these surroundings should be reflected in the wines highlights the significance given to a specific form of winemaking. In other words, the role of the vintner is also given critical value in these narratives, albeit not as explicit as the natural resources. Seemingly circulating within the local culture of Mosel winemaking, these are detectable on a micro level. Despite my material being generated through interviews with individual winemakers, the narratives of Mosel winemaking reflect the presence of a collective ‘taste philosophy’. These views exemplified a knowledge seemingly shared by all cultural members.

As mentioned in chapter three, Reckwitz (2002) states that discourses of social practices take on the form of a routinized language. Certain meanings are given to certain objects through patterns of communication. In other words, the individuals involved in carrying out a practice not only act but also speak according to routines. The stories told by my informants often
coincided with each other to a large extent. Apparently circulating between those involved in Mosel winemaking, these narratives included a shared set of ideas separating good from bad Mosel wine, thus constituting such a ‘local taste philosophy’. While these indeed drew on some criteria that are common for judging a wine’s quality outside of the Mosel too, such as ‘balance’, great emphasis was put on those they held ‘made the Mosel special’. An illustrative example of this was the view that Mosel wine should be ‘light bodied’.

**Distinction**

All the while my approach deviates from the theoretical and empirical departures taken by other scholars that have researched the phenomenon of terroir, I believe my findings have implications beyond the scope of this thesis. Terroir in the sense I apply it represents the same phenomenon discussed in other studies, such as those directed at its institutionalization. I have explored the cultural meaning given to taste in relation to the Mosel as a place. As noted, other scholars have been interested in the discriminating aspect and the institutionalization of these, as terroir not only implies differences concerning character, but also quality. Terroir in this sense can become a mean for stating one’s supremacy over others. My analysis shows that these features of terroir were intertwined in the narratives of Mosel winemaking. The attributes regarded to make the Mosel unique were often the same used to argue that the region was greater than others.

How attitudes and norms of taste function at an individual level are also relevant for studies seeking to grasp terroir from different angles, including those focusing on the discriminative aspect. My study shows how rules of winemaking and views of what makes wine good or bad, were part of a collective discursive practice. Answers to why one piece of land is considered better than another, can, in other words, be found also at such levels. In Germany however, there is no wine law that classifies vineyards or winemakers according to quality. Therefore, there is no public organ involved in such work. However, the VDP, Germany’s leading winemaker association has introduced its own system of quality classification for its members, based on the AOC system of Burgundy.\(^9\) The VDP does not represent anyone but their own members. Some claim that their model based on the AOC is spreading throughout Germany (Schildknecht 2016), although that is not a topic I will discuss further here. My analysis shows that attempts to distinguish the Mosel from ‘the others’ were part of the narratives, too. While

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\(^9\) VDP is short for Verband Deutscher Prädikats- und Qualitätsweinguter
this was mainly done with respect to character, quality was also given significance. These findings can complement those of scholars directing attention at the phenomenon of classification, for instance, providing an account of exactly what winemakers seek to have protected by such legislations.

However, one should be careful to conclude if this was done to promote the Mosel financially or culturally. That several informants again and again explicitly emphasized the uniqueness of the Mosel, both with respect to quality and character, can perhaps be argued to be reflecting marketing considerations. There was no scarcity of winemakers speaking about how important sales were, either. Ambitions to stay attractive in the markets were expressed on many occasions. An alleged growing focus on crafting dry wines was especially argued by market trends. However, the taste of Mosel also triggered strong emotional reactions among my informants. Anger, sadness, and resignation were among the feelings involved when we discussed winemaking approaches that deviated from the ‘acceptable’ and thus resulted in wines that were conceived of as misrepresentations of the Mosel.

7.2 Terroir as Structure

Using the perspective from Burnham and Skilleås (2012), who argue that a wine has terroir when it reflects an aromatic expression, subjected to the process of structuration through being produced and reproduced over time, have allowed me to investigate terroir from a fresh theoretical angle. Following their reasoning, terroir is established as a distinct wine style becomes the associated taste with that specific place. Such an expression thus gives the impression of an over-individual existence. Numerous contributions within the literature of sociology can provide accounts of such an effect related to a wide range of social phenomena. It is in such a context that Giddens (1979) criticizes Durkheim (1899-1900), who argued that social structures do have an existence outside of individuals. However, central to Giddens’ thought is that structures only endure as long as they are practiced by individual agents. While structures according to Giddens will cease to exist once their practices are no longer carried out, they do appear as external to individuals. He locates their enabling and constraining features in exactly this feature. Patterns of action are resources that individuals can draw upon, but also rules that regulate the acceptable and unacceptable.
The concept of terroir represents such a phenomenon in the world of wine. While a ‘taste of place’ is perceived as something external to the individual, the theory of structuration allows for researching how a specific expression of a specific place is produced and reproduced, thus structuring a ‘taste of place’ or terroir. More specifically, Giddens’ theory allows to concretely research which rules and resources that are drawn upon in social reproduction. I have shown how the rules of Mosel winemaking consists of an extensive set of norms addressing stylistic issues such as aromatic profile, color, and texture in wine, as well as questions regarding the production of wine. My analysis illustrates how these rules are legitimized by referring to ‘place’. By ‘place’ I refer to the Mosel and especially its features that were regarded as resources. These resources enabled the making of Mosel wine, I was told. Hence, I have illustrated how beliefs, values, and knowledge relates to attributes of the physical environment, in Mosel winemaking.

7.2.1 Theoretical Implications of Findings

As mentioned in chapter three, Giddens (1979) operates with a two-dimensional conception of resources. He separates the allocative from the authoritative, where the former represents material goods such as things and property, while the latter consists of human resources, as in possessing power over others. Sewell (1992) criticizes Giddens for ascribing a virtual existence to structures. It is obvious that rules are virtual, as they are made up of schemes for how things should be done, separating right from wrong and so on. Resources, however, especially allocative, cannot be considered virtual, as they represent things, objects and physical property. While especially the authoritative is defined by virtual schemes to function as resources, they too are undoubtedly material. Following from this, how can structures be virtual, he asks, if they consist of rules that are virtual, and resources that are actual? Sewell solves this problem by stating that structures must also be thought of as having a dual nature. While on the one hand, rules and authoritative resources are virtual, and on the other, resources are actual, structures must also possess both these characteristics.

A large share of the resources of Mosel winemaking was, as I have shown, allocative resources. These largely focused on certain attributes of the physical environment, such as climate, soil, and humidity. Certain techniques of winemaking were also presented as essential resources. Although they implied knowledge, which perhaps can be said to be virtual, such winemaking methods were first and foremost represented by their material existence. The practice of sulfur
could not be carried out without sulfur as a substance, for instance. Arresting fermentation, oak barrels and steel tanks too were talked about as allocative resources fundamentally enabling in character. However, the third main group of resources I found, drawing on history and tradition, can hardly be viewed as material, and thus not actual in Sewell’s sense. Neither are they authoritative and have little to do with power and dominance.

While it is perhaps tempting to think of rules and resources as respectively representing the constraining and enabling features of structure that Giddens discuss through his conception of the duality of structure, this would be misinterpreting his ideas. He makes it clear that both rules and resources can be constraining and enabling. So why cannot the history and tradition be said to symbolize enabling rules? While these also had instructive aspects, they seemed first and foremost to be praised for their symbolic features. Resources of history and tradition functioned as a connection to a distant past. It allowed winemakers of the Mosel to regard their work in a historical perspective. This clearly provided Mosel winemaking with meaning. Drawing on knowledge of winemaking from the past, allowed them to be in touch with a distant era, seemingly important for a cultural identity of the Mosel.

However, they do not fit very well into Giddens’ definition of resources. Neither allocative nor authoritative, resources of history and tradition represented something else. As they indeed were regarded resources by my informants, I want to argue that this part of Giddens’ theory is incomplete. However, enabling consequences of structures’ extensions in time and space is made subject in his concept of duality of structure. Here he claims, as I also discussed in chapter three, that through structure, individuals draw on the experience of others. Taking part in social practices implies acting in line with patterns established by others before you. While this can certainly be a source of conformity, for Giddens it also represents possibilities. Drawing on tradition and historical accounts of Mosel winemaking, served as an example of this. However, it was presented as a resource that allowed one to adopt motives and goals, as well as draw on knowledge from the distant past of the region. It also seemingly provided winemakers with an abstract connection to the past of Mosel winemaking, thereby giving meaning to Mosel wine production.
7.3 Constructing Terroir

While my analysis illustrates aspects of Mosel terroir that are socially constructed, it also shows how the close connection between rules and resources was. More specifically, norms of Mosel winemaking are constructed according to attributes of the local natural environment. Of course, it could also be argued that their classification of nature represents cultural constructions. Indeed, claiming that a climate is cool implies ascribing nature with features of social origin. However, these rules were far from arbitrary. My informants drew upon general and uncontroversial knowledge of scientific disciplines like meteorology, chemistry, physics, and geology, to argue their views on winemaking. Some of these rules additionally were marked by a broad consensus. They were part of narratives told by a large group of people, that seemingly circulated within this local, cultural context of the Mosel. The narratives I have described represents detailed illustrations of how taste and place are linked together by those that carry out winemaking themselves. As such, they portray an aspect of terroir that until now has not been made subject to social scientific research. The meaning given to taste in the light of place, have until now been overlooked by sociologists, anthropologists, and human geographers. While contributions made within these disciplines to the subject of terroir have been valuable, my thesis provides a rare account of the way in which taste is given cultural meaning, through considerations of the physical attributes found in the place of production. It illustrates in a detailed manner the cultural embeddedness of knowledge about natural resources, and how this knowledge is applied in practice, and thus becomes essential for the wine that is produced.

7.4 Further Research

The theoretical and analytical departures taken in this thesis has enabled a new and fresh outlook on terroir. First, by regarding terroir as a social structure, resulting from the social practice of a specific winemaking approach, one can research how a ‘wine style’ is established in an area, and thus comes to be perceived as an expression of terroir. This allows for scrutinizing a central aspect of how terroir occurs. While the approach of exploring the meaning of terroir on micro level has been little pursued, my analysis and finding show that it represents a fruitful angle for researching connections made between taste and place in wine production. Second, while the departures taken in this thesis in many respects deviate from the already existing literature on the phenomenon on terroir in winemaking, my findings have implications for terroir research in general. In my material, stories used to distinguish Mosel wine from other
types of wine was told frequently. Although these mostly highlighted why Mosel wine was different from other wines, some also emphasized why they found it to be better than other wines. Therefore, the approach I have pursued by focusing on how taste is linked to place on an individual level can be fruitful for researchers examining various features of terroir and winemaking, such as the perspective of ‘discrimination’ outlined above. Accounts of how producers of wine give meaning to their work are highly relevant regardless if one is interested in the institutionalization of terroir or simply its basic ideas.
8 Concluding Remarks

My thesis has researched an aspect of terroir that until now has been little explored. By using Giddens’ theory of structuration, I have given a detailed description of the ideas linking taste to place in the Mosel, Germany. My analysis shows how knowledge, attitudes, values and aesthetic judgment together constitute a set of rules and resources, that are essential in the production and reproduction of a stylistically coherent expression of the Mosel. Firstly, certain attitudes and beliefs address how the local environment should be understood. They are specific forms of interpreting the history and tradition of the region. The outcome of these is what I have referred to as the resources of Mosel wine. Secondly, a specific form of knowledge and aesthetics judgments serve to separate ‘good wine’ from ‘bad wine’ generally, and more specifically what is ‘good Mosel wine’ and ‘bad Mosel wine’. These constitute what I have referred to as the rules of Mosel winemaking. Moreover, focusing on the aspect of taste has enabled me to research what can be regarded as the causes for an established expression of the Mosel, which again is perceived as a product of Mosel terroir.
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