

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

**CEMENTING MODERNISATION:
TRANSNATIONAL MARKETS, LANGUAGE
AND LABOUR TENSION
IN A POST-SOVIET FACTORY IN MOLDOVA**

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Anthropology of the
London School of Economics in Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy

Rebecca A. Chamberlain-Creangă

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DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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ABSTRACT

The aim of my thesis is to investigate workers' reactions to transnational market reform in a Soviet-era factory in the Republic of Moldova. The thesis finds that there are varying, blurred responses of contestation and consent to market modernisation in the context of one factory, the Rezina Cement Plant of Egrafal Group Ltd., one of Moldova's first major European transnational-corporate (TNC) private enterprises. Language plays a critical role in workers' responses, since language is important to Egrafal Ltd.'s goal of market integration and capitalist labour reform. However, corporate language expectations frequently clash with the language that was previously embedded in Moldova's industrial workscape. As a result, the thesis argues that workers adopt, resist or modify factory reforms through what I call *linguistic styles* or situational performative modes linked with ideas of modernity, markets and mutuality. The thesis goes on to argue that employees' spatial status location in the plant, irrespective of job skill and income, corresponds to employees' differing linguistic modalities and differing tendencies towards protest and accommodation in response to factory restructuring. Workers in the top strata of the factory's Administration Building speak multiple languages, long for cosmopolitan lifestyles and benefit from high integration into corporate-market structures. Many achieved job mobility in the plant since socialism and now accommodate to capitalism and corporate styles through linguistic code-switching. The middle strata of ethno-linguistic minorities in Administration's laboratory and the lower strata on the shop floor lack corporate-backed linguistic capital and are on the fringe of modernisation; both are highly job insecure and protest capitalist change by way of what appears to be traditional language usage, but is in fact a contemporary response to liberal-economic change. This finding leads the study to conclude that workers' fragmented linguistic-based reactions to market reform do not entail real protectionist collectivism, as Polanyi would have envisioned (Polanyi 1944, 150), nor enduring moral-economic protest along the lines of E.P. Thompson (1971). This is for the very reason of workers' competing modernist longings and job insecurity – alienating workers from each other whilst drawing them back to local ties – which effectively keeps workers in perpetual oscillation between markets and mutuality.

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A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

I have used the Library of Congress system in the transliteration of Russian from the Cyrillic. Romanian remains in its original Latin-alphabet form. Where there are Romanian and Russian names used inter-changeably for towns, I have used the version most commonly utilised among inhabitants of that town (like *Rybnitsa* from Russian instead of *Rîbnița/Râbnița* from Romanian in this predominantly Russian-speaking city.) The only major exception is the secessionist region of Transnistria, called *Pridnestrov'e* by residents and *Transnistria* by Romanian-speakers. I use the Romanian-language variant in the thesis for its ease of read, and not for any political reason. All translations are my own, except where noted. I thank Ovidiu Creangă for his help in reviewing my Romanian-language translations.

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Figure 1. Cement production in the Republic of Moldova. All photographs are by the author unless specified otherwise.

PART ONE
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Modernisation and Language in Moldova

1.1 Research Topic and Questions

This thesis explores the social, communal and moral dimensions of the economy in a multi-ethnic, newly privatised cement plant on the margins of Europe. It addresses how socialist-era workers of varying ranks and their younger counterparts respond to European market expansion¹ and modernisation through the means of language in the former Soviet country of the Republic of Moldova. The thesis takes into account the actual and perceived effects of neoliberal modernisation² on ideas of work and the person, and the individual's relationship to a broader collectivity.³

The main social actors under study in the thesis are the Republic of Moldova's majority population of Moldovans, Russian-speaking minorities and foreign Romanian employees. Attention to how these diverse persons engage their tasks and each other in the labour process provides a noteworthy example of how a West European, Fortune-500 owner affects liberal-economic change in a country where little liberalisation and structural adjustment have taken place.⁴ Incorporating the Soviet-era cement plant into the global market economy is similarly challenged by the factory's location on a

¹ Following Karl Polanyi's concise definition, 'a market economy is an economic system controlled, regulated, and directed by markets alone; order in the production and distribution of goods is entrusted to this self-regulating mechanism. [...] An economy of this kind derives from the expectation that human beings behave in such a way as to achieve maximum money gains' (1944, 68).

² *Neoliberal modernisation* in the context of the foreign-owned factory under study is understood as the corporate owner's broad set of technical measures aimed at transforming its workforce into self-calculating, efficient, individualised workers with the goal of accessing global markets to increase capital accumulation (see Arce and Long [2000, 2] on modernisation and Ferguson [2006, 11] and Harvey [2005, 2-3] on neoliberalism).

³ Throughout the thesis, the words *person-hood*, *self-hood*, *subjectivity*, *identity* and *identification* are used interchangeably to refer to the way in which a person experiences and perceives the world and self, which is construed in relation to his wider environment, background, and relationships (see Rew and Campbell 1999, 7-8). *Person-making* or *subject-making*, on the other hand, refers to 'the processes by which individuals are made, and also make themselves, into subjects under the aegis of the state' (or of a global conglomerate in this thesis), in Stephen Kotkin's rewording of Foucault (1980 in Kotkin 1995, 22).

⁴ The Moldovan government only began introducing a broad range of policies to fully liberalise the economy from January 2008 onwards. The main goal of the policies was to ease business regulation and to improve tax collection and fiscal controls in order to attract more foreign capital into the country (RFE/RL, 6 March 2007). See also the World Bank Moldova – Country Brief 2006 found on <http://www.worldbank.org.md>. Accessed 14 November 2006. Moreover, information is based on an informal conversation with an ex-employee of World Bank Moldova.

disputed post-war front, where notions of modernity and the languages of competing empires have long clashed. This makes culture and language important to the post-socialist remaking of labour and factory life.⁵

Within this socio-economic context, the study specifically takes up the following research questions: does the spread of free-market capitalism and the commodification of labour in transforming economies necessarily lead to a collectivist protective backlash, anticipated by influential thinker Karl Polanyi (1944, 150), or to a similar-style ‘moral economy’ proposed by E.P. Thompson (1971, 1991)? Or do workers find other ways of modifying and adjusting their lives to market liberalism? What role do ideas of language and economic morality play in workers’ reactions to market reform?

Based on 2005-2006 ethnographic research in the Rezina Cement Plant of the French transnational corporation (TNC), which I call *Egrafal Group Ltd.*,⁶ the thesis finds that there are varying, even blurred, responses of contestation and consent to market reform in the context of one factory. Language plays a critical representational role in these responses, since language is important to Egrafal’s goal of market integration and labour reform among multi-lingual workers. However, corporate (Romanian) language expectations frequently clash with the (Russian) language that was previously embedded in the social relations of Moldova’s industrial workscape. As a result, the thesis argues that workers adopt, resist or modify factory reforms through what I call *linguistic styles* or situational performative modes linked with moral-economic ideas of modernity, markets and mutuality. The thesis goes on to argue that

⁵ Throughout the thesis, the words language and ‘culture’ are connected in view of Pierre Bourdieu’s understanding that *linguistic capital*, defined as mastery of a language (1991), is a subset of *cultural capital*, which becomes embodied in a person as a means of communication. Relatedly, just because I consider culture-cum-language to be a part of the post-socialist remaking of labour and factory does not mean that I agree with the formalist view in economic anthropology that culture and social obligations are constraints on optimal production (see Gudeman 2008, 95 on the debate). In many cases, it could be argued that social-cultural factors appear to aid corporate goals.

⁶ I thank Elisabeth Engebretsen for suggesting this pseudonym.

employees' spatial status location in the plant, often irrespective of job skill and income, corresponds to employees' differing linguistic modalities and varying tendencies towards protest and accommodation in response to factory restructuring. Workers in the top strata of the factory's Administration Building speak multiple languages, long for cosmopolitan lifestyles and benefit from high integration into corporate-market structures. Many achieved job mobility in the plant since socialism and now accommodate to capitalism and corporate styles through linguistic code-switching. The middle strata of ethno-linguistic minorities in Administration's laboratory and the lower strata on the shop floor lack corporate-backed linguistic capital and are on the fringe of modernisation; both are highly job insecure and protest capitalist change by appealing to what appears to be traditional language habits, but which are in fact contemporary responses to economic change. This finding leads the study to conclude that workers' fragmented linguistic-based reactions to market reform do not entail real protectionist collectivism, as Polanyi would have envisioned (Polanyi 1944, 150), nor enduring moral-economic protest along the lines of E.P. Thompson (1971). This is for the very reason of workers' competing modernist longings and ideas of economic morality, together with job insecurity, which altogether alienate workers from each other whilst drawing them back to local ties. This dynamic effectively keeps workers in perpetual oscillation between markets and mutuality.⁷

Present-day social transformations witnessed in the Rezina Cement Plant are part of a wider pattern in Moldova's history of socio-economic development. In what follows, a review of English-language, largely historical monographs covering Moldova will show how large-scale modernisation campaigns on the territory of present-day

⁷ Or alternatively, workers are in a continuing dialectic between markets and mutuality. This use of the word 'dialectical' follows Stephen Gudeman, who understands it to mean notions that both oppose and overlap one another (2008, 14).

Moldova have typically originated from beyond its borders and have had the goal of integrating Moldova into wider structures of empire and nation. Briefly recounting these development drives shows how language became a part of planned integration with each successive empire, with language consolidation and value reclassification needed for the sake of efficiency and control, irrespective of indigenous attitudes towards language.⁸ Establishing this historical trend early in the thesis sets a relevant backdrop to the story of a French conglomerate, *Egrafal Group Ltd.*, seeking to incorporate a factory, the Rezina Cement Plant, from Europe's poorest country into the global market economy. However, the past shows that every regime's attempt at widespread language standardisation, subject-making and cohesion-building has encountered difficulties in implementation, as we will see replayed again in a factory in Moldova's capitalist present.

Before reviewing relevant anthropological literature and introducing my field site and methodology in the second half of the chapter, I start by reviewing the major English-language monographs on Moldova by Bruchis 1982, Ciscel 2007, King 2000, and Livezeanu 1995. I draw out from these monographs illustrations of the relationship between Moldovans' changing languages, social-spatial positioning, and ideas of and reactions to modernisation.⁹ My intention is to show how language became embedded in industrial life, but in differing ways for persons of differing social-spatial locations.

⁸ Modernisation as such has normally gone hand-in-hand with language change and subject-making – the re-forming of people's language choices and behaviour consistent with modernisation goals – a process sometimes acquiring a moral or spiritual undertone (see Kotkin 1995, 23).

⁹ Examining the authors' material for people's changing language practices, social positioning and modernisation reactions complements the authors' intended focus on top-down power consolidation and cultural policy-making. It should be noted that the authors are less concerned with theorising Moldovans' uptake of policies according to social position, although their data on the matter suggest that depending on a person's social location within society and type of engagement in empires past, a new regime's ideas of language, development and modernity have tended to be absorbed, resisted or modified in modernisation's process of subject-making.

The only book missing in the above list of monographs is Jennifer Cash's *Villages on Stage: Folklore and Nationalism in the Republic of Moldova* (2011), which was recently published in Europe while I was in the last months of finishing my dissertation in America.¹⁰ Cash's book deals with the role of folkloric performances and villages in the making of national identity in post-Soviet Moldova. The theme overlaps with issues of contested identity in my thesis, but focuses on national identity in relation to folklore, the rural sphere, and state discourses. My work, on the other hand, is concerned with labour and language divisions in relation to transnational-corporate modernisation, and perceptions of it, in an urban setting. For this reason, the rest of the thesis, starting with the next section, engages literature mainly on economic modernisation and language in the Moldovan and wider post-socialist context.

1.2 Modernisation, Language and Social-spatial Location in Moldova's History

Modernisation is taken to mean planned economic change throughout the thesis. Anthropologists Arce and Long define modernisation more thoroughly as 'a comprehensive package of technical and institutional measures aimed at widespread [and evolutionary] societal transformation' (2000, 2). These organised measures can be of a political, cultural or economic nature, although socio-economic processes are privileged in the thesis and in the following historical review.¹¹

Modernisation in Moldova's history began when it was incorporated into Imperial Russia in 1812.¹² Under the Russian Empire, the Moldovan region (also called

¹⁰ Together with a professor in Washington D.C., I made every effort to find this book as soon as its publication was made known to me in autumn 2011. For a synopsis of Cash's book see: <http://www.lit-verlag.de/isbn/3-643-11226-2>.

¹¹ Teleological or evolutionary assumptions underpin the term modernisation (Ferguson 1999, 48). However, my use of the word does not suggest that I believe planned procedures bring about the progressive, wholesale expansion or betterment of society (as argued by Polanyi 1944, 76, 130) – as indeed the thesis will show. I thus consider it important in the thesis to pay less attention to the plans of modernisation, and more to people's bottom-up experiences of and reactions to modernisation.

¹² Moldova only experienced modest political-economic development until its absorption into Imperial Russia (King 2000, 13-14). This is attributed to the territory and peoples stretching between the Prut and

Bessarabia by the Russians) initially had a high degree of autonomy. In fact, according to Irina Livezeanu, Bessarabia enjoyed ‘the highest degree of autonomy of any province or district in the Empire’ (Livezeanu 1995, 93-94; see also King 2000, 25). This meant that the region’s main indigenous language, a form of Romanian, along with the Empire’s Russian *lingua franca*, was allowed and utilised in regional government and public life. However, from 1822 onwards, Moldova lost its self-rule as it was progressively integrated into broader imperial structures and brought into line with imperial standards, as part of the Russian Empire’s effort to centralise and modernise its disparate regions (King 2000, 25). Modernisation in this period was manifested in the making of a uniform system of governance, in conjunction with the expansion of cities, infrastructure and manufacturing, for the solidification of the Russian Empire. In Bessarabia, the centralising nature of this political-economic modernisation led to the abolishment of indigenous language use in favour of just Russian as the province’s sole official language (Livezeanu 1995, 94). Meanwhile, the Moldovan ruling class was progressively ‘russified’¹³ or replaced by Russian bureaucrats. The region’s new urban manufacturing class was mostly Jewish and Russian (King 2000, 25 and Livezeanu 1995, 94), many being immigrant settlers to Bessarabia’s growing cities (Ciscel 2007, 10 and Kristof 1974, 27-31). By 1867, within forty-five years of Bessarabia losing its autonomy, modernisation had embedded the Russian language so deeply in the province that Moldova’s small native intelligentsia ‘was extremely russified,’ in the words of Livezeanu (1995, 95 and King 2000, 46, 50) and no Moldovan-language schools remained in the province, unlike in the early days of the Russian Empire (Livezeanu

Nistru Rivers never being directly governed by foreign rulers before the Russian Empire’s 1812 annexation of Moldova, even if the area was never completely insulated from the influence of stronger neighbours.

¹³ This word comes from *russification*, which is defined as the adoption of the Russian language in public settings by non-Russian peoples, who may acquire other Russian habits and dispositions by necessity or force.

1995, 94). However, it is important to note that this trend towards russification relates mostly to persons situated in urban spaces.

In rural spaces, Livezeanu points out that average Moldovans' language was largely unaffected by the Russian Empire's so-called russification policies. This is because most Moldovans during this period laboured in the countryside as illiterate serfs or peasants,¹⁴ and so they were not incorporated into the Empire's educational, manufacturing and administrative structures, where they would have had to learn Russian. Therefore, most rank-and-file Moldovans in the countryside remained untouched by Russian culture (Livezeanu 1995, 94-95).¹⁵ This detail testifies to the important relationship between social location and language exposure among Moldovans.

The urban-rural divide in Bessarabia is noteworthy for the way in which it corresponds to Moldovans' differing responses to their changing socio-economic environment in the wake of feudalism's abolition and the start of industrial manufacturing. In turn-of-the-nineteenth-century Moldova, evidence indicates that the rural peasantry overwhelmingly turned to Bolshevik and radical movements promoting land reform and protectionist economic measures (see King 2000, 28-32). These movements, however, clashed with an urban russified elite upholding the Imperial Russian establishment, as well as collided with young Moldovan intellectuals from cities promoting a pan-Romanian agenda, including the public use of their mother tongue (2000, 28).¹⁶ These young Moldovan intellectuals were backed by older

¹⁴ Feudalism existed in Bessarabia until its abolition in 1861.

¹⁵ For example, evidence of this is found in the writing of Romanian authorities who discovered in 1918: "the Romanian population has been indifferent toward the school and has remained almost untouched by Russian culture" (cited in Livezeanu 1995, 95).

¹⁶ On account of infrastructure and travel made possible by modernisation, these young Moldovan intellectuals were exposed to radicalism and revolution while studying in Russia (King 2000, 28 and Livezeanu 1995, 96), or while interacting with cultural circles from the adjacent, newly formed Romanian

indigenous nobles, who were alarmed by the growing number of socialists threatening the nobility's hold on land (ibid, 28-32). In this way, Moldovan responses to the changing socio-economic milieu were generally split between a young urban intelligentsia and countryside nobility, pushing for Romanian-language rights and political autonomy, on the one hand, and a Moldovan peasantry and Russian-speaking activists championing economic protectionism, on the other hand. These two social movements of nationalism and socialism never faced off in Bessarabia, but tension remained in the wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution and Bessarabia's unification with Romania after the First World War.

Between the two World Wars (1918-1940), Bessarabia was incorporated into so-called Greater Romania (1918-1940).¹⁷ Integrating newly acquired lands and peoples into one nation-state proved to be a great challenge for the Romanian authorities, even as most of their new subjects spoke a dialect of Romanian (King 2000, 41).¹⁸ From the start, Romanian authorities were concerned with the hostile reactions of Bessarabia's indigenes to Romanian interventions (Livezeanu 1995, 97-98). What is more, Bessarabia was the poorest and most rural of all of Romania's provinces. Aware of its challenges, the Romanian administration aggressively set to work on the economic and cultural development of the province. It built new roads and railways, established radio

Kingdom (established 1881) (King 2000, 28). Their outpouring of ethno-linguistic sentiment was not owing to an age-old disposition for identity to be important to people, as primordialists like Smith (1986) contend, but more as a way to contest Bessarabia's Russian-controlled socio-political life, which these young Moldovans struggled to access. These intellectuals explored what they believed to be common cultural origins between Moldovans and Wallachians from the Romanian Kingdom and began to call for the unification of all areas inhabited by Romanian-speakers into one nation-state (King, 28-32).

¹⁷ Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, a Bessarabian parliament (*Sfatul Țării*) was formed and a year later it declared a Moldavian Democratic Republic independent from Russia. A couple of months later the parliament voted in favour of uniting with Romania, although scholars note that almost one-third of the parliament abstained, and Romanian and French armies were already in the country (King 2000, 32-35).

¹⁸ By comparison, King suggests Romania's post-war integration of Transylvania and Bukovina was less contentious (2000, 41-42) than Bessarabia, where, as cited by Livezeanu, "the majority of the population is plainly hostile to the Romanians. [...] The small Romanian element there is represented by poor peasants who are themselves hardly disposed in favour of their compatriots" (as noted in a French report in Livezeanu 1995, 98).

stations and telephone lines, and accomplished a degree of agrarian reform, redistributing land to portions of newly propertied peasants. This economic modernisation of Bessarabia notably went hand in hand with plans for its cultural change (King 2000, 41). Romanian cultural work centred on the assimilation and awakening of Bessarabians to their ‘true’ Romanian heritage. Bessarabians’ social transformation into ‘Romanian’ was to happen by way of mass education and cultural activity. However, cultural reform among Bessarabia’s rural population was limited, in part because of people’s ideas about language and themselves, learned in the last century under Imperial Russia. It was through these ideas that Moldovans’ differing responses to cultural-economic modernisation took shape.

Since the early nineteenth century, only Russian was the official and hence proper public language of the urban and educated elites and bureaucracy. By this period, even the peasantry esteemed Russian, as evidence suggests villagers over time picked up fragments of it (Livezeanu 1995, 119). The highest strata of Moldovans – many of whom knew their vernacular, evidently using it in domestic contexts (1995, 100) – still preferred Russian in public discourse and distained Romanian high culture, regarding Romania as ‘uncivilised’ vis-à-vis Russian culture (1995, 100).¹⁹ Against these odds, Romanian officials ‘struggled to persuade [Bessarabians] that *limba prostimei* [‘the language of simple people’ or Romanian], the idiom of the village, of the household, of the fields, of the lower classes could, in the new political context, become the language of science, school, theatre, poetry, and state’ (Livezeanu 1995, 106).

By the time of the Second World War, a fraction of society was schooled in and regularly used standard Romanian in all walks of life; this was namely educated

¹⁹ For evidence that Moldovan elites preferred to read Russian over Romanian literature and that Russian Cyrillic lettering remained on street signs in urban centres, see King 2000, 45, 47 and Livezeanu 1995, 119.

Bessarabians working in the Romanian administrative, educational or cultural apparatus in the region's towns and villages. These skilled indigenes integrated into the system generally became proponents of pan-Romanian modernisation, if anything because their livelihoods were deeply enmeshed in it. Bessarabia's rank-and-file population, on the other hand, by and large, did not associate itself with a Romanian identity and language, which they had long known as Moldovan (King 2000, 58).²⁰ This largely rural peasantry remained on the fringe of Romanian modernisation, which was not helped by Romania's mounting mistrust and surveillance of the population in the lead up to and during the Second World War. Romanian officials kept the masses at bay further by castigating them as 'Russian stooges,' and 'uneducated victims of tsarist deceit' (King 2000, 59), which only served to push the masses closer to all-too-eager Russian Bolsheviks, who offered support against so-called bourgeois Romanian chauvinism (Livezeanu 1995, 99).²¹ The Romanian state, then, failed to make Romanian loyalists out of all Moldovans, particularly the rural masses, just as it failed to make literary Romanian the *lingua franca* of Bessarabia in a totalising, all-encompassing way – altogether not unlike the mixed results of corporate Egrafal's socio-economic reform in this thesis.

During the Second World War (1940-1945), Bessarabia exchanged hands once again. The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact between Stalin's Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany returned Bessarabia to Russia in 1940. This was followed by Romania's short

²⁰ King further adds: 'Despite the best efforts of Bucharest intellectuals to awaken the Bessarabian peasant to his own "Romanianness," many Moldovans remained cool on their putative Romanian identity' (2000, 58).

²¹ An example of the Romanian authorities' distance from the Bessarabian population is cited in an observation by a French official: "The Romanians are alienating these populations by all means at their disposal: too harsh a police that thrashes the citizen with sticks..., inquisition, venality, extortion, organised theft under pretext of requisitions, etc.'" (in Livezeanu 1995, 98). All in all, both Livezeanu and King find that Bessarabia's incorporation into Romania in the inter-war years – or rather the culturally aggressive way in which it happened – unintentionally created regionalist solidarity among countless Bessarabians against Romanians beyond the Prut River (see Livezeanu 1995, 118, 120, 127).

war-time recapture of the territory a year later when it joined Hitler's Axis, only to lose it again to the Soviets when Romania switched back to the Allies in August 1944. During this military battling over territory, Bessarabia's economic development virtually stopped as the war's south-eastern front ravaged its lands.²² At the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union was responsible for rebuilding and developing Moldova for the next half of a century. This period turned out to be crucial for Moldova's industrial modernisation.

The Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR), established by peace treaty in 1947, was comprised of Bessarabia and a narrow strip of land to the east of the Nistru River, known as *Transnistria*. Transnistria was never considered a part of Bessarabia. During the inter-war years, when Bessarabia was inside Greater Romania (1918-1940), the Transnistrian region was named the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) and was integrated into the USSR's Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine (1924-1943). Here in the MASSR, the region's sizeable number of ethnic Moldovans encountered two decades of 'moldovanisation' programmes organised by the Soviets. Their goal was to create a communist Moldovan people with a Slavic-disposed language and identity separate from Romanians (see Ciscel 2007, 10), in order to legitimise Soviet claims to then Romanian-controlled Bessarabia. However, moldovanisation in the MASSR failed on account of rural Moldovans' illiteracy and mistrust of political education programmes (King 2000, 78-79, 87-88). The failure kept Moldovans out of public life and buttressed a Russian-speaking communist cadre in Transnistria (2000, 64, 73-74), in contrast to Romanian-speaking Bessarabia.

²² In terms of language, there was no wide scale language change in Bessarabia during this period of changing occupiers, beyond the personal negotiation of multiple languages for survival.

With different socio-political histories, Bessarabia and Transnistria's post-Second-World-War reconstruction and integration into the Soviet Union necessitated cultural and linguistic homogenisation.²³ Soviet language policy targeted not only the systematisation of Moldovans' vernacular, as happened in the days of the MASSR, but also the creation of new historical and ethnic origins for Moldovans in order to separate them from Romanians. This cultivation of a distinct Moldovan cultural identity was mapped onto already existing regionalist sentiment that developed among average Bessarabians against Romanians in the lead up to the Second World War (recall Livezeanu 1995, 127; King 2000, 107). Soviet mass education of Moldovans took place in their vernacular written in the Cyrillic alphabet with Russian borrowings for technical terminology – the opposite of the prior regime's Latin-alphabet Romanian with French borrowings (Ciscel 2007, 11). Historians give no indication of average Moldovans resisting this alphabet change (unlike in the MASSR), whether out of fear or out of a need for stability and accommodation in a war-ravaged environment.²⁴ Moreover, memories of aggressive romanianisation along with peasants' basic schooling and limited absorption into Romanian institutions left peasants with few positive Romanian memories with which to protest Soviet language expectations. Meanwhile, Russian quickly came to dominate Soviet Moldova's administrative, party, scholarly, scientific,

²³ This entailed a more effective and more violent moldovanisation campaign than that started in the Transnistrian MASSR. The Soviet's new moldovanisation drive necessitated the imprisonment, deportation or, in extreme cases, execution of any persons loyal to the Romanian administration and its socio-cultural outlook.

²⁴ It can be argued that few Moldovans resisted the writing of their vernacular in the Cyrillic alphabet, because high culture in Soviet Moldova subtly and increasingly became Romanian (King 2000, 107). Historians Michael Bruchis and Charles King and linguist Matthew Ciscel show that over time the standard Moldovan promoted by the Soviets was essentially identical to standard Romanian (King 2000, 107; Bruchis 1982, 291.) Bruchis illustrates how high-culture native speaking in the MSSR was perceived by locals to be 'Romanian,' while rural, colloquial speaking 'Moldovan' (1982, 291). Such ideas about language had the effect of reinforcing a long-time split between Moldovan intellectuals and the masses – each being seen to speak different dialects, when in fact linguistic differences were small. This connection between dialect and social standing became accentuated in Greater Romania, but the link was entrenched in the Soviet period.

pedagogical, and cultural life (Bruchis 1982, 22), as the Russian language was crucial to the integration and modernisation of the Soviet Union's diverse regions.

Widespread industrial development of the MSSR did not begin until the early 1950s, shortly after its integration into the Soviet Union.²⁵ An industrial boom occurred in the first decade (1950-1960) with the establishment of a thriving agro-industrial sector to exploit Moldova's rich agrarian land (King 2000, 99).²⁶ Large-scale heavy industry appeared later in the 1960s to 1980s, concentrated mostly in Transnistria. The notable construction during this period of two cement plants and a steel mill straddling Transnistria and Bessarabia along the Nistru River – one of which is the focus of this thesis – played a key role in changing northern Moldova's linguistic and labour landscape (Stati 2002, 358-359), which is discussed in the next chapter.

The story of Moldova's rapid urban industrialisation contains mixed stories of opportunity and inequality. In heavy industry, Moldovans occupied lower paid, less qualified, manual-labour positions than Russians, Ukrainians and Jews, many of whom were not native to Moldova. The latter dominated in management due to their higher education and specialisation, which led to their disproportionate share of the 'aristocracy of labour' (Munteanu 2002, 204; Frunțașu 2002, 189-191).²⁷ Soviet industrial policy in this way institutionalised its own ethnic and linguistic status distinctions (see Figure

²⁵ The region's first Soviet factories were built in Transnistria in 1926, more than two decades before the industrialisation of Bessarabia. The progressive industrialisation of left-bank Moldova in the inter-war period contrasts with the limited industrialisation of right-bank territories under Greater Romania (Petrescu 2007, 134). Historian Vasile Stati claims that as many as 217 factories in the agro-industrial sector operated in Transnistria by 1937 (2002, 328).

²⁶ More specifically, the agro-industrial sector included fruit and vegetable canning factories, bread-making plants, wine, cognac and beer plants, as well as sugar and sweets production. Light industry was made up of shoe-making and textile and leather-working, as well as auto-repair and energy-related industries. Over the next three decades (1960-1990), hundreds of small, medium and large factories were built throughout the republic (Stati 2002, 358-359).

²⁷ As training became available to indigenes, some Moldovans obtained qualifications equal to their Russian and Ukrainian counterparts. Still, the majority of leading industrial posts remained in the hands of non-Moldovan elites (Livezeanu 1981, 338; Frunțașu 2002, 202-203). This is evidenced in statistics showing that near the Soviet Union's collapse in 1989, only 33 per cent of industrial management positions were held by ethnic Moldovans (Solonari and Bruter 1994, 72-90).

5).²⁸ This prejudice existed even as all non-Russians in the industrial complex absorbed, by and large, a Russian-speaking proletarian mode (like in Payne 2001) – whether out of conviction (Hellbeck 2006) or performative self-presentation (Fitzpatrick 2005, 28). In the process, workers routinely switched between Russian and indigenous languages (Payne 2001 and Kotkin 1995, 220), which is akin to many workers’ adaptive strategy today at the Rezina Cement Plant.

As Moldovan workers were increasingly integrated into and adapted to Soviet industry, the Russian language became deeply embedded in the industrial life of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic.²⁹ However, Gorbachev’s 1980s *glasnost*’ and *perestroika* (reconstruction) socio-economic reforms – meant to modernise a stagnating Soviet Union – created conditions for contesting the role of Russian in Moldovan society. As political and economic decision-making power was increasingly devolved to the republics in an effort to streamline the country, republican-level leadership gradually became divided into native and non-native camps. In places like the MSSR, Moldovans previously underrepresented in the Communist Party administration and urban economy became a rising indigenous elite, wanting to control the course of their republic (King 2000, 139). It is during this period that a Moldovan language rights’ movement surfaced, known as the Popular Front (*Frontul Popular din Moldova*).

The Popular Front built a nationalist imagination of collective Moldovan victimhood at the hands of non-Moldovan ‘occupiers.’ Young Romanian-speaking intellectuals led mass protests against the republic’s Moscow-assigned Slavic leadership

²⁸ The fraction of Moldovans advantaged by Soviet industrial policy were usually select relatives of local Communist Party leaders, free of *kulak* (bourgeois-peasant) forefathers or Romanian war-time kin collaborators, Moscow or Leningrad-university educated, inter-married with Russians or Ukrainians, and Russian-speaking in most, if not all, life spheres (Munteanu 2002).

²⁹ Note that prior to 1989 there was no official language in Soviet Moldova, although Russian was widely used (Livezeanu 2007, 39).

and against the Russian language's dominance in public life.³⁰ Some even called for Moldova's unification with Romania. The strength of the nationalist movement was in urban centres, where Moldovans, recently arrived from villages, knew the effort involved in competing with ethnic Russians and Ukrainians for jobs and social advancement (Kaufman 2001, 138),³¹ and so understood the advantages of official status for their mother tongue. So even if the Moldovan countryside was important to nationalist rhetoric, the movement's call for language reform resonated greatly with urban ethnic Moldovans (see King 2000, 139-140).³²

In cities like Chişinău, masses of protesters succeeded to pressure indigenous politicians to use their *perestroika*-acquired majority seats in the Moldovan Supreme Soviet to proclaim the language of the Moldovans as the republic's *sole* official language. Henceforth, from 31 August 1989, Moldovans' language was written in the Latin instead of the Cyrillic script, as in the days of inter-war Romania. Russian was downgraded from a state language to a 'language of inter-ethnic communication.'

The outcome of these fateful events was that large numbers of non-native Slavs were unseated in their leadership and factory-managerial positions and many returned to family roots in Russia and Ukraine. In the MSSR's highly russified and industrial-rich Transnistrian region, russophone non-indigenes did not flee, but banded together in violent protest against Bessarabia's reforms.³³ At the heart of their protest was

³⁰ Similar characteristics of the Moldovan nationalist movement are found among nationalist proponents at the turn of the nineteenth century (see King 2000, 28-32).

³¹ For example, Moldovan students could only receive a Soviet Moldovan university education in Russian, and evidence shows that would-be Moldovan managers often found their career paths blocked by ethnic Russians and Ukrainians (see Kaufman 2001, 138).

³² However, Livezeanu claims that the majority of the protesters in the August 27, 1989 protest – on the eve of the parliamentary vote for language change – were made up of peasants 'marching on foot from all parts of the republic and from adjoining areas annexed to Ukraine' (2007, 43). However, her only source of information for this claim is the somewhat subjective work of Vladimir Socor (1989).

³³ High numbers of Russians and Ukrainians ran the extensive industrial-military complex concentrated on Transnistria's narrow strip of land. Their work as industrial managers gave them important organisational and economic resources for resisting Chişinău's cultural and political reforms (King 2000,

disagreement over the direction of the changing political-economic order in the *perestroika* era, and over the cultural-linguistic values representing the new order.³⁴ Transnistrian demonstrations escalated to armed conflict after Moldova declared its independence from the Soviet Union on 27 August 1991. Between 1991 and 1992, war was waged along the 290-kilometre natural border of the Nistru River (see Figure 3), mainly in the industrial cities of Tighina/Bendery, Dubăsari/Dubossary, Râbnița/Rybnitsa and Rezina, the site of this study (see Chapter Two for local details).³⁵ Despite a 1992 ceasefire, the Transnistrian conflict has remained frozen between active hostility and formal settlement for the better part of two decades (Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 331). Today the Transnistrian region functions like a state separate from the rest of Moldova, drawing its support from persons nostalgic for an idealised socialist modernity and Russian-speaking ‘internationalism’ (see Figure 12). Territorially, stalemated conflict resolution has left Moldova *de facto* split in two.³⁶

In conclusion, these past modernisation programmes on the territory of modern-day Moldova – from Imperial Russian modernisation and Greater Romanian development to Soviet industrialisation and late Soviet *perestroika* – show how people’s differing urban and rural social positions and diverging degrees of incorporation into modernising projects intersects with how people accept, contest or modify a new regime’s expectations of language and development. Additionally, the historical review showed how different languages became embedded in the socio-economic life of the

187). There was also an element of Russian pride among displaced russophone elites in Transnistria not willing to submit to what was perceived as Moldovan peasant control (Kolstø 2002, 271).

³⁴ See Bilaniuk on the importance of language in changing and constituting the post-socialist order in multi-lingual societies like Ukraine (2005, 15, 27, 32).

³⁵ Dual versions are where there are Romanian and then Russian-language city names.

³⁶ Despite on-going negotiations between the Transnistrian *de facto* authorities and the recognised Moldovan government no permanent solution has been reached on the territory’s status. This means the country is split in two between what is known as the ‘right bank’ (or Bessarabia) and ‘left bank’ (Transnistria) separated by the Nistru River. Each side governs itself separately. See Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010 for more information on the Transnistrian conflict.

country. So the next question is how will a new mode of capitalist modernisation play out in contemporary post-Soviet Moldova? How might language be a part of new market reform and its receptivity and representation? An ideal way of answering these questions is through a bottom-up ethnographic view into the life of a privatising heavy industrial plant, like the Rezina Cement Plant in provincial Moldova. First, though, let us consider the contemporary social-linguistic and economic dynamics of the country where the factory is located.

1.3 Social-linguistic and Economic Dynamics in Contemporary Moldova

Today Moldova's 33,846 square kilometres – a land mass one-third the size of Portugal (see Figure 2) – has a population of just over three million, three-quarters being Moldovan (76 per cent), more than one-eighth Ukrainian and Russian (14 per cent), with pockets of Turkic Gagauz, Bulgarians, Roma, Jews and Poles.³⁷ In the wake of independence, the country's most widely spoken language is Moldovans' vernacular (77 per cent). However, as we will see in the thesis's ethnography, decades if not centuries of Russian-speaking make the language difficult to erase. Russian is currently the country's second most widely spoken language, with 11 per cent of the population calling it their native tongue. It is widely spoken in urban-industrial cities and factories – by Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Gagauz *and* Moldovans alike.³⁸ This widespread use of Russian is often overlooked by Romanian and West European companies investing in Moldova.

³⁷http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/procese_demografice/Procese_demografice_2009.pdf. Accessed 4 January 2010. While these 2004 statistics paint a picture of Moldova's ethnic diversity, they are based on a rather rigid concept of 'passport ethnicity.' Census data do not reveal how the ethnic identity of individuals and their descendants on the territory of present-day Moldova has switched back and forth (see Gorenburg 2006, 146 on changing ethnicity in the post-Soviet space).

³⁸ Russian is an official language in Transnistria, alongside Ukrainian and Moldovan. In reality, the Transnistrian state bureaucracy, regional commerce and industrial sector function only in Russian. Most Ukrainians in the Transnistrian region prefer to speak Russian, and just like Russians, they have little knowledge of Moldovan. The Moldovan dialect dominates in villages. Most ethnic Moldovans in Transnistria call their mother tongue and ethnicity Moldovan and not Romanian.

Debates over Moldovan and Romanian linguistic-status distinctions are also not easily dissolved, especially as they intersect with ideas of modernity and modernisation discussed in the thesis. Diverging language dispositions are bound up in people's longings for better lifestyles and brighter futures in Russia, Romania or Western Europe. For many, the Romanian language stands for ideas of liberal democracy and a market economy associated with Western Europe, whereas the Russian language and Moldovan dialect for a closed communist past. For others, though, the Russian language represents socio-economic protectionism associated with 'big brother' (*bol'shoi brat*) Russia, and the Romanian language for a nationalist, bourgeois past; Moldovan-speaking is about local intimacy. On account of these different attitudes, establishing an official language in Moldova has been a matter of great controversy. This extends to whether or not the language of the majority should be called Moldovan or Romanian (Ciscel 2007). To get around the impasse, the latest Moldovan Constitution simply calls the country's language 'our language' (*limba noastră*). As mentioned already, from the perspective of an outside listener, Romanian and Moldovan sound like two idioms of a mutually intelligible language with slight, albeit detectable vocabulary and accent differences.³⁹ Rural Moldovans, making up 60 per cent of society,⁴⁰ and unskilled, first-generation urbanites usually only speak colloquial Moldovan. Literary Romanian is preferred by the country's urban, educated Moldovan elite, most of whom also traditionally speak Russian and colloquial Moldovan (Livezeanu 1995, 100).⁴¹ This then suggests that

³⁹ An example of the difference between standard Romanian and colloquial Moldovan is: *Malenkaia devushka graiește ghine amuia* in colloquial Moldovan (with a noticeable mix of Russian words), and *domnișoara mica vorbește bine acum* in standard Romanian.

⁴⁰ http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/procese_demografice/Procese_demografice_2009.pdf. Accessed 4 January 2010.

⁴¹ It is said that the languages a Moldovan speaks in turn influence his sense of self in relation to others (Ciscel 2007, 10; Livezeanu 1995, 101).

Moldovans' language habits continue to intersect with their location in society, as in the past, and as we will see play out in the contemporary changing economy.⁴²

Economically, Moldova's agricultural-based economy is highly dependent upon the unstable production and sale of wine, tobacco, fruit and vegetables, prompting international bodies to call for Moldova's increased development and incorporation into European and global-economic structures.⁴³ So far new foreign investment has trickled in – like the case of the French-owned Rezina Cement Plant – but it has not halted Moldova's endemic rates of out-migration. With a per capita income of just 420 US dollars⁴⁴ (267 GBP) a year,⁴⁵ Moldovan citizens look to migration abroad for survival. Statistics indicate that between one-fourth and one-third of the population presently works outside the country (IOM 2005). This means half of Moldova's able-bodied labour force works beyond its borders.⁴⁶ 780 million US dollars in official remittances came to Moldova in the first half of 2008 alone (ProTV, 18 August 2008). 2007 was a record year with 1.2 billion US dollars' worth of remittances. United Nations sources

⁴² On religion, the majority of persons on both Moldovan river-banks are Eastern Orthodox Christian, subordinated to the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. Just 2 per cent of the population is Protestant, notwithstanding large numbers of neo-Protestant churches that have mushroomed in Moldova's urban-industrial cities, like Chişinău, Bălţi and Rybnitsa, in the wake of socialism. However, in my fieldsite of Rezina, only two small neo-Protestant churches exist – one Baptist and the other Seventh-Day Adventist. Few if any Rezina Cement Plant workers attend them, or the town's Orthodox Church, and so religion is not discussed in the thesis.

⁴³ For an example of European Union economic development expectations for Moldova, see my 2008 report:
<http://www.wiltonpark.com/documents/conferences/WP949/pdfs/WP949.pdf?633983444395406250>. Accessed 10 January 2010.

⁴⁴ Please note that American dollar amounts are used throughout the thesis, because this is the most frequently used foreign currency of my informants.

⁴⁵ This figure is from when I began my study of Moldova in 2003. (Cf. Kieran Cooke, 'Europe's poorest economy in downward spiral,' BBC News – Business, 31 March, 2003: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/2881291.stm>. Accessed 10 January 2010.) As a comparison, sources in 2006 put the average yearly salary at 1,620 US dollars. (See <http://www.wall-street.ro/articol/International/13834/Salariile-din-Republica-Moldova-printre-cele-mai-mici-din-Europa.html>. Accessed 6 September 2011.)

⁴⁶ Many Moldovans are dual citizens of Romania, Ukraine or Russia. For more on Moldovan migration, see Ciscel 2007, 8, Heintz 2008, 9 and IOM 2007, 4-6). At the time of my fieldwork, most Rezina inhabitants and Ciment S.A. workers were simply Moldovan citizens, so citizenship is not discussed in this thesis. Citizenship did not become an issue until after my fieldwork, when in 2007 Romania joined the European Union, and eligible Moldovans increasingly started to acquire Romanian citizenship in order to have a passport to travel and work in Western Europe.

rank Moldova as one of the most remittance-dependent countries in the world. However, a notable number of Moldovans migrate not only out of poverty, this thesis argues, drawing upon data from the International Organization for Migration, but also out of modernist yearnings, a distinction that will be discussed towards the end of the thesis (Chapter Seven) in relation to cement workers' domestic lives in the post-socialist era.

1.4 Research Themes in Social Theory and Anthropological Literature

Despite the interconnection between language and economic change in Moldova's modern history, these themes have previously been studied in isolation of each other in scholarly work on Moldova.⁴⁷ They also have not been integrated in post-socialist East European and industrial anthropology literature relevant to the thesis.

A growing body of post-socialist anthropological literature addresses how new economic transformations in Eastern Europe bring new modes of relationality and fragmentation among the millions once making up the socialist-era proletariat (e.g. studies by Burawoy and Verdery 1998; Dunn 1998, 2004; Kideckel 2001, 2002, 2007; Müller 2007; Nazpary 2001; Walker 1998).⁴⁸ It explicitly illustrates how heavy industry lost its place of primacy as communism collapsed, and how an entire way of life came to an end for millions of people who made up the socialist-era proletariat. More specifically, this body of work examines workers' integration into new market economies (Dunn 2004), recounting their complex stories of protest and accommodation (Müller 2007), as well as their equally painful retreat from industrial work to joblessness on account of industrial restructuring (Kideckel 2007). My thesis wishes to add to this anthropological literature by providing an account of the interplay between language

⁴⁷ For example, Bruchis 1982 is concerned with language, Ciscel 2007 and King 2000 with language and national identity, and the volume of Heintz 2008 largely with citizenship and national identity, with some concern for economics.

⁴⁸ For sociological studies on industrial labour, see Ashwin 1999, Clarke et al. 1993, and Crowley and Ost 2001.

and capitalist development in the multi-ethnic country of Moldova. Social-cultural expressions like language – and their connection to workers’ social-spatial positioning and modernist longings – have hitherto not been taken into account in the study of post-socialist worker reactions to market capitalism.⁴⁹ In this way, my research aims to be a contribution not only to the study of Moldova – being one of the few English-language ethnographies written exclusively on Moldova (only other anthropology accounts to date by Cash 2011 on villages and folklore, Bobick 2011 on local business in Transnistria, as well as Demirdirek 1996 and Keough 2006 on Gagauz minorities) – but also a contribution within industrial and post-socialist anthropology. Before addressing this anthropological literature, the thesis first sets the foundation by reviewing social-theoretical literature on responses to industrial capitalism.

Social responses to free-market capitalism: moral-economic protest and collectivist countermovements

Karl Polanyi’s seminal work, *The Great Transformation*, argues that society’s exposure and subordination to self-regulating (*laissez-faire* or free) markets leads to social problems and opposition (1944, 71 and also Hart and Hann 2009, 1). His work shows that capitalist free markets are neither natural to nor the apex of society, just as economic liberalisation does not necessarily lead to workplaces detached from collectivities and cultural particularities past and present. Polanyi’s thinking has relevance to Moldova’s still liberalising economy, especially among workers at the Rezina Cement Plant just now exposed to neoliberal restructuring.

Karl Polanyi believes that the root problem of the modern factory system is that free-market economic principles, like those being introduced at the Rezina plant, require that man be transformed into a commodity (1944, 72-73, 75). This *commodification of*

⁴⁹ Moreover, the major ethnography on language in the post-socialist sphere, a study by Laada Bilaniuk (2005), also gives limited attention to the relationship between capitalist change and language.

labour, as it is called, is the objectification of man's labour power for the purpose of monetary value (see Dunn 2004, 55; Kideckel 2007, 7; Lampland 1995, 11). More precisely, Polanyi explains that labour commodification involves persons seeing their human activity as existing for the distinct purpose of being bought and sold, when in reality humans were not, in Polanyi's words, 'produced for sale' (1944, 72).⁵⁰ Polanyi believes that human economic activity cannot be detached from other social activities and relationships of life. Polanyi's convictions are based on evidence from tribal and agrarian civilisations showing that the economic order was historically a function of (and constrained by) the social order, and not the other way around (1944, 71).⁵¹ However, laissez-faire's commodification of labour has switched this equation, subordinating 'the substance of society [...] to the laws of the market' (1944, 71), which in turn threatens to disembed persons from their social institutions and relationships (1944, 72-73, 129, 176).⁵² This is problematic for the way in which history shows that social institutions have customarily provided a protective covering for people from material hardship brought on by economic activity. Capitalist industry's disembedding of persons from social ties thus leaves people without the promise of wider social security from community, let alone from factory or state. This is what made the commodification of labour and free markets so perilous for Polanyi. The consequence, then, of the expansion of laissez-faire conditions is, according to Polanyi: 'To separate

⁵⁰ Polanyi uses the word 'fictitious' because 'labor [along with land and money] are obviously not commodities; the postulate that anything that is bought and sold must have been produced for sale is emphatically untrue in regard to them [labor, land and money]. In other words, according to the empirical definition of a commodity they are not commodities' (1944, 72). However, according to capitalist logic, it is not up to labour to decide when it should be offered for sale, for what purpose it should be used, and at what price it should be permitted to change ownership (1944, 72, 129, 176).

⁵¹ Polanyi, following Aristotle, believed that society existed to provide tangible material sustenance to its members through the distributive functions of reciprocity, redistribution and householding. Market activity played only a peripheral role in these socially embedded economic activities (Hart and Hann 2009, 4-5).

⁵² See Hann 2009 for an alternative perspective, arguing that not only free-market principles, but also Marxist-Leninist-Maoist socialism can disembed the economy from social relations, resulting in devastating social consequences equal to those brought on by the free market (2009, 257-258).

labor from other activities of life and to subject it to the laws of the market was to annihilate all organic forms of existence and to replace them by a different type of organization, an atomistic and individualistic one (1944, 163).’ The result, as Polanyi saw it, was: ‘human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure. They would die as the victims of acute social dislocation’ (ibid, 73).

Both Polanyi and Karl Marx rightly diagnosed the alienation and social dislocation inherent in people’s exposure to what Polanyi called capitalist ‘satanic mills’ (Polanyi 1944, 73, 76); however, they differed in their collectivist remedies to the problem. Whilst Marx looked to the proletariat to organise an overturn of the free-market system, Polanyi believed that all segments of society, not just manual labour, were important to spontaneous cooperative movements to counter the every-day physical and psychological ills of submitting persons to laissez-faire economic conditions (1944, 71-73, 132, 146-147 and Hart and Hann 2009, 4, 6). Given that all employees at the Rezina Cement Plant were anxious about neoliberal reform – from blue-collar to white-collar workers alike – and that Marx’s proletarian class categories have all but lost their value in the post-socialist present, and as such are avoided by most workers in Moldova and throughout Eastern Europe (see Kideckel 2007, 11; Ost 2002; Ost and Crowley 2001), the thesis moves forward with Polanyi’s ideas of spontaneous collectivism against market reform. This is even if the thesis questions Polanyi’s conviction that the universal, natural response of society and workers to laissez-faire market expansion is to call for their protection against it in the form of ‘restrictive associations’ and ‘collectivist countermovements’ (1944, 76, 132, 146, 150). Otherwise known as ‘the double movement,’ as Polanyi calls it (1944, 130) (and the thesis discusses further in Chapter Six), collective counter-reactions against market reform are not easy to find among disunited segments of the Ciment S.A. workforce.

In cases where Ciment S.A. workers are collectively united around protectionist, moral idioms against the encroachment of what they perceive to be dehumanising ('soulless' in their words) neoliberal reform, E.P. Thompson's concept of 'moral economy' is relevant (1971 and 1991). Both Thompson's moral economy and Polanyi's double movement involve protective expressions in opposition to free market conditions (Polanyi 1944, 132, 150 and Thompson 1991, 260-261). Both entail collective behaviour (or 'direct popular action' and 'a collective alternative' [1991, 180, 266]) to cope with individualisation and harmful market conditions (1991, 266). Moreover, both see that there are obligations of provision that the state, dealers and land or factory owners *ought* to obey to protect people from free market ravages (Polanyi 1944, 146-147 and Thompson 1991, 188). Despite these considerable similarities, Thompson's work provides more useful detail for a segment of the Ciment S.A. labour force (discussed in Chapter Five). Thompson believes that moral-economic riots and protest happen during times of hardship in the free-market economy, like during times of high prices, low food supply, high unemployment and low job security. Polanyi, on the other hand, gives the impression that persons protest under any free-market conditions, whereas Thompson details under *what* conditions and the *way in which* people protest. Thompson believes that there is popular consensus among persons over protective obligations and legitimate and illegitimate economic practices within the free market arrangement, and collective protest happens *when* illegitimate practices occur and customary obligations are unmet. In addition, Thompson shows that protest frequently happens by appealing to past traditions of paternalist protection (like the Tudor policies of provision and market regulation in England cited by Thompson), even if for contemporary motivations (1991, 341, 269). Such moral-economic expressions echo loudly in my own work, like in Russian lab workers' obstinate tea breaks against

management's wishes. These employees persist in what they call traditional practices of 'soul' (*dusha*), associated with socialist-era communalism. Similar conduct and ideas are found among workers in a leading ethnography of post-socialist change relevant to this thesis.

Elizabeth Dunn's *Privatising Poland* examines the remaking of labour in a newly privatised, American-owned baby-food firm in Poland, called Alima. Here employees underwent corporate re-education initiatives aimed at re-making themselves into self-directed, capitalist individuals (2004, 5-6, 8, 20, 83), not unlike the worker training programmes at Ciment S.A. On the whole, both Dunn and I found a variety of responses to reform in the context of a single factory, which I believe can be analysed through the lens of Thompson and Polanyi's work. From the outset, shop-floor workers most strongly resisted their commodification and reform procedures. They resisted through either asserting a quiet 'moral vision of solidarity,' in Dunn's case – akin to something like Thompson's moral economy – or loudly summoning what appear to be protectionist impulses to re-embed sociality and labour control in an increasingly impersonal workplace, as theorised by Polanyi (1944, 150) – all of which echo reactions inside the Rezina plant. Meanwhile, there were also those workers who complained, but more or less adapted. They did so in a way that called upon practices from their socialist past in order to get by in the capitalist present (2004, 82-83). Dunn sees this as 'workers deploy[ing] alternative concepts of value [...] [like work as sociality] and [...] seek[ing] to develop other subjectivities and to become subordinate in a way they can live with' (Dunn 2004, 8). At Ciment S.A., this entailed groups of workers dualistically negotiating between traditional and corporate-sponsored work and language patterns.

On the opposite spectrum were white-collar employees, who more or less adapted to Western corporate expectations of privatised responsibility, transforming into

what Dunn alludes to as ‘new capitalist persons.’ The lures of novel consumption possibilities and cosmopolitan travel – not to mention transnational romantic possibilities at the Rezina plant – played a part in white-collar trends towards adaptation to new work ideas and personhood at the Alima factory (2004, 70-75), as well as at Ciment S.A. By giving considerable attention to this segment of the workforce,⁵³ my thesis will examine not only manual workers struggling to get by amidst on-going lay-offs, but also the post-socialist emergence of a new indigenous white-collar ‘middle-class’⁵⁴ benefiting from transnational market reform, even if hard pressed by it.⁵⁵

What is significant about this segment of the Ciment S.A. workforce is that the majority of indigenous managers, supervisors and white-collar workers were blue-collar just two decades ago under socialism. The post-1989 departure of significant numbers of Russian and Ukrainian managers and engineers – at the time of Moldova’s independence and war with its Transnistrian region – opened the door for local Moldovans to advance in position and to assume the running of the plant. Dunn’s factory employees did not experience this sort of mobility from the shop floor to administration (see 2004, 70-75).⁵⁶ Therefore, the Rezina workers make an interesting case in the study of post-socialist labour transformation, and hence the thesis accords white-collar labour more attention than does Dunn and traditional studies of industrial life (e.g. Nash 1993 [1979], Ong 1987; Parry 1999; Rofel 1999).

⁵³ This thesis devotes a couple of chapters to white-collar workers, which is more than Dunn’s dozen or so pages on managers and salespersons.

⁵⁴ Outside of the domain of industrial anthropology, see Patito 2005 on school teachers as a middle-class in post-socialist Russia.

⁵⁵ This takes my work beyond Kideckel’s *Getting By*, which recounts stories of decline among Romania’s formerly privileged industrial proletariat, who appear today poles apart from globalising elites and aspiring middle-classes. In Romania, worker subjectivities, once constructed around productive labour in the socialist era now face either unemployment or job insecurity (2007, 8-10, 13).

⁵⁶ Moreover, Moldova’s level of structural adjustment by 2004 is still unlike 1990s Poland. See World Bank Moldova – Country Brief 2006.

In conclusion, the social-theoretical assumptions of resistance (or adaptation) to market reform play out differently among differently positioned workers from varying parts of Dunn's baby-food plant, as well as in the Rezina Cement Plant studied in this thesis. No modern-day capitalist change in industry can be assumed to have a totalising, one-way impact on its workforce. Socio-cultural factors such as language, I argue, play an important mediating role in the diversity of workers' reactions to capitalism, particularly when workers labour in multi-cultural settings.

Language in socially embedded industrial workscapes

This is because people take part in the market and industrial-economic activity as social persons (Dilley 1992; Granovetter 1985; Gudeman 2001; Humphrey and Mandel 2002, 12). Language is a part of how Rezina cement workers relate to each other and to capitalist modernisation. The biggest difference between my study and Elizabeth Dunn's (2004) that I will explore lies in the Rezina plant's linguistic diversity, which makes language a part of labour's commodification, adaptation and resistance – a phenomenon not found in Dunn's apparently mono-ethnic Polish plant, nor in other ethnographies of post-socialist industrial change, from Kideckel's Romanian miners and chemical workers (2007) to Müller's German labourers (2007), let alone in the social theory literature of Polanyi and Thompson.⁵⁷

Understanding how workers accommodate and resist capitalist processes through language requires looking at the level of the labour process in the factory under study. The *labour process*, or work organisation, is 'the coordinated set of activities and relations involved in the transformation of raw materials into useful products' (Burawoy

⁵⁷ There are a number of studies concerned with the impact of socio-cultural factors, like ethnic identity and national affiliation, on capitalist economic activity (Drazin 2002; Rausing 2002), but none of these works address industrial factory environments, on which this thesis focuses.

1985, 221 and 1979, 15).⁵⁸ The anthropological approach to the study of labour and industry believes in the cultural specificity and the social embeddedness of labour processes (Gudeman 2001, 1-2; Garsten et al. 2004, 3; see also Polanyi 1944, 71, 162-163). It draws upon Polanyi's understanding of 'the embedded economy' in which material life is connected to or embedded with social relations, including with the dispositions and habits that inform these social relations.⁵⁹ Situated within this tradition, my research starts with the assumption that people's social orientations, namely language dispositions, and ideas of economic morality are embedded within the organisation of work. People's dispositions play a role in their resistance and adaptation to capitalist industrial production.

Other ethnographers share similar ideas about the labour process. Engelshoven (1999), Klass (1981), Linhart (1985), Nash (1979), Parry (1999) and Rofel (1999) and Yelvington (1995) all suggest, albeit in differing ways, that externally derived consciousness matters in how workers manage, accommodate or defy capitalism in the workplace. June Nash shows how in Bolivia indigenous, precapitalist religious beliefs and customs, like Tio worship, encourage worker cohesion in the mines in a way that makes capitalist protest possible. Lisa Rofel illustrates how age – together with memories of prior spatial work arrangements – impacts the labour process in a silk factory in post-socialist China. Mao Mallona shows how workers' generational backgrounds influence labour organisation and capitalist engagement in Sheffield (2003,

⁵⁸ Burawoy further clarifies in his 1979 monograph: 'This is the labor process. It has two analytically distinct but concretely inseparable components – a relational and a practical aspect. I refer to the relational aspect of the labor process as the relations (in) production or production relations. They are, for example, the relations of the shop floor into which workers enter both with one another and with management' (1979, 15).

⁵⁹ Therefore, even if Polanyi at some points in his work asserts that socially disembodied markets dominate in laissez-faire liberalism, he also argues that new social institutions and relations naturally form to counter and socially re-embed impersonal market forces, thereby evidencing his belief that modern-day material life is indeed socially embedded [see Hart and Hann 2009, 9]). This dialectic is what Polanyi calls the double movement, which resonates with aspects of Stephen Gudeman's 'universal dialectic of mutuality and market' (2008, 121), discussed in the thesis conclusion.

196) Engelshoven, Klass and Parry point to the significance of caste and ethnicity for work organisation in India, especially in private, informal-sector industry in Parry's work (1999). Altogether this body of research indicates that subjective orientations are deeply embedded in and significant to the organisation of capitalist production and people's experience of it.

However, there are Marxian scholars like Michael Burawoy (1979, 1985), who nuance the way and extent to which people's external orientations like race, ethnicity, religion, age and gender have bearing on the labour process. In his influential ethnography *Manufacturing Consent*, sociologist Michael Burawoy insists that machine operators at Allied factory in the United States adapt and consent to an exploitative capitalist system through the lures of 'making out' – a spirited game operators play on their machines to meet production targets and earnings (1979, 63-64). 'Imported consciousness' or 'external factors,' to use Burawoy's words, like age and racial affiliation, moulded outside of the factory, have little, if any impact on shop-floor culture (on production activities and relationships with co-workers and supervisors) and responses to capitalism (1979, 15, 152, 155-156, 212):

In this chapter I have tried to show, first, that variations in imported consciousness do not give rise to different relations in production [in how workers relate to each other and their superiors]; second, that imported consciousness mediates the translation of relations in production into activities, but only within narrow limits; and third, that the mediating effect of such consciousness varies in accordance with position in the labor process, that is, its effect is shaped by the labor process itself. [...] I concluded that the labor process at Allied is relatively autonomous. [...] The behavior of workers is in accordance with the labor process and largely independent of any precapitalist consciousness they carry with them' (1979, 156).

Burawoy makes this argument based on findings that external factors *can* have an impact on a worker on the shop floor (along the lines of Nash 1979 and the aforementioned scholars), but *only* according to a worker's position in the labour

process (based on seniority and skill status) (1979, 147). Therefore, the nature of capitalist work organisation (economics) – not external factors or ‘precapitalist consciousness’ alone (1979, 156) (social ideas) – affect how employees relate to each other, their bosses and the firm (ibid, 15).

This finding applies to the Rezina Cement Plant, which will add another voice to works in post-socialist industrial anthropology. At Ciment S.A., a worker’s factory location generally coincides with his ideas about language and economic morality. Therefore, Burawoy appears to be right that factory work organisation is connected to and shapes possibilities for socio-cultural responses of consent and resistance to capitalism. However, this is not to say that outside dispositions, particularly language beliefs, do not circulate around the factory.

Russian speaking is still valued outside of Ciment S.A. in town (see Part Two’s introduction on Rezina) and in industrial settings around the country. This Russian-speaking preference in Moldovan society is, nevertheless, in opposition to the language policies of the factory’s new corporate owner. Egrafal Ltd. seeks to legitimise and add symbolic value to Romanian speaking, whilst discouraging Russian. This is what makes Ciment S.A. an ‘alternative linguistic marketplace’ – a concept introduced briefly by Laada Bilaniuk – ‘where values of linguistic forms are different than elsewhere in society,’ but nevertheless carry material benefit (2005, 100).⁶⁰ The nature of work organisation in the plant affects the way in which workers respond to and cope with this alternative linguistic market, I argue (in keeping with Burawoy 1979, 156). So even when outside dispositions (Russian speaking) permeate working life, their expression is

⁶⁰ This makes Ciment S.A. like the rapidly changing linguistic environment in post-socialist Ukraine described in Laada Bilaniuk’s ethnography *Contested Tongues* (2005). Citizens of Ukraine accept or reject top-down language policies based on their repertoire of language skills, ideologies and experiences of the past and present (2005, 7 and 3, 15, 26, 32).⁶⁰ The major difference between Ukraine and the Rezina Cement Plant is that a foreign corporation, not a state as in Bilaniuk’s case, is introducing the language policies and is legitimising a new language.

limited by the organisation of work – like the extent to which foreign Romanian managers are in a position to check-up on russophone Moldovan operators, effectively switching their language back to Romanian. This is what happens in Ciment S.A.’s Control Room, where operators switch between every-day Russian speaking and mandatory Romanian. The language switching, notably, depends on whether workers are in the presence of Romanian superiors or not. Exposure to Romanian managers is in turn contingent on a worker’s location in the plant, as some factory spaces never interact with Egrafal management (like the Repair Hall in Chapter Six). So I wish to argue that the nature of factory spatial work organisation affects the functioning of different, linguistic-based work modes and employee manifestations of consent and resistance.⁶¹

Negotiating capitalist change through linguistic styles

As a result of the multiple linguistic values circulating around the Rezina plant, the thesis argues that workers adapt or resist new corporate language and work expectations through what I call *linguistic styles* or modalities. The concept has roots in James Ferguson’s *Expectations of Modernity* (1999), which shows how copper miners cope with the de-industrialising Zambian Copperbelt through embodying two distinct performative styles.⁶² Ferguson calls the duality of performative practices he observes, *cultural styles*, as described here:

Among the copper miners with whom I worked in Kitwe, it was impossible not to distinguish two contrasting cultural modes, which I will call ‘localist’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ [...] Cosmopolitan style [...] marked the distance a worker maintained from ‘home’; it signalled a shrugging off of localist cultural traits, and often rejection of rural ties, along with an embracing of Western-

⁶¹ Even though the factory is unlike other predominantly Russian-speaking industrial settings in Moldova, paying attention to the Rezina Cement Plant is meaningful, because it is part of a trend towards increased Romanian and West European investment in Moldova, which tend to favour languages other than Russian.

⁶² Ferguson’s emphasis on observable practices as his starting point (1999, 97) – as opposed to internal identifications and orientations (like cultural-historian Payne 2001) – is useful in my study’s emphasis on visible language practices in the making of workers’ labour and capitalist subjectivities in a Moldovan factory.

dominated transnational mass culture. [...] On the other hand were the localists [...] Localist stylistic markers seemed to distinguish those who had a strong sense of continuing allegiance to a rural 'home' community – those who visited often, adhered to 'custom,' and displayed a strong ethnic or regional identity [...] Localism was (no less than cosmopolitanism) a specifically *urban* style (Ferguson 1999, 91-92).

Ferguson considers these 'cosmopolitan' and 'localist' styles as complex 'trajectories and strategies that draw on rural and urban resources and options' (1999, 79) to manage urban economic downturn and rural returns (see also 1999, 82-83). They represent the social, communal and moral dimensions of the economy. Their point is that there is no one way of perceiving and coping with economic change. Moreover, it is not that cosmopolitans and localists represent the co-existence of two different evolutionary stages within a single social setting – the former emblematic of permanent, modern urbanisation and the latter a hold-over from a disappearing, old-fashioned tribal system that is unable to adapt to modern economic changes. Instead, economic change induces two simultaneous modes of being in the present – like being Soviet and indigenous Nivkhi (see Grant 1995) or Soviet and Moldovan (see Chapter Two) in the Eurasian context. One is refashioned as 'traditional' (the Nivkhi or Moldovan-speaking mode), but *both* social modes of practice are about getting by in a precarious present and economically insecure future (1999, 102, 251). Thus, Ferguson effectively shows that there is an economic base to cultural styles, even as the styles are also embodiments of people's ideas about economic morality and desires for progress, as expressed in *modernist narratives*, or *modernist yearnings* in this thesis.⁶³

⁶³ Mitchell's *Kalela Dance* (1956) is an important precursor in some of these respects. In his ethnography Mitchell describes Africans' preoccupation with the idea of 'a European way of life' – an idea that patterns their behaviour and social interaction (1956, 14-15). Parry shows a similar concern for ideas and discourses in 'Lords of Labour' (1999). Here he writes how the Bhilai Steel Plant was built on the Nehruvian vision of a modern, secular Indian nation.

In calling attention to Copperbelt workers' expectations of modernity,⁶⁴ Ferguson reminds us to look beyond just economic structure to discover the equally powerful role of ideas and representations in workers' stylistic practices. It is hence important to consider how representations of industrial modernity and consumer-market desires become localised in peoples' self-identifications and habits (Rofel 1999) – like in the linguistic identifications and stylistic practices of workers at Ciment S.A. – and how they can be a way of coping with or opposing capitalist change, as this thesis will emphasise. For Ferguson's Copperbelt workers, yearnings for progress have a performative quality to them, which play out in workers' ostentatious consumption habits – such as consuming Western bottled beer and fashion (1999, 91-92) – a trend which we will see replayed in this thesis among a segment of white-collar workers. These Rezina cement workers' cosmopolitan mode – which the Romanian language is representative of – connects with workers' market-based consumer desires.⁶⁵ These consumer choices and modes of expression, according to David Harvey, are at the heart of neoliberalism itself (2005, 42). Thus, not unlike Ferguson's Copperbelt miners, Ciment S.A. white-collar employees' newly acquired consumption habits and linguistic styles are a part of their absorption of a neoliberal capitalist order.

However, just because these Ciment S.A. white-collar workers adopt habits in line with capitalist expectations does not mean that they do not ascribe to other moral modernities⁶⁶ and linguistic styles, and even switch between them. Documenting this

⁶⁴ For clarification, the term modernisation is not to be confused with the word *modernity*, as defined by Comaroff and Comaroff (1993, xiii).

⁶⁵ Following Stephen Gudeman, I consider the market realm to be 'a competitive arena directed by the value of efficiency' (2008, 22) and characterised by anonymous, short-term exchanges (2001, 1).

⁶⁶ The term *modernities* gives credence to the multiple, sometimes disaggregated (Strathern 1991) metaphors held by and between people at any one time, owing to people's diverging encounters with modernisation. From the perspective of 'modernisers,' it is assumed that there can only be one modernity at a time; the rest is 'divergent,' 'traditional' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993, 1) and in need of erasure, as each power seeks to supersede the modernisation measures of the former.

diversity helps us to understand the uneven shape and texture of people's altering capitalist subjectivities and market responses.

Switching linguistic styles and linguistic protest as capitalist coping

Ferguson is not confident in people's abilities to situationally shift between localist and cosmopolitan expressions in urban life. Instead, Ferguson believes:

Situational shifting of style is possible only to a limited degree. Like linguistic dialect or accent, cultural style tends to stick with a person [...] having style is a matter of successful performance [...] and bringing the performance off requires not simply a situational motive but a whole battery of internalized, nontrivial capabilities acquired over time (1999, 96).

Ferguson writes this in critique of the older Copperbelt works of the Rhodes-Livingston Institute (RLI) ethnographers, Epstein (1958), Mitchell (1956) and Watson (1958), who suggest that different styles can be taken on and dropped off easily depending on the situation (1996, 95). While Ferguson's findings may be true for present-day Zambia, my informants' multilingualism and manifold identifications mirror more the situational shifting of the RLI scholars. For as the historical review in this chapter showed (see also Chapter Two),⁶⁷ and the thesis's ethnography will reiterate, newly industrialised Moldovans' – notably those with stable, full-time work – accommodated industrial change by shifting their mother tongue to domestic and rural spheres and intimate relations, as they acquired a Russian performative competence (Livezeanu 1981) for work and public life. These Moldovans could situationally shift (or code-switch) linguistic styles, just like the Copperbelt workers depicted by the RLI scholars (e.g. Watson 1958, 6-7).⁶⁸ The difference between the Copperbelt works and the Moldovan

⁶⁷ Industrial change in the Soviet Union did not heighten or lessen Moldovans' identification with their language and background. Moldovans did not choose either an 'internationalist' Soviet or 'localist' Moldovan identification.

⁶⁸ Watson shows Copperbelt workers acquiring and practicing in urban spheres skills which were distinct from the behaviour practiced in tribal or rural areas, another sphere (Watson 1958, 6-7). The difference in contemporary Moldova is that linguistic code-switching is not just situational, but also relational, crossing and complicating spatial boundaries in some cases.

context is that Moldovans' motivation for code-switching is not necessarily manipulation (Ferguson 1999, 95), but for reasons of economic security and social intimacy to manage alienating economic change.⁶⁹

Today at the Rezina Cement Plant these code-switchers from the Soviet era are the best paid and act most like Ferguson's cosmopolitans (1999, 91-92), as they quickly take on the new linguistic idiom expected by their transnational-corporate managers and accommodate capitalist work expectations (contra the expectations of Ferguson). However, they also exhibit so-called localist Moldovan linguistic traits, long embedded in their lives and used in certain instances discussed in the thesis. Their subject-making, as in the past, involves, then, the spatial and relational re-shifting, not abandonment of languages. Their code-switching is arguably an important contemporary coping mechanism in the unpredictable capitalist present, as discussed in the coming chapters.

Differently than for well-off workers at the Rezina Cement Plant, linguistic code-switching is unavailable for the most precarious of workers (akin to Ferguson 1999), who only ever learned basic Russian under socialism and today resist the corporate-sanctioned Romanian idiom. In the absence of language capital, they hold onto localist Moldovan-dialect speaking (like Ferguson's localist expressions [1999, 92]), rooted in their rural, regional homeland, and use this (moral) linguistic localism in a seemingly economic-protectionist manner (Polanyi 1944, 150) against the precariousness of market reform. So language skill and job security – according to the dictates of Ciment S.A. factory organisation – play a role in Moldovans' receptivity or hostility towards new modernisation plans, I argue. Ferguson, in this respect, omits any real discussion of workers' skills and positions in production and society, as it relates to

⁶⁹ The need for economic security played out in the Soviet era with each linguistic style being important to the Moldovan worker's urban sustenance: Russian for a Soviet salary (*zarplata*) and Moldovan for non-monetary support from village kin.

workers' performance and adaptation to cultural styles, finding that cosmopolitans and localists frequently share the same social standing; neither is better off than the other in the urban context (1999, 92, 96-98).

Ferguson also treats very summarily generational differences in his work (for example, see 1999, 115-116),⁷⁰ whereas such differences are important among the Rezina plant's high-ranking Moldovan workers who regularly switch between languages. The thesis ethnography will show how young engineers and middle-aged supervisors value and spatially shift languages differently, as they also identify differently with the Fortune-500 corporation, depending on whether they came of age before or after the Soviet Union's collapse. Examining language with generation helps construct a picture of the social embeddedness of the urban industrial landscape in north-eastern Moldova, as it helps us to understand workers' every-day consent and contestation of a new capitalist system.

Space and status in linguistic-style capitalist coping

The RLI Copperbelt studies previously mentioned drew attention to space, and the need to observe how a social actor's behaviour changes across rural or urban spaces. My own work will privilege not the traditional urban-rural spatial nexus, but Moldovans' multi-lingual switching in varying factory and urban leisure spaces (see Chapters Three, Four and Seven).⁷¹ This is in order to understand the role of linguistic styles and code-switching – and what they are emblematic of in terms of economic morality and modernity – in workers' everyday negotiation of restructuring. Looking at multiple spaces is important because, unlike Michael Burawoy's work, cultural

⁷⁰ Ferguson's allusions to 'a person raised in town' and 'paying attention to [...] elders' (in 1999, 115-116) suggests second generation urbanised workers, who distance themselves from localist behaviour and traditions with each successive generation.

⁷¹ Some attention will also be given to interactional situations criss-crossing these spaces, as mentioned in passing in Chapter Four.

preferences at Ciment S.A. do not necessarily match those of comparable factories and of wider society (1979, 40-41), as previously mentioned (recall Bilaniuk 2005, 100). So for this reason my study gives attention to non-factory intimate spaces, in which different attitudes towards language function,⁷² as well as to comparable cement and steel plants that model alternative Russian-language values across the river in secessionist Transnistria (see Chapter Two). Moreover, my work will bear in mind those actors with insufficient linguistic skill (or *linguistic capital*, using Bourdieu's term [1991]) to mobilise new linguistic styles (Chapters Five and Six) and point out the spaces they occupy. Doing so will draw attention to the importance of the relationship between language, space and status.

When it comes to status, all factories have status systems or 'prestige rankings' of jobs (Burawoy 1979, 147). From an *emic* perspective, *factory status* (or prestige position) at Ciment S.A. does not derive exclusively from a worker's seniority or job rank (see Burawoy 1979, 147), let alone from material earnings. Most employees have worked at the plant for the same number of years, so seniority is not a factor.⁷³ Instead, the space in which an employee works (in the Administration Building or in the production territory) is a first key indicator of status. This is because, as Catherine Alexander writes (2002, 134), social space in urban-industrial settings is often a reflection of the social hierarchies of production.⁷⁴ Moreover, within factory spaces at Ciment S.A., the consumer goods a worker channels money towards, and the languages a worker has mastery over – all of which are linked to ideas of modernity and morality,

⁷² This means that attention is only given to those instances when non-factory spaces mould language attitudes counter to those promoted in the plant by Egrafal Ltd.

⁷³ Worker seniority and experience/skill are key elements of 'status' or 'position' in the labour process for Burawoy (see 1979, 147).

⁷⁴ Catherine Alexander makes this point drawing upon the work of Lefebure (1991, 8-9).

but do not automatically correspond to job-skill and income level⁷⁵ – are also important in defining status and position at the Rezina plant. In other words, as David Kideckel points out in post-socialist Romania, workers’ awareness of their social position derives not only from monetary distinctions, but also from consumption habits and other forms of non-economic capital (2007, 9-11). Things like language ability and spatial work location, even if not mentioned by Kideckel, are resources which are increasingly important markers of status and personhood in post-socialist countries.⁷⁶ All of this is significant for the way in which workers’ varying strategies of adapting, modifying and protesting reform through linguistic styles coincide with their spatial status position in the Rezina Cement Plant.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, this point still begs the question of whether the varying linguistic styles practiced by workers in different spaces can at times organise collectivism vis-à-vis capitalist change – the question posed at the start of the thesis.

Job insecurity, mutuality and protest

Even in cases when economics is a real issue behind workers’ anger at market reform, workers acute sense of job insecurity makes for little enduring collectivism against neoliberal change, I argue. Not even shared customs, like regional dialect, are a source of connectedness around which workers resist capitalist conditions, as anthropologists have suggested (see Nash 1979 on Bolivian customs), and Burawoy concedes can happen during ‘moments of crisis’ of societal upheaval (see 1979, 157). Instead, workers’ strategies for coping and protesting capitalist change are largely

⁷⁵ See Chapter Four, where cases of disjuncture between high social prestige and low income are most clearly depicted.

⁷⁶ The production-consumption nexus is important as people’s incorporation into different productive spheres controls access to the capital needed to purchase commodities (Leach 2005).

⁷⁷ From this line, it appears that Burawoy is correct to argue in *Manufacturing Consent* that external ‘consciousness [like linguistic consciousness and practice] varies in accordance with position in the labour process’ (1979, 156). What is at stake in this supposition is whether economics overlap with, and hence are responsible for constraining or permitting, linguistic-based expressions of consent and contestation in the workforce.

fleeting and limited to a few outbursts in labour union meetings and to personal acts of non-compliance towards corporate regulations. These short-lived, individualistic acts are generally true for all other employees and their reactions to the Rezina Cement Plant's neoliberal market transformation.⁷⁸

This leads me to conclude that Rezina workers do not react to their commodification with a collectivist countermovement, as foreseen by Polanyi (1944), nor with an enduring consciousness of moral economy, even under dire *laissez-faire* circumstances (like pending lay-offs at Ciment S.A.), as might be expected by Thompson (1991). Rather, workers rely on linguistic styles – taking on new, allegedly modern languages and subjectivities and/or persisting in traditional-looking ones – in a patterned manner to navigate and manage their capitalist commodification. The reason no real collectivist backlash around economic grievance or language norms⁷⁹ emerges among segments of the Ciment S.A. workforce, especially among minorities and rank-and-file workers hit hardest by factory changes, is ultimately because of high job insecurity. Job uncertainty is understood as an employee not knowing the probability of how long he will have his current job.⁸⁰ Workers know that the only real alternative to their uncertain work conditions at Ciment S.A. is a migrant job on a Moscow construction site. Added to this job insecurity are competitive modernist longings among employees, particularly middle-aged white-collar workers, trying to secure their place in a still transforming market economy. Their desire to satisfy consumer longings, combined with their general anxiety over job security, consequently leaves most of them feeling alienated and in need of mutuality, more often than not found in familial ties

⁷⁸ What social collectivism exists at Ciment S.A. is among those sets of workers who meet up regularly outside of the plant, like young Moldovan 'Egrafalists' and Russian minority women (see Chapter Seven).

⁷⁹ Chapter Five shows a moral economy of liberal-economic protest forming around Russian language norms, but the chapter ultimately points to the fleeting instability of even a moral economy.

⁸⁰ See Gudeman (2008, 23) on uncertainty and economics.

outside of the factory.⁸¹ This leads to my main argument that Rezina cement workers' lives are suspended between markets and mutuality (Gudeman 2008, 121), mediated by differing languages, which leaves little scope for freedom and protest.

1.5 Fieldwork Site and Factory

Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted between November 2004 and July 2006 in and around the town of Rezina (population 10,196) and its cement plant along the northern industrialised secessionist boundary-zone (see Figure 4). Rezina's location 98 kilometres from the Moldovan capital Chişinău, along the Orhei-Rybnitsa highway, makes it both accessible but provincial. Rezina's industrial heritage and ethnic diversity make it comparable to other urban areas in Moldova. This is even if the Rezina Cement Plant is unique in being the last and largest cement plant built by the Soviets in 1985. This is added to the fact that it is Moldova's leading foreign-financed plant, and an important prototypical example of the impact of European foreign direct investment (FDI) on a post-socialist, still economically restructuring society, which will in all likelihood experience increased Western investment in the future.⁸² The timing of the study was propitious for the research questions raised, because from 2005 to 2008 the plant's French corporate owners launched a multi-million-Euro modernisation campaign to upgrade the plant to Western standards. The plant's location across the river from major separatist cement and steel plants in the city of Rybnitsa⁸³ – still organised according to socialist-era ideas, as discussed in the next chapter – made Ciment S.A.'s neoliberal restructuring all the more distinctive and challenging among its largely

⁸¹ This is not unlike the feelings of fear, meaninglessness and alienation (or 'frustrated agency') that Romanian workers feel in Romania's neoliberal environment depicted in Kideckel's ethnography (2007, x, 8, 210).

⁸² <http://www.wiltonpark.com/documents/conferences/WP949/pdfs/WP949.pdf?633983444395406250>, again, discusses prospects for increased foreign investment in Moldova.

⁸³ The Russian transliteration of the city is used throughout the thesis, instead of the Romanian-language version, because most of my informants in Rybnitsa and Rezina used the Russian form.

Soviet-trained workforce. In order to understand better the transformations taking place in the Rezina plant, I spent considerable time in neighbouring Rybnitsa and toured its heavy industrial factories.

1.6 Methodological and Ethical Considerations

The research for this thesis was carried out mostly by means of participant observation in urban factories and surrounding communities. In addition, it draws upon structured interviews with multinational-corporate directors and elite local politicians. On factory shop floors and in urban domestic spaces, much of my data comes from observing how people work, interact and indeed perform vis-à-vis each other, as well as from listening to people's every-day conversations. I pay special attention to the multiple languages workers use, what they say with these languages, and where they speak them. I believe participant observation is the most effective tool for capturing the social reality of a dynamic, transitioning factory, whilst also allowing me to depict the sometimes contradictory relationship between professed attitudes and actual behaviour, not privileging what people say over what they do. Paying attention to word and deed helps the ethnographer gauge people's social orientations and values.

I am aware that I conducted participant observation at a particular period of high transition at the Rezina Cement Plant. Since then, having returned to my fieldwork site on short-term research trips in summer 2007 and spring 2009, I know that some socio-economic conditions have changed, and with them the intensity of some of the social practices and orientations described in this thesis. However, changes only substantiate that an economic process of modernisation and market reform was indeed taking place during my fieldwork.

Making the Rezina Cement Plant my main unit of analysis has helped me to map out social processes and relationships, which are especially complex in urban

environments. Attention to an organisation as a case study can also help delineate social unity and cleavages in wider society (Clammer 1984, 83). For the factory can be conceived as a type of small society – studied as a system of relationships between diverse peoples (Schwartzman 1993, 9, 19).

Different from other fieldwork settings like villages, the factory usually requires the ethnographer to take on a special, management-approved role in order to blend into a task-oriented environment (Schwartzman 1993, 52). My positioning in the field thus needs to be taken into account. For Fernandes aptly warns: ‘To enter the factory is to enter a domain governed by a strongly codified system of power articulated through [...] position’ (1997, 61). At the Rezina Cement Plant, I considered myself not simply an outside observer-researcher peering in on the social life of the plant, but very much an active participant in the practices and processes described in the thesis. I became a part of the factory community over the course of more than a year as a volunteer Business English instructor and acknowledged researcher (*cercetător*), having gained research permission from Egrafal Ltd.’s regional Romanian headquarters.

Authorization to do research at the Rezina Cement Plant came six months into my fieldwork, after frustratingly being given only intermittent access to Rybnitsa factories in Transnistria. Needing a long-term factory site for my study and wary of Transnistria’s instability, I approached family contacts in the cement industry in my hometown in northern Michigan⁸⁴ – a limestone-rich state hosting some of the largest cement plants in North America, including the world’s largest cement mill owned by Egrafal. My hometown cement contacts were competitors (the Mexican Cemex Corporation) of Egrafal, but in a collegial enough relationship to promote my project

⁸⁴ My father was a city councillor and zoning commissioner for over a decade in city government, along with working as a businessman linked to the construction industry, all of which gave him contact with the town’s cement industry.

with Egrafal authorities in Michigan, Paris and eventually Bucharest, Romania and Moldova. This top-down process of gaining access to the Rezina Cement Plant took several weeks, and I was able to begin daily factory visits in May 2005, which lasted over a year. The disadvantage of gaining relatively quick, top-down access was that it took several more months to gain the trust of local employees within the factory. I also had to balance and prioritize my informants' confidentiality with management's expectations my research should help them understand workers' ways of coping with factory restructuring. In order to protect my informants' individual confidentiality, personal pseudonyms are used throughout the thesis

I had limited access to separatist heavy industry across the river in Rybnitsa, although just enough to provide a backdrop to the thesis's main focus on the Rezina Cement Plant. I visited the Moldovan Steelworks once and the Rybnitsa Cement Plant three times. Even these rare visits raised suspicion that I was more a 'spy' than an inquisitive doctoral student. On one occasion I was interrogated repeatedly by a pump plant boss, and the following week approached by separatist police, and within one month questioned by local security forces from the Ministry for State Security (*Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Besopasnosti* or MGB) and asked to stop attempts at research in the region. Nevertheless, I gathered enough material for the purposes of this study.

When it comes to language, Rezina's Moldovans are multi-lingual Romanian, Russian and Moldovan-dialect speakers. As such, during interviews and periods of participant observation, I used the language my informants wished to use with me. For ethnic Moldovans this was frequently Moldovan mixed with Russian words, whilst at other times purely Russian. Nevertheless, my informants often politely accommodated themselves to the language easiest for me to speak, which for most of my fieldwork was

Romanian. I learned Romanian initially during a 2001 to 2002 Master's Degree programme; colloquial Russian was learned after the first nine months in the field. In the ethnography, I try to capture the diversity of languages being spoken.

1.7 Overview of Chapters

The thesis is divided into three parts. *Part One*, consisting of two chapters, deals with the relationship between economic modernisation and language throughout Moldova's history (Chapter One) and in the context of my field site in the past and present (Chapter Two). Chapter Two highlights the town of Rezina and its twin-river city of Rybnitsa. Both cities are examined in order to show the way in which different linguistic and economic trajectories developed over time and eventually pulled the towns apart. Differences pose a challenge for the Rezina Cement Plant's new neoliberal direction; they also point to the way in which Egrafal has made Ciment S.A. an alternative linguistic market on the Rezina-Rybnitsa borderland.

Part Two, making up the bulk of the thesis, examines the relationship between capitalist industrial restructuring and language in the milieu of the Rezina Cement Plant. Part Two does this by first giving an account of the Rezina Cement Plant's new transnational owner, the French company Egrafal Group Ltd. and its modernisation campaign for the plant. Attention is given to how privatisation has involved the commodification of employee's labour, and how this commodification involves language change in the multi-lingual plant.

Egrafal's modernisation goals, however, are not the focus of the thesis, but rather the way in which employees of different social backgrounds, working in different spaces of the plant, react to Egrafal's new work and language expectations. Consequently, the four chapters which make up Part Two are concerned with what happens to workers when economic processes and cultural dynamics change in a plant.

The thesis finds that a worker's response to reform through language coincides with his spatial status location in the factory, as previously mentioned. Therefore, Part Two is organised according to manual-labour and non-manual-labour working spaces, which at Ciment S.A. is *la teritoriu* ('the territory' of production and maintenance) and the Administration Building. Ciment S.A. may be divided into seven departments (Safety Office, Human Resources, Purchasing, Finance, Public Affairs, Plant Production and Maintenance, and Sales and Marketing), but from an emic perspective, the plant is imagined as being separated between the two spaces of *teritoriul* (in Figure 22) and the Administration Building (in Figure 23). The latter possesses a higher status than the former due to Administration housing the offices of all managers, engineers and skilled technicians and operators. Of these two spaces, almost two-thirds of Ciment S.A.'s 425 employees are based in the Administration Building, and so three of the four chapters of Part Two (Chapters Three to Five) analyse working contexts here, which reveal a great diversity of responses to modernisation. Part Two's last chapter (Chapter Six) discusses restructuring responses in manual-labour spaces in contrast to Administration areas.

The first Administration Building place examined is the Control Room of Chapter Three. This chapter scrutinises a workspace dominated by Moldovan technicians whose language preferences do not match the expectations of their new transnational managers. The latter expect Moldovans' language to coincide with their ethnicity. Instead, these Moldovans' language inclinations match those in wider society and in heavy industry across the river in Transnistria. This raises the point about the way in which a corporation valorises language differently from local society. The result is that workers develop dualistic on-the-job language practices, which include socialist-looking language customs, which help workers manage corporate expectations. Behind the dualistic work modes are embedded social-moral ideas, of which language is

emblematic. However, on this complex, socially embedded shop floor, the nature of work organisation allows and constrains how these values are collectively expressed through language. The result is that no outright moral economy of protest develops, the chapter argues.

Chapter Four details the Administration Building's prominent Third Floor (*etajul trei*) made up of managers, engineers, accountants and clerical staff. It addresses theoretical debates about the role of culture and economics in status making and class and ethno-linguistic subjectivity. The theme is appropriate for the Third Floor's status-conscious workers, earning different-size salaries, but all caught up in new consumption and linguistic practices esteemed by foreign managers. However, like other workers, status is precarious for *etajul trei* employees undergoing modernisation, and therefore, depending on whether *etajul trei* employees came of age before or after the Soviet Union, they may or may not maintain Soviet-valued language habits. This point speaks to anthropological debates about whether linguistic code-switching is possible, and what are the motives for doing it, which in turn has implications for workers' ways of adapting to market reforms.

Chapter Five examines the Laboratory, which is comprised of mostly Russian and Ukrainian women. This minority group of Russian speakers draws attention to how labour's post-socialist commodification is experienced through language, again suggestive of the social embeddedness of the labour process. The chapter also addresses debates about whether workers' exposure to new capitalist work patterns necessarily leads to a call for protectionism (like a moral economy) or something fluid between markets and morality. It finds that in lab workers' assertion and practice of a moral economy are consumption longings that contribute to their commodification.

Chapter Six moves from the Administration Building to *la teritoriu* (the shop floors) of the Repair Hall and Kiln. The chapter looks at the segment of the workforce most resistant to industrial restructuring at the hands of transnational owners. These blue-collar workers have limited linguistic capital and are highly job-insecure. They call upon protectionism and summon a localist self-identification in response. The chapter takes up questions on how language is an idiom through which these workers resist capitalism, albeit in a temporary, fleeting manner.

The thesis concludes with *Part Three*, which is comprised mainly of Chapter Seven on workers' intimate leisure spaces beyond the factory gates. Chapter Seven focuses on cement workers' changing domestic lives, and workers' kin who migrate on account of families' material and modernist longings. It also provides an analysis of how economic and cultural divisions and alienation produced in the plant are mirrored in society. Finally, the thesis ends with Chapter Eight's Conclusion of the major findings. These findings are then related to the main question of the thesis of whether capitalist expansion and labour commodification necessarily lead to a form of collectivist, moral-economic backlash in all circumstances.

Figure 2. Map of the Republic of Moldova with major cities. Rezina is located just across the river from Rîbnița/Râbnița/Rybnitsa. Journeys between Rezina and the capital Chișinău take approximately two hours by car or slightly longer by bus. Ciment S.A. Administration employees frequently travel to the capital for weekend leisure time or to fly abroad for business trips from the country's international airport in Chișinău (see also King 2000, xxviii).



Figure 3. Detailed map of the Republic of Moldova with Rezina and Rîbnița clearly marked.



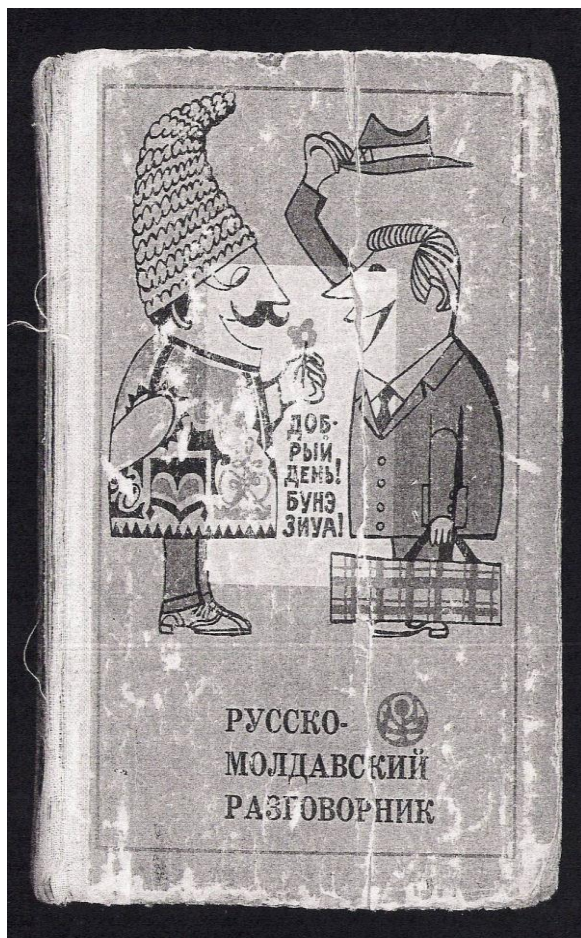
Figure 4. The Nistru (or Dniester) River acts as a natural border between Moldova on the western side or right bank (*malul drept*) and the secessionist Transnistrian region on the eastern side or left bank (*malul stâng*) of the country.



Figure 5. The skyline of the northern city of Rybnitsa is dominated by its steel (central) and cement (left) industries. Apartments along the river in the forefront were built for steelworkers. Photo was taken from Rezina.



Figure 6. An example of the stereotypical ‘modern’ Russian and ‘traditional’ Moldovan on the front cover of a Russian-Moldovan language conversation book from the Soviet era (from Kishinev/Chişinău with publication date unknown).



CHAPTER TWO

The Construction and Conflict of Factories, Languages and Modernities along Rezina's Boundary-zone

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a background for the study of neoliberal modernisation and language change in the present-day Rezina Cement Plant. The previous chapter looked at Moldova's overall history of economic development, while this chapter reviews past industrialisation projects and social dynamics specific to the area around Rezina. Here attention is given to the twin river-bank cities of Rezina (in Bessarabia or right-bank Moldova) and Rybnitsa (in Transnistria or left-bank Moldova) and their interconnected histories of industrialisation. The periods of interest are the cities' Soviet factory construction years (1975-1985) and their urban-industrial context in the years before and after the Soviet Union's collapse (1986-1992). Attention during these periods is given to the relationship between industrial modernisation and language change, and its impact on demographic processes, social inequality, nationalism and separatist conflict along the Rezina-Rybnitsa boundary-zone. The chapter ends by presenting an account of modern-day factory workings inside the separatist city of Rybnitsa. This is to evidence an economic and linguistic trajectory contrary to the Rezina plant's neoliberal, romanophone direction. The existence of these rival modernities – as differing representations of economic progress – poses a challenge to the Rezina plant's foreign owners, trying to affect a particular path of socio-economic change, as will become clearer in the body of the thesis.

2.2 A Tale of Two Cities: Soviet Industrialisation in Rezina and Rybnitsa

Rezina and Rybnitsa have a long history of co-existence, going back centuries. Both cities are nestled within the hilly Nistru River Valley. The modern-day city of Rezina (population 10,196) is located in the north-eastern part of the Republic of Moldova on the right-bank of the Nistru River, exactly across from the left-bank city of Rybnitsa (population 53,648). Only the Nistru River separates the two cities 0.2

kilometres apart. Rezina's small size and proximity to Rybnitsa makes it seem like a small suburb of Rybnitsa, but the distinct histories of the two cities make them very much their own places. The earliest documentation of Rybnitsa is traced to 1623 (see Figure 8), when it was a small market town along the river. Rezina was allegedly founded earlier in 1495 (Proca and Proca 1999). Both cities gradually, if unequally, grew in size and importance once they became a part of the Soviet Union.

Rezina's industrialisation

Rezina could hardly be called a town until 1940, when the Soviets made it the administrative centre of the district (*raion*) of the same name (*Rezina Raion*), just after the Soviet Union acquired Bessarabia from Romania during the Second World War. Rezina remained the district's centre after the war and throughout the days of the Soviet Union. The district and town of Rezina was largely agricultural until the mid-1970s, when construction began on one of the largest cement plants ever built in the Soviet Union.¹

The Rezina Cement Plant began with the Tenth Congress of the Moldovan Communist Party in 1975. The Congress elected to build within four years a cement plant with the capacity to produce 3,450 tonnes of cement a year (Bradu 1976, 3; Medvedkin 1976, 3). The Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) already had a cement mill in Rybnitsa across the Nistru River from Rezina, established in 1961. However, the older plant's production capacity was limited to 1,220 tonnes of cement a year, and so alone could not meet Soviet development ambitions in the region.² Consequently, within a decade and a half of building the Rybnitsa Cement Mill, the Soviets decided to take advantage of the region's rich limestone supplies for cement-

¹ See *Uzina mea de la Rezina: Ciment S.A. – 20 de ani* pamphlet, 2005.

² See *Rybnitskou Tsementnomy Kombinat – 45 Let* pamphlet 2006, 4-7.

making and to build another cement plant just across the river from Rybnitsa in the town of Rezina.

Rezina's cement factory was constructed in a ravine seven kilometres outside of the town (a twenty-minute ride with local transport) and right at the bottom of a line of limestone hills. It is far enough from the city centre that even its tallest smokestacks are out-of-sight of Rezina's apartment blocks assembled on higher ground. The 1970s plant construction site swarmed with newly arrived workers, bulldozers, tractors and trucks. The sight of elevated cranes and steel beams protruding from a large crater was described in Soviet newspapers as the birth of modern 'new eras' (*orînduieli noi*) and the making of 'the factory of dreams' (Bradu 1976, 3). However, the actual implementation of the MSSR Congress' grandiose building plans proved much more difficult to carry out.

Already by 1978, just three years into building the plant, there were signs of delay. Setbacks turned into nearly six years of hold-ups. This meant that the Rezina factory took twice as long to erect as the older Rybnitsa Cement Plant. Newspaper archives suggest delays were caused by a lack of proper organisation and management. At the leadership level, the building of the Rezina factory suffered from having its governing construction body³ located across the Nistru River in Rybnitsa, on account of Rybnitsa's longer experience with industrial planning and supervision. (Rybnitsa had already built a half dozen of industrial factories by the 1970s, whereas Rezina had none.) The inter-city linkage between Rezina and Rybnitsa, however, led to uncertainty over whether the Rezina or Rybnitsa District exerted jurisdiction over aspects of the Rezina building project. The ambiguity caused a chain-reaction of setbacks in reaching

³ This refers to a construction trust appointed by MSSR central authorities.

building targets. MSSR central authorities in Chişinău did little to confront Rybnitsa district officials (Liverant 1976, 2). Soviet-era archives suggest that Rybnitsa (in the Transnistrian region) had the upper hand in the Rezina plant's construction, and had a habit of acting independently of Chişinău, the MSSR's capital (Liverant 1976).

Despite these set-backs, the construction of the Rezina Cement Plant was finished in 1985 and full cement production began in 1986. From this time until the Soviet Union's break-up, the plant yielded approximately 5 million tonnes of cement a year used for building purposes, mostly in Moldova (Tudose 1993).⁴

Rybnitsa's industrialisation

Rezina's twin city of Rybnitsa has a longer and more extensive history of industrial development. Rybnitsa was under Bolshevik leadership for seventeen years between 1924 and 1941, and again in 1944 at the end of the Second World War, whereas Rezina was incorporated into the Soviet Union only temporarily in 1940-1941 (during the war) and later in 1944. During Rybnitsa's second Soviet period, it grew in size from a small trading town to a bustling city. Population growth and city expansion was on account of Soviet industrial projects, from the building of a pump plant (1946) and cement mill (1961) to an alcohol distillery, as well as textile-weaving, milk and bread factories, and a steel mill. Of these plants, the Moldovan Steelworks and the Rybnitsa Cement Mill proved to have the greatest impact on Rybnitsa's economic and demographic development (Dovgaleac 1984, 1). They are discussed in this chapter as heavy industrial plants comparable in size and importance to the Rezina Cement Plant, highlighted in this thesis.⁵

⁴ See also *Uzina mea de la Rezina: Ciment S.A. – 20 de ani* pamphlet, 2005.

⁵ Prior to the Soviet Union, Rybnitsa had just one single enterprise, a sugar factory, established in 1898.

The first to be built was the Rybnitsa Cement and Shifer Mill (*Rybnitsa Tsementnyi-Shifernyi Kombinat* or RTSK) (see Figure 13). Its construction was decreed by legislative ministers of the MSSR in 1958. Three years later, the plant, built in record time by 1961, began producing cement, and a year later a second production line was added. The manufacturing of *shifer* (an asbestos and cement mix) started around 1966.⁶ Cement and *shifer*, key construction materials, were used all over the rapidly modernising Soviet Moldovan republic.⁷ The RTSK's importance to the Soviet modernising mission meant its skilled workers and their families were privileged with their own neighbourhood of 1,000 new apartments, schools, a market and a 'Little Cement' (*Tsementnik*) cultural house.⁸

Like cement, metal was an icon for modernity and industrial progress. From the early days of the Soviet Union, metal promised to bring the country out of centuries of backwardness and into the industrial age. Steel was a part of the Soviet vision to advance economically and morally beyond the successes of the capitalist world (Kotkin 1995, 14-16, 29). With this mission in mind, construction of the Moldovan Steelworks (*Moldavskii metallurgicheskii zavod* or MMZ) began in 1981, several years after the Rezina Cement Plant, in order to meet the developing needs of Moldova and nearby Ukraine. Rybnitsa's 'Metal Construction Trust' (*Trest 'Metallurstroi'*), in charge of the steelworks construction site, hired more than 4,000 workers (Skvirenko 1983, 125). Many stayed on as employees when steel-making began in 1985, added to the numbers of specialists who arrived later. Employees settled in Rybnitsa's newly erected nine,

⁶ Asbestos-cement sheet is still frequently used today for the tiling of roofs on homes throughout the former Soviet Union.

⁷ Although 1960s production figures are unavailable for comparison, in the 1990s just after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Rybnitsa Cement Plant supposedly maintained cement production levels at 1,250 tonnes a year, exporting abroad to Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic (*Rybnitskii Tsementno-Shifernyi Kombinat – Sovremennoe Vysokorazvitoe Predpriatie* pamphlet [no publication year]).

⁸ See *Rybnitskii Tsementno-Shifernyi Kombinat – Sovremennoe Vysokorazvitoe Predpriatie* pamphlet (no publication year).

twelve and fourteen-story apartment blocks – towers of urban progress – built especially for steelworkers along the Nistru River. Known also as *Val'chenko* neighbourhood, this 'mini-district' (*microraion* in Dovgaleac 1984, 1), as it was once dubbed, was capable of housing up to 20,000 steelworkers and their families. It also possessed its own kindergarten, grade schools, shops, cultural palace, clinic and hospital, all of which were separate from the rest of Rybnitsa (Dovgaleac 1984, 1).⁹

Rybnitsa was similar to other Soviet industrial cities like Magnitogorsk (see Kotkin 1995) in that the Soviets remade Rybnitsa's town centre, relocating its old site along the lowlands of the Nistru River up to the city's highest hilltop, within vicinity of Rybnitsa's cement and steel mills (see Figure 9).¹⁰ Rezina, likewise, also went from being a riverside village to a highland town, with its cement plant on the outskirts of the city. The important point of this discussion is that Soviet industrial cities like Rezina and Rybnitsa were idealised as beacons of progress and modernity; they epitomized the Soviet goal of massive social transformation.

In *Magnetic Mountain* (1995), Kotkin finds that through the aegis of the industrial city, factories and urbanity were supposed to remake people according to a new Soviet civilisation. In rejecting capitalism, cities of steel and cement would inculcate proletarian attitudes and socialist urban values. This cultural transformation, though, required the permanent relocation of peasants to the city, in order to put an end to the old Russian habit of seasonal-work migration between factory and farm (*otkhod*) – a practice considered backward or 'not modern' by the Soviets (Kotkin 1995, 29, 35, 37, 71, 73, 83, 144, 363, 366). Instead, new modern ways of living permanently in urban

⁹ These sorts of attributes are reminiscent of another major Soviet steel city, *Magnitogorsk*, which was designed as a new Soviet city with its entire form and function derived from the steel mill, as described in Stephen Kotkin's *Magnetic Mountain* (1995).

¹⁰ The smokestacks of the Rybnitsa cement and steel plants protrude out high above the town's landscape, visibly seen from miles away. Their constant industrial-humming is heard, billowing steam columns observed, and smoke-emissions smelled day and night by Rybnitsa residents.

apartment blocks had to be acquired (see also Alexander 2002, 146 on Turkish modernisation).¹¹ However, the reality that Kotkin finds in Magnitogorsk – and my findings reveal for Soviet cities like Rybnitsa and Rezina – is that workers did not embody a clear urban form, but a hybrid rural-urban nexus (1995, 93, 136, 144, 237). According to Kotkin, Soviet Russians would “‘speak Bolshevik” one moment, “‘innocent peasant” the next’ (1995, 220). In Soviet Moldova, differently than in Kotkin’s Magnitogorsk, this hybrid rural-urban nexus had a linguistic character to it, as discussed momentarily. My work also finds that factory to farm cyclical movement (*otkhod*) did not completely disappear in new Soviet cities like Rezina, as unstable and haphazard industrial conditions kept many newly urbanised Moldovan workers dependent on their natal villages and mother tongue.

2.3 Factory Construction, Language and Demographic Change in Soviet-era Rezina and Rybnitsa

Before describing Moldovans’ rural-urban hybridity and village dependency in the next section on Rezina, attention now is given to Rezina and Rybnitsa’s changing ethnic and linguistic demographics brought on by industrialisation. This information shows how north-eastern Moldova’s urban-industrial life came to be multi-culturally embedded as it is today. Present-day diversity has roots in Soviet factory construction attracting Russian-speaking persons from all around the Soviet Union to Moldova (Dovgaleac 1984, 1). Moldovan Soviet industrial projects privileged Russian as the ‘technical-scientific language’ in a country of non-native Russian speakers. In the MSSR, industrialisation expanded cities and changed population demographics, which contributed to a type of urban-rural linguistic duality among native Moldovans living in cities. Evidence of these demographic and other changes are found in my field site

¹¹ Here Catherine Alexander touches upon the making of ideal modern living conditions by the Turkish state (2002, 146).

during the Soviet era, discussed first with regards to Rybnitsa and then right-bank Rezina.

Rybnitsa

In Rybnitsa's early Soviet days, the city's 9,400 inhabitants were predominantly Jewish (38 per cent), Ukrainian (34 per cent) and Moldovan (16 per cent), according to the town's first Soviet census in 1926. The Russian language functioned as the public and commercial *lingua franca*, even though few ethnic Russians lived there. A quick tour of Rybnitsa's two large Jewish and Christian Orthodox cemeteries corroborates basic statistics. In the latter cemetery, the majority of gravestones belong to ethnic Ukrainian surnames, including a significant number of Moldovans, from the turn of the nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century.¹² It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that Rybnitsa underwent a population shift, as the Second World War decimated Rybnitsa's Jewish population¹³ and large numbers of eastern Slavs moved in from outside the MSSR (Dovgaleac 1984, 1). Locals attribute the influx to industrialisation, as described by one of my informants:

'Uncle Iuri' – a senior-aged ethnic Moldovan – started explaining in broken Moldovan and Russian how there used to be Jewish (*evreiski* was his word), Russian and Moldovan-language schools in Rybnitsa back in the 1960s, before he left to Kazakhstan for the Soviet army. 'Back then there was no cement and steel plant.' In the 1980s Iuri returned to Rybnitsa to find new industrial development but no Moldovan or Jewish schools. He recounts, 'I met an old [Moldovan] teacher who said there's no interest in Moldovan anymore [by the 1980s]. No one wants to study it. Every year only a few children wish to learn in Moldovan, but it's not enough to make a course, let alone a school.'

¹² Data on the Tiraspol district (of which Rybnitsa was a part) from the first general census of the Russian Empire in 1897 of the 50 Governorates of European Russia appear to substantiate this information with approximately 80,000 Ukrainians, 60,000 Moldovans, 41,000 Russians and 24,000 Jews (out of 240,000 persons) in the Tiraspol district. (The First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897. Table XIII. Breakdown of population by mother tongue. Volumes 1-50. Saint-Petersburg, 1903-1905).

¹³ See Livezeanu 1981 and Solonari 2009 on the region's history of Jewish discrimination and the Holocaust of the Second World War.

My informant Iuri made an unconscious connection between industrial expansion and ethno-linguistic change – a link substantiated by census data and newspaper archives (see Dovgaleac 1984, 1). Evidence shows that Rybnitsa swelled in size from a population of 9,400 persons in 1926 to 32,400 in 1970, after the building of the Rybnitsa Cement Plant, and to 61,352 persons in 1989, after the construction of the Moldovan Steelworks. By comparison, the entire Rybnitsa *raion* had 96,300 persons by 1989.¹⁴ During this period of more than twenty-five years of industrialisation, Ukrainians became the largest ethnic group (45 per cent) by 1989, replacing the dominant Jewish contingent that disappeared with the Second World War. Ukrainians were followed by an almost equal number of Moldovans (25 per cent) and Russians (24 per cent) in 1989. Ethnic Russians were not a major category of peoples in Rybnitsa in the 1920s to 1950s. Their arrival in significant numbers from the mid-twentieth century onwards is linked primarily to industrial development, as well as to Rybnitsa's increasing russification, as suggested by 'Uncle Iuri,' and explained in more detail in relation to the Rezina context.

It is also important to consider, although Iuri seems unaware of it, that Rybnitsa's russification and large increase in Russians and Ukrainians since the 1960s may also be attributed to more frequent Slav-Moldovan inter-ethnic marriage, which has a tendency to produce Slav offspring. Data collected on inter-ethnic marriage in Rybnitsa from this period show that there are more Moldovan women than men in Rybnitsa, and the former most frequently marry Russian-speaking Ukrainian men – taking the latter's Slavic surname and language for themselves and their children (as confirmed in an analysis of birth certificates). These Moldovan women also typically declare their children's ethnicity in keeping with the ethnic Slav father, as anecdotally

¹⁴ See 'Social-economic character of the districts and cities of Moldova for 1990-1991,' vol. 1-2, National Bureau for Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, Chişinău, 1992.

confirmed by a number of informants. This therefore suggests that Transnistria's late-Soviet russification is partly owing to inter-ethnic marriage.

Rezina

Rezina was similar to Rybnitsa in that, upon joining the Soviet Union and industrialising, the town also increased, quadrupling in size from 2,367 persons in 1959 (Rezina's first Soviet census) to a population of 8,314 persons in 1979, as construction was under way on the Rezina Cement Plant. In the years of plant production up until just before the collapse of the Soviet Union (1986-1989), Rezina grew to 14,311 persons.¹⁵ This considerable growth (see Figure 7) brought new ethnic diversity and languages to a traditionally ethnic Moldovan town,¹⁶ as almost a quarter of the town became ethnic Russian and Ukrainian by the 1980s.¹⁷ Rezina's social transformation hence was different from across the river in Rybnitsa, which had a longer history of ethnic diversity and Russian speaking.

As Rezina grew and became a more demonstrably 'Russian city' (*oraşul rus*, in the words of Moldovan informants) in its social demographics, Russian speaking became embedded in Rezina's urban-industrial landscape to the point of replacing Moldovan speaking in public places (Proca and Proca 1999, 108). Local histories – like Nicolae and Olga Proca's *Rezina: schiţă istorică (Rezina: a historical outline [1999])* – suggest that Moldovans and others who moved to the Rezina Cement Plant's construction site from other parts of the MSSR learned to adopt, what Jennifer Patico

¹⁵ See the 1989 population census: 'Population at the 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989 and 2004 censuses, by sex and area, in territorial aspect,' National Bureau for Statistics of the Republic of Moldova: <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295&id=2234>. Accessed 18 March 2011.

¹⁶ It is important to note that local scholars attribute Rezina's russification to the city's Soviet urban-industrial transformation, and less to trends happening across the river in Rybnitsa (see Proca and Proca 1999, 60-61, 108).

¹⁷ This figure is based on a dozen of anecdotal accounts, since Soviet-era census data on Rezina's ethnic break-down is unavailable. The figure is likely correct as the Moldovan census of 2004 shows Rezina is 18 per cent eastern Slav (9 per cent Russian and 9 per cent Ukrainian) and 80 per cent Moldovan out of a population of 10,196 persons. See <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295&id=2234>. Accessed 18 March 2011.

calls, ‘an ideologically correct urban mode of behaviour’ (2005, 483). This behaviour in urban Moldova was typified, above all, by Russian speaking. Russian speaking was associated with being ‘modern,’ ‘civilised’ and ‘cultured’ (*kul’turnyi* in Russian) as opposed to the ‘backward’ languages of Soviet minorities (Laitin 1998) (see also Figure 5). Getting Soviet minorities to speak Russian was an important part of the Soviet civilising mission (Dunham 1976; Fitzpatrick 1999, 103). In Soviet Moldova, not unlike the days of Imperial Russia, the Russian language came to be seen as the high language of work and state, whereas Moldovan was a ‘low’ language for the privacy of home and village (Ciscel 2007). So in urban-industrial spaces, like Rezina’s plant construction site, it was ideologically correct for Moldovans to speak the ‘high’ language of Russian with Russians and with each other.¹⁸ ‘It was civilised (*civilizat*),’ one Moldovan informant explained, when asked why so many Moldovans in the Soviet era spoke Russian in public rather than their mother tongue. In reality, though, Laada Bilaniuk emphasises that the ‘civilised’ and ‘modern’ – the values attached to minorities speaking Russian – were really just masks for a Soviet system of power ‘that privilege[d] one group of people [ethnic Russians and their language] over another’ (2005, 27). This is true because ethnic Russians (including those from Soviet Russia more generally) dominated political and economic institutions throughout the Soviet republics (Brudny 1998; Kaufman 2001 and Solonari and Bruter 1994 on the MSSR). Bilaniuk goes on to point out that regulating language – getting non-Russian nationalities to associate

¹⁸ Jennifer Patico’s (2005) thoughtful study on consumption and culturedness (*kul’turnost’*) in Soviet and contemporary Russia is more concerned with people’s proper relationship to material objects and possessions than with people’s proper relationship with each other mediated through ideas of language and culturedness.

Russian speaking with ‘being civilised’ – was key to reproducing the power of the Muscovite Russian metropole of the Soviet Union (2005, 32).¹⁹

Getting nationalities on the margins of the Soviet Union to speak Russian in public over their own native tongue involved the Russian language becoming ingrained in work practices and in the attitudes of newly urbanised indigenes. In new industrial cities like Rezina, Moldovans came to experience industrial modernisation through what I call *russianness*. Throughout the thesis, *russianness* is considered a linguistic mode of behaviour connected at its base to a socialist or protectionist economic outlook (or at least an expectation of paternalist provisioning). The social protectionism of Soviet economic development acted as a leverage in indigenes’ reordering of language.²⁰ However, despite tangible Soviet assistance, social protectionism in the Soviet era did not provide a universal or all-encompassing safety net for all citizens of Soviet Moldova, just as *russianness* did not penetrate all spheres of all Moldovans’ lives.

In Soviet-era Rezina, urban-industrial development carried with it economic and social instability. The misunderstandings that existed between Rezina and Rybnitsa over the building of the Rezina Cement Plant, discussed earlier (see Liverant 1976, 2), not only slowed down its building, but also delayed important infrastructure supporting the factory’s construction, from road-building to worker housing. Amid haphazard organisational circumstances and limited social provisions, securing a stable labour force for factory building proved difficult. Newspaper archives write of unskilled workers – the majority of whom were rural-born Moldovans – who abandoned the

¹⁹ Laada Bilaniuk makes the interesting point that when Soviet institutions lost the ability to regulate language among national minorities in the 1990s, amid Soviet decentralization and national language-rights movements, Soviet power was eroded and the state eventually dissolved (2005, 32).

²⁰ In Moldova’s history, it appears that socialist protectionism and Russian speaking became associated with one another, as socialist or protectionist movements championing the rights of the masses were usually led by Russian speakers, like during the Imperial Russian and Greater Romanian periods (see King 2000, 28-32).

construction site on account of a lack of pay, housing, food, tools and other resources (Dumbrăvianu 1978, 13-15; Dumbrăvianu 1979, 5-6). This unpredictability, due to a lack of provisioning, is not unlike the very early stages of constructing the famed Magnitogorsk steel plant, which, according to Stephen Kotkin, was threatened by insufficient tools, a lack of skilled workers, disorganised management and chaotic decision making (see 1995, 45-46, 62-63, 69-70, 144).

These insecure working conditions on the Rezina site are significant for how they impacted the identification and language habits of workers. Many Moldovans left their rural homes for the first time to take up factory construction work. Erratic work and pay conditions kept these skilled and unskilled Moldovan labourers connected to and dependent on their natal villages, where their maternal tongue and cultural practices were reinforced, even if just in these rural spaces.²¹ Former blue-collar cement worker Petru recounted from plant construction days how he took frequent weekend trips home to his village to stock up on foodstuffs, otherwise expensive in Rezina. Regular village reunions during factory time off kept kin relations alive, as Petru relied on wine from his godfather and cheese from his aunt. Back on the Rezina construction site, many Moldovans like Petru were interacting with large numbers of Russians and Ukrainians and consistently speaking Russian for the first time. This made Soviet industrial-building sites like the Rezina Cement Plant places where village-born Moldovans learned a Russian-speaking proletarian identification for work situations, akin to Kotkin's 'speaking Bolshevik' (1995, 93), or Sheila Fitzpatrick's 'presentation of class self' (2005, 28) or Patico's 'ideologically correct urban mode of behaviour' (2005, 483). At the same time, these Moldovans maintained their Moldovan dialect (Livezeanu 1981)

²¹ Two common cultural practices discussed at later points in the thesis are respect for godparent-godchild relations and the commonly observed custom of spitting to ward off the 'evil eye' and related witchcraft beliefs.

for close colleagues on and off the job, as well as for relatives at home and in villages. So Russian-language learning did not come at the expense of Moldovan speaking. This type of linguistic rural-urban duality, unaccounted for in Kotkin's Magnitogorsk, is illustrated in the account of one Rezina informant, who remembers: 'we all spoke Russian at work [...] but Moldovan with each other [...] and at home and in the village.' This situational switching of languages is, according to Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2002, 29-30), an example of Moldovans *under-communicating* their natal language and identification and *over-communicating* russification in industrial-work settings around Slavs, while doing the reverse in rural and intimate contexts with ethnic compatriots. This observation corroborates Livezeanu's claim (1981) that in the 1980s Moldovans were becoming more urbanised and learning Russian, but not losing their Moldovan language.²² In other words, Moldovans in Rezina were not completely russified in all walks of life.

2.4 Linguistic Nationalism and Armed Conflict on the Rezina and Rybnitsa Borderland

Valeriu's perspective

Despite Rezina's lower ethnic diversity in the 1980s, the minority of Russians and Ukrainians living there (less than 25 per cent of Rezina's population) dominated in the city's leadership and, most importantly for this study, in the Rezina Cement Plant's management (Proca and Proca 1999, 60-62, 126). By comparison, Rezina's Moldovan majority (almost 75 per cent of the population) held lower status positions in the cement

²² This is evidenced in Livezeanu's 1981 study on urbanisation and linguistic change in late Soviet Moldova, which finds that an increasing number of rural Moldovans were by the USSR's last decade urbanising, working in factories, and learning Russian for the first time in history. Despite Moldovans' increased Russian-speaking, making Moldova one of the most Russian-proficient Soviet republics, Livezeanu finds that in Moldova, unlike in Ukraine or Belarus, Moldovans remained fluent in their mother tongue.

plant's construction and operation (see Table 2).²³ In the first four years of factory operation (1985-1989), Valeriu Rusu, a skilled worker at the cement plant in the Soviet days, told me that Moldovans increasingly became disenfranchised with factory posts being held by non-natives and by, what he called, 'Moldovans' lack of social rights.' For example, Valeriu explained it was customary among cement employees that 'Russians would get apartments right away [...] while Moldovans would wait six to eight years [...] living in communal apartments shared with other families'. Valeriu himself had to wait almost nine years for an apartment. He found it problematic that Russian was the only official language and that advancement in factory posts was slow for Moldovans like himself. 'We didn't have rights!' Valeriu asserted.

Antagonism over insecure living conditions and unfair job opportunities – at heart an economic issue – provoked by the late 1980s anger and revolt among ethnic Moldovans over their need to under-communicate (Eriksen 2002, 29-30) their natal language and identification in the public life of the republic in which they were a majority. Industrial workers like Valeriu discovered that no amount of performing or over-communicating russification at work won Moldovans equal advancement and resources as Russians, from Valeriu's perspective.²⁴ Like him, many of Rezina's ethnic Moldovans channelled their frustration into the emerging Moldovan language-rights movement that became known as the Popular Front by 1988-1989 (see Kaufman 2001 on the MSSR more generally).²⁵ Across the river in Rybnitsa, a Popular Front branch developed under the guise of the literary-musical group 'Materna.' However, this Rybnitsa group only ever gathered 18 members at its height in 1989, as opposed to the

²³ See Solonari and Bruter 1994, 72-90. Beyond factory gates in the Rezina context, even Rezina's city council was dominated by eastern Slavs from 1959 onwards, being chaired during this period by M. Noskov, I. Pomes-Iachnii, P. Stokov, A. Atamanenko, V. Grebanos, and by two Moldovans, A. Chirița and I. Burciu. See <http://www.orasul-rezina.com/istoria90.html>. Accessed 18 March 2011.

²⁴ Interview with Valeriu Rusu, 10 June 2009 (Rezina, Moldova).

²⁵ See Chapter One on the wider national movement in the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic.

500 members in Rezina.²⁶ Rezina in fact had two movements – one in town headed by Ion Andronic with 100 activists and another at the Rezina Cement Plant led by Valeriu Rusu with up to 400 workers out of over 2,000 employees. The Rezina Cement Plant was thus implicated in Moldova's nationalist movement. Valeriu's cement workers joined forces with Rezina's other group to create the Rezina Popular Front in 1989.²⁷ The greater success of Rezina's nationalist movement over Rybnitsa's is undoubtedly related to Rezina's higher proportion of ethnic Moldovans (75 per cent versus 25 per cent in Rybnitsa), even as both cities had a strong Russian character by the 1980s.

Silvia's experience

Rezina and Rybnitsa, nevertheless, were full of russified Moldovans wary of the Popular Front nationalist movement. My informant Silvia, an educated Russian-language school teacher in Rezina in the 1980s, and her husband, a Rezina Cement Plant blue-collar worker at the time, intimated that they did not want to stop speaking Russian, even as they always spoke their vernacular (Moldovan) at home and with relatives. Following these remarks, Silvia recounted her positive experiences in the Soviet system – from serving as a *Komsomol* (Communist youth organisation) leader in her village to being chosen for exchange trips abroad to Bulgaria to receiving a full scholarship for university education in the MSSR (notably conducted in the Russian

²⁶ Social trends among newly urbanised Moldovans on both river banks may have been comparable in the early 1980s. However, by the end of the decade Rybnitsa's Moldovans were inter-marrying more with Slavs and were speaking Russian across multiple spheres. Rezina's Moldovans, on the other hand, were more frequently marrying each other and were more linguistically hybrid, speaking Russian and Moldovan according to context. By the 1990s inter-ethnic marriage was high, in fact the norm, in Rybnitsa, whereas it was less frequent in Rezina. In Rybnitsa, Moldovan and Slav mixed-ethnic conjugal couples commonly spoke Russian with each other and their children in their homes. All-Moldovan families frequently chose the same, as they do today (see Appendix for information on Rybnitsa informants), curtailing spaces in which Moldovan-speaking was practiced. Such tendencies towards high inter-marriage and Russian linguistic uniformity in Rybnitsa are rooted in the city's numerically dominant eastern Slav population, higher population size (see figures above), more expansive industrialisation, and longer history of Russian speaking. All of these factors contributed to Rybnitsa's greater russification and smaller Popular Front activity than in Rezina.

²⁷ The Rezina Popular Front was one of four nationalist movements in the Rezina raion, which had over 2,000 members. Interview with Valeriu Rusu, 10 June 2009 (Rezina, Moldova).

language). Silvia's advancement in the socialist period – from villager to university-educated townswoman, the first in her family²⁸ – no doubt shaped her rather upbeat memories of the Soviet Union and positive opinions of Russians and Russian speaking. However, these stories were far and few between for other urban Moldovans like Valeriu, who found nothing but disillusionment in the Soviet promise of industrial progress.

Town experiences

Although in the 1980s the two cities of Rezina and Rybnitsa almost joined one another to become 'Dniestrov' (Proca 2005, 3), by the end of the decade nationalism and a secessionist counter-reaction had pulled them apart. The Popular Front's demands for Latin-script Romanian language rights escalated into calls for independence from the Soviet Union and unification with Romania (see also Chapter One). This in turn instigated a reaction of Russian-speaking and socialist protectionism among Transnistria's more russified, multi-ethnic inhabitants.²⁹ Peoples in cities like Rybnitsa, despite a history of co-existence with the right-bank, proclaimed independence from the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic and declared allegiance to the Soviet Union.³⁰

As Moldova became independent and the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, the Moldovan authorities bolstered their efforts to regain control of their increasingly defiant break-away territory. By spring 1992, armed fighting intensified along several fronts on both sides of the left and right banks of the Nistru River (see Figures 19 and

²⁸ Silvia's father was a supervisor in the village's collective farm and her mother a village school teacher.

²⁹ According to the 1989 Soviet census, Transnistria was 40 per cent ethnic Moldovan, 28 per cent Ukrainian and 25 per cent Russian out of a population of 546,400 persons. This made Transnistria's population one-sixth the size of rump Moldova, with 17 per cent of Moldova's population living in Transnistria and 83 per cent in Bessarabia (King 1999, xxvii-xxviii).

³⁰ The Pridnestrovian Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (PMSSR) was proclaimed on 2 September 1990, seceding from the still-Soviet MSSR, but remaining in the Soviet Union. Differently than the MSSR, which seceded from the USSR four months before the Soviet Union's dissolution (on 27 August 1991), the PMSSR continued to consider itself a part of the Soviet Union until the end. Only after the Soviet Union was disbanded did the Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic declare independence.

20).³¹ A poorly outfitted Moldovan Army fought a well-equipped Transnistrian Republican Guard (TRG), buttressed by leftover stocks from Soviet military bases set up in the Transnistrian region. This was added to Transnistria's richer industrial resources, which sustained its stand-off against right-bank Moldova (King 2000, 184-189). Militarily, TRG units were recruited from among work brigades of men from enterprises like the Rybnitsa Steelworks and Rybnitsa Pump Plant. Rybnitsa workers not relocated to far-off fronts blockaded the Rezina-Rybnitsa railway and highway bridge, making the so-called 'bridge of tolerance' between the two cities (Proca 2005) into a war front. These workers defended with guns and grenades 'our homeland' (*nasha rodina*) from what was perceived as Moldovan nationalist aggression. For them, an independent Transnistria symbolised the preservation of Russian language rights and continuity with a Soviet-style way of life.³²

In general, the Rezina-Rybnitsa front was not violent, despite bloody fighting elsewhere. Even during the tensest of times, like when Transnistrian forces threatened to blow up the bridge between Rezina and Rybnitsa in 1992, and Chişinău authorities put troops on stand-by for battle, local officials intervened to stop blood-shed. A truce was reached on the bridge between local officials from Rezina and Rybnitsa.³³ These low levels of violence are attributed to close Soviet-era relations between the two cities and, if anything, on account of two decades of industrial interaction. Lasting remnants of this manufacturing relationship can be observed today in the now defunct raw-materials

³¹ While a number of armed skirmishes began in 1990 between Moldovan policemen and break-away militia at the river-border city of Dubossary/Dubăsari (60 kilometres south of Rybnitsa), the bloodiest of fighting occurred in the 1992 battle of Bendery. Here several hundreds of soldiers, militia and civilians died and Moldova suffered a loss of territory in Bendery. Transnistria effectively won this war's last battle, although notoriously owing to the intervention of the Russian Federation's Fourteenth Army Motorized (tank) Division stationed in southern Transnistria (King 2000, 190-195).

³² It is not surprising that in my encounters with industrial workers of native Ukrainian, Russian or mixed-ethnic origin, I find they and their kin most frequently identify themselves with 'our state' (*nashe gosudarstvo*) and 'our [Transnistrian] people' (*nash narod*).

³³ Interview with Anatol Cuzuioac and Nicolae Proca, 10 June 2009 (Rezina, Moldova).

conveyer belt strung across the river (see Figure 6), once bringing limestone from the higher-quality Rezina limestone quarry to the Rybnitsa Cement Plant.

Nowadays, almost two decades after a formal cessation of hostilities between Moldova and Transnistria (21 July 1992), the materials and factories that once united Rezina and Rybnitsa are pulled apart by their differing representations of modernity and socio-economic outlooks. Rezina's current population of 10,196 has lost a portion of its Soviet-era Russian and Ukrainian populace³⁴ (80 per cent of Rezina is Moldovan and only 9 per cent Ukrainian and 9 per cent Russian).³⁵ Rybnitsa's population of 53,648 remains diverse as almost a half of residents are ethnic Ukrainian, more than a quarter Russian, and another one-quarter Moldovan.³⁶ The Soviet civilising mission, as depicted in Kotkin 1995, came to an end in the Rezina plant, while it nostalgically lives on in representations of socialist-style paternalism in Rybnitsa's present-day heavy industry. The Rezina plant became an all but defunct, state-owned enterprise in the 1990s. Its re-modernisation did not come about until six years after its corporate transnational buy-out in 1999, which is discussed in the thesis body. Moreover, unlike in socialist days when there was a dynamic inter-change of factory workers between river banks, today Ciment S.A. only has fifty workers who reside in Rybnitsa and commute

³⁴ This is after the post-1991 departure of non-native Russians and Ukrainians, who were recruited to the plant in the 1970s to 1980s from all over the Soviet Union.

³⁵ Please note that these figures are disputed. The figures that I use are according to the 2004 census results published online by the National Bureau for Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, under 'Population by nationalities and localities, in territorial aspect': <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295&id=2234>. Accessed 30 March 2011. However, another source puts the town of Rezina's population at 13,800 of which 93 per cent is Moldovan, 4 per cent Ukrainian and 2 per cent Russian. For more information, see the brochure *Raionul Rezina in Cifre și Imagini* (2008, 3, 6). Although I am wary of its reliability, this brochure details that the Rezina District has a total area of 6,217,947 square kilometres and a population of 53,400 persons, slightly less than the neighbouring city of Rybnitsa. Of the Rezina District's population, the majority is rural (39,900 persons) and a fraction urban (13,500 persons), mostly located in Rezina (2008, 3, 6).

³⁶ Rybnitsa's ethnic composition includes 24,898 Ukrainians, 11,738 Russians and 11,263 ethnic Moldovans. Ethnic Moldovans in Transnistria's wider society are of almost equal proportion to Ukrainians and Russians, but given that most Moldovans live in villages, their number in urban Rybnitsa is understandably low. Figures are based on the Transnistrian region's census taken in 2004; the results of which are available online at: <http://www.pridnestrovie.net/2004census.html>. Accessed 23 August 2009.

daily to the Rezina plant. No Rezina residents are permitted by Transnistrian authorities to work in Rybnitsa's heavy industry.³⁷ In what follows now, Rybnitsa's industrial context is emphasised to show how Rybnitsa's industry follows a different economic trajectory from the Rezina plant. Understanding the nature of Rybnitsa's post-socialist industrial development helps us to delineate better the Rezina plant's unique direction, which is the focus of the thesis.

2.5 Rybnitsa Heavy Industry as Socialist Nostalgia in Post-Soviet Transnistria

The still unresolved conflict over Transnistria's status vis-à-vis Moldova has permitted the secessionist regime in Transnistria to avoid sharp economic liberalisation and to develop instead a socially oriented market economy with a high state regulation of economic processes (Gudîm 2001). This economic paternalism, as it may be called, is evocative of socialist-era paternalism (see Verdery 1996, 24-26), in that it includes the state distribution of social entitlements at a generous level thought to secure mass support. In present-day Transnistria, social entitlements are at a level somewhat higher than in right-bank Moldova, as evidenced in Table 1. The higher levels are accentuated by Rybnitsa's lower utilities and living expenses.³⁸ Transnistrians depict this non-liberal way as a rival path to the *laissez-faire* reforms on right-bank Moldova.³⁹

³⁷ This information is according to Ciment S.A. trade union leader Valeria Dmitrov. She and others explained to me that many Ciment S.A. employees initially lived in Rybnitsa in the 1980s and commuted daily to the Rezina Cement Plant for work. However, the Transnistrian war and independence movement made persons choose between river banks. Ethnic Moldovans relatively new to the area, and without family in Rybnitsa, typically relocated to Rezina. Informant Evgenii (a Russian from Chapter Four) and his wife (a Moldovan) did this. The fifty Ciment S.A. employees who currently work in Rezina, but live in Rybnitsa are those either born in Rybnitsa or with a significant familial support network there.

³⁸ For example, gas and electrical utilities and supermarket products are cheaper in Rybnitsa than Rezina. Only seasonal produce sold at open-air markets is cheaper in Rezina.

³⁹ For example, one rank-and-file Rybnitsa informant, a kindergarten cook, explained to me rather astutely how Transnistria does not have to submit to the demands of the World Bank. She sees this as Transnistria's advantage over Moldova.

Table 1. State pensions and benefits in Moldova and Transnistria (2009)

TYPE OF PENSION/BENEFIT	REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	TRANSNISTRIA REGION
Monthly Work Pension (qualified work)	\$ 75-82 (900-1000 MDL)	\$ 74/89 (670/820 RTR)
Monthly Work Pension (unqualified work)	\$ 41-46 (500-570 MDL)	\$ 38/53 (350/500 RTR) ⁴⁰
Monthly Unemployment Benefit	\$ 32 (400 MDL)	\$ 37 (if voluntary departure) \$ 60 (if laid off)
Maternity (one-off giving birth)	\$ 123 (1500 MDL)	\$ 325 (2931 RTR)
Monthly Child Benefit	\$ 12 (150 MDL) for up to 3 years	\$ 37 (340 RTR)
Monthly Incapacity/Disability Benefit	\$ 20 (243 MDL) if born with disability and up to age 18 \$ 47 (575 MDL) if disabled at work, based on medium income	\$ 37 (336 RTR) if born with disability and up to age 18 Unknown
Widow/Widower Compensation	\$ 32 (400 MDL)	\$ 38 (340 RTR) ⁴¹

Exchange Rates applied: 1 US dollar = 12.16 MDL (Moldovan lei); 1 US dollar = 9 RTR (Transnistrian rubles) (Table from Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 337).

This paternalism has played out heavily in Transnistria's industry. With Transnistrian authorities' privatising the region's many factories and enterprises ten years later than in right-bank Moldova, the delay allowed Transnistrian workers to hold

⁴⁰ These figures may actually be higher (see second figures), as Transnistria's Ministry of Finance announced in January 2010 that monthly pensions in Transnistria were 150 Rubles (\$15) smaller than usual in late 2009, at the time data was collected (see 'Tiraspol Hopes for Russian Help in 2010, Too,' *Infotag*, 16 January 2010).

⁴¹ Data was gathered by a trusted research assistant in the region in December 2009. The information was verified by cross-checking several websites, including the following in Transnistria: 'Tiraspol hopes for Russian Help in 2010, Too,' *Infotag*, 16 January 2010, and 'A Series of Measures to Promote the Employment of People Offered,' Parliamentary News of the Transnistrian Supreme Soviet, 29 December 2009, as well as 'Russia's Financial Assistance for Transnistria,' *Infotag*, 20 February 2009. In Moldova, the following information on social benefits was found up until 2007: Republic of Moldova Government Decision Number 325 from 21 March 2007 (published 23 March 2007) on social security benefits and the indexation of state benefits, and on 'Average Amount of Allowance for Children' (like on 'unique allowance at the birth of the first child' and 'unique allowance at the birth of every next child'), National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova. (Information cited in Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 337.)

on to jobs and entitlements longer than workers in Moldova, thus giving the impression that Transnistria had a better economic plan than Moldova (Asarov 2005, 137). When Transnistria did privatise portions of its industry, it was done with an eye to keeping workers in jobs and their benefits in place for as long as possible.⁴² This is what gave Transnistria's economy a moral-economic appearance, from the perspective of citizens, as witnessed in the Rybnitsa context.

In Rybnitsa, ten of the city's fourteen manufacturing enterprises had been privatised by the time of my fieldwork in 2004, including the two heavy industrial plants, the Rybnitsa Cement Plant (or RTK) and the Moldovan Steelworks (MMZ). These two plants belong now to Russian Federation Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).⁴³ This Russian private take-over was seen by locals not as a capitalist intrusion, benefiting a small clan of Kremlin cronies, but as beneficial to the break-away region's livelihood (Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 334-335 on Russian FDI; see also Bobick 2011 on local business). This may be on account of how taxes and revenues extracted from Russian FDI have helped to make possible Transnistria's paternalist economic order. Without these resources, the economic base on which Transnistria's ideology of paternalism exists would collapse (Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 336).

Transnistria's paternalism, more specifically, is a representational strategy on the part of separatist authorities, which plays into nostalgic longings among the masses for an idealised socialist modernity of the past (for evidence see Figures 11-12 and 14-16).⁴⁴

⁴² Don Kalb finds this trend all around the former Soviet Union, where industrial employers use, what he calls, 'the old socialist technique of "hoarding" labour, keeping wage rises far below inflation, accepting wage arrears rather than dismissals, and failing to raise productivity' (2002, 327).

⁴³ Russian Federation big business has purchased newly privatized steel, cement and hydro-electric plants in Transnistria. To date the privatisations are considered illegal and unrecognised by Moldovan authorities. All of the Russian corporations have open links to gas giant Gazprom, the world's third largest conglomerate.

⁴⁴ This resonates with Charles King's finding that the main loyalty of people in Transnistria was not to Russia, but to the Soviet Union, even though most people spoke Russian and had ties to the Russian republic (2000, 184).

Bottom-up, this Transnistrian project is reinforced by non-native industrial workers (Russians and Moldovans alike) who feel more deeply embedded in work and social relations in the region – having lived in Transnistria all of their working lives – than back home in their native birthplaces (like Russia or right-bank Moldova), where they no longer have friends, family and employment options. For them, Transnistria and its paternalism functions to invoke mutuality and nostalgic memories, which ‘cleave to an essential innocence and goodness attributed to the state,’ according to Lisa Rofel (1999, 136), and which was felt most deeply among Transnistria’s privileged industrial proletariat. However, as Rofel reminds us, socialist nostalgia is often hegemonic in that it ‘seeks a purity of lived socialist experience’ (1999, 136-137) that does not match the totality of real lived experiences on the ground. In Transnistria, this idealised experience comes in the form of the idea that Russians alone were responsible for socialism and economic paternalism, in spite of the Soviet Union and Transnistria being home to numerous cultures led by diverse leaders. As one local sees it, referring to Transnistria’s development, ‘it is the Russian way. [...] for the state to take care of its people. [...] to invest in the economy.’⁴⁵ This followed a comment about right-bank Moldova’s lack of investment in its economy and people. For her – a mixed-ethnic young adult living most of her life on the right-bank – left-bank Transnistria’s socially oriented economic ideology is associated with ‘the Russian way’ (Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 335-336). The fact that non-Slavs from the right bank find affinity with this concept suggests the extent to which this ideology of ‘the Russian way’ (signifying generous pay-outs and social investment) is embedded along the Rybnitsa-Rezina borderland and, as we will see, in its industry. Let us now take a brief look at the two largest industries

⁴⁵ Chamberlain-Creangă (in Heintz 2008, 120-123) discusses how peoples of different ethnicities and labour backgrounds (and of indigene and foreign-born status) in Transnistria are dissimilarly advantaged in their opportunities for social benefits, job mobility and attaining well-paid industrial employment.

in Rybnitsa – steel and cement – to see how economic paternalism plays out on the ground.

Rybnitsa's Moldovan Steelworks: a snapshot of economic paternalism

The Moldovan Steelworks (or MMZ) (established 1985) in Rybnitsa was privatised in 1998 as a Joint Stock Closed Company (JSCC), the majority of its shares going to a Russian Federation company (see Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 334). In 2004 it changed hands to another Russian conglomerate, Metalloinvest, owned by one of the world's richest men.⁴⁶ With on-going Russian investment, the MMZ's steel-making and rolling-mill shops were regularly upgraded and modernised in the post-socialist era.⁴⁷ The MMZ suffered no degeneration like most other Moldovan and Transnistrian factories, including the right-bank Rezina Cement Plant. Instead, the MMZ became the world's leading producer of 'black steel' (*chyornyi stal*) (Brezianu 2000, 165-166).

From the turn of the twenty-first century until today, the successful state-of-the-art plant (see Figure 10) has exported steel products to North America and other Western destinations. Its annual production is upwards to one million tonnes of crude steel and one million tonnes of rolled product.⁴⁸ It accounts for more than half of Transnistria's industrial output, as it yields more than 500 million US dollars-worth of

⁴⁶ Metalloinvest was supposedly founded to manage Gazprom's metal interests. Its owner – Alisher Usmanov, the world's 142nd richest man (*Forbes* 2007) and current owner of London's famed Arsenal Football Club – is one of the few surviving oligarchs in good relations with the Kremlin and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, engaging Metalloinvest in joint ventures with Russian state corporations (Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 334-335).

⁴⁷ Modernisation works on the steel-making and rolling-mill shops were first carried out in conjunction with foreign companies from 1995 to 1999. The biggest changes were switching from two to one, more efficient production line, in addition to installing a ladle furnace, vacuum degasser, six-strand continuous casting machine, and a two-line rolling mill machine (144 metres long). Plant production capacity reached one millions tons of steel a year after technical upgrades. It helped that the relatively young MMZ plant was already competitive to enter international steel markets after the Soviet collapse, unlike many other Soviet-built factories. For more details on MMZ modernisation, see the MMZ's official website: <http://www.aommz.com/pls/webus/webus.main.show>. Accessed 21 July 2008.

⁴⁸ This is twice the average output of a steel mini-mill like the MMZ (consult McGannon 1971 on steel production).

exports a year. These high earnings are represented by local media and residents not as greedy, but as ‘moral,’ ‘communal’ and ‘sacrificial,’ as the plant dutifully supplies over a half of the break-away region’s budgetary income (21 million US dollars in 2005). Its taxes and monies proudly ensure the state’s ‘[...] timely payment of pensions to pensioners [...] and] other social protection,’ according to the MMZ’s Economic Director.⁴⁹ More than 50 per cent of Transnistria’s gross domestic product (GDP) comes from the MMZ (Chamberlain-Creangă in Heintz 2008, 113).⁵⁰

During my day-tour of the Moldovan Steelworks in March 2004, I saw everything from the plant’s smelting to rolling and forging facilities.⁵¹ While on the tour, I asked an engineer about changes to the size of the 4,000-person workforce during mill modernisation in the 1990s and more recently. I was proudly informed that few workers have been made redundant over the course of the plant’s upgrades. Even if worker jobs became obsolete with improved machinery, employees were not laid-off; I am told, but transferred to new redesigned positions in the plant. Employees I got to know outside of the MMZ in Rybnitsa over the course of 2004 to 2006 corroborated this. They insisted job security brought a calm, consistent attention to one’s labour in the face of technical development. This contrasted with Rezina cement workers’ stress, in the face of the majority of their colleagues being made redundant during the plant’s take-over and modernisation, described in the next chapters. Their loss of job was for good. Conversely, in the MMZ, workers may have gotten laid off during times of economic downturn – as happened in a spring 2006 forced furlough (see Chamberlain-

⁴⁹ See an interview with the MMZ’s Economic Director in ‘Kak Rybnitsa porabotala c biudzhedom rasschitalis’, *Dobryi Den*, No. 7. 9 February 2005, p. 1.

⁵⁰ This is as of 2006. Such figures are no doubt fuelled by the high demand for steel on the world market in the 1990s to early 2000s, incidentally during Transnistria’s hey days of *de facto* independence.

⁵¹ The forging facilities were unfortunately non-operational the day of my factory tour. I observed best the casting part of the steel process in the main mill hall. It appeared to be the most supervised and labour intensive unit in the mill.

Creangă in Heintz 2008, 115) – but workers still received reduced salaries and their jobs back once the factory returned to full operation.⁵² The MMZ’s relative job stability was a major advantage to working in Russian Federation industry in Transnistria over neoliberal right-bank industry, where downsizing and job insecurity was rife. The difference reproduced the idea among my informants – from both the left and right banks (recalling the earlier comment) – that ‘the Russian way’ is associated with full or near-full employment and satisfactory social welfare, evocative of an idealised socialist way of life.

MMZ workers see themselves and are seen by others in Moldova as a real ‘aristocracy of labour,’ earning the highest industrial salaries in all of the Republic of Moldova. The rank-and-file production monthly medium is set around 200 US dollars, higher than the 150 US-dollar-average on the shop floor of the Rezina Cement Plant.⁵³ The MMZ is also celebrated for providing social assistance to veterans of the Second World War and to families ‘of deceased [1992 war] defenders of Transnistria’ (Chamberlain-Creangă in Heintz 2008, 113). What is more, workers are housed in Rybnitsa’s relatively up-scale *Val’chenko* neighbourhood (see Figure 4), supplied with saunas and a riverside sanatorium. Employees receive special Transnistrian bank accounts and foreign-style debit cards (a *raduga* ‘rainbow’ card, even if valid only in Transnistria). A special kindergarten and crèche are provided for employees’ children, just as in socialist days. None of these fringe benefits, however, exist for workers in the

⁵² This is also the practice of the Rybnitsa Cement Plant, according to an informal interview with Evgenii Berndikov, Plant Manager of the Rybnitsa Cement Plant, Rybnitsa, August 2007.

⁵³ This is during my fieldwork in 2006. Salary figures are averages based on anecdotal information from more than two dozen interlocutors from the left and right banks. Both figures are higher than the Moldovan national average, which according to the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, is 1,534 Moldovan lei (or 135 US dollars) per month in spring 2006. (Exact figures for the secessionist Transnistrian region are unknown.) See ‘Salariile din Republica Moldova, printre cele mai mici din Europa,’ *Wall-street*, 3 May 2006, <http://www.wall-street.ro/articol/International/13834/Salariile-din-Republica-Moldova-printre-cele-mai-mici-din-Europa.html>. Accessed 6 September 2011.

Fortune-500-owned Rezina Cement Plant. Its post-1999 owner provides employees' children with neither a kindergarten nor subsidized schooling, let alone with worker saunas and spas. At best, the Rezina plant's owner occasionally donates to social projects in town and once a year subsidizes trade-union summer camps for employees' children. Beyond that, there are significant enough differences in industrial provisioning, making it perhaps no surprise that Rybnitsa steelworkers – Ukrainians, Russians *and* Moldovans alike – choose to rally around urban Transnistria and not right-bank Rezina.⁵⁴

Rybnitsa Cement Mill: a snapshot of labour practices and Russian speaking

The Rybnitsa Cement Plant (*Rybnitskii tsementnyi kombinat* or RTK),⁵⁵ established 1961, shares the same Russian transnational owner as the MMZ. Metalloinvest bought a majority stake in the RTK's Joint Stock Closed Company in 2007 in order to manufacture cement for the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics complex in Russia (Marinina 2007, 12-14; see Figure 20). The plant got a modernisation make-over to ready it for the goal. New machines and equipment were installed and dozens of new

⁵⁴ Referendums on Transnistria's status suggest that left-bank residents support the *de facto* state. According to the 17 September 2006 Transnistrian referendum, 97 per cent of voters backed continued independence from right-bank Moldova and 'free association' with Russia, meaning protectorate status or possible unification. 79 per cent of inhabitants allegedly turned out to vote. The results, even if they must be critically engaged, demonstrate a common mistrust for right-bank Moldova and a strong sense of Soviet or big-state nostalgia (see also King 2000, 184 on Transnistrian loyalty to the Soviet Union).

⁵⁵ The plant stopped producing asbestos-derived shifer after 1991, so the word 'shifer' in the RTSK-founding name of the plant has been dropped.

employees hired from around Rybnitsa.⁵⁶ A team of Russian specialists came from Moscow to oversee the modernisation process.⁵⁷

Despite the frenzied commotion over the RTK's modernisation and on-site foreign-management, not unlike what has happened in the Rezina Cement Plant, the ways of working among the RTK's *expanded* workforce hardly changed or accelerated with the furore. I observed this during my August 2007 tour of the plant, in comparison to my earlier factory visits in March 2004 and February 2006.⁵⁸ During my August 2007 tour, I visited for a second time the Distribution Centre on the southern, outlying side of the plant along the railroad. Inside the cement packaging room of the Distribution Centre, workers were bagging cement on an automated machine, not unlike what I had observed at the Rezina Cement Plant (in the area depicted in Figure 24). The automated machine – a brand-new German apparatus (Möller brand) – was set at a manageable pace, although stopping frequently with jams and technical problems (see Figure 18). This is compared with the frantic, non-stop rhythms observed on a similar machine at the Rezina plant. The woman in charge of the RTK Distribution Centre was a stout, dark-faced Russian speaker, a long-time Rybnitsa resident and veteran employee, whose words were inflected with a subtle Moldovan accent. Just outside were three men

⁵⁶ The RTK had not received an upgrade since 1985. Before the 2007 Russian re-investment and rehabilitation, the RTK's workforce decreased from a Soviet-period high of 2,200 employees to a post-socialist low of 934 employees in 2005. Over half of the plant's socialist-era employees left Rybnitsa during 1989-1992 never to return. Of the 934 remaining in 2005, during in the middle of my fieldwork, 840 were production or maintenance-related workers and 310 were women. In 2007, at the time of Russian FDI take-over, the plant's workforce evened out to 835 employees, many of whom were young persons from around Rybnitsa. The RTK itself stands out for having three lines of production (kilns), which are smaller than those of the Rezina Cement Plant. The RTK's overall production is not high, but its smaller-sized kilns are flexible and efficient to generate quick products and sales.

⁵⁷ Interview with Evgenii Berndikov, Plant Manager of the Rybnitsa Cement Plant, Rybnitsa, August 2007.

⁵⁸ In March 2004, the Rezina Cement Plant was owned by the Transnistrian state. By summer 2004 the plant was privatised to an alleged Hungarian company, and remained in its hands during my February 2006 factory visit. Reliable sources say this privatisation was 'only on paper.' The real owner was the former Transnistrian Supreme Soviet Chairman Grigorii Marakutsa. Evgenii Berndikov – a middle-aged ethnic Russian citizen born in Volgograd, USSR – remained the plant's General Manager throughout the changeover. Berndikov was the former mayor of Rybnitsa and Communist Party Chairman of the Rybnitsa *Raion*, as well as a key interlocutor for my research.

loading heavy bags of cement by hand onto a truck. Two of the three loaders had prophylactic masks to protect against breathing in harmful cement dust, but none were wearing the masks – in contrast to the mandatory practice across the river at the Rezina Cement Plant. Failure at the Rezina plant to abide by worker-safety regulations set by management led to reprimand. RTK workers, conversely, have less strict management discipline looming over them. This is in spite of foreign managers on-site at the plant.

The most noticeable expectation on the RTK's multi-ethnic workforce, from the point of view of industry and language, is the use of Russian.⁵⁹ RTK and MMZ workers alike practice a socialist-nostalgic 'inter-nationalism' – the Soviet ideology of multi-ethnic unity around Russian speaking (Brudny 1998). This ideology is normalised in workers' everyday habits and beliefs that on-the-job Russian speaking is the proper thing to do (recall Patico 2005, 483).⁶⁰ In my March 2004 and February 2006 visits to the RTK, all around the plant I saw nothing that advantaged Transnistria's two other official languages, Moldovan and Ukrainian. Old Soviet slogans written in Russian dotted the plant – like 'Praise to the people' and 'the USSR is 50 years old' (see Figures 14-16). All engineers and shop-floor supervisors I met spoke *just* Russian. Among groups of rank-and-file workers, the language I deciphered over roaring kilns and machines was only Russian. The whole social environment of the factory reinforced russianness and gave the appearance of Russian-speaking unity. The same was no less true during my August 2007 visit, when the factory was under Russian ownership. The

⁵⁹ Informants tell me that both the RTK and MMZ are approximately 45 per cent ethnic Ukrainian, 30 per cent Russian and 20 per cent Moldovan. Many persons are mixed-ethnic.

⁶⁰ For example, throughout the multi-ethnic MMZ, I observed that on-the-job communication was always in Russian. Factory signs, machine-operating instructions and canteen conversations were all in Russian. During my extensive MMZ tour, even my bilingual Chişinău research associates stopped speaking Moldovan (as we did in the car) and switched to Russian as soon as we entered the factory. This russianness also had a transnational tone, as I observed large, flashy white posters, dotting the grey walls of the MMZ corridors, reminding the plant's many Russian citizens to vote in the upcoming March 2004 Russian Presidential election. It was a reminder that the plant was Russian Federation owned with many Russian citizens.

RTK employees I observed loading cement bags, and their supervisor (who we recall from above had a Moldovan accent), spoke Russian with each other no matter their presumed multi-ethnic backgrounds. This is unlike the mixing of Russian words with Romanian and the situational switching of languages that was commonly found in the right-bank Rezina Cement Plant. Such differences in language practice between left and right-bank industry connect with, and are a part of differing ideas of work and moral-economic orientation – a point made next, setting up the rest of the thesis.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has recounted Soviet-era industrialisation on the Rezina-Rybnitsa borderland of north-eastern Moldova in order to show how Soviet cement and steel-factory building and production affected the ethnic composition and language use of inhabitants of the two neighbouring towns. In Rezina, attention was given to linguistic hybridity among newly urbanised Moldovans. Out of this Moldovan hybridity, and what was shown to be an inequality of industrial experience between Moldovans and Russians, came a Moldovan nationalist-linguistic movement on the right bank. It in turn provoked a counter-reaction of secessionist conflict to safeguard Russian-language rights and a socialist-style way of life (King 2000, 184) among russophone left-bank Transnistrian peoples – who carry on today in their support of Transnistria's twenty years of *de facto* statehood and supposed moral-economic outlook.⁶¹

Special attention in this chapter was given to the post-socialist economic development of the separatist town of Rybnitsa. Its thick columns of smoke, emerging daily from its factory towers, represent job security and entitlements to left-bank Transnistrian residents. These smoke pillars are visible reminders of the socialist past

⁶¹ For evidence of degrees of support for Transnistrian *de facto* statehood, see Chamberlain-Creangă 2008, 113-121.

for which left-bank workers are nostalgic. Interestingly, the same nostalgia is true for some right-bank workers at the Rezina Cement Plant, who see Rybnitsa's smoke pillars from across the river in Rezina. Under pressure to perform higher and to communicate in new languages, but without the guarantee of long-term employment, some Rezina Cement Plant employees question the benefit of the capitalist take-over of their factory and become nostalgic for a russophone, protectionist-minded industrial modernity. The russified socialist nostalgia embedded in Transnistrian industry across the river, then, serves to heighten the sense among Rezina's workers that their cement plant is a distinctive, alternative working world (see Chapter Three). For these workers, the industrial worlds of Rezina and Rybnitsa represent a divergence or conflict of modernities. This, however, can pose a challenge to neoliberal market integration and Romanian-language reforms proposed by the European owners of the Rezina Cement Plant, as the following chapters will show. The result will be a workforce fragmented by differing ideas of language and economic morality.

Figure 7. Defunct raw-materials conveyer belt strung across the Nistru River, once bringing limestone from the higher-quality Rezina quarry to the Rybnitsa Cement Plant.



Table 2. Ethnic distribution among specialists in departments of the Rezina Cement Plant (1984-1987)⁶²

<i>Rezina Cement Plant</i> <i>Departments</i>	<i>Total of Specialist Staff</i>	<i>Ethnic Slavs</i>	<i>Ethnic Moldovans</i>	
			<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Raw Materials Department	10	9	1	10%
Production/Control Room	14	11	3	5%
Distribution Centre	16	11	5	3%
Information Technology ASU TP Department	9	5	4	2%
Department UGAS (energy)	11	8	3	4%
Maintenance Department	11	10	1	11%
Department KMK TsSiP	7	3	4	2%
Cement Mill Department	13	8	5	3%

⁶² This Table shows that Rezina's Moldovan majority – almost 75 per cent of the population – held lower status positions in the cement plant's early operation phase. (Source: Rezina Cement Plant archive album, 1984-1987). See Table 11 in the Appendix for more details.

Figure 8. The main thoroughfare in Rezina.



Figure 9. Unfinished Soviet-era apartments at the entrance to Rezina. Soviet planners were expecting an even greater influx of persons to work in the Rezina Cement Plant. However, the Soviet Union dissolved and the cement plant became defunct, so these persons never arrived.



Figure 10. Entrance to Rybnitsa, indicating that the city was founded in 1628.



Figure 11. The industrial heart of Rybnitsa, the Moldovan Steelworks (or MMZ).



Figure 12. The Moldovan Steelworks.



Figure 13. Soviet leader V.I. Lenin still stands proudly in Rybnitsa's main square, unlike across the river in right-bank Moldova, where most Soviet statues have been dismantled.

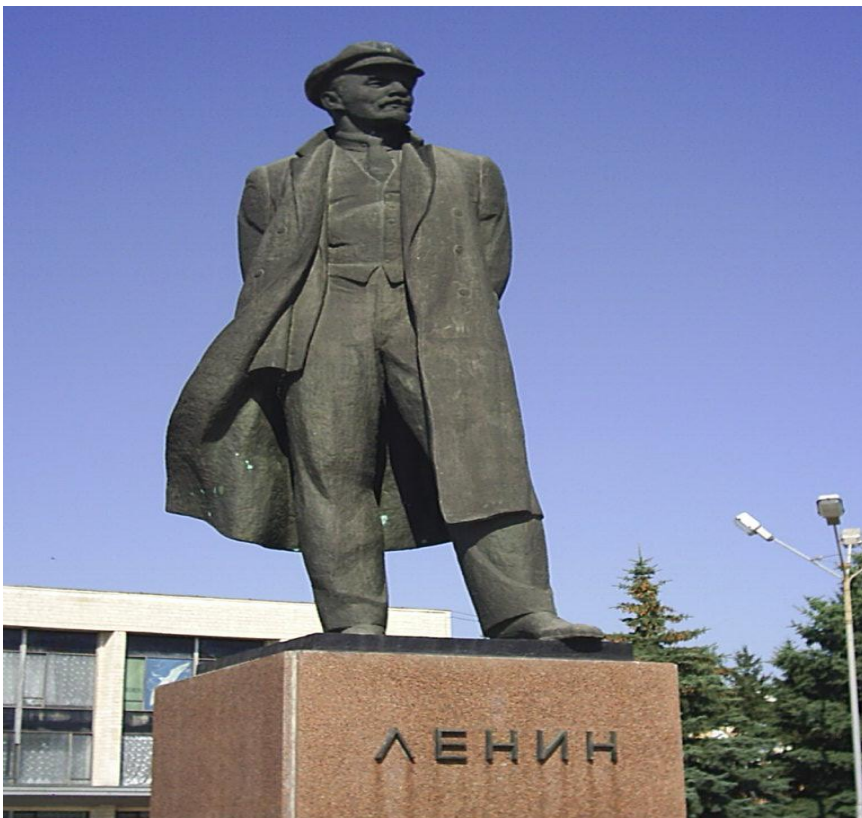


Figure 14. Evidence of Soviet nostalgia in someone's courtyard on the back streets of Rybnitsa.



Figure 15. The Rybnitsa Cement Plant



Figure 16. Words on the wall inside the Rybnitsa Cement Plant, reading ‘The USSR is 50 years old.’ Such expressions do not exist across the river inside the French-owned Rezina Cement Plant.



Figure 17. Building at the Rybnitsa Cement Plant with socialist-era words written on top in red, ‘Praise to the people!’ (*slava narodu!*)



Figure 18. Close-up view of socialist-era words written on top in red, ‘Praise to the people!’ (*slava narodu!*)



Figure 19. Firing up the limestone kiln at the Rybnitsa Cement Plant (February 2006).



Figure 20. Automated cement packaging at the Rybnitsa Cement Plant.



Figure 21. A business journal from the Transnistrian region, highlighting the role of the Rybnitsa Cement Plant in producing cement for the Russian Sochi Olympics in 2014.



Figure 22. Rank-and-file workers in seemingly friendly relations with the Plant Manager of the Rybnitsa Cement Plant. Such encounters between workers and the French Integration Chief and Romanian Plant Manager are rare in the right-bank Rezina Cement Plant.



Figure 23. An example of russianness in the main square of Rybnitsa. A Russian folk dance during the Russian pre-Lenten *Maslenitsa* festival in March 2006. This Russian holiday is not publically celebrated in right-bank Moldova.



Figure 24. A contributor to Rybnitsa's *Maslenitsa* festival was the 1,500-member Rybnitsa Russian Community Group 'A.V. Suvorov' (*Rybnitskaia russkaia obschina im. A.V. Suvorova*). No such group exists in Rezina.⁶³



⁶³ The Alexander Suvorov Russian Community in Rybnitsa was founded on 1 December 1 1999: “The main goals of activity: the support, development and protection of Russian culture, spiritual traditions, historical memory; protection of national, civil, economic, social, religious and other rights and freedoms of members of the community and all those associated with them; the preservation of friendly relations between people of all nationalities living in the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic [...]; the conduct of charitable programs to those in need” (see Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 355, as well as, interestingly, the website of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at: <http://www.mid.ru/nsdgpch.nsf/aa259d77f08b8f4543256da40037b908/ff0b06a742a63c5ac32572f9004a2a15> [accessed 1 October 2010]). This Russian-backed community group in Rybnitsa is led by persons occupying major management positions in the Russian-owned MMZ Steelworks, which ‘is indicative of the multiple layers of linkages that exist between Russia and the Transnistrian industrial sector’ (Chamberlain-Creangă and Allin 2010, 342). Such linkages work to invoke and reproduce a sense of russianness in Transnistria, I argue.

Figure 25. A Transnistrian tank barricading a roadway into its region during the Moldovan-Transnistrian war (1991-1992). The Russian inscription hails Transnistria's 'internationalism' of inter-ethnic relations. (Photo taken from Iovu 2002.)



Figure 26. A Moldovan tank. The Romanian-language inscription reads ‘death to the occupiers.’ (Photo taken from Iovu 2002).



PART TWO
EGRAFAL CIMENT S.A. REZINA

This second section focuses on the Rezina Cement Plant, and the way in which different segments of its multi-ethnic workforce react to the factory's global market integration. The Soviet-turned-neoliberal Rezina Cement Plant was once considered the very embodiment of an idealised Soviet modernity (see Chapter Two), depicted in media and reproduced in people's memories as 'a new era' with 'all nations working together in friendship' (Bradu 1976, 3). However, as the previous chapters touched upon, several years after the Rezina Cement Plant's founding, Moldova was swept up in nationalist fervour and independence. In the process, the one-time 'factory of dreams' became an impoverished 'orphan factory' (*fabrică orfană*) (Tudose 1993), losing most of its veteran Russian leadership and becoming virtually abandoned by its new owner in the early 1990s.

All Soviet-era industrial assets on Moldova's territory fell into the hands of the Moldovan state after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Rezina Cement Plant henceforth became state property, owned by the Moldovan government for nearly eight years, between 1991 and 1999. Although little public documentation exists on this period, newspaper and local writings reveal that the plant sometimes functioned only one month a year and workers were regularly laid off due to the plant's low revenue and high electrical debts (Tudose 1993; Proca and Proca 1999). The factory's tide turned when, in May 1999, the Fortune-500, French transnational corporation (TNC), Egrafal Group Ltd. bought a majority stake in the plant from the Moldovan government.¹ In what follows, a description is given of the plans to modernise and fully integrate the

¹ Egrafal's present-day workers rarely discuss the preceding 1990s phase in the history of the Rezina Cement Plant, even as most lived through it. Workers prefer to skip over this period, describing the Rezina Cement Plant 'under the Russians' (*sub ruși*, which also refers to the Soviets) and 'with the French' (*cu francezii*).¹ This dualistic way of perceiving time is similar to, albeit slightly different from David Kideckel's finding (2007) that Romanian industrial workers imagine their working lives as before and after 1989. For these reasons, the thesis focuses on the modern-day period with Egrafal, with some reference to the Soviet era, according to how my informants remember the factory.

Rezina Cement Plant into Egrafal Group Ltd. This cementing of modernisation is outlined in order to understand Egrafal's privatisation goals, which triggered mixed reactions among workers, discussed in the rest of the thesis.

Egrafal Group Ltd. and the Rezina Cement Plant's neoliberal modernisation

Egrafal Group Ltd. is the world's leading conglomerate in building materials, dominating the global production and sale of cement. The company is present in 78 countries of the world with headquarters in Paris, France. Egrafal Group Ltd.'s 1999 purchase of the Rezina Cement Plant (henceforth also *Ciment S.A.*)² is part of its corporate philosophy of investing in emerging markets. Within just one year of Egrafal's buy-out of the Moldovan factory, the enterprise transformed from bankrupt and defunct to profit-producing. However, it was not until six years later – several months *after* my arrival to Ciment S.A. in summer 2005 – that the factory underwent major industrial restructuring and began to be operated by on-site foreign management.³

In autumn 2005, Egrafal Group Ltd. launched a 40-million-euro modernisation campaign, called 'the integration program' (*program de integrare* in Romanian), to upgrade the Rezina Cement Plant from its humble state to a top national cement producer in the region.⁴ The three-year development campaign entailed modernising structural equipment, like replacing out-dated Soviet machinery with state-of-the-art German and American equipment (as in Chapter Five). Modernisation also meant modifying employees' 'mentalities' and work habits to Egrafal standards. Workers

² The privatisation made the Rezina Cement Plant into *Rezina Ciment S.A.* (*S.A.* stands for *Societate pe acțiuni* or a shareholders' company). Both factory names are used interchangeably in the rest of the thesis.

³ Egrafal Ltd. purchased 52 per cent of shares in the Rezina Cement Plant for 200,000 US dollars in 1999, promising to repay the factory's debts to the Moldovan state and to other creditors in the amount of 4.8 million US dollars, while also investing over 12 million US dollars in the plant's development. Towards the end of the Rezina Cement Plant's modernisation campaign in 2008, Egrafal had completely fulfilled its obligations. Egrafal currently holds 95.31 per cent of shares in the plant (*Infotag*, 26 May 2009).

⁴ Ciment S.A.'s main cement market is the Republic of Moldova. Egrafal's goal is to overtake its Russian-owned competitor in secessionist Transnistria, the Rybnitsa Cement Plant. Apparently successful, towards the end of Egrafal's three-year investment and modernisation campaign, the factory recorded a profit of 91 million US dollars in 2008 (*Infotag*, 26 May 2009).

needed to be transformed from socialist to flexible-capitalist workers through seminars teaching ‘The Egrafal Way’ – a four-tiered commitment to a ‘culture of performance,’ ‘orientation towards the client,’ ‘more efficient organisation’ and ‘personal development’ (see Figures 25-26). This is similar to findings described in Elizabeth Dunn’s study on a multinational Polish plant, where an ideal capitalist worker had to possess qualities of dynamism, flexibility, critical self-reflection and individualism (2004, 64, 75-82).⁵ At Ciment S.A., Egrafal swiftly introduced new on *and* off-the-job standards, like ‘Safety First’ and ‘the Pledge for Prudent Driving’ in order for workers to learn new habits during work and leisure. From Egrafal’s perspective, workers’ behavioural modification was necessary in order for the provincial plant to become quickly modernised and fully integrated into the global-market structures of Egrafal Group Ltd.’s Ciment România division. Within three-years-time (after my fieldwork departure), the factory and labour of Ciment S.A. were to be brought entirely into the domain of this transnational market.

Ciment S.A.’s market integration into Egrafal Ciment România also meant labour’s ‘marketisation’ or commodification.⁶ Labour’s marketisation during the *program de integrare* required that workers learn that their labour was not a right, but a commodity on sale and in competition for Egrafal’s limited-amount purchase. Labour had to be transformed into pure economic value, insecurely bought and sold, without overriding social value and security (recall Polanyi 1944, 72-75) from a corporate

⁵ Egrafal was equally concerned with teaching workers to become profit-maximising neoliberal subjects, as evidenced in the following description of an ‘ideal work team’ from an Egrafal Ciment România employee newsletter: ‘A team (*o echipă*) which has initiative is flexible, dynamic and capable of producing changes (*schimburi*) [and] capable of setting new standards’ (in *Știrile*, December 2005, issue 25, page 7). Also consider a review of the third session of the factory’s Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) training, which lists employee goals: ‘Driving for results’ (*obținerea rezultatelor*) [involves]: (1) Setting stretching objectives (2) Focusing on results (3) Problem-solving (4) Project work (ibid).

⁶ More generally, the ‘marketisation of labour’ in this thesis refers to the process whereby workers enter into and participate as commodified beings in a free market economy in the context of a formerly non-market, state-socialist factory.

perspective. For employees this meant that job insecurity, competition and work hours were constantly on the rise during factory restructuring. Three-quarters of more than 1,000 employees had been laid-off since transnational take-over. More lay-offs were planned.⁷ Against this backdrop of labour insecurity, shop-floor labourers worked demanding twelve-hour, around-the-clock shifts⁸ five days a week – a change from eight-hour shifts under socialism. This was accompanied by a speedup of task-turnover time, as Egrafal had to increase worker productivity vis-à-vis capital outflow to increase profits (a process called ‘the pace of capital circulation’ in Harvey 1990, 147).⁹

Administration employees spent on average six days a week, ten hours a day at the geographically remote plant, seven kilometres from town. Their long work hours and fight to keep their jobs transformed their work into an embodiment of monetary value. Workers struggled to hold onto workplace social-moral values like mutuality (Dunn 2004, 64, 75-82) and maintained that work should be a social entitlement, as in socialist days (see Popovski 2000 on Soviet-era entitlements).¹⁰ As Ciment S.A. marketised, the plant was pitched by Egrafal to become a ‘global factory’ promising, not unlike in Soviet discourse, a new modern age for its workers. As in other parts of the former Soviet bloc, this kind of market development represented progress and was closely intertwined with the idea of the modern European (Drazin 2002, 107). However, in

⁷ This was according to the rumours of employees and informal conversations with anonymous Egrafal managers.

⁸ It is significant that the plant is geographically distant from Rezina’s town centre (approximately 7 kilometres), making it difficult for employees to leave their jobs during the workday to run home or do errands in town.

⁹ In contrast, Soviet propaganda speaks of rationalisation and increasing labour productivity, but allegedly ‘without impairing the workers’ health’ (Khoreva and Pikarevich, circa 1980). Such Soviet party lines, even if hardly the whole truth, resurface nevertheless in reaction to a rapidly transforming, anxiety-ridden present.

¹⁰ Under state socialism, social entitlements included, for example, education and health care, as well as the right to work. For more details, see Popovski 2000 on changing citizenship rights from the socialist to post-socialist era in the former Soviet Union.

order for European market integration to happen at Ciment S.A., a transfer of knowledge and language reorientation had to take place in the multi-cultural factory.

Egrafal's modernisation goals: language consolidation and European market integration

The Rezina Cement Plant's skilled workers and specialists were accustomed to speaking the language of the minority, Russian, not that of the Moldovan majority when Egrafal Group Ltd. acquired the factory in 1999. Almost all ethnic Moldovans spoke fluent Russian, or a basic version of it.¹¹ For the last half of a century, Russian was hailed as *the* inter-ethnic language of communication binding together diverse peoples in urban settings, as detailed in the previous two chapters. Managers and workers believed that Moldovan-speaking could not function in the production sphere (see Livezeanu 2007, 40). Even worse, the standard Romanian dialect – practiced by Egrafal Romanian managers – was all too recently deemed 'nationalist,' 'fascist' and forbidden by the Soviets, being reminiscent of Romania's Second-World-War occupation of Moldova. Based on this ideology and for practical reasons, the Rezina Cement Plant's *linguistic market* (Bourdieu 1991, 14, 18) – or structured space of differently valued and distributed languages – made Russian the most valued language choice in the Soviet and early post-socialist periods of the plant.¹² Alongside Russian speaking, skilled ethnic Moldovans also spoke a dialect of their mother tongue, the Moldovan idiom or standard Romanian, used at home and with close compatriots. Only a couple of Russians spoke a

¹¹ The majority of middle-aged Ciment S.A. Moldovans, many of whom were born in mono-ethnic villages in the MSSR, learned Russian in school or by way of involvement in regional *Komsomol* Communist Party youth activities. Others picked up Russian through attending urban boarding schools or frequently during factory construction or military service. The more a Moldovan interacted with Soviet party-state structures, the more likely he was to acquire fluent Russian.

¹² On a linguistic market, some language utterances 'are valued more highly than others; and part of the practical competence of speakers is to know how, and to be able, to produce expressions which are highly valued on the markets concerned' (Bourdieu 1991, 18).

form of Moldovan.¹³ In view of most employees knowing and valuing the Russian language, and Russians traditionally being veteran leaders, Ciment S.A. has been more or less a Russian-speaking plant for two decades, transcending the Soviet Union's collapse. This is not unlike other industrial plants around Moldova and Transnistria, which still function in Russian.¹⁴ This linguistic context, then, posed a challenge for the plant's integration into Egrafal România's purely romanophone business-administrative structures.

Egrafal Group Ltd. functions according to a 'multi-local business model,' which aims to combine corporate know-how with local initiative and market specificity. Transnational management modernises machines and mentalities while attempting to respect local cultures and customs. Yet, Egrafal made the decision to allocate the Rezina Cement Plant to the Egrafal Ciment România business unit in Eastern Europe upon take-over in 1999, tying the plant to wealthier, neighbouring Romania, instead of to nearby Russia and Ukraine, countries with which Moldova has had a more recent history. Interviews with Egrafal senior management suggest that important to its decision and subsequent reform policies was Egrafal's view that Moldova promises to learn more from advanced cement plants in Egrafal România than the relatively un-restructured ones in Egrafal's Russian and Ukrainian division. Another factor, albeit controversial one, in the decision was the assumption that Moldova allegedly has more in common with Romania than the latter countries, based on assumptions of shared

¹³ Moldovans and Russians alike still frequently use Soviet-learned adjectives like 'civilised' (*kul'turnyi* in Russian or *civilizat* in Romanian) and 'technical' (*tehniceskii* or *tehnic*) to explain their preference for Russian speaking at work instead of the country's official language. In describing their Russian language preference, Russians and Ukrainians sometimes add old party phrases like 'friendship of peoples' (*druzhiba narodov*) and 'togetherness' (*edinstvo*), considered representative of their language's role in building so-called community among multi-ethnic (or inter-national) peoples.

¹⁴ A significant portion of younger persons in Moldova, almost one-quarter of society, usually of urban white-collar, mixed-ethnic background, prefer education and employment in the Russian language, reproducing the Russian language's urban prominence in cities like Chişinău and Rezina, even as an increasing number of Romanian companies arriving in Moldova favour Romanian.

language and culture between Moldova and Romania. This belief, nevertheless, belies the reality of many workers' preferences towards Russian speaking, just mentioned above, as well as divergent ethno-linguistic subjectivities in and between the two countries, as will be discussed in Chapter Six. Egrafal's decision also ignores the reality of the local context in which the factory is located, with Rezina's mayor and city government,¹⁵ leading high school (*A. Pushkin School*), and even top restaurant (*Plai*) all functioning pretty much exclusively in the Russian language, not Romanian. Russian speaking is heard all up and down Rezina's main street.¹⁶ Moreover, Egrafal's decision to link the Moldovan plant with Romanian factories contradicts established Moldovan opinion-polls, which show that the national population is split in its strategic outlook towards Romania and the European Union (together 37 per cent) versus Russia (52 per cent).¹⁷ Many Moldovans appear to be more inclined towards the latter than former, not unlike persons living in Transnistria (discussed in Chapter Two), counter to Egrafal Ciment România's expectations.

In spite of this variation in disposition and Moldova's history of Russian language use, the corporation's solution was to adjust Ciment S.A.'s *lingua franca* from

¹⁵ Rezina's city government was controlled by the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) during my fieldwork. The party has long had a reputation for being democratically closed and hostile to Romanian culture (see Heintz 2008, 14). Therefore, Egrafal România did at times experience trouble with the PCRM-controlled local and national government, although problems were kept quiet. Only at my fieldwork departure in July 2006, when I had a face-to-face meeting with the French Director, did I hear that Egrafal Ltd. had received several letters from the office of the President of Moldova, expressing concern over the number of Romanians working at the plant. Later in spring 2007, a number of Romanian contractors were briefly arrested on trumped up immigration violation charges. This is evidence that transnational corporations are never free from the national contexts in which they operate (see Bear 2007, 15).

¹⁶ One Rezina informant says, in so many words, 'so many Moldovans speak Russian on the street just to be cool; they think they feel superior to Moldovans who don't speak Russian. [...] In Rezina there is a superiority complex with speaking Russian and an inferiority complex with speaking Romanian.'

¹⁷ See the Institute of Public Policy's (*Institutul de Politici Publice*) Moldova opinion poll, published July 2009, 63. Accessed 17 August 2009 on: http://www.ipp.md/files/Barometru/2009/iulie_english/BOP_iulie_2009_prima_parte_English.pdf. *Conversations with Ciment S.A.* See also the 2010 CBA-AXA CSOP poll, which evidences societal splits between 48 per cent of the population thinking Moldova needs to be closer to Russia, and 49 per cent closer to the West. 47 per cent prefers that the country becomes a member of the European Union, whereas 46 per cent wants to prioritise remaining in the Commonwealth of Independent States (*Moldova Azi*, 4 November 2010).

Russian to Romanian.¹⁸ This new language of communication was needed for the efficient transfer of knowledge from Romanian-speaking managers to multi-lingual local employees. This was important in 2005 – at the time of my fieldwork – when Ciment S.A. factory operations were gradually taken out of the hands of local Moldovan managers and given to directors from Romania. Moldovan managers became understudies (or deputies) to Romanian-speaking French Integration Director, Xavier Dupont, and to four Romanian managers – Plant Manager Pavel Florescu, Production Manager Gheorghe Szekely, Maintenance Manager Liviu Popescu and Performance Development Manager Călin Dumitru.¹⁹ All were brought in from the more advanced Ciment România division across the Prut River. These foreign managers were sent to run the Moldovan plant for three years in order to manage the multi-billion-euro investment and to integrate the plant into Egrafal Ciment România.²⁰

During this integration period, Egrafal România managers considered the decision to use Romanian as natural, with the titular tongue the official state language and more than three-quarters of the labour force being ethnic Moldovan. Minority ‘Russians’ – an emic category inclusive of ethnic Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians²¹ – made up less than one-quarter of the labour force, a two-fold relative decrease since socialism.²² Ethnic Moldovans now dominated in managerial and

¹⁸ However, the language changes in the plant inverted a long-held, Soviet-era linguistic ‘respect relationship’ between Russians and Moldovans. These respect relationships involved Moldovans showing standardised respect to Russians and other Slavs through the use of Russian. Ethnic Moldovans grew up in the Soviet Union learning from their parents and in school that it was impolite to address a Russian (especially of superior status) in their native Moldovan tongue.

¹⁹ As a reminder, all names in the thesis are pseudonyms.

²⁰ Two Romanian managers actually had to stay two years longer to better train local staff.

²¹ Throughout the rest of the thesis I use the emic category ‘Russian’ to imply eastern Slav ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, unless just ‘ethnic Russian’ is specified. Ethnic Bulgarians are also Slavs, but they do not consider themselves to be a part of this Russian category, even if they are mostly Russian-speaking.

²² Other minorities in Moldova, such as Bulgarians, Turkic-Gagauz and Roma, together constitute hardly one per cent of the factory’s workforce.

professional positions (see Table 4 and Table 10 in Appendix).²³ Moldovans also comprised nearly all rank-and-file labour posts. With this preponderance of Moldovans, standard-literary Romanian hence replaced Russian as the new linguistic style that cement workers were expected to acquire and use at work.

However, the effect over time of Egrafal's Romanian-language requirement was to decrease the plant's already small number of non-Romanian speakers – mostly Slavs of rank-and-file status. The result was that Russians now stood out only in scientific and technical positions, as in the Control Room and Laboratory. A smaller fraction of Russians, predominantly male, occupied one-fifth of important engineering and management posts.²⁴ This overall ethnic distribution of minority labour was a significant reduction from Soviet days, when archives show that male and female Russians dominated *all* top positions (see Table 2).²⁵ Interviews with Egrafal management suggest that the lay-offs of many Russians were accidental, although workers claim otherwise. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle, as the Russians surviving the lay-offs were those with advanced skill, experience and connections that did not make them easily replaceable with Moldovans without matching skills.²⁶ Nevertheless, the enforcement of new language policies affected workers' job stability and, as we will see, made language emblematic of consent and contestation towards economic restructuring.

²³ As noted earlier, this was mostly on account of post-1991 Russian flight and Egrafal advancement. This is according to an interview with Egrafal Ltd.'s former Moldova Operations Director in Chişinău, Moldova, May 2005.

²⁴ The majority of all Russians (over 50 per cent) are skilled, middle-aged, white-collar women, discussed in Chapter Five. The reason for this distribution is on account of gender-specific, skilled jobs, as in the Laboratory, not easily filled with non-Russians, as examined in Chapter Five.

²⁵ For example, in 1985 at the factory's founding, archives reveal that the Control Room was almost three-quarters Russian, while nowadays in 2005-2006 it is only one-third Russian. This is still a relatively high Russian concentration compared to other factory shop floors nowadays.

²⁶ This point was confirmed by the Ciment S.A. trade union leader and an Egrafal Romanian senior manager.

As an aside, Egrafal achieved two things by way of factory reform that not even the Moldovan state has attempted in almost two decades of independence.²⁷ It transferred industrial control from ethnic Russians to formerly rank-and-file Moldovan indigenes, as well as *tried* to make Russians, manual-labour and russified Moldovans, unaccustomed to standard Romanian, to speak the language. In the process, the Rezina Cement Plant became a type of *alternative linguistic marketplace* (Bilaniuk 2005, 100), in which Egrafal's (Romanian) language preferences functioned as the opposite of those outside of the factory. The complex effects of and responses towards all of this planned change will be discussed in the following four chapters.

Egrafal's restructuring in the Administration Building and 'the territory'

Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six all deal with the Administration Building. The Administration Building is situated at the centre of the plant compound. Its modern, refurbished exterior and welcoming soft-blue colour stands in stark contrast to the worn-out, rusty-grey colours of the factory's screeching, grinding machinery, scorching kiln, billowing smokestacks and giant silos encircling the building. The contrast represents what employees see as the spatial division of the plant between the dangerous and dirty *teritoriu* ('the territory'), where cement production and maintenance work happens, and the clean, orderly *birouri* ('the offices,' referring to the Administration Building), where production is monitored and marketed. Employees in both spaces attribute a higher status to the latter over the former.²⁸

²⁷ This suggests that non-state actors, like transnational-corporations, can be just as or more involved as state-governments in unifying people's diverse linguistic practices around one official language. For in Moldova, the state has not managed to impose its official national language (*limba de stat* or Romanian/Moldovan) as the only legitimate spoken idiom. Egrafal apparently has had more success. This makes me question Pierre Bourdieu's emphasis on the state's primary role in defining the linguistic market. I would suggest decoupling Bourdieu's concept of the 'linguistic market' from the state, at least when applied to contexts of weak or newly independent states (see Bourdieu 1991, 45).

²⁸ One middle-aged Laboratory informant, who has worked at the plant since its founding, explains 'it has always been like that,' with the Administration Building and its workers possessing a higher status than manual-labour spaces and workers.

Having been in sectors of the Administration Building and the territory before, *during* and after the difficult management change over, I observed that Administration employees and rank-and-file workers (*muncitorii de rând*) alike were anxiety-ridden over their long-term job security and struggled to keep pace with the dizzying change. Fearing redundancy, talk of worker rivalry was on the rise in both factory spaces (see the beginning of Chapters Six and Seven). The Administration's Control-room machinists, I am told, competed with one another for corporate bonuses in operating the kiln at stable, high temperatures with the least amount of costly gas, while shop-floor foreman silently competed with one another to learn English to secure their jobs. However, I noted that differences existed in Administration and *teritoriu* employees' responses to change. Unlike hostile rank-and-file Moldovans and minority Russian work groups, the Administration Building's Third-floor workforce did not openly resist and rebel against the Moldovan-to-Romanian management change-over and the so-called romanianisation (*românizare*). Instead, white-collar Administration workers on the Third Floor (*etajul trei*) seemed to enjoy management's presence, engaging in flirting with and proud mimicking of foreign managers' consumption and work practices. Control Room technicians, many of whom prefer Russian speaking, only subtly resisted what they called *românizare* (romanianisation) by shrewdly developing dual working patterns based on alternating between Romanian and Russian speaking, which is discussed next in Chapter Three. The ability to speak various languages and switch between them when necessary, as we will see in the following pages, connects with varying spaces inside and outside of the factory; the same is true for patterns of consent and contestation of neoliberal reform.

Altogether the chapters of Part Two will show how the introduction of a new language, modern machines and corporate-work expectations alter local labour activities

and relations (the labour process) and workers' ethno-linguistic subjectivities. This is especially the case for Moldovan-dialect and Russian speakers vis-à-vis the new foreign Romanian managers and local-aligned compatriots. Language, and the moral-economic values it stands for, is a key part of how workers' experience transnational market integration and modernisation.

Figure 27. Rezina Cement Plant kiln.



Figure 28. The Rezina Cement Plant's 'territory' (*teritoriu*) of production, maintenance and distribution. (Courtesy of Ciment S.A.)



Figure 29. The Administration Building of the Rezina Cement Plant. French and Moldovan national flags fly in the middle.



Figure 30. Mechanical cement-bag loading at the Distribution Centre of Ciment S.A. (Courtesy of Ciment S.A.)



Figure 31. ‘Orientation towards the client’ sign in Ciment S.A.’s parking lot, reminding workers and visitors of ‘The Egrafal Way’ of ‘an orientation towards the client,’ ‘constructing a culture of performance,’ ‘more efficient organisation’ and ‘personal development.’



Figure 32. Close-up view of an ‘orientation towards the client’ sign in Ciment S.A.’s parking lot.



CHAPTER THREE

THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
Control Room

3.1 Introduction

As Egrafal expected all employees at Ciment S.A. to speak Romanian, Egrafal simultaneously set about re-organising work groups according to the assumption that ethnicity is equivalent to language, especially on heterogeneous shop floors with a lingering Russian presence. Egrafal assumed that all ethnic Moldovans speak a form of Romanian and all ethnic Russians speak Russian. Egrafal's mono-ethno-linguistic work organisation in the Control Room, the most diverse space of the plant, had the effect of separating out Romanian-speakers from Russians and Ukrainians in need of language training. The separation allowed for close scrutinising of the latter's progress in language learning. The division, though, meant that one linguistic bias was replaced with another – Soviet-era Russian for modern-day Romanian – in the organisation of labour regimes.

Egrafal's work organisation, however, did not contribute to a singular distinctive pattern of language and work behaviour based on the corporation's understanding that ethnicity equals language. Neither did Egrafal succeed in getting Moldovan workers to stop speaking Russian entirely, even if it did eventually get russophone Moldovans begrudgingly to speak a form of Romanian in particular circumstances at work, as this chapter will show. The result was multiple linguistic-work practices began to function in the Control Room. Through them, the chapter finds that Egrafal's new system created dual 'formal' and 'informal' linguistic work modes to cope with restructuring. The formal or official mode was about employees working 'the Egrafal way' (with Romanian speaking), while the unofficial mode was about working by familiar local convention (with Russian speaking). Language was emblematic of each work mode. I argue that this duality shows workers, in Elizabeth Dunn's words, "[...] seek[ing] to develop other subjectivities and to become subordinate in a way they can live with'

(Dunn 2004, 8). Their actions suggest a type of economic morality that does not loudly protest against market reform, if anything because of the constraints of factory spatial work organisation. Instead, these workers exhibit adaptation with a mix of morality, mutuality, pride and pragmatism.

In what follows, the chapter first looks at the Control Room's heterogeneity in order to understand the context in which Egrafal attempts to affect change. Out of this diversity, the chapter details Egrafal's attempts to create a (formal) work mode for supposed linguistic efficiency in the Control Room. This description is followed by an account of how workers informally organise around their Russian-speaking language preferences to manage their job tasks in a manner considered 'cultured' (*kul'turnyi*) and efficient to them. Important to this duality are the different social-moral values connected to Russian and Romanian speaking. The finding of duality among operators leads next to an examination of the different language perceptions of managers, supervisors and operators in order to understand the ideological and practical roots of the duality. The chapter shows how russified Moldovans' language preferences are connected to external influences in the family and media, which Control-room employees engage daily. Nevertheless, the factory's spatial work organisation affects how these external values are ultimately expressed at work.²⁹ The chapter ends by assessing what the language-work duality means for russified Moldovan workers' sense of self-identity as Russian speakers. This russophone subjectivity is arguably a part of how workers cope with their changing socio-economic environment.

²⁹ This is in keeping with Burawoy (1979, 156-157), who argues that 'the labor process is [...] relatively autonomous. That is, the labor process may itself determine the effect of imported consciousness [race, education, age]' (1979, 152).

3.2 The Case of Russophone Moldovans in the Control Room and Society

The duality of work-language practices discussed in this chapter was observed most predominantly in the Control Room among Moldovan male specialists, popularly called ‘russophone’ or ‘russified’ Moldovans (*moldoveni rusificați* in Romanian).³⁰ They represent Moldova’s thousands of Russian-speaking indigenes, who complicate assumptions that language and ethnicity are co-determinous categories. At Ciment S.A., russophone Moldovans represent about one-sixth of the factory labour force and more than one-half of Control-room operators and supervisors.³¹ They ostensibly appear to be Russians in everyday life, and indeed, their subjectivity and social outlook (championing socialist nostalgia and economic protectionism)³² tends to be similar to that of Russians and Ukrainians (see also Livezeanu 2007, 47 on russophones in Moldova).³³ Their preference for Russian speaking at work and home makes Egrafal managers confuse them for ethnic Russians in every-day life.³⁴ In spite of russified Moldovans’ indistinctiveness, Egrafal places an unambiguous, straightforward cultural paradigm on these employees’ work organisation.

³⁰ Irina Livezeanu uses the word ‘russophones’ to define ‘anyone who identifies with Great Russian culture and is nostalgic about the Soviet past’ (2007, 47). Hereafter I use the expression ‘russified Moldovans’ and ‘russophones’ interchangeably, albeit not derogatorily, with ‘Russian-speaking Moldovans’ or ‘Moldovan preferred Russian speakers.’ All expressions mean the same thing in this chapter.

³¹ Most of these ethnic Moldovan men are inter-married to ethnic Russian or Ukrainian wives. They are usually of a skilled, middle-age, non-manual labour background – half having achieved plant promotions from ‘worker’ (*rabotniki*) to ‘specialist’ (*spetsialist*) status under communism. The rest were promoted after the privatisation of the factory.

³² See the end of Chapter Two for more on socialist nostalgia and economic protectionism among Russians and the Russian disposed in the context of Transnistria. It should be noted that only language is an outwardly noticeable trait of russianness.

³³ However, the socio-political attitudes of russified Moldovans are somewhat different from Russians, as discussed elsewhere (Chamberlain-Creangă 2009, 13). Russified Moldovans are more fluid and fluctuating in their social strivings and even political preferences. They are also less cohesive and more fragmented than ethnic-minority Russians and Ukrainians.

³⁴ None of the middle-aged, russified Moldovans in the plant were mixed-ethnic, as inter-marriage was uncommon for their parents, most of whom were married before or around the time of Moldova’s post-war annexation to the Soviet Union. The offspring of middle-aged workers are more likely to be mixed-ethnic, not themselves.

Russified Moldovans' indistinctiveness (vis-à-vis Russians) may be why these Moldovans are rarely discussed in literature on Moldova (see Dyer 1996 et al.; Heintz 2008; King 2000), although they exhibit common characteristics indicative of a linguistic subjectivity – of becoming 'Russian speakers' – observed around the former Soviet Union, and as theorised by scholar David Laitin (1998). However, differently than Laitin's expectation of a linguistic-based nationality group in the making, in Ciment S.A.'s Control Room, Moldovans' russified subjectivities are more a product of pragmatism and cultural-moral ideas reproduced in relation to capitalist change. They are not permanent, wide-ranging identities. This is even if foreign and young Moldovan managers assume that workers' retention of Russian speaking, and the russophone self-identity linked to it, are Soviet hold-overs. Instead, this chapter argues that they are reinvigorated practices developed to cope with the post-socialist instability and pressures of 'the Egrafal way.'³⁵

Teodor is one example of a russified Moldovan, even though he still speaks his mother tongue. Teodor is a kiln machinist (*mașinist la cuptor*) in the Control Room, one of the most high-status, (non-managerial) posts in the plant. He and the cement mill operator next to him effectively control the entire process of cement production. Teodor is responsible for regulating the kiln's energy-use and temperature. His work involves analysing computer readings and making regular rounds outside to take kiln temperatures every fifteen to twenty minutes. In our initial verbal exchange, Teodor made it known, unequivocally, 'I am not Romanian!' (*Nu sunt român!*). This was followed by him proudly proclaiming, 'I built this plant,' having worked all twenty years of the plant's existence. What Teodor did in the Soviet past was contrasted with

³⁵ However, the energy these russified Moldovan workers spent negotiating double work modes, and the way Egrafal later exploited them, particularly post-fieldwork, seems to have countered any possible group connectivity around the language work practices that workers protested in the first place.

what he is not in the liberal-economic present. Teodor's forceful assertions came across as moral statements of work, self-identity and language preference. As Teodor furiously hand-recorded in an Egrafal log the kiln temperature readings *in Russian*, he explained that his wife is a Russian from Siberia and that he and his children speak *only Russian* at home. Russian was the main language of the plant until 1999, he stresses. Teodor found it difficult to begin regularly speaking his mother tongue (*limba maternă*) when Egrafal took over the plant six years ago and started enforcing Romanian speaking. He had been speaking Russian at work and home for more than twenty years, since his early days of marriage and factory-construction in the 1970s. For these reasons, Russian is Teodor's preferred, most utilised language, even though he has his mother-tongue (Moldovan) partly to thank for his promotion to the Control Room under Egrafal. Despite his partiality for Russian, at Egrafal Ciment S.A., Teodor is labelled 'Moldovan' by Egrafal management and assigned to a Moldovan supervisor and Moldovan co-machinist. He is expected on-the-job to try to speak standard Romanian. Teodor works in a mono-ethnic Moldovan work group not because he does not know how to speak and act Russian, but because Egrafal finds it efficient to divide the plant along the lines of 'ethnicity equals language,' and classifies workers accordingly. In spite of Egrafal's binary work organisation – between Moldovans and Russians – Teodor prefers to attend Egrafal's Russian, not Moldovan job trainings, and to speak and write in Russian, not Romanian, whenever he can, as observed in his everyday work habits over periods of time. He and others like to frequent Rybnitsa's (Transnistrian) markets and shops, hailing the allegedly better quality products from Russia and Ukraine. Teodor is not alone in his on and off-the-job preferences. His partialities are shared by many of his Control-room Moldovan colleagues and made visible at work vis-à-vis Egrafal's formal work organisation.

3.3 Formal Work Mode in the Control Room

Spatial layout of the Control Room

To set the context for the following discussion, the Control Room (*sala de comandă*) is known as the ‘heart of the factory’ (*inima fabricii*). It is a hot, dusty, asbestos-enclosed space about the size of a classroom (approximately 40 x 20 meters). It is positioned four stories high in the Administration Building, attached to the scorching cement kiln (100+ degrees Celsius) on its outside exterior. The western wall of the Control Room is lined with tall, boxy, loud machines, regurgitating automatic print-outs. In the middle of the shop floor are two operating stations for the kiln machinist (*mașinist la cuptor*) and cement mill (raw materials) operator (*mașinist de moară de făină*) – two of the most important (non-managerial) positions in the plant.³⁶ Three tall, old-fashioned-looking control boards protrude from the operators’ interlocked station desks. One reads in Russian ‘diagram of the technological control of the kiln department’ (*shema tehnologicheskogo kontroliia pechnogo otdeleniia*), its language a reminder of days gone. Each Soviet-designed operating board is connected to an Egrafal-installed modern computer, emblematic of ‘the old’ being overrun by ‘the new.’ All operations are now computer controlled. Next to Egrafal modern computers are a myriad of Soviet-installed, semi-obsolete chunky control buttons. The buttons are in Russian (on bottom) with stickered Romanian translations over top – symbolic of Egrafal România’s takeover. On the back wall behind the operators is an unavoidable eye-catching sign in Romanian: ‘Your goals for 2005’ (*Obiectivele tale pentru anul 2005*), printed in bold, flashy red letters. Overlooking the operating stations is a see-through, panoptic-like windowed office for on-call shift bosses, foremen and the half-

³⁶ Different operators get different salaries, depending on performance and education. For example, the more frugally an operator uses gas in kiln operation, the better his performance and hence pay.

dozen process engineers who move in and out of the room. It is within this shop-floor spatial environment that the labour process unfolds, in all of its activities and relations. In order to understand better these relations and general work organisation, the composition of the workforce and authority structure is examined next, with attention to ethnicity and language.

Social organisation in the Control Room

There are a total of four shift groups working in the Control Room. Nine operators are men and two are women.³⁷ They and the foremen make up no more than five or six persons permanently stationed in the Control Room at any one time. All eleven workers labour twelve-hour shifts. Operator Teodor grimaces with distaste when twelve-hour work days are brought up.³⁸ Just over half of the male operators in the Control Room are ethnic Russian and Ukrainian and the other half ethnic Moldovan, like Teodor. These Moldovans generally consider themselves Russian speakers. They know both Russian and Romanian (akin to the Moldovan idiom), whereas none of their Russian counterparts speak the plant's operating language of Romanian. The latter require constant translation. This difference in language ability has occasionally caused production hitches and halts, as discussed later in the chapter. All Control-room operators are middle-aged (between 40 and 50 years old), and most have been employed at the plant for twenty or more years since its construction. All were university or trade-school educated during the Soviet days. Still, despite good jobs and skilled backgrounds, some are new to the relatively high-status post of Control-room operator.

³⁷ More precisely, five men work as kiln machinists, while four men and two women serve as operators, regulating the flow of raw materials into the cement mill (*moară de făină*). Notably, only men work as kiln operators. This may be because kiln control is considered more stressful – requiring the sensitive, skilled use of increasingly expensive natural gas – and hence the work is of higher status than mill operation done by two women and their male colleagues.

³⁸ As previously mentioned, eight-hour work days were the norm in Soviet days, although occasionally twelve-hour shifts also existed.

Most Moldovan operators, like Teodor, were only promoted to the Control Room after the 1999 take-over of Egrafal România.

In terms of management authority, one shift boss and one foreman are responsible for each of the four shift groups; all bosses are male. Most are Moldovan, with the exception of a couple of Russians. As supervisors, they usually stay in the Control Room for operators' entire twelve-hour work day. Other higher ranking managers from Production and Manufacturing often move in and out of the Control Room, occasionally overseeing operators' work. Working relations between supervisors and operators range from collegial and informal to professional.

The Control Room is the highest traffic shop floor in the plant. Diverse ranks, genders and types of employees traverse through its space every hour: operators, the shift boss, the Romanian Manager of Production (Gheorghe Szekely) and his Moldovan deputies, along with process engineers, maintenance workers, cleaning ladies and contractors. There can be anywhere from four to fifteen persons in the Control Room at any given time.³⁹ This picture contrasts with empty, machine-run production spaces outside in *teritoriu*.

In spite of the Control Room's social and ethnic inter-mixture, individual operator work groups are not so diverse, a point raised earlier. Moldovan operators are paired with Moldovan supervisors, as in the case of Teodor, while ethnic Russian and Ukrainian operators are put together with ethnic Russian or Ukrainian supervisors. Egrafal managers call, for example, the Moldovan operators 'a Moldovan group' (*grupul moldovean*) and the Russian operators 'a Russian group' (*grupul rus*), implying ethnicity, with the assumption that language speaking matches ethnicity. However, as

³⁹ This is busy in a downsized transnational-corporate cement plant. I compare this Control Room with those I have visited in large cement plants in North America. The latter usually only have one to four persons on average.

already established, not all ethnic Moldovans prefer just Moldovan or Romanian-speaking – a point often overlooked or misconstrued by scholars working on Moldova (e.g. Chifu 2005).⁴⁰ Laada Bilaniuk's work on Ukraine rightly challenges such assumptions that nominal ethnicity and language should coincide, as not all ethnic Ukrainians speak Ukrainian (2005, 19, 34-35). However, at Ciment S.A., management's decision that ethnicity should dictate and be synonymous with language-use – no matter how strategic for managing work – ignores the fact that significant numbers of Moldovan workers, like Teodor, prefer to speak Russian. The outcome of Egrafal's policy is that Teodor and colleagues may reluctantly accommodate Egrafal's formal work expectations, but also develop their own informal ways of working – partly as subtle protest and partly as a means of coping with market changes. This next section looks at how russified Moldovan workers respond at work to Egrafal standards by switching between languages as the situation dictates.

3.4 Informal Work Mode: Being Cultured (*Kul'turnyi*) in the Control Room

To be 'cultured' (*kul'turnyi*) in the technical, scientific Control Room has traditionally meant speaking Russian. Besides in the Laboratory (see Chapter Five), Russian speaking has persisted most in the factory's Control Room into post-privatisation years, even after Egrafal exchanged one-third of the Control Room's predominantly Russian and Ukrainian staff with ethnic Moldovans. The Control Room is a shop floor worth examining on account of being historically dominated,⁴¹ in number and status position, by ethnic Russians and Ukrainians (see Table 2). It is a factory space where the divergence of language and ethnicity is clearly visible, and the subtle

⁴⁰ Romanian scholars especially tend to assume Moldovans want to speak a form of Romanian, and if not, it is because they are prevented from doing so by various external factors (see Chifu 2005).

⁴¹ For at least 14 years of the factory's 20 years of existence (at the time of my fieldwork.)

conflicts and concessions between workers and managers over such is equally noticeable.

An average weekday in the Control Room begins with a shift-change meeting from 8:30 to 9:00 AM in the supervisor's glass see-through room. Present at that time are the shift bosses (*șef de schimb*) and the shift foremen (*maistru de schimb*) from the night and day shifts, along with the Production Manager, Romanian Gheorghe Szekely.⁴² The order of business starts with an analysis of production during the past twenty-four hours, followed by bosses' work proposals and task assignments. Safety incidents are sometimes reported. 'Worker safety' and 'environmental protection' (*protecția mediului*) are discussed as problems arise, although Egrafal expects it daily (officially). Romanian Chief Gheorghe's presence at all morning Control-room meetings assures that Romanian is spoken among Moldovans, even if local dialect (like words '*ghine* –good') is frequently overheard. Before the autumn 2005 arrival of Egrafal Euro-Romanian management, I observed, and my informants confirm, Control Room meetings were frequently conducted in Russian or in Russian mixed with Moldovan.

Despite today's Romanian-speaking at shift-change meetings, when the meeting's half-hour is up, and the Romanian manager exits the glass room, most supervisors, operators and shift managers – irrespective of job rank and ethnicity – *revert back to Russian speaking*. The same happens when out of ear-shot of any Romanian manager. Operators go about their tasks in Russian, like communicating kiln readings in Russian via walkie-talkie with colleagues in the cement mill, or logging computer readings in Russian Cyrillic handwriting, as Teodor does. Moldovans like him

⁴² Methodologically, I accompanied the Production Manager to one of these meetings, while other meetings I observed on my own. (Note: most Russians and Ukrainians in the Control Room need some degree of translation from Romanian to Russian.)

prefer receiving their work instructions in Russian over Romanian. Operator notices to each other are written exclusively in Russian. All of this activity suggests an informal or non-Egrafal-sanctioned work mode based around the working language of Russian.

Whatever Egrafal thinks about the use of Russian in the factory, its importance for production activities is never more clearly evidenced than when work goes awry. Every few hours kiln and mill operations tend to get off track – either the kiln temperature is too high or low or too much red slurry (a raw material) is going into the cement mill. In response, a group of three or four engineers – all of similar status vis-à-vis the operators – gather around the operator to collectively solve the problem. Russian is the most common language during these crises, irrespective of the ethnic composition of those gathered to resolve the problem. Workers indicate that Russian speaking helps the group fix the problem fastest in order to cope with meeting the expectations of a time-conscious Egrafal.

Even local Moldovan bosses endorse and become implicated in these informal ways of working.⁴³ Some say ‘workers will not respect you if you [a boss] do not speak Russian.’ Whatever the reason, next to Teodor’s computer is a hand-written sign from the (ethnic Moldovan) Deputy Manufacturing Chief addressed in Russian ‘to the kiln machinists! [...]’ (*mashinistam pechi!*). The choice of Russian for the sign – from a Moldovan boss to Russian *and* Moldovan work groups – indicates two things: firstly, the majority of kiln operators prefer Russian in conducting their daily tasks, and secondly, local Rezina bosses, regardless of their ethnicity, do not discourage Russian-language use. Moldovan deputy managers in fact could be observed habitually yielding to Russian speaking with Russian, Ukrainian *and* russified Moldovan operators, who

⁴³ This might be because, as Egrafal Romanian managers complain, shift bosses tend to defend the interests of the collective instead of ‘pushing workers to work harder and to learn Romanian.’ In reality, though, there is high status insecurity among Moldovans adjusting to their newly appointed supervisory status vis-à-vis demoted Russians.

initiate conversation in Russian, even if they (the operators) are the local manager's subordinates.⁴⁴ The factors, then, structuring Moldovan bosses' Russian language choice were neither their ethnicity nor job-status, nor that of their subordinates, since both ranks come from varying ethnic backgrounds, and given superiors gladly would return Romanian for Romanian if initiated by subordinates.⁴⁵ I observed Russian and Ukrainian workers with modest Romanian-speaking do this once or twice with Moldovan bosses. Therefore, ethnicity and job-rank did not dictate patterns of language usage in the Control Room. Rather, I argue, it was a past (moralised) preference for Russian, associated with the technical Control Room, in combination with a present need to get the job done in the easiest language. Nevertheless, the extent to which informal Russian-speaking could be practiced depended on Ciment S.A.'s wider spatial work organisation.

3.5 Language Values, Social-moral Embeddedness and Work Organisation

Control room operator Vadim says that just because he is paid more now than in socialist days does not mean that work is better. For Vadim, the idea of a 'better working life' is not defined by money only. Work is also about stability. Anthropological literature on work and industry points to how such values, attitudes and moralities are embedded in changing forms of work organisation. It is often from these ideas and moralities that labour protest materialises (see Nash 1993 on religious Tio worship). Post-socialist ethnographies of labour routinely show that there is no unified set of moralities and ideas about work in post-socialist

⁴⁴ In terms of inter-ethnic interaction between Moldovan managers and Russian and Ukrainian employees, Moldovan managers at Ciment S.A. normally speak Russian with Russian-speaking Slavs.

⁴⁵ Seniority refers to the number of years a worker has been employed at the plant. Age and seniority between these two sets of peoples also appear to have little impact on their work-time language choices and job relations, as both bosses and workers are approximately the same age (35 to 50 years old) and most have worked at the plant since its foundation. However, age does influence language preferences in work interactions between Moldovan operators and younger Moldovan engineers. Younger Moldovan supervisors tend to side with Egrafal Romanian management in contesting subordinates' informal Russian-speaking work mode, as mentioned later in the chapter.

workplaces. Elizabeth Dunn demonstrates how Polish workers hold values about work and capitalism different from their new foreign owners (Dunn 2004, 36-38). The divergence frequently leads to labour tension, even if frustrated or blunted (Müller 2007, 204-213).⁴⁶ Other work by Monica Heintz depicts how managers and opinion leaders in Romania pit imported capitalist work ethics against allegedly negative local work practices (see Chapter Eight in Heintz 2006).

In Ciment S.A.'s Control Room, these scholars' ideas are visible in competing notions of work and on-the-job language use. For Control-room operators, work is about sustenance and stability, as echoed in Vadim's words above, as well as about continuity with the past, as heard in Teodor's words, 'I built this plant,' followed by a family justification for Russian-speaking. For Egrafal, on the other hand, work means ever-increasing productivity, which leads Egrafal to organise work groups in a manner they deem most productive (around ethnicity equals language) with a bias for Romanian. However, even with these different work ideas and social-linguistic values, factory spatial organisation affected the way in which these social values could (or could not) become sources of shared moral-economic protest against marketisation.

In terms of organisation, the office of the Romanian Production Chief overseeing the Control Room is located just one floor below the Control Room. He and fellow Romanian managers are just a minute's walk away from the operators. This arrangement allows the Romanian managers to make frequent trips to the Control Room to check up on 'the heart of production.'⁴⁷ Being regularly (and unexpectedly) in the

⁴⁶ For example, workers in the Alima factory viewed the capitalist privatisation of their factory as an opportunity for historical justice after socialism through real employee ownership of the firm, whereas Polish state officials and TNC buyers considered only economic growth and efficiency in selling the factory to the American company Gerber (Dunn 2004, 35-38).

⁴⁷ Egrafal Romanian managers are important to this discussion concerning work organisation, because they are a part of the labour process (or work organisation), according to Burawoy: 'I refer to the relational aspect of the labour process as the relations (in) production or production relations. They are, for example, the relations of the shop floor into which workers enter both with one another *and with*

presence of Romanian bosses, Control-room operators have learned to change quickly to Romanian from Russian. They switch back to Russian, however, as soon as the foreign managers exit their space. From workers' perspective, the change back to Russian is about moral culturedness (*kul'turnost'*),⁴⁸ in helping each other get work done by way of the language they are most accustomed to. Interestingly, efficiency also appears to be a part of this Russian culturedness. Elizabeth Dunn writes that at the Alima factory: 'morality and efficiency presented two alternative frameworks by which to judge value' (2004, 38), but among the Control-room operators, Russian speaking was valued for both its moral culturedness and efficiency in trying to meet corporate demands.⁴⁹

The fact that Control-room operators were able to manage their work through a language that they considered moral and efficient – or, as I see it, 'to become subordinate in a way they [could] live with' (Dunn 2004, 8) – meant that workers generally adapted to changes in the labour process. This is even if they regularly foot-dragged and complained about Romanian speaking. The former is significant, because, according to E.P. Thompson, the key elements in workers developing a moral economy of protest are a 'consensus as to what [are] legitimate and what [are] illegitimate practices' and an 'outrage to these moral assumptions [on legitimate/illegitimate practices]' (Thompson 1991, 188 and see Chapter Five). Even if Control-room operators thought it was legitimate that they should be allowed to speak Russian on the job, the fact that they could, even if only out of ear-shot of Romanian managers, meant that little sustained grievance developed among workers. Therefore, even if culturedness and

management [italics mine]' (1979, 15; see also 1979, 147). Therefore, we see that managers are an important part of production relations and overall work organisation.

⁴⁸ Bound up with an idea of moral culturedness (*kul'turnost'*) is the idea that Russian-speaking represents continuity with Russian-speaking pasts and family lives, as mentioned later in the chapter.

⁴⁹ In other words, even if Egrafal România managers considered the Russian-language 'old fashioned' and the Romanian mode as epitomizing a so-called capitalist work ethic, workers viewed both modes as linked to efficiency.

morality were indeed embedded in the labour process (as represented in Russian speaking), there was no shared outward expression of moral economy, along the lines of E.P. Thompson.⁵⁰ Instead, Control-room workers modified and adjusted their lives within the constraints and allowances of factory spatial work organisation.

3.6 Management Perceptions of Language

The work-language dualities just highlighted were tolerated, but not highly welcomed by Romanian managers and junior supervisors, whose attitudes reveal further values placed on language use. Romanian managers and young Moldovan supervisors spoke poorly of the persistence of Russian among skilled workers, especially among ethnic Moldovans. Romanian Production Chief Gheorghe, for instance, complained that he could not speak directly to six of the eleven ‘minority’ operators⁵¹ in the Control Room: ‘There’s no desire (*voința*) among them to learn Romanian. [...] And neither do they know English or French. It’s only Russian,’ he deplored angrily.⁵² His anger, though, may have only served to reinforce a sense of Russian-speaker identification, discussed at the end of the chapter.

Sharing Gheorghe’s opinion on Russian speaking, young quality-control engineer Andrei and boss Evgenii (one of a few Romanian-speaking Russians)⁵³ are frustrated at employees, especially ethnic Moldovans, who will not learn standard-literary Romanian. ‘Having one language in the factory is easier and enhances

⁵⁰ However, it is important to mention that just because there is no clear expression of moral economy does not mean social, moral ideas do not exist in the labour process (cf. Wegren 2005 suggesting otherwise). See Chapter Five for more on E.P. Thompson and moral economy.

⁵¹ It is worth noting that the Romanian managers, like Production Chief Gheorghe, often confused russified Moldovans for Russians.

⁵² However, I also discovered that Romanian managers like Gheorghe cannot easily distinguish between mono-linguistic ethnic Russians and Ukrainians and russified Moldovans, who ostensibly appear to be Russians but are not.

⁵³ Evgenii is a rare case, though. It is important to note that Evgenii is married to an ethnic Moldovan wife, whereas many Russian and Ukrainian technical workers are married to co-ethnic Russians. Evgenii’s Moldovan wife also is an influential member of the Rezina Moldovan community and helps Evgenii’s Romanian-language learning.

communication, and so productivity,’ Evgenii maintains. He and Andrei protest over how much time it takes them to translate Egrafal documents from Romanian into Russian: ‘[And] Egrafal does not want to waste time!’

They also think workers are too nostalgic for old machines and work habits and not adapting fast enough to Egrafal’s innovative technology. Andrei gives the example of a new machine for the kiln installed in April 2006. ‘It is July now!’ Andrei complains. The Control-room operators are still learning to use it three months on: ‘They are used to only Russian equipment – in which one needs to only *push, push, and push*. [...]’ Andrei contrasts crude, chunky Soviet appliances with Egrafal’s modern, digitized equipment, requiring just a flick of the mouse or a keyboard stroke. Andrei goes on to complain how he painstakingly translated the new equipment instructions from English to Romanian and then to Russian for all of the operators and shift bosses (note: of all ethnicities) to be able to read the directions in a language comfortable for them. The idea was the operators could then swiftly learn to run the new machine, which they still struggle to operate. For Andrei, workers’ Russian speaking represents a thing of the past whilst Romanian is emblematic of productivity in the post-socialist transforming plant.

Diverging management-worker perceptions over Russian speaking surface most prominently during Control-room emergencies, like one spring weekend when a city-wide electrical shutdown surprisingly stopped kiln production – long enough to be a threat to meeting seasonal production targets. Romanian Chief Gheorghe and ‘minority’ operators on staff could not communicate with each other in a common language to resolve the problem in a quick manner. ‘This will have to change. It needs to,’ Chief Gheorghe asserts. However, what Gheorghe and local engineer Andrei fail to see is that Egrafal encourages russianness, at least in the informal work mode, through its very

own reform and work demands, which necessitate the use of the most convenient language possible to get the job done.

Still, managers' negativity towards Russian speaking in the plant begs the question of why skilled russified Moldovans persist in Russian speaking, especially when they can turn exclusively to their native Moldovan tongue, as expected by Egrafal, and doing so would make the labour and production process run smoother (from Egrafal's perspective). This next section examines some reasons.

3.7 Moldovans' Russian Speaking as Pride, Protest and Pragmatism

For many Moldovan workers like Teodor, Russian speaking is still an important part of urban-industrial behaviour. This makes it hard to switch over completely to Romanian. Most heavy industrial factories in Moldova still function in Russian, as previously mentioned. This propensity towards Russian-speaking is partly on account of older and middle-aged Moldovans, like those in the Control Room, being more familiar with Russian words for technical equipment and instructions (see also Chapter Six).

Beyond pragmatism, many Moldovans like Teodor are proud to speak Russian. Yet he and others like him are often derogatorily typecast by co-titulars as 'russified Moldovans' (*moldoveni rusificați*), who supposedly compromised their language and culture for the lures of social advancement promised by Soviet-era russification. In the eyes of Moldovans who did not become russified, russophone Moldovans are considered living remnants of Moldova's Soviet legacy, unwilling to adapt to new times. However, far from it, russified Moldovans persist in Russian speaking at Ciment S.A. for very practical and existential reasons that relate to Moldova's rapidly transforming, post-Soviet society.

To illustrate, there are family practicalities behind Moldovans' Russian speaking. Most russified Moldovans (wedded in Soviet days) are inter-married with

mixed-ethnic offspring at home; Russian is the uniting language of the household. Here in private domestic spaces, positive attitudes towards the Russian language are reproduced, as in the case of operator Teodor's multi-ethnic household. For Teodor and russified Moldovan colleagues like him, dinner-table conversations are always in Russian and post-meal relaxation revolves around reviewing Russian-language newspapers,⁵⁴ whilst a Russian sit-com plays on the television in the background. Typically the Moldovan national channel (of lesser quality) is quickly flicked past with the remote in favour of flashy Russian newscasts. Almost every night on the Moscow news, families like Teodor's get a half-hour or more dose of Russian viewpoints on neighbouring states. It is no wonder that Teodor and others like him are quite Russian-disposed in their socio-political opinions. Many of these so-called pro-Russian attitudes contribute to already idealised yearnings for a Soviet past, strong among russified Moldovans (see also Livezeanu 2007, 47). Persistent Russian speaking for Teodor and his colleagues, then, is a part of this yearning for a type of modernity guaranteeing social security in the face of uncertainty. The same can be said for other russified Moldovans in Rezina, who educate their children, like Teodor did, in Russian-language schools – most notably Rezina's A. Pushkin School, considered to be of better standard than the town's Romanian-language schools. It is these subjective orientations reinforced externally in the home, and by way of children's schooling and in the media, that Moldovan operators such as Teodor bring with them to the shop floor, adding an extra layer of rationale to their work-time Russian-language preferences. These attitudes motivate the making of informal work modes around Russian in the face of unwelcomed Romanian-speaking expectations. This is whilst real, matter-of-fact economic issues,

⁵⁴ Substantiating this ethnographic finding on Moldova's print media, see 'Newspapers in the Romanian language occupy second position in the list of preferences of Moldovans' in *Moldova Azi*, 22 April 2011. Accessed 22 April 2011 on: <http://www.azi.md/ro/story/17952>.

shown momentarily, combine with the existential in influencing Teodor and his colleagues' dispositions.

Beyond social-familial reasons, Russian speaking existentially helps russified Moldovans rationalise and resolve tensions between feeling proud of their Soviet past and apprehension in the present for forsaking, as locals see it, Moldovan cultural traits for russianness.⁵⁵ Many like Teodor have long since given up Moldovans' intimate language of the home, village and kin – the Moldovan dialect – for Russian speaking. A few have even left behind kin connections in their natal villages as they inter-married with Russians. This is evidenced in their severance of extensive (and sometimes expensive) *cumătri* (godparent-godchild) relations with rural relatives, or in excusing themselves from attending Moldovan-specific holidays like *Paștele Blajinilor* (Easter of dearly-departed ones) celebrated in forbearers' villages. The village is still an important mental and physical locus of Moldovan culture in the minds of middle-aged Moldovans like Teodor (see Moldovan scholar Iulia Bejan-Volc [2000, 11] and Cash 2011), most of whom are only first-generation urbanised. So in 'denying the village' with decreased visits and in repudiating the Moldovan dialect, Teodor is in a way eschewing, from a Moldovan perspective (or reformulating in my view), his own Moldovan heritage. For language and rural-territorial links, beyond blood ties, are at the heart of what it means to be 'Moldovan,' according to right-bank Moldovan informants around the country. Teodor is instinctively aware and apprehensive of this. So he retreats to Russian speaking, with its enduring status in the region, to fill the void left behind by deserting his mother tongue. This, as I see it, is language functioning as existential coping.

⁵⁵ For some russified Moldovan informants, there is a real sense of rejecting Moldovan heritage, while for others embodying russianness is simply about re-conceptualising language (not ethnicity and heritage) in relation to rural-to-urban social mobility.

Russian also persists at Ciment S.A. for reasons of economic survival in the face of economic uncertainty. With job insecurity on the rise during restructuring, Russian-speaking male employees know they need fluent Russian if laid off. A well-rehearsed Russian technical vocabulary is essential for industrial work elsewhere in Moldova or for construction work in Russia or Ukraine. Statistics show that most Moldovan men look for work abroad in Russia, where Russian speaking is imperative (IOM 2007). This puts socio-economic unpredictability at the heart of Control-room workers' ideological dispositions towards Russian speaking.

Russian speaking, finally, appears to be activated at times as capitalist-reactionary protest to Egrafal's ever-demanding policies and diminishing job security. Workers object to obligatory new programs like 'Leaders for Tomorrow' (LFT), complaining its seminars put extra demands on their working time (without financial return.) One employee from the Control Room grumbles: 'Leaders for Tomorrow is an American and European program [...] so Egrafal should go to Romania and implement it there and not here with us.' Sharing his judgment, some of the most opinionated about LFT were Russians – who in this case includes ethnic Russians, Ukrainians *and* russified Moldovans. They protest via slow language acquisition, foot-dragging and rebuffing Egrafal meetings in Romanian, insisting instead on instruction in Russian. During trainings workers persist in Russian speaking with leaders and with each other, so much so that Egrafal managers were obliged to split Ciment S.A.'s much awaited LFT launch into two-day sessions with a Romanian-language Moldovan group (*grupul moldovean*) and a Russian group (*grupul rus*). Workers picked which one to attend. Importantly for this study, most russified Moldovans from the Control Room chose the Russian option. In doing so, they allowed themselves to be typecast with Russians as 'aggressive and expressive' (not necessarily negative traits) as opposed to the 'quiet,

listening' Moldovan group, as assessed by Egrafal foreign managers. The assertiveness of the former was eventually considered questionable by Egrafal managers over the perceived conformity of Moldovans. It is interesting to note how different characteristics were attributed to the 'Moldovan' versus 'Russian' LFT groups, despite the binary being unrepresentative of the multi-ethnic diversity criss-crossing the 'Russian' (multi-ethnic) conference group.⁵⁶

With more than 1/6 of Moldovans at Ciment S.A. opting for Russian speaking, the Russian language represents choice and a means of contestation. Russian speaking is increasingly emblematic of resistance and wilful self-identity, partly in response to global capital sidestepping the shape and texture of the factory's history of linguistic embeddedness. Furthermore, in protesting Egrafal's Romanian policies via language, Russian-disposed Moldovans give the impression that they identify with being 'Russian speakers.' However, this social-linguistic subjectivity, and the associated practice of Russian speaking, should not be considered simply Soviet-era hold-overs, but present-day coping mechanisms in the face of unpredictable circumstances.

3.8 Russian-speaking Strategies and Identifications during Egrafal's New Language Policy

Given that little scholarly attention has been given to russified Moldovans, it is worth pointing out the implications of this chapter's findings on social-science literature about russophone identities. Doing so helps us to understand further why informants like Teodor so adamantly assert their preference for Russian speaking. In one of the most widely cited monographs on post-Soviet identity, political scientist David Laitin hypothesises that Russian-speaking Slavs in the Russian Federation's near abroad are

⁵⁶ Egrafal misses how russified Moldovans wish to self-identify trans-situationally at work and home as Russian speakers. This is even if Egrafal Ltd. expects russified Moldovan to wear the badge of 'ethnic Moldovan' at Ciment S.A., whilst ethnic Russians and Ukrainians are lumped together as 'Russian.'

evolving into a new identity grouping (1998, 300).⁵⁷ This involves persons in the countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU), like Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia and Kazakhstan, the focus of Laitin's study. The conglomerate identity includes Slavs of ethnic Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian and Polish background (including some non-Slav Jews), all of whom speak Russian as their self-declared primary language and live outside of their so-called national homelands. Laitin finds that these Slavs share little ethno-national affinity with co-ethnics in their constituent home republics. This includes diaspora Russians feeling different from Russians in Russia. Laitin argues that Russian-speaking Slavs feel linked not by home country, but by language, as 'Russian speakers.' Their linguistic identities develop vis-à-vis newly independent nationalising governments and titular-majority populations of the countries in which Slavs found themselves after the Soviet dissolution. Laitin recognises this Russian-speaking population does not constitute a nationality per se, but suspects it will take on the feel of a nationality group, not unlike Hispanics in the United States.

While I generally agree with Laitin's important findings, a more nuanced application is necessary in the case of russophone Moldovans in Ciment S.A.'s Control Room. Differently than Laitin (1998) leads one to believe, Russians and Ukrainians in provincial Moldova do not identify exclusively with language, as Chapter Five will show.⁵⁸ This is while ethnic Moldovans of this chapter identify strongly with the Russian language. This observation suggests a few things. Firstly, Laitin's identity category of 'Russian speaker' can apply to not only ethnic Slavs and Jews, but also non-

⁵⁷ David Laitin specifically writes: 'A recurrent theme in this book is that the "Russian-speaking population" in the near abroad is developing a new corporate identity that has within it the possibility of evolving into a national group' (1998, 300). Laitin uses the word 'evolving,' because he does not yet see a Russian-speaker identity as championing broad national rights.

⁵⁸ Few Russians and Ukrainians have a vested interest in a 'Russian-speaker' category, partly because they feel secure with being lumped together as 'Russian,' all of Slav background, a designation in Moldova still carrying positive social status vis-à-vis indigenes.

Slavs like Moldovans. Secondly, Laitin's Russian-speaking category of identification appears to resonate as much, *if not more* with Moldova's russified Moldovans than with its Slavs.⁵⁹ This may be because urban-industrial russophone Moldovans have a vested interest in the Russian-speaker category to fill a somewhat vacuous, disputed self-identity, as just discussed. The consequence, though, of this existentiality is a degree of individualism among russified Moldovan workers, which I believe affects the limits and possibilities for the development of a Russian-speaker group identity, as hypothesised by Laitin.

For russified Moldovans at Ciment S.A., like Teodor, David Laitin's (1998) category of Russian speaker is a linguistic-based, semi-conscious identification developing in reaction to Egrafal's restructuring. It is essentially a stylistic expression in response to the corporate re-valuation of the importance of Russian speaking, happening at a time of job insecurity for Control-room Moldovans. This view goes against popular discourse that characterises russophone Moldovans as Soviet carry-overs, as the identity category has only really come about in the post-socialist present, as rightly argued by Laitin (1998). Differently than Laitin, I see the emergence of people self-identifying as Russian speakers not just vis-à-vis nation-state activity, but also in relation to new transnational-corporate market modernisation. Moreover, the emergent subjectivity of 'Russian speaker' appears to gather little groupness (Brubaker 2004, 12)⁶⁰ or cohesion around it, unlike what Laitin predicted in former Soviet countries like Moldova.⁶¹ Also

⁵⁹ In other words, the difference between russified Moldovans of this chapter and the ethnic Russians and Ukrainians of Chapter Five is that Moldovans are self-identifying more by language.

⁶⁰ Groupness refers to intensely felt collective solidarity around an ethnic (or in this case, linguistic) identity category. Brubaker understands groupness not as fixed and given, but as variable and changing to the point 'that groupness may *not* happen, that high levels of groupness may *fail* to crystallize, despite the group-making efforts of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, and even in situations of intense elite-level ethnopolitical conflict' (Brubaker 2004, 12).

⁶¹ Russian speaking could provide a possible outlet for protest against capitalist change, but dual work habits have nonetheless left employees divided. Division between Moldovans is exacerbated in Egrafal's competitive work environment. This fact of factionalism among this often overlooked segment of

differently than Laitin's findings, being a 'Russian speaker' does not replace other natal affiliations and languages, as traditional modernisation theory might suggest,⁶² but adds to Teodor's and other russified Moldovans' (official-corporate) Romanian linguistic practice.⁶³ This duality of language and identifications then suggests complex individual strategies of adapting to and modifying Egrafal's work norms.

3.9 Conclusion: Adaptive Linguistic Duality

So far in the thesis we have seen how Egrafal's modernisation campaign has had a considerable impact on people's everyday language preferences and subjectivities. This is as we also examined how perceived language values influenced how workers did their tasks, like in choosing to keep track of kiln-temperature readings in Russian instead of Egrafal-endorsed Romanian, or in foot-dragging on workshops unless they were in Russian. Language ideas also impacted how workers understood themselves (as russophones) in a rapidly changing environment. This is just as language was a part of how workers related to one another, such as when switching to Russian as soon as they were far from Egrafal management. All of these present actions are related to past language usage on the shop floor and existing usage outside of the factory. What is particular about this chapter on the Control Room, though, is the way in which, because of the diverging language preferences between company, individual and society, Egrafal's reforms encouraged 'informal' (Russian-speaking) ways of working alongside 'formal' (Romanian-speaking) patterns. The duality allowed skilled Moldovans to work

Moldovan society precludes hard-and-fast connectedness around *any* category of identification, including a Russian-speaking nationality. What identification with russianness exists is mainly at the level of the individual. Therefore, David Laitin's (1998) forecast of a future Russian-linguistic nationality group developing in the Russian near abroad is far from reality in right-bank Moldova.

⁶² Going back to the early functionalist school in sociology, arguments arose over whether or not economic modernisation pushes different ethnicities, language-speakers and tribes to assimilate into one homogenous culture (e.g. Gellner 1983; Weber 1980 [1921]). For Gellner (1983), for example, cultural homogenisation goes hand in hand with modernisation, because industrial development requires a common level of skill, language and competence among the working population.

⁶³ Added to this is a localist Moldovan identification (see Chapter Four's moldovanism), activated at times in Moldovans' rural birthplace, unless a rural background has been eschewed.

more comfortably and capably, using their Russian speaking to meet production goals; this is even as these Moldovans fluctuated between subtly protesting and accommodating Romanian speaking. The finding furthers the argument of the thesis that workers exhibit mixed responses of adaptation and protest to neoliberal reform, and language is a part of this negotiation of capitalist change.

Finally, the switching between languages amongst russified Moldovans expresses not a full-fledged moral economy (Thompson 1991) of resistance or an organised backlash against neoliberal Egrafal (like in Polanyi 1944, 150). Rather, the language duality is about workers negotiating between different social-moral (e.g. *kul'turnyi*) ideas embedded in the workplace within the allowances and constraints of factory organisation. So what protest happens is about personal, uncoordinated expressions, such as individual workers avoiding Romanian-dialect speaking. All in all, even if russified Moldovans are frustrated over the firm's ethno-linguistic changes to the work order, they complain less and more just get on with the job. As colleagues around the plant get laid-off, these Moldovans are happy to have a job in the first place.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Third Floor

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the restructuring responses of white-collar employees from Ciment S.A.'s highest status space, the Administration Building's Third Floor (*etajul trei*). Here capitalist adaptation is the norm, not defiant foot-dragging and dual work modes, as witnessed in the preceding chapter, nor moral-economic protest, as discussed in the next chapter. This is largely on account of significant upward mobility experienced by employees now on the Third Floor. In this factory space, the majority of middle-aged Moldovans have been promoted to their positions here in the post-socialist period, setting them apart from other Moldovans in the plant. Their relatively new promotion to *etajul trei* and to white-collar status generates, I argue, a preoccupation with distinction-making from their blue-collar (*rabotniki*) pasts. This distancing happens by way of consumption and language, and not just by increased earnings and skill. Language and consumption become important markers of status during restructuring because of the way in which Egrafal managers – located on Administration's *etajul trei* – model new, valued ways of speaking, dressing and behaving at work. The Third Floor's middle-aged and young adults, who interact daily with Romanian superiors, engage and imitate their bosses' language, consumption and even flirting habits in an attempt to secure modern futures and identities akin to their European managers. However, the thesis argues that there is a precariousness of status among Third-floor employees – which relates to the generational mixture unique to the Third Floor – and which plays a role in how different-aged workers adapt to corporate expectations. The middle-aged *etajul trei* cohort relies on situational linguistic code-switching, whilst the younger cohort apparently undergoes an ethno-linguistic transformation. Both are contemporary strategies involving changing moral-economic ideas and desires embedded in economic life (differently from Wegren 2005, 107). The different coping

strategies also speak to anthropological debates about the motives behind linguistic code-switching and, what I believe to be, their significance for workers' reactions to capitalism.

People's encounters with the plans of modernisation are often coloured by their longings for particular trappings of lifestyle, or modernist yearnings, embodied in person's every-day consumption and cultural habits. Modernist ideas are also constructed in relation to, but separate from a prior past. On the Third Floor, modernist yearnings played out in white-collar Moldovans' preoccupation with fashion, flirting and social-linguistic correctness during the 2005-2006 period of Egrafal restructuring. Female engineers sampled Avon lotions and logged Oriflame beauty-product orders, as they typed up production reports; accountants and personal assistants compared fabrics for custom-made business suits, while inputting financial data, and navigating multiple languages with colleagues and regular sexual teasing from foreign managers. During business trips abroad and weekend free time, female employees perused clothing and cosmetics shops, got manicures with female kin, shared newly learned Romanian phrases (like *sărut mâna* [I kiss your hand]), and occasionally travelled to city commercial expositions, like 'Beauty 2007' in the capital, Chişinău – excursions made possible with Egrafal-size salaries¹ and factory-subsidized transport. Employees' access to economic opportunities and conspicuous consumption was undoubtedly owing to their incorporation into the Egrafal production sphere.² Interestingly, male white-collar counterparts in the plant were equally concerned with beauty,³ sporting stylish, Western-designed clothes and donning decorative rings, when not in hard-hats and

¹ An entry-level accountant makes no more than 200 US dollars a month, a salary considered high for Moldova but not extravagant.

² This reminds us of the necessity of investigating both consumption and production together (Belinda Leach 1998 and 2005.)

³ I consider 'beauty' to mean a concern for adorning or dressing the body.

cement-dusted overalls. They also regularly doused themselves with cologne throughout the working day. When not in meetings or inspecting equipment, their fashion-consciousness and male gaze regularly noticed female fashion, complimenting women's new outfits with expressions like, 'you are beautiful!' (*ah, tu ești frumoasă!*). Men's eyes frequently and overtly lingered over female bodies. Sometimes physical touching, from friendly hugs to sensual strokes on the neck, entered into male and female work-time fraternising. Such examples testify to new, power-loaded Moldovan and Romanian inter-relations, as well as to novel cosmopolitan tastes and linguistic expressions operating in the context of Moldova's changing neoliberal factory.⁴ All of these aspects have an impact on how *etajul trei* workers experience economic morality in market capitalism.

In what follows, the chapter describes the physical and social make-up of the Third Floor, including the upward advancement of Moldovans to the Third Floor's high-ranking factory space. Next the chapter details how Moldovan workers' status development involves distancing themselves from their shop-floor beginnings and associating themselves with foreign Romanian managers on the Third Floor. This happens, firstly, through consumption, mainly of clothing and beauty products modelled by foreign managers, and secondly, as depicted in a subsequent section, through using the standard Romanian idiom. Theoretical discussions of class and status-making are interspersed between the two sections. Next the chapter looks at how flirting and romantic liaisons are a part of the uptake of standard literary Romanian, which is a new verbal idiom for some Moldovan and Russian workers on the Third Floor. In other words, expressions of sexuality (or rather, hetero-sexuality) are studied in order to

⁴ These examples also testify to unequal gender and power relations in the factory, however, gender relations are not the focus of this chapter, but rather language, consumption and age and their relationship to status-making and capitalist adaptation.

apprehend how once forbidden ideas of Romanian ethnicity and language-speaking have become moralised and learned in a transnational factory environment. Finally, consideration is given to the variation in how workers of different generations adapt through language to corporate expectations. Mention is made of the social-moral elements which are a part of this adaptation.

4.2 Situating Administration's Third Floor: Physical and Social Organisation

The Administration Building is divided between four floors.⁵ The Third Floor (*etajul trei*) is the heart of Administration and the entire plant; it connotes command and authority. Workers say it is 'where decisions are made,' with all management offices situated there, including those of the Plant Manager and the chief Director of Integration, the plant's two most powerful persons. *Etajul trei* has experienced the most visible change, with the arrival of foreign management and the frequent re-arranging of seats, desks and offices. It is the busiest, most socially diverse space in the plant, with the all-female Accounting Department, together with the mixed-gender Purchasing and Sales Departments, sharing the L-shaped hallway with male Romanian senior managers, local female clerical staff, and the all-male Maintenance Department. Overall, the Third Floor is approximately one-half female and one-half male. Three-quarters of employees are middle-aged (approximately 35 to 45 years old) and a quarter between the ages of 23 and 30 years old (see Table 6 at the end of the chapter).⁶ This latter age cohort was hired by Egrafal within the last five years; most being male engineers (with training in mechanical, electrical or process engineering) and recruited straight out of university. A

⁵ The first floor houses the canteen, changing and shower rooms and assembly hall (for shift-change and trade-union meetings). The second floor belongs mainly to the Laboratory, Accounting, Quality Control Department, worker safety chief and trade-union leader, while the fourth floor contains the plant's control room and engineers' offices.

⁶ Most employees fall in either one or the other generational category, as most started working at Ciment S.A. in their twenties during factory construction. There are several Ciment S.A. employees over the age of 45, but they are few. None of this older age works on the Administration's Third Floor.

couple of persons from this younger cohort include women working in accounting and marketing. Overall, this young generation represents the *only* new segment of employees hired into the downsizing plant.

The Third-floor composition of different departments and offices helps to explain its high inter-mixture of generation, gender, ethnicity, and job rank. The Russian and Romanian languages and the Moldovan dialect are heard interchangeably here, as are the sounds of high-heels on tiled floors and male voices barking angry orders. Two married couples work on the floor.⁷ Three-quarters of staff are ethnic Moldovan, one-fifth ethnic Russian and Ukrainian (Slav), and one-tenth foreign (Romanian and French) (see Table 4). Work-time fraternising is most common in the stylish kitchenette (*bufetărie*), *anticameră* (waiting room to the Director's office) and L-shaped corridor. Colleagues gather in these places to smoke, gossip, flirt, tease, talk fashion, and drink coffee.⁸

In this Third-floor space, one of the biggest social changes introduced by Egrafal was to promote a dozen or so lower-ranking Moldovan engineers, foreman and skilled workers from the Soviet era to high-up management positions within Egrafal Ciment S.A.⁹ Most Moldovans at Ciment S.A. were rank-and-file (of *rabotniki* status) under socialism. Evidencing this, none of the current ethnic Moldovan senior managers had their top-status positions in the Soviet era (see Table 3). The majority of the plant's management was Russian and Ukrainian, as mentioned earlier (see Table 2). This management change-over and current configuration at Ciment S.A. is different from that

⁷ According to the Human Resources Manager, a total of eight married couples work in the factory – a significant reduction from the dozens that existed before Egrafal took over the plant: 'There used to be many, many more.' I did not have access to employment records for exact figures. Nevertheless, nowadays it is rare for Egrafal, a foreign company, to hire from within families. Only in Soviet days was it a common practice to hire whole families to work in the Rezina Cement Plant.

⁸ The two most common sexual expressions in Administration are wanted and unwanted sexual bantering and flirting relationships. Full-fledged affairs are infrequent.

⁹ Some employees started the ascent to upward job mobility on account of Russian flight after Moldova's independence.

depicted in existing ethnographies of post-socialist industrial life (Dunn 2004, 69-75 on Poland; Müller 2007 187-201 on Germany). At Moldovan Ciment S.A., today's office managers were yesterday's shop-floor labourers; they are hence anxious to distance themselves from their humble shop-floor beginnings through reconfiguring their sense of status and person, which the forthcoming sections will show. First, though, the chapter looks at what Third-floor workers are distancing themselves from (see also Chapter Six).

4.3 Widening Status Distinctions: Third-floor *Salariași* versus the Territory's *Muncitorii*

The modern is always constructed in relation to an 'other' (see Arce and Long 2000). It is a metaphor for 'here-and-now' meanings, materialities and modes of practices 'seen in relation to the notion of some past state of things,' as explained by Comaroff and Comaroff (1993, xiii). At Ciment S.A., the very antithesis of all that is fashionable and up-to-the-minute on the Administration's Third Floor is embodied in the out-dated shop floor of the Repair Hall. Here more than sixty labourers, including several dozen women, used to work on what are now idle, dust-collecting lathes and outdated Soviet equipment, ghosts of co-workers past. Only four male machine operators remain. Other repair jobs Egrafal has outsourced to contractible, mobile bodies. A small red sign 'work here' ('*rabotat' zdes*' in Russian) hangs above each machine, while an old hanging portrait of V.I. Lenin overlooks the shop floor – symbols reminiscent of a time when all things Russian and Bolshevik (versus Romanian and liberal-economic) were modern. The operators who remain on this shop floor nostalgically reminisce of break-time visits to the outdoor apricot grove and folkloric concerts on the shop floor in socialist days. These activities contrast with their relative stasis and social introversion today. Now it is only during their thirty-minute pause for

lunch that operators step outside the walls of their dimly lit repair warehouse and mingle with other Egrafal *muncitorii de rând* (rank-and-file hourly-paid workers) of similar status. Rarely do *muncitorii de rând* come into contact with *salariați* (salaried employees), who are comprised of engineers, managers and clerks from Administration's Third Floor. Social distinctions between the two, largely ethnic Moldovan factory groups are widening. Today they lead separate working and social lives, even if they share similar roots. The variation is not wholly due to income and skill differentials, but more to new consumption and linguistic practices taken on by Moldovans on the Third Floor. The issue is about increasing social differentiation in the post-socialist era.

With the end of state socialism and the advent of capitalism, new economic divisions have emerged on an unprecedented scale around Eastern Europe (Schröder 2006). This is the case with what used to be a rather fluid relationship between supervisory employees and production and maintenance workers. Informant Eugenia claims her (deceased) father started out as a 'simple worker' but worked his way up to become a Plant Manager around the time of Moldova's independence: 'It was a time when this happened [Soviet days]...but not anymore ...these days [European] management picks who it wants...decisions are made far away from the factory gates.' Whether fact or nostalgia, union leader Valeria similarly insists relations between rank-and-file workers (*rabotniki*) and supervisors and engineers (*spetsialisti*) were better in socialist days. She gives the example of how production workers and engineers used to eat together in the canteen and drink in the bar as one group. Nowadays this does not happen. Simple workers and specialists no longer mix.¹⁰ Valeria shrugs her shoulders

¹⁰As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, social divisions in the plant are now mimicked in town through the type of bar or restaurant that a worker frequents in his leisure time. Different ranks of private

when asked to explain the new distinctions. She only says the changes happened when ‘the French’ (*francezii*) took over the plant. The trade union leader’s gesture and comment suggests that she sees things capitalist as erecting new socio-economic fault lines in provincial Moldova.¹¹

The same is true in the imaginations of Valeria’s rank-and-file union members, who are convinced that Egrafal contributed to social differentiation among employees. Between 1991 and 1999, before Egrafal bought the bankrupt plant from the Moldovan state, all employees experienced a similar plight in not getting paid. Now with Egrafal, engineers and managers receive significantly higher salaries than rank-and-file workers (*muncitorii de rând*) – from 150 US dollars a month for the latter versus more than 250 US dollars a month for engineers. This is as opposed to more than 800 US dollars a month for deputy managers (see Tables 9 and 10 in the Appendix for more).¹² Today managers and engineers live considerably better than average workers, affording a vast array of new consumer goods that have flooded post-socialist Moldova. This is as opposed to socialist times when the command economy restricted goods (Humphrey 2002, 44-45) and therefore did not allow for consumption to mark out such vast differences in living standards: ‘We all lived the same before,’ one employee asserts. Vast differences between the rich and poor were not permitted (see Kideckel 2008, 46). However, this same employee goes on to assert, ‘today if you have a refrigerator and a

restaurants and bars have sprung up in post-1991 Rezina to service different statuses of workers and town-folk.

¹¹ A factor to consider in union leader Valeria’s comment is that she may have been talking about lower-level bosses (like foremen and shift bosses) – in all probability ethnic Moldovans, as factory archives show. They, like today, tend to be close to their Moldovan subordinates, as Chapter Six will show. Lunch together may come as no surprise then.

¹² We recall from Chapter Two that the average monthly salary of a Moldovan is 1,534 Moldovan lei (or 135 US dollars) in spring 2006. See ‘Salariile din Republica Moldova, printre cele mai mici din Europa,’ *Wall-street*, 3 May 2006, <http://www.wall-street.ro/articol/International/13834/Salariile-din-Republica-Moldova-printre-cele-mai-mici-din-Europa.html>. Accessed 6 September 2011.

car, it means you are rich (*bogat*)’.¹³ For this cement worker and others, the moral issue behind money and cars is the fact that some Moldovans have risen to the top (and hence can afford these new possessions) whilst other Moldovans have not – even though all have comparable educational backgrounds and socialist work experiences. The rest of the chapter focuses on the Moldovans who have made it to the Administration’s prominent Third Floor, and how during economic transition they seek to secure their new white-collar status by acquiring new consumption and language habits.

4.4 Third-floor Status-making through Consumption

Scholars agree that industrial workers of the former Soviet bloc do not identify themselves primarily in terms of a production hierarchy as under socialism, even if workers are acutely aware of their social location in the transforming economic order (see Crowley and Ost 2001; Kideckel 2007, 11, 17-18; Słomczyński and Shabad 1997, 167).¹⁴ Nowadays consumption habits and other forms of non-economic capital play a central role in creating social-economic division in society (Humphrey 2002, 40-41; Patico 2008; Rausing 2002, 130).¹⁵ At the Rezina Cement Plant, everything from work bibs and cologne to dialect and speech differentiate worker status. This makes the Rezina Cement Plant not only a leading production site of quality construction material, but also a fertile ground for producing and displaying new habits of consumption among workers.

This was particularly noticeable among the many women making up the Third Floor. For them, commodities became goods that could be bought and adorned for

¹³ So not all people see consumption as positive; attitudes towards consumption are complex and even negative, as pointed out by Humphrey (2002, 40).

¹⁴ In socialist days, a class identification was defined by one’s position in the production hierarchy (Kideckel 2007, 9-10).

¹⁵ It is important to remember that class never disappeared from the officially ‘classless’ societies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Economic inequalities always existed, as categories of persons had differing degrees of access to economic, social and political resources.

status. Starting several months after Egrafal Romanian management arrived at the plant, the fashion of Third-floor women gradually changed. Change went hand-in-hand with Third-floor employees' increasing exposure to European managers and visitors. Young female process engineers, normally wearing industrial-looking work overalls (*şalopete*) during my first six months in the factory, now floated around *etajul trei* in long black skirts, colourful jumpers and occasionally open-toed sandals.¹⁶ Wearing plain *şalopete* (work overalls) is a standard practice among socialist-era industrial workers (see Kideckel 2001, 113-114), which is why the change to skirts and colourful clothing was so noticeable. Middle-aged women would sometimes dress up in the same way. They wore clothing normally reserved for a night out or a special holiday (*praznic*), not for work. Women of all ages began to be aware of what each other were wearing, complimenting everything from boots to stockings (*ah, ești frumoșică!* – ‘you are a beauty’) and nosily inquiring where items were purchased. They took pride in dressing themselves with a collection of outfits – sometimes even skipping lunch to lose weight for a new skirt. What is more, secretaries regularly stopped typing at their computers to file their manicured nails, while accountants pulled out compacts to re-apply lipstick and make-up (*machiaj*) at their desks. Silvia – the Personal Assistant to the plant's French Director, an outgoing, married, middle-aged woman – whose extended family I lived with in Rezina – tells me there is an unspoken dress code at corporate Egrafal; ‘you must keep up...or else.’ Silvia explains how the status of her position, working for a European director (since autumn 2005),¹⁷ requires that she wear higher quality beauty products (like Avon and Mary Kay cosmetics, she cites) than those she previously wore

¹⁶ David Kideckel in a way corroborates what I am saying by pointing out how traditional *şalopete* (work overalls) in Romania lost their symbolic value in the post-socialist transition period. This is now happening at Ciment S.A. with European managers modelling different styles of work clothing.

¹⁷ Prior to autumn 2005, Silvia worked for the Moldovan Plant Manager, who now works alongside the French Director.

as a secretary and schoolteacher. She feels, with a mix of pride and anxiety, that she can no longer shop for cosmetics at Rezina's open-air market (*la piață*), as other so-called provincial townsfolk do. Silvia must purchase perfume and make-up by mail order or in specialty label shops (*magazine de firmă*) in the capital Chișinău.¹⁸ Silvia's remark is telling in that it suggests practices of beautifying oneself are not only about self-image, but also, more importantly for this chapter, about white-collar workers' sense of modern status vis-à-vis old-fashioned pasts.

Elizabeth Dunn depicts a similar impulse among white-collar managers at the Alima factory, who purchase commodities – everything from mobile phones to Western-style clothing – with the goal of distancing themselves from socialist-era work and living standards. The latter are also shunned by new transnational owners, whose cosmopolitan work and lifestyles are now desired and mimicked by Polish managers (2004, 70-75). For this social strata in Eastern Europe, Western goods were not seen as 'contaminated,' as described by Humphrey (2002, 55),¹⁹ but as positive carriers of a new European identity (like in Rausing 2002, 137-140). We see from this example, and at Ciment S.A., that workers' consumption preferences or 'tastes' (Bourdieu 1984) are affirmed and justified by rejecting other ('old-fashioned' socialist-era) preferences or tastes. This is what Pierre Bourdieu means by 'tastes (i.e., manifested preferences) [being] the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference' (1984, 56, 466). More importantly, though, for this thesis is Bourdieu's classic point that tastes function as markers of social status or class (1984, 2). For white-collar workers like Ion and Silvia,

¹⁸ It is interesting how a 'mail order' (*o comandă*) or 'store' (*magazin*) becomes juxtaposed to the 'market' (*pieța*), as preferred sites of consumption.

¹⁹ 'Contaminated' is how Russia's middle-class and rank-and-file see the flooding of marketplaces with Western goods. The country's elite 'new Russians,' on the other hand, are positively attached to Western styles and the accumulation of foreign luxury goods (Humphrey 2002, 42-47). While Dunn's managers and salespersons and Ciment S.A.'s Administration employees are also attracted to Western styles, their material earnings make them more of a middle-class than elite.

their preferences for cutting-edge commodities reflects habits of consumerism, through which, according to anthropologist Mark Leichty, an emerging middle-class constitutes itself ‘as a socio-cultural entity’ (2003, 7), as I believe is happening at Ciment S.A. This leads me to argue that the heightened attention to consumerist beautification depicted in this section was about collectively taking on markers of white-collar middle-class identity, as modelled by new Romanian and French managers. This status-making comes out further in the following examples, and will be taken up again later in the chapter.

For now I wish to emphasise that not only women, but also men on the Third Floor showed a growing emphasis on purchasing goods that beautify the male body, despite gender literature (e.g. R.W. Connell 2005 on *Masculinities*) implying that beauty is mostly a concern of women.²⁰ Moldovan male engineers and adjunct managers built up their sense of person through consumption, by donning name-brand jeans, adorning decorative (non-marital) rings and regularly applying cologne during the working day. Every morning I arrived to the plant, I navigated through a cloud of competing fragrances of freshly doused male cologne (everything from Armani to Avon), seeping out of private offices onto the *etajul trei* corridor. The way in which these consumption habits impacted status and identity-making is seen in the example of Ion.

Ion is one of the Moldovans upgraded by Egrafal several years ago. Ion moved from a skilled electrical position to his present-day post as Deputy Manager of Manufacturing under a Romanian.²¹ Ion’s wife, Silvia (from above) – observes new consumption behaviours in her husband, Ion:

²⁰ For example, see R.W. Connell’s authoritative book on masculinities (*Masculinities* [Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005 2nd edition]), which even lacks a subject heading for beauty in the index.

²¹ He possesses a technical-training diploma but not a university degree, unlike the Russians who held his post in the Soviet era. As a side note, Ion was the deputy manager from Chapter Three writing messages in Russian to the kiln operators.

Ion is concerned *lately* [italics mine] about the type of cologne he wears. It must be of better quality than his subordinates – which means he cannot buy it on the local market as simple workers do. [Ion used to do this.] He must buy cologne of better quality.

Ion's mundane preoccupation with cologne is about his desire to be a modern European and a model employee, emulating his well-groomed superiors from Egrafal România. This emulation is an important part of gaining favour from foreign bosses in transnational-corporate workplaces, as shown in Dunn's work (2004, 70-75). When I first meet Ion and Silvia in May 2005, Ion cared little about cologne and fashion. Back then the *etajul trei* corridor was filled only with the smell of cement dust and stale work boots. However, as Ion and his colleagues were exposed to the dress habits of European foreign managers, Ion began practicing their styles and behaviours, and Ion's work status and identity altered over time. However, it is important to note that Ion was concerned not only with keeping *up* with his more affluent superiors, but also with keeping *above* his subordinates to legitimise his still relatively new white-collar status.

4.5 Third-floor Status-making through Language

Another factor in the upward advancement of Moldovans, like Ion, under Egrafal has been their ability to learn and exercise standard-literary Romanian with Egrafal Romanian managers.²² Moldovans promoted to the Third Floor must not only distance themselves from their shop-floor beginnings, but also feel pressure to speak and act Romanian. This means eschewing Russian words traditionally used for factory equipment and opting for Romanian expressions over Moldovan words (like *acum* instead of *amuia* for the word 'now') to be understood well by Egrafal Romanian managers.

²² Despite not having a university degree, Ion already spoke good standard Romanian before Egrafal România management arrived at Ciment S.A. This is likely on account of Ion having grown up in Rezina with a Moldovan schoolteacher, his mother. The same is true for Ion's wife, Silvia, whose mother was also a schoolteacher in their natal village.

I make this point – notably with the word *acum/amuia* – because I once observed a Romanian-Moldovan interaction in which a Moldovan Ciment S.A. employee urgently needed a broom from a Romanian contractor, stressing ‘*amuia!*’ (now!), but the young Romanian did not understand the urgency of the matter, because he did not recognise the Moldovan word *amuia* (now). After repeating the word several times, the frustrated Moldovan eventually discovered the misunderstanding and used *acum* instead of *amuia* in his request. This goes to show that every word counts, especially with time-sensitive tasks in a market environment. Wanting to avoid embarrassing miscommunication with their superiors, and to safeguard their *etajul trei* positions, Moldovans like Ion are quick to show their Romanian bosses that they speak just like them.

Beyond research on consumption, there are a number of well documented industrial studies showing how post-socialist economic restructuring leads to new processes of fragmentation and inclusion and exclusion (see Ashwin 1999; Dunn 2004; Clarke et al. 1993; Crowley and Ost 2001; Kideckel 2001, 2002). What is unique about the case of the Rezina Cement Plant – different from these other studies – is the role of language in creating economic division. As mentioned in Chapter One’s historical overview, class differentiation in Moldova’s Soviet era was primarily expressed through ethno-linguistics. Among Moldovans themselves, ‘being russified’ – or speaking and acting Russian – distinguished a Moldovan’s social rank in the Soviet era. Today in the midst of Egrafal’s restructuring of Ciment S.A., a Romanian linguistic style (or *romanianness*) – speaking the Romanian dialect and mimicking Romanian mannerisms – has become an important, valued form of *cultural capital* (Bourdieu 1991), replacing russification as the major badge of distinction.²³ Enacting *romanianness* aids in a

²³ Laada Bilaniuk shows that all around the former Soviet Union, new opportunities for social advancement have opened up to persons who could identify themselves with local non-Russian languages and identities (2005, 33), like Moldovans’ titular tongue.

worker's likability by Egrafal Romanian managers, just as Elizabeth Dunn found that Polish managers' enactment of foreign styles made them likeable to their Western superiors (2004, 70-75). Within Egrafal, this is evidenced in an interview I had at the Egrafal România Bucharest headquarters with the former Egrafal Director for Moldova Operations, who praised on more than one occasion 'dynamic Moldovan managers' (giving specific names) who 'want to speak Romanian,' emphasising that they 'have a future' within the company. Favour with Romanian managers certainly did not hurt promotion prospects within Egrafal România.²⁴

However, Bourdieu reminds us that material constraints can impede performative competence of cultural and other non-economic forms of capital (Bourdieu 1984, 12-16). However, in the case of Ciment S.A.'s Third Floor, money is less of a factor, I argue. Even while salaries are several times higher for managers than for shop-floor workers in *teritoriul* (recall 150 US dollars versus 800 US dollars a month on average), Third-floor clerical staff, like informant Silvia, earn as much as or less than production workers (around 150 US dollars a month). Silvia would occasionally complain about this salary differential, which she sees as insulting to her university education and French and English foreign-language abilities, none of which her husband, Deputy Manager Ion, has. This is even if Silvia spends what salary she earns on her stylish business wardrobe and on high-tech items, like the digital camera that she regularly brings to work to show-off family photos.

At least one-sixth of Administration staff is in a similar situation as Silvia with a low salary but noticeable conspicuous consumption habits. A secretary's ability to perform romanianness and to dress business-like gives her white-collar status (opposite

²⁴ Substantiating this claim, my informants recounted several examples of Ciment S.A. Moldovans who were in good relations with and promoted by Egrafal Ltd. to Romanian cement plants. One middle-aged man – a family friend of informant Eugenia in this chapter – is currently working for an Egrafal business unit in America.

Braverman 1974, 353) and options for job advancement denied to shop-floor workers and Third-floor staff who cannot fluently act Romanian or European professional.²⁵ I argue that romanianness, consumption and job opportunity are linked because, in the case of Silvia, she moves up to the newly created post of Internal Communications Manager within two years of me finishing fieldwork at Ciment S.A. Meanwhile, one of Silvia's Third-floor colleagues, Lidia, was made redundant within three years. Lidia was a legally trained clerk, earning more than Silvia during my fieldwork, but known to be vocally unsympathetic to restructuring and Romanian speaking, differently than Silvia. Lidia was not concerned with her outward appearance nor conspicuous consumption like Silvia and other Third-floor employees. Lidia also was never invited to Egrafal's business-training trips in Romania, which are considered important stepping stones for corporate advancement. In general, the trainings were a privilege reserved for Third-floor employees exhibiting enthusiasm for working for Egrafal and its Romanian management – as measured in long working hours and friendly fraternising with Romanian managers.²⁶ Such examples suggest that a performance of cultural (linguistic) capital and an Egrafal-amenable disposition are just as important as economic capital (like job skill and salary) in opening up career opportunities and distinguishing social status at Ciment S.A. It is also a reminder of the inter-changeability between cultural (linguistic) capital and economic capital (Bourdieu 1991), even as post-socialist industrial anthropology studies so far give little consideration to this inter-play. The next sections will provide more details on how cultural-linguistic capital and a corporate persona are absorbed and practised on Ciment S.A.'s Third Floor. Economic-moral ideas bound up with identity, status and language are also discussed.

²⁵ See *Știrile*, December 2005, issue 25, page 7 on Egrafal's expectations of its employees.

²⁶ This remark is based on my observation during 2005 and 2006 of the types of Ciment S.A. individuals participating in the Egrafal business seminars.

4.6 The Role of Sexualised Relations in Language Change, Status and Capitalist Subject-making

This section, made up of three parts, argues that romantic liaisons and flirting relationships between local women and powerful foreign men afford close interaction and behavioural examples which were generally welcomed by local women and observed and imitated by local men. Observations of flirting in turn played a part, I argue, in changing social-moral attitudes towards Romanian speaking and Egrafal Ltd. On the whole, this trend is generally different from what we see in literature on factory flirting, which emphasizes the unpleasant, aggressive sides of sexuality at work (see for instance Salzinger 2000 and Yelvington 1996). This is not to say that sexual aggressiveness did not take place at Ciment S.A., but that it was out of my view as a researcher.

Ciment S.A.'s new Romanian male managers were known for their flirting and teasing habits, to a point that even outside of work employees discussed the Romanians' mischievous, playful conduct and interest in Moldovan women. One informant referred to the three most flirtatious and cunning as 'the three shepherds' (*trei ciobani*, an expression from Romanian folklore): Production Manager Gheorghe Szekely, Maintenance Manager Liviu Popescu and Plant Manager Pavel Florescu.²⁷ Important to this chapter is how their flirtatiousness modelled Romanian speaking and other traits attractive to women and others around the Third Floor. This discussion, then, focuses on sexualised relations that involved mutuality between men and women, instead of cases of unwanted sexual bantering. This is not to say that there were not times when women rebuffed sexual advances; women, nevertheless, tolerated the teasing because of job insecurity and power differentials.

²⁷ The fourth Romanian manager, Călin Dumitru, in charge of Performance Development, was reserved and not known for flirtatious behaviour.

Romantic liaisons

On the most extreme end of sexual expression at the Rezina Cement Plant are fully articulated romantic liaisons. The ethnography examines two romantic relationships with foreign Romanian lovers abroad and within Moldova, both short-lived. The first is a brief affair between Ciment S.A. engineer Natalia and Romanian Manager Liviu. Sex, love and lies are a part of this affair. The other is a one-month, seductive courtship of a young factory accountant by an older Egrafal employee from Romania. They meet on an Egrafal 'Leaders for Tomorrow' personal development workshop in the Romanian Carpathian mountains. Both relationships entail less powerful women from Moldova and influential Romanian men. The second relationship is told from the perspective of its protagonist, Eugenia, a close informant. Details of Liviu and Natalia's romantic involvement come mostly from factory gossip, backed up with personal knowledge of the actors in question.

The latter affair started with a language offer. Liviu offered to teach Natalia English.²⁸ Natalia, an ethnic Russian process engineer (approximately age thirty-four), needed to learn English or Romanian to keep her Egrafal job.²⁹ Natalia had basic knowledge of English but practically no Romanian. Natalia is divorced, lives with her parents, and raises her daughter as a single mother. In Moldova, women alone are considered vulnerable and prey to other men, so I am told. Natalia was vulnerable as a woman and as an employee. Liviu made no secret of the fact that he found blonde-hair, blue-eyed, slender Natalia beautiful. So Liviu's offer of English tuition was less about philanthropy and more about attainable romantic pursuit. When Silvia told me about 'the private English classes' between the two (common knowledge around the plant), I

²⁸ Liviu himself had advanced knowledge of English, having been sent to America for training with Egrafal.

²⁹ Romanian and English are the two official working languages of *Egrafal România*.

was puzzled how teaching and learning could take place, given that Liviu knows no Russian and Natalia no Romanian, only incommunicable English:

Rebecca: But Liviu doesn't know Russian!?

Silvia: It's not important [she smiles]

Silvia's words and smile disclose the nature of Liviu and Natalia's association. Apparently Natalia welcomed Liviu's advances – even to the point of being territorial, not letting anyone near his office. Then suddenly the relationship took a mysterious nose-dive. Liviu went away on a business trip to Egrafal's headquarters in Paris. During his week away, Natalia got married! Not just to anyone, but to Liviu's understudy, Deputy Maintenance Manager Sergei Lazarov, an influential local Russian, owning several small businesses in town.³⁰ What is worse, Natalia did not inform Liviu of the marriage. Liviu had to find out through factory gossip. Liviu was surprised as anyone else to discover his 'girlfriend' had gotten married while he was away for a week. When I curiously asked an employee why she thinks Natalia chose to have an affair with Liviu, only to leave him high and dry, suddenly marrying a well-off local, the answer I got was a Russian saying: 'A woman so quickly jumps on a man's back that he does not have time to breathe.' My informant explains this is why Natalia went for Liviu and then Sergei. It is as the Russian adage implies: there are cunning women seeking out 'wealthy, popular, successful men with good jobs.' My informant adds that Natalia does not have a reputation as '[...] a good worker,' insinuating that there was some sort of self-interested utilitarianism (pertaining to job security or possibly home support) involved in Natalia's love intrigue with Liviu and marriage to Sergei.³¹ If not job security or a promotion, Natalia *did* walk away from her relationship with Liviu with

³⁰ The success of Sergei's local business ventures, mostly in retail foodstuffs, was not widely discussed around town.

³¹ This perhaps comes as no surprise to Liviu, as he recognizes there is usually inequality in his relationships with lovers: 'People always want something from me.'

noticeably better Romanian. I noticed this, as her boss – Liviu’s Romanian colleague, Călin – began increasingly speaking to Natalia in Romanian, whose comprehension noticeably improved over the course of the affair.

The second romance involves a young, mixed-ethnic accountant named Eugenia. Eugenia is a recent university graduate hired by Egrafal. Eugenia’s Russian mother is the plant’s Lab Chief and her deceased Moldovan father was a former Plant Manager in the 1990s. (He was previously mentioned in this chapter, and again in Chapter Five.)³² Eugenia tells me and other Moldovans that she considers herself a Moldovan. However, Eugenia originally felt uncomfortable as a Moldovan in Romania, despite the similar languages. She believed Romanians to be very different from her – in how they talked, in the manner they dressed, and in what they ate. She associated Romanians with being *mai culți* (more cultured) and speaking a dialect *mai curat* (cleaner) than hers.³³ Having practically no interaction with Romanians before coming to work for the cement plant in 2005, Eugenia’s opinions were mainly formed through her observations of and interactions with foreign managers, like Liviu, a relatively well-off man who joked with her and took her out to lunch. After Eugenia’s first visit to Romania for an Egrafal induction just after being hired, she came home frustrated that Romanians in Bucharest could not understand her Moldovan dialect. She felt affirmed in her belief that Romanians *are* different from Moldovans, even citing trivial differences like Romanian women eat more than Moldovan women. Eugenia initially was wary of Egrafal management changes, which intimately impacted her Russian mother at the plant. (Eugenia’s mother has limited Romanian-speaking ability.) However, in less than a year’s time, Eugenia’s opinions of Romanians and Romania changed, as her long work

³² Eugenia’s father’s period as Ciment S.A. Plant Manager was interrupted in the 1990s when he suddenly died in an industrial accident in the factory, according to employees.

³³ This is a common Moldovan stereotype of Romanians.

hours in Accounting earned her the nickname of '*Egrafalist*' – a factory term for someone devoted to Egrafal Ltd.

Eugenia's change of person all began with a romantic relationship. Eugenia met an admirer while on a winter Egrafal training in Romania. His name was Lucian. She liked how he has goals and ambitions. They began a romantic liaison – mostly over mobile phone. Within several weeks, Eugenia started contemplating about the possibility of living in Romania someday. She said that she would not mind living in crowded, fast-paced Bucharest, a city of which she once spoke poorly. She even began dreaming of working for Egrafal's Bucharest headquarters – that is, she says, 'if I have someone special in my life in Bucharest.' She intimated that she did not always know what she wanted to do. 'It was only after coming to Egrafal,' Eugenia shared, that she started having ambitions. She recognised that in working for Egrafal, she has become more goal-oriented; she thinks more consciously about the future.

I was surprised by Eugenia's words, knowing that she used to express anxiety over leaving behind her widowed mother in remote Rezina. Eugenia's new independent thinking and changed attitude towards Romania – coincidentally during her budding romance with Lucian – seems to represent a shift in Eugenia's sense of personhood and work identity. Eugenia now talks about setting work and life goals – as she learns to do in Egrafal seminars, contemplating her future with Egrafal and extolling the virtues of the company. Her words express moral-goodness and trust in the corporation. Eugenia now wants to find 'a man with goals.' Her recent ex-boyfriend Sasha, an ethnic Russian (non-Romanian speaking) from secessionist Transnistria, is now considered an unsuitable partner, being 'without goals' and 'traditional,' not supportive of women like Eugenia in the workplace. Eugenia compares Sasha and Lucian's sexuality: Lucian uses poetic words, displays public affection, and 'moves fast' (saying *mi-e dor de tine* or 'I

miss you' after only two days of knowing each other), while ethnic Russian Sasha is more conventional and reserved. For a number of reasons, Eugenia breaks off all relations with Sasha, even after eventually breaking-up with Lucian. Still, by way of her relationship with Lucian, Eugenia developed, over the period of one month, a desire for things Romanian, and a desire for things Egrafal. Speaking with Lucian almost every day by mobile, sometimes at work, Eugenia's language habits were affected, as she occasionally took-on Romanian phrases, for example, using *pa* and *ceau* for good-bye, words Moldovans rarely use. (Moldovans instead frequently use Russian *poka* for good-bye.)

Moldovan workers like Eugenia fall in love with Romanians, and in doing so, they become intimately exposed to a country about which they have had little knowledge, and have traditionally been taught to feel ambivalent from Soviet times (Heintz 2005). However, through the romantic interactions, they make themselves into subjects to traditional Romanian ideas of what it means to be Moldovan³⁴ (like speaking standard Romanian, as Eugenia began doing more frequently), as well as subjects to Egrafal's new mentality (*nouă mentalitate*) of goal orientation and liberal-economic individualism, exemplified in Eugenia's idea of moving to 'exciting' Bucharest regardless of kin obligations in provincial Moldova. All in all, these changes represent a shift in social-moral attitudes towards cultural and economic life.

Flirting relationships

Sexualised relations in the context of work at Ciment S.A. also came in the form of flirting relationships. Flirting was most frequent on Administration's Third Floor: observed along the hallway, in the kitchenette, in open-door offices, or in the high-traffic stairwell. Sexual exchanges rarely took place elsewhere in the plant, least of all

³⁴ For example, recall the aggressive romanisation cultural programmes during the inter-war years of Greater Romania (see King 2000).

on the all-male shop floors. Most ethnographic sociological work on sexuality in the workplace (as in Lee 1998; Pollert 1981; Salzinger 2000; Westwood 1984; Yelvington 1996) has focused on shop-floor flirting among line workers. My study wants to add a concern for bureaucratic administration – often stereotyped as rational and prudent – but in fact the most sexualised workspace at Ciment S.A. The Third Floor’s unique mixed-gender composition makes flirtation possible; *teritoriul*’s male make-up precludes it.³⁵ Here in Administration, flirting generally happened in public spaces and in the presence of others, attesting to its performative character, as in the eye-catching displays of conspicuous consumption mentioned earlier.

Local women’s participation in flattery and sexual innuendo was not simply about taking the edge off of management control, the conclusion of Anna Pollert in her study on women in a British tobacco factory (1981), nor just about the pursuit of desire and pleasure on the job, a point made by Williams et al. (1999, 77, 85),³⁶ but rather about employees feeling attractively modern and cosmopolitan in interacting with prosperous, well-travelled European men. My informant Silvia liked to speak about Romanian men being ‘more open’ and physically affectionate than ‘our Moldovan men.’ She considered Romanian flirting, like the Romanian dialect, to be ‘more sophisticated...and round-about’ than the Moldovan dialect and culture, which were ‘simple and direct [...] for peasants, simple people.’ Silvia did not mind the new flirtatious expressions in the plant; in fact, she personally enjoyed the public attention. Silvia liked retelling (or bragging) to colleagues about examples of Liviu showing her friendship and affection, even when it was a crude remark directed towards her, like the

³⁵ Williams et al. (1999, 81) reminds us that the social and physical layout of the workplace is important in shaping sexual expression. The location of departments, offices and social spaces impacts interactional patterns and possibilities for sexual exchanges (Delph-Janiurek 2001).

³⁶ Williams et al. (1999, 77, 85) points out that the line between welcomed flirting and unwanted sexual harassment is often a blurred one. However, Williams et al. argues that scholars should not dismiss all sexual bantering as harassment, or assume workers do not pursue pleasure on the job.

following (as recounted by Silvia with giggles): ‘I got into the car to work this morning [...] Liviu took one look at my swollen face and joked: “*what* were you sucking on last night!’.’ In response, she explained smugly: ‘[...] Liviu and I are good friends. He is just very friendly.’ Differently than sexual bantering, considered one-way, asymmetrical acts of pestering, Silvia’s example signals pleasure and mutuality in flirting. It discloses how Silvia enjoyed feeling desirable in having a modern Romanian man be friendly with her.³⁷ Women like Silvia who enjoyed flirting the most usually had what I call a ‘flirting relationship.’

Despite the entwining of flirting as friendship and flirting as desire, a point made by Povinelli (2006), Silvia insists: ‘Between two smart people there can only ever be “a flirt”.’ Silvia was perhaps thinking of her own relationship with Liviu – a liaison akin to a ‘joking relationship,’ characterised by patterned behaviour between people of the opposite sex or of differing social groups, involving ‘mild taunting or ribald joking’ (Burawoy 1979, 142-45, Schusky 1965, 76; also Radcliffe-Brown 1940).³⁸ Joking relationships come about in situations when persons must get along with others they are deeply hostile to (for example, see Mitchell 1956). Traditional literature stresses the more or less instrumental use of joking relationships for conflict avoidance or resolution. Joking partners – ambivalent towards one another – maintain relational ties through mutual aid and exchange of services. In this way, joking relationships can act as modes of belonging linking together individuals of different, antagonistic ethno-national

³⁷ In comparing Silvia’s account of flirting as pleasure with other occasional accounts of flirting as pestering, what was important was which man initiated the flirting and the potential gains of allowing him to flirt with you. Women assessed the possibility of a ‘friendship,’ of mutual give and take (materially *and* emotionally) with a man, in defining the line between behaviour as consensual flirting or as unwanted harassment.

³⁸ Radcliffe-Brown defines a joking relationship as ‘[...] a relation between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other, who in turn is required to take no offence. [...] There are many varieties in the form of this relationship in different societies. In some instances the joking or teasing is only verbal, in others it includes horse-play; in some the joking includes elements of obscenity, in others not’ (1940, 195).

groups (like Moldovans and Romanians) and of differing superior and subordinate statuses. While much of this is true in Silvia and Liviu's relationship, I am not convinced that a 'joking relationship' is the best way to frame their association. Local Moldovans *are* ambivalent towards Romanians,³⁹ but during the course of the flirting relationship, ambivalence lessens and group difference weakens, as some locals take on the ethno-linguistic traits of those whom they were once hostile towards. In the process, meanings attached to the ambivalent 'other' change, as the last part of this section will highlight. I do not recall the same fluidity and sharing of ethnic markers in the inter-tribal joking relationships of Mitchell's *Kalela Dance* (1956), for example.⁴⁰

To illustrate a 'flirting relationship,' I use an ethnographic snap-shot of interaction between Silvia and Liviu:

It was the start of the workday in secretary Silvia's office (the *anticameră*). As usual, she was doing three tasks at once: answering the phone, responding to emails, folding invitations. While in the middle of typing, two Russian Laboratory women approached Silvia to claim Egrafal t-shirts. I observed Silvia outright deny t-shirts to these women, and initially refuse to communicate with them in Russian, but only Romanian, an act uncharacteristic of Russian-speaking Silvia (but not uncommon for the Romanian managers). An hour later, though, she gave the same t-shirt to Liviu. Liviu had just returned from an Egrafal business trip in Paris. The gift-giving impressed me as Silvia's attempt to reinforce her friendship with Liviu. There was an exchange of smiles and laughter, as Silvia and Liviu caught up from his week away. At one point Silvia's demeanour changed to hushed, urgent secrecy. Placing her hand on Liviu's arm, she guided him to her boss's vacant office adjacent to hers. Their conversation moved behind closed doors. Later in the day, while monotonously stuffing envelopes together, Silvia explained the secrecy. Silvia, as Liviu's friend and confidant, needed to warn him that his factory girlfriend got married while he was away in Paris. [...] After gossiping about this for a while, Silvia expressed to me how she likes Liviu and considers that they have

³⁹ More so than vice versa. (Note that locals did not initiate the flirting relationships, foreigners did.) Moldovan ambivalence toward Romanians is best summed up in a rumour, a version of which I frequently heard throughout Moldova, recounted here by Silvia: 'The rumour was Romanians wanted to come to Moldova to take Moldovan women as their wives and servants [...] But the idea was that Romanians are the superior ones and Moldovans the lesser ones [...] People in Moldova did not like this kind of thinking.' Silvia adds that she believes this is one reason Moldova never joined Romania after 1991.

⁴⁰ For Mitchell's dancers, their tribe was valorised, their group identity asserted, while the hostile 'other' was ridiculed. Group identities remained intact.

un fel de prietenie (a type of friendship): ‘He even showed me pictures of his children, which people only do with persons they trust.’

Friendship, trust, pleasurable joking, gift-giving, Romanian-speaking pride, and enjoyment in spending time together characterise the activities surrounding this account of interaction between Silvia and Liviu – two Egrafal employees of unequal status. This is not to say that instrumentality and patronage were not involved in the relationship – for Silvia gave Liviu a t-shirt and emotional aid, while Liviu later provided material support to Silvia’s sick daughter and regular car rides to the capital. Liviu is still Silvia’s superior. However, Ciment Rezina women like Silvia did not enter into ‘a type of friendship’ (*un fel de prietenie*), which I have termed a ‘flirting relationship,’ with a foreign boss for purely instrumental reasons. She reciprocated relational advances also for pleasure, sociality and self-esteem (to feel ‘modern’) – important during a time of staff reductions, disappearing networks of social support, and status-making away from the past.⁴¹ Moreover, it is important to note that flirting relationships only existed within the bounds of the factory. Silvia, for example, did not spend time socialising with Liviu outside of work, mostly for reasons of male and female social propriety for married persons, as well as because of Romanian management’s own reluctance to inter-mix with employees outside of work, as Silvia and Liviu explained to me on separate occasions.⁴² For this reason, the factory space of *etajul trei* – where white-collar

⁴¹ The sociality in a flirting relationship may in a way bring humanness back into post-socialist work, increasingly competitive and individualised as my informants see it. The instrumentality of flirting was, then, bound-up in flirting’s sociality and pleasure. In preferring the term ‘flirting relationship’ over ‘joking relationship,’ I consider it important that conscious, mutual attraction (defined as being pleasurable to be around another person and seeking out the person’s company) expressed in public, underlay the relationship, even if there was no consummation of relations. It is also important to note the instability of flirting relationships, with relational peaks and troughs. Men, more than women, held the power in setting the boundaries and constancy of the relationship. Men worked and played when they needed and wanted to, almost irrespective of female job obligations.

⁴² The one exception was Liviu’s short-lived affair with process engineer Natalia. Afterwards, Liviu’s romantic liaisons were with women from town, not from the factory.

employees spend more than ten hours a day, five days a week⁴³ – was central to providing opportunities for flirting relationships with Romanians on the floor, and for invoking new feelings of attractive, modern and moral romanianness.

Third-floor male employees mimicking Romanian management in attitude and practice

Changes in attitude and practice were most noticeable among young Moldovan men working around the Third Floor.⁴⁴ They were increasingly mimicking Romanian flirting styles and language habits to the point that Moldovans as much as Romanians were putting their arms around young women and using Romanian verbal courtesies. This is not to say that flirting did not exist in Administration before the arrival of Romanian management, only the manner and *language* in which it was done changed, I argue. (Recall that I was in Administration almost half of a year before Romanian management arrived.) From autumn 2005 onwards, sexual expressions became more pronounced, public and affectionate – considered uncharacteristic of ‘our Moldovan men’ (*moldovenii noștri*). Engineer Andrei – a Moldovan, age twenty-four – and his factory workmates regularly commented on the admirably bold tactics of the Romanians’ flirting – like Liviu wooing female colleagues with James Blunt’s ‘*You’re beautiful*’ programmed onto his mobile, or frequently kissing Administration women on their hands and cheeks. Acquiring a degree of Romanian masculine *savoir-faire*, impressionable young Moldovans, like Andrei, took on a degree of romanianness through mimicking their bosses’ flirtatious behaviour. They started kissing female colleagues good-bye on their cheeks, and using Romanian-specific phrases like *sărut*

⁴³ These working hours are averages, as Moldovan understudies to Romanian managers usually spend longer at the plant, working twelve hours a day and usually going into the factory after lunch on Saturdays and Sundays.

⁴⁴ Over the course of sixteen months at the Rezina Cement Plant, I rarely came across patterned flirting relationships between local Administration men and women. This may be because of the history of conjugal relationships and fictive kin networks in the factory, ordering local male-female conjugal propriety. However, as previously noted, kin networks are disappearing with Egrafal’s personnel reductions.

mâna ('I kiss your hand' for hello), uncommon in Moldova, but typical in Romania.⁴⁵

At work their Moldovan dialect gradually transformed nearer to standard Romanian, as I encountered these younger employees consciously correcting their word choices – like switching their usual Moldovan *copchii* (children) for Romanian *copii* or enunciating Romanian *faceți* ('you do') instead of Moldovan *fațeti*.

As the Romanian dialect and expressions became attractive around the Third Floor, changes were even observed among the older generation of ethnic Russian managers. Middle-aged Evgenii began greeting Moldovan female colleagues in the hallway with '*bună ziua!*' (Romanian 'hello') and a friendly pat on the back, instead of simply '*zdravstvuite!*' (Russian formal 'hello') and a plain, distant look. Evgenii barely spoke Romanian when we first met in summer 2005, but over the course of six months, working closely under Romanians, he became fluent. It was not just me who noticed the change. Andrei tells me of his boss: 'Mr. Evgenii is speaking Romanian so much lately, he's started to forget Russian [...] It is because of Călin [Evgenii's Romanian manager] [...] Liviu and Călin told Evgenii and his Russian co-worker, Sergei Lazarov, that they will lose their jobs if they don't learn Romanian.'

Sergei Lazarov – the aforementioned Deputy Maintenance Manager (Liviu's understudy and the husband of Liviu's ex-lover) – is another example of a Russian learning Romanian. A tall, proud, imposing middle-aged Russian, Sergei did not speak a word of Romanian before Liviu's take-over as boss. However, after spending long hours mirroring Liviu's work, occasionally travelling with him on business trips to Romania, and observing his every-day demeanour, Sergei began to speak semi-proficient Romanian and to develop perfect comprehension – a feat few Russians in the plant have

⁴⁵ This is a polite way of saying 'hello,' usually initiated by a male to female, but not native to Moldova.

mastered (see Chapter Five).⁴⁶ Although it is difficult to establish the exact way in which locals like Sergei learned, or became emboldened in Romanian speaking from Romanian management, the examples of changed habits are striking, especially among the couple of Russians mentioned.⁴⁷ I believe that Liviu and his colleagues' appealing, confident sexuality – and Sergei's regular exposure to it as Liviu's understudy – played a role in adding a symbolic sense of virility, strength and attractiveness to the Romanian language, which was previously considered weak, immoral and backwards in Moldova's Soviet history, especially among ethnic Russians like Sergei.

These examples show the way in which the Romanian language and identification became attractive and pleasurable, as did the idea of working for Egrafal. A Moldovan 'acting Romanian' was no longer (immorally) 'nationalist and bourgeois' as in Soviet times (cf. Sbornik Statei 1971), but modern, sexy, flexible and European with positive (moral) connotations. The symbolic value and prestige of Romanian speaking increased as it was modelled by well-off Romanians,⁴⁸ who occasionally gave from their earnings to local employees in need, like in the case of Silvia's daughter.⁴⁹ As employees on the Third Floor changed their ideas about Romanians and their speech, they noticeably *took on* Romanian characteristics. Administration Moldovans now wanted to act like Romanians – even if only in certain spaces and relations, discussed in the next section. The admiring or mimicking of Romanian sexual prowess on-the-job contributed towards these changed attitudes and practices, I argue.

⁴⁶ While we do not know if Third-floor ethnic Russians Sergei and Evgenii would have lost their jobs if they did not learn Romanian, they were certainly compelled to do so, unlike other Russian speakers who refused or foot-dragged on learning Romanian (see Chapters Three and Five).

⁴⁷ The case of Evgenii and Sergei Lazarov, both working closely with Romanians in Administration, may be exceptions but also important prototypes of the type of language change that is possible in a European corporate work environment in Moldova.

⁴⁸ As a comparison, see Laada Bilaniuk on the way in which the Ukrainian language increased in symbolic value in post-socialist Ukraine (2004, 100).

⁴⁹ So even if the Romanians' sexual behaviour might not be considered 'moral' to an outside audience, workers, nevertheless, saw them as 'moral' and rationalised their flirting and affairs as 'normal for men.'

4.7 Generational Variance in Multi-lingual Code-switching, Self-identity and Adaptation

The previous section showed how Third-floor employees are taking on Romanian social and linguistic habits, and some even an ‘Egrafalist’ disposition (recall young Eugenia), suggestive of their adaptation to corporate restructuring. Their adaptation is noteworthy for the way in which it reminds us that people’s exposure to market liberalism does not always lead to resistance and a moral economy of protest (Thompson 1971). Instead, market modernisation at Ciment S.A. gave new opportunities and incentives to those now on the Third Floor. The opportunity to become white-collar played a role, I believe, in these workers’ adaptation to market reform, not unlike what Stephen Wegren found among particular Russian agricultural workers advantaged by post-Soviet market reform in *The Moral Economy Reconsidered* (2005). Among these workers, Wegren finds: ‘Russia’s post-communist rural transition has been better characterized by adaptation than resistance, a fact that, so far, some analysts have failed to recognize’ (2005, 197). The difference, however, between political scientist Wegren’s work and this thesis is Wegren’s assumption that people’s adaptation is irrespective of their local values and ideas, or what he calls peasants’ ‘moral economy’ (2005, 106). Wegren’s understanding of moral economy – unfortunately missing E.P. Thompson’s formulation of the concept (1971, 76-136)⁵⁰ – portrays workers’ cultural values and orientations as static and disconnected from (and essentially unchanged by) market liberalism (see 2005, 59, 106-107, 151). It is for this reason that Wegren argues that scholars need to stop using the moral-economy paradigm in peasant studies (2005, 197-198). This chapter, on the other hand, depicts social-moral ideas about working life and relationships very much alive during market modernisation

⁵⁰ Wegren writes: ‘The moral economy was originally published by Eric Wolf and then expanded upon and made more explicit by James Scott who argued that markets and commercialization of agriculture threaten the “moral economy” of rural villagers’ (2005, 106).

– like in workers’ evolving and interconnected values of language and consumption on the Third Floor – even if these ideas do not culminate in a moral economy of protest, like that described in Thompson (1971, 76-136) and elsewhere in the thesis (Chapter Five). This chapter shows how cultural perceptions, including social factors like generation, affect the way in which workers adapt to corporate market reforms. The rest of this section argues that the significance and shape of capitalist accommodation differs according to the age of employees on the Third Floor. The Third Floor’s middle-aged and young cohorts understand romanianness and their long-term job security differently.

Middle-aged cohort

For informant Silvia’s age group – irrespective of white-collar job status, whether secretary or engineer – acquiring romanianness appears to be about a developing middle-class consciousness among previously Soviet-era *rabotniki* (rank-and-file) workers. According to Schröder, a middle-class identification is not defined by its economic situation alone, but by its consumption habits, leisure activities, and ‘[...] its self-image centered on the quest for social recognition’ (2009, 9 and Liechty 2003, 17-18). For Silvia and her husband, being ‘middle-class’ is about a cosmopolitan business persona, epitomized in acquiring very noticeable things like clothes, beauty products, and the latest electronic devices, purchased from brand-name shops (*magazine de firmă*). Many of their tastes and styles are picked up from what they see modelled by foreign Romanian managers, as evidenced earlier.

What is interesting about this process is that Silvia is aware that some of her tastes are changing, differently than Bourdieu’s assumption that tastes are an unconscious, fixed part of a person’s habitus (1984, 2-16). Silvia explained on several occasions that socialist-era objects, like an old painting or cabinet at home, are not ‘in style.’ The painting she eventually gave to her younger sister, whose plain apartment

was in need of decorating (see Chapter Seven). Silvia also frequently comments on the differences between the Romanian and Moldovan dialect, comparing the way that she spoke, read and wrote her native tongue in the Soviet era ('with simpler expressions') with how the Romanians speak her language ('it's more complex'). Silvia tells me that she enjoys using Romanian expressions, suggesting that she is consciously aware of her changing practices.

However, for Silvia and middle-aged informants at the Rezina Cement Plant, there is no self-ascribed ethno-national consciousness bound up in their observable practice of romanianness and their affinity for Egrafal România. Romanian-speaking and acting simply represents a white-collar, middle-class lifestyle.⁵¹ Performing this linguistic modality is important at work and in public, and as such the linguistic style starts and stops in these spaces. This explains why in homes and private spaces a localist-style 'moldovanness' (observed in speaking the Moldovan regional dialect and culturally specific superstitions), along with Russian-speaking, holds sway (see Chapter Seven), and not Romanian speaking.⁵² Therefore, for this middle-aged generation, speaking and acting Romanian does not replace, but co-exists alongside a localist Moldovan idiom and identity, between which Third-floor Moldovan informants situationally code-switch.

The code-switching of linguistic modalities happens not only between spatial contexts – as traditionally emphasized by the Rhodes-Livingston Institute (RLI) scholars

⁵¹ Romanianness is associated with a middle-class lifestyle, because countless conversations with Moldovan interlocutors reveal that the Romanian dialect and culture have held class connotations since the inter-war years. Speaking the Romanian dialect was associated with being 'more cultured,' as those Moldovans who spoke it in the days of so-called Greater Romania were city or village administrators and educators – those most incorporated into Romanian state-administrative structures. Even when the Latin-based Romanian language was stigmatised during Soviet rule, the verbal form of the language was still used among Soviet Moldova's titular elites (Bruchis 1982), which furthered the dialect's association with high status. Today a burgeoning middle-class lifestyle, with standard Romanian as its emblem, is associated with status.

⁵² At home with her husband, daughter and extended family, Silvia speaks mainly Moldovan – something I observed having lived with her extended family.

(Epstein (1958); Mitchell (1956); Watson (1958) – but also in the context of one singular space, depending on the relations (ethnic, kin, superior) passing through the space. This is illustrated in an ethnographic example of secretary Silvia in her Third Floor *anti-camera* office:

Silvia beckons something inaudible in Russian after Ukrainian Marketing Manager Maxim, while turning back to (Romanian manager) Liviu in standard Romanian to go over conference travel arrangements. Shortly after Liviu departs her office, Silvia's sister, Maria, phones Silvia for a mid-day catch-up. Silvia shuts-off from work for five minutes as she effortlessly switches into the Moldovan dialect to speak with her sister.

In this account Silvia code-switched between three linguistic forms at work over a relatively short period of ten minutes. Switching between Russian, Moldovan and Romanian was a common, everyday practice for Silvia and most Third-floor Moldovans. Silvia's linguistic switching, though, was arguably not about self-interested transacting (*pace* Mitchell 1956) in and of itself, but about a mix of instrumentality, emotionality, and moral notions of kinship and group 'insiders,' reminding us that values and moral ideas are a part of workers' adaptation (contra Wegren 1995, 260-269, 304-305). It is important to note that when Silvia was in the presence of Romanians – whether Egrafal managers or my Romanian husband – Silvia never spoke Moldovan around them; only standard Romanian. It did not matter if she was on or off-the-job.

This example brings to mind James Ferguson's commentary on code-switching (1999, 95-98), which follows the work of Bourdieu (1984, 2, 16) and hence is sceptical of people's competency in switching between what he calls 'cultural styles' or modes (like Bourdieu), or what I call linguistic styles. Ferguson rightly stresses that different lifestyle modalities require a certain investment of time, money and effort, which thus place limitations on to the extent to which anyone can switch between the modalities. Bourdieu emphasizes that social-class upbringing and educational level constrain

people's abilities to master new and multiple cultural codes (1984, 16). However, their points have limited applicability to Ciment S.A.'s Third Floor, where many employees with an ability to code-switch multiple languages have not university education and formal language schooling, but just technical-institute training, having been *rabotniki* in the Soviet era (recall Silvia's husband Ion), as well as now experience pay differentials (like Silvia's pay being equivalent to a shop-floor worker). For these reasons, I argue that the ability of Third-floor Moldovans at Ciment S.A. to capably code-switch between the Romanian and Moldovan dialects and subjectivities, along with Russian speaking, is not mainly on account of their socio-economic backgrounds. Rather, Romanian-language learning and code-switching is related to Third-floor employees' high (spatial) exposure to European managers on *etajul trei*, along with modernist yearnings for middle-class consumer futures, represented in the lives of their bosses.

Young adult cohort

Similar code-switching in and out of the Romanian language was observed among the Third Floor's young adults, although the habit notably transformed gradually over time. For this younger cohort, practicing romanianness acquired ethno-linguistic meaning and began to transcend spatial location, whilst over-taking past habits of Russian speaking. As young engineers engaged with Egrafal Romanian managers – doing things like mimicking Liviu's manly flirting techniques – these young Moldovans started gradually exhibiting more Romanian-dialect speaking and less Russian-speaking on-the-job. This is also as young engineers like Andrei (from the end of section 4.7) got on the side of Egrafal, supporting its policies (like Gheorge's controversial proposal for hiring foreign contractors),⁵³ whilst being unsympathetic towards workers not complying with Egrafal policies and Romanian speaking. These attitudes contrasted

⁵³ For more, see section 3.6 in Chapter Three.

with their middle-aged colleagues, like adjunct manager Ion, who persisted in Russian-speaking in the plant among russophone subordinates. What is more in terms of differences, Andrei and his close colleagues, who once regularly conversed in the Russian-inflected Moldovan dialect during leisure hours (in 2005 and early 2006), began more frequently using the Romanian idiom in bars and in each other's homes over the course of several years (from late 2006 onwards).⁵⁴ It was noticeable to the point that they would even reprimand me, 'Rebecca, speak Romanian!', as Andrei said once when I accidentally used a Russian phrase (*do zavtra* for 'see you tomorrow') amid Romanian speaking. As they spoke less Russian, they increased their verbal attacks against all things Russian. This young cohort also stopped doing Moldovan-specific cultural superstitions, like spitting over their shoulders to ward off the evil eye, as I observed young Eugenia and Andrei's factory roommate do during a weekend barbeque in early 2006. Instead, I noticed these young employees joking light-heartedly with each other at picnics and in the bar about who works the longest hours and is therefore an 'Egrafalist.' These changing attitudes and cultural-linguistic practices were significant, I argue, because they went hand-in-hand with an increasing number of young factory employees self-identifying as Romanian. I would increasingly hear phrases like 'I am Romanian!' (*Eu sunt român!*).⁵⁵ These attitudes were the opposite of middle-aged colleagues, who continued to insist on a Moldovan identification and Moldovan

⁵⁴ I make this assertion on account of fieldwork conducted in March to June 2009. During this period, I noticed among this young cohort from the factory gradually less Russian-speaking and more Romanian-dialect-speaking, including increased verbal attacks against all things Russian. Case in point, during my meeting in June 2009 with engineer Andrei, he kept ridiculing Russian culture and way of life, passing judgments like: 'In Russia, they do not like to work. [...] Russians spend their salaries all on alcohol. [...] The Russian business model has no future. Russian companies only put investment into equipment, but not into people [He cites Transnistria's Russian-owned MMZ steel plant and cement plant as examples.] [...] They have no specialists. [...] This is not the mentality of European business.' Andrei juxtaposed Russian culture to European lifestyles and work patterns, as observed during his recent Egrafal Ltd. business trips to Germany, Austria, France, and Romania.

⁵⁵ This became especially prominent during the contentious political climate of my spring 2009 fieldwork, when one young engineer admitted, 'It is my dream [...] that Moldova unite with Romania.' This is the first time that I heard employees out-and-out championing Moldova's political union with Romania.

speaking in informal settings. The young envisioned their future as bound-up with a West European life-world, as opposed to older colleagues' tepid interest in Europe and resilient security in the Russian and ex-Soviet orbit.⁵⁶ For Ciment S.A. youth, Egrafal România convinced them that 'Europe' – an idea as much as a place – is associated with consumer freedom and is acquirable by way of Romanian culture. This all suggests the importance of generation in workers' conceptions of and accommodation to capitalist change, despite the omission or only cursory mention of generation in anthropology works on industrial change in Eastern Europe (like in Dunn 2004, 59, 62-64 and Müller 2007) and around the world (Ferguson 1999, 115-116). The one exception is Rofel's 1999 monograph dealing with gender and generation in a Chinese factory.

All in all, the reasons for the generational differences in ethno-linguistic subjectivity are related to perceptions of economic insecurity, this last part argues. Moldova's post-socialist class structure is unstable and still in formation. Labour insecurity is rife, as experienced at Ciment S.A. through corporate lay-offs and rumours of new ones. Amid these difficult circumstances, Third-floor employees, especially the middle-aged, have been fortunate to achieve a great deal of upward job mobility in a relatively short period of time. They quickly adapted to the language and long-working hours of Egrafal, important to winning favour with (and potentially advancing within) the company. Nevertheless, middle-aged informants like Silvia are still trying to secure themselves in a new middle-class lifestyle. They have a deep fear of downward mobility or status demotion. They have only recently begun to remodel their apartments – an

⁵⁶ See the Institute of Public Policy's Moldova opinion poll, published in July 2009 (2009, 63). Accessed 17 August 2009 on: http://www.ipp.md/files/Barometru/2009/iulie_english/BOP_iulie_2009_prima_parte_English.pdf. *Conversations with Ciment S.A.* Middle-aged informants corroborate this poll data, like Ciment S.A. employee Ludmila, who confesses that she sees Moldova intrinsically linked to other former Soviet countries more than to Romania and Western Europe, to which French conglomerate Egrafal is associated.

important post-socialist class marker in Moldova – and have high debts, including in financing their off-springs’ university education. Their number of working years left to secure their social status are numbered, including by (fears of) competition from incoming youth, like clever Andrei, in Ciment S.A.’s cut-throat transnational-market environment. Incipient middle-class employees like Silvia and Ion worry that they will lose all that they have gained. To protect against this, Silvia knows that she needs good Romanian speaking to get on with foreign managers at work, whilst also retaining Russian in the event of being laid-off (most administrative jobs in Moldova require a knowledge of Romanian *and* Russian). Also important is Moldovan speaking, emblematic of closeness and intimacy, for nurturing bonds of emotional, material support from kin during times of socio-economic unpredictability.⁵⁷ So long as Silvia feels economically insecure and relies on moldovanness and russianness as security, Egrafal’s expectation of permanent Romanian speaking for the plant’s market consolidation is unlikely among Silvia’s generation.

In contrast, young Third-floor employees, as opposed to older colleagues, have less (or no) household investments, private pension savings, major debts, or family members to care for. Most in this category are unmarried and without children (as of 2006). Many aspire to be promoted to work in Egrafal Ltd. plants in Romania (as Andrei was in 2009) and around the world to places like America, following in the footsteps of Liviu and Gheorghe (who worked in Egrafal’s largest global cement plant in Michigan), attesting to these employees’ upwardly mobile aspirations. Worse case, this generation has plenty more earning years and can more easily re-tool skills and seek alternative employment if laid-off from Egrafal. It aspires to be middle-class and has

⁵⁷ I would also add to Ferguson’s account on code-switching that economic uncertainty and emotional support can also motivate the acquisition and use of multiple languages. Having spent considerable time around Silvia at work and home, I discovered that each of the three language idioms she used had different meanings or values attached to them, although all linked to a need for security.

time to achieve it. Such socio-economic structural factors appear to contribute to young workers' willingness to be risky amid economic uncertainty. They have nothing to lose in speaking and acting Romanian. Overall, I believe the linguistic difference between younger and older workers is about distinct ways of conceiving and coping with (not protesting) an unstable, developing capitalist economy. So even if workers are not protesting, but adapting to market change, perceptions and ideas are a part of the process.

4.8 Conclusion: Code-switching as Capitalist Coping

The Third Floor is the most diverse workspace at Egrafal Ciment S.A. in terms of employees' language abilities, genders, generations, and past-to-present incomes and job ranks. Only two decades ago, today's Third-floor managers were yesterday's production workers – no better off than present-day manual labourers. Today they wish to distance themselves from their rank-and-file pasts and to associate themselves with cosmopolitan futures. This process plays out on the Third Floor through employees taking on new consumption and linguistic practices, which are modelled by charismatic foreign Romanian managers newly arrived to the plant. Employees' sustained, regular interaction with these Romanian managers on their floor helps make this possible. It also makes possible sexualised relations and romantic liaisons between Romanian senior staff and Moldovan women – flirting habits which were observed and imitated by local engineers – and had the effect, I argue, of instilling a Romanian linguistic-cultural disposition, and in some cases an 'Egrafalist' corporate-loyal attitude among employees.

Even among Moldovans speaking and acting Romanian, differences were found to be developing between different age groups over what romanianness subjectively means in the context of economic unpredictability. Workers' orientations and ideas about language, consumer goods and stability mattered in their subject formation and

approach to capitalist change. Middle-aged Moldovans were acquiring a cosmopolitan middle-class awareness through Romanian-dialect speaking and conspicuous consumption, whilst their younger counterparts gradually connected more with being ethno-linguistically Romanian and Egrafal-disposed through the same practices.⁵⁸ Therefore, the chapter finds that language and age, more than pure material factors, were important to employees' every-day working habits. Like in the previous chapter, language and social-moral values translated into consent more than contestation of factory restructuring. This is even if consent unfolded differently for different age cohorts.

Perceptions of economic security played a big role in the unfolding of consent and divergent subject-making. I argue that middle-aged workers were susceptible to a precariousness of labour differently than younger workers, which compelled the older workers towards linguistic code-switching and the latter towards linguistic trans-situational change. The former maintained Russian-language and Moldovan-dialect habits from the past, whilst adding another Romanian linguistic style. The Third Floor's younger cohort, on the other hand, increasingly eschewed Russian and Moldovan-speaking for standard-literary Romanian in all walks of life. The younger group saw Romanian-speaking to be about aspiring towards inhabiting a (moral) liberal European life-world, whilst the older group saw it simply as a way to keep a job and social status rather than a means to an ethno-linguistic transformation. Both were contemporary ways of adapting to and coping with Egrafal's modernisation programme.

However, the next two chapters of the thesis will show that not all Ciment S.A. employees can mobilise a Romanian linguistic style. Administration employees,

⁵⁸ Overall, most Third-floor employees appeared to be transforming into a growing middle-class, little studied in the post-socialist context so far (Schröder 2006).⁵⁸

interacting daily with Romanians, engage in interactions and sexualised practices that can bring about the embodiment of this new cultural capital. Differently positioned shop-floor and minority workers, on the other hand, do not easily take on Romanian characteristics. In fact, they resist things Romanian and Egrafal, as Chapters Five and Six will illustrate.

Figure 33. An office on the Third Floor of the Administration Building.



Figure 34. Young engineers outside of work.



Table 3

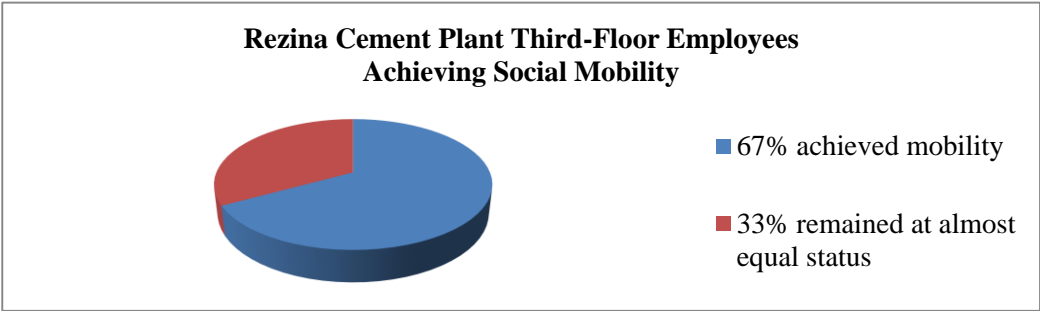


Table 4

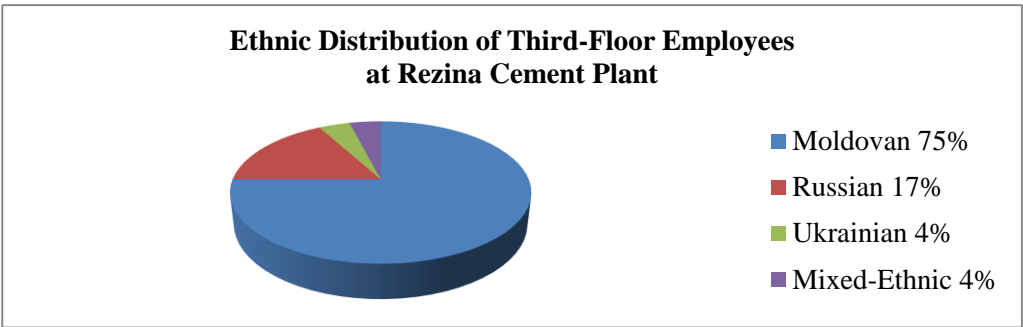


Table 5

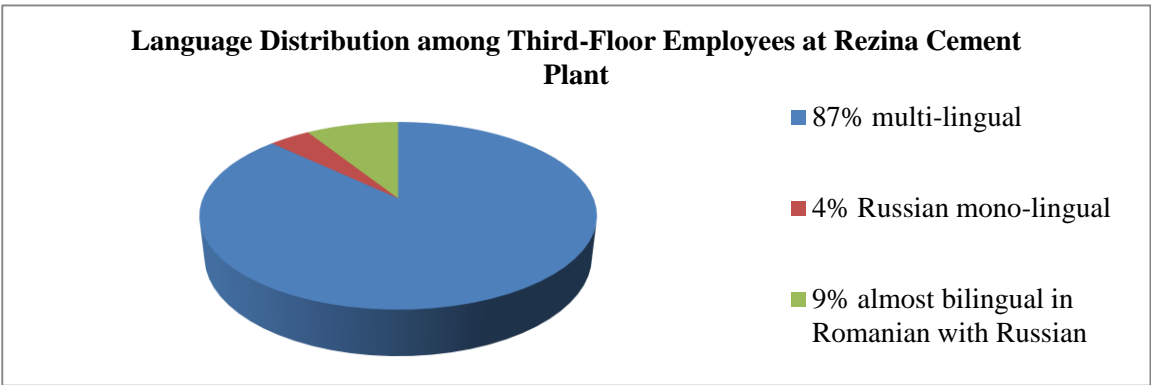


Table 6

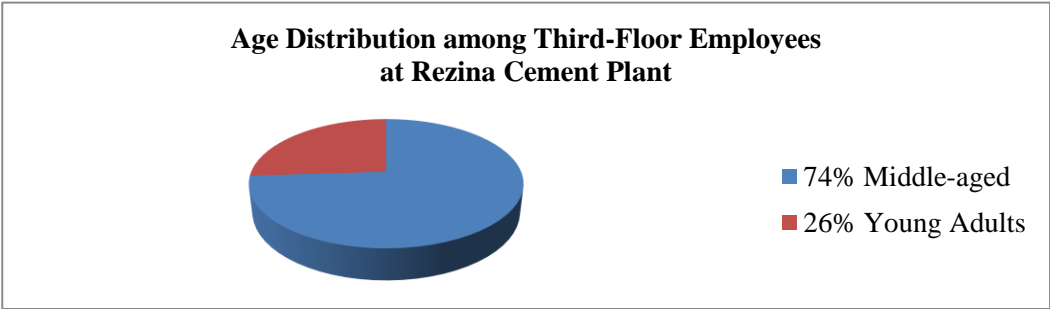
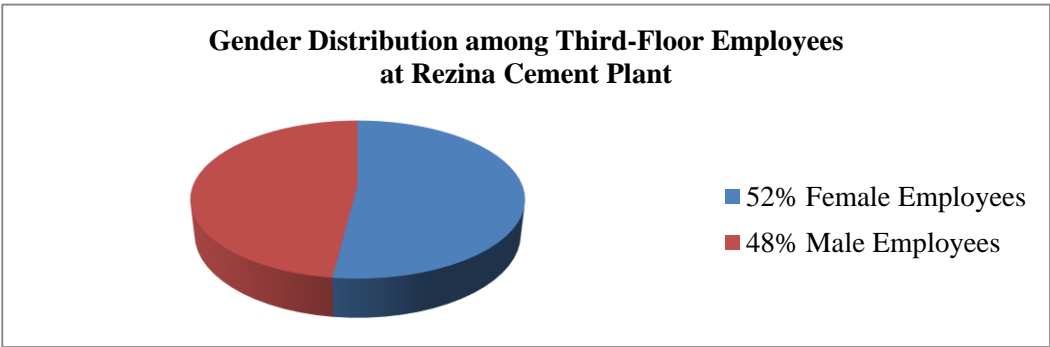


Table 7



CHAPTER FIVE
THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
Laboratory

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is about Egrafal Ciment S.A.'s Laboratory, a longstanding and uniquely Russian and Ukrainian industrial space. The chapter deals with the turmoil felt by Slav ex-elites turned-minorities in a restructuring, Romanian-run private enterprise in the newly independent Republic of Moldova. It is about shifting hierarchical relations, changing labour values, and what I find to be an emerging moral economy of protest among minorities in the plant.

Most of Ciment S.A.'s present-day Slav minorities are of skilled white-collar standing, but, as Russian speakers, they share few or none of the newly valued ethno-linguistic traits of the Moldovan majority of the country and factory. Minorities' lack of cultural-linguistic capital curtails their strivings to achieve job security and to reclaim lost status. The fact that Slav minorities were once 'specialists' (*spetsialisti*) of Soviet heavy industry, but now possess a fluctuating, uncertain social status, sets minorities apart from other job-insecure Moldovan workers in the plant (see Chapters Three and Six), who neither had nor feel a moral right to economic status and security in the way ethnic Slavs do.

Specifically, this chapter looks at how female employees from the Laboratory organise their everyday work and social practices and labour values in response to the pressures of marketisation at Egrafal Ciment S.A. The chapter proposes that work-time sociality and job patterns – associated with a Soviet nostalgic past, russianness, and moral soul (*dusha*) – become for my informants a 'moral economy' (akin to that of Thompson 1971) of industrial behaviour, which protests against new Romanian corporate management. However, the very practices and discourses associated with this moral economy may in fact work to commodify this minority, drawing them closer into subordination to the market economy, against the assumptions of E.P. Thompson's

thinking on the moral economy (1971). This then returns us to the wider theoretical question of the thesis on whether workers' participation in a new free-market economy inevitably leads to calls for protection from it (Polanyi 1944) or something different.

In what follows, the chapter starts by detailing Ciment S.A. workers' job insecurity amid factory restructuring, and the way in which Russian minority workers are affected differently than others in the plant. It then proposes that skilled, educated minorities react to Egrafal România's language and labour restructuring not through reactive ethnic nationalism, as assumed by some scholars (e.g. Chinn and Kaiser 1996), but by way of a moral economy linked to language. The remainder of the chapter shows how this plays out in the Russian-dominated Laboratory by first examining the Laboratory's spatial and social organisation. The purpose of doing such is to set up the context in which new corporate work-regime expectations are functioning. This is followed by a four-part account of how Egrafal's new values about language, goal attainment, calculability and relationality run counter to Soviet-era standards, which were felt strongly among Slav minorities. The consequence is a fluctuating moral economy among Laboratory workers with the scope to resist. This is even as minorities' moral economies are entwined with market elements, suggestive of the way in which moral and market economies are not wholly distinct from each other – just as protest and adaptation are not entirely clear-cut, discrete responses to market reform. The indistinctiveness appears to be rooted in the transforming, unpredictable economic environment of Egrafal Ciment S.A.

5.2 'We want a Psychologist!': Factory Reform and Job Stress among Minorities

Fear of job loss

Employees work like a car with defects. They cannot produce under very high pressure. (Trade Union leader)

8:00am and the summer sun is already streaming through the Laboratory's large, lofty windows. Russian Lab engineer Svetlana, learning that I am meeting Xavier Dupont, the plant's French director, requests I tell him something. It seems important. She comes close: 'Tell Mr. Dupont we want a psychologist!'¹ Her unabashed, matter-of-fact tone breaks the morning calm. Svetlana, almost fifty years old, conveys her stress in having to learn foreign languages and new Lab equipment. She feels pressure to work over-time. Later in the day I hear a similar remark from the trade union leader: workers are stressed; they *have* requested a psychologist. Workers fear losing their jobs (*au frigă că pierd lucrul*); they no longer work freely (*liberi*) but under constraint (*constrânși*). The union leader links workers' anxiety to guaranteed work (*lucru sigur*) being a thing of the past.

The loss of job security is one of the single greatest adjustments for socialist-era workers in the new market economy. This is on account of decades of formerly full-employment in state-socialist systems. 'Everybody had a guaranteed job,' one factory machinist recollects, while another worries: 'I work for Egrafal now, but I don't know if I will have a job later [...]' Nowadays all Ciment S.A. employees feel job insecurity, manual and non-manual labour alike. It is manifested in workers' temperaments, in their pace of work, and in their on and off-the-job physical and emotional well-being. Nervous tension is exhibited in habitual pill popping, chain smoking, and recurring, stress-induced hives (rashes), blamed on work stress, informants say.² So anxious are workers that they run relentless health checks and take sanatorium treatment 'from

¹ For clarification, this Russian woman's request for a psychologist was not just directed at me, a foreigner, as a way of expressing dissatisfaction with work conditions. Apparently, employees made a similar request to the trade union leader, requesting that Egrafal hire a Human Resources specialist with psychological training. I learned this in a meeting with union leader Valeria Dmitrov. The plea for a psychologist in a non-Western setting surprised me enough to write about it.

² David Kideckel depicts among Romanian industrial workers similar examples of anxiety and what he calls 'personal and domestic pathologies,' which he attributes to workers' growing alienation and fear for the future (2008, 210), not unlike what exists among workers at Ciment S.A.

stress.’³ Visible anxiety calls into question studies suggesting post-socialist workers assert a considerable degree of control over the labour process, even amid restructuring (Clarke 1999; Morrison 2007). In the case of cement workers in this chapter, their outward stress appears to be an expression of something between resignation and outright resistance (Ong 1987). All employees attribute anxiety to work in a newly privatised, global enterprise. However, workers’ anxiety is, arguably, not about their inability to adapt to new transnational labour regimes (Dunn 2005), but about shifting hierarchies and the altering social-moral embeddedness of workspaces. This is combined with job insecurity, brought on by market capitalism itself.

The case of Russian minority workers at Ciment S.A.

While all Ciment S.A. employees have been hard hit by the loss of job security during factory reform, the thesis finds that the work group most anxious about the changes are ethnic Russians and Ukrainians (or hereafter the emic category of ‘Russians’). This, I argue, is on account of differences between Russians’ past, present and (uncertain) future status in the plant.

As the vanguards of proletarian revolution, ethnic Russians in the past were empowered with the moral destiny of leading the civilising mission of transforming the Soviet Union’s rural, backward lands into a shared Soviet industrial modernity (Fitzpatrick 1999, 103).⁴ Dispatched to the far corners of the Soviet Union, Russians had privileges of empire (Chinn and Kaiser 1996, 180), even though a numerical minority in Soviet republics like Moldova.⁵ As elites, kinship ties among them and their relatives once densely crisscrossed the Rezina Cement Plant. Nowadays those kinship ties are but

³ Sanatorium health centre visits were common in socialist days, however for rest and relaxation more than for recovery from nervous tension. The reason for the visits, not practice, has changed.

⁴ See also Grant 1995; Hirsch 2005; Payne 2001.

⁵ Soviet statistics show that 54 per cent of Moldova’s industrial workers in 1977 were ethnic Russian or Ukrainian, as were two-thirds of Moldova’s Communist Party members (see Kaufman 2001, 135; also Eyal 1990, 127; Crowther 1991, 2.)

a handful, not more than four Russian or russophone mixed-ethnic couples, mainly in supervisory domains (see Table 9 in Appendix).⁶ These low numbers relate to Russian-worker reduction since 1999, when Ciment S.A. was placed under the Egrafal România division. As mentioned in the introduction to Part Two, the take-over of the Rezina Cement Plant gave rise to new language policies affecting minorities' jobs.⁷

Today the relatively few, mostly female Russians remaining at Ciment S.A. are somewhere between a working and middle class. Their money earnings and technical skill, as under socialism, make most of them 'white collar' and put them in the latter category, but their lack of important cultural capital – the newly valued language of Romanian – threatens their job security and curtails their middle-class strivings. They, like Moldovan manual labour in Chapter Six, are the most resistant to Egrafal factory restructuring. This includes opposition to Romanian-language training, undertaken by all Russians and Ukrainians.⁸ Russian female specialists' forthright nonconformity in language and labour practice gives the impression to Egrafal that they are 'traditional' and have more in common with seemingly old-fashioned workers on the shop floors of *la teritoriu* (see Chapter Six) than with modernising Moldovan colleagues on Administration's Third Floor (recall Chapter Four).

Russian minorities around the former Soviet Union

These ethnic Russians at Ciment S.A. resemble Russians in other Soviet successor states, adapting with difficulty to their new minority status. Self-perceptions are part and parcel of the predicament. Before Soviet disintegration, ethnic Russians

⁶ One example is Ol'ga, an ethnic Russian technician from the Laboratory. Ol'ga's Russian husband works on the limestone crusher in the factory's quarry.

⁷ One cannot forget that, perhaps more than anything, the decline in Ciment S.A.'s 'Russian' personnel is owing to late 1980s Moldovan nationalism and the 1991-92 separatist conflict, which drove many non-native 'Russians' back to their birthplaces, as previously mentioned.

⁸ Russians were also joined by Moldovans more accustomed to speaking Russian and their rural dialect, as mentioned in Chapter Three and Chapter Six.

considered themselves the dominant group of the Soviet Union rather than a minority in the constituent republics in which they lived. Also, surveys suggest that Russians were divided in self-identity by 1989, half thinking of themselves as ‘Russian’ and the other half ‘Soviet’ (Chinn and Kaiser 1996, 10).⁹ Many of the latter ‘ethnic Russians’ were actually inter-mixed, inter-married, or in close camaraderie with Russian-speaking ethnic Ukrainians and Belarusians. These factors help account for weak politico-social cohesion around an ethnic Russian category in Russian-concentrated urban centres in the former Soviet Union (FSU). This lack of Russian cohesion is in spite of Russians collectively refusing to acculturate to indigenous ways of life (namely language) in their host countries, and occasionally reverting to ‘reactive nationalism’ against bouts of titular-group exclusivity.¹⁰ In Moldova, there is also the factor that many Russians regained their old economic, and to varying degrees, political and cultural status after nationalism subsided. Egrafal Ciment S.A. then represents an exception and noteworthy case study in its attempts to assimilate Russians linguistically.¹¹ The consequence is Russians are now restlessly betwixt and between an old and new transforming status.

5.3 Russianness as Moral Economy

Taking the above into account, I would like to propose that Ciment S.A.’s minorities oppose Egrafal management not with straightforward ‘reactive nationalism,’ as suggested by Jeff Chinn and Robert Kaiser (1996). Rather, the argument of this

⁹ This confusion over Russian identity may be the result of the ambiguous, contested relationship between ‘state’ and ‘nation’ in the large, ethnically diverse Soviet Union, as reflected in Soviet arguments over how best to define the Soviet nation and Russians’ place in it (see, for example, Brudny 1998.) Ambiguity over the nation led some Soviet political theorists to emphasise ‘the [Soviet] state’ as an ideal, in lieu of ‘the ethno-nation’ (Rosenberg 1994), which may be the root of many Russians’ preference for a Soviet self-identity over an ethnic one.

¹⁰ Interestingly, titular chauvinism in Moldova is often perceived by Russians not to be indigenous, but foreign Romanian (like the Popular Front’s message of unification with Romania), as most ethnic Moldovan indigenes are fairly Russian accommodating. Moldova’s Russians as such have rarely felt compelled to coalesce as ethnic or linguistic minorities.

¹¹ However, this is the opposite of Russians’ strong reactive nationalism in Moldova’s separatist region of Transnistria. Here it is less of an ethnic Russian nationalism and more of a ‘Russian-speaking’ one. Neither ethnic nor linguistic nationalism among Russians is very strong on Moldova’s right bank.

chapter is that Russians react to restructuring by asserting a Soviet-nostalgic, but contemporary ‘moral economy’ linked to language; this is even as they fluctuate in their accommodation to the lures of a middle-class identification. Ethnic group nationalism is infrequent as few Russians at Ciment S.A. feel bound by ethnicity or as a nation.¹² Antipathy towards Egrafal is consequently expressed through a mix of linguistic *and* economic consternations. As one-time Soviet leaders, many Russians feel a moral right to decide their workplace organisation, language usage, and job security, as will be discussed with regards to changing labour values later in the chapter.

Over the period that Egrafal initiated its ‘integration program’ at Ciment S.A. (2005-2006), I increasingly witnessed allusions to the Soviet past and metaphors of ‘soul’ (*dusha*) used by Russian minorities to describe their longstanding language and work-regime habits, juxtaposing them to Romanian managers’ latest liberal-economic standards. ‘The soul’ (*dusha*) became significant as a metaphor of morality of customs old. With new, stressful demands of intensified task turn-over time, rapid Romanian-language acquisition, and curtailed collegiality, accompanied by job-security loss, Russians began imagining Egrafal’s work order as stripped of civility, culturedness (*kul’turnost’*) and sociality, akin to an ‘amoral economy.’ Economic activities and relations were ‘amoral’ in the sense that they were perceived as being detached from customary social-moral bindings and entitlements.

Using the term ‘amoral economy’ does not mean that my informants and I consider economics separated from morality, as neither did E.P. Thompson (see 1991, 270-272; see also Dilley 1992, 3), who spent a great deal of time theorising on the matter. Thompson disagrees with Mandeville’s famed *The fable of the bees*

¹² Here I define ‘nation’ as a community whose members *imagine* themselves to have a shared sense of common origins (genealogical or geographic), as well as a desire to control their presumed common destiny (see Anderson 1983).

(1705/1714), in which economics is considered a separate domain above and beyond morality (1991, 270). Thompson, instead, upholds the notion that morality exists even in the market economy, just as it did for Adam Smith, citing a quote from P.S. Atiyah: ‘‘[...] this was not so much to separate morality and economics, as to adopt a particular type of morality in the interest of a particular type of economy’’ (Atiyah 1979, 84 in Thompson 1991, 270-271). Thompson gives the example of Adam Smith, for whom a liberal-moral philosophy of enlightenment informed his economic thinking on markets. Thompson considers this to be an example of how different moralities function with different economies.

Thompson’s view on the intertwining of markets and morality contributes towards understanding my Lab informants’ perceptions of the new market economy as ‘amoral,’ or lacking morality. It is not that the Lab women see morality as separate from the economy, but that they see the capitalist economy as functioning according to a particular, misguided morality that disembeds work from sociality. This point resonates with Monica Heintz’s (2006) finding that Romanian service sector workers labour not out of a work ethic, but out of an ethic of human relations. For Heintz’s informants and my own, human relationality is embedded in the workplace (see also Polanyi 1944) to the point that my informants resist, as we will see in the ethnography, corporate capitalism’s attempts to remove tea-time sociality from every-day work practices. Laboratory workers’ expressions of protest are akin to Polanyi’s protective backlash (1944), even if Thompson more clearly defines the conditions that provoke the backlash, which are relevant to this chapter.

Back at Ciment S.A., things Romanian and liberal-economic were judged as lacking local norms and associated with foreign soils, whereas the Russian language was imagined by my informants as the antithesis of the Romanian language; Russian

was domesticated as more or less native. With this mind-set, some female Russian Laboratory work groups, described in the ethnography to follow, went so far as to protest capital's laissez-faire amoral economy by refusing at times Romanian-speaking and work-rhythm reordering, collectively asserting instead their own 'moral economy' of industrial behaviour. In this way, Russian speaking became newly emblematic of a contemporary, intimate moral economy for Ciment S.A. female Russians in highly skilled, technical jobs. Russianness, like across the river in Transnistria (described in Chapter Two), became associated with moral-economic protectionism.

This chapter subsequently draws upon E.P. Thompson's original conceptualisation of 'moral economy' (Thompson 1971, 76-136). This is as opposed to James C. Scott's (1976) understanding of moral economy, which is connected to traditional forms of social justice, reciprocity and protective relations (between landlord and tenant) in opposition to, or threatened by market forces. Scott's understanding of moral economy suggests that all market conditions undermine pre-existing forms of reciprocity and cohesion in society (see also similar arguments in Polanyi 1944, 150). E.P. Thompson, on the other hand, does not go so far as to argue that *all* market conditions lead to moral-economic rioting among peasants, but instead market conditions that are not in favour of peasants' livelihoods (see 1991, 304-305). This latter point of Thompson's is more akin to the job-insecure situation of Ciment S.A. Russian minorities, who feel particularly vulnerable during the Egrafal România market-integration phase (2005-2008), differently than in earlier capitalist periods under Egrafal, like when I first started visiting the plant in spring 2005.

E.P. Thompson's work on the moral economy addresses peasants, riots, and early capitalist food marketing, differently than the context and actors of this chapter. Still, I believe Thompson's moral economy can be applied to my case, as we both

examine '[...] the *mentalité*, or [...] the expectations, traditions, and, indeed, superstitions of the working population most frequently involved in actions in the market [...]' (1991, 260), including relations between rulers and ruled, and the obligations the former *ought* to obey vis-à-vis the latter (1991, 269).¹³ Like Thompson, I study how a moral economy is summoned into being in resistance to what protesters see as unfair economic conditions of the free market (1991, 304-305), even if I see the boundaries between moral and market economies blurred between practice and discourse.

Applied to the post-socialist productive sphere, the moral economy of minority workers at Ciment S.A. is conceived of as an alternative (or protest) model of work relations and routines, grounded in non-monetary, 'traditional' norms and values ('work [being] about soul, not pay,' in an informant's words). This moral economy defends a Soviet nostalgic, non-liberal economic past, as it is constructed in relation to a perceived lack of present-day entitlement (like Russian specialists' right to [socialist-era] job security, or peasants' 'just price' in the case of Thompson 1971) at the hands of so-called unscrupulous profiteers. Both Ciment S.A.'s Russians and E.P. Thompson's peasants are defending what they believe to be 'an old way of life' – a paternalistic (socialist or pre-capitalist) model against disobliging market-economy principles, even as the moral economies of both the Russians and English peasants are neither exactly

¹³ For further clarification, I chose to use Thompson's (1971) theorisation of 'moral economy' over that of James C. Scott's version (1976), even though both isolate moral economies from market economies, when in fact the boundaries are blurred, as argued through the ethnography of this chapter. I use Thompson's concept, because it more clearly addresses the kinds of entitlements people feel vis-à-vis economic actors and market practice, and how the breaching of entitlements provoke people's protest (or a moral economy). Scott, on the other hand, is interested in traditions of land use among peasants and their entitlement to the land's produce, whereas Thompson is more interested in food marketing – akin to the marketisation of jobs and labour in this thesis. Moreover, Thompson is open to the use of the 'moral economy' concept in other contexts beyond where it was developed (see 1991, 349).

old and paternalistic, nor above and beyond the free market (Thompson 1971a, 98), as Thompson concedes:

One cannot think of an economy without a market; and even the most zealous food rioters, such as Cornish tinnerns or Kingswood miners or West of England clothing workers, were inextricably committed to the market, both as producers and as consumers. How could they have existed for a month or a week without it? What we can find are different ways of regulating the market or of manipulating exchanges between producers and consumers, to the advantage of one party or the other. It is with the special case of *the marketing of 'necessities' in time of dearth* [italics mine]¹⁴ that we have been concerned, and the crowd's preferred model was precisely the 'open market' in which the petty producers freely competed, rather than the closed market when large dealers conducted private bargains over samples in the back parlours of inns¹⁵ (1991, 304-305).

Something like a moral economy is bound to surface anywhere that industrial capitalism spreads [notably under particular conditions]. This has the advantage of discarding the notion that 'moral economy' must always be traditional, 'backward-looking', etc.; on the contrary, it is continuously regenerating itself as anti-capitalist critique (1991, 341).

On the whole, both Thompson's English peasants and my Russian cement workers hark back to traditional values in their moral-economic protest, but appear to do so in very modern and culturally specific ways, particular to their self-identity and relational ethics.¹⁶ In other words, their moral economies seem to have pre-capitalist traits (of socialist-era Russian speaking, for example), but these traits have different values and meanings enacted in the capitalist present. At Ciment S.A., minority Russians recall socialist labour principles – of language, job entitlement and work-time collegiality – even as some of these old ideals, like customs of goal-orientated work, unwittingly have something in common with Egrafal's present-day liberal-economic values, or take on

¹⁴ The 'marketing of "necessities"' in a 'time of dearth' (Thompson 1991, 304) is not unlike Egrafal's marketisation or commodification of workers' jobs, which are necessities for survival during a time of job scarcity in post-socialist Moldova – a point further justifying my use of E.P. Thompson's concept of the moral economy in relation to highly job-insecure minorities at Ciment S.A.

¹⁵ Workers' anger over decisions made about prices and jobs in back parlours is not unlike one Ciment S.A. employee's complaint that 'these days [European] management picks who it wants...decisions are made far away from the factory gates' (as also quoted in Chapter Four).

¹⁶ In other words, their moral economies seem to have pre-capitalist traits, but in reality have different values and meanings enacted in the capitalist present.

new meaning and motivation in the capitalist present. This suggests an uneasy boundary between ‘old’ and ‘new,’ and ‘moral’ and ‘amoral,’ as moral economies themselves are non-fixed and fluid – exhibiting traits of mutuality and market (Gudeman 2008, 121) – a point seemingly ambiguous in Thompson’s work.

The remainder of the chapter turns to a key factory shop floor dominated by ethnic Russian and Ukrainian minorities. These one-time bearers of Soviet modernisation are now some of the most affected by corporate marketisation, with its introduction of new temporal, linguistic, and insecure-job conditions. The chapter considers the ways in which West European management tries to produce romanophone, individualised, calculable subjects out of minorities, and how different workers from the Laboratory protest and acquiesce by negotiating past and present ideologies of labour and language (as cultured, moral and relational). It considers how workers organise their everyday work practices, time rhythms, labour values, social identity and inter-group relations. Attention is also given to competing ideas of moral and amoral economy and memories of labour past, as a means to show how the reinvention of past practices may appear to model the past but actually have a role to play in managing the present. Crucially, the ethnography argues that Russian minorities, as they assert a moral economy, may actually participate in their own commodification, as middle-class longings seep into their moral economic practices, thus creating tension between money and morality. Before examining these tensions in minorities’ working lives, the chapter looks at the context in which Russians work.

5.4 Laboratory Spatial and Social Organisation

The Laboratory’s job is quality control. It monitors what goes into and what comes out of production. It either slows-down or sustains operators’ production work. Its sterile, white-collar workspace belies the true hazards of work with radioactive

elements, dangerous equipment, and unrelenting quality-control testing (see Figure 32). Tedious experiments on raw materials, rushed deliveries of clinker samples, and constant walkie-talkie communication between Lab technicians and control-room machinists demonstrate the dynamic, relational interface between production and quality assurance.

The Laboratory is unique in that it is the only all-female department at Ciment S.A. Other sectors which once employed large numbers of women are now male dominated. Global capital's outsourcing and profit-oriented downsizing made redundant all women occupying unqualified or semi-skilled industrial jobs. The Laboratory, which under socialism occupied the entire four-storey Administration Building, now comprises only three-quarters of the second floor. Today just ten Lab technicians, two quality engineers, and one supervisory chief make up the Laboratory's thirteen-person workforce, which once had almost four times as many personnel. The technicians run experiments on finished products and raw materials, while the quality engineers oversee experiment accuracy. The latter have a higher skill and pay grade than the former.¹⁷

The Laboratory is spatially split along job lines, with the quality-control engineers occupying two rooms on the northern side of the corridor (see Figure 29), while the technicians occupy two rooms on the southern side. The most dangerous machinery and radioactive elements are housed with the latter. The Lab chief has her own office, adjoining the quality-control space. In reality there is a lot of movement between the two rooms, but it is the higher status engineers who are the most mobile. The technicians rarely venture over to the engineers' side, unless in need of assistance.

¹⁷ This is more than 300 US dollars a month for engineers versus 200 US dollars a month for technicians. Exact figures are unknown due to the sensitive, competitive nature of the wage structure. Wage estimates were gathered from among the offspring of Lab workers.

The spatial and job-status differences presuppose and reproduce social divisions in the Lab.

In everyday work, the Lab women use their short-form names with each other (like informal 'Sveta' instead of formal 'Svetlana Petrovna' with patronymic) – a Russian practice signifying closeness. However, there is still a recognised hierarchy among them. When the Lab ladies eat lunch, they eat only on their designated sides – with the quality-control women eating exclusively together. The latter take a leisurely lunch, averaging 40 minutes, gossiping about husbands and work, while exchanging recipes and political opinions. They communally divide up their dishes of *shchi* (cabbage soup), *kasha* (porridge) and pork *kotleta*, cooked at home and reheated on Lab Bunsen burners. Post-meal tea and biscuits are shared with Russians outside of the Laboratory, including with the accountant daughter of the Lab chief and engineers like Natalia (from Chapter Four), who come from around Administration to join the scientists. Ethnic Moldovans and Romanians are never invited. The Lab technicians, on the other hand, rarely eat together. Their short, quick lunch-breaks are taken alone, as one technician must always be running a *proba* (experiment) on the clinker, slag, gypsum, or cement material. The technicians' pay rate depends on the pace and accuracy of their experiments. Their labour is tedious. They work gruelling twelve-hour, around-the-clock shifts (8:00 to 20:00 or 20:00 to 8:00), whereas the Lab engineers work eight-hour shifts (8:00 to 16:00). Rarely do Lab engineers work on weekends. This is in contrast to technicians, whose Lab functions require they work Saturdays and Sundays. Russians' reluctant weekend work differentiates them from ethnic Moldovan engineers and managers of the previous chapter (Chapter Four), many of whom

willingly forsake family and home for weekend work at the plant.¹⁸ For all employees, patterns of excessive work or reluctant overtime, while not unfamiliar practices, now represent reframed lifestyle longings and values, as detailed in this next section.

5.5 Changing Values and Meanings of Labour

A mainstay of russianness: labour as language

‘It’s all Russian here’ (*totu-i ruseasc aici*) is how an informant describes the Laboratory. The Laboratory is one of the few mainstays of russianness remaining at Ciment S.A. Most other sectors are devoid of anything Russian since French Egrafal’s 1999 takeover. Nowadays the Laboratory is the only factory space where all things Russian still dominate. This is because it is the one factory department lacking a supply of qualified, native-speaking ethnic Moldovans to replace Russians and Ukrainians, who the Soviets channelled into scientific vocations (Kaufman 2001). Symbols of ‘slavdom’ are everywhere, from pictorial calendars of Odessa (Ukraine) to an old, unused silver *samovar* (a traditional Russian coffee pot) decorating a quiet corner. Practically all objects, from test-samples to solution labels and signs are written in Russian Cyrillic (like ‘лаборатория’/*Laboratoriia* at the entry), atypical of other shop floors. Romanian is only found on official Egrafal signs, like employees’ ‘personal development’ targets,¹⁹ (ironically) incomprehensible to Lab workers and usually ignored. Objects and articles are classified as personifying the Russian-speaking ‘Lab’ (us) or Romanian-speaking ‘Egrafal’ (them).

¹⁸ These blue-turned-white-collar Moldovans labour excessive hours not because they are building a great Soviet future, as in days past, but because they are collectively building individual futures.

¹⁹ These personal development goals were constantly changing between summer 2005 and 2006. Case in point, I noticed in May 2006 that the Laboratory goals in the domain of ‘personal development’ included studying English and two computer programs (EXCEL and CECIL). Learning Romanian (*limba română*) was no longer one of the goals. Surprisingly, this changed two months later, when senior-ranking Slavs were made to take daily Romanian-language classes during the summer. They blame the plant’s French Director (a self-taught Romanian speaker) for this policy.

The Laboratory women are a mixed group of ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans. Of the nine Lab technician women, seven are ethnic Slav (Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian or mixed) and two are Russian-speaking ethnic Moldovans.²⁰ Every employee is middle-aged (35 to 50 years old), with the exception of one newly hired, young Moldovan technician (aged 25 approximately). The Laboratory Chief and two quality engineers are ethnic Russian. With this Slav ethnic distribution, the language of the Lab is Russian at all times – whether it is a shift-change meeting or tea time. This is in spite of all official plant notices and work-manual instructions having gradually changed to Romanian, as noted above. The Lab Chief is the only Slav with communicable Romanian, but resolutely prefers Russian. Factory rumour has it that the Laboratory women were the most hostile to Egrafal's language change-over. 'They made so much noise in the beginning [...],' a Moldovan secretary says of the Lab engineers. Their reluctance to learn Romanian requires all official Egrafal documents and technical instructions to be coupled with informal (meaning non-company-stamped) Russian translations. Still, informants rationalise their reliance on Russian as a common, uniting language in the Lab. Russian Lab women have little social incentive to learn Romanian, a language to which they attach little value or respect.²¹

On-going apathy towards Romanian language learning did not change until Egrafal installed Călin Dumitru, a Performance Development Manager from Romania (dealing with factory quality control), to run the Laboratory from autumn 2005 to spring 2008.²² From then onwards, Lab employees were supposed to be learning Romanian –

²⁰ These two women do not consider themselves to be 'russified' Moldovans or assimilated Slavs, as neither hides her ethnicity and mother-tongue – something ethnic Moldovan preferred Russian-speakers frequently do (see Chapter Three).

²¹ This is for reasons noted in previous chapters (e.g. Chapter Three).

²² It was not just 'then they [the Lab workers] saw their good salaries, and they became silent [...] They started learning', as one informant put it. For, little progress was observed during my first six months in the plant (May to October 2005). Lab workers' vocabulary remained limited to *oleacă* (a little), *făină*

‘priority A – imperative’ on their 2005 Personal Development goal sheets. They nervously yielded to, or worriedly fretted over Egrafal’s language demands, reinforced by on-site Romanian management. For the one Lab employee who already knew basic Romanian, Lab Chief Tat’iana (married to a deceased Moldovan),²³ she now *had to* speak Romanian with her foreign boss.

However, even amid these conditions, Lab Chief Tat’iana, when in boss Călin’s presence, listened carefully to instructions and answered dutifully in mediocre Romanian, but as soon as he was gone, she turned immediately back to Russian with Slav and Russian-speaking Moldovan colleagues. This habit is not unlike that observed in the Control Room in Chapter Three. Differently than among the latter’s russophone Moldovans, most Russian Lab women in this chapter resolutely refused to persevere in perfecting Romanian and resisted the language’s incursion into their everyday work regimes – as I observed day-in, day-out in the Lab over the course of a year (as well as in Lab workers’ homes). This was one way in which russianness expressed itself and persisted in the plant, despite Egrafal’s attempts to re-route it. The Romanian language’s workaday utility – and the amoral individualism it represented to Russians – was rejected for the Russian language’s perceived moral communalism. The senior-ranking Lab ladies protested spending their summers in intensive Romanian classes instead of on warm Odessa beaches with their families. They complained of reduced holidays for language learning, although they knew that the new language was crucial to preserving their work positions. So, in the end, they had incentive to learn Romanian for job

(‘flour’ or cement powder), and raw materials. This was problematic when, for instance, during an Egrafal România Lab visit: ‘They [technicians] could not understand anything the Romanian business delegates were saying,’ a witness recounted.

²³ This is Eugenia’s father, as previously mentioned in other chapters.

security. Fear of failed goals, due to slow language acquisition, was great among these socialist-era specialists, accustomed to setting and achieving targets.

Labour, goals, and the self: work as goal-orientation

The words ‘objectives’ and ‘safety first’ dot the technician Lab room everywhere. Four of six signs on one wall alone read of objectives and safety goals.

Rezina and Rybnitsa were full of young people from all over the Soviet Union. All shared – it was not about selfish ownership. [...] (middle-aged Russian Lab technician Svetlana)

For highly skilled Russian ex-specialists, goal orientation was a part of their past labour practices. Today, though, they are unaccustomed to individual goal attainment being a requisite for job security, and work being valued as a means of self-actualisation, not for common advancement of the family or state. Ethnographies of post-socialist market transformation show that work in the former eastern bloc has long been valued for its part in advancing the well-being of families and wider collectivities. Labour and economic activities (like trade) aimed at enriching the individual at the expense of the producing collective were considered lacking in morality (Hann 1992, 257; Holy 1992; Humphrey and Mandel 2002, 1; Pine 2002).

Against this backdrop, transnational corporations assume that self-driven goal-orientation is a contemporary Western quality, even if a learnable, innate attribute of all humankind (Dunn 2005, 20-21).²⁴ Training programs, like Egrafal’s ‘Safety at Home’ or ‘Leaders for Tomorrow,’ encourage worker empowerment and participation. Designed in Paris skyscrapers, while translated and disseminated from elite regional headquarters, such programs are thought to be predicated on Euro-American ideas of work and personhood. However, as one informant intimates, new Egrafal work mottos, like ‘let’s

²⁴ Work is celebrated as a form of self-fulfilment or self-actualisation (see Bear 2007, 10-12, 14). For evidence of goal-orientation at Ciment S.A., see ‘The Egrafal Way’ elsewhere in the chapter.

make today better than yesterday and tomorrow better than today' (*să facem azi mai bine decât ieri și mâine mai bine decât azi*), unknowingly replicate exact Soviet Komsomol (youth Communist Party) sayings and propaganda (*zavtra budet luchshe* [...]). It's not new to us!,' the informant exclaims, protesting Egrafal's unawareness, whilst suggesting neoliberal, capitalist notions of work as goal-attainment (like 'achieving more tomorrow') existed also in socialist days, but for very different purposes.²⁵

Both the communist command economy of yesterday and the neoliberal free-market-economy of today are fixated on goal-orientation and the future (Burawoy and Lukács 1992; Kotkin 1995).²⁶ Despite the similarity, there are significant differences. One distinction between the two economic systems is with respect to the place of 'the self,' or more specifically, how the self should *feel* in relation to values of work and community. Egrafal, for example, teaches salaried employees to work for 'the client,' salary and self-satisfaction.²⁷ Work and goal-attainment are about feeling good about oneself (or self-gratification).²⁸ Work is about being supposedly unfettered by kith and kin. This way of valuing labour is modelled by Ciment S.A. foreign managers, who have left behind families in Romania and France for job promotions in Moldova, America and soon Russia and possibly China. Many find temporary lovers in Moldova

²⁵ This informant and the Laboratory women believe that the Soviet Union prepared them, in a way, for the capitalist world – which is all about success and being 'better tomorrow than today.' Familiar, past discourses and practices only become invested with new meaning. Both the communist command economy of yesterday and the free-market economy of today remain fixated on goal-orientation and the future (Kotkin 1995; see also Buck-Morss on socialist and capitalist similarities). The main difference is the former was centrally planned and production-led, while the latter consumer-influenced and consumption-led. One emphasises the making of personhood through productive labour, while the other through consumption (see Harvey 2005, 42 on the role of consumerism in neoliberal economics).

²⁶ The emphasis here is on capitalist and socialist shared ideas of goal attainment and not on the timeliness of goal attainment, like instant gratification of success important to capitalism.

²⁷ Teaching 'self-gratification,' to feel good about oneself, through goal attainment, I believe, is also a way for Egrafal to discipline and to secure labour's cooperation, as workers' subjectify themselves via their own pleasures.

²⁸ See *Știrile*. Egrafal Cement newsletter. December 2005, issue 25: 7.

(recall Chapter Four) and in other places they work. This global flow of Egrafal managers sails from one developing economy to the next, transferring knowledge thought to be geographically boundless. Their weekends and long hours at the plant (typically 8:00 to 21:00) are meant to reach targets satisfying to self.²⁹ However, this ‘sacrifice to self’ runs counter to earlier Soviet notions of work and the person, as discussed next. The disjuncture is a source of anxiety for Lab women at Ciment S.A.

For these former communist leaders, Soviet industrialisation was as much a moral as material battle in which the whole of society was engaged (Kotkin 1995, 35-37, 71-73, 363-366).³⁰ Individual workers were singled out for their record-setting labour feats for the good of the Soviet state, like legendary Donbas miner Aleksei Stakhanov. My factory lab informants spoke proudly of their socialist-era labour transforming landscapes and livelihoods. They visually pointed to how their participation in factory construction renewed rocky, fallow land and enabled their rural families to move to the city.³¹ Informants’ labour, in this way, acquired value in relation to their families and homeland.³² Working for the good of the latter made their labour virtuous and sacrificial-like. Visibility of things built was important in that it was observable proof of alleged Soviet superiority and economic morality (over capitalism). However, today there is a new visibility of labour, which is about individuality and

²⁹ This sacrifice to the self – to become ‘an Egrafalist,’ as employees call themselves – idealises a connectedness to global flows, even if in reality an Egrafalist is never truly disconnected from family obligations and local community.

³⁰ Case in point, Soviet Five Year Plans (*piatiletka*) were about the economic and moral advancement of state and society. Heavy labour was valued for its part in ‘catching and overtaking the capitalists’ (Kotkin 1995, 14-16, 29, 42, 123). The moral battle was over whether the state-socialist or capitalist model could better satisfy the masses.

³¹ This is mainly through securing highly sought-after, newly-built private apartments and residency permits in town for rural-born family. Factory labour helped make both possible. (See Cash 2008, 80 on the challenges Moldovans faced in obtaining such benefits during the Soviet era.)

³² The idea of industry and labour contributing towards Soviet state-building resonates with Catherine Alexander’s finding that factories in modern-day Turkey were built to represent an ideal state: ‘a microcosm of a harmonious community participating in a shared culture and contributing towards national, industrial development’ (2002, 129).

discipline, not morality and community, from the perspective of workers in this chapter. Nowadays Lab workers and their families frequently complain about not knowing to what end they work. One protests: ‘I write all these reports. But where do they go?[...]’ Employees once laboured for the betterment of communal things that they could see – for family, work collective, and the socialist state – consistent themes in Lab employees’ idealised narratives of work past.³³ However, now employees labour for what seems to be an intangible transnational corporation. The stress for middle-aged workers like Lab Chief Tat’iana is that corporate Egrafal is perceived as repudiating her past. The fact that Tat’iana and colleagues already possess a developed sense of self and goal-orientated approach to work, learned in Soviet days, makes her subjection to liberal-economic ideas of work even more confusing. What Tat’iana and workers may only half-realise is that they are learning not just new practices, but different driving rationales and outcomes. It is against these features that minority Lab workers react in stress and indignation.

Visible/invisible labour: work as time and visibility

A sign hanging in the hallway of the Lab reads (in Romanian, exactly as follows): ‘The Egrafal Way – principles of action: 1. Making our people successful (expecting people to give their best, leading by example, achieving greater results through teamwork) 2. Focusing on performance improvement (resulting from the actions of all, making performance a daily commitment, sharing systems and tools) 3. [This all happens] within a multi-local organisation. And this is all to build its own culture of performance.’

In spite of this corporate preoccupation with performance, Russians are quick to assert that work-pace rhythms should be conducive to collegiality, even as they feel powerless to change their work patterns. This is exactly how Lab technician Ol’ga feels. Ol’ga is a proud, university-educated Russian, 18-years

³³ For more on socialist ideas of labour and self, see Steinberg 2002 and 1992. In addition, see also Fitzpatrick 2005, and Siegelbaum and Suny 1994.

employed at Rezina Cement Plant after enduring the nuclear horrors of the Chernobyl district. Ol'ga takes me through her work routine. She is responsible for running tests on clinker and cement product every 60 minutes (or faster). She repeats the same task every hour, twelve times a day.³⁴ Rarely do Lab technicians work together. As Ol'ga finishes one round of testing and quickly begins another, her colleague (or 'pair') Irina works on two heavy machines. One of them uses radioactive elements to break-down materials' chemical composition. Irina and Ol'ga barely have time for breaks, let alone a leisurely tea. Occasionally, they talk to one another while running experiments on different sides of the same room, but often they are stressed and concentrated on their own tasks. Each is trying to meet work goals. Notices around the Lab remind them that they must run a set number of successful experiments a day. Their pay is dependent on meeting these targets. Pay scales reward quantity *and* quality, driving technicians to work efficiently. This is important because the pace of technicians' laboratory testing either slows or speeds overall production, indirectly affecting Egrafal Ciment S.A.'s ability to meet cement orders and sale demands. In summer 2005, when I first started observing the Laboratory, daily production goals were set at: '3,150 tons/a day (24 hours) of material (clinker) coming out of the kiln.' So to keep pace, lunch was eaten hurriedly in the Lab. There was no interruption in experiments, or production timing would be slowed. 'We are working fast [...]' (*my rabotaem bistro*), I hear Ol'ga assure a Russian control-room operator over a walkie-talkie. Ol'ga once complained that she was working two weeks straight without a free day, as her

³⁴ The Egrafal 'work instruction' folder for the Lab technicians spells out their main work responsibilities: '1. Results need to be transmitted to the control room. 2. You need to do analyses in a timely and correct manner [...]' There is also mention of 'responsibilities for work and for equipment.' Such commands signal the high importance Egrafal places on workers relations to their machines and equipment. Egrafal management, including the Plant Manager, occasionally complain about manual labour not respecting new machines: 'When something is new you have to take care of it [...] not break it!'

‘pair’ Irina was on summer holiday, and another technician on maternity leave, and still another ill. Ol’ga blames Egrafal for a downsized labour force and extra work. While productivity was paramount in the past, Ol’ga maintains that task turn-over time was not so fast as to inhibit every-day, on-the-job collegiality, now rare in the downscaled, profit-maximising plant.³⁵ Ol’ga believes that work-pace regimes should still be conducive to collegiality.

Equally disruptive was the way in which the Laboratory space and rules were constantly changing. New machines and regulations turned up every season. Hard-hat rules went into effect even for Lab technicians only occasionally in production spaces (*teritoriul*). Gone just two weeks in summer 2006, I returned to find freshly plastered signs of ‘safety first’ and ‘a culture of performance’ ubiquitously hanging around the Lab (for example, see Figure 32). For workers like technician Ol’ga, ‘making performance a daily commitment’ simply means increased pressure to do her job faster and better – knowing her pay is contingent upon quantity and quality. Technicians feel that the way they do their job is being constantly monitored by Egrafal, similar to what Dunn (2004, 7) found among TNC baby-food line workers. The recent addition of brand-new computers and advanced equipment, replacing Soviet-era machinery, not only gave the Laboratory a European make-over – transforming it to ‘European standards,’ in one manager’s proud words – but also had the effect of rendering technicians’ labour more visible. The experiments and measurements of technicians can now be recorded on print-outs. What an employee does, and does not do, is made visible through technology. Global capital wants the labour of *the individual* – and not just the

³⁵ While beneficial for Egrafal’s profitability, less on-the-job collegiality is difficult for workers accustomed to work being a mix of toil and sociality.

work of the collective or entire shop floor, as under socialism³⁶ – to be made calculable, and thus accountable to meeting management's tight, sometimes budget-constrained production goals. Technicians embody capital's calculability in their self-conscious choices to cut short lunch or not to talk to a colleague, hankering to start up conversation during a work task. Calculability thus appears to become a form of labour self-discipline, in the Foucauldian sense. The stress from the perspective of the technicians – stress that intensified over the course of my year in the plant – may be what Trade Union leader Valeria meant about employees no longer 'working freely.'

Like the Lab technicians, the quality engineers ultimately acquiesced to a degree in capital's expectations placed upon them (from working longer winter hours to submitting to Romanian-language classes). However, the latter appeared to have more scope to subvert management discipline than the former. Calculability appears to penetrate some workers more than others, as seen in this example:

The Lab received a new machine – a beige and blue-trimmed boxy desk-top contraption 'for conducting Rio Solutions.' Senior Lab chiefs Svetlana and Tat'iana must learn how to use it, but the instructions only come in English. I ask why a Russian version of instructions was not provided. 'They don't want to' (*oni ne hotiat*), Svetlana said tilting her head upwards towards senior management's Third Floor. The machine lay dormant for almost a year as Svetlana and Tat'iana ignored it (see Figure 33).

Machines can create new forms and beings of labour. However, the engineers escaped, at least for a while, learning a new machine that could discipline their job-time routines. The engineers' work seems 'invisible' in a way the technicians' work is not. The work-time habits (e.g. work pace and the frequency and length of breaks) of the former have been reordered less than for the latter – despite the common assumption that the more skilled the worker, the faster the change. Instead, certain (lower-ranking) labours are

³⁶ See the Rezina Cement Plant 1980s archive album celebrating shop floor accomplishments. Individuals in the album are presented as leaders ('beacons') of the shop floor. However, their work feats are not achievements in and of themselves (for self-fulfilment), but accomplishments for the good of the plant and the advancement of the Soviet state, as depicted in the words of the album.

more easily calculable and disciplined than others, just as certain (higher-ranking) labours are able to resist discipline easier than others. Engineers' 'invisibility' gives them freedom to organise their labour as they please, unlike the visible, assessable technicians, who fear their labour is more replaceable than indispensable. The engineers' invisibility and labour control is invariably owing to their technical skills and importance to the firm, which leaves be their work, making them all the more 'invisible.' Invisibility is important as it allows for on-the-job activities like tea breaks, which for workers are moments of (moral) sociality against individualising measures of calculability.³⁷

Working tea time ('come, let's drink a tea') and labour relations: work as relationality

We have our own families at home, but at work we are each other's family. [...] The plant is our life [...] It is a place where we laugh, we cry [...] Most of the hours of our days are spent at the plant, so of course we want to have close relations with those we work with. (accountant)

No other social group at Ciment S.A. was so habitual in its communal tea breaks than the female Russian Lab engineers. Like clockwork, tea breaks (see Figure 31) happened every day at 9:00, lasting half of an hour, followed by a short post-lunch tea around 13:30, and afternoon tea after 16:00. Quality-control tests were rarely run during these breaks, unless ordered by foreign managers; the point being to put aside individual tasks for common sociality, even at the expense of Egrafal reprimand.

In addition to tea-time, the Laboratory hosted regular tea parties for Russians' birthdays and name-days. Russian Orthodox names-days are occasions when colleagues get together to drink and eat to a friend whose name matches the Saint's day. On St.

³⁷ Work-time pauses like tea breaks in relation to the labour process may also function to reinforce social cohesion as they mediate collectivism and free-market expectations. They say something about the way people negotiate the everyday practices, values and longings that constitute the post-collective environment. However, it is important to remember that place in the factory hierarchy constrains and allows for different strategies to negotiate every-day work expectations, as the next section considers higher-skilled Lab employees' work and on-the-job rest.

Valentine's Day, for example, all men and women named Valentin and Valentina are honoured. One such 14 February in 2006, the Ciment S.A. Laboratory attracted a half dozen, all-Russian women and one Valentina for tea and cake. One ethnic Russian contractor, an ex-employee, even showed up. No matter the occasion, tea was always drunk lukewarm, weak and sweet, with a spoonful of sugar, honey, or fruit preserves (*varen'e*) stirred in, with an occasional lemon slice. Like the tea itself, I discovered that the bitter, vulnerable, and sweet moments of Lab workers' lives came out most poignantly over communal tea time. When a close colleague impromptu says 'come, let's drink a tea' (*'hai să bem un ceai'* in Romanian or *'davai pit' chai'* in Russian), it really means 'come, let's leave work behind and sit down and open up.'

To be a 'soulful' (*dushevnyi*) person is to concern oneself with others (Pesmen 2000, 55).³⁸ This is what the act of tea-drinking on-the-job is – to drink and feel the bitterness and sweetness of others. It is a work-repose to encourage relationality in work regimes considered practically devoid of it. Tea-drinking, as an act of commensality, functions as a 'social conductor' (Bloch 2005, 45-59). Through common consumption and the sharing of emotions, the soul and virtue of sociality is re-implanted in the Laboratory. Habits of 'warmth, stability, support' – or what could be interpreted as 'practices of soul (*dusha*),' as in tea-drinking – re-embed people and place within increasingly individualising work regimes.³⁹ 'The soul' (*dusha*) as such becomes significant as a metaphor of the Russian language, representative of morality and virtue

³⁸ Dale Pesmen's ethnographic critical appraisal of the 'Russian soul' found that most informants believe: 'Soul [is] connected to warmth, stability, support and moral behavior' (2000, 58). However, juxtaposed to Pesmen's volume, suggesting a debate, Engelstein and Sandler 2000 challenge the common notion of the Russian character as selfless and self-effacing. It argues that there is a history of the individual in Russian culture not entirely different from that in the West. Even if Engelstein and Sandler are in fact correct, what is interesting for my study is the way in which my Russian informants perceive themselves to be communal and selfless, especially vis-à-vis 'selfish' market capitalism.

³⁹ Focusing on these 'soul practices' in on-the-job rituals of collective consumption allows us to take Pesmen's 2000 exploration of Russian soul and its discursive reproduction to the phenomenological, substantivist levels.

to these women – the very things considered missing from a Romanian-run, neoliberal worldview.

Svetlana and colleagues worry, however, that their collective (*'nash kolektiv'*) in the Laboratory is in danger of falling apart. Many Lab women have already lost loved ones to redundancy, like Svetlana's Russian husband, who was laid-off by Egrafal several years ago. Now female engineers fear disappearing family ties foretell of fading collegiality, an end to work-time name-day celebrations, birthday parties, and afternoon tea – acts of soulful sharing. Nostalgic for persons and days gone, Svetlana's face lightens up flipping through an old factory photo-album dug out of storage. However, as she scans pages, 'oh, but he's gone...and he's gone' comes to mind, and her mood turns melancholic. Blame is on employee downsizing and the individualisation associated with Egrafal and its romanianisation (*romanizare*). Blame is on free-market ideas of self that are divorced from a moral vision of solidarity – like the nostalgic work values of the past, which Elizabeth Dunn's baby-food workers are fighting to reclaim amid individualising pressures of the capitalist present (2005, 7, 20-22). Ciment S.A. employees have reason to fear as they observe individualisation modelled by Egrafal foreign managers and Egrafal workers in Romania. The Lab chief's daughter Eugenia,⁴⁰ who stops by the Lab regularly, shared with me how she thinks work relations are different among Romanians in Egrafal Romania. Her impressions are based on four business trips to Egrafal business meetings in Romania: 'I don't think they [Romanians] are as close as us at the plant [...] They *don't* celebrate in the way we do...and spend time together [...] They are more competitive. For example, we all get together and have some sweets with Ivana to celebrate her son graduating from high school. [...] We all gather for one hour – no more time than I'd take for a lunch – and drink a tea, eat

⁴⁰ Eugenia is the young, newly hired factory accountant highlighted in Chapter Four.

some cake together...’ Romanians’ un-relationality and self-interestedness at work, as perceived by Eugenia, is considered ‘amoral’ for employees like her.⁴¹ Only the self embedded in disinterested social relations moralises market work. Eugenia worries that Egrafal’s competitiveness will destroy close relations among Lab workers.

Work-time acts of commensality like tea-drinking are thus meant to counter cut-throat competitiveness and individualism by keeping the self submerged in the collective – “‘a sacred, moral self that transcend[s] narrow individualism’”.⁴² If we accept Maurice Bloch’s argument (2005) that commensality creates inter-relational cohesion through its mimicking of familial, kinship dynamics of association – the very relations my Lab informants feel stripped of – then the collective consumption of tea and cakes, a seemingly mundane activity, may in fact be a way to re-assert bonds of relationality in the workplace. Acts of commensality like tea-drinking unite what market-economic forces threaten to divide.

5.6 Manufacturing Moral-economic and Middle-class Connectivity

The moral economy of minorities

For minority Russians, moments of on-the-job sharing are what keep virtue (or *dusha*, the soul) and russianness in work. In the Lab quality-control room, engineers organise their individual work tasks around regular, collectively shared periods of sociality. No matter if boss Tat’iana is in the middle of analysing documents, Ivana is supervising a test, or Svetlana is running a chemical experiment, each pauses her tasks for lunch or tea-time. It is work that is ordered around sociality. The opposite is true for the technicians across the hall, whose limited sociality is ordered around work. Unlike for them, Russian engineers’ habitual, drawn-out breaks are purposeful acts to control

⁴¹ See Pesmen (2000, 119, 149) on Russians who think similarly (2000, 119, 149).

⁴² Pesmen 2000, 18; see also Steinberg 2002, 117.

their workplace time patterns. Mimicking work and rest rhythms of old, Russians refuse to stop taking tea breaks, despite corporate managers' complaints like: 'All they [Russians] like to do is sit around and drink tea [...] they don't like to work so hard'. Egrafal's dissatisfaction with Russians makes minorities all the more determined to uphold their own soulful work and leisure routines – or in other words, their 'moral economy' of industrial behaviour.⁴³ It is around this moral economy that a recent, shared sense of economic and linguistic relatedness appears to be developing among Russian minority engineers. Their connectivity over work and russianness, as minorities in need of one another, notably comes at a time of high unemployment and job insecurity. This is the economic hardship cited by E.P. Thompson (1991, 261) which can provoke moral-economic protest. What is striking is the way in which Russians assert their moral economy looks similar to socialist-era customs and behaviour, but their rationale and meaning are quite different. Also unique is the way in which new middle-class longings seep into moral-economic practices.

Middle-class anxiety and appeal

Today white-collar workers at Ciment S.A. are split between Moldovans viewing Egrafal Romanian influence as something to be harnessed for social stability and advancement, and minorities seeing it as cultural domination. TNC Egrafal makes a middle-class modality⁴⁴ attractive through business-travel abroad and by regular

⁴³ Russians' working the way they wish also involves obstinate, on-the-job Russian-speaking in spite of Egrafal's Romanian-language requirements. This makes Russian-speaking one of the very emblems of minorities' moral economy of protest.

⁴⁴ Social scientists have given the most attention to studying the development of a new urban and rural underclass from the formerly privileged industrial proletariat and collective-farm communities of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (on industrial labour, see Ashwin 1999; Clarke et al. 1993; Crowley and Ost 2001; Kideckel 2002. On rural farmers, see Wegren 2005; Bridger and Pine 1998.) Much less attention has been paid to the emergence of a transformed elite (on Russian entrepreneurs, see Yurchak 2006) and possibly new middle class developing from economic transition (Dunn 2005 on Polish salesmen, and on Russian school-teachers, see Patito 2008). Few middle-class studies in the post-socialist context exist. This might be due to difficulty in defining 'middle-class', pinning down its multiple material and non-economic characteristics, as well as doubts over its usefulness as an advanced capitalist

interactions with visiting European specialists.⁴⁵ In Russian minorities' quest to regain job stability and social recognition in the present, they at times inadvertently accommodate to the very things they oppose. This appears to be the root of much of their nervous anxiety, I argue. In the early Soviet Union, a 'middle-class' (*meshchanstvo* or petty-bourgeois) way of life was considered morally depraved and deficient (Dunham 1976, 17-19), even up to the 1990s transition (Pesmen 2000, 48).⁴⁶ Middle-class expressions are equally contentious in the present, being linked to Egrafal România's modernisation of the factory. Since middle-class formation happens in relation to dynamics of consumption, among other non-production factors, it makes workers highly reliant on adapting to (not resisting) the market economy and foreign-investment influence. This usually creates an 'ambiguous and *anxiety-inducing* [italics mine] relationship with the capitalist market [...]' (Liechty 2002, 10-11) for former socialist workers.

As Egrafal makes increasing demands on Lab engineers' time – via new machines, language, and work regulations – and calls into question job stability, *dushevnyi* (soulful) relationality at work is increasingly jeopardised. Some fear it has already disappeared, with work motivations changing from collective achieving to individual self-gain. In Svetlana's own words, 'Work used to be from the *dusha* (soul) [...] now we work for *zarplata* (pay or salary). [...] It is all about *den'gi* (money). Svetlana's words speak to the changing meanings of labour – 'work as money (*den'gi*)'

concept applied to relatively new market economies (Schröder 2006, 9-10). Nevertheless, I believe the term can be prudently applied to particular non-Western places like Rezina's Ciment S.A.

⁴⁵ See Schröder 2006, 9-10 on how travel abroad and consumer practices are a part of how post-socialist persons take on middle-class identities.

⁴⁶ One commendable study addressing this social segment in the context of urban Russia starts from the assumption that her interlocutors were already middle class under socialism (Patino 2008). While undoubtedly true, in the Rezina context few Moldovans had access to esteemed white-collar professions (see Munteanu 2002, 204 on Moldova). At the socialist-era Rezina Cement Plant in particular, no real middle class identity existed. Persons were categorised as either rank-and-file labour or specialists.

typifies Egrafal Ciment S.A.'s trend towards the commodification of labour, while 'work as soul (*dusha*)' epitomises the fleeting socialist past and a contemporary moral economy. However, in reality the line between labour as money and labour as soul (*den'gi* versus *dusha*) is in fact blurred, I argue.

Moral-economic practices like tea breaks, and the conversations they produce, are both acts of resistance and resignation to soul-taking. They are, in a way, a form of participation in the commodification process. They are acceptance of the lures of a post-socialist (neoliberal), middle-class lifestyle, as things middle-class (or petty-bourgeois *meshchanstvo*) – like talk of gold-jewellery shopping, apartment remodelling (*remont*) and business travel to Vienna⁴⁷ – once considered compromising to *dusha* (Pesmen 2000), now increasingly pervade Russians' tea-time discussion. On the one hand, Lab workers were some of the first in the factory to remodel their apartments (see Chapter Seven) and more frequently travel abroad for holidays than less-paid white-collar colleagues. On the other hand, in order to sustain this lifestyle, reminiscent of days of Soviet privilege, Russians must adopt the very things that they resist – Egrafal's liberal-economic romanianness. Thus, workers' anxiety, introduced at the start ('we want a psychologist!') and in the work ethnography owes not only to ever-increasing work demands, but also to wider, unsolvable or contradictory tensions. Social identities and meanings of work are becoming detached from past ideas of labour and language. Russian speakers long to see old values restored while, at the same time, aspiring to be 'middle class.' Since being middle class is made possible at Ciment S.A. only by way of romanianness (involving Romanian language-learning and working over-time, among other things), Russians oscillate between wanting to preserve a proud past and wanting

⁴⁷ Vienna, Austria is the site of Egrafal's central European technical hub, so Ciment S.A. employees frequently visit here, including Svetlana in 2007.

to attain the social status once accustomed to. They fluctuate between connectivity around a moral economy and middle-classness. The outcome appears to be a hybrid form of social-economic inter-connectivity and dis-connectivity of mutuality and markets, using the language of Stephen Gudeman (2008, 121).

5.7 Conclusion: Minorities between Money and Soul

This chapter is about proletarian leaders turned private employees, and how they navigate privatised work imperatives and collective commitments. The study examines changing meanings of labour and self, as linked to current capitalist relations and social-group transformation among Ciment S.A.'s Russian minorities. The ethnography details how transnational management tries to produce individualised, calculating subjects out of its workers. Fortune-500 management disciplines and secures labour's cooperation through teaching 'self-gratification' ('to feel good about oneself') through goal attainment. This is in addition to transnational-corporate expectations of job calculability and linguistic efficiency. All work to keep labour insecure, as employees are anxious about meeting Egrafal's work expectations. The study shows how a corporate mind-set of 'sacrificing to self,' and labour as socially disembedded, calculable and without linguistic (Russian) culturedness (*kul'turnost*) intersects with, but runs counter to *idealised* Soviet notions of work and the person. While the first four corporate attitudes bear upon other workers in the plant – like the occasionally protesting manual labourers of the next chapter and the foot-dragging russified Moldovans in Chapter Three – the Russian lab engineers most acutely, and in a unified way, feel that Egrafal România standards are in opposition to their sense of russianness. They also uniquely draw upon moral metaphors, linking 'the soul' (*dusha*) to factory life, differently than other workers. So for these reasons, this chapter focuses on female employees from the Laboratory – a traditionally russified industrial space. It examines

the way in which Russian lab women organise their everyday work and social practices in response to transnational market reform.

Through all this we see how work-time sociality and Russian-speaking, associated with a soulful past, become a traditional-looking, but contemporary moral economy of industrial behaviour among these Russian Lab workers, particularly those with scope for dissent. Such expressions are seen most visibly among the Russian engineers in the Lab. They have the most unity and possibility for protest in the plant,⁴⁸ which I believe makes possible their moral economy of protest (along the lines of Thompson 1971), which we do not see in other factory spaces. However, the chapter argues that middle-class desires are in fact embedded within the engineers' moral-economic practices that seek to oppose market values. Russian minorities' shared experiences and talk of status, language, and loss triggered by economic restructuring produces a blending of markets and morality, and a fusion of the communal and personal.⁴⁹ This, I wish to argue, suggests a dialectics of markets and mutuality, as theorised by Stephen Gudeman:

The two value realms of mutuality and markets are dialectically related in many ways. For example, in markets we value efficiency, but mutual relations embody many values, such as equity, equality, age, gender, position, and merit [and language habits]. The realms are not comparable, but each may *subsume*, *veil*, stand off from, or *absorb* [italics mine] features of the other (Gudeman 2008, 14).

The way in which capitalist consumer longings can become absorbed or subsumed in socialist-nostalgic moral-economic practices (like in tea drinking), as demonstrated in this chapter, shows that free-market individualism and mutuality are not two exclusive

⁴⁸ The Russian Lab engineers' possibility for protest relates, as mentioned earlier, to the fact that they are not easily replaced by Moldovans.

⁴⁹ Both Thompson (1971) and Scott's (1976) notion of moral economy may excessively emphasise the difference between the moral binding of kin and sociality versus the anomie of monetary exchange and wage labour. A connectedness appears around a blurring of not only market, but also non-market principles.

domains. Thus, I believe it is too black-and-white to depict places of the former Soviet Union, like Moldova, as full of only communities of the dispossessed, grounded in Soviet nostalgia alone, and unambiguously resisting the new economic order (see Nazpary 2001). Instead, this chapter suggests the re-development of social relatedness and factory work regimes in a blurred, non-lineal manner between money and soul (*den'gi* and *dusha*), as it reminds us that a purely collectivist protective backlash (as proposed by Karl Polanyi [1944, 150]) is not necessarily the natural, enduring response of workers to market reform.

Figure 35. Laboratory space of the quality-control engineers.



Figure 36. Svetlana running an experiment in the Laboratory. The Lab ladies' electric tea kettle is on the counter behind Svetlana. (Courtesy of Ciment S.A.)



Figure 37. Main entrance to the Laboratory.



Figure 38. The new worker safety sign at the Laboratory entrance (from summer 2006 onwards).



Figure 39. Lab women and Russian colleagues posing for a photo (with the author) at the end of an afternoon tea break in the Laboratory.



Figure 40. The new machine in the Laboratory.



CHAPTER SIX

THE TERRITORY (*TERITORIUL*) Repair Hall and Beyond

6.1 Introduction

This chapter shifts from the Administration Building to *teritoriu* ('the territory' of production and maintenance). It focuses on the Repair Hall, with some attention to the Kiln, as classic work spaces in *teritoriu*. Examining these spaces in relation to the ones of the previous chapters helps us to understand the relationship between workers' differing factory locations, general language habits and responses to capitalist change.

The production and maintenance area of *teritoriu* is filled with rank-and-file labourers (*muncitori de rând*) – formal, unionised employees (*angajați*) – who work in small, one to three-person groups interspersed on shop floors outside of the Administration Building. This category of workers is largely male and ethnic Moldovan with limited education.¹ Most have worked at Ciment S.A. for nearly all twenty years of the plant's existence, and as such are predominantly middle-aged (between 38 and 50 years old). No younger employees of this rank were recruited during my study, due to the fact that the downsizing factory was reducing, not adding formal employees (*angajați*). On the whole, rank-and-file employees make up no more than one-third of all formal Egrafal Ltd. employees, the rest working in Administration. Countless other manual labourers around *teritoriu* are contractors, as discussed in the last part of this chapter

Manual labourers working in *teritoriu* are the most openly resistant to the commodification of their labour at the hands of global-capital owners. This chapter

¹ As previously mentioned, what rank-and-file women once worked in the territory in socialist days are now all but redundant since Egrafal Ltd.'s take-over. Global capital's outsourcing and profit-oriented downsizing made redundant all women occupying unqualified or semi-skilled industrial jobs. This suggests something different from David Harvey's (1989) argument for post-Fordism's blanket feminisation of industrial labour. My questioning of Harvey (1989) extends to him apparently not making a distinction between light and heavy industry in predicting global capital's shift to cheap, compliant female labour. It is important to make the distinction between global capital's feminised *light* industry (see for example, Freeman 2000; Lee 1998; Salzinger 2000) and typically masculine *heavy* industry.

highlights these workers' antagonistic relations with local and foreign supervisors and contractors. It specifically takes up questions on the role of culture and economics in these workers' expressions of resistance. The chapter finds that rank-and-file workers are loudly summoning what appear to be anti-capitalist protectionist impulses (Polanyi 1944, 150). Interestingly, their protest is largely against and by means of language, instead of outright economic conditions,² as witnessed among E.P. Thompson's (economically motivated) moral-economic rioters (1971) and among Chapter Five's protesting Lab women. The expressions of protest in this chapter involve a strong awareness of language over economics, which is why this chapter engages Polanyi's work, which is attentive to socio-cultural embeddedness in the economy, over E.P. Thompson's stronger emphasis on the economic conditions and perceptions behind workers' protest.

Nonetheless, the chapter argues that just because workers draw upon local cultural particularities (like dialect) in their protest against foreign management does not mean that workers unify enduringly around these customs (see Nash 1993). Even if workers occasionally call upon common customs, the ethnography shows that it is only briefly and in rare collective gatherings (like occasional trade union meetings). Otherwise, rank-and-file workers are generally disconnected from each other in the workplace and in their leisure time (see Chapter Seven), on account of their high job insecurity and obstacles to connectivity in a fractured, fast-paced neoliberal work environment. As a result, workers are limited in the kind of protest they can mount against global capital, making Polanyi's prediction of a *laissez-faire* countermovement

² In Chapter Five, Lab engineers' moral-economic protest is against both Romanian-speaking *and* work-rhythm reordering (especially in relation to tea-time sociality), whereas the few collective expressions of protest in this chapter are mainly linguistic-based.

difficult to realise (see Burawoy 2003; Parry 2009) beyond ephemeral, cultural expressions witnessed in this chapter.

In what follows, the chapter starts by looking at the discourse of a labour union meeting with workers from divisions in *teritoriu*, analysing workers' open expressions of labour and language grievance. This is followed by an ethnographic description of every-day work in the Repair Hall in order to contextualise from where worker grievances come, ranging from job stress to relations with supervisors and other workers, particularly foreigner contractors. Special attention is then given to workers' perceptions of contract labour, as contractors are a symbolic source of anxiety for rank-and-file employees, reminding them of their insecure job status and the shame of redundancy, as Egrafal continues to lay off full-time labour for flexible contractors. For the time being, let us turn to workers' voices on these matters.

6.2 Union Voices of Manual Labour

The labour union

There is one trade union in the plant. It is an affiliate of the national Moldovan construction union 'SINDICONS.'³ Almost all Egrafal Ciment S.A. formal employees (*angajați*) are members of this union, although only manual workers from 'the territory' (*teritoriul*) take part in regular union meetings. Meetings are convened almost monthly for different departmental divisions. All union meetings are held in a semi-refurbished, unheated, 50 meter by 50 meter assembly hall (*sală de apel*) on the ground floor of the Administration Building, next to employees' changing rooms. Cramped hall space

³ 'SINDICONS' stands for the Federation of Unions for Construction and the Industry of Construction Materials (*Federația Sindicatelor de Construcții și Industria Materialelor de Construcții*). It is one of 29 national unions making up the National Confederation of Unions in Moldova (*Confederația Națională a Sindicatelor din Moldova*). For more information, see <http://www.sindicat.md/> and <http://www.sindicat.md/148> on SINDICONS.

precludes manual workers convening all together in one room for one large union meeting.

Ciment S.A.'s union is headed by Valeria Dmitrov, a hefty, imposing, middle-aged ethnic Moldovan woman.⁴ Her salary comes from SINDICONS by way of Ciment S.A. Valeria has a large, remodelled office on the second floor of the Administration Building. During socialism she worked in the plant's Personnel Department (akin to today's Human Resources) – an unlikely starting place for a union leader. Her ethnic Bulgarian husband (surname 'Dmitrov') is a grinding-station foreman. Rumour has it that he, a mono-linguistic Russian speaker, kept his job during Egrafal lay-offs owing to Valeria's contacts in Human Resources. In our regular conversations, Valeria tells me repeatedly how life is difficult for the union's rank-and-file workers (*muncitorii de rând*). 'The changes' (*schimbările*) associated with restructuring have made manual workers fear for their jobs; there is increased competition among employees, she asserts. To get first-hand knowledge of this labour insecurity, Valeria extended an invitation to a union meeting with production workers from a factory section.

Labour union meeting

It was 7:15am on a cold, frosty November morning. I made it to the factory's packed assembly hall just as the trade union meeting commenced. Thirty or more workers were present, filling up rows of humble wooden benches. All were rank-and-file workers from the primary materials division. In the front of the room sat *doamna sindicat* ('Mrs. Trade Union' – as union leader Valeria was called.) Her brand-new, brightly coloured Egrafal work jacket (*scurtă*) stood out, contrasting with workers'

⁴ Union leader Valeria tells me that union power and organisation in Moldova is generally weak and bought-out by big-business interests associated with the country's political leadership. 'Unions are stronger in Romania,' she tells me without hypothesising reasons.

worn-out, navy-blue, winter-padded jackets. Valeria does not work for Egrafal, but wears an Egrafal company jacket reserved for managers, suggestive of her connections.⁵

The Moldovan dialect (note: not standard Romanian like in Administration), mixed with occasional Russian words, was the primary language of communication during the union meeting. Valeria always responded in a so-called ‘cleaner’ (*mai curată*) form of Moldovan, akin to standard Romanian. Workers’ dialect was different enough from standard Romanian that I had difficulty following it at times. I noticed just one young employee spoke clear standard Romanian. I overheard two older, skilled workers, one of whom was a woman, speak Russian. I noticed the way Valeria replied to them in Russian – Russian being Valeria’s most utilised language in her mixed-ethnic home. Valeria continued speaking in Russian for a while until a Moldovan worker interjected with a comment in his titular tongue, changing the language back to Moldovan. Valeria obliged workers preference for Moldovan speaking.

The first half of the one-hour meeting was a complaint-and-answer session, while the second half was announcements. The latter was a monologue and the former a heated exchange. In the announcements, Valeria read to workers the union’s proposal for salary increases. Workers listened calmly. Valeria took an extra moment to justify the proposal’s clause on financial rewards for ‘a good worker.’ I was surprised the union was backing a corporate practice meant to increase individual worker performance. Individual workers, on occasions outside the *sala de apel* told me this ‘pay for performance’ leads to increased competition and a breakdown in the cooperative spirit of work teams. ‘The team (*echipa*) is being broken...’ was one of the concerns raised in the first half of the meeting. Passing by rank-and-file anxieties, the union leadership

⁵ Only senior-ranking managers, supervisors and engineers received the new Egrafal work gear distributed in autumn 2005. It is important to note that Valeria was not re-elected union leader several years later in 2008.

decided to go forward in implementing policies accommodating to corporate Egrafal. Strangely, workers did not protest the point. Instead other more pressing issues seemed to be on their minds. Major issues raised by workers during the first-half of the meeting included a 'lack of people' (*lipsă de oameni*) caused by lay-offs. Workers complained that a reduced personnel forces one worker to do the job of four, or makes it difficult to take sick leave. One fiery, red-faced man stood up and protested that his wife is sick, but he has no vacation time to be at home. Workers around him nodded their heads in sympathy.

Still, the most heated conversation during the one-hour meeting was over the recent management change-over from Moldovan to Romanian and French. The room lit up with remarks. One worker sitting close to me burst out: 'They want us like Romania, but we're not Romania!'⁶ Another worker to my right bellowed: 'They [Romanians] are rich! (*sunt bogați!*).' Someone else griped about Romanian managers not knowing Russian for tools and instructions. (This is compounded by earlier complaints I heard of young engineers knowing, but refusing Russian-speaking for equipment.) The most heated, belligerent worker in the room erupted: 'The problem is with management. It's not the mentality of workers; it's the mentality of management!' This comment was a direct confrontation to management calls for 'a new mentality' of work (*o nouă mentalitate*), raised in previous chapters. Workers were specifically angry over a lack of time-off, a dearth of personnel, and the perceived double-standard that foreign managers expect them to change (to Romanian speaking), whilst not adapting themselves (to local Russian-speaking habits). When union leader Valeria interjected, informing workers

⁶ Union leader Valeria tells me that the problem is Ciment S.A. workers are paid 150 US dollars a month for the same job a worker in Romania gets paid 300 US dollars a month. Despite the wide pay differential and comparable living costs (according to Moldovans *and* Romanians alike), Rezina workers are expected to labour at the same intensity as Romanian workers, but without getting paid as much. This is what workers protest.

that they will have a chance to raise their issues in a meeting with the plant's new chief Director of Integration, Xavier Dupont, criticisms surfaced over the amount of face-to-face time with the Frenchman: 'It's not enough time...' Rarely do *muncitorii de rând* come into sustained contact with foreign management. They lead separate working and social lives. The belligerent worker shouted again, 'and I'll tell him [the Director] this!...', in fury not able to finish his sentence.

Workers' angry, vulnerable words depict tension between labour and management – friction between Moldovans and Romanians. Romanians are persons with whom rank-and-file Moldovans have historically had troubled relations, as depicted in Chapter One. This is a different picture from the amicable, even flirtatious relations between white-collar Moldovans and Romanians in Administration, as detailed in Chapter Four. However, here in *teritoriu* conflict is overt. The complicated overlap of job and linguistic-related grievances makes it difficult to get at the root of the conflict and to understand how complaint challenges global capital. Protest begs the question of whether workers are resisting capital ('the patron' Egrafal), as much as they are resisting Romanian and French foreigners. Is labour's hostility rooted in national, linguistic, or other grievances? Is it a conflict of capital or of culture?

6.3 The Protective Backlash against Market Reform

Double movement in theory

Karl Polanyi might believe that these workers are protesting against market capitalist reform – their protest representing part of what he calls the 'double movement,' a concept put forward in *The Great Transformation* (1944, 150). The double movement is 'the unleashing of the market and the reaction against it,' as succinctly described by Jonathan Parry (2009, 178). In other words, both actions – the introduction of the market and its spontaneous collective counter-reaction – make up the

double movement. It is important to note, though, that not just any market arrangement stimulates a counter-reaction, according to Polanyi, but one which operates according to a ‘laissez-faire liberalist’ (or self-regulating market) philosophy⁷ – cutting material provisioning and job security (see Hart and Hann 2009, 5, 9) – like that functioning at Egrafal Cement S.A. However, does the ushering in of laissez-faire market reforms necessarily stimulate a counter-reaction all of the time? What about the constraints to counter-reaction?

Polanyi believed wholeheartedly in ‘the possibilities for societal resistance against the predations of the market,’ in the words of Keith Hart and Chris Hann in their volume, *Market and Society*, devoted to Karl Polanyi’s work (2009, 15). Society seeks to protect itself against impersonal market forces through everything from trade unions to globalised activist networks (2009, 9). Even if the market is unmoved by these reactionary movements, the sheer existence of the movements, not the degree of their success, is what is important to the existence of the double movement. However, Parry’s work in Hann and Hart shows that there are serious obstacles to mounting a double movement (2009, 175). Either a hegemonic, protectionist state has a stranglehold on society, containing worker resistance and organising consent, or a market unregulated by the state is coercive enough to subvert calls from society for the state to rein it in (ibid, 176-178, 201-202).⁸ So even when expressions of countermovement happen (like in labour union protest), they are more often than not short-lived or easily undermined, as was the case with Parry’s example of the Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM) union

⁷ However, as previously noted in Chapter Three, Thompson (1991) would add that protest is provoked not just by a laissez-faire market arrangement per se, but also by a ‘consensus as to what [are] legitimate and what [are] illegitimate practices’ within laissez-faire markets, and an ‘outrage to these moral assumptions [on legitimate/illegitimate practices]’ (Thompson 1991, 188).

⁸ Using Michael Burawoy’s 2003 study on Polanyi and Gramsci, Parry finds that the first obstacle, of which Gramsci’s work is indicative, is true for organised, public-sector workers in the Bhilai Steel Plant in central India, whereas the second obstacle, which is telling of Polanyi’s work, describes contract labour in the private sector (Parry 2009, 178).

in central India, advocating on behalf of contract labour and other interests (Parry 2009, 196-197). The movement's limitations were not unlike those at Ciment S.A., where there is a fragmented workforce and capital is hegemonic. Here at Ciment S.A. 'the union is weak,' in workers' words and those of union leader Valeria.⁹ However, the strength or weakness of a labour union is not the only factor behind whether sustained opposition to laissez-faire capitalism can be mounted.

Another obstacle to the double movement, which Parry emphasizes from Polanyi's work, is that one class 'must persuade other classes that it represents the interests of society' (2009, 176). In other words, a truly transformative movement must serve a variety of interests other than its own (Polanyi 1944). This was the issue with the Parry's unions (2009, 202) and the problem with blue-collar union members at Ciment S.A. Their interests were narrow, as we saw at the union meeting, when workers' complaints shifted from initial out-and-out economic issues to linguistic grievances, which were particular to them. Anger over extra work and shortened holidays turned into hostility over management not knowing local speaking habits (of mixing Russian words with a form of Romanian.) What started out as a conflict of capital ended in a conflict of culture. During the process of shifting issues, workers' hostility appeared to lose sight of the economic (to which others in the plant could potentially relate) – to the point of passing over by meeting's end a controversial, corporate-conciliatory proposal on pay for performance. So although Moldovan workers had real issues with Romanian and French managers over proper pay and rising work demands, they appeared to

⁹ However, the CMM union is highly active in central India's private sector (2009, 196-197). This is different from the Ciment S.A. union, recalling its compliance with Egrafal's pay-for-performance demands as an example of the union's weakness vis-à-vis management. So Ciment S.A.'s union is closer in character to organised labour at the Bhilai Steel Plant, which essentially does the bidding of management. The difference, though, is Parry's unions are more closely linked to the state apparatus, as the Bhilai Steel Plant is state-owned, and the plant's unionised workers receive state concessions meant to protect their job security (2009, 201), which is unlike the rampant job insecurity at the privatised Ciment S.A.

overlook capital as the root of their individually shared problems. Instead, they became caught up in what I call an anti-foreigner ‘localism,’ witnessed in workers’ use of a Moldovan linguistic style in resistance to Egrafal. However, what is this Moldovan linguistic style and localism, and what does it mean for the possibilities and limits of a double movement in Ciment S.A.’s *teritoriu*?

Moldovan localism as capitalist protest?

Since the moment Moldova declared its independence, Romania has been primitively *imposing Romanian standards on us* [emphasis mine] both from the outside and from the inside. They are doing this brutally and by force. [...] When we oppose this, they say: how dare you! [...] We want to be the masters in our own house and we do not accept the persistent imposition of Romanian standards. (Vladimir Voronin, President of the Republic of Moldova, 3 March 2007, quoted in *RFE/RL*)

These angry words of Moldovan ex-President Vladimir Voronin towards Romanians are not unlike the trade unionists’ irritation at Romanian managers imposing foreign standards on them, whilst dismissing Moldovans’ local ways of speaking and working. Such manifestations of local defence appear to be a type of ‘nativism,’ which Myron Weiner defines as ‘intense opposition to minorities because of their foreign origin’ (Weiner 1978, 274-294). The irate comments of Moldovan trade unionists towards foreign Romanians illustrate some of this animosity and suggest support for the use of Weiner’s definition. This is even if I prefer for my study the word ‘localism,’ which I believe better represents emic adjectives – like *de baștină* or *localnic* – which Moldovans (like local scholar Ana Pascaru [2000]) use to identify themselves as ‘sons of the soil’ vis-à-vis outsiders.¹⁰

¹⁰ This localist association is a type of territorial identity, although it is important to point out in the case of my manual-labour informants, it is less about connection with the Moldovan-Bessarabian region as a whole, and more about identification with their *terra firma* or narrow-confined surroundings. This gives weight to Jennifer Cash’s (2007) argument that Moldova ‘is a nation of villages’ in which people identify more with their localities than with a national Moldovan identity per se. I agree with this finding, however, in so far as it relates mainly to rank-and-file and first-generation urbanised Moldovans, like my manual-labour informants. It seems less relevant to the young, second-generation urbanised engineers of

‘Moldovan localism,’ as I wish to depict manual labour’s angry work expressions, is akin to the Soviet-created ideology of ‘moldovanism’ (*moldovenism*) (Anderson 2008, 167 and Ihrig 2008, 149; see also Frunțașu 2002; King 2000; Musteață 2008; Stati 2001), which is understood by local scholars (from proponents like Stati 2002, 387-410 to opponents like Frunțașu 2002, 208) to be underpinned by Moldovans’ claim to cultural and linguistic distinctiveness in ‘our land’ (*pământul nostru*) vis-à-vis Romania and Romanians.¹¹ Such manifestations of Moldovan localism are similar to the behaviour of James Ferguson’s ‘localists,’ in so far as both sets of actors ‘had a strong sense of continuing allegiance to a rural “home” community [...] adhered to “custom,” and displayed a strong [...] regional identity’ (Ferguson 1999, 91-92). Rank-and-file workers frequently visited their natal villages (privately with families), kept kin customs (like *cumătri* relations, discussed in Chapter Seven), spoke the regional dialect and self-identified as ‘Moldovan’ (versus Romanian).¹² These Moldovans saw themselves in opposition to Romanian managers, as well as to ‘Egrafalist’ young Moldovan supervisors in Chapter Four. The latter had a fondness for what Ferguson calls a ‘cosmopolitan style [...] signalled [by] a shrugging off of localist cultural traits [like the Moldovan dialect], and often rejection of rural ties, along with an embracing of

Chapter Four, for whom the village, and all it symbolises, has less of a pull – a point which appears lacking in Cash’s 2007 ethnographic account.

¹¹ Stefan Ihrig (2008) sees moldovanism and romanianism as identity-based political movements among Moldovan elites grounded in mythical narratives of state and nation. While I do not dispute this, I would add that the production and consumption of these myths represent different political-economic realities. Moldovanism and a Moldovan identity, as in Soviet days, are constructed in relation to, and as the antithesis of romanianisation, and vice versa. At Rezina Ciment S.A., rank-and-file Moldovan workers – not indigenous elites – identify with a moldovanist (localist-style) self-identification, partly in reaction to Egrafal’s Romanian-speaking policies. Workers’ affinity for moldovanism is not simply the result of old Soviet and present-day Party of Communists (PCRM) political engineering to create a separate ‘Moldovan people,’ a common view among Romanian and Moldovan scholars (Heintz 2005, 80; Musteață 2008). Rather than being an old Soviet legacy, moldovanism, at least in the context of Ciment S.A., is the outcome of contemporary, antagonistic Moldovan and Romanian exposure, linked to economic disparity. However, this comment is not to discount the role of social memory and propaganda in the making of social distinction/s between peoples.

¹² According to many of my Moldovan informants, regional birthplace and indigenous dialect set the key boundaries of who is and who is not locally ‘Moldovan.’

Western-dominated transnational mass culture' (1999, 91-92),¹³ as depicted in consumption and flirting habits in Chapter Four. However, it is important to point out that Moldovan localism versus Romanian cosmopolitanism is how my informants and local scholars understand Moldovan and Romanian animosity, often ignoring fundamental, underlying economic issues behind the antagonism, and the way in which both Romanian and Moldovan idioms are contemporary responses to change – to which Weiner's work points, but Moldovan scholarship downplays (see Frunțașu 2002; Pascaru 2000; Stati 2002).

The above points are made because upon close examination not just any type of Moldovan and Romanian dealings induce expressions of localism among Ciment S.A.'s manual labour or in wider Moldovan society. Moldovans' perceptions of difference between themselves and Romanians have lessened in a half-dozen cases that I know of average Romanians living and inter-marrying among Moldovans in Bessarabia, taking on Moldovans' local habits and dialect, and assuming socio-economic parity with, not superiority over Moldovans.¹⁴ Therefore, it seems to me that Moldovan localism arises out of inter-group relations characterised by unequal, status-loaded interaction – particularly when foreign Romanians hold more power and economic resources than Moldovans *in* Moldovans' own homeland, *and* limit Moldovans' access to these resources. Economic and power disparity is what arguably creates the tension. It gives the appearance of cultural differences between Romanians and Moldovans, when in fact distinctions are economic; they are about inequality between managers and workers.

¹³ Yet, *moldovenism*, with its Soviet ideological origins, is less in opposition to russianness, although not uncritical of Soviet rule and Russian dominance (Stati 2002).

¹⁴ This same goes for relations between Russians and Moldovans. Those Russians who lived and inter-married among Moldovans were liable to become domesticated 'locals' (even if not ethnically Moldovan) in the eyes of Moldovans. Equality of livelihood and life-chances, combined with attempts to take on local customs and ways of speaking, was crucial to relaxing inter-group boundaries between peoples (Barth 1969) with historically complicated relations.

To illustrate from the Ciment S.A. trade union meeting, the problem of Romanian superiority over Moldovans was that Romanian management appeared to bring more disadvantage (like neoliberal job insecurity) than advantage (such as guaranteed work with fringe benefits) to rank-and-file Moldovans. For them, Egrafal's Romanians brought to Moldova a European-style labour contract that made Moldovans work for Romanians on terms which Moldovans regarded as unfair. Rank-and-file Moldovan labour felt that it was unfair that they cannot control their job security no matter how hard they worked. At least 'under the Russians' ('*sub rusi*'), as my informants say, there was full employment.

Thus, having made the point that rank-and-file workers respond to economic changes in the factory with localist expressions,¹⁵ there is a problem with assuming that Moldovans' expressions of localism can constitute a form of double movement like that described by Polanyi. This is for the following reasons. Firstly, rank-and-file workers' preoccupation with their own language interests (Moldovan-dialect speaking over economic matters) are not shared by other employees in the plant – like the Control Room's russified Moldovans and the Lab's Russian speakers, who were shown to have different socio-linguistic interests. These latter workers do not identify with the linguistic grievances of the former on the shop floor. Therefore, so long as grievances against Egrafal are expressed around and through a particular language representing one segment of the plant, no enduring, wider capitalist protest is likely to happen. In other words, resisting through narrow linguistic styles appears to preclude connecting to wider interests in the plant, let alone society.

¹⁵ In other words, workers appealed to their own Moldovan particularities against foreign Romanian encroachment. Again, this is even though workers' real grievances are over the terms of their labour contract.

Secondly, expressions of moldovanism are not organised into political manifestations¹⁶ or economic ('class for itself') movements, but rather are just individually voiced linguistic modalities on the part of shop-floor workers. Polanyi's double movement, however, requires collectivist protest, absent in Moldovan workers' narrow, reactive expressions. My ethnography suggests that shop-floor workers' unity around language is only ever short-lived, like at trade union meetings or when confronted with Romanian-language classes. However, this is not to say that Moldovan cultural-linguistic expressions could not foster lasting togetherness for protest, like in June Nash's (1993) example of how Bolivian tin miners found unity around pre-capitalist cultural symbols, which allayed alienation and made possible collective protest against capitalism. Or there is Aihwa Ong's (1987) example of the use of pre-capitalist beliefs about spirit affliction among Malaysian factory workers as a way to critique the capitalist order. The problem at Ciment S.A. is that shop-floor workers are generally quite fragmented from each other. They only make up one-third of the Ciment S.A. workforce (approximately 142 persons) and are scantily dispersed around *teritoriul* in groups of two or three (see the forthcoming example of lathe operators Petru and Radu). As such, this small segment of the Ciment S.A. workforce rarely has opportunities to come together and inter-relate at work, beyond occasional departmental trade union meetings.¹⁷ Even lunches in the factory canteen are eaten silently and hurriedly (within 15 or 20 minutes) often alone – in order to quickly return to one's work post being covered by a colleague – as I regularly encountered eating with workers. 60-hour work weeks left little free time and possibilities for connectedness outside of work (see Chapter Seven). This is in a context where workers were

¹⁶ See Breuilly on nationalist manifestations (1985, 3). Worker-management disputes in labour union meetings did not instigate an ethnic Moldovan consciousness at the level of the individual and group.

¹⁷ As noted elsewhere, there is not meeting space in the factory to accommodate all 142 shop-floor workers.

preoccupied with keeping their jobs and making ends meet, over collective action aimed at social transformation and cultural revival, which is generally true around the former eastern bloc (see Ashwin 1999 on Russia and Kideckel 1998, x, 11-12, 210 on Romania). With three-quarters of the Ciment S.A. workforce recently discharged, the only real alternative to corporate compliance was a migrant job abroad. Hence, the fear of job-loss, along with small, sparsely distributed work groups and limited opportunities for inter-connectedness, left manual labour little scope for coming together for lengthy periods of time to resist corporate demands. Factory conditions hence made resistance seem impossible to workers, whose relative isolation we will see play out next in the context of the Repair Hall.

6.4 The Repair Hall: The Place and Persons

The layout of the Repair Hall

On the far western end of the plant compound, seemingly a world away from Egrafal corporate trademarks and newsletters, nestled below a steep, rocky cliff, is situated the dilapidated Repair Hall (*hală de reparație*). Its location, almost a half mile from management's head offices in the Administration Building ('where decisions are made'), makes the Repair Hall one of the most remote production spaces in the plant.¹⁸ The old aluminium-framed warehouse, laid in concrete with thin, semi-transparent windows, is a far cry from the parquet-floor conference rooms and refurbished head offices on Administration's Third Floor (*etajul trei*), discussed in Chapter Four. Administration's thermo-pan windows, flat-screen computers, and French and English posters and Romanian notice-boards stand in stark contrast to the warehouse's out-dated Soviet machinery and Russian-language Soviet placards (like the one at the entrance

¹⁸ This is notwithstanding the limestone quarry, which I only had permission to visit once, and so it is not detailed in the thesis.

announcing ‘safety!’ – *bezopasnost*’). The physical distance and disparity in languages and workplace remodelling seems symbolic of the modest value Egrafal attaches to stable, permanent repair work, which nowadays is increasingly outsourced to mobile bodies contracted within and beyond Moldova’s borders.

The Repair Hall is the size of a football pitch. Twenty-two employees are scattered around this space, working alone or in groups of two with very little inter-communication. In the middle of the hall stands a two-story, concrete square-edifice with panoptic-like windowed offices. The offices are now empty. Around the structure lie four rectangular shop-floor areas. Only the warehouse’s longer northern floor and southeast corner are used. Dust-collecting machines and Soviet-installed equipment populate the other areas.

In terms of authority, the Repair Hall is a subsidiary of the Maintenance Department, headed by interim Romanian Manager Liviu Popescu since autumn 2005.¹⁹ Liviu’s understudy, ethnic Russian Sergei Lazarov, was the head of Maintenance and the Repair Hall prior to the management change-over. Under Liviu and Sergei’s leadership, the repair division has a shift boss and foreman (the former of higher status than the latter), but only the foreman regularly roams the shop floor. Higher-up bosses like Sergei infrequently visit the hidden-away hall.

Now having set the context of the Repair Hall, we turn to an example of two lathe operators working here to illustrate their labour environment and practices, suggestive of their rank-and-file localism. Attention to labouring identities is further developed in subsequent sections examining the practical and relational aspects of the

¹⁹ I am told that during socialism labour was organised through the trade union. All workers were subordinated to a particular shop floor and its union leadership, and each shop floor was in turn subordinated to the trade union. With the plant’s 1999 take-over by Egrafal, the cement plant is now organised so that workers are subordinated to different departments (versus shop floors) (source: Ciment S.A. work origram).

labour process, along with worker and manager relations, in order to understand the changes workers are undergoing with Egrafal, and how these changes contribute to rank-and-file labour insecurity and a sense of Moldovan distinctiveness, while also constraining expressions of discontent.

Repair operators: introducing Petru and Radu

Petru is one of two Egrafal-employed lathe operators to survive three rounds of Egrafal lay-offs (*reducere de cadre*) in the Repair Hall. He is a full-time Egrafal employee (*angajat*) at the rank of *muncitor* (an employee paid by the hour), as opposed to *salariat* (a salaried employee), like those in the previous three chapters. He has worked at the Rezina Cement Plant for twenty-two years, ever since finishing technical-vocational school in Rezina (*Școală Tehnico-Profesională din or. Rezina*) and joining the Rezina Cement Plant's construction site. The same is true for fellow lathe operator (*strungar*), Radu, who learned his vocation through on-site apprentice training in the Soviet factory. Like most rank-and-file workers at Ciment S.A., Petru and Radu are ethnic Moldovan, born in nearby Moldovan villages in the Rezina *raion*, and now considered long-time Rezina residents.²⁰ Both are middle-aged and married to ethnic Moldovan spouses. They consider 'the Moldovan language' (*limba moldovenească*), not standard Romanian, their mother tongue.²¹ Like Petru, Radu's good work reputation allowed him to outlast multiple Egrafal lay-offs, which saw almost sixty of his maintenance colleagues dismissed. Despite his good fortune, Radu is left with few

²⁰ Most rank-and-file workers at Ciment S.A. are married and wed to co-ethnic Moldovans. Both partners are usually rural-born, the majority coming from villages in the Rezina, Șoldănești and Orhei Districts. Most moved to Rezina during cement plant construction in the 1970s.

²¹ As noted elsewhere, Repair Hall workers like Petru and Radu speak the rural Moldovan dialect at work, as well as in the home with family. Neither can speak well standard-literary Romanian, and they know passable Russian with a heavy Moldovan accent. Interestingly, sometimes two members of one family call the language they speak differently: 'I speak Moldovan; she [my wife] speaks Romanian,' an informant's husband tells me. Educational-level and occupation are influential factors in this sort of distinction-making.

people on the shop floor with whom to relate. This day-to-day reality is a reminder of the precariousness of Radu's own labour – an important theme in this chapter and the thesis.

Petru and Radu work seven meters apart on two sober, grey-green Soviet-era lathes on the southern end of the Repair shop floor near opaque windows. The distance and noise of their machines makes it difficult to communicate on the job. Petru must shout to Radu's backside to get his attention. The several dozen idle lathes and dusty machines surrounding them are reminders of co-workers past. The out-dated machines are older than Petru and Radu. Each heavy-duty cast iron lathe is three-meters long with countless arm-like gears, tiny slots and protruding metallic angles running up and down the machine's central platform. Lathes make nuts, grind tool-cutter bits, shape bolts and valves, finish pistons, bore connecting rods, and cut screws, all of which are used in equipment around the plant. Mixing objects past and present, Petru domesticates the austere workspace with an eye-catching mother-and-child bronze figurine and several newspaper pull-outs of naked women decorating the machine bed to his rear. Also strewn atop the machine is a nationalist party 2005 election campaign pamphlet, an out-of-place Soviet-era book on yachting, and a lathe-operator manual, both written in Russian. Taken together, the objects suggest a socialist-nostalgic and Moldovan outlook versus a cosmopolitan, Romanian orientation (recalling the fashion and high-tech gadgets in the workspace of Chapter Four). Such displays may instinctively be a way for workers to maintain a recognisably localist presence amid wider transnational changes going on around the factory. The next section examines these changes –from increased worker quotas to new Western-style safety regulations – affecting Petru, Radu and other maintenance personnel. The following snapshot of Petru labouring at the lathe is an example of worker reactions to the changes.

6.5 Work Practices under Transformation in the Repair Hall

The Egrafal trademark means a system of values: What do we want to accomplish? Who do we want to be? (corporate newsletter to employees)

Work efficiency and quota at the lathe (la strung)

I arrive on the shop floor as Petru is setting up his lathe at the start of the 8:00am morning shift. The electric-powered machine is warming up with the engine and fan roaring. Oil and mustiness permeate the shop-floor air. It is a typical day, a typical task. Petru is instructed by his shift boss to make 600 metal machine screws (*șurubi*) for factory use. A short, stocky man with a jovial smile, Petru works on his feet, shifting left and right along a waist-high opening to the lathe's flatbed working area. Peering through chunky protective glasses, Petru, without a word, diligently pushes and pulls levers, rearranging the lathe's gears. Using change wheels at his side, he swiftly connects the lathe's rotating spindle on his left to a long, thick screw running parallel the length of the horizontal machine bed. Petru smoothly attaches this thick leadscrew, as it is called, to the machine's right-side cutting and grinding tool, responsible for shaping the final product. Every new bolt, nut or screw-cutting job requires a different arrangement of parts and gears. Calculating the correct setting is what distinguishes an operator's skill.²² On this occasion, Petru arranges the parts in a precise way so as to produce the exact screw shape and size specified by his shift boss. Petru pauses momentarily, referring to what appears to be a gear chart in a worn-out, paper-back Russian-language lathe manual, something I am told operators double-check when setting up new jobs. Although I noticed, interestingly, Romanian-language lathe instructions attached to the machine's lower-left corner, Petru prefers his old Russian

²² I am told that one of the most difficult tasks in screw-cutting is to cut accurate grooves into the screws. I thank Ovidiu Creangă for technical background information on lathe work and screw-cutting, and for assisting my descriptions of complicated machine procedures that I observed.

manual over Romanian – suggesting his unfamiliarity with, or low value placed on Romanian. Stooping over the wide, heavysset lathe again, Petru resumes his task, adjusting the cutting tool and rotating speed, which determine how many screws an hour the machine will produce. This controls how fast he *should* work. Petru needs to set the pace fast enough to finish 600 screws over no more than two shifts, as expected by his boss. Completing the set-up, from this moment onwards, the final product is the result of Petru's accurate machine set-up and less about any creativity exerted over the machine's on-going output. For the machine controls the product design and production pace, and the operator simply and obediently keeps in step. Workers say the operating speed is set faster today than 'under the Russians' (*sub ruși*, meaning during the Soviet era, as mentioned elsewhere), as daily production quotas are higher and more demanding under Egrafal management. The new quote of 600 screws, instead of an older quota of 400, must be produced in two days-time. However, Petru must not only produce more and faster, but also more carefully amid new, strictly enforced worker safety regulations. These new safety regulations are considered by Petru more of a hassle than help, as seen next.

Safety first: new work regulations

Efficient in his set-up, lasting no more than ten minutes, Petru's dark, oil-stained hands carefully insert a half-meter-long, two-diameter-wide stainless steel rod into the left-side of the machine. The lathe does the rest of the work. The warm machine cuts the steel rod into equal sizes, pulling one piece at a time into the cutting tool, where the lathe's spindle rotates the piece at a fast pace to grind it into the shape of a screw, trimming excess material, and inserting the right number, size and angle of groove-threads. Petru just stands back as the machine runs a phase (about seven minutes long), overseeing through his thick safety glasses pieces of dull rod give birth to functional

screws, which are mechanically collected in a box.²³ During an early phase Petru engages me in conversation after being silent during set-up. As we talk, I nervously keep my distance from the screeching machine cutter, with its metal dust and hot steel coils flying everywhere. Petru stands unwavering. One piece strikes my bare hand, leaving a burn mark. My initial reaction is to appreciate Egrafal's 'worker safety' policy of mandatory safety gloves, protective glasses and hard-hat in production spaces. Petru only wears safety glasses, disregarding expectations that he put on protective gloves and a hard-hat. Perhaps it is Petru's veteran work status – confident without any Egrafal prophylactics – or it is simply that 'worker safety' practices have not entered his daily working habits.

Irrespective of reason, *all* factory employees, formal and informal alike, are required to respect comprehensive 'worker safety' (*protecția muncii*) regulations – a criterion practically non-existent (or not enforced) under socialism. Most rank-and-file workers are resistant to the new rules, for reasons summed up by one worker: 'worker safety guidelines are characteristics for Europe – not Moldova!' Workers consider them foreign, unwanted intrusions, according to this employee. Young Moldovan engineer Andrei (from Chapter Four) substantiates this idea, in so many words:

Something foreign is considered something bad. Workers are resistant to worker safety (*protecția muncii*) [because] they don't want to have to use a hard hat – although it is normal for Europe and America. The only way to get workers to follow these new policies is for bosses to be more severe with their workers. If bosses are not severe, workers won't wear hard hats... Starting in August 2006, workers are obligated to wear safety glasses. If they do not respect this regulation, they will be disciplined. They will be written up and reprimanded. [A Romanian manager introduced the law.] [...] Never in their lives did they do this *protecția muncii* (worker safety), wearing glasses, hard hat and gloves.' Andrei says he is from a generation more receptive to Egrafal România managers' changes, including their Romanian speaking.

²³ The product is usually checked by at least the foreman and shift boss for quality control before being used in the factory.

Protective policies only began to be strictly enforced a year on from Romanian management's arrival at the plant. Interesting, these shop-floor attitudes and actions are in contrast to those of Moldovan white-collar employees in Chapter Four, especially the newly hired engineers, like Andrei, who voluntarily adopt their work habits to the new worker safety regulations (as hinted in the quote above), and often are strictest in demanding blue-collar compliance. Petru's disregard for or casualness towards *protecția muncii* (worker safety) seems emblematic of his customary (localist) Moldovan ways of working. However, I believe that Petru disregards worker safety not just because it is foreign, but also because the new protective equipment adds more things to think about in Petru's work routine, as observed next.

Individual output

Perhaps owing to these new work rules and rhythms, I noticed that Petru's face remains tense and alert, keeping an eye on his hot machine, although he can relax a few minutes during each phase as the lathe runs automatically – provided he is not working simultaneously on a second lathe. Even as he talks to the occasional contractor (usually to an ethnic Moldovan in local dialect) milling about the lathes on break, or to his sociable foreman, Petru makes sure, still in mid-sentence discussion, to feed the machine with new rods immediately after the old material is consumed. There is little opportunity for sustained sociality while working.²⁴ Even Petru's lunch break with Radu is no more than thirty minutes long. Lunch (provided free to shop-floor workers) is eaten rushed in a corner of the factory canteen, with little conversation and inter-action among colleagues. The lack of sustained break and social outlets at work can make it

²⁴ This lack of opportunity for inter-communication at work and the small numbers of Egrafal employees working on the Repair Hall are contributors to the lack of togetherness observed in the Repair Hall, I argue. Whilst competition among workers is also a likely factor behind the lack of togetherness, there are few (approximately twenty-two) formal workers with whom to compete in the Repair Hall. Most do different jobs and are scattered around the shop floor. I only heard mention of worker competition in the Control Room (Chapter Three).

difficult for operators like Petru to repeat the same job functions, which on the lathe must be done every seven minutes, eight hours a day (8:00 to 16:00).²⁵ This makes working a lathe one of the most monotonous, tedious industrial jobs, even if not stress free. Although an upbeat man, the sweat on Petru's brow and vigilant eyes betray a hint of nervous apprehension. He seems preoccupied with remembering to feed the machine at a particular time. Petru has probably learned, as his maintenance colleagues explained to me, that Egrafal assesses an operator's performance by how well the operator maximises his time on the lathe, not letting the electric-powered engine overheat or idly run in vain between phases.²⁶ Differently than under the plant's Soviet *patron*, Egrafal is bent on cutting energy (electricity and natural gas consumption) and other production costs. An operator is now evaluated by his individual work tempo vis-à-vis product output. His salary is based primarily on performance. Education and experience are also factors, but above all: 'Workers who are better performing (*mai performanți*) are paid more,' trade union leader Valeria Dmitrov says matter-of-factly. 'It is about skill and adeptness [...] He [the worker] checks up on things a lot.' Under socialism, it was the productivity of Petru's shop floor (*tseh* in Russian) or *kollektiv* (work collective), and less the output of the person (*chelovek* or *persoana*), which purportedly mattered most for economic well-being. This idea that the Repair Hall's productivity was measured against the 'collective' (*kollektiv*) versus the 'person' (*chelovek*) finds substantiation in a factory archive (1984): 'The [Repair Hall] labour collective had the most productive labour [and] repair work of the highest quality: finishing work on 450 kilogrammes of

²⁵ The lathe employees work just eight-hour days, as their rather tedious, wearisome jobs are not directly implicated in cement production. Other Maintenance employees work longer shifts.

²⁶ A shift boss knows his employee's productivity because the boss dictates how fast the machine should be working. For example, if the boss says 600 screws are needed by the end of the day, knowing this is a reasonable task for the machine, the boss expects the pace of the machine to be set to accomplish this.

metal [and] finishing work on three tons of black metal.’²⁷ In these words and in those throughout the archival scrapbook, there is no mention of any individual’s production figures, beyond that of the shop-floor *kollektiv*. Whilst this may be just nostalgic wistfulness – with research pointing to wage security being tied to individual work-output in socialist-era factories (Haraszti 1978) like today – at Ciment S.A. Petru is convinced that productivity standards have changed from socialism to neoliberal capitalism.

In socialist times, an employee tells me ‘work wasn’t so intense [...Now] Egrafal’s goals can be summed up in: more, regular and cheaper.’ Generally speaking, Egrafal has been successful in getting ‘more and consistent’ work from employees like Petru, even if the company struggles to get workers in line with its language expectations. Almost more than anywhere else in the factory, language and labour practices are still under transformation in *teritoriu* spaces like the Repair Hall. The collision of new and (nostalgic) old practices can activate rifts between manual labour and managers, as discussed in the next two sections.

Workshop language tension

When it comes to working relationships, the language of communication among operators and workers in the Repair Hall is the Moldovan dialect infused with Russian words. For these workers, Moldovan is the language that transcends multiple spaces and relations, from work to home. Alongside Moldovan, Russian is used (instead of standard Romanian) for Repair Hall equipment and tools (*utilaj*), seeing as Soviet-trained workers were tutored in the Russian language. Consequently, workers only learned

²⁷ Translated from ‘kollektiv [my emphasis] *rabotal s naivyshej proizvoditel’nostiu truda, remontnye raboty vypolnialis’ c vysshim kachestvom: sdano 450 kg. tsvetnogo metalla, sdano 3 t. chernogo metalloloma.*’ (Rezina Cement Plant archive album 1984.)

Russian technical names, like *rychag* instead of Romanian *pârghie* for the word lever.²⁸ This explains why many workers still prefer to receive daily instructions in Russian and Moldovan, as opposed to standard Romanian. They find it difficult to change a work vocabulary that they have used for more than twenty years. For these workers, Ferguson is right about the difficulty of code-switching (1999, 95-98).

To encourage Romanian speaking among manual labour, Egrafal sent all workers –including Moldovans like Petru and Radu – to mandatory Romanian-language classes during the early days of its takeover. Many workers could not read the language they speak, being almost illiterate in Romanian’s Latin alphabet. (This was because Moldovans’ vernacular was written in the Russian Cyrillic alphabet in the Soviet era.) Evidence of this was found in the Romanian Latin-alphabet sign I saw tacked on the front desk of the Maintenance Department’s meeting room. It seemed out of place, more for a kindergarten class than an industrial work site. However, even with on-site factory schooling in Romanian, the Cyrillic alphabet and Russian language *au rămas* (‘remained,’ as workers say) in the factory, as countless informants and hours of observation substantiate.

Dialect differences between Romanian and Moldovan²⁹ are in fact small, as mentioned in Chapter One, but it may be that differences matter more when they are

²⁸ Russian words are also used by Moldovans for showing respect, being commanding, or expressing strong emotions, like ‘*uzhas!*’ ([what] horror!), spoken in fury or sympathy. Fluent Russian is rarely spoken in the Repair Hall, as few Russians regularly work here, and rank-and-file Moldovans’ Russian language skills are usually mediocre, involving a heavy Moldovan accent. According to emic standards, non-Russians’ Russian language ability is ranked by distinguishing whether persons (1) speak perfect Russian without a local accent, (2) speak middle-of-the-road Russian with an accent and limited vocabulary, (3) speak Russian with some struggle but can communicate most thoughts (this and the latter describe rank-and-file workers’ Russian-language ability), and finally (4) speak no Russian.

²⁹ This is what Anton Blok meant by ‘The narcissism of minor differences’ (1998), whereby the greatest struggles often happen between individuals and groups that differ little. Romanian citizens from the Romanian region of Moldova, abutting the Republic of Moldova, speak a similar dialect to Moldovan citizens, at least in the countryside.

minor, a point emphasized by Mathijs Pelkmans (2006, 72-73).³⁰ This is also Laada Bilaniuk's finding in *Contested Tongues*, which deals with how people in Ukraine speak a complex mix of Ukrainian, Russian and colloquial *surzhyk* (the nickname of the verbal idiom of Ukrainian mixed with Russian words) (2005, 3, 58) – linguistic patterns which are not unlike rank-and-file Moldovans' Russian-inflected Moldovan idiom spoken alongside Russian. The fact that Russian, Ukrainian and *surzhyk* are so closely related gives the languages fiercely contested statuses in Ukraine, with debates over whether the widely spoken *surzhyk* idiom and Russian language need to be eschewed for the correctness and purity of official Ukrainian.³¹ This is like debates over Egrafal România's preference for standardised 'pure' Romanian over Russian-influenced Moldovan (Bilaniuk 2005, 19, 34-35, 100, 105, 117, 145, 149).³²

At present, the Romanian dialect is only spoken in the Repair Hall by Ciment S.A. foremen and shift bosses, who are generally of higher skill level than workers.³³ Nevertheless, these supervisors communicate in a comprehensible mix of Moldovan and Russian with their subordinates, like Petru and Radu. However, I was told by workers, as well as by Administration employees and those from Egrafal România headquarters, that shop-floor conflict arose in *teritoriu* in the past when *younger* Moldovan supervisors refused to explain instructions using Russian words (despite knowing

³⁰ Bilaniuk found this to be true for the structural similarities between Ukrainian and Russian, whose linguistic closeness only heightened the symbolic significance of the differences between the two languages (2005, 3).

³¹ Bilaniuk rightly notes that the idea that language use in a country should be homogenous or of standard form is ideological, which is true for corporate language expectations.

³² At stake, though, for rank-and-file Moldovan workers in their arguments over Romanian and Moldovan-speaking – just as with Ukrainian and *surzhyk* – are issues over the legitimacy of two nation-states still consolidating their paths of socio-economic development, with language practice marking out a person's modernist leanings towards a European liberal-economic path (with Romanian and Ukrainian speaking, respectively) or an inward-looking paternalist model (with Moldovan and *surzhyk*). According to Bilaniuk, Ukrainian speaking is said to be emblematic of Europeanness for some (the country's ethnic Ukrainian speakers of the language) but national chauvinism for others (minority non-speakers). *Surzhyk* and Russian speaking generally represent a Russian or Soviet-nostalgic disposition. Such deliberations are not unlike on-going debates over whether the Romanian or Moldovan dialect more authentically represents the people of newly independent Moldova and their contested future aspirations.

³³ The supervisors speak Romanian with each other, their colleagues (of equal status) and their superiors.

Russian). The conflict is most likely on account of the fact that rank-and-file Moldovans, accustomed to instructions in Russian, either protested or pretended to understand commands, but proceeded to collect the wrong tools or to set-up machines incorrectly, which in turn triggered a vertical dispute.³⁴ Workers got criticised by supervisors for an ‘old mentality,’ whilst supervisors got criticised by workers for being ‘nationalistic’ in stubbornly refusing to speak Russian. Consequently, worker-supervisor relations worsened, as discussed next.

Relations of production: workers, managers, supervisors

During my observations in the Repair Hall, relations were surprisingly amicable between workers and their lower-level supervisors (shift bosses and foremen) of the same age. Foremen came around the Repair Hall at least once a day. Their visits were regarded by workers not so much as intrusions, but as opportunities for trouble shooting. On one occasion, while a supervisor was joking with one of the lathe operators, a worker from another shop floor walked over and interrupted, asking for help with a welding problem. The supervisor obliged, excusing himself from the conversation. Being in closer touch with the troubles of their workers, lower-level supervisors exhibited surprising empathy toward their subordinates. They often spoke well of their workers. I recall foreman Anatoly praising operator Petru as a hard worker within earshot of Petru. Anatoly went on to sympathize with Petru’s humble salary (approximately 150 US dollars a month), explaining to me that it is too low; it is barely enough to live on: ‘The *patron* [meaning Egrafal] doesn’t care about people like Petru.’

Beyond words of empathy, foreman Anatoly sides with his workers over and above Egrafal Romanian managers when it comes to work-time language. As previously

³⁴ Another reason that rank-and-file workers need to learn the Romanian-dialect, according to Egrafal’s young supervisors, is ‘because many Romanians [contractors] come here to do repairs...so [employees] need the Romanian language.’

mentioned, Romanian managers insist on Romanian speaking for all equipment and machinery despite worker inclinations and aptitudes. Anatoly, however, uses the Moldovan dialect mixed with familiar Russian words for equipment when giving work instructions to his employees. I overheard him use, for example, the Russian word *ral'* instead of Romanian *arbore* for a steel rod, choosing the word that workers recognise. Later Anatoly rationalised: 'They do not know the Romanian word.'³⁵ He believes it does no good to give instructions that his workers do not understand. Anatoly's choice also says something about his conciliatory management style, which is in contrast to senior managers and younger supervisors in Administration who, like their Romanian chiefs, question workers' language usage.

This worker-supervisor connection around workshop language seems to have roots in a common feeling of job insecurity. For even boss Anatoly vulnerably admits: 'I work for Egrafal now, but I don't know about tomorrow'.³⁶ Trade union leader Valeria confirms that employees even at Anatoly's rank risk losing their jobs amid possible departmental reshuffling. Anatoly knows he, like workers under him, may be out of a job in a year's time. Both ranks of employees know that Russian-speaking is useful in the event of redundancy.³⁷ Neither worker nor boss as such outright eschews Russian.

Instances of worker and supervisor empathy may explain why workers' job complaints are usually directed towards non-indigenes, like foreign Romanian management, and the amorphous entity 'Egrafal,' and not towards low-ranking foreman, considered by workers as 'one of us' in dialect and job insecurity. Keeping Egrafal a

³⁵ This approach by lower-ranking shift bosses is opposed to that of senior supervisors in Administration, who assert: 'They [workers] must learn [...] to be happy speaking not just *amuia* (rural Moldovan-dialect for "now") but *acuma* (literary Romanian-dialect word for "now").'

³⁶ Anatoly makes such a comment with the knowledge that even managers *de vârf* (high-up) have lost their jobs for supposedly inadequate performance or for an inability to learn good English or Romanian, as occurred with one senior manager just after I finished my fieldwork.

³⁷ We recall the same attitudes among russified Moldovans in Chapter Three.

distant ‘other’ is reinforced by the fact that Romanian managers rarely, if ever, step foot into the Repair Hall, as mentioned elsewhere.

Egrafal management, for its part, expresses disapproval of workers thinking and acting like ‘a collective’ – ‘without minds of their own’ – and criticises shift bosses for allegedly defending the interests of shop-floor groups, instead of pushing workers harder. Shift bosses are seen as not representing the interests of Egrafal, but the collective interests of labourers who work under them, as intimated to me by one corporate manager. In his view, Egrafal needs to change how workers relate to each other and to their bosses.³⁸ His opinions, though, are based on limited exposure to the shop floor, where collective attitudes and activities are far and few between with so few *angajați* (formal workers) in the first place. It is only during occasional trade-union meetings that personal complaints against Egrafal coalesce into shared expressions of discontent. So what connectivity exists between workers and their shift bosses (about which the corporate manager above complains) is over shared job insecurity. Job security is not likely to improve, though, with increasing numbers of foreign and local contractors replacing employees’ jobs. This trend, along with its localist backlash among Moldovan workers, is discussed in the final section.

6.6 Contract Labour in the Repair Hall and Beyond

Composition and context

The southern floor of the Repair Hall has little activity with only two Egrafal *angajați* – the aforementioned lathe operators Petru and Radu. By comparison, the northern floor of the Repair Hall is quite active. Twenty people regularly work here sharing soldering instruments, metal cutting apparatuses, a suspended crane, and other machinery. Of these persons, only two are full-time Egrafal *angajați*, the crane operator

³⁸ These opinions are based on an interview at Egrafal România headquarters in Bucharest, Romania.

and welder. Most workers on the northern shop floor are a mix of *subcontracănți* (contract-firm employees) and *contracănți* (individual freelance workers). A *contracant* or ‘freelancer’ is someone hired temporarily by Ciment S.A. for a time-specific task, like bolt making. Usually he is a skilled ex-employee. There are approximately 50 freelancers around the plant. Most contractors (*subcontracănți*), on the other hand, are male hired hands of local contract firms. There are 140 contract-firm employees (*subcontracănți*) on site at the plant at any one time. The number increases by a hundred or more during the busy months of the factory’s annual shut-down for maintenance (December to January).³⁹ The aptitudes of *subcontracănți* range from semi-skilled to highly skilled and university educated. The majority are ethnic Moldovan. Sometimes they are ex-employees, like older Ukrainians or Russians, laid-off after Egrafal took over the plant. Egrafal contracts out winter shut-down repairs (like kiln-brick relaying) and year-round maintenance jobs to these bigger firms, which in turn hire temporary, non-unionised manual labourers. In a world of expanding flexible capitalism, this is a common way for transnational corporations like Egrafal to save money (Harvey 2005). So an aesthetically out-dated shop floor is in fact modern capitalist in its internal social organisation of labour.

Formal and informal labour: points of connection and disconnection

The Repair Hall is the only space in the plant where informal and formal labour comes in regular close contact. Normally the two labour types are kept spatially separate – working, eating and showering in separate places in the plant. I am told that the two sets of workers get along well in the Repair Hall. ‘There is no beating up of each other,’ a maintenance supervisor jokingly told me. Although the Repair Hall is certainly no boxing ring, it is also not without underlying latent tensions. Maintenance *angajați* are

³⁹ Figures are according to Ciment S.A.’s Director of Human Resources.

well aware that the reason there are so many contractors in their building, often a dozen or so doing the job of ex-colleagues, is because formal employees are expendable. *Angajații* like Petru and Radu fear that their jobs will go to contractors. Still, I notice *angajați* voluntarily helping some contractors on-the-job and exchanging friendly jokes with some and not others. I once observed the Ciment S.A. crane operator willingly help out a team of Moldovan contractors from the local Salve firm, lifting a metal sheet for them, after he had finished his own task. *Angajați* as such have different quality relationships with different contractors. The principal determining factor of the quality of the relationship is whether contractors are local or foreign. The dozens of contractors from the eight Moldovan contract firms operating at Ciment S.A. are considered ‘localnic’ (or *ai noștri* – ‘ours’), whereas the twenty or so contractors from the Romanian repair firm, which I call MCAS, are ‘foreigners’ (*străini*).⁴⁰ (The successful company MCAS has branch offices all over Romania.) Locals and foreigners maintain their distance in the Repair Hall. The Romanian contractors usually keep to the northern side. I never observed an *angajat* in the Repair Hall initiate contact with a Romanian contractor.

Foreign, adulterous (străin) labour: the case of Romanian contractors at Ciment S.A.

Workers tell me that there are different opinions of Romanian contractors working at Ciment S.A. On the one hand, people recognise that the Romanians can do the work better: ‘They share their expertise...and it sends a message to locals, that if they don’t work hard, they will lose work to others...’ But on the other hand, there is resentment, especially among rank-and-file workers at the plant, that Romanians are taking local jobs. Against this backdrop of different local opinions

⁴⁰ The Romanian word *străin* is the same word that locals use to refer to someone with whom a person has had an affair (for example, a person sleeps with ‘o persoană străină’ – a foreign person.)

towards foreign contractors, I spent time in December 2005 observing MCAS work groups doing kiln repairs and engaging people around the plant.

Spread out over the twenty-square-foot stage of the factory's kiln furnace, a dozen male workers, split into groups of two, worked diligently on different jobs. The MCAS contractors were working on electrical repairs, modernising the kiln's electrification. Their bright-blue work outfits with MCAS logos, advanced protective gear, and state-of-the-art tools and equipment, including European-brand Bosch drills, gave the impression of skilled professionalism. Not once in an hour did any worker break from his tedious, strained task, which was a noticeable difference from the stop-and-start work rhythms of local Moldovan contractors doing similar repairs.

These contractors from Romania are considered 'specialists' by Egrafal. They are awarded three-year work contracts with Ciment S.A. for seasonal maintenance with good chances for renewal, unlike the tenuous, shorter-term contracts of local Moldovan *subcontracănți*. MCAS recently set up an office in the Moldovan capital Chișinău, suggesting the firm's permanence on the Moldovan industrial scene. At Ciment S.A., a handful of contractors stay year round. Their work posts are paid at a Romanian pay-rate (not Moldovan) and are guaranteed during the duration of MCAS's contact; there is no fear of job loss. This makes the MCAS contractors appear more job-secure than formal Egrafal shop-floor workers, who have less job security over the same three-year period. Romanian contractors' security of contract is owing to the plant's Romanian management believing that the former work better than local Moldovan contractors.⁴¹

Maintenance Manager Liviu – responsible for hiring contractors – says the local

Moldovan contract groups do not work diligently. '[Romanians] work much better. [...]

⁴¹ To illustrate, Romanian Production Director, Gheorghe, explains how it took ten days to relay the bricks in the kiln with local contractors – a job that takes four days in Romania. 'I had to stand out there every day to get them to work faster.' He thinks local contractors are not specialists; they lack skills for the cement industry.

they're specialists.' In bringing Romanian contractors to Ciment S.A., management's idea is for the group to teach informal and formal workers at the plant how to work differently. When their MCAS contracts at Ciment S.A. run up in three years, they will leave. (Other sources say more are likely to return.)⁴² The Romanian contractors, like Romanian management, model a work tempo of long, intense hours, labouring diligently under flood lights into bitter cold winter nights. Romanian contractors' fast pace, precision work, use of high-tech equipment, and fluent standard Romanian stand in stark opposition to the Moldovan-dialect and relatively slower, more deliberate work tempo of informal *and* formal Moldovan maintenance workers in the Repair Hall.

Despite working in the same factory, Moldovans' and Romanians' pay differential is also stark. Romanian contractors are paid 7 US dollars *an hour*, earning almost 70 US dollars a day. They are compensated incredibly more than Moldovan contractors, who are paid around 5 US dollars *a day*, not to mention more than formal employees, also paid about 5 US dollars *a day* (but with fringe benefits unlike local contractors),⁴³ *and* more than Moldovan foreman and low-level supervisors, paid just 7 US dollars a day. This pay differential between foreigners and locals, coupled with the reality that the former do not fear being out of work – with guaranteed posts in Romania if not Moldova – seems to make informal labour more secure, in this case, than its formal-employee counterparts, who are fearful of lay-offs. This is especially interesting because informal contract labour is usually imagined as being downtrodden and insecure when compared to formal labour (see Parry 1999). However, this is not the case with Romanian contractors at Ciment S.A. The fact that they have, in addition to

⁴² 'This is what happened with us in Romania. Germans came and taught us how to do things. [...] Now we're helping Moldova,' is how one Romanian manager justifies Romanians' presence in Moldova.

⁴³ In local currency this is 80 Moldovan lei a day (or approximately 6.50 US dollars), according to 2006 exchange rates. As noted in Chapters Two and Four, formal shop-floor workers make 150 USD a month on average.

good work contracts, skills and tools, an identification and language (Romanian) associated with status in Moldova, brings them relative security in this foreign country.

However, while Romanian contractors feel secure in their jobs, lathe operator Petru works in fear of losing his job, as evidenced in his nervous, repeated mention of contractors on his shop floor. He has the recurring worry that a ‘foreign worker’ (*muncitor străin*) will push him out of his job: ‘A foreign worker comes alongside me and starts working, and before I know it, I am pushed out of my job, I’m reduced [or laid-off].’ This fear figures so strongly in Petru’s imagination because of the shame and disconnection from factory life that is experienced by workers when they lose their jobs. Unless they are re-hired as contractors, laid-off workers tend to disappear from the minds of their employed colleagues.⁴⁴ So this adds to Petru’s worry.⁴⁵ Importantly, Petru is anxious about losing his job not just to anyone – but to ‘*un străin*’ (a foreigner from abroad). The *străin* is not just any foreigner – a Russian, Ukrainian or Bulgarian – but a Western *străin*, namely a Romanian. The fact that the Romanian *străin* is considered ‘richer’ and ‘more civilized,’ and yet still usurps the job of the modest Moldovan, makes his actions morally dubious or adulterated to a Moldovan manual labourer.

Petru’s fears of job loss are well founded. Foreign contractors from Romania have already begun invading the Repair Hall, undoing its former social make-up. Workers know that more reductions among their ranks are to come, as talk of reorganising work groups circulates around the plant. The rumour is Egrafal will

⁴⁴ This is evidenced in the fact that not a single Ciment S.A. employee was able to locate a laid-off employee in Rezina for me to interview. I was told ‘they all go abroad [to Russia to work].’ While this is true for most, I imagine some ex-colleagues regularly return home to Rezina (being cyclical migrants). The fact that they do not reconnect with their old Ciment S.A. colleagues when in Rezina is telling.

⁴⁵ This might also be a factor behind the lack of togetherness among shop-floor employees, who distance themselves in advance of hearing news of being laid-off.

eventually transfer all repair work to contractors. However, young Romanian-disposed supervisors and engineers from Administration dismiss manual-labour grumbling over Romanian contractors as simple jealousy (*invidie*). Engineer Andrei says shop-floor operators are just jealous of foreign contractors' salaries and technology. 'Moldovans are jealous of Romanians. They are jealous of their speech and clothes. [...] Moldovans do not like foreigners running their country.' However, higher-ranking engineer Andrei may not grasp just how job *insecure* rank-and-file workers feel. The latter see Romanians coming and taking the few existing jobs in Moldova, and subsequently being paid more than a Moldovan for the same work. What is worse for workers, adding insult to insult, is that local labour is expected to learn the language habits of those who are increasingly taking their jobs.

6.7 Conclusion: Fleeting Cultural-economic Protest

In conclusion, Romania and Europe are Egrafal's natural points of reference, as the corporation aims to integrate the Rezina Cement Plant into the more advanced Egrafal România corporate division. When Egrafal managers make demands on workers by referencing how workers in Romania do a task, Egrafal expects Moldovan workers to mimic the Romanian example. However, these culturally loaded demands made by Romanian supervisors – set amid rising work insecurity and a growing trend towards hiring Romanian contract labour – only serve to re-affirm rank-and-file workers' perceptions of themselves as different, as 'Moldovans' in opposition to Romanians. This Moldovan linguistic modality and self-identification is not some Soviet propaganda hold-over, I argue, but a new sense of self-expression, associated with local rootedness, and created in relation to Romanians' presence in Moldova. It is a modern response to present-day restructuring and job insecurity.

Unlike Administration workers on the Third Floor – who interact daily with Romanians, picking up their language and habits – shop-floor workers’ spatial position means that they neither engage Romanians nor easily have opportunities to learn Romanians’ social-linguistic and work characteristics. What is more, the nature of shop-floor work organisation means that small work teams and interspersed workers – labouring under time pressure, short breaks and new safety regulations – have few opportunities to come together around common job grievances. The only occasions are at labour union meetings, when rank-and-file Moldovans use their language and localist fidelity to protest against Egrafal România, even if only momentarily and narrowly, as few others in the plant identify with their cultural grievances in the same way. For these reasons, this chapter claims that rank-and-file workers’ expressions of Moldovan localism do not constitute any sort of lasting counter-hegemonic demonstration against global capital. This is ultimately on account of the work constraints mentioned above, under which the factory’s few remaining rank-and-file *angajați* (formal employees) labour.

Figure 41. Rank-and-file workers interacting with each other at Ciment S.A. (Courtesy of Ciment S.A.)



Figure 42. A manual-labour face. (Courtesy of Ciment S.A.)

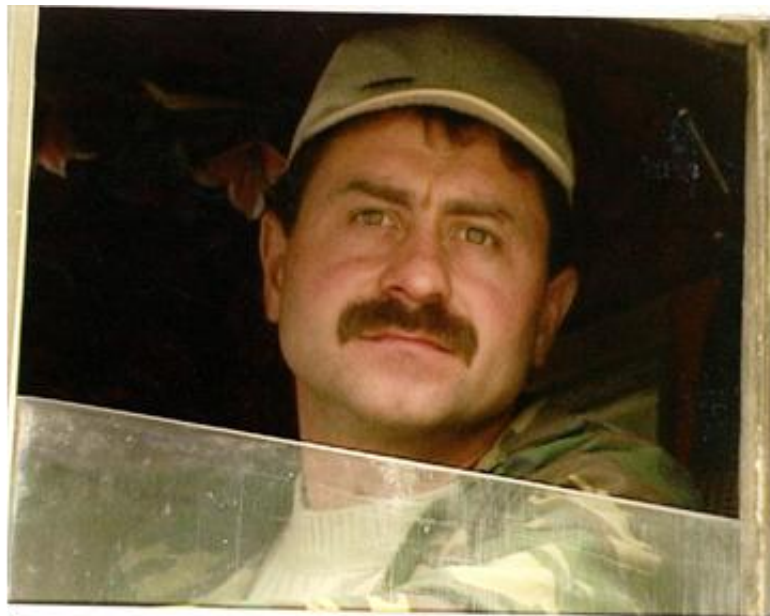


Figure 43. Worker safety advertisement outside *teritoriul*, reading: ‘Safety at work [is] peace of mind in the family. 104 days since the last accident.’



Figure 44. More signs around the factory promoting worker safety (*protecția muncii*). The blue sign in the middle stresses the qualities Egrafal expects from its workers: security, competency, unity and transparency.



Figure 45. ‘Safety at work, safety at home’ as pictured by children of Ciment S.A. employees. (Ciment S.A. 2007 annual calendar for employees).



PART THREE
OUTSIDE CIMENT S.A.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Intimate Leisure Spaces and Practices

7.1 Introduction

Moving beyond Ciment S.A.'s factory gates, this chapter focuses on cement workers' domestic, leisure lives. It gives special attention to female white-collar employees, whose lives and families I know best outside of the plant. It also provides an account of male manual workers, young engineers and female Russian minorities in their non-working spaces during Ciment S.A.'s market integration.

This chapter comes at the end of four chapters describing the ways in which workers respond to capitalist change through language. The four responses – from adaptive linguistic duality and multiple code-switching to blurred moral-economic protest and momentary cultural-economic dissent – represent what I see as disunion in the factory workforce. This fragmentation is brought on by economic insecurity and increasing alienation among workers, which this chapter argues is reproduced beyond the factory gates in the leisure lives and longings of workers.

This chapter, then, considers factory and domestic spaces as inter-connected, just as cosmopolitan and localist cultural-linguistic practices are also inter-linked, despite James Ferguson (1999) understanding cultural styles to be distinct coping mechanisms in a changing industrial environment. The localist-cosmopolitan inter-connection in Rezina is evidenced in this chapter by showing how corporate lifestyles and migrant-kin cash promise new freedom and Western opportunity, especially for white-collar employees, but how these cosmopolitan yearnings also push middle-aged workers away from their colleagues and back to the reserved security of family and the domestic sphere. Their insular privacy is demonstrated in their intimate kin gatherings, household familial support and informal dialect speaking.¹ These every-day habits are also

¹ The talk among persons outside of the factory usually happens in the Moldovan dialect, unless otherwise stated.

characteristic of manual labour. Therefore, the chapter finds that white-collar workers who are acting and striving to be Romanian cosmopolitan at work (see Chapter Four) are little better off from their rank-and-file colleagues (from Chapter Six) outside of the plant, as both sets of workers live out of localism and rely primarily on kin in their day-to-day lives. The only exceptions are the factory's newly hired young cohort and Russian minorities, whose factory bonds extend beyond the workplace. All the same, most segments of the Ciment S.A. workforce find mutuality with their kin more than with each other, which this chapter argues mitigates any wider solidarity in the workforce against competitive market forces.

In terms of structure, the chapter starts by detailing the different leisure spaces of workers in order to understand their varying degrees of connectivity and disconnectivity with each other outside of the factory gates. The next two sections pick up on white-collar factory women mentioned in the first section, addressing, firstly, how a market-driven company affects women's domestic lives in general, and, secondly, how Ciment S.A. women, differently than others at the plant, feel a unique friction between their new corporate personas and traditional home-life, which ultimately brings about familial tension and localist coping mechanisms. Nevertheless, these women's modernist longings, and those of their colleagues, keep driving their kin abroad for migrant work, as the final section examines. This trend raises the ancillary point that migration materialises not only out of poverty (Sassen-Koob 1983) but also out of desires for prosperity. Jealousy, alienation and division among factory employees appear, however, to develop from this action.

7.2 Disunion of Leisure Spaces

During Soviet days, Rezina Cement Plant workers were tied together through varying conjugal and fictive kin relationships. Informants recount how it was normal for

a husband and a wife to work in the same factory, and to appoint work colleagues as godparents (*cumătri*) for their children.² However, these old social ties have all but disappeared with a loss of personnel after Moldova's independence and war with Transnistria, and in the wake of factory reductions after Egrafal's corporate take-over. Sociality among remaining employees is also weak amid rising competitiveness and job insecurity during the restructuring period. On the Administration Building's Third Floor, informant Silvia observes: 'Everyone wants to show off; to prove that he's the best. [...] 'Everyone knows that the Romanians leave in three years [...] and people are fighting for their jobs.'³ For these reasons, Silvia envisions 'the break-up of the collective,' as she spends little time with colleagues outside of the factory and relies mainly on relatives for emotional and material support. Whatever workers' outside patterns of interaction were like before Egrafal's restructuring, it is clear that during my fieldwork Ciment S.A. employees intermixed very little with each other outside of work, with two exceptions. What sociality took place was usually within particular spaces, which is significant, as we will see next, because it indicates that spatial-status divisions and social atomisation in the plant were mirrored and reinforced outside of the plant in workers' leisure activities. Much of the difference in relaxation and in the forging of social bonds relates to how different sets of workers manage material insecurity.

Minority Russian female spaces

Russian minority women from the Laboratory (discussed in Chapter Five) exhibited a high degree of connectivity outside of the plant. They inter-mixed with each

² For example, Eugenia's godfather is engineer Natalia's father (see Chapter Four), a laid-off Russian engineer at the plant who now works as a contractor with the *Salve* company.

³ Silvia speaks from the experience of having an Administration colleague suddenly stop sharing presentations with her before weekly staff meetings that she organises and co-leads. Silvia finds this strange behaviour. Her suspicions are not unfounded, because this person in question intimated to me that he would like the position that Silvia's husband wants after the Romanian managers leave.

other and with former laid-off Russian cement workers over tea, homemade dumplings (*pel'meni*) and holiday visits, although rarely with ethnic Moldovan colleagues. All three of the Lab's quality engineers (including the Lab chief) have *dachas* (country farm cottages as second homes) – a Russian custom among the urban privileged – within shouting distance of each other in the same village (Saharna) 10 kilometres from Rezina. A dacha and its land provide not only produce, but also symbolic value, according to Caroline Humphrey: 'It represents space, repose, "Russianness." It may be no more than a hut, but it allows the re-creation of "age-old" security' (2002, 56). Not required to work weekends, the Russian engineer women spend spring and summer free days at their rustic river-side dachas, where they sow, harvest, relax and visit each other's gardens. Interestingly, the Lab's engineers and technicians hardly encounter each other outside of work. They rarely cross paths with the one Russian technician, Ol'ga, owning a dacha in the same village.

Most Lab Technicians are best friends with their work 'pair.' Technicians work in pairs of two; the same pair every shift. 'Pairs' choose one another at the start of each year, usually without change. They regularly spend quality time together outside of work. Technician Ol'ga's home photos are filled with birthday scenes of her quarry-worker husband and children celebrating with her 'pair,' Irina, and her husband. Likewise, it is not unusual to find technician Ol'ga in Irina's home, even stopping by unannounced for an evening liquor-laced tea. Irina's teenage children casually address Ol'ga as 'Aunt Ol'ga' (*tětya Ol'ga*), representing the closeness shared between these workers' families beyond the shop floor.

When not meeting for tea or at their dachas, Russian Lab women, technicians and engineers alike, grocery shop and spend leisure time across the river in Rybnitsa in secessionist Transnistria. Lab engineer Svetlana is one of these women. Svetlana was

born in Rybnitsa and most of her family – including widowed mother, sister and daughter – lives across the river. Her Soviet-assigned apartment with her husband, a redundant Rezina Cement Plant employee, is nevertheless in Rezina.⁴ Svetlana manages her complex family arrangement by visiting Rybnitsa every weekend. Her custom is to go to the Rybnitsa sauna with her sister every Sunday morning, followed by shopping at one of Rybnitsa's two well-stocked supermarkets (part of the Transnistrian *Sheriff* retail conglomerate) (see Figure 39), carrying goods at reasonable prices not found in Rezina (see Figure 40, which depicts Rezina's basic shopping complex). If asked to pick one city, as I once pushed her to, Svetlana admits to identifying more with the language and customs of left-bank Rybnitsa.⁵ She imagines them as more Russian. Many Ciment S.A. Moldovans I spoke with feel the opposite, imagining Transnistria as 'peculiar' and with 'different people over there.' The fact of Svetlana's affection for people and places outside of Rezina, along with the noticeable job-status hierarchy between the Lab's engineers and technicians outside of working hours, no doubt does not help possibilities for wider worker relatedness amid on-going economic change.

Rank-and-file spaces

Russian Lab engineers' weekends are in contrast to those of Ciment S.A.'s manual labourers, many of whom work weekend shifts. Another notable difference between the two sets of workers is that ethnic Moldovans usually do not have *dachas*, as only professionals can afford to maintain second homes (see also Walker 1998, 192,

⁴ Svetlana and her family have long been tied to the Rezina and Rybnitsa aristocracy of labour. Svetlana originally worked just out of university at the Rybnitsa Cement Plant – where her mother and sister worked – but then was assigned to the Rezina Cement Plant at the age of twenty-three. Svetlana's youngest daughter works as a computer programmer in the archives of the MMZ Steelworks. Later in 2008, Svetlana acquires and remodels an apartment in Rybnitsa.

⁵ To give an example, Natalia explains that in Transnistria, 9 May is a day when Russians go to the cemetery and remember the dead. 'It is different than in Moldova,' where 9 May is only a veteran's day commemoration. She reiterates that *Paștile Blajinilor* is the Moldovan holiday for remembering the dead. Natalia usually takes four days off from Lab work for the 9 May Transnistrian holiday.

202). Still, most Moldovans have access to land and extra foodstuffs with relatives living in nearby villages. The consequence, though, of not having their own plots is that rank-and-file workers often feel pressure to visit their natal villages during their spare time, assisting in the planting and harvesting of elderly parents' gardens and contributing hard-earned income to the upkeep of rural homes instead of to their own urban consumer desires. In return, they will be awarded the land (or profit from its sale) after their parents' passing, and a portion of the harvest for their toil, important supplements for unpredictable urban livelihoods.⁶

On account of these workers' frequent movement between town and village and close urban-rural links, they often have extensive *and* active local networks of fictive kin relations. This is as opposed to Moldovan colleagues newly promoted in Administration, whose long weekend work and travel abroad poses a challenge to maintaining strong bonds with relatives and friends around town and in villages. One of the most popular fictive kin associations in Moldova is the Eastern Orthodox religious tradition of designating a set of baptismal godparents (*cumătri*) for a child.⁷ The practice normally happens through a church ceremony, followed by a special meal (*masă*) between the child's parents and godparents to solidify the new 'kin' relationship. Ideal godparents are of adult age and of the same sex as the child being baptised, and preferably married (although not to each other) and practicing Orthodox Christians. In present-day Moldova, informants say the custom is more about mutuality and support

⁶ Only on one occasion did I interact with rank-and-file workers in a bar space, for reasons of female propriety. I was with young engineer, Andrei, who introduced me to two Ciment S.A. electricians who work under his roommate in the Maintenance Department. We shared a round of beers together and spoke frankly about Moldovan and Romanian relations, a matter sparked by mentioning my marriage to a Romanian. Amid one man ignoring mobile calls from his wife, he and his co-worker drunkenly asserted that Moldova is closer to Russia than to Romania and Western Europe – not unlike the attitudes discovered on the factory shop floor (see Chapter Six). Both men worked abroad in Russia when the cement plant was not functioning in the 1990s.

⁷ Another common fictive kin relationship in Moldova is that of marital godparents (*nași*) to a bride and groom. I am told that *nași* are expected to give at least one-thousand US dollars to the bride and groom, and to maintain moral and practical support for the young couple.

than religion, for godparents are expected to offer life-long material support (and not just spiritual sustenance) to their godchildren. Bonds are commonly solidified between village families and urban relatives, each having different resources to help the other. It is said that Moldova is unique in its *cumătri* tradition, because children are permitted to have multiple sets of godparents. This is allegedly the case with one Moldovan villager, who is said to have 30 sets of *cumătri* for his two children. This is a total of 60 persons.⁸ Even though agreeing to be a godparent is an investment of money – which is no small thing for a job-insecure cement worker from Rezina – entering into and maintaining these fictive kin ties with the families of godchildren carries social, non-monetary value for workers. These workers make a point of visiting their rural parents and fictive kin during Moldovan holidays like *hram* (a village's patron-saint day), going from door-to-door sharing meals and returning home with a sack of potatoes or a flask of wine. However, like Russian co-workers spending leisure time in Rybnitsa and at their *dachas* with families, Moldovan blue-collar workers' regular rural visits and need for extra-monetary support from the village mean that their habits of localism (Ferguson 1999, 91-92) are kept alive, and that they spend more time with family than co-workers outside of work. Such habits are ultimately linked to a need to produce safety and security against the capriciousness of new market-economic lives. However, workers' domestic involution only limits possibilities for worker connectivity needed to challenge the market conditions at the root of their instability.

Administration white-collar spaces

Such family activities are a world away from Moldovan engineers and managers, many of whom forsake family and home for weekend work at the plant. When not at the plant, the rare times and spaces in which they are glimpsed around town are during

⁸ I thank anthropologist Tricia Fogarty for sharing this account with me.

Administration colleague's special birthday parties hosted in one of Rezina's top two restaurants. Different ranks of private restaurants and bars have sprung up in post-socialist Rezina to service different statuses of workers. The 'Plai' restaurant and bar is preferred by senior managers and foreign contractors from the plant, although the staff only speaks Russian, which is common in high-class establishments around Moldova. The 'Lilia' restaurant and 'Livanda' bar is frequented by young engineers and skilled Egrafal employees, whereas several hole-in-the-wall taverns around town cater to rank-and-file workers. Interestingly, as the young engineers received job and salary promotions, they moved on from Livanda to Lilia for weekend entertainment.⁹

These young Moldovan men ('Egrafalists' from Chapter Four) have some of the strongest bonds between them of any employees at Ciment S.A. (see Figure 28), besides the Russian Lab women. They make a point of working on Saturday mornings but take the rest of the weekend off, not burdened with the same responsibility as their superiors, the deputy managers, who work through the weekend. They frequently take the local bus together to the capital Chişinău for a dose of cosmopolitan nightlife or spend Saturday evenings collectively drinking in the bar or in their rented apartments. When gathered together, their factory work often enters into their leisure conversations. Between gulps of beer, they joke about the never-ending refrain at the plant, 'when was the last accident?!', referring to newly enforced worker-safety practices (see Chapter Six). On one occasion, engineer Andrei and his roommate Sasha, along with co-worker Vlad, laughed about how their factory job roles accurately describe their roles at the drinking table:

'Andrei works in Development and Progress, so he is trying to *develop* the *masa* (table meal), getting everyone to keep drinking more,' Vlad says, 'while

⁹ Even after their job promotions, the young engineers did not frequent the Plai restaurant and bar, unless invited by a senior boss.

Sasha works in Maintenance and is trying to *maintain* or keep the *masa* in good shape with enough food.’ Andrei cheerfully chimes in that Vlad works in Investment, which explains his set-up or *investment* in the *masa* (meal).

These young men’s pride in and apparent preoccupation with their Egrafal Ltd. jobs went hand-in-hand with a growing interest in national politics. Two of the above young men got involved with a political party with close ties to Romania. Sasha spent his summer holiday from Ciment S.A. travelling to Spain with the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) to attend the European convention of Democratic Parties. Earlier he took time-off from work to participate in a PDM-sponsored trip to Romania. Sasha’s colleague, Vlad, is also involved with the Democratic Party, and several years after my fieldwork, upon marrying and having a child, Vlad earned a spot on the PDM’s parliamentary national electoral list.

Differently than these younger male colleagues, a number of middle-aged Ciment S.A. Administration employees complain that they do not drink as ‘a collective’ anymore. Silvia tells me that she and her husband Ion used to go on occasion for drinks with colleagues. Now these persons complain that she spends more time with the Romanian managers than with co-workers. Her explanation as to why this happens drew upon a recent example of when ‘the collective’ was not there for her: ‘The Romanians were the first to offer help and words of concern after my daughter’s operation [...] whereas the old collective said practically nothing.’¹⁰ Although Silvia imagines herself, and is imagined by others, as being close with the Romanians, in reality her free time is spent in the home with her family, not with the Romanians.

¹⁰ Silvia’s daughter had a nose condition that required an operation at a private clinic in the capital Chişinău, allegedly costing over one-thousand dollars. It was rumoured that the Romanian managers helped finance the surgery, which could have invoked jealousy among Administration colleagues.

I observed that white-collar Administration women like Silvia spend evening strolls (along the thoroughfare in Figure 6), weekend manicures, and private get-togethers with co-ethnic female kin, mostly sisters or women cousins, more than with workmates (of any gender). It may be that in-factory antagonism brought on by uneven relations with (or patronage from) new Romanian managers and the silent rivalry triggered by competitive fashion mimicking among Administration women (as noted in Chapter Four) meant that they look overwhelmingly outside of the plant for support and domestically inwards towards family. This appears to be the case with Silvia and her wedding anniversary, celebrated with Silvia's teenage daughter, with her unmarried sister, Maria (just under thirty years old), and with an old Rezina friend, who was on break from migrant work in Italy. Silvia's sister, Maria, is a godparent of the friend's child.¹¹ The get-together around Maria's rustic kitchen table (because Silvia was remodelling her apartment at the time) included a large cake and a bottle of sweet liquor. Silvia's husband, Ion – for whom the anniversary also celebrated – was notably at the plant working on Sunday afternoon, as is his normal custom. No work colleagues were present. Unlike when Silvia is on the factory Administration's Third Floor – speaking standard-literary Romanian with bosses and co-workers – the Russian-inflected Moldovan dialect was used throughout the two hours that the women gossiped and drank together in this intimate domestic space, with Silvia opening up about her personal life in a way that was rare at work.¹²

¹¹ Maria is a godmother (*cumătră*) to her friend's little girl, regularly helping the child while her mother is working abroad and an elderly grandparent cares for her.

¹² As evidence of the intimacy of this social space and relationships, Silvia started opening up about her marriage. Silvia longs for more affection and romance from Ion. She complained that they rarely sit down at home and talk. When they do, Ion needs hard liquor in hand, and the only topics they discuss are work at the cement plant and raising their teenage daughter. Silvia started comparing her husband and Moldovan culture to the plant's foreign management, saying that she respects her French boss, Xavier Dupont, who hardly drinks and regularly requests time from Egrafal to visit his wife and children living outside of Moldova.

In general, Moldovan women's lives revolve around their households and families when not at Ciment S.A. It used to be that to make ends meet many women did extra (informal) work in town outside of their formal jobs,¹³ but today in Egrafal's fast-paced corporate environment, women do not have time, beyond occasional Avon magazine sales on the Third Floor. This female white-collar segment of the Ciment S.A. workforce has experienced significant post-socialist change as it negotiates between being housewives and corporate businesswomen.¹⁴ They increasingly feeling atomised, as they perceive their home lives becoming ever more subservient to factory work, as the next two sections discuss.

7.3 Marketisation of Home

Corporate Egrafal goes beyond the workplace to instil a culture conducive to industrial efficiency. Egrafal does such through employee training programmes like 'Safety @ work, safety @ home,' with annual family picnics and regular employee trainings. Before being launched at Ciment S.A. in summer 2006, the programme started in Romania the previous summer with Egrafal employees and their families receiving t-shirts with the English-language slogan: 'I am on holiday, but safety is my priority.' The programme seeks to reorder everyday habits by teaching Egrafal workers to be self-vigilant at home in everything from shaving to turning on gas stoves (see Figure 36-38). Through these ideas, the corporation wants to come home with workers, being a part of employees' thoughts and decisions about what they do in their domestic lives (so it is Egrafal @ work and @ home). In a corporation in which fewer employees mean greater profitability, the health and productivity of every (non-laid-off) individual worker

¹³ For example, Silvia used to make extra money doing private tutoring outside of the classroom when she was a school teacher under socialism and throughout the 1990s. The only male Ciment S.A. employee I heard of doing extra work outside of the factory was Sergei Lazarov, a well-off ethnic Russian, who owned several retail shops around Rezina.

¹⁴ See Gal and Kligman 2000a and 2000b on the unique post-socialist challenges that women face in Eastern Europe.

becomes central to securing workers' surplus labour. This is so important to Egrafal that the company started replacing Ciment S.A.'s twenty-year old *Cimentists' Day* – a Soviet-created summer holiday from work – with a day-long 'Safety at Home' employee festival. Employees were not pleased to surrender an age-old free-day, customarily spent with family, to a new corporate mandate.¹⁵

For middle-aged Ciment S.A. employees, like Lab engineer Svetlana, Egrafal policies are problematic for the way in which they inverse the Soviet idea that work is meant to serve harmoniously family and home, and ultimately the party-state's progress.¹⁶ The problem with present-day Egrafal, from Svetlana's perspective, is that it is the other way around. Home-life is seen as increasingly and openly subordinate to factory productivity. Such a comment echoes Polanyi's criticism of how 'satanic mills' subordinate society (like kin relations) to market principles (1944, 71, 73). Polanyi believed that the advent of a laissez-faire industrial system changed social life, as it appears to be doing to home life in provincial Rezina. Senior female plant employees, like Svetlana, say they work more over-time and spend shorter intervals at home under Egrafal than in socialist days. Even during demanding Soviet-era production periods, state-sponsored support eased women's double burden of managing a job and home,

¹⁵ However, both free-market and socialist economic orders have thought they could secure more productive labour by managing workers' health and habits on *and* off the job (see Kotkin 1995 on Soviet housing surveillance). One striking difference between capitalist corporations and the Soviet party-state lies in the object of labour's profit. For the Soviets, labour's profit (or surplus labour) was to build-up a party-state, in its moral crusade against capitalism, whereas for Egrafal it is to buttress the conglomerate's market earnings; this intangible, unseen accumulation of wealth being considered selfish and soulless by many workers. This difference over labour's purpose in socialist and capitalist economic systems appears to be passed over in Buck-Morss's 2000 study, which highlights similarities between capitalist and socialist orders.

¹⁶ From the perspective of my female informants, the public domain of the workplace and the private domain of home were not necessarily seen in opposition to each other in socialist days, as argued by Dunn (2004, 142). Rather, the tension and growing opposition between home and work is on account of the factory's post-socialist market transformation. As evidence of informants' ideas that work and home were integrated, Svetlana would reminisce about how her husband would take work breaks from the plant to care for their daughter, Katushka (or 'little Katy'). By the time Svetlana finished her shift, Katy was in bed sleeping. 'Husband and wife helped each other. [...] There was a real spirit of team-work and community,' according to Svetlana.

differently than today. All over the former eastern bloc, the state-funded institutions that female workers once relied on for domestic help have been eliminated with growing private-market expansion (Humphrey and Mandel 2002, 9). Factory-subsidised kindergartens and child day-care (still functioning today at the Soviet-style steel plant across the river in separatist Transnistria, but not at European-owned Ciment S.A.), along with ‘meals for toddlers,’ were programmes cited by Svetlana. The latter freed her from tiresome two-meal cooking for toddlers and elder kin, unable to eat the same foods, leaving Svetlana time for other tasks.¹⁷ Nowadays working overtime means neglected cooking, laundry and *dacha* gardening, female responsibilities middle-aged Svetlana takes pride in. Leaving these tasks undone is distressing for Svetlana, because it threatens her sense of womanhood.

Countless discussions with Svetlana and her Lab colleagues corroborate the findings of Dunn 2004 and Westwood 1985 on how ‘true womanhood’ lies in domesticity and motherhood: ‘Watching your child grow – learning its first words and learning how to walk – is the most special time in your life.’ ‘Work is never more important than being a mother.’ Such are gender ideologies reinforced among the Russian Laboratory women through consuming celebratory cakes for new-born children and grandchildren, sharing baby photos, and exchanging cooking recipes. They complain that TNC Egrafal champions the idea that a woman’s primary sense of self-fulfilment should come from work and not the home.

¹⁷ For example, children’s meals were provided by a state-sponsored ‘milk canteen.’ Archives and oral accounts suggest that the Soviets also established special crèches and kindergartens for the children of factory workers near the enterprise. Mothers allegedly got time-off to feed their children at the crèches. Although maintained at the expense of the city, the crèches received subsidies from the factory administration and trade-union committee, providing things like toys and games. Factories often established their own kindergarten for factory children (see *At the factory in Tiraspol: this small book will tell you how the women employees of a Soviet factory live and work*, Khoreva and Pikarevich, circa 1985 [exact year unknown]).

For these reasons, global capital is seen as penetrating the home and reordering gender and kin relations to capital's service, rather than for a wider collectivity, as in socialist days. This 'marketisation of home,' as I call it, involves making home life market-oriented and enterprise-focused (like through Egrafal's 'Safety @ work, safety @ home' programmes). It modifies late Soviet notions of a kin-sacrificial labour regime, in which work was said to uphold local, conventional male and female domestic roles and marital unity.¹⁸ Nowadays white-collar married men frequently skip family mealtimes and after-hours social drinking for over-time work. Natal village festivities, even at the gravesites of kin, are repeatedly spent tied to company mobile phones, barking work orders. Similarly, married factory women get behind on household chores and leave husbands and teenagers home-alone in the evening to meet Egrafal deadlines. Perhaps as compensation, they channel hard-earned incomes, wired by Egrafal into their new private bank accounts,¹⁹ into laptops and jeans for their children without consulting or asking for monetary contributions from their husbands. These new work, earning, and spending trends unsettle traditional notions of family life and monetary distribution within the family, as bread-winning men customarily vetoed (frivolous) consumer spending in the household. The consequence of these domestic changes is increased in-family strife, panic attacks, and even the occasional witchcraft allegation, as detailed below. For such reasons, family and domestic gender roles are believed by workers to serve wrongly the money-driven (amoral) workplace.²⁰

¹⁸ See Khoreva and Pikarevich, circa 1985 [exact year unknown].

¹⁹ Based on conversations with employees, it seems that the practice at Egrafal Ciment S.A. is for each employee to have his own bank account into which Egrafal deposits his salary, irrespective of both husband and wife (sometimes) working for the same company.

²⁰ To Egrafal, even the Moldovan state is typecast as troublesome to transnational market goals. For example, Ciment S.A. management complains of the seemingly incessant audits that the Moldova government insists on performing on the plant, taking time away from other pressing tasks. There are also rumours that the plant wants to use a new fuel utilised in the European Union, but prohibited by Moldovan state law.

Overall, it is interesting to note so far that my informants regard corporate Egrafal to be more intrusive into the realm of home life than the old Soviet regime, thus forgetting the latter's repressive surveillance (see Kotkin 1995, 157-197 on Soviet surveillance mechanisms in public housing), if anything, it seems, because of what the former (Egrafal) fails to provide (from crèches to full employment). Workers like Svetlana frequently and nostalgically compare the Soviet Union's better welfare with Moldova's poorer provisioning. Svetlana's selective memory is similar to what David Kideckel found among post-socialist Romanian workers, who, when talking about the socialist past, emphasise adequate subsidies and the certainty of life, even though Kideckel's earlier research shows the ambiguous nature of workers' lives even under state socialism (Kideckel 2008, 45). Nevertheless, the reality of today's reduced social safety net and capitalist job insecurity – along with new, pressing lifestyles – makes workers rely all the more on family and home life, as discussed next.

7.4 Between Homemaker and Business Woman

The transnational-corporate workplace of Egrafal Ciment S.A. provides new opportunities and challenges for a segment of women who came of age in previously closed socialist countries. This includes most Administration women from Chapter Four. In less than half a decade, provincial homemakers (*gospodină* in Romanian or *khozaika* in Russian), socialist factory accountants and grammar-school teachers, like Silvia once was, have quickly recast themselves into white-collar 'business women' of the future through Fortune-500 employment. Their recently acquired Administration jobs frequently involve professional working partnerships with foreign men, from whom Moldovan women pick-up novel domestic and romantic models, as noted in Chapter Four.

Business travel abroad to France and Romania also make it possible for white-collar Administration employees to begin imagining themselves connected to Europe and the European Union – versus simply Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – and linked to people in neighbouring Romania. This is significant because Administration employees like Eugenia and Silvia – notably educated in Russian-language schools – admit to feeling closer to Russian history and culture than to Romanian culture. Both are reminded, and even ashamed, in Eugenia's words, of this during business trips to Romania. To make up for missing history, Moldovans take advantage of free time on business trips across the Prut to tour notable Romanian historical sites like Peleş Castle of King Carol I in the Carpathian Mountains (Sinaia). The tourist photos they bring back to the factory attest to their excursions and enjoyment. The Egrafal-subsidised business trips – trips normally too expensive for Moldovans like Silvia and Eugenia – make it possible for some Administration employees (notably those in good working relationship with Egrafal's Romanian managers) to begin feeling, in a way, a part of Romania's history. Even if in the process they do not become Romanian – as most of my middle-aged informants *do not* consider themselves Romanian – they *do* acquire added competence in performing a Romanian linguistic mode, picking up new verbal expressions and mannerisms (see Chapter Four). However, through leisure travel and exposure to new modernist imaginings, Moldovans like Silvia increasingly bind themselves to neoliberal Egrafal to fulfil their longings, which ultimately provokes new tensions in their family lives.

Business-travel abroad often leaves women like Silvia alone with male colleagues, considered 'dangerous' in the view of controlling Moldovan men and mothers-in-law. Female employees consequently feel torn between their new roles as business women, championed by corporations, and their traditional roles as

homemakers, upheld by Moldovan society. Case in point, Silvia intimates that her mother-in-law does not understand why Silvia no longer makes her usual walnut jam, when Silvia pleads that the process ‘cuts up your hands,’ making her manicured fingers unattractive as the Personal Assistant to the French Director. In almost the same breath, Silvia reassures herself that her Egrafal job ‘makes me interesting to my husband [Ion, who also works at Ciment S.A.].’ Still, new work trends unsettle customary notions of what it means to be a virtuous Moldovan woman – a child-rearing, home-bound *gospodină*, whose movement and sexuality is under the control of her husband, and sometimes mother-in-law (*soacră*).²¹ This describes Silvia, who feels increasingly constrained by her mother-in-law and her judgemental comments. Silvia puts up with criticism, though, as she is dependent on her mother-in-law for help around the home.

The consequence of a re-articulation of gender and kinship roles leads to familial tension and, in one case, allegations of witchcraft attacks between mothers and daughters-in-law. One middle-aged, white-collar female factory informant, Luda,²² had just this problem. After weeks of dizziness and feeling lethargic at work and home, Luda one day discovers an item of her clothing soiled with human urine buried deep in her chest drawer. This is a typical act of witchcraft, I am told. A witch urinates on an item of the person on whom a curse is laid. Luda assumes the curse is for her and immediately accuses her mother-in-law. They have had a contentious relationship, especially since Luda took-up demanding work in Ciment S.A. Administration more than five years ago. Luda’s mother-in-law is also blamed as she is the only person with free access to the family apartment, beyond Luda’s own mother, sister, husband and

²¹ The mother-in-law traditionally has special control over the sexuality and livelihood of her son’s wife, as evidenced in well-known folk stories of female jealousy and deception in the home in Moldovan folklore, like *Soacra cu trei nurori* [*The mother-in-law with three daughters-in-law*], authored by celebrated nineteenth-century Romanian-Moldovan writer Ion Creangă.

²² Luda is actually one of my female informants previously mentioned; however, I wish to protect her identity with a pseudonym in this sensitive account.

daughter. To end Luda's apprehension, it took a ceremonial home-cleansing with an Orthodox priest, along with a special visit to an Orthodox monastery – both hand-in-hand with kin, *not* factory friends – for Luda to rid herself of a curse imagined to be affecting her work performance at Ciment S.A. Consequently, what this example suggests is that the anxiety and kin confrontations brought on by the demands of a European corporation compel middle-aged business women like Luda back to traditional, locally rooted methods of coping.

Local practices like witchcraft cleansings and superstitions are far from the modern European cosmopolitanism that white-collar employees like Luda are exposed to when travelling abroad.²³ The reality is that white-collar workers like Luda, as well as Silvia, uphold and negotiate both localist and cosmopolitan traits in their every-day lives, as they strive to meet corporate expectations, whilst not surrendering the support and security of family. This finding, however, is counter to James Ferguson's (1999) opinion that employees undergoing economic change exhibit *just* localism *or* cosmopolitanism. In my case studies, there is a real movement between these two modalities, at least for persons representing a growing middle-class segment of Moldova's population. Nevertheless, a good point that Ferguson makes is that cultural modalities require a good deal of investment to enact successfully. The next section will address how Ciment S.A. white-collar employees' cosmopolitan styles and consumption (see also Chapter Four) are commonly aided and sustained by migrant relatives working abroad, just as employees also help their relatives.

²³ The retreat to traditional superstition – a type of local coping mechanism – is especially true for middle-aged Moldovan female employees at Ciment S.A. Interestingly, it is less the case with younger female employees who have left behind many of the superstitions (like witchcraft and belief in the 'evil eye') of their parents' generation and are working far from their rural birth homes.

7.5 Migration and Modernist *Remont* Yearnings

Professional and scholarly literature explains the explosion of Moldovan out-migration as due to poverty and a lack of jobs (IOM Moldova 2004).²⁴ Moldovan migration is considered the result of a new international division of labour (Sassen-Koob 1983) and global neoliberal policies of economic restructuring and state deregulation (IOM 2005), forcing families cut-off from one-time welfare states to function transnationally (Keough 2006 on Moldova). In an influential argument in migration studies, Sassen-Koob argues that the decline of manufacturing and the growth of low-paid service sector jobs in the ‘first world’ (e.g. Europe) has resulted in a natural flow of migrants from the ‘third’ or ‘second world’ (from countries like Moldova) to take up these unwanted jobs. The argument’s premise is that global-market forces push and pull persons in the service of capital, irrespective of local motivations.²⁵ It does not take into account the masses of persons who leave stable employment in their home countries in order to chase after their or their family’s modernist longings.

Moldovan migration is peculiar for the way in which large numbers of out-migrants are coming from stable, professional white-collar jobs. According to a comprehensive study done by the Moldovan non-profit *Alianța Microfinanțare* (2005) (funded by the International Organization for Migration and the Soros Foundation), approximately *two-thirds* of Moldovan migrants have stable occupations prior to leaving

²⁴ Moldova has one of the highest volumes of remittances measured against its GDP of any country in the world, according to the World Bank. In 2008 Moldovan migrants sent home 1.7 billion US dollars through official channels, largely from Russia and Italy. Over 35 per cent of Moldovans live in households that receive remittances (*Infotag*, 26 May 2009).

²⁵ It is also important to note the specificities of the post-Soviet and Moldovan case when it comes to migration. Firstly, only since the Soviet Union’s break-up in 1991 did international borders open up, allowing for travel. For more than half of a century, people’s transnational mass movement was restricted. While intra-republic migration for work purposes occurred in the Soviet Union, it was highly regulated and under the control of authorities. Thus, work migration – as choice and freedom – is relatively new in former Soviet countries. Bearing in mind Moldovan particularities, little economic liberalisation has actually taken place in the country, although socialist-era levels of welfare provisioning have generally been rolled back (RFE/RL, 6 March 2007).

to work abroad. Most are employed in the state sector (*sectorul bugetar*), in the domains of medicine, education, and civil-service administration – *half* having degrees of higher education.²⁶ Moldovans from these white-collar professions work abroad not because of a lack of jobs and poverty at home. Although many Moldovans do migrate out of poverty, the *Alianța Microfinanțare*/IOM report (2005) shows that a large number of white-collar Moldovans have sufficient finances and income before leaving to work abroad. In spite of their resources, when they go abroad, most of these persons, largely women, do unqualified work (*munca necalificată*). This is because most Moldovans cannot get qualified work abroad, and unqualified work in Italy or Portugal pays better than white-collar jobs at home. 51 per cent of these Moldovans, mostly women, engage in housekeeping (*menajul casnic*) and social care (*îngrijirea socială*). 20 per cent, namely men, do construction and repairs (*reparații*).²⁷

Beyond surveys and national statistics, the participatory and informal-interview part of my fieldwork corroborates these findings. Most Ciment S.A. employees, regardless of their background, have family members working abroad. Among skilled labour highlighted in this chapter, several men had wives working in Italy. In the case of Maintenance supervisor Ghenadie, his wife – a former engineer at Ciment S.A. and white-collar clerk in Rezina – left employment in Moldova to work as a housekeeper outside of Venice. Foreman Alexandru's wife left her position as a French school-

²⁶ Evidencing their resources, 26 per cent of these migrants have personal resources to cover the legal costs of emigrating; another 26 per cent borrow money from usuries (paying corresponding interest) or borrow from informal sources like family and friends.

²⁷ 63 per cent from this category find places of work in Western Europe. Most legal migrant workers are in Italy. Such official findings follow a trend I found in my own migration survey that I conducted in Rezina in July 2006. I found that educated, skilled Moldovans migrate westwards to Italy and Portugal, or even to Israel, while unqualified labour tends to migrate eastwards to Russia, Ukraine or Turkey. According to IOM data, over 600,000 Moldovans are working abroad. A recent survey undertaken by the International Labor Organization shows that most Moldovans who work abroad - 63 per cent - are men. As much as 26 per cent of migrants are graduates from institutions of higher learning, 51 per cent have a technical or vocational education, and 23 per cent have completed secondary school (*Moldova Azi*, 2 July 2004).

teacher in Rezina to work as a caregiver in Rome. Both of these educated professional women have husbands with corporate employment. They leave esteemed jobs in their home country to take on menial work in foreign lands. IOM's hypothesis (2005) is that persons, like the wives of Ghenadie and Alexandru, migrate more out of a fear of becoming poor than because of actual poverty. Whilst I agree that these Moldovans are not migrating out of poverty, I would nuance the point by contending that they are working abroad out of yearnings for prosperity. According to my findings, they go abroad in order to help their children and homes acquire middle-class lifestyles far from their rank-and-file socialist pasts.

This resonates with IOM's finding that a Moldovan's decision to work abroad, in many cases, is related to a life event requiring supplementary financial income, like a child's university education, a wedding, or home repairs (IOM 2005). Sacrificially scrubbing toilets in Italy for a child's higher education in urban Chişinău – as Ghenadie's wife is doing for her two children – is important for middle-aged Moldovans, whose own higher education and financial gain was restricted during socialist times. Many Moldovans of village origin did not have strong enough Russian-language skills or proper Communist-party connections to obtain a residency permit to enrol in university or to work in urban centres (see Cash 2008, 80 on these limitations). Now in newly independent Moldova, ethnic Moldovans can access education and an urban lifestyle in the same way Russians once did. Doing so detaches them from humble pasts.

The widespread practice that most dissociates Moldovans from the past and connects them to imagined modern futures is *remont* – the widely used Russian word in Moldova for home repair. Adam Drazin shows how cleaning and remodelling apartments in post-socialist Romania is a way for Romanians to distance themselves

from the socialist period and to embed themselves in more prosperous futures (2002, 101-126). *Remont* is one of many consumption practices defining the growing middle-class of the former Soviet bloc (Schröder 2006, 9-10).²⁸ In Moldova, *remont* brings neoliberal modernity into Soviet-built apartment blocks through the process of people making consumer choices about particular products and designs for home modernisation. Variety and selection is seen by Moldovans as juxtaposed to limited consumer options available in socialist days (Humphrey 2002, 44-45, 47).²⁹ The very idea that there is choice in the mode of expression and lifestyle that a person can convey through *remont* goes to the heart of neoliberalism's ideological emphasis on individual consumer freedom (Harvey 2005, 42). However, this is not to say that unlimited consumer possibilities really exist and that consumption is simply about individual choice, as consumption is also about constructing a European self-identity for many Ciment S.A. Moldovans.

During the time of my fieldwork in 2005 to 2006, white-collar Moldovans from Administration's Third Floor had just begun the process of remodelling their apartments. Household consumption was increasingly going towards apartment refurbishing and consumer status objects, and not just towards basic necessities.³⁰

Whether or not a worker had remodelled his apartment, or was in the middle of doing so, often affected whether I or others got invitations to visit them (for *oaspeție*

²⁸ The developing post-socialist middle-class is typically identified from an occupational perspective, composed of businessmen, managers, professionals, academics, mid-to-upper-level government officials, technicians and some skilled labourers (Schröder 2006, 9-10). However, such persons find commonality not just in their shared economic-vocational situations, but also in their urban lifestyles and leisure activities.

²⁹ Caroline Humphrey writes: 'Even though the Soviet consumer formally engaged in buying – went to shop, decided what to purchase, and paid money for it – the ways people talked about this revealed that at some level they realized that they were at the receiving end of a state-planned system of distribution' (2002, 45).

³⁰ This is significant because a survey in Humphrey's *The Unmaking of Soviet Life* shows that middle-class Russians spend between 50 to 82 per cent of their household budgets on food; consumption is largely devoted to basic necessities (2002, 50-51), which is different from what is happening today in Moldova with household earnings increasingly going towards apartment *remont*.

[hospitality]). This is because, as Goffman maintains (1971), parts of a home are often for presentation (see Alexander 2002, 146). In these spaces, the décor and goods that a host has on display immediately says something about the host's social status and 'modern' outlook. A worker may or may not want an outsider to see this.

Home repair was a slow, expensive process. It moved faster for those receiving supplementary income from spouses and kin working abroad. This was the case with Alexandru's wife's toiling in Italy, wiring money home to pay for things like new furniture. Lab technician Ol'ga had also done a great deal of modernisation on her apartment by summer 2006 – more than the average *remont* done in the few dozen homes that I had observed around Rezina during fieldwork (see Figure 46 for Ol'ga's apartment block). A tour of Ol'ga's two-bedroom apartment revealed brand-new bathroom tiling, a washing machine, a modern television, and a hot-water boiler in the bathroom *and* kitchen (a status marker) – modern electronic appliances which she sometimes proudly pointed out during my visit. Later I discovered that Ol'ga's son and daughter (single in their twenties) had been working abroad in Russia, respectively, and they occasionally added their earnings to Ol'ga and her husband's work incomes, making the purchase of home appliances possible and re-decoration swifter.

Other Ciment S.A. employees, like Silvia and her husband, Ion, feel that their *remont* process has been slower than colleagues like Ol'ga or Alexandru, because neither Silvia nor Ion can go abroad for quick earnings. Silvia and Ion are both tied to Egrafal, and their university-bound daughter is in high school, so migrant work is not an option for their household. The kin whom Silvia has working abroad in Italy – her brother and sister-in-law – need their earnings to support their own children's upcoming university education. Another limitation on Silvia's resources for *remont* is that Silvia makes a point of loaning some of her Egrafal earnings to her less well-off sister, Maria,

to modernise her bathroom (see Figure 42 for Maria's humble apartment).³¹ Maria is employed in a local food-catering business frequently contracted by Ciment S.A. Silvia knows that she needs the practical and emotional support of Maria and family members, and so Silvia makes sure to appreciate them through her financial assistance. However, the moral obligation does not take away Silvia's *remont* longings for an apartment with furniture like she observes in hotels in Romania during Egrafal business travel. With the tension between kin and self, and financial resources stretched thin, Silvia repeatedly makes comments that betray envy towards Ciment S.A. colleagues with more advanced apartment repair. She is like other women around Rezina and throughout Moldova comparing apartment *remont* done with a family's hard-earned foreign currency. Some Moldovans compare, even quite competitively, their *remont* developments, as in this exchange:

Two women struck up conversation on the bus. One was middle-aged and the other in her twenties. They appeared to know each other. Both were from villages. They started talking about how long each has spent in Italy. Then out of the blue, the older woman asked: Where do you have your toilet? Outside? Or in the house? (*Unde aveți veceul? Afară? Sau în casă?*) The other responded: Outside...but we want to put a toilet in the house now with money from Italy (*Afară [...] dar vrem să ne facem un veceu în casă acuma cu banii din Italia.*) The younger one went on to describe fixing her toilet and bathroom.

Such competitive comparisons of house remodelling were occasionally heard among Ciment S.A. employees. While they did not lead to out-and-out bickering at the plant, they did leave workers talking behind each other's backs about who has what. As an outsider embedded in the life of the plant, I often bore the brunt of multiple persons coming to me with gossip about 'his new car' or 'that outfit.' Such talk did not help foster unity among increasingly atomised workers, who saw themselves in competition with each other over their modernist longings. Their increasingly competitive yearnings

³¹ I can attest to this because I lived in the basic apartment of Silvia's sister, Maria, during my time in Rezina.

drove them and kin to work abroad, and not necessarily the global capitalist push and pull factors that are often blamed for Moldova's mass out-migration.³² However, what is worth pointing out is that Moldovans' tendency towards migration does not necessarily improve their social position, as imagined by them, but often entrenches division and alienation back home. Persons turn inward to networks of security, withdrawing into themselves and their homes, whilst sometimes pulling back from the market (like Russians' dacha farming [see Humphrey 2002, 56; Kideckel 2008, 210].) Apartments may be remodelled with the help of cash saved with subsistence farming and monetary resources acquired from relatives' work abroad, but social tensions, differentiation and inequality emerge in the process.

7.6 Conclusion: Disunity and Cosmopolitan Lies

This chapter examined cement employees' leisure spaces and non-working lives, showing how worker (dis)unity and alienation in the plant was mirrored and reproduced outside of the factory gates. This was illustrated through recounting workers' changing domestic practices and their need for non-factory support, especially for women with dual home and work responsibilities, to cope with the household changes amid job instability. Attention was also given to employees' modernist *remont* longings, which were aided by family members' migration abroad. The outcome of these new post-socialist trends, linked to the Rezina Cement Plant's market transformation, was to prompt most employees to rely heavily on kin, which in turn has only served to atomise workers from each other on *and* off the job.

White-collar workers in particular strive to live out modern middle-class lives through spending their leisure time attaining newly available fashion and home

³² As mentioned earlier, between one-fourth and one-third of Moldova's population is working outside of the country (IOM 2005).

furnishings. However, as workers preoccupy themselves with these commodities, they also buy into the ‘cosmopolitan lie’ of modern neoliberal markets (see Harvey 2005, 42) that promises all is attainable (goods and lifestyles) through hard work. Striving for these products, though, causes employees to work longer hours and to send kin abroad, bringing about new domestic stresses. Home life becomes increasingly market-oriented (‘the marketisation of home’), as gender and kin are supposed to serve the interests of capital. This is an example of society becoming subordinated to market principles, as described by Karl Polanyi (1944, 71, 73).

The effect of all of this on workers was that whilst chasing after cosmopolitan lifestyles, the strain of worker competition and familial strife following on from the chase appeared to reinforce localism – that is to say, a reliance on the things of home, family, religion, co-ethnic community and intimate local dialect – for middle-aged white-collar employees. In other words, the drive for cosmopolitanism reverted a portion of workers back to localism (even if for very modern reasons) and away from the transnationalism that lured them in the first place. In the process, however, segments of the Ciment S.A. workforce did not inter-mix and find connection with each other outside of the factory, but maintained existing hierarchies from inside the plant. All of this works to preclude any lasting collectivism among workers against the perils and uncertainty of market reform.

Figure 46. The Western-style Transnistrian Sheriff supermarket chain in Rybnitsa, where many Rezina residents shop on the weekends.



Figure 47. Rezina is without a supermarket. Its humble, main shopping complex is below.



Figure 48. Typical apartment block for rank-and-file workers in Rezina. The first two windows to the left of the main door belong to Maria, Silvia's sister, with whom the author resided in Rezina.



Figure 49. Inside Maria's un-remodeled flat decorated in the 'old style' with rugs hanging on the walls, for example. The apartment, nevertheless, had a boxy television set playing in the background.



Figure 50. Silvia, her mother and family during a visit to her natal village for the Moldovan festival, *Paștele Blajinilor*. Visits to here village in the Rezina raion were extremely rare.



Figure 51. *Paștele Blajinilor* in the cemetery of Silvia's natal village.



Figure 52. *Paștele Blajinilor* in the cemetery of Silvia's natal village.



Figure 53. Russian and high-status industrial workers received flats in these high-rise apartment blocks under socialism. Ol'ga's apartment is here.



CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

This thesis has examined mixed responses of contestation and accommodation to capitalist change. It investigated within one industrial setting how workers' differing, multiple orientations towards language, the economy and each other, acquired over time inside and outside of the plant, affected their ways of engaging a new corporate labour process. It dealt with varying changes in work and self-identity among a multi-ethnic workforce at a global cement plant in northern Moldova. The location is notable for the way in which the towns of Rezina and Rybnitsa shared common Soviet industry until the 1991-1992 armed breakaway of Transnistria from the Republic of Moldova. Now diverging industrial regimes and ideas of economic modernity and language separate a formerly common socio-economic space. Today a Soviet-nostalgic paternalist economic outlook is fused with Russian speaking (or *russianness*) in Rybnitsa, whereas notions of capitalist progress, European modernity and Romanian speaking are taking root in Rezina. This is even as russianness and localist ideas are still very much alive within the Fortune-500-owned Rezina Cement Plant.

Against this backdrop, focusing on Rezina's restructuring Ciment S.A., the thesis examined the question of whether the spread of free-market capitalism and the commodification of labour among industrial employees necessarily leads to a type of collectivist protective backlash (Polanyi 1944), moral economy (Thompson 1971) and/or to modes of socio-cultural adaptation and accommodation. The question starts with the assumption that cultural-linguistic practices are embedded within Rezina's multi-cultural workscape, and so therefore important to economic activity and to people's reactions to neoliberal capitalist change. For this reason, the thesis finds that it is important to examine varying segments of the Ciment S.A. workforce, as different workers have differing dispositions towards language and modernisation. Some attention is given to workers' non-working lives, in order to understand the social-moral

values and preferences that they bring with them to the factory. It also allows us to see how divisions inside the factory are reinforced outside of it.

The focus on economic transformation is timely because there are increasing calls for Moldova's swifter incorporation into global economic structures. However, international appeals for Moldova's modernisation routinely provoke domestic debates over how best to go about modernising the young state; arguments which often become overlain with issues of language and culture (Heintz 2008, 2-10).¹ In Moldova, as around the former Soviet Union, there is no homogeneity of perceptions and responses to modernisation, language and identity.

In spite of Moldova's diversity, the neoliberal modernisation campaign of the European multi-national, Egrafal Ltd., expected linguistic homogenisation among the heterogeneous personnel of Ciment S.A. The unintended consequence was that workers became ever more fragmented, mobilising a range of new and traditional-looking cultural-linguistic styles in adaptation to and protest against Egrafal. In general, the thesis finds that these linguistic-based styles of coping matched workers' factory positions, although the argument does not lend itself to a straightforward delineation between economic status and response to capitalist change, since there were multiple non-material factors influencing emic understandings of status and restructuring.

More specifically, the thesis has detailed how indigenous multi-lingual workers in the high-status Control Room used a Russian linguistic modality learned in history and reinforced in the home and media to create a work mode which is different from foreign management's ethno-linguistic preference for organising work. These workers

¹ For example, a liberal-economic path to development promoted by the West is often associated with Europe and Romania, whilst a protectionist model is linked to Russia and internal moldovanism. Both of these main development paths – notably derived from beyond Moldova's borders – are representative of what local adherents believe to be modern (contra Ciscel 2007, 11).

were notably of varying ranks and ethnicities, but all worked around the same factory space and all held similar attitudes about language, which in turn influenced their objection to and modification of new corporate working patterns. Differently than in the Control Room, white-collar employees' on the prominent Third Floor of the Administration Building took on a corporate-sponsored Romanian linguistic style, whilst also maintaining and switching between old habits of Russian and Moldovan-speaking in different spaces with different persons. Their language code-switching was a part of both their status transformation and need to feel secure in an economically insecure environment. Code-switching became increasingly prominent during Egrafal's integration program, when foreign Romanian managers arrived, modelling attractive cosmopolitan styles, relational habits and linguistic practices, which were mimicked among Third-floor workers wanting to secure their jobs and status. These formerly rank-and-file workers have generally gained from Egrafal's economic transition and appear to be developing into a new middle-class, hitherto understudied in post-socialist literature (except Dunn 2004; Patino 2008). On the opposite spectrum were Ciment S.A.'s Russian minorities, who were the one-time leaders of Soviet industrialisation but now towards the middle of the factory hierarchy of power. They were resistant towards all things Romanian, even as they knew a degree of Romanian-speaking was needed to reclaim their lost socio-economic status. Also defiant against Egrafal România and its labour and language outlook were rank-and-file Moldovans from the plant's territory of production and maintenance (*teritoriul*). Their localist-based expressions of protest, however, were short-lived and hence not found to represent a lasting collectivist backlash against capital, if anything because of factory organisational constraints, the narrowness of the (linguistic) issues they were protesting most of the time, and their small size (one-third of the workforce). Their lack of sustained unity in the factory was

not helped by their divergent family and village commitments and domestic habits outside of the plant, which was generally the pattern for most segments of the Ciment S.A. workforce. In fact, even the Administration employees seemingly most advantaged by market reform found that the stress and anxiety brought on by work in a transnational-corporate environment tended to drive them back to localist ways of life, relying on kin, but increasingly alienated from colleagues on and off the job. This was especially true for women, who found home-life becoming increasingly marketised or subordinated to the demands of the corporation.

Overall, the major root of all workers' disunity and alienation was labour insecurity, I argue. All employees were faced with degrees of anxiety and unstable material conditions amid rapid restructuring, even as uncertainty was greater for some (like minorities and manual labour) than others. This is as restructuring created a state of affairs in which workers' lives were in transition from socialist-era work circumstances to a still unknown sets of conditions. In the words of one informant, 'it's moving (like a spirit) from new management [...but] I'm not sure what the new management way is yet'. This uncertainty and the fear of job loss, along with competitive modernist longings and spatial-work constraints, limited employees' potential for lasting individual and collective action.²

All of this is significant, because it leads me to conclude that workers' disjointed linguistic-based reactions to neoliberal market reform do not constitute real protectionist collectivism, as Polanyi (1944) or Thompson (1971) expected with the spread of laissez-faire capitalism and inequality. The reason, I conclude, is ultimately because of the way

² Similarly, David Kideckel writes that the high variation and uncertainty among the working class limits their potential for individual and group agency. Like at Ciment S.A., he finds that workers are most concerned for the uncertainties of the present, and their perceived lack in the midst of the expanding market economy (2008, 14, 45).

in which economic insecurity leads people to oscillate between markets and mutuality – not unlike the ‘universal dialectic of mutuality and market’ described by Stephen Gudeman (2008, 121). As workers object to capitalist change and the precariousness of their labour, they tend to do so in customised ways through social-moral (language) idioms, which only further atomises workers from each other. This is because of workers’ differing views on these language idioms; there is little possibility for connectivity around them. Workers’ atomisation, thus, does little to halt the advance of marketisation at Ciment S.A., but instead enmeshes workers further into the market for job survival. However, the impersonal nature of market life leads to calls for connection and mutuality, which are found overwhelmingly outside of the factory with kith and kin. Hence, workers’ perpetual movement between mutuality and markets precludes any lasting resistance to economic transformation. Understanding this dynamic, and how cultural expressions like language are a part of it, contributes insight into the human side of global-market modernisation in the post-socialist world.

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APPENDIX

Table 8. Ethnic Moldovan informants in urban Rybnitsa (Transnistria), 2005-2006

Name & Gender	Birth origin: region and village	Age	Job & salary per month	Spouse's ethnicity & Job Type	Family language at home & in public	Children know Moldovan language? Schooling language	Frequency of village kin visits	Friends' ethnicity
1.I.G. Male	Ukrainian Village	Late 40s	Entrepreneur /Church Leader \$200	Wife Ukrainian House-wife	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	No Russian-speaking schools	Once a year	Mixed Slav mostly
2.V. Male	Left-bank village	60s	Porter \$50	Wife Ukrainian Retired Nurse	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	No Russian schools	Rarely because parents deceased	Mixed Slav mostly
3.I. Male	Left-bank village	Late 50s	Admn. \$100	Wife Ukrainian	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	No Russian schools	Infrequent	Mixed Slav mostly
4. Father of S. Male	Right-bank village	Late 50s	Builder \$100	Wife Moldovan School Cook	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	Yes Russian schools	1-2 times a year for holidays	Mixed
5.L. Male	Left-bank town	50s	Laid-off industrial worker		Russian (in public)		N/A	Mixed
6.A. Male	Right-bank village	Late 40s	Laid-off manual labourer		Russian (in public)			Mixed
7. Father of A. Male	Left-bank village	Late 40s	MMZ skilled worker \$200	Wife Moldovan	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	Yes Russian schools	Monthly	Mixed
8.S. Male	Right-bank village	Late 40s	MMZ skilled worker \$200	Wife Ukrainian	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	No Russian schools	Infrequent	Mixed Slav
9.I. Male	Right-bank village	Late 40s	MMZ skilled worker \$200	Wife Ukrainian	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)		Infrequent	Mixed Slav
10. V. Female	Right-bank village	Late 40s	Cook \$50	Husband Ukrainian Mechanic	Russian-speaking (at home) Russian (in public)	No Russian-speaking schools	Infrequent	Mixed
11.S. Female	Right-bank village	50s	Cook \$50	Husband Moldovan Builder	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	Yes – in relatives' villages Russian	Seasonal (for foodstuffs exchange)	Mixed

Name & Gender	Birth origin: region and village	Age	Job & salary per month	Spouse's ethnicity & Job Type	Family language at home & in public	Children know Moldovan language? Schooling language	Frequency of village kin visits	Friends' ethnicity
12. V. Female	Left-bank village	30s	Agro-industrial factory worker \$80	Husband Moldovan	Moldovan-speaking (at home) Russian (in public)		Regular	Many Moldovans
13. Mother of I. Female	Left-bank village	40s		Husband Moldovan Migrant	Moldovan (at home) Russian (in public)	Yes Romanian-language schools		Mixed
14. Milk plant porter Female	Left-bank village	40s	Porter apx. \$50		Russian (at home) Russian (in public)			
15. Eurika Lyceum Teacher Female	Right-bank town	40s	School teacher \$150+	Husband Moldovan Builder & manual labour	Moldovan and Romanian dialects (at home) Russian and Moldovan (in public)	Yes	Seasonally	Moldovans
16. Sofia Female	Russia town	20s	University student	Husband Moldovan Student	Moldovan (at home) Russian and Moldovan (in public)	N/A	Monthly	Mixed
17. T. Female	Left-bank village	20s	Domestics	Husband Ukrainian MMZ skilled worker	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Seldom	Mixed
18. E. Female	Left-bank village	20s	Domestics & tailoring	Husband Moldovan Builder	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Monthly or fortnightly sometimes	Mixed
19. O. Female	Left-bank village	20s	Housewife	Husband Ukrainian Builder	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	No Russian-speaking schools	Monthly or fortnightly	Mixed

Name & Gender	Birth origin: region and village	Age	Job & salary per month	Spouse's ethnicity & Job Type	Family language at home & in public	Children know Moldovan language? Schooling language	Frequency of village kin visits	Friends' ethnicity
20. N. Female	Right-bank village	20s	Cook	Husband Russian Baker	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Seldom	Mixed
21. A. Female	Left-bank town	20s	University student	Unmarried	Russian-speaking (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Seldom	Mixed
22. I. Female	Left-bank town	Teen	High school student	Unmarried	Russian & Moldovan (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Seldom	Mostly Moldov-ans
23.T. Female	Left-bank town	20s	Domestics & Migrant Labour	Unmarried	Russian (in public)	N/A	Rare	Mostly Moldov-ans
24.S. Female	Left-bank town	20s	Construction (informal) \$50-100	Wife Moldovan Housewife	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Seldom visit own kin, but seasonally wife's village kin	Mostly Moldov-ans
25.V. Female	Left-bank village	20s	Construction (informal) \$50-100	Unmarried	Russian and Moldovan (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Regularly	Mostly Moldov-ans
26.Y. Male	Left-bank village	20s	Construction (informal) \$50-100	Unmarried	Russian and Moldovan (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Regularly	Mostly Moldov-ans
27.S. Male	Left-bank village	20s	Construction \$75+	Wife Moldovan Housewife	Russian (at home) Russian (in public)	N/A	Infrequent	Mostly Moldov-ans

Table 9. Main informants in urban Rezina, 2005-2006

*MD refers to Moldova, UA to Ukraine, BEL to Belarus and TN to the Transnistrian region.

Name & Ethnicity	Birth origin: region and village	Age	Job & salary per month	Spouse's ethnicity & Job Type	Language at home, work & in public	Children's schooling language	Frequency of village kin visits	Friends' ethnicity
1.Silvia (wife of Ion) Moldovan	Rezina raion village MD	40s	Personal Assistant to Ciment S.A. Director \$150 apx.	Wife Moldovan Ciment S.A. Adjunct Manager of Manufacturing	Moldovan dialect (at home) Romanian & Russian (at work & in public)	Russian schools	Rare because natal village home sold; father deceased and mother moved to Rezina	Moldovan mostly
2.Ion (husband of Silvia) Moldovan	Urban Rezina MD	40s	Ciment S.A. Adjunct Manager of Manufacturing \$800 apx.	Moldovan Personal Assistant to Ciment S.A. Director	Moldovan dialect (at home) Romanian & Russian (at work & in public)	See Silvia	N/A because urban-born in Rezina	Moldovan mostly
3.Maria (sister of Silvia) Moldovan	Rezina raion village MD	Late 20s	Private catering company employee \$100 apx.	Unmarried	Moldovan dialect (at home) Romanian & Russian (at work & in public)	N/A	Rare (see Silvia)	Moldovan mostly
4. Svetlana Russian	Rybnitsa MD (TN region today)	Late 40s	Ciment S.A. Lab engineer \$250-300 apx.	Husband Russian Redundant Ciment S.A. employee	Mono-linguistic Russian	Russian schools	Very frequently to urban Rybnitsa	Russian and mixed Slav
5.Ol'ga Russian	UA	40s	Ciment S.A. Lab technician \$200 apx.	Husband Russian Ciment S.A. quarry worker	Mono-linguistic Russian	Russian schools	Never	Slav
6.Irina Belarusian	BEL	40s	Ciment S.A. Lab technician \$200 apx.	Husband Moldovan Coal mine worker	Mono-linguistic Russian (including Russian at home)	Russian schools	Irregularly to Belarus & often to husband's family village	Slav

Name & Ethnicity	Birth origin: region and village	Age	Job & salary per month	Spouse's ethnicity & Job Type	Language at home, work & in public	Children's schooling language	Frequency of village kin visits	Friends' ethnicity
7.Andrei Moldovan	Chişinău MD	20s	Ciment S.A. engineer \$200-250 apx.	Unmarried	Romanian and some Moldovan dialect (at home) Romanian & some Russian (at work & in public)	N/A	Regularly to urban Chişinău	Moldov- an mostly
8.Sasha Moldovan	Village in south- ern raion MD	20s	Ciment S.A. engineer \$200-250 apx.	Unmarried (until 2008)	Romanian and some Moldovan dialect (at home) Romanian & some Russian (at work & in public)	N/A	Seasonally for holidays	Moldov- an mostly
9.Vlad Moldovan	Rezina raion MD	20s	Ciment S.A. engineer \$200-250 apx.	Unmarried (until 2007)	Romanian and some Moldovan dialect (at home) Romanian & some Russian (at work & in public)	N/A	Very frequently	Moldov- an mostly
10. Ghenadie Moldovan	Village in north- ern raion MD	40s	Ciment S.A. supervisor \$200-250 apx.	Wife Moldovan Migrant domestics worker in Italy	Moldovan dialect (at home) Romanian, Russian and some Moldovan dialect (at work & in public)	Moldovan schools	Seasonal	Moldov- an mostly
11.Alexan dru Moldovan	Rezina raion MD	40s	Ciment S.A. foreman \$200 apx.	Wife Moldovan Migrant domestics in Italy	Romanian, Russian and Moldovan dialect (at work & in public)	Moldovan schools	Regularly	Moldov- an mostly

Name & Ethnicity	Birth origin: region and village	Age	Job & salary per month	Spouse's ethnicity & Job Type	Language at home, work & in public	Children's schooling language	Frequency of village kin visits	Friends' ethnicity
12.Valeria Moldovan	MD	40s	Ciment S.A. trade union leader \$200+ apx.	Husband Bulgarian	Romanian, Russian and some Moldovan dialect (at work) Russian (at home) Russian & Romanian (in public)	Russian schools	Unknown	Mixed ethnic
13.Petru Moldovan	Rezina raion village MD	40s	Ciment S.A. Repair Hall manual labourer \$150	Wife Moldovan Administrative job in Rezina	Moldovan dialect & some Russian (at work) Moldovan (at home) Moldovan & Russian (in public)	Moldovan schools	Unknown	Moldovan
14.Radu Moldovan	Rezina raion village MD	40s	Ciment S.A. Repair Hall manual labourer \$150	Wife Moldovan Unknown	Moldovan dialect & some Russian (at work) Moldovan (at home) Moldovan & Russian (in public)	Moldovan schools	Unknown	Moldovan
15. Anatoly Moldovan	Rezina raion village MD	40s	Ciment S.A. Repair Hall foreman \$200	Wife Moldovan Unknown	Romanian & Russian (at work & in public) Unknown at home	Moldovan schools	Regularly	Moldovan
16.Teodor Moldovan	Village MD	40s	Ciment S.A. Control Room operator \$200+	Wife Russian Unknown	Romanian & Russian (at work & in public) Russian (at home)	Russian schools	Seldom	Mixed

Name & Ethnicity	Birth origin: region and village	Age	Job & salary per month	Spouse's ethnicity & Job Type	Language at home, work & in public	Children's schooling language	Frequency of village kin visits	Friends' ethnicity
17. Evgenii Russian	Unknown in USSR	40s	Ciment S.A. process engineer supervisor \$300-500 apx.	Wife Moldovan Public library director	Russian & Romanian (at work & at home) Russian (in public)	Russian schools	Unknown	Mixed
18. Lidia Moldovan	Unknown in MD	40s	Ciment S.A. Administration clerk \$250 apx.	Unknown	Russian and Moldovan dialect (at work & in public) Unknown at home	Unknown	Unknown	Mixed
19. Natalia (wife of Sergei) Ukrainian	Rezina MD	Apx. 30	Ciment S.A. process engineer \$200 apx.	Husband Russian	Mono-linguistic Russian speaking	Russian schools	No village roots	Mostly Slav
20. Eugenia (daughter of Tat'iana) Mixed-ethnic Moldovan & Russian	Rezina MD	20s	Ciment S.A. accountant \$200 apx.	Unmarried	Romanian and Russian (at work) Russian (at home) Russian & Romanian (in public)	N/A	Rare visits to father's natal village in Orhei raion	Mixed
21. Tat'iana (mother of Eugenia) Russian	UA city in east near Russia	40s	Ciment S.A. Lab Chief \$500+ apx.	Widow	Russian mono-linguistic speaking, with notable Romanian-speaking progress '06	Russian schools	Yearly visits to town	Slav
22. L.N. Moldovan	Town in MD	40s	Adjunct Plant Manager \$1,000-1,500 apx.	Wife Russian Unknown	Romanian and Russian (at work & in public) Russian (at home)	Russian schools	Seldom	Mixed

Name & Ethnicity	Birth origin: region and village	Age	Job & salary per month	Spouse's ethnicity & Job Type	Language at home, work & in public	Children's schooling language	Frequency of village kin visits	Friends' ethnicity
23. S.R. Moldovan	Village in MD	40s	Human Resources Manager \$800 apx.	Husband Moldovan Redundant Ciment S.A. employee/ non-profit community organiser	Romanian and Russian (at work) Romanian (intimate spaces) Romanian (in public)	Moldovan schools	Unknown	Moldovan
24. N.C. Moldovan	Village in MD	40s	Adjunct Production Manager \$800 apx.	Wife Moldovan Unknown	Romanian and Russian (at work & in public) Unknown at home	Moldovan schools	Unknown	Moldovan
25. V.L. Moldovan	Village in MD	40s	Safety Coordinator \$400-500+ apx.	Wife Moldovan Unknown	Romanian and Russian (at work & in public) Moldovan dialect (at home)	Moldovan schools	Unknown	Moldovan
26. I.R. Moldovan	Village in MD	40s	Ciment S.A. computer specialist \$500+	Wife Russian Ciment S.A. engineer	Romanian and Russian (at work & in public) Russian (at home)	Russian schools	Unknown	Mixed
27. I.R. (wife of I.R.) Russian	Unknown	40s	Ciment S.A. process engineer \$250+ apx.	Husband Moldovan Ciment S.A. Computer specialist	Mono-linguistic Russian speaking	See I.R.	Unknown	Slav
28. F.U.	Village in MD	40s	Ciment S.A. Training Coordinator \$250+ apx.	Husband Moldovan Unknown	Romanian and Russian (at work & in public) Moldovan dialect (at home)	Unknown	Occasional	Moldovan
29.A.T.	Village in MD	30s	Ciment S.A. accountant \$200 apx.	Wife Moldovan Unknown	Romanian and Russian (at work & in public) & Moldovan	Moldovan	Unknown	Moldovan

Table 10. Characteristics of the Third-floor Workforce of Egrafal Ciment S.A.'s Administration Building (2005)¹

Name	Egrafal Job Position	Soviet-era Job Status: lower, higher, the same	Ethnicity	Language Spoken ²	Age Range & Gender	Salary Monthly Range apx.
L. N.	Plant Manager	Lower	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged male	\$1,000-1,500
Silvia	P.A. to the Plant Manager	Hired after Egrafal's buy-out. Formerly school teacher	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$150
Ion	Manufacturing	Lower	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged male	\$800
Evgeni	Development & Process Engineer	Equal	Russian	RU, RO	Middle-aged male	\$300-500
Sergei	Maintenance Manager	Equal	Russian	RU & basic RO	Middle-aged male	\$800
Z. M.	Financial Manager	Unknown	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$500-800
S. M.	Commercial Manager	N/A because newly hired	Ukrainian	RU, RO (UA home)	Late 20s male	\$500-800
N. C.	Production Manager	Lower	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged male	\$800
S. R.	Human Resources Manager	Lower	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$800
Andrei	Development & Alternative Fuel	N/A because newly hired	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Mid 20s male	\$200-250
V. L.	Safety Coordinator	Lower	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged male	\$400-500
S. C.	Economist	Unknown	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$250+
F. U.	Training Responsible	Unknown	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$250+
L. P.	Head clerk	Unknown	Moldovan	RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$250
I. R.	Computer Office Responsible	Lower	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged male	\$500+/-
I. R.	Process Engineering	Equal	Russian	RU	Middle-aged female	\$250

¹ This table depicts almost all of the employees working around the Third Floor of the Administration Building, with the exception of the Egrafal foreign Romanian managers, who do not represent the local workforce under study. I had some degree of personal interaction with every person depicted on this table.

² RO signifies the Romanian language, RU the Russian language, UA the Ukrainian language, and MD the Moldovan idiom.

Name	Egrafal Job Position	Soviet-era Job Status: lower, higher, the same	Ethnicity	Language Spoken	Age Range & Gender	Salary Monthly Range apx.
Natalia	Process Engineering Responsible	N/A	Russian	RU & basic RO	Late 20s female	\$250+
G. C.	Quality Assurance Engineer	Lower	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$250+
A. T.	Accountant	Equal	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$200
L. L.	Accountant Coordinator	Lower	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Middle-aged female	\$250+
Vlad	Sales Economist	N/A	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Late 20s Male	\$200
Eugenia	Financial Controller	N/A	Mixed Moldovan & Russian	RO, RU, MD	Mid 20s female	\$200
V. T.	Financial Controller	N/A	Moldovan	RO, RU, MD	Early 30s male	\$200

*All employees have worked at the plant since its construction, unless under the age of 30 years old or otherwise specified.

Table 11. Rezina Cement Plant Archive Album, ‘*Oktiabr’ Mir Trud*’ (1984-1987)³



Raw Materials Department Founders/Leaders: Kleiankin A.G., Terapchuk V.P., Beliaev Y.I., Kirtoaka, Y.G., Shchaptefrats' V.I., Menchuk I.V.

Acquisition of Raw Materials Lead Workers: Kleiankin A.G., Iakovenko A.I., Filatov E.K., Panteleev A.A., Shestakov V.A., Menchuk I.V.

Production/Control-room Founders/Leaders: Krivenko V.D., Agafonov V.I., Kozlov P.I., Dubina A.P., Paramonov V.K., Kvapish A.A.

Production/Control-room Front-rank Workers: Pan'ko G.N., Samarin A.M., Paramonov V.K., Stratulat E.V., Bulgak N.S., Teleucha I.E., Lisnik V.S., Firsov Y.L., Kvapish A.A., Vesku A.N.

Distribution Centre Department Founders/Leaders: Dorofeiev A.S., Leshchenko A.L., Rotar' A.B., Belinskii Y.P., Nekita A.N., Baranov V.V., Osipov V.V., Sherpi V.A., Smykovskii P.A.

Distribution Centre Front-rank Workers: Ababin V.M., Baranov V.V., Baksichev V.I., Kryshel'nitskazha J.V., Donika M.F., Mazur V.D., Tinku A.S., Ursakii G.A.

Information Technology ASU TP Department Leaders (‘They Were the First Ones’): Shedlovskii V.K., Knopmakher M.Z., Rabota Y.V., Maidanskii V.G., Nikorich L.M., Brynzila G.V., Kirtoaka E.D., Kurilo L.V., Didenko E.V.

³ I wish to thank my Russian-language research assistant, who wishes to remain unnamed, for his help in translating and extracting names from the archival material to make this table.

Department UGAS (energy) Front-rank Workers: Rusu V.K., Kamyshov V.I., Maidanskii V.G., Vodichev V.M., Kupchenko V.A., Pasechnik Z.S., Nosach F.M., Skvortsov V.M., Ponomarenko V.M., Nikorich L.M., Rabota Y.V.

Maintenance Department Founders/Leaders: Vakarenko M.I., Vitiuk A.A., Yefremov I.V., Kozinets T.G., Vladimirov A.N., D'iakov S.V., Vakarenko R.U.

Maintenance Department Front-rank Workers: Kozinets T.G., Vakarenko M.I., Kozhevaton I.M., Vitiuk A.A., Vladimirov A.N., Moskalenko T.K., Kliuchnik I.V., Gul'pesku V.G., Gudumak N.S.

Department KMK TsSiP Founders/Leaders: Kuzuiok N.V., Afteni Y.A., Vesulas R.L.

Department KMK TsSiP Front-rank Workers: Voitenko A.G., Kolesnik V.G., Tsyurkan V.G., Lupu I.P.

Cement Mill Department Founders/Leaders: Dubina A.P., Kigim S.I., Tsuruk M.F., Berezovskii V., Skliaruk V.P., Ungur M.A.

Cement Mill Department Front-rank Workers: Tsuruk M.F., Boznat V.N., Pachula E.A., Bulai A.V., Rabii I.F., Straista M.Z., Kigim S.I., Tsuruk N.F., Shulin V.F.

Table 12. Rezina Cement Plant questionnaire interview: Rezina Cement Plant employee⁴

1. How many years of school did you finish? Which educational institutions did you graduate from?
10 years of school and 5 years of university. Lvov Polytechnic Institute.
 2. What kind of job do you have (skilled/unskilled)?
Quality Assurance engineer.
 3. How long have you worked at the factory/job? How did you get this job?
20 years. I came on an assigned position after graduation.
 4. Were you always employed at your current position?
I started working as a quality assurance technician.
1992 – analytical engineer
2005 – quality assurance engineer
 5. Do you have family members who work here as well? Did anybody in your family ever worked here? Where?
No
 6. Where were you born? Were you born in Rezina? Do you have relatives here (parents, grandfather, grandmother)? Do you visit them a lot (during the period when the factory is closed)?
Ukraine. I visit my parents once a year.
 7. Do you have friends among co-workers?
Yes
 8. Do you get together and spend time outside work? What do you do together?
No. Outside of work we work at a family camp.
- [Interviewer's note: This comment suggests low sociality outside of work among some employees.]*
9. Do you like your job? What do you like best about it?
Yes
 10. Do you like your job as much as you did during the Soviet Times?
Yes
 11. Did your job (for example, the quality of work that is expected from you) change since then? If yes, then how? Do you like these changes?
Yes, the workload increased

⁴ All of the following interviews were translated from Russian to English with the help of a research assistant, who wishes to remain anonymous.

12. Are you proud to be working at the factory? Why?

Yes

13. What do you when the factory is closed? Are your working hours reduced? If yes, then what else do you do?

Take yet another leave from work.

14. Where else do you work? (do you work additional jobs?) What kind of work is it? (official/unofficial)? Do you like your additional job more or less than your factory job?

Nowhere

[Interviewer's note: Informal or secondary employment is not common among Ciment S.A. employees.]

15. Did you ever travel to another country seeking employment?

No

16. Where did you go? Why did you travel there? Why did you choose that country?

Did not travel

17. How long did you spend there? When?

--

18. Did you go by yourself or with friends (with family or co-workers)? Did your family stay in Rezina?

--

19. What kind of work did you do there? Did you like that job?

--

20. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?

Married, one child.

21. Do you have family members who worked in another country? Who and when?

--

22. Was it difficult to come back home and adapt to your previous life?

--

23. What is your citizenship(s)? What is your nationality/ethnicity?

Citizen of Moldova. Ethnic Ukrainian.

24. What is your native language? Which language did you speak abroad? Which language do you speak at home? What language do you speak at work?

Ukrainian. At home – Ukrainian. At work – Russian.

Table 13. Rezina Cement Plant questionnaire interview: Rezina Cement Plant employee

1. How many years of school did you finish? Which educational institutions did you graduate from?
How many years of education did you receive? 15 years.
2. What kind of job do you have (skilled/unskilled)?
Skilled (underlined in the questionnaire)
3. How long have you worked at the factory/job? How did you get this job?
Since 1982
4. Were you always employed at your current position?
Yes
5. Do you have family members who work here as well? Did anybody in your family ever worked here? Where?
Husband, until 1992 as a mechanic of commodity [answer unfinished]
6. Where were you born? Were you born in Rezina? Do you have relatives here (parents, grandfather, grandmother)? Do you visit them a lot (during the period when the factory is closed)?
1) In Rybnitsa 2) I do (relatives question) 3) Yes
7. Do you have friends among co-workers?
Yes
8. Do you get together and spend time outside work? What do you do together?
Yes. Going to a family camp.
9. Do you like your job? What do you like best about it?
Yes, I like it.
10. Do you like your job as much as you did during the Soviet Times?
The same
11. Did your job (for example, the quality of work that is expected from you) change since then? If yes, then how? Do you like these changes?
It changed, the workload increased. I am satisfied with that.
12. Are you proud to be working at the factory? Why?
Yes. Because it became my second home.
13. What do you when the factory is closed? Are your working hours reduced? If yes, then what else do you do?
Research which requires a more detailed study. Work hours did not decrease.

14. Where else do you work? (do you work additional jobs?) What kind of work is it? (official/unofficial)? Do you like your additional job more or less than your factory job?
--
15. Did you ever travel to another country seeking employment?
No
16. Where did you go? Why did you travel there? Why did you choose that country?
--
17. How long did you spend there? When?
--
18. Did you go by yourself or with friends (with family or co-workers)? Did your family stay in Rezina?
--
19. What kind of work did you do there? Did you like that job?
--
20. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?
Married. Two children
21. Do you have family members who worked in another country? Who and when?
No
22. Was it difficult to come back home and adapt to your previous life?
--
23. What is your citizenship(s)? What is your nationality/ethnicity?
Citizen of Moldova. Ethnicity is Ukrainian.
24. What is your native language? Which language did you speak abroad? Which language do you speak at home? What language do you speak at work?
(Respondent provided various grammatical corrections to the question).
Native language – Russian. We speak Russian both at work and at home.

Table 14. Rezina Cement Plant questionnaire interview: Rezina Cement Plant employee

1. How many years of school did you finish? Which educational institutions did you graduate from?
10 grades and technical school
2. What kind of job do you have (skilled/unskilled)?
Skilled
3. How long have you worked at the factory/job? How did you get this job?
20 years
4. Were you always employed at your current position?
No
5. Do you have family members who work here as well? Did anybody in your family ever worked here? Where?
No
6. Where were you born? Were you born in Rezina? Do you have relatives here (parents, grandfather, grandmother)? Do you visit them a lot (during the period when the factory is closed)?
Rezina region, village of Boshernitsa
7. Do you have friends among co-workers?
Yes
8. Do you get together and spend time outside work? What do you do together?
Yes
9. Do you like your job? What do you like best about it?
Yes
10. Do you like your job as much as you did during the Soviet Times?
Yes
11. Did your job (for example, the quality of work that is expected from you) change since then? If yes, then how? Do you like these changes?
Yes
12. Are you proud to be working at the factory? Why?
Yes
13. What do you when the factory is closed? Are your working hours reduced? If yes, then what else do you do?
Take vacation (can be interpreted as 'vacation travel')

14. Where else do you work? (do you work additional jobs?) What kind of work is it? (official/unofficial)? Do you like your additional job more or less than your factory job?
Nowhere
15. Did you ever travel to another country seeking employment?
No
16. Where did you go? Why did you travel there? Why did you choose that country?
No
17. How long did you spend there? When?
--
18. Did you go by yourself or with friends (with family or co-workers)? Did your family stay in Rezina?
--
19. What kind of work did you do there? Did you like that job?
--
20. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?
Yes. Two children. A son and a daughter.
21. Do you have family members who worked in another country? Who and when?
--
22. Was it difficult to come back home and adapt to your previous life?
--
23. What is your citizenship(s)? What is your nationality/ethnicity?
Citizen of Moldova – ethnic Moldovan.
24. What is your native language? Which language did you speak abroad? Which language do you speak at home? What language do you speak at work?
Moldovan

Table 15. Rezina Cement Plant questionnaire interview: Rezina Cement Plant employee

1. How many years of school did you finish? Which educational institutions did you graduate from?
10 grades. Technical school
2. What kind of job do you have (skilled/unskilled)?
Skilled
3. How long have you worked at the factory/job? How did you get this job?
15 years. Assigned position. (job assigned after graduating from college)
4. Were you always employed at your current position?
No
5. Do you have family members who work here as well? Did anybody in your family ever worked here? Where?
No
6. Where were you born? Were you born in Rezina? Do you have relatives here (parents, grandfather, grandmother)? Do you visit them a lot (during the period when the factory is closed)?
In Rybnitsa. I have. We live together.
7. Do you have friends among co-workers?
Yes
8. Do you get together and spend time outside work? What do you do together?
Rarely
9. Do you like your job? What do you like best about it?
Yes. I like it.
10. Do you like your job as much as you did during the Soviet Times?
Each stage had its peculiarities. (the original phrase is very vague)
11. Did your job (for example, the quality of work that is expected from you) change since then? If yes, then how? Do you like these changes?
Yes. It became better. Yes.
12. Are you proud to be working at the factory? Why?
Yes
13. What do you when the factory is closed? Are your working hours reduced? If yes, then what else do you do?

Vacation.

14. Where else do you work? (do you work additional jobs?) What kind of work is it? (official/unofficial)? Do you like your additional job more or less than your factory job?
--
15. Did you ever travel to another country seeking employment?
No
16. Where did you go? Why did you travel there? Why did you choose that country?
--
17. How long did you spend there? When?
--
18. Did you go by yourself or with friends (with family or co-workers)? Did your family stay in Rezina?
--
19. What kind of work did you do there? Did you like that job?
--
20. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?
Yes. Yes. (duplication is in the original) Son and daughter.
21. Do you have family members who worked in another country? Who and when?
No
22. Was it difficult to come back home and adapt to your previous life?
--
23. What is your citizenship(s)? What is your nationality/ethnicity?
Moldovan citizenship. Ethnic Ukrainian.
24. What is your native language? Which language did you speak abroad? Which language do you speak at home? What language do you speak at work?
Russian.

Table 16. Rezina Cement Plant questionnaire interview: Rezina Cement Plant employee

1. How many years of school did you finish? Which educational institutions did you graduate from?
[Graduated] in 1978. Belgorod Technical Institute, Russia. 15 years.
2. What kind of job do you have (skilled/unskilled)?
Mechanical engineer.
3. How long have you worked at the factory/job? How did you get this job?
From 1981 until 1993
4. Were you always employed at your current position?
Always. Engineer in the completion department. Mechanic of commodity preparation department / master repairmen, mechanic of the 'Pomol' department, mechanic of the commodity department.
5. Do you have family members who work here as well? Did anybody in your family ever worked here? Where?
Wife
6. Where were you born? Were you born in Rezina? Do you have relatives here (parents, grandfather, grandmother)? Do you visit them a lot (during the period when the factory is closed)?
Russia, Belgorod region, Chernianka
7. Do you have friends among co-workers?
Yes
8. Do you get together and spend time outside work? What do you do together?
--
9. Do you like your job? What do you like best about it?
Yes, it is very interesting.
10. Do you like your job as much as you did during the Soviet Times?
Yes
11. Did your job (for example, the quality of work that is expected from you) change since then? If yes, then how? Do you like these changes?
--
12. Are you proud to be working at the factory? Why?
Yes
13. What do you when the factory is closed? Are your working hours reduced? If yes, then what else do you do?
--

14. Where else do you work? (do you work additional jobs?) What kind of work is it? (official/unofficial)? Do you like your additional job more or less than your factory job?
(underlined on the questionnaire: unofficial; less.)
15. Did you ever travel to another country seeking employment?
No
16. Where did you go? Why did you travel there? Why did you choose that country?
Belarus. Launched a cement factory.
17. How long did you spend there? When?
0.5 years.
18. Did you go by yourself or with friends (with family or co-workers)? Did your family stay in Rezina?
[underlined on the questionnaire: with friends. Yes.]
19. What kind of work did you do there? Did you like that job?
(underlined on the questionnaire: liked. Mechanic.)
20. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?
Yes. Two children [note that children was written in English]
21. Do you have family members who worked in another country? Who and when?
Sister in Kharkov.
22. Was it difficult to come back home and adapt to your previous life?
Difficult.
23. What is your citizenship(s)? What is your nationality/ethnicity?
Citizen of Moldova. Ethnic Russian
24. What is your native language? Which language did you speak abroad? Which language do you speak at home? What language do you speak at work?
Russian

Table 17. Rybnitsa Cement Plant questionnaire interview: Rybnitsa Cement Plant employee and seasonal contractor with Rezina contract firm

1. How many years of school did you finish?
I received secondary education, graduated from specialized secondary school and Tiraspol State University, department of economics.
2. What kind of job do you have (skilled/unskilled)?
I am a master of repair production at the Rybnitsa cement plant.
3. How long have you worked at the factory/job? How did you get this job? Did you always work in this capacity?
I have worked at the RCSP (Translator: Rybnitsa Cement-Slate Plant) for 10 years. My father helped me get a job there. At first I was employed as a maintenance mechanic (Translator: the profession can be translated in many different ways depending on what exactly this individual did. Maintenance mechanic is generic enough to convey the type of work though.), later I was assigned (Translator: promoted) to be a master.
4. Do you have family members who work here as well? Who in your family used to work here?
Yes, my father works at the RCSP.
5. Where were you born? Were you born in Rybnitsa? Do you have relatives here (parents, grandfather, grandmother)? Do you visit them a lot (during the period when the factory is closed)?
I was born in Rybnitsa. My family, parents, wife, son live in the city.
6. Do you have friends among co-workers? Do you get together and spend time outside work? What do you do together?
No, I am not friends with my co-workers, but we maintain good relationship.
7. Do you like your job? What do you like best about it? Do you like your job as much as you did during the Soviet Times?
Yes I like my job. I like that my job lets me develop myself and enrich my knowledge.
8. Did your job (for example, the quality of work that is expected from you) change since then? If yes, then how? Do you like these changes?
The quality of work worsened.
9. Are you proud to be working at the factory? Why?
No pride yet.
10. What do you when the factory is closed? Do you still work? If yes, what do you do?
I go to work and I fix equipment.

11. Are your working hours reduced? If yes, then what else do you do during the day?

My working time is shortening. I dedicate my free time with to family.

12. Does salary reduce during the month when the plant doesn't work? If yes, do you need to be employed on another paid job (official or unofficial)?

The salary is decreasing and we are forced to search for additional income opportunities.

13. Where else do you work? (do you work additional jobs?) What kind of work is it? Do you like your additional job more or less than your factory job?

We are trying to work on a side using our qualifications at other cement plants (Russia, Ukraine)

14. Did you ever travel to another country seeking employment for any duration of time?

Yes

15. Where did you go? Why did you travel there? Why did you choose that country?

Moldova

[Interviewer's note: Notice that Moldova is considered a 'foreign country' by this interlocutor.]

16. How long did you spend there?

We worked in Russia and Ukraine

17. Did you go by yourself or with friends (with family or co-workers)? Did you family stay in Rybnitsa?

A few months

18. What kind of work did you do there? Did you like that job?

With co-workers and friends. My family remained in Rybnitsa

19. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?

I am married. My son is growing up. (Translator: could just say 'I have a son')

20. Did you send money home to your family or your parents?

Yes

21. Was it difficult to come back home and adapt to your previous life?

No

22. What is your citizenship(s)?

--

23. What is your native language? Which language did you speak abroad? Which language do you speak at home now? What language do you speak at work?

--

Translator: Note that questions 16, 17, 18 are answered in a wrong order.

Table 18. Rybnitsa Cement Plant questionnaire interview: Rybnitsa Cement Plant employee and seasonal contractor with Rezina contract firm

1. How many years of school did you finish?
I finished 10 grades and a technical school.
2. What kind of job do you have (skilled/unskilled)?
Skilled
3. How long have you worked at the factory/job? How did you get this job? Did you always work in this capacity?
9 years, 2 of which as a production mechanic.
4. Do you have family members who work here as well? Who in your family used to work here?
No
5. Where were you born? Were you born in Rybnitsa? Do you have relatives here (parents, grandfather, grandmother)? Do you visit them a lot (during the period when the factory is closed)?
I was born in Rybnitsa. I reside in Rybnitsa with my family.
6. Do you have friends among co-workers? Do you get together and spend time outside work? What do you do together?
I maintain friendly relationship with all co-workers, yet I only spend time with a few of them.
7. Do you like your job? What do you like best about it? Do you like your job as much as you did during the Soviet Times?
Not liking it much
8. Did your job (for example, the quality of work that is expected from you) change since then? If yes, then how? Do you like these changes?
Changed
9. Are you proud to be working at the factory? Why?
Can't say I am proud, yet I am not ashamed of it.
10. What do you when the factory is closed? Do you still work? If yes, what do you do?
Resting
11. Are your working hours reduced? If yes, then what else do you do during the day?
I go home and spend my free time in a family circle (Translator: could just say 'with my family')
12. Does salary reduce during the month when the plant doesn't work? If yes, do you need to be employed on another paid job (official or unofficial)?

We are looking for extra income (official and unofficial) depending on a job

13. Where else do you work? (do you work additional jobs?) What kind of work is it? Do you like your additional job more or less than your factory job?

At the moment at the Rezina Cement Plant

14. Did you ever travel to another country seeking employment for any duration of time?

Yes travelled

15. Where did you go? Why did you travel there? Why did you choose that country?

Moldova, Ukraine, Russia

16. How long did you spend there?

A few months

17. Did you go by yourself or with friends (with family or co-workers)? Did you family stay in Rybnitsa?

With friends and co-workers

18. What kind of work did you do there? Did you like that job?

Repair jobs

19. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?

I am married and have a daughter

20. Did you send money home to your family or your parents?

Brought home and sent

21. Was it difficult to come back home and adapt to your previous life?

No

22. What is your citizenship(s)?

Moldova, PMR (Transnistria)

23. What is your native language? Which language did you speak abroad? Which language do you speak at home now? What language do you speak at work?

Russian everywhere

Table 19. Moldovan Steelworks questionnaire interview: MMZ employee (Rybnitsa)

1. How many years of school did you finish?
Completed 10 grades (secondary education)
2. What kind of job do you have (skilled/unskilled)?
Skilled work. Specialty: treating of surfaces of ferrous metals (gas cutter of 5th wage category)
3. How long have you worked at the factory/job? How did you get this job? Did you always work in this capacity?
I worked at the plant for 20 years. I helped build the metallurgical plant. I was a master builder, and then I started working at the plant, being employed as a shear press operator, a scrap press operator, and later as a gas cutter and flame cutter.
4. Do you have family members who work here as well? Who in your family used to work here?
My wife's sister works at the factory – she is an overhead crane operator.
5. Where were you born? Were you born in Rybnitsa? Do you have relatives here (parents, grandfather, grandmother)? Do you visit them a lot (during the period when the factory is closed)?
I was born in Moldova, in the Ungheni region, village of Megurelli. My family and the family of my wife's sister live in Rybnitsa. Our families are friends and we help each other in everything.
6. Do you have friends among co-workers? Do you get together and spend time outside work? What do you do together?
People at work are my friends. We celebrate holidays and birthdays at home, in the forest, near the river, etc. We attend weddings of our children, funerals of our parents, help each other, help each other financially during difficult times. (Translator: 'help each other' duplication in the original). Our whole families are friends. My friends are of all (Translator: different) nationalities.
7. Do you like your job? What do you like best about it? Do you like your job as much as you did during the Soviet Times?
Although my job is difficult, I love my job. I got used to my job and it is my life.
8. Did your job (for example, the quality of work that is expected from you) change since then? If yes, then how? Do you like these changes?
The quality of work changed since the Soviet times, demands (Translator: standards) are higher. I like this, although the pay does not correspond to (Translator: can add 'demands of') our time.

9. Are you proud to be working at the factory? Why?
I am proud to be working at a famous plant, where I am a part of its efforts.
10. What do you when the factory is closed? Do you still work? If yes, what do you do?
I always have work to do.
11. Are your working hours reduced? If yes, then what else do you do during the day?
I always have an 8-hour work day, working on a flexible schedule.
12. Does salary reduce during the month when the plant doesn't work? If yes, do you need to be employed on another paid job (official or unofficial)?
Sometimes we take pay cuts, when there is no plan, even though it is due to circumstances beyond our control.
13. Where else do you work? (do you work additional jobs?) What kind of work is it? Do you like your additional job more or less than your factory job?
In my youth I worked on the side at the home construction sites, as I also specialize as a master builder. Nowadays, my health prevents me.
14. Did you ever travel to another country seeking employment for any duration of time?
I do not have time to be working in another country and I do not want to lose my job. If I move, they will not accept me back.
15. Where did you go? Why did you travel there? Why did you choose that country?
I served in the armed forces in Germany and Mongolia.
16. How long did you spend there?
In Germany – 6 months. In Mongolia – 1.5 years.
17. Did you go by yourself or with friends (with family or co-workers)? Did you family stay in Rybnitsa?
I was single.
18. What kind of work did you do there? Did you like that job?
I never visited any other country (except for Romania)
19. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?
I am currently married. Two kids (son, daughter) They are law school students in Kishinev/Chişinău.
20. Did you send money home to your family or your parents?
My parents passed away, but my wife's parents are still alive. I am paying for kids' school, helping financially.

21. Was it difficult to come back home and adapt to your previous life?
I live in Rybnitsa all the time
22. What is your citizenship(s)?
I have Moldovan citizenship.
23. What is your native language? Which language did you speak abroad? Which language do you speak at home now? What language do you speak at work?
My native language is Moldovan. I speak Moldovan with Moldovans and Russian with Russians at work.

Table 20. Rybnitsa Cement Plant questionnaire interview: Plant Manager (Rybnitsa)

- The number of staff of the closed joint-stock company ‘Rybnitsa Cement Plant’ amounts to 924 employees.⁵ 840 people, including 310 women, work directly in main and auxiliary departments.
- During the Soviet times, 2200 employees worked here until 1990.
- Starting from 1991, due to the collapse for the Soviet Union and the disruption of economic ties, the production volumes started to decrease and people were forced to resign in search of other employment.

The number of employees of the closed joint-stock company ‘RCP’ during these years is as follows:

1991 – 2101 employees	1999 – 1713 employees
1992 – 1792 employees	2000 – 1518 employees
1993 – 1784 employees	2001 – 1327 employees
1994 – 1858 employees	2002 – 974 employees
1995 – 1961 employees	2003 – 888 employees
1996 – 1902 employees	2004 – 884 employees
1997 – 1801 employees	2005 – 924 employees
1998 – 1748 employees	

Included here are also those fired for disruptive work behaviour⁶, unable to get through the probationary period, etcetera.

- Closed joint-stock company ‘RCP’ manufactures portland cement of various grades⁷, scalloped asbestos-cement sheeting⁸, and construction lime. The sale of cement, as a main type of manufactured goods, brings the majority of profit. Products of ‘RCP’ are sold on the markets of Transnistria, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and other countries.
- During the Soviet times, the plant worked at total capacity (100%) all year without interruptions. The plant works at 25% of total capacity during the last 10 years and it operates from mid-February throughout spring, summer, and fall until 15th of December. The rest of the time – winter month – the plant idles due to a decrease in demand for the manufactured goods.
- During the downtime the personnel is carrying out various types of preparatory, service, and repair works for which it receives a salary.⁹
- Average salary of a worker during 2005 amounted to 135 United States dollars. This salary is lower than a salary the metallurgic plant workers, yet higher than of those of the pump plant, automotive organisations and others.
- Employees of the plant are entitled to paid vacation. The remuneration consists of the following components:
 - a) a base rate (remuneration for the actual work time as a salary or an hourly wage)

*Translator's note: ‘The closed joint-stock company “Rybnitsa Cement Plant” employs 924 people’ might work better without losing the meaning.

6 Translator's note: direct translation is ‘violation of labour discipline.’

7 Translator's note: could be brands, but I presume they brand their cement as ‘RCP’ so I chose grade.

8 Translator's note: can be translated as roofing slate, but I don't think that's what they manufactured.

9 Translator's note: or ... the personnel are carrying out various types of paid preparatory, service, and repair works.

b) a system of bonuses and additional payments¹⁰:

* Compensations based on working conditions (night shift, evening shift, job hazard, combining multiple positions, for increases in volumes of production).

* Incentives:

- for professional skills
- for class rate of drivers
- for team management, etc.

* Bonuses:

- for production indexes
- for reaching a work plan (each department has a work plan)
- for quality of manufactured products
- for production standards

There are two lists¹¹ of professions based on the hazard level on the plant.

I – Especially harmful working conditions

II – Harmful working conditions¹².

Workers of these types of professions have mandatory insurance; workers included in these lists retire 5 years earlier.

There is an additional 14 calendar days of vacation for the first category and 7 days for the second category.

In addition workers of both I and II category receive special meals (0.5 litre of milk for per shift.)

The salary was much higher during the Soviet times; in addition, the plant was operating constantly.

The purchasing power of money was many times higher during the Soviet times, especially [buying] food and paying bill for public utilities. The funds of the plant were often used to provide additional financial help on top of vacation.

The company used to pay up to 70% of vacation costs in vacation homes and health resorts.

At the end of the year, based on the results of financial and economic activities, workers received an additional so-called ‘thirteen’s’ salary.

During the Soviet times, the plant had the financial capability to pay retired workers additional allowances on top of their pensions.

- The plant established friendly, respectful relations with the labour union based on mutual responsibilities outlined in the union contract between the administration and the union.

I promptly respond to meeting requests by any of the chairmen of the labour union committee or any of the plant workers.

I am present at the labour union committee meetings answering questions asked by the union.

During these difficult times we are trying to do all that is possible together to ensure that year after year the plant increases manufacturing capacity and the workers make more money.

- Workers of the plant, depending on their education or management skills have opportunities for career advancements or improve their skill category.
- (II)

10 Translator's note: underlined in the original.

11 Translator's note: types, categories.

12 Translator's note: the author provided an English word ‘unhealthy’ in the original.

The chairman of the labour union committee

Labour union committee (15-17 people)

Departmental labour union organisations

Department Department Department

[note] Departmental committee usually consists of 3 people headed by a chairman of the departmental committee.

During the Soviet times the labour union had broader financial capabilities to support its activity.

These days the labour union is operating under severe conditions: on one hand it is obligated to protect workers' interests, on the other hand, considering Transnistrian reality and peculiarities, the labour union understands that even strikes sometimes do not lead to desired results.

They have to hope for a better time, endure and wait changes for the better.

There is only one labour union at the plant – labour union of the closed joint-stock company 'Rybnitsa Cement Plant'.

The meetings of plant's labour union committee are usually held once a month, general plant meetings happen once or twice a year.

Departmental labour union organisations meet as necessary 4-5 times a year.

The meetings are held during the second half of the day during the work shift change. They are organised by the plant's labour union or departmental union.

During the downtime at the plant the committee carries out their meetings, while general meetings are held only when necessary.

Meetings are used for discussions of various issues, including the controversial ones, such as issues relating to labour management, salary, working conditions, modernisation of the plant and its future, etc.

These meetings are attended by the representatives of departmental labour union organisations, approximately 250 attendees and representatives of the management.

The workers recognise the importance of the labour union, because they understand that today there are no other organisations which are close to them and which are competent in advocating their interests.

Workers' opinion on the necessity of the unification in labour unions and the increase of the role of the labour union in social-economic development of the community is becoming more pronounced and well defined.

The leadership of the labour union receives their salary through their bank account, where plant's accounting deposits labour union fees.

Generally labour union has constructive relationship with plant's administration, although there are times when there are increasing tensions and those tensions require resolution (delays in salary during winter times and other issues).

The analysis of quantity and quality of work remains the same: fulfilment of workers functional responsibilities according to job description for every position...

In cases where the quality of work diminishes, the plant reduces various kinds of bonuses, including those given for completion of the plan or quality standards.

Generally workers are organised in small shift, crew, department, etcetera teams.

The leaders of these divisions work towards uniting the group of workers, increasing team's responsibility for fulfilment of the defined manufacturing

tasks.

Yet individual workers sometimes skip work, consume alcohol at work, or steal.¹³

In these cases the administration in agreement with the labour union fires such workers.

In general the administration and the labour union are working with the workers to promote mutual respect among the personnel regardless of the position at the plant. The chief executive officer¹⁴ wearing his work clothes routinely visits the departments of the plant and meets workers and specialists at their work place. This practice is useful for both parties. The CEO personally observes the manufacturing process and working conditions, and a worker experiences the attention and interest by the administration in improving the work any of the department.

(III) Education

Education – 10 grades of school or including technical school.

Job – skilled work of III – V grade¹⁵

The average employment time at the plant is 15-20 years. I applied after learning about the plan and working conditions from my acquaintances. I had to change a few positions.¹⁶ Some constantly work in their position during a few years. There are many cases where both spouses and even their children work at the plant at the same time.

Workers are usually natives of Rybnitsa, or Rybnitsa region. Some of the personnel came from Russia and Ukraine.

The majority of workers of the plant live in buildings constructed some time ago during the Soviet times and funded by the plant. This way, living all together, they workers' families are friends, they get together during holidays, help each other resolve various problems.

A job today, whether you like it or not, is the only means for living. Due to the unemployment all around, people who remain working for the plant today value their workplace.

At the same time it is important to mention that working conditions at the plant are difficult, the plant does not operate stably, the salary that the personnel receives does not fully satisfy elementary needs of the worker, specialist and the family.

During the Soviet times working conditions, workplace safety setup and safety measures, remuneration, moral and financial compensation for highly productive work were a few times higher. The plant was not modernised during the last 15 years. The equipment and instruments are ran down and out-dated.

Presently the plan is privatised. 100% of shares belong to the proprietor.¹⁷ That's why everybody is waiting for the investments from the proprietor and into

13 Translator's note: original contains phrases like 'workers allow themselves to skip work...' and 'steal tangible property.' The translation appears simplified.

14 Translator's note: I guess it could be directly translated as General Director.

15 Translator's note: or category.

16 Translator's note: can also be jobs, but it is unclear if the person means within the company or different companies.

17 Translator's note: it is hard to tell if the author means one owner or share owners in general – based on the later text might be a single owner.

the plant.

Working conditions greatly worsened compared to the Soviet times. During the privatisation employees hoped that a part of the shares of the plant would be sold on the preferential terms to the workers. However that did not happen, just like it did not on other large and small plants of Transnistria.

When the factory is idle, the personnel works at a reduced schedule – three days a week. Generally they work on servicing and repairing the equipment.

A feeling of pride¹⁸ for the enterprise is usually connected with prosperity, stable working plant where people work in good working conditions and receive high pay. These days the workers of the plant don't feel particularly proud of their plant. During difficult times when the plant was idle for a few months a year, the workers were leaving the plant without any regret.

During the winter month of the last 10 years workers received very low salary. That is why they were forced to find temporary employment in Rybnitsa or leave for Ukraine or Russian to work there. Hence any job that pays well is well loved. Usually workers get employed at construction sites in Odessa¹⁹ (Ukraine), Moscow and Saint Petersburg (Russia) for one or two month. Usually they go in small groups with acquaintances and friends. Their families stay in Rybnitsa. They have to do various hard and difficult jobs, yet many find employment based on their specialty: electrician, driver, gas-arc welders, etc.

Workers send or bring earned money home.

Many workers have dual citizenship – Ukrainian or Russian.

Native language – Ukrainian, Moldovan, or Russian.

Language used abroad – Russian.

Language used at work – Russian.

18 The author provided an English phrase 'a feeling of pride' in the original.

19 Translator's note: Odesa is spelled with one 's' to follow the Ukrainian spelling of the city.

39.92: 1567

[illegible]

Президенте конституций
де конституция, конституция
хуудан аа конституций
экскурсия районд аа алу-
уу аа конституций

My friend K. TUCKER

координателе:
график: 6-355
тел. за саврешност: 3-77-04
тел. за одржаност: 3-79-05

My request is that you pay the following:

1. My request is that you pay the following:	1. My request is that you pay the following:
2. My request is that you pay the following:	2. My request is that you pay the following:
3. My request is that you pay the following:	3. My request is that you pay the following:
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10. My request is that you pay the following:	10. My request is that you pay the following: