The Legitimation of Peripheral Producers' Novelty by External Audiences: The Contingent Role of Consultants

THE RECOGNITION OF PERIPHERAL PRODUCERS' NOVELTY BY EXTERNAL AUDIENCES: THE CONTINGENT ROLE OF CONSULTANTS

Abstract

Are radically novel practices more likely to attract recognition when the evaluating audience is composed of external evaluators? Our baseline argument asserts that radical novelty is more likely to be positively evaluated by an external audience and that peripheral (rather than core) producers have higher incentives to adopt novel practices that depart from tradition. Yet, because peripheral producers often lack the necessary support and legitimacy to promote novelty, audiences play a critical role in recognizing their innovative efforts. How can peripheral producers mitigate the challenges associated with novelty recognition? To answer this question, we explore how peripheral producers' collaboration with acclaimed consultants affects the process of external audience recognition in the context of the Italian wine field from 1997 to 2006. Our findings suggest that radical novelty is positively received by an external audience composed of critics, although we do not find a significant difference between core and peripheral producers. However, external audiences are more open to recognizing peripheral producers' use of novel practices when they collaborate with well-connected consultants. We find that the use of central consultants produces a "boosting" effect that accentuates the differences between evaluations of peripheral producers who embrace novelty and evaluations of those that follow the tradition. Our study thus advances theory by providing empirical evidence of the value of considering third-party actors such as consultants, who sit at the nexus between the agency required for innovation and external audiences' recognition of novelty, when studying novelty evaluation and recognition.

Keywords: Audience; evaluation; consultants; novelty; periphery; recognition; wine.

INTRODUCTION

In research on novelty, scholars have focused primarily on how novelty is generated (Bocken & Snihur, 2020; Mandler, 1995; Tortoriello & Krackhardt, 2010), although an equally important aspect is how novelty is evaluated and recognized after it is generated. Particularly intriguing is the case of radical novelty, as opposed to incremental novelty, as it is more subject to resistance from a field's incumbents and the market, and is more likely to produce tangible changes within a field once it is adopted. Incremental novelty, instead, produces small changes with respect to the prevailing *modus operandi* within a field (Abernathy & Utterback, 1978) and is likely to be perceived as congruous because it fits relatively easily within existing schema (Rindova & Petkova, 2007). Because it often results from an innovator's initiative, scholars have advanced an actor-centric view on novelty (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994), emphasizing that those who are less bound by a field's dominant logics (i.e., peripheral producers, outsiders) are more likely to be crucial carriers of novelty (Merton, 1973; Sgourev, 2013). Not only are peripheral producers more likely to "produce work that departs from the fields canons and expectations" (Cattani, Ferriani, & Allison, 2014, p. 2), but they are also likely to benefit from the adoption of an innovative practice, as it allows them to "become more visible within the field and gradually move to its core" (Sgourev, 2013, p. 1603). Yet, despite their openness to novelty, peripheral producers often lack the support and legitimacy to do so (Cattani, Ferriani, & Lanza, 2017); thus, legitimacy and recognition can be thought of as "a relationship with an audience" rather than a possession of the actor (Suchman, 1995, p. 594).

By expanding the focus beyond the agentic role of the innovator, an audience-based perspective has emerged, which views social audiences as agents of consecration with the authority to produce symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1993). Researchers examining various contexts, from academia (Fini, Jourdan, & Perkmann, 2018) to feature films (Cattani et al.,

2014), painting (Sgourev, 2013), and theater (Shymko & Roulet, 2017) have shown that audiences play a fundamental role in consecrating, legitimizing, and recognizing producers' work. Much of this research has focused on how peer audiences evaluate producers, exploring the conditions that support or inhibit peer evaluation (e.g., Aadland, Cattani, Falchetti, & Ferriani, 2020; Shymko & Roulet, 2017). Other studies, however, have shown that the same producers can face more than one audience, and that different audiences evaluate producers' products differently (e.g., Cattani et al., 2014; Pontikes, 2012). Traditionally, researchers have distinguished external audiences (e.g., critics) from internal audiences (e.g., peers) (see Cattani, Falchetti, & Ferriani, 2020), but have said little about the role played by external, influential actors sitting between audiences and producers. In other words, little is known about how qualified professionals such as consultants influence an audience's evaluative process. Evaluating audiences allocate symbolic capital and have the power to grant symbolic legitimacy (Cattani et al., 2014; Zuckerman, 1999) although the object of their evaluation (i.e., cultural production) is not easy to evaluate objectively (Salganik, Dodds, & Watts, 2006). In that respect, external consultants may act as bridges between producers and audiences, and work to increase the likelihood that producers' work will obtain recognition and legitimacy. In this paper, we explore whether these intermediaries influence the extent to which the work of peripheral producers attracts recognition from external non-peer evaluators. This distinction opens the possibility to explore the *contingent* role of consultants when peripheral producers seek recognition from evaluating audiences. We thus ask: *How do peripheral producers overcome challenges associated with the recognition of radically novel practices by external audiences*? *Do ties to well-connected consultants influence their likelihood of being successful in doing so?*

To address these questions, we collected data on the Italian wine field from 1997 to 2006. The Italian wine field is the world's largest in terms of production and ranks third for

wine consumption. As with other cultural products where the quality of a product is more difficult to verify objectively (Salganik et al., 2006), certifications or awards by peers or critics often are used as proxies for excellence or quality. In the wine field, wine guides function as a medium of legitimacy. Our sample consists of all the wines rated by the Veronelli guide, the oldest wine guide in Italy, published since 1989. By analyzing over 26,000 different wines evaluated during our observation period, we find that the use of a radically novel practice by wine producers (i.e., wineries) is positively received by the external audience of wine critics, although we do not find a significant difference in radical novelty recognition between core and peripheral wine producers. Instead, the support of well-connected consultants (i.e., winemakers) helps peripheral producers obtain positive evaluations from external audiences. Thus, the effect of consultants on the evaluation of radical novelty is reinforced by peripheral positioning.

Our findings contribute to research on the evaluation, legitimation, and recognition of novelty by offering a deeper understanding of the contingent factors that influence an audience's evaluation and recognition of novelty, an area of scholarly inquiry that has received less attention with respect to the generation of novelty (Cattani et al., 2017; Zhou, Wang, Song, & Wu, 2017). In extant research on novelty recognition, scholars have treated peripheral producers as disadvantaged actors who might be proponents of novelty (Merton, 1973), yet are unlikely to have such novelty recognized (Sgourev, 2013). Yet, in recent research, scholars have theorized that producers are more likely to receive support from external audiences when introducing radical novelty (Cattani et al., 2020). We test and extend this proposition by exploring whether innovators' positional status impacts recognition of their radical work. Although we do not find support for our claim that peripheral producers are more likely to be recognized by external audiences when adopting radically novel practices, we do find support for the idea that well-connected intermediaries influence

external audiences' recognition of novelty, particularly when those who use novel practices are peripheral producers. Our findings thus offer a more nuanced account of the recognition of peripheral producers' novelty by an external audience. In particular, we extend recent research that explores factors affecting evaluation and recognition by audiences (Ertug, Yogev, Lee, & Hedström, 2016; Fini et al., 2018) by highlighting the contingent role of embedded consultants as valuable bridges between peripheral producers and external audiences.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Novelty recognition and external audiences

Organizations can benefit from the exploration and assimilation of new sources of knowledge (e.g., Katila & Ahuja, 2002; March, 1991), which may lead to novel and innovative outcomes. At the same time, novelty entails a certain amount of ambiguity and uncertainty (Rindova & Petkova, 2007), as it requires "a recombination of conceptual and physical materials that were previously in existence" (Nelson & Winter, 1982, p. 130). Innovators also depend on outside actors for resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), and their ability to generate novelty relies to a certain extent on how such outside actors view them (e.g., Polidoro, 2013).

Although the primary focus in novelty research has been how novelty is generated (Bocken & Snihur, 2020; Tortoriello & Krackhardt, 2010), an equally relevant issue is how novelty is recognized within and beyond the field where it is generated. The recognition of novelty has been studied by moving beyond the agentic behavior of the innovator to include relevant social audiences (e.g., critics, peers). As Cattani and colleagues (2020, p. 3) recently noted, "of particular interest here is the role of social audiences in charge of channeling the symbolic and/or material resources that innovators need to further their ideas." Therefore, an

audience-based perspective seems particularly suitable for exposing some unclear aspects of novelty recognition. It also builds on the conceptualization of novelty as "an idea, practice, or material artifact perceived to be new by the relevant unit of adoption" (Zaltman, Duncan, & Holbek, 1973, as cited in Dewar & Dutton, 1986, p. 1422).

For the innovator, novelty recognition is challenging because innovators must overcome bias against novelty (Mueller, Melwani, & Goncalo, 2012) and compete for the attention of their target audiences (Chai & Menon, 2019). A positive evaluation from a specific audience can grant the innovative producer the support and legitimacy necessary to obtain rewards from other audiences, such as investors, peers, or users. In other words, from an audience-based perspective, "actors may be successful in innovation not *solely* because of the specific actions that they undertake but because of the favorable interpretation of these actions by members of the audience" (Sgourev, 2013, p. 1611; emphasis added). As such, audiences act as agents of consecration with the authority to produce symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1993). They also act as gatekeepers, deciding which novel elements deserve more or less recognition, with important consequences for the value producers are able to extract from novelty. Different audiences, however, employ different criteria to evaluate innovative producers. In this sense, distinguishing between internal and external audiences is useful. Internal audiences are typically composed of peers who are members of the same community as the producers under evaluation (e.g., Wijnberg, 1995). In contrast, external audiences, such as analysts or critics, are not directly involved in the field's dominant canons and are not embedded in the same professional community (Cattani et al., 2020).

Unlike internal audiences who are more eager and likely to maintain the status quo and even oppose the introduction of novelty (Cattani et al., 2017), recent research has suggested that external audiences are more likely to positively evaluate novelty, particularly when novelty carries disruptive or radical elements (Cattani et al., 2020). Moreover, whereas

internal audiences are invested in the field's dominant canons, external evaluators risk compromising their reputations if a particular element of novelty that they do not embrace later becomes popular (Cattani et al., 2014). For instance, in the visual arts, external audiences played an essential role in recognizing and certifying the innovativeness of Impressionist painters (Wijnberg & Gemser, 2000). The invention of the telephone is another instance where audiences played a crucial role in novelty recognition. Although Antonio Meucci had invented the telephone almost two decades before Alexander Graham Bell, the latter was credited for this innovation because he was able to patent it and received significant support from Anglo-Saxon scientific communities (Catania, 1990). The role of external audiences as agents of consecration also emerged in a study of the Hollywood feature film industry, which revealed critics to be important certifiers of novelty that deviates from tradition (Cattani et al., 2014). These examples suggest that external audiences are more likely to support novelty that deviates from established practices (i.e., radical novelty) as opposed to incremental novelty, which implies minor modifications to existing practices or products (Madjar, Greenberg, & Chen et al., 2011). By not being bound by social ties to those whom they evaluate, external audiences possess what Simmel (1971) termed the "objectivity of the stranger" and are therefore open to recognizing and supporting novel practices. Based on the above, external audiences might positively welcome the introduction of novelty—particularly radical novelty—by producers. Hence, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: *The use of a radically novel practice by producers has a positive effect on their evaluation by external audiences*.

Peripherality and novelty recognition

Audiences not only influence the recognition of novel practices, but also shape the struggle for legitimacy between more or less prominent players (Cattani et al., 2014). Indeed,

prominence, centrality, or status can be used to signal credibility to an evaluating audience. Because status—and social signals in general—indicate the particular category that an individual or an organization occupies within a well-defined social hierarchy (Sauder, Lynn, & Podolny, 2012), higher-status actors typically receive better evaluations (Trapido, 2015). To address the question of whether specific characteristics such as the status of those under scrutiny affect how they are evaluated, previous studies have advanced the proposition that the social-structural locations of actors under evaluation influence how audiences recognize these actors' work (Cattani et al., 2014; Aadland et al., 2020).

The link between social structure and novelty recognition has been studied in contexts as diverse as the arts, online user communities, and wine (Dahlander & Frederiksen, 2012; Ierfino-Blachford, 2020; Sgourev, 2013). Applying a relational lens to novelty, researchers have examined social structure in terms of occupying a core versus a peripheral position. Actors positioned at the core enjoy positional advantages that enable them to benefit from emerging information and to be more easily recognized for their innovations. A rich literature on the relationship between social structure and novelty recognition also highlights that these actors are more likely than peripheral actors to receive credit for their ideas (Merton, 1949; Crane, 1972). More recent research has also supported this conjecture. Whereas peripherally-positioned actors are often crucial carriers of novelty (Cattani et al., 2017), individuals at the core (or close to it) more effectively garner recognition for the novelty they introduce (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008; Dahlander & Frederiksen, 2012). Yet, core or prominent players might be less favored when those who evaluate them are not peers, but rather external audiences such as critics or customers (Cattani et al., 2014).

Adopting a social network perspective and the core/periphery lens has proven fruitful for investigating novelty recognition (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2020). Fewer scholars, however, have explored the core-periphery construct and its link with novelty recognition

from a perspective that is not strictly social. Within this stream of research, core-periphery patterns have been studied from a spatial perspective (e.g., Berman, Marino & Mudambi, 2020), whereby core and peripheral status, for instance, reflect the relative level of regional economic activity at a particular time (Wallerstein, 1979, p. 174). Therefore, producers may be classified as core and peripheral by looking at the distribution of economic activities (Pain, 2008). Uneven distributions of productive activities across a specific area (e.g., a nation) with high or low concentrations of production in specific locations (e.g., subnational regions) classify producers residing in these locations as core and peripheral, respectively. We see an interesting and fruitful opportunity to view the two approaches (geography and social signals) as complementary, rather than substitutes, in studying peripherality and novelty recognition.[1] An interesting example of the link between geographic and social peripherality is the initially marginal, but later path-breaking architectural movement known as Baukünstler that emerged in the peripheral region of Vorarlberg in Austria (Grabher, 2018). On the one hand, a geographic characterization of peripherality helps establish boundaries in space, highlighting potential disparities between actors' locations. On the other hand, social signals function as important credibility markers that help further distinguish between more or less prominent actors. Therefore, coreness (peripherality) may stem from being located in a space characterized by a high (low) concentration of producers whose products have been recognized for their quality.

Building on these arguments, we now turn to a discussion of the producer-audience interface by focusing on how differences in the way producers are perceived by the field influence the recognition of their innovative efforts. Two additional considerations beyond perceptions of producers as core or peripheral are relevant and useful here. First, the nature of

[1] While in economic geography there is a relatively rich tradition of studies exploring the social-geographical nexus and how it affects innovation (e.g., Boschma, 2005; Kudic, Ehrenfeld & Pusch, 2015), less attention has been paid by management and organizations scholars on this issue. On this point see a recent Editorial for a special issue on the competitive advantage of regions by Knight and colleagues (2020) who focus on opportunities for the fields of economic geography and strategic management to work more closely.

novelty (radical versus incremental) is likely to affect its acceptance and recognition (Rindova & Petkova, 2007). A second important distinction is the internal or external character of the evaluating audience (Cattani et al., 2014).[2] Usually, core players involved in introducing incremental novelty are more likely to receive recognition from peer evaluators, as both parties have incentives to maintain continuity with the past. Peripheral producers, in contrast, are more likely to depart from the status quo, but often lack support and legitimacy from their peers. This is well explained by studies showing that, on average, peripheral producers have little chance of being recognized as innovators in peer-based evaluative contexts (e.g., Lamont, 2009). Thus, an opportunity may emerge when those responsible for evaluating novelty are not strictly attached to a field's canons. Yet, plenty of anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that peripheral players can be proponents of (unconventional) novelty and obtain recognition for it from non-peer audiences (Cattani et al., 2017; Sgourev, 2013). For example, a study of icewine in Canada revealed that peripheral producers were more likely to successfully diffuse their innovative products when they received support from audiences outside of the field (Ierfino-Blachford, 2020). In line with scholars who view the periphery as a source of novelty (Grabher, 2018; Jeppesen & Lakhani, 2010; Merton, 1972), we posit that when peripheral (rather than core) actors use a radically novel practice, external evaluators are more likely to recognize their efforts. For the reasons above, when evaluating the utilization of novel practices that deviate from tradition, external audiences, which are less bound by a field's dominant canons, may not favor producers positioned at the core where the concentration of products recognized as high-quality is high, but may actually favor more peripheral producers. Thus:

[2] In this paper, we focus on a particular case where novelty is radical and evaluators are non-peers. While we are aware of studies in which researchers have compared evaluations of external and internal audiences (e.g., Cattani et al., 2014; Gemser, Leenders & Wijnberg, 2008) or explored how audiences evaluate products with varying degrees of novelty (e.g., Boudreau, Guinan, Lakhani, & Riedl, 2016), our data do not enable us to analyze such cases. We acknowledge this important limitation in the last section of our manuscript.

Hypothesis 2: *The positive effect of using a radically novel practice on evaluations by external audiences is higher for peripheral producers than for core producers.*

External consultants and novelty recognition

Our previous arguments suggest that the characteristics of producers affect how audiences evaluate novel practices. We extend this argument further and suggest that relationships with prominent professionals such as consultants influence the recognition of novelty associated with peripheral producers. Scholars have begun to analyze how those under evaluation might benefit by engaging with multiple audiences (e.g., Cattani et al., 2017), highlighting that an additional "source of information that an audience might use to assess an actor's unobserved qualities is the actor's *interaction* with other audiences" (Ertug et al., 2016, p. 118; emphasis added). Yet, while it is now better understood that an external evaluating audience can be influenced by candidates' previous interactions with well-known peers (Slavich & Castellucci, 2016), we know less about how candidates' ongoing (rather than past) interactions with non-audience members such as qualified influential consultants affect an audience's evaluation of these candidates. Therefore, we extend this research by considering whether peripheral producers' interactions with well-connected consultants can be interpreted as signals of quality and influence an evaluating audience's recognition of novelty.

Consultants are recognized as such by virtue of superior experience or because they are particularly adept at solving complex problems (Teece, 2003). Consultants' know-how is particularly valuable to their clients, as they "have the capability to rely on previous knowledge (experience) and to re-articulate pieces of knowledge in a new way" (Creplet, Dupouet, Kern, Mehmanpazir, & Munier, 2001, p. 1519). Being recognized widely for these qualities, consultants often become well-known celebrities in their domains, making them a valuable resource for clients seeking legitimacy and recognition from external audiences.

Establishing legitimacy is particularly important for novel practices, especially when they diverge significantly from existing ones (e.g., Aldrich & Fiol, 1994).

In our setting, consultants are independent professional winemakers who are hired to help wine producers make better wines (Barhélemy, 2017). They also provide professional support to wine producers and serve as intermediaries between producers and external audiences (Corrado & Odorici, 2009). Having worked with several producers, the most active winemakers can act as knowledge brokers, transferring important information about the product and lessons learned through experience. Beyond technical expertise, winemakers often possess strong communication skills and public relations expertise (Arrigoni, 2000). Take the example of Giacomo Tachis, a prominent Italian winemaker who is considered a pioneer in the transition from "wine as a source of nutrition" to "wine as a source of taste and pleasure." In the early years of his career, Tachis worked with several core wine producers, such as Marquis Antinori. Through experimentation with novel techniques, Tachis became popular for high-quality wines such as Sassicaia, Tignanello, and Solaia. Building on his expertise and accumulated knowledge, he later transitioned to working with more peripheral producers in regions such as Sardinia and Sicily. Marquis Piero Antinori said:

> The great merit of Giacomo [Tachis] has been to change, beyond that of wine, the image of the oenologist: not only a chemist ready to intervene on wine in case of urgency, but someone that follows wine from the vineyard to the bottle and knows how to turn it from good to perfect, grasping those nuances that make the difference. (Gambero Rosso, 2016)

Thanks to these collaborations, peripheral producers' innovative efforts, such as the Sicilian Donnafugata's night grape harvesting technique, were widely recognized by critics (Wine News, 2000).

In cultural fields such as winemaking, social evaluation is only marginally based on an objective observations of quality (Salganik et al., 2006); instead, evaluators must rely on signals because key attributes are unobservable (Spence, 1973). This uncertainty about producers and their products' attributes can be particularly detrimental for peripheral players who typically lack crucial markers of credibility (e.g., brand, reputation). Building on previous findings that evaluations of actors could be influenced by characteristics of the affiliates of the actors under scrutiny (Slavich & Castellucci, 2016; Stuart, Hoang & Hybels, 1999), and given the ambiguities that are intrinsic to the definition of a cultural product such as wine (Odorici & Corrado, 2004), we propose that professional relationships with central consultants are signals to an evaluating audience regarding the innovative efforts of peripheral producers. Several advantages may stem from interacting with well-connected consultants, as they have broad access to resources and are often thought to have more power in the network (Cook & Emerson, 1978). Central consultants actively collaborate with several producers and other field stakeholders, and as a result, are better informed about a field's requirements. Moreover, trustworthiness, reputation, and influence are key social outcomes often associated with a central position (Provan, Huang, & Milward, 2009), which can be particularly valuable for helping clients obtain recognition from evaluating audiences. To summarize, the collaboration between central consultants and peripheral producers compensates for the latter's lack of legitimacy, such that an innovative practice used by these actors receives more support when it is certified by a well-connected consultant. Hence:

Hypothesis 3: *The relationship between the use of a radically novel practice by peripheral producers and their evaluation by external audiences is contingent on the interaction between producers' peripherality and consultants' centrality. Specifically, the use of a radically novel practice improves the evaluation of peripheral producers that collaborate with central consultants.*

STUDY SETTING: THE ITALIAN WINE FIELD

The Italian wine field has changed radically in recent decades as a result of domestic and international transformations. Although Italy was the world's top wine producer and second largest wine exporter in terms of both value and volume in 2019, wine production has witnessed a rapid decline from 83 million hectoliters in 1980 to 53 hectoliters in 2005 (Enotria, 2000-2007), to 49 hectoliters in 2019 (I numeri del vino, 2020b). Accompanying this decline was a crisis of consumption in Italy, plummeting to 37.4 liters per capita in 2019 (I numeri del vino, 2020a), much lower than both Portugal (49 liters per capita) and France (40.6 liters per capita). Despite this decline, Italy still ranks third in the world for wine consumption. These quantitative declines reflect important qualitative changes at the global level. In Italy, as in other countries with long histories of winemaking, wine was traditionally consumed on a daily basis as part of ordinary meals. In light of many recent societal changes, these habits have changed and wine consumption patterns have become increasingly similar worldwide. Rather than being a normal part of everyday life, wine consumption is increasingly limited to convivial moments. As a result, consumers are paying increased attention to the quality of wine.

Together with increasing international competition, these changes have posed many challenges to Italian producers. New countries have emerged as producers and consumers of wine, and even though they have not undermined the prominence of European countries such as France, Italy, and Spain, they have nevertheless created strong pressure to change established arrangements and traditions (Corrado & Odorici, 2009). These changes also have revealed several peculiarities and weaknesses of the Italian wine field. First, Italian wine production is highly fragmented among hundreds of thousands of small firms. This production system is the legacy of a tradition whereby each farm, no matter how small, allocated some soil to grape-growing to produce wine for personal consumption. This practice

was at odds with growing concentration of the industry worldwide (Coelho & Rastoin, 2006a, 2006b). Second, Italian wines are characterized by extreme heterogeneity, reflecting the plethora of *terroirs* (Corrado & Odorici, 2009) in the country. The *terroir* concept expresses the specificity of wines to the natural (e.g., microclimate, soil type) and cultural (e.g., local customs and folklore) characteristics of their production territories, some of which are tiny geographical areas. The extreme heterogeneity of Italian wine production was institutionalized in the denomination of origin system, which was introduced in 1963 to establish standards for wine types and wine quality, thereby enabling producers to gain recognition for their quality improvement efforts and consumers to easily identify high-quality products (Delmastro, 2005; Zhao, 2005). However, this vertical classification system of quality (Zhao, 2005), with the DOCG (denomination of controlled and guaranteed origin) designation at the top, did not clearly certify a wine's quality, as its complex articulation did not simplify decisions for consumers. Instead, it reflected the heterogeneity of Italian wine, highlighting the link between wine and *terroir*.

These effects are even more relevant if we consider the evolution of the international wine market towards mass production (Corrado & Odorici, 2009). New producers all over the world were trying to gain a foothold in the international market by responding to consumer demand for wines with very consistent quality rather than following traditions and "product specifications."[3] In this context, important actors emerged, such as wine guides and independent winemakers (Corrado & Odorici, 2009; Colucci and Visentin, 2019). In particular, wine guides were developed by an audience of critics in the 1980s after the methanol scandal, which ruined the image of Italian wine all over the world. Repercussions

[3] In the Italian context, every product with a protected designation of origin (DOP) must follow a *disciplinare*, which is a set of production and commercial specifications. In the case of DOC and DOCG wines (see data, methods, and measures section), these specifications concern aspects such as grape varietals, their percentages, the geographical harvesting area, grape density, winemaking and aging processes, alcohol content, color, flavor, acidity, name, and other details printed on labels.

for the Italian wine industry were tremendous, considering that by the end of 1986, Italian wine exports had decreased by 37%.

To defend the image of Italian wine, a famous critic, Luigi Veronelli, published the first Italian wine guide in 1989. The guide's main goal was to recognize the hundreds of wineries with excellent products whose products were mistakenly associated with the products of unscrupulous wine producers. Wine guides began to influence decisions on both sides of the market for a number of reasons. First, they reduced the uncertainty around wine selection for consumers by identifying the best wines. Second, guides gained a very strong influence in the field to the point where strong recognition of a specific wine (e.g., a three-star evaluation in the Veronelli guide) brought a sudden increase in orders and revenues to the wine producer. Third, wineries began to use guides to understand trends about which wine characteristics were more appreciated by the market audience (Bottura, Corrado, Forgues, & Odorici, 2017).

Parallel to the wine guides, independent professional consultants (i.e., winemakers) began to play an increasingly important role in the winemaking process by sharing their technical competencies and knowledge of market tendencies. Thus, wine guides and winemakers reciprocally sustained their success. Winemakers became a symbol of the professionalization of the winemaking process, signaling its degree of sophistication and complexity. Most importantly, they contributed to the diffusion of modern and novel practices focused on producing good wines, such as the use of *barriques*, small wooden barrels typical of the French tradition, to age wine (Negro, Hannan, Rao, & Leung, 2007). These practices helped stabilize the quality of wines regardless of climate conditions and the peculiarities of specific vintages.

Barriques began to be used all over the world, including Italy. However, diffusion of the practice was not homogeneous (Bottura et al., 2017). In areas with long histories of wine

production, the use of *barriques* in the aging process was often criticized as compromising traditional winemaking practices (Negro et al., 2007; Negro, Hannan & Rao, 2011). For more peripheral producers, however, the practice represented an opportunity to attract attention to wines that often were not well known in Italy or abroad. The radical nature of this innovative aging practice can be understood by comparing the traditional style of winemaking with so-called "modernist" winemaking practices. The traditional style of winemaking yields wines that reflect their natural and cultural environment of production, which is linked to the French concept of *terroir*. Traditional winemaking practices stipulate longer times for grape crushing, fermentation, and aging, with little or no intervention in the natural process (Winepair, 2017). Similarly, the containers used to age the wines (e.g., large Slavonian oak barrels) have relatively little influence on the aroma, and taste of the wine. Hence, "traditional" wines are characterized by significant heterogeneity in that they reflect specific *terroirs* and are subject to changing climatic conditions across vintages. These wines best match the preferences of experienced and knowledgeable collectors and enthusiasts, but are not suited to international demand and the requirements of large-scale distribution.

The growth of international markets boosted "modernist" practices and sparked a fierce debate between supporters of tradition and advocates of innovation (Negro et al., 2007). New winemaking methods involve shortening the crushing, fermentation, and aging periods and active intervention in fermentation (e.g., through the use of additives). A key innovative practice is the aging of wines in *barriques*, which affects the aroma and taste of the final product. For example, previous research focused on the producers of Barolo and Barbaresco wines confirms the strong association between the *barrique* and modern winemaking: "Knowing only that a producer uses the French barrels leads outside audience members to treat as default that they also use most, if not all, of the harder-to-observe 'modernist' practices of vinification" (Negro et al., 2011, p. 1455). These new techniques were backed by

prominent innovators such as winemaker Giacomo Tachis and winery owner Elio Altare, but also encountered strong opposition, because such innovations weaken the link between a wine and its *terroir* as a constitutive element of wine quality. Among these "radical" and contested innovations, the use of *barriques* is the easiest to observe, as it is perceived as a symbol of modernity (Negro et al. 2007, p. 3) and is a proxy for the adoption of other harder-to-observe modernist practices (Negro et al. 2011, p. 1455).

DATA, METHODS, AND MEASURES

Our sample consists of all wines rated in the Veronelli guide over a 10-year period, from 1997 to 2006. The guide offers very detailed information about wineries and the wines they produce. Table 1 shows that the number of wineries included in the guide doubled from 1,040 to 2,326 and the number of wines grew from 4,212 to 13,102 between 1997 and 2006.

<Table 1>

The Veronelli guide offers a comprehensive overview of the best wines produced in Italy through a ratings system. Wines are rated in two ways: on a scale from 1 to 100 and on a scale from one to three stars. The numerical rating reflects the result of a tasting of a particular vintage, which is specified along with the name of the expert who evaluated it. This rating is provided only for a few wines. In contrast, the star rating represents a general evaluation that does not refer to a particular vintage, but to the average quality of the wine over the past few years (Odorici & Corrado, 2004). As Table 2 shows, the number of evaluations published in the guide increased during the observation period. The percentage of wines rated with one star decreased, whereas wines rated with two or three stars increased. In particular, the percentage of three-star ratings increased from 6.96% in 1997 to 15.16% in 2006.

<Table 2>

In addition to the wine evaluations, we coded all information about the associated wines and wineries. Data on wineries included geographic location (e.g., region and zip code), size (e.g., number of hectares), and ownership and management (e.g., names of the owners, agronomist, and winemaker). Data about individual wines included wine rating, tasted vintage, name of the taster, recommended vintage, size of the vineyard from which the wine originated, grape varietals used to produce the wine, number of bottles produced, aging method (steel tanks, *barriques*, etc.), price, and the denomination of origin: table wine (TAV), protected geographical indication (IGP), controlled designation of origin (DOC) and controlled and guaranteed designation of origin (DOCG). Unfortunately, some of these data were available only for a limited number of wineries and wines, and thus could not be used to build variables for our entire period of observation. Each wine was specifically identified and coded, and we arranged all data in a pooled cross-sectional time series dataset where the observation unit was a single wine. Each wine generated a number of observations equal to the number of years it appeared in the Veronelli guide. The dataset contains 74,096 observations associated with 26,817 different wines.

Our dependent variable is the number of stars (*Stars*) assigned by the Veronelli guide to a wine, which we use as a proxy for this external audience's evaluation. The independent variables are the aging method in the barrique, the peripherality of the wine producer, and the centrality of the winemaker. *Barrique* is a dummy variable that indicates whether the wine was aged in small wooden barrels. *Peripheral_Region* is a dummy variable indicating whether the producer was located in a peripheral region. We classified a region as peripheral when the mean annual proportion of wines from the region appearing in the guide during the 10-year period did not exceed the 6% threshold.[4] The regional distribution of wines evaluated

[4] Prior to 2000, the Italian denomination system recognized 17 DOCG wines (Controlled and Guaranteed Denomination of Origin) at the apex of the pyramidal classification, only two of which were produced in peripheral regions. Using our classification of core/periphery regions, the average number of DOCG wines per core region is 2.5 versus 0.13 per peripheral region during our study period, whereas the average number of

in the guide appears in Table A1 in Appendix A. The following regions were classified as peripheral: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Marche, Molise, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Umbria, and Valle d'Aosta. Part of the autonomous Italian region Trentino-Alto Adige was core (i.e., Alto-Adige), and part was peripheral (i.e., Trentino). If we exclude the case of Trentino Alto-Adige, of the remaining 19 regions, 14 are peripheral. Despite their high number, only 24.95% of the wines appearing in the guide during the 10-year observation period were produced in peripheral regions. In contrast, some highly productive wineries in core regions had over 200 wines represented in the guide. *Wmaker_Centrality* measures the centrality of a winemaker—that is, the number of other winemakers affiliated with the same winery.[5]

We show the affiliations of winemakers and wineries in 1997 and 2003 in Figure 1. Black squares are winemakers, blue circles are wineries in core regions, and red circles are wineries in peripheral regions. Lines link a winemaker with one or more wineries. Both figures were created by running the spring embedder graph-theoretic algorithm multiple times in the graph drawing software Netdraw (Borgatti, 2002). The denser network for 2003 results from the increased number of observed wineries from around one thousand in 1997 to 1,700 in 2003, and the increased number of winemakers from 714 to 1,118. In 1997 (Figure 1a), it is possible to distinguish a few winemakers only affiliated with peripheral wineries (red circles), while the majority are affiliated either with a mix of core and periphery wineries or only with core wineries. In 2003 (Figure 1b), collaborations that include only peripheral wineries and winemakers become less common, a phenomenon we ascribe to peripheral wineries' seeking to work with more prominent winemakers increasingly.

DOC (Controlled Denomination of Origin) wines per core region is 12.2 versus 5.8 per peripheral region. The number of denominations skyrocketed over time, often to promote territories rather than to recognize particular enological productions. Hence, we decided not to use the denomination system as it may not clearly reflect the difference between core and peripheral producers.

[5] The degree of the winemaker in the one-mode network of winemakers that results from the transformation of the two-mode matrix of the affiliations between winemakers and wineries.

<Figure 1>

To verify our second and third hypotheses, we added the interaction terms of the explanatory variables. We also included two control variables. The number of wines per winery included in the Veronelli guide in a year *(Nwines x Winery)* is a proxy for the production size and diversification of a winery, together with its ability to maintain a high quality standard. The number of wines from a given zip code (*Nwines x Zipcode*) reflects the extent of winemaking activities in a particular geographic location. Given the panel nature of the data and the possible correlations among wines produced in the same year (cross-sectional) and among different vintages of the same wine (time-series), we estimated the parameters following Petersen's (2009) recommendations. Thus, we clustered the residuals to control for correlation bias across wines and over time.

RESULTS

Table 3 reports the descriptive statistics of the entire sample (*All*) and of the sub-samples split by wine aging method (*No barrique/Barrique*). The second column shows that the average star rating for the wines in our sample is 1.711, and the average winemaker centrality is 1.408. Summary statistics for the sub-samples split by wine aging method show that on average, wines not aged in *barriques* received lower star ratings (1.529 stars) than wines aged in *barriques* (1.879). These differences in the means of the two sub-samples are statistically significant, as the nonparametric Kruskal Wallis test shows. The median star ratings of 1 for wines not aged in *barriques* and 2 for wines aged in *barriques* reveal a similar trend. For wines not aged in *barriques*, the median star rating is lower than the mean star rating, suggesting a right tail in the frequency distribution. In contrast, for wines aged in *barriques* the median star-rating is higher than the mean star rating, implying a left tail in the frequency distribution. A similar dynamic can be observed for winemaker centrality. For

wines not aged in *barriques*, the mean value for winemaker centrality (1.266) is significantly lower than that for wines aged in *barriques* (1.538). The median value also is lower for wines not aged in *barriques* (1) compared to wines aged in *barriques* (2). Comparing the means and medians of the two sub-samples, the frequency distribution of winemaker centrality presents a right tail for wine not aged in *barriques* and a left tail for wines aged in *barriques*.

<Table 3>

Table 4 shows the correlation matrix using Pearson's coefficients. The use of *barriques* is positively correlated with star ratings, and winemaker centrality is positively correlated with star ratings and the use of *barriques,* but negatively correlated with the other variables. This result suggests that winemaker centrality is directly linked to higher wine ratings and the use of *barriques*. In contrast, the peripheral region variable is negatively correlated with all other variables considered. This suggests that compared to wineries in core regions, wineries in peripheral regions generally produce wines that receive lower evaluations, use *barriques* less, and have weaker affiliations with well-connected winemakers. The number of wines per winery is positively correlated with the use of *barriques*, but not with the use of a central winemaker and location in a peripheral region. The number of wines per zip code is positively correlated with star ratings and the number of wines per winery.

<Table 4>

Table 5 reports estimates of the dependent star-rating variable regressed against the use of *barriques*, winemaker centrality, and peripherality. Model 1 is the baseline model with the control variables only. Both the number of wines per winery and the number of wines per zip code have positive and significant effects on critics' evaluations. However, the effect of the number of wines per zip code on critics' evaluations is quite small. The results for Model 2 regarding the relationship between aging technique and critics' evaluations reveal that wines

aged in *barriques* receive higher ratings. The effect is positive and significant, confirming Hypothesis 1 about the importance of radical novelty in improving evaluations. The results for Model 3 regarding the effect of peripherality as well as its interaction with the aging technique indicate that wines produced in peripheral regions generally receive lower ratings (see Figure 2). Whereas the net effect is negative and significant, the effect of the interaction between peripherality and the use of *barriques* is not significant, despite the sign of the coefficient being in the expected direction. Therefore, although the use of the *barriques* was positively received by external evaluators, the results suggest no significant difference in the relationship between *barrique* utilization and audience recognition when distinguishing between core and peripheral wineries. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is not confirmed.

<Table 5>

<Figure 2>

Model 4 evaluates the effects of the independent variables and their interactions. In this model, the positive effect of the use of *barriques* and the negative effect of peripherality on star ratings remain significant, whereas the interaction between the use of *barriques* and peripherality remains non-significant. Winemaker centrality has a positive and significant effect on wine ratings and reinforces the positive relationship between the use of *barriques* and wine ratings. Moreover, winemaker centrality positively moderates the relationship between peripherality and wine ratings.

Finally, Model 5 includes all of the independent variables and their interactions, together with the three-way interaction to test Hypothesis 3. The results are similar to Model 4, except the contingent effect of winemaker centrality on the relationship between the use of *barriques* and wine ratings is no longer significant. This effect, however, remains positive for wines produced in peripheral regions. Moreover, winemaker centrality positively moderates the relationship between the use of *barriques* by peripheral producers and critics' evaluations,

confirming Hypothesis 3. The result can be easily appreciated by examining Figure 3, which reveals that winemaker centrality increases the effect of the use of *barriques* on wine ratings much more strongly for peripheral rather than core producers, as the difference in the slopes of the two higher lines, representing wines aged in *barriques* in peripheral and core regions, shows.

<Figure 3>

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Novelty evaluation, legitimation, and recognition have increasingly attracted scholarly attention (Cattani et al., 2017; Cattani et al., 2020; Sgourev, 2013; Zhou et al., 2017). In this paper, we explored whether the use of practices that substantially deviate from tradition (which we consider a form of radical novelty) is more or less likely to be positively received by external audiences. The choice to consider external audiences instead of peers is important, as external audiences are, in principle, less subject to biased evaluations (Simmel, 1971). Next, we explored whether peripheral producers are more likely to be recognized by external audiences when using radically novel practices than core producers. Finally, we examined whether well-connected and qualified professionals supporting peripheral producers' innovative efforts influence an external audience's recognition of such efforts.

In our empirical setting, novelty took the form of innovative winemaking practices which emerged as part of a broader transformation of the wine field to appeal to mass market consumers. One of the most salient new winemaking practices was the use of *barriques* to age wines. The general transformation of the wine field was accompanied by changes in the social organization, with the appearance of new categories of actors external to the professional community of winemaking (i.e., wine guides) and others more internal to the field (i.e., winemakers). We leveraged this empirical context to highlight the dynamics of novelty

evaluation and recognition by building on the growing literature in which scholars have examined the roles of different actors in the legitimization of novelty (Cattani et al., 2017). In particular, we studied the role of interactions between audiences and innovative producers in determining the rewards that accrue to novelty by highlighting the role of consultants as a contingent factor influencing the audience-producer nexus.

We modeled the effect of radical novelty on ratings published in one of the most prominent wine guides in Italy, the Veronelli guide. Our findings support our hypothesis that the use of a novel practice that deviates from tradition is evaluated positively by an external audience of critics. This circumstance is remarkable, given the highly contested nature of the *barrique* aging technique and other "modernist" practices in winemaking (Negro et al., 2007; Negro et al., 2011). Tradition tends to value and reproduce each wine's dependence on the specific natural and social conditions of a given geographic location. This dependence is embodied in the concept of *terroir*, which links each wine to the unique soil composition, climate, and winemaking practices of a given place. The exploitation of new market opportunities fostered the diffusion of new practices in winemaking, including the use of *barriques*.

Consistent with previous literature that examined the role of external audiences in innovation processes (Cattani et al., 2020; Wijnberg & Gemser, 2000) and with studies related to the wine field (Corrado and Odorici, 2009), we found that external audiences reward novelty. Interestingly, the critics who compile the Veronelli wine guide and dominate the evaluation of Italian wines are somewhat external to the field, similar to the critics studied by Cattani and colleagues (2014). Extant research shows that external audiences are more prone to endorse novelty, whereas internal audiences (e.g., peers), tend to favor adherence to established canons (e.g., Wijnberg & Gemser, 2000). Although wine critics do not possess the knowledge and distinctive competencies of peer wineries, they have gained importance as

external evaluators due to their role as specialized critics in the context of a market shift towards mass consumption of quality wines. Moreover, contrary to peers, critics are not bound by traditions of the field, but instead, have incentives to advocate novelty in order to maintain a competitive advantage vis-à-vis critics who publish other guides. Our results confirm this view, contributing to literature reflecting an audience-based perspective on novelty recognition (Cattani et al., 2014; Durand, Rao, & Monin, 2007; Wijnberg & Gemser, 2000).

Our second argument builds on the consideration that the innovator's positional status is an important contingency factor that affects how novelty is received. Cattani and colleagues (2014) noted that cultural fields are permeated by an oppositional structure in which less established peripheral players try to advance their interests vis-à-vis better established core players. On the one hand, research has revealed that novelty tends to be rewarded positively when it is introduced by core (i.e., prominent) actors in a field (e.g., Trapido, 2015). On the other hand, there is also evidence that peripheral actors are more likely to be the source of radical novelty (Grabher, 2018) that could advance their position vis-à-vis core players, and that external audiences are more likely to reward their innovation positively (Cattani et al., 2014). In the Italian wine field, a widely recognized distinction exists between regions with long-standing winemaking traditions (e.g., the Chianti area in Tuscany or the Langa area in Piedmont) and other regions that are not well known for winemaking. Indeed, the most prominent wineries are located in areas with the strongest historical winemaking traditions, where the distinctions between "traditionalists" and "modernists" are most stark (Negro et al., 2011). While all of these factors seem to suggest that rewards for novelty should be higher for peripheral producers (Hypothesis 2), this intuition is not supported by our models.

Evidence in this direction emerged only as a result of our finer-grained analysis of innovation processes to evaluate the contingent role of well-connected consultants

(Hypothesis 3). As we noted above, the consolidation of wine critics as agents of consecration in the wine field in Italy was concomitant to and complemented by the rise of the winemaking consultant as a new type of professional (Bottura et al., 2017; Corrado & Odorici, 2009). Peripheral producers, while attracted by the prospect of gaining more prominence in the field, lacked the legitimacy conferred by a longstanding winemaking tradition. This gap was filled by the technical expertise of winemakers and their growing public prominence (Arrigoni, 2000). Our findings support the expectation that novelty is rewarded more when the innovator is a peripheral producer, but only when the latter is associated with an influential consultant. From a theoretical point of view, this evidence complements and extends extant research on novelty recognition. Some research highlights that the nature and role of the audience influence how novelty is recognized (e.g., Wijnberg & Gemser, 2000), whereas other research documents the role of the innovator's positional status (Sgourev, 2013) and her/his previous interactions with well-known peers (Slavich & Castellucci, 2016). Complementing these perspectives, our study suggests that well-connected consultants signal credibility to evaluating external audiences, thereby enabling peripheral producers to reap the rewards of novel practices. These findings contribute to recent research on factors affecting evaluation and recognition by audiences (Ertug et al., 2016; Fini et al., 2018) by highlighting the contingent role of embedded consultants as valuable bridges between peripheral producers and external audiences.

From a managerial standpoint, our study offers interesting insights into the problem that Cattani and colleagues (2017) termed "the outsider puzzle." On the one hand, peripherally-positioned actors have the greatest incentive to engage in innovation as a means of subverting the social hierarchy in which they are disadvantaged. On the other hand, innovation efforts by those same actors tend to be on average poorly rewarded. The external (non-peer) nature of the evaluating audience is only a partial solution to the outsider puzzle

because despite tending to be more objective than peers, external audiences might also confer recognition based on individualistic motivations (e.g., increasing visibility or establishing connections with specific actors). Our results suggest that this gap is more easily filled when peripheral producers are visibly associated with professionals with certain technical expertise and prominence.

As with every study, our study is not without limitations. One limitation of our research is that we used a geographical criterion to capture the stratification of the wine field between more or less prominent producers. Although this criterion can be justified based on the specific characteristics of our empirical context and is grounded in the tradition of studies in economic geography (Berman et al., 2020; Boschma, 2005), it departs from explicit socio-structural criteria such as the network core/periphery distinction used by Cattani et al. (2014), or the measurement of status based on network beta centrality (Bonacich, 1987) employed, for instance, by Aadland and colleagues (2019). Another limitation of this study is that our sample relies on a single source of data—namely, the Veronelli guide. Although this guide is the oldest and one of the most complete guides published in Italy (Corrado & Odorici, 2009; Negro et al., 2007), extending data collection to other guides may strengthen our findings. To partially address this limitation, we complement our quantitative findings with a qualitative illustration of the role played by a prominent winemaker, Giacomo Tachis, in helping peripheral producers obtain recognition for their novelty (see Appendix B). Third, in this study, we explored the audience-candidate link by examining a single type of audience—namely, critics. Building on recent studies on multiple audiences and candidate recognition (e.g., Cattani et al., 2014; Cattani et al., 2017; Fini et al., 2018), future research should replicate our findings by incorporating additional audiences, including customers, who increasingly act as substitutes for critics by actively evaluating producers through social media and other online platforms, and expert evaluators, such as sommeliers, among others.

Finally, although the novelty we explored (i.e., the use of *barriques*) is widely recognized as one of the most radical innovations in the wine field, other innovative winemaking practices (e.g., micro-oxygenation or the use of clay vessels) could be examined in future studies. In this regard, it would be interesting to complement our quantitative findings with qualitative case studies. Such studies could, for instance, focus on successful (or unsuccessful) attempts of peripheral producers to obtain recognition for using novel and unconventional practices.

Despite these limitations, we believe our theoretical arguments can be explored in other contexts within or outside the cultural field, as well as in other countries. Examples of such settings include academia, where external consultants may facilitate the accreditation of innovative management programs launched by peripheral business schools, and the automotive or fashion industries, where less prominent car makers and fashion houses could hire acclaimed design professionals to increase the likelihood of garnering recognition from internal or external audiences. We hope our work will inspire other researchers to further explore the contingent role played by bridges, intermediaries, and third-party actors in enabling peripheral producers' innovative efforts to be recognized.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Number of wines, wineries, and wines per winery, by year (1997–2006).

Year	Wineries	Wines	Wines per winery		Min	Max
			Mean	Std. Dev.		
1997	1,040	4,212	5.25	2.71	1	17
1998	1,095	4,118	5.04	2.52	1	14
1999	1,119	4,168	5.06	2.59	1	14
2000	1,320	5,319	5.49	2.86	1	16
2001	1,483	6,153	5.83	3.08	1	18
2002	1,601	7,686	6.4	3.22	1	18
2003	1,700	8,034	5.9	2.68	1	16
2004	2,087	9,886	6.61	3.59	1	23
2005	2,315	11,418	6.93	3.74	1	23
2006	2,326	13,102	7.18	3.97	1	23

Table 2. Distribution of star ratings by year (1997–2006), in absolute and percentage terms.

Number of stars	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
1	1,818	1,739	1,750	2,205	2,834	3,214	3,029	3,415	4,210	4,602	28,816
	46.32	44.29	42.48	41.74	47.04	41.88	38.79	35.41	36.89	35.15	39.52
2	1,834	1,819	1,914	2,418	2,888	3,878	4,342	5,048	5,691	6,506	36,338
	46.73	46.33	46.46	45.77	47.93	50.53	55.61	52.34	49.87	49.69	49.84
3	273	368	456	660	303	582	437	1,181	1,510	1,985	7,755
	6.96	9.37	11.07	12.49	5.03	7.58	5.60	12.25	13.23	15.16	10.64
Total	3,925	3,926	4,120	5,283	6,025	7,674	7,808	9,644	11,411	13,093	72,909
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, by wine aging method.

Variable	Wine aging method														Kruskal-Wallis test
	All						No barrique				Barrique				
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	p50	Min	Max	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	p50	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	p50	
Stars	72,909	1.711	0.647	2	1	3	34,937	1.529	0.588	1	37,972	1.879	0.653	2	4,279.283***
Wmaker_Centrality	68,334	1.408	2.302	0	0	12	32,495	1.266	2.212	0	35,839	1.538	2.373	1	267.458***
Peripheral_Region	74,096	0.249	0.433	0	0	1	35,384	0.267	0.442	0	38,712	0.234	0.423	0	61.396***
NWines x Winery	74,096	6.264	3.402	6	1	23	35,384	6.226	3.399	6	38,712	6.298	3.403	6	13,007.897***
NWines x Zipcode	74,096	68.172	82.951	33	1	411	35,384	71.508	87.374	33	38,712	65.123	78.568	33	4.246*

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4. Correlation matrix.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1 Stars					
2 Barrique	0.270				
3 Wmaker_Centrality	0.125	0.059			
4 Peripheral_Region	-0.098	-0.038	-0.047		
5 NwinesxWinery	0.115	0.011	-0.070	-0.015	
6 NwinesxZipcode	0.148	-0.039	-0.006	-0.362	0.248

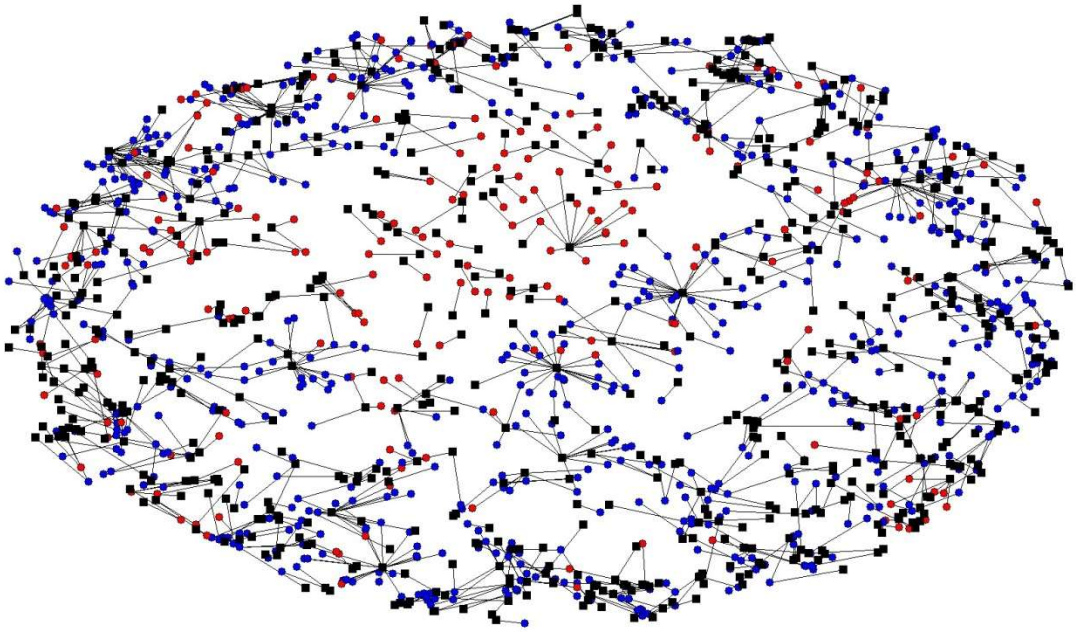
Table 5. Star ratings explained by wine aging method, peripherality, and winemaker centrality. Residuals are clustered by Id_wine and Year.

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Barrique		0.355*** (16.09)	0.342*** (15.97)	0.330*** (15.35)	0.335*** (15.42)
Peripheral_Region			-0.0765*** (-5.81)	-0.0879*** (-5.98)	-0.0718*** (-7.59)
Barrique x Peripheral_Region			0.0282 (1.22)	0.0226 (0.96)	0.00358 (0.14)
Wmaker_Centrality				0.0252*** (8.79)	0.0270*** (9.13)
Barrique x Wmaker_Centrality				0.00571* (1.74)	0.00245 (0.64)
Wmaker_Centrality x Peripheral_Region				0.0165*** (3.86)	0.00829* (1.67)
Barrique x Wmaker_Centrality x Peripheral_Region					0.0150** (2.50)
NWines x Winery	0.0159*** (6.45)	0.00147*** (9.21)	0.0154*** (9.54)	0.0162*** (11.91)	0.0163*** (11.93)
NWines x Zipcode	0.000995*** (20.24)	0.00109*** (23.60)	0.000962*** (17.80)	0.000956*** (18.67)	0.000956*** (18.65)
Constant	1.543*** (49.21)	1.359*** (62.35)	1.385*** (62.60)	1.345*** (70.75)	1.343*** (70.52)
Cluster Id_wine	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Cluster Year	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	72,909	72,909	72,909	67,415	67,415
R-squared	0.029	0.104	0.105	0.117	0.117

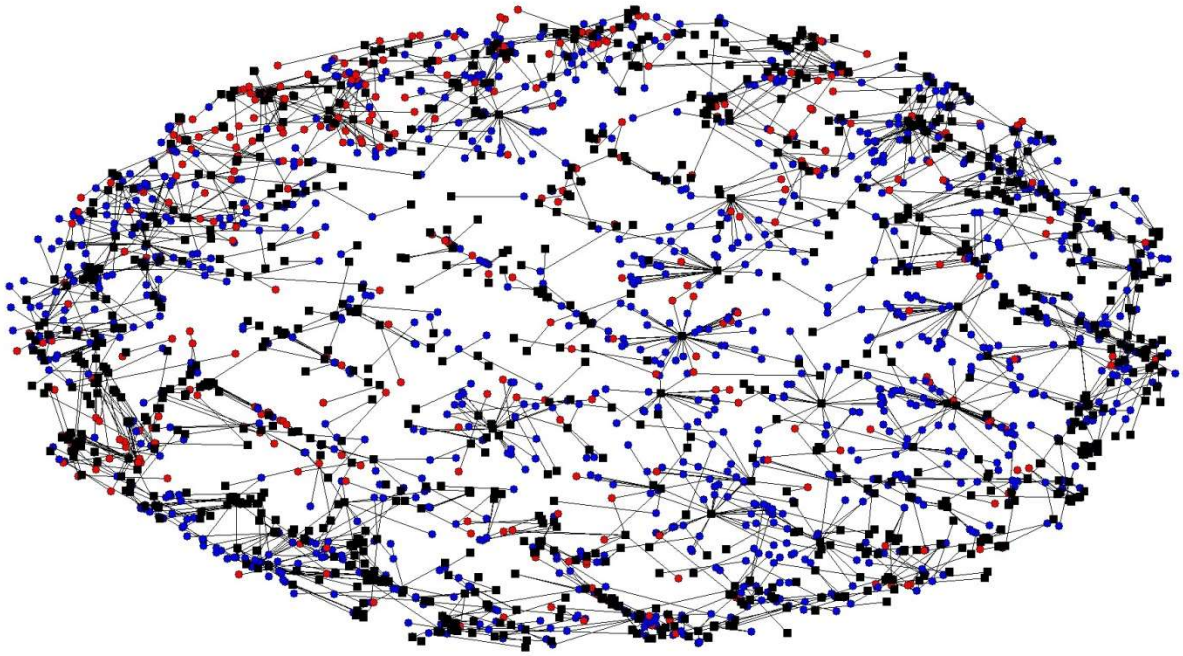
Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure 1. Affiliations of winemakers and wineries in Italy, 1997 and 2003.

(a) 1997



(b) 2003



Note: Black square = winemaker; blue circle = core winery; red circle = peripheral winery.

Figure 2. Histogram of average star rating, by region and year.

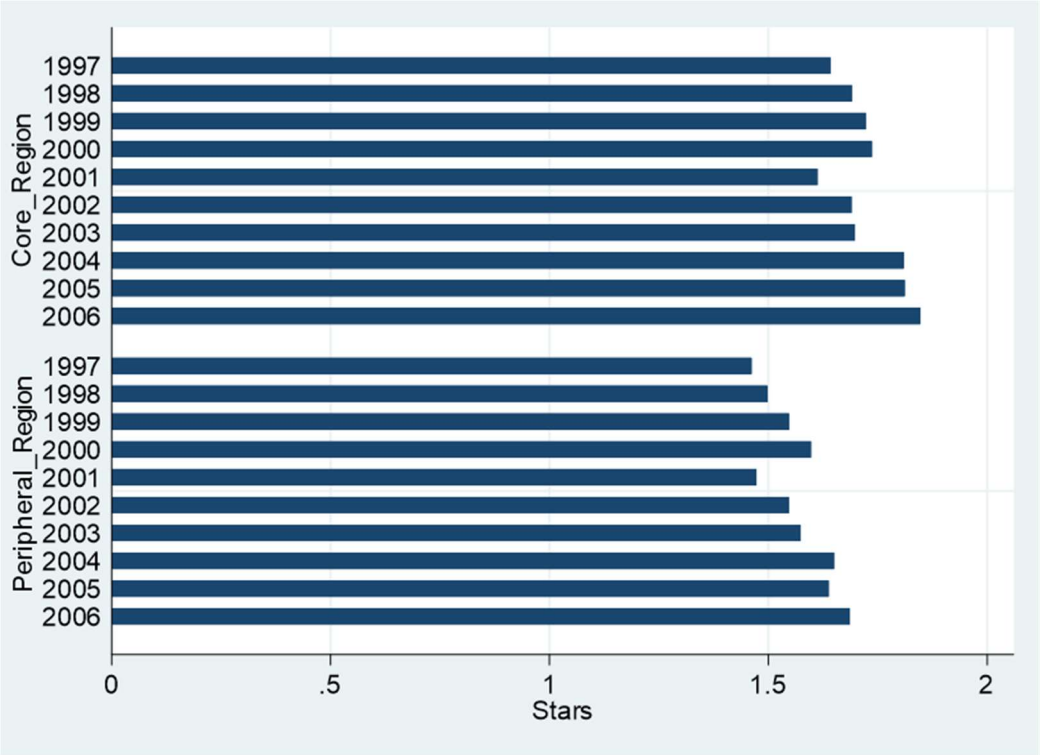
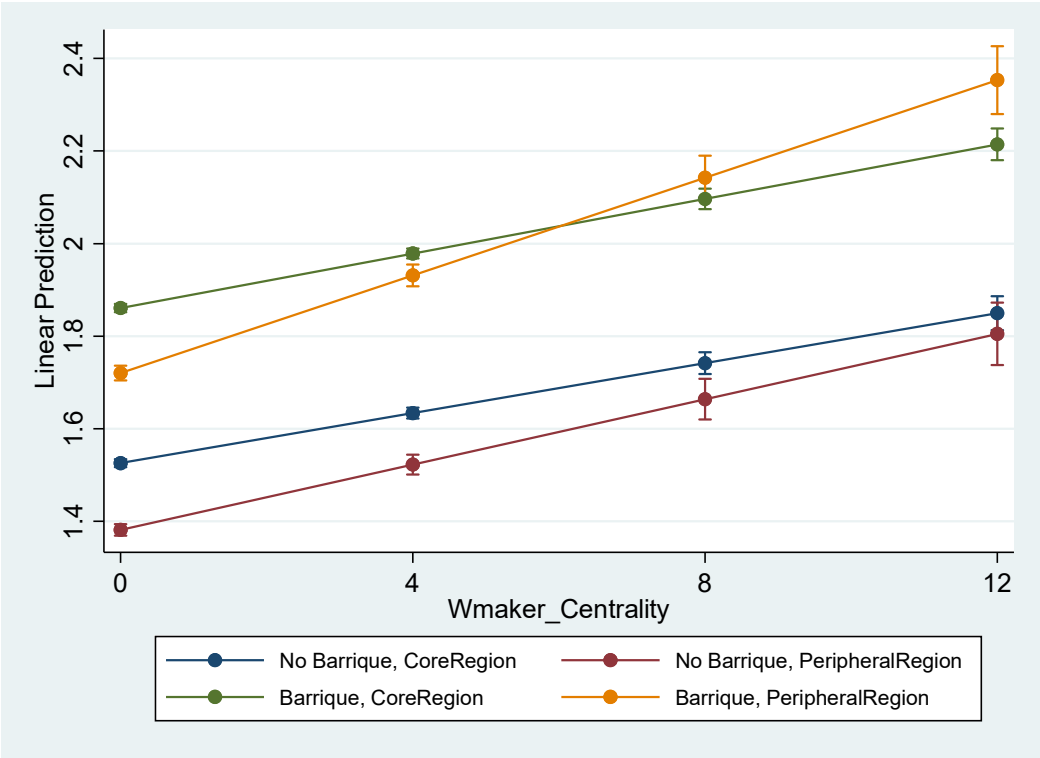


Figure 3. Marginsplot of star ratings based on wine aging method, peripherality and winemaker centrality.



APPENDIX A

Table A1. Quantity of Italian wine produced in each region, by year (absolute values and percentages).

Region	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total/ average %
Abruzzo	34	33	31	52	72	93	100	143	209	273	1,040
	0.81	0.80	0.74	0.98	1.17	1.21	1.24	1.45	1.83	2.08	1.40
Alto-Adige	217	249	263	339	432	504	565	661	739	789	4,758
	5.15	6.05	6.31	6.37	7.02	6.56	7.03	6.69	6.47	6.02	6.42
Basilicata	10	9	9	11	14	15	25	28	38	55	214
	0.24	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.23	0.20	0.31	0.28	0.33	0.42	0.29
Calabria	18	18	18	23	29	31	35	51	62	81	366
	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.43	0.47	0.40	0.44	0.52	0.54	0.62	0.49
Campania	62	68	71	102	131	181	189	237	308	405	1,754
	1.47	1.65	1.70	1.92	2.13	2.35	2.35	2.40	2.70	3.09	2.37
Emrom	115	116	117	142	170	187	192	257	347	438	2,081
	2.73	2.82	2.81	2.67	2.76	2.43	2.39	2.60	3.04	3.34	2.81
Friuli	507	433	399	517	655	715	691	847	988	1,129	6,881
	12.04	10.51	9.57	9.72	10.65	9.30	8.60	8.57	8.65	8.62	9.29
Lazio	36	36	35	45	59	70	79	104	132	160	756
	0.85	0.87	0.84	0.85	0.96	0.91	0.98	1.05	1.16	1.22	1.02
Liguria	59	58	52	54	50	83	102	115	128	128	829
	1.40	1.41	1.25	1.02	0.81	1.08	1.27	1.16	1.12	0.98	1.12
Lombardia	312	302	250	384	380	552	551	663	742	818	4,954
	7.41	7.33	6.00	7.22	6.18	7.18	6.86	6.71	6.50	6.24	6.69
Marche	82	75	79	118	183	225	239	309	353	417	2,080
	1.95	1.82	1.90	2.22	2.97	2.93	2.97	3.13	3.09	3.18	2.81
Molise	7	7	8	8	15	16	21	19	23	29	153
	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.15	0.24	0.21	0.26	0.19	0.20	0.22	0.21
Piemonte	1,072	1,029	1,074	1,358	1,320	1,884	2,000	2,325	2,531	2,788	17,381
	25.45	24.99	25.77	25.53	21.45	24.51	24.89	23.52	22.17	21.28	23.46
Puglia	49	48	52	63	118	137	146	237	304	371	1,525
	1.16	1.17	1.25	1.18	1.92	1.78	1.82	2.40	2.66	2.83	2.06
Sardegna	45	49	56	55	65	108	110	150	166	194	998
	1.07	1.19	1.34	1.03	1.06	1.41	1.37	1.52	1.45	1.48	1.35
Sicilia	62	66	77	104	145	194	231	320	436	517	2,152
	1.47	1.60	1.85	1.96	2.36	2.52	2.88	3.24	3.82	3.95	2.90
Toscana	915	917	964	1,131	1,325	1,527	1,629	1,958	2,206	2,550	15,122
	21.72	22.27	23.13	21.26	21.53	19.87	20.28	19.81	19.32	19.46	20.41
Trentino	154	156	156	204	249	274	277	344	388	445	2,647
	3.66	3.79	3.74	3.84	4.05	3.56	3.45	3.48	3.40	3.40	3.57
Umbria	81	81	75	84	105	118	120	173	198	253	1,288
	1.92	1.97	1.80	1.58	1.71	1.54	1.49	1.75	1.73	1.93	1.74
Valdaosta	40	43	46	46	36	59	64	86	90	91	601
	0.95	1.04	1.10	0.86	0.59	0.77	0.80	0.87	0.79	0.69	0.81
Veneto	335	325	336	479	600	713	668	859	1,030	1,171	6,516
	7.95	7.89	8.06	9.01	9.75	9.28	8.31	8.69	9.02	8.94	8.79
Total	4,212	4,118	4,168	5,319	6,153	7,686	8,034	9,886	11,418	13,102	74,096

APPENDIX B

A "country wine mixer:" A brief description of the role of Giacomo Tachis

Giacomo Tachis is considered to be one of the most influential winemakers in the history of Italian wines and the father of the popular Super Tuscans, a family of internationally recognized Bordeaux-style Chianti wines. As a result of this and other accomplishments, he is widely recognized as the winemaker responsible for the renaissance of Italian wines, although throughout his life, he preferred to define himself as a "country wine mixer." Originally from Piedmont, one of the most well-known regions for wine production, his professional career and successes are attached to once undervalued areas, such as the Bolgheri area in Tuscany, Marche, Sardinia, and Sicily, to name a few. Throughout his career, Tachis was able to innovate and experiment by, for instance, importing winemaking practices from France while maintaining a strong bond with the territory where the wine was produced. Applying his expertise in chemistry and microbiology to cultivation and fermentation, he promoted or pioneered several innovations such as malolactic fermentation (i.e., the use of bacteria to convert the tart acid present in grape juice into a softer taste) and the use of *barriques* and clay vessels to ferment and age wines.

Wine consultants such as Giacomo Tachis have played a pivotal role in the consecration of now popular wines such as the Super Tuscans Sassicaia, Solaia, and Tignanello. Describing the process used to make Tignanello, the first Tuscan red wine to be produced without white grapes, Marquis Piero Antinori said:

> It was a mix of intuition and experimentation. Without a doubt, it became a turning point but was also a controversial wine because Italy had recently introduced the system of denominations and it was difficult to explain why a wine classified as table wine would be so expensive … Then the Vinarius award arrived and things changed.

> We understood that markets, and particularly the local one, were ready for that quality jump. (Gambero Rosso, 2016)

Through the work of wine consultants such as Tachis, the overall quality of Italian wines was elevated through the use of novel practices, such as fermentation in *barriques*. Describing the value of introducing novel practices, Mr. Bambagioni of the Argiano winery said:

> The Maestro was quite traditional with respect to vinification … he never used chemicals, the great novelty he introduced was the use of barriques, in fact we began to buy 200 of them per year from Seguin Moreau and to refine 40% of the Brunello, which until then we had only aged in large barrels. (Cappelli, 2018)

This practice enabled local producers to grow their presence and reputations, at both the local and international levels. Local wine critics such as Luigi Veronelli as well as the international magazine *Wine Spectator* further contributed to this process of consecration, with positive consequences for Tachis's status and that of his clients.

Following his successful collaboration with the Antinori family, Tachis began working with other wine producers in less prominent areas. Thanks to his expertise, wine producers such as Santadi in Sardinia, Umani Ronchi in Marche, and Donnafugata in Sicily were able to introduce important elements of novelty and obtain wide recognition for their wines. In Marche, for instance, a region that traditionally produced white wines, Tachis was able to create a red wine named Pelago by blending the local Montepulciano grapes with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Michele Bernetti, the owner of the winery that produces Pelago, recalled his collaboration with Tachis as follows: "Tachis stayed with us as a consultant from 1992 to 2001. Pelago was created in 1994 … We were in the laboratory and tasted this 'potion': Cabernet, Merlot and Montepulciano, the result was exceptional. Then we proceeded with the barrique" (Gambero Rosso, 2016). The Pelago was also positively recognized by

critics such as those affiliated with the Veronelli guide, and received the prestigious “Best Red Wine Overall” award at the International Wine Challenge in 1997. This brief illustration of Tachis’s professional contribution to the wine field provides qualitative support for the theoretical tenet that critics play an important role in legitimating producers, but also highlights the relevance of external consultants in this process, particularly for peripheral producers.