

**NO *BARRIQUE*, NO BERLUSCONI:
COLLECTIVE IDENTITY, CONTENTION, AND AUTHENTICITY
IN THE MAKING OF BAROLO AND BARBARESCO WINES**

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Abstract

How does contention over authenticity unfold through social movement processes of mobilization and counter-mobilization? We address this issue by studying how the rise of “modern” winemaking practices embodied authenticity as creativity, how the success of the modernists triggered a counter-movement seeking to preserve “traditional” wine-making practices, and how the emergent “traditional” category was premised on authenticity as conformity to a genre. This counter-movement succeeded in a situation in which market forces seemed destined to displace tradition with modernity.

When Bob Dylan, a much idolized exponent of folk music, unveiled his electric guitar and played three songs with it at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965, the audience jeered. In a concert at Manchester in 1966, a fan famously yelled “Judas,” and Dylan retorted “I don’t believe you—you’re a liar.” The folk-music audience associated authenticity with the acoustic instrumentation, and many of its members reviled the electric guitar in the folk context as evidence of the tainting influence of capitalism. But Dylan, who famously defined himself as a trapeze artist, saw himself as an experimenter seeking to make original music. As the brief episode illustrates, authenticity has two meanings. A product, a performance, or a work of art is authentic if (1) it is original and creative, or (2) it conforms faithfully to the conventions of a genre (Peterson 1997: 150–54). As a result of these contradictory poles, claims to authenticity are contested and trigger an oppositional dynamic (Trilling 1972).

Sociologists have emphasized one or the other pole of authenticity and have devoted little attention to how the contention over authenticity unfolds through collective mobilization and counter-mobilization through social movement processes. For example, Fine’s (2004) study of “self-taught” artists shows that critics have constructed claims of authenticity as originality to artists whose biographies locate them far from the mainstream. Carroll and Swaminathan (2000) depict the authenticity of microbrewers and brewpubs as faithfulness to tradition, conformity to a code that opposes and forbids use of mass-production techniques, chemical additives, and use of nontraditional ingredients.

Studies such as Carroll and Swaminathan’s (2000) study of brewing and Rao, Monin, and Durand’s (2003) study of the emergence and spread of *nouvelle cuisine* usefully emphasize collective mobilization. However, these empirical settings studies did not evidence much, if any, countermobilization (by industrial brewers or chefs retaining classical cuisine). In general, we know little about how counter-mobilization can be triggered and what difference it makes for claims to authenticity.

We argue that contention over authenticity arises because of the ambiguity of codes. The partiality of codes creates an opportunity for innovators seeking to challenge convention and claim authenticity. Collective action by challengers is required for such claims to authenticity to be legitimated by key audiences, the critics, and consumers. The success of challengers in securing the support of key audiences induces those who do not innovate to make rival claims of authenticity based on their adherence to the conventions of the genre and to countermobilize through collective action. The ensuing contention pivots on the construction of two opposing categories, the innovative and the traditional. In turn, the opposing categories imply two very different social identities and rules of conduct. We suggest that the success of movements to promote creative identities triggers counter-movements to preserve traditional identities.

We explore these processes by studying the trajectory of change in vinification practices in the making of Barolo and Barbaresco wines. The Barolo/Barbaresco district lies in the Langhe, at the southeastern corner of Italy's Piedmont—a short distance from the French and Swiss borders. Its wines are generally regarded as among the world's great wines; and prices of the most highly evaluated wines run into hundreds of dollars. It became a hotbed of contention over authentic methods for winemaking.

In a formalist sense, issues of authenticity of Barolo and Barbaresco can be settled with references to written legal code called the *disciplinare di produzione*. This code mandates a number of properties a wine must have to be labeled as a Barolo or a Barbaresco (Caldano and Rossi 2004). The code states the wine must be produced only from the Nebbiolo grapes grown in specifically delimited areas in the Cuneo province of Piemonte. It must be aged for three years in wooden barrels (oak or chestnut) before release (or five years if designated as *Riserva*) in the case of Barolo or two years in the case of Barbaresco. The code also specifies the maximum allowable yield, minimum alcohol content, and a variety of other chemical properties. Although the code is detailed, producers have discretion in their use of aging technology—they can decide whether the barrels are made of oak or chestnut and are free to choose the sizes of the barrels. Likewise they have discretion about the

length of the period of maceration (the time for which the tannin-laden skins remain in contact with the juice or must) and whether fermentation relies of naturally occurring yeasts of the vineyard and cellar or uses yeast prepared in a laboratory and also whether the temperature of the fermentation is controlled. Each of these variations can have an important impact on color and taste. And each became a source of contention when some producers began to vary these techniques to produce “modern” (or “international”) styles of Barolo and Barbaresco.

It turned out that the kind of wood containers used for aging became the main source of contention. Producers of these wines traditionally aged them in large Slovenian oak barrels (*botti*). These barrels were as large as 120 hectoliters (hl). This traditional practice was challenged by modernists who adopted *barriques*, small (usually 225 liter, that is, 2.25hl) barrels made of aromatic French oak. Because the volume of a *botte* is large relative to its surface area, the wood does not have much influence on the wine—so during aging, the wine, rather than the wood, does the job and nature is allowed it take its own course. The situation differs greatly for the small *barrique*, whose surface-to-volume ratio is high. Gianni Fabrizio (a senior editor of the Slow Food’s influential *Gambero Rosso* wine guide) presents the case as follows

In modern winemaking *barriques* are important because they allow two things that have been crucial for the great success of Barolo. First of all, *barriques* overcome a big problem of Nebbiolo: the light color of the wine. *Barriques* fix the antocyanins, so the color is deeper. Second, *barriques* induce higher exchange of oxygen, which makes tannins form longer chemical chains, resulting in softer tannins. According to the modernists, the biggest problems of Barolo were the lack of color and the presence of too much tannin. These characteristics were perceived similarly by journalists too, who thought that the public wouldn’t love this (old) kind of wine.

As we show below, the use of *barriques* became a symbol of modernity in the production of Barolo and Barbaresco. Insurgent modernists strongly criticized traditional wines as defective. Moreover, the modern-style wines found favor with the critics and the market. And some traditional producers switched to the modern camp. This combination of circumstances activated a traditional identity and a countermovement against modernism in wine production. Whereas the modernists saw

themselves as creative artisans who stamp their imprint on the wine, traditionalist activists claimed that the use of *barriques* was a cellar trick that stripped the wine of its terroir and regional distinctiveness, and instead, produces a homogeneous international style. Bartolo Mascarello, a staunch traditionalist, issued a clarion call on a famous wine label: “No *Barrigue*, No Berlusconi,” which summarized the opposition of the traditionalists to the twin dangers of the *barriques* and globalization of wine styles (Figure 1).

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

We draw on our fieldwork to sketch out the contrasting claims to authenticity presented by modernists and traditionalists. We then document how the modernists gained favor with critics and consumers and show how modern wines received higher ratings and higher prices than traditional wines. So why then did traditional winemakers not defect to modernism? Why did some traditional producers resist modern winemaking? The centerpiece of our study is an effort to answer these questions.

Our central argument holds that the salience of collective identity gets amplified by the oppositional contrast of categories. The success of modernism activated traditional identities and fueled countermobilization. We propose that the construction of a “traditionalist” category and mobilization around claims of authenticity for traditional practices slowed the inroads of modernist and thwarted the defection of traditionalists to modern winemaking.

We rely on material from interviews with forty-five winemakers in their cellars, with wine journalists and oenologists in the Piemonte area and elsewhere in Italy during 2005–7, and from telephone interviews in 2006 with 252 winemakers (who were listed in the wine guide *I Vini di Veronelli* for at least one vintage). We also gathered data from the Veronelli guide on critics’ ratings of quality and on (suggested) prices of Barolos and Barbarescos and actual retail prices from the Internet.

CATEGORIES, COLLECTIVE ACTION, AND AUTHENTICITY CLAIMS—THE USE OF BARRIQUES

Recent theorizing holds that an organizational form is a taken-for-granted category with default

features that define membership such that violation of these default conditions is penalized by external and internal audiences (Hannan et al. 2007). This definition allows organizational forms to be collective identities in the eyes of audience members, and suggests organizations have to adhere to social codes consisting of the expectations of audience members, or else, lose appeal to the audience or perhaps even face punishment.

Social codes are partial. So even when a single law enacted by a state agency delineates a category, the partiality of the code leaves considerable room for interpretation (Edelman, Uggen, and Erlanger 1999) and, by implication, scope for innovation and authenticity in the form of creativity. In turn, such creativity presupposes a particular interpretation of a code, and require collective action if the given interpretation is to become accepted by key audiences. Below, we chronicle how an insurgency flowered into the modernist movement.

The Modernist Insurgency. The origin of the use of *barriques* to age Barolo and Barbaresco dates to the late 1970s. For several hundred years Barolo and Barbaresco winemakers used very long maceration, uncontrolled fermentation, and aging in large Slovenian *botti*. The wines were austere and tannic when young, and they realized their full potential only after considerable aging. Quality was uneven.

A small group of rebels began to challenge the prevalent technology of winemaking in the late 1970s. Aldo Vacca (Managing Director of the Cooperativa Produttori del Barbaresco, owned by 56 growers) summarized matters succinctly

Producers, notably Renato Ratti in Barolo and Angelo Gaja in Barbaresco, started to look at Burgundy, seeing how successful Burgundy was, and focused on the single *Cru* [named vineyard]. So, slowly we started to make wine from individual vineyards. And now almost every winery makes single-vineyard wine, because they all started to look at the French. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, this area was exposed to new huge markets, first the USA and then Japan. You know that in order to enter those markets wine should be a little less tannic, a little “easier.” Our wines have strong tannins, strong acidity, not too much fruit, and are not so balanced. *This type of style was good for collectors. But in order to serve a foreign customer you need wine easier to understand, fit for palates that are not*

used to this kind of taste. In the mid-1980s the sense of wine changed, and switched from collectors to restaurants. Restaurants cannot really store the wine; they pick up cases and put it on the list. Lots of producers started to produce easier-to-drink and ready-to-drink wine (a maximum of six years to be ready) and not super tannic. Back in the 1960s and 1970s wine had to wait ten years to be ready. Thus, they changed winemaking in order to make wine drinkable when it is younger. (Emphasis is ours)

Angelo Gaja, who became an international wine superstar, recognized the need to change the technology of production to respond to the growing mass of wine consumers and the globalization of wine markets. The editor of a leading Italian enological review observed

Gaja realized that international high-end restaurants demanded something different from the classic Piedmont wines—products that were different from the super-tannic wines which needed a very long time to soften and become enjoyable. He needed a winning wine which would *ingratiate itself*. I mean a wine seeking the “*captatio benevolentiae*” from the market, in a way that the consumer would not need to follow it; rather the wine would get closer to the consumer.

Gaja contravened the cultural code of winemaking in Barbaresco by adopting *barrisques* and changing practices in the vineyard. Yet, while he exercised great influence as a role model, he did not engage with other like-minded winemakers to create a modernist movement. He stayed above the fray.

Gaja’s radical break had a strong influence on Elio Altare, who became the leader of the modernist movement. Altare recounted the story to us as follows

In January 1976, I went to Burgundy just to learn, to understand why the customers spent a lot of money for some bottles, why they spent 10-20-50 times more than for my bottles. What emotions justified that price? I was really ambitious, and I still am. If you are ambitious, you seek to compete only with the best. I asked to myself “Who can forbid a young producer to compete, to make investments?” Who can tell you “You don’t change because I am Barolo! There are rules!”? For me a good wine must be good always, not just after 20 years. If the wine is good, I want to enjoy it now.

Why do I use *barrisques*? Not because it is a trend or it is fashion, but because I use common sense. I was wondering: which wines are the best in the world? Which one is made without the *barrisques*? None! My “teacher” here was Angelo Gaja—he was the first

one who looked at the region and understood that there was a need of change in style. This region was dead in style.

The use of *barriques* by Gaja, Altare, and a few other rebels dismantled the prevailing cultural consensus of how to make Barolo and Barbaresco. Altare also undertook a notorious radical act that symbolized the cultural break and put the focus squarely on *barriques*. Since his visit to Burgundy, Altare had tried without success to convince his father to allow him to use *barriques*. In 1982, his frustration with the constraints of the cultural tradition of winemaking led him to destroy the family's *botti* with a chainsaw. This act led his father to disinherit him entirely. According to his daughter Silvia,

When Elio started to make all these changes, my granddad didn't talk to his son for almost 10 years. He was so disappointed he even stopped going to church because the people in the village thought that my father was crazy. So he was ashamed of his son, and he decided not to go to the church anymore. My grandfather was completely convinced that my father was wrong.

Daniel Thomases (an evaluator for both the Veronelli guide and Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate*) characterized Altare's significance in the growth of modernism as follows

The revolution introduced by Altare consisted principally of an extremely short fermentation of the wine—3 or 4 days—and the use of small oak barrels instead of larger casks. These were the first two radical differences that Altare brought to the making of wines in Barolo. It distinguished him from Gaja. Altare had a very important influence because he was from a town, La Morra, with many young producers who were just beginning to market their wine. So his approach was very influential. He basically created a school in his own area. Altare wanted to bring a revolution to the area; actually it was not only Altare, but also others like Enrico Scavino.

From Initial Insurgency to Movement. Social movements are organized endeavors to realize new categories and identities or protect jeopardized categories and identities and require a political opportunity, meaning work by activists and mobilization structures for them to be successful (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). Political opportunity means activist have the freedom to express views and benefit from the support of key audiences. Mobilization structures range from

informal networks and collaboratives to formal organizations. Movement activists engage in meaning-work, that is, they render events or occurrences meaningful and create a bridge between the collective identity sought to be created or defended and the individual identities of the movement's recruits.

Using *barriques* for aging Barolos and Barbarescos was not one man's idea—it gained ground because it became part of a social movement seeking to enhance quality. A key aspect of the social movement was the birth of informal groups of experimenters who met to taste each others' wines and exchange ideas. One of the earliest outcroppings of mobilization was a seminar organized at the Italian largest wine show in 1985, where several experts, including Eugenio Gamba (a maker of *botti* and *barriques*), proclaimed the virtues of the *barrique*. In 1986, an association of likeminded experimenters called *Langa In* was formed and it included people who later became prominent exponents of modernism: Altare, Scavino, Domenico Clerico, Claudio Conterno, and Guido Fantino, among others. Its members shared insights, went to fairs together, and sought to propagate a consistent message to others and avoid confusion about *barriques*. As Claudio Conterno of Conterno-Fantino winery, a member of *Langa In*, observed, "This big group of 20–30 producers changed the history of this region, in the sense that they made people talk again about Barolo, and, most important, they made people open bottles of Barolo again." In 1987, modernist winemakers joined together in collective tastings. Marc De Grazia, one of the early participants, described the exchange of ideas

The first meeting was before the 1984 vintage was released... Clerico and I organized a tasting meeting; we invited something like 20... Anyway, this was a memorable meeting. We tasted each other's wines from that vintage all day... during that meeting producers began to talk to each other about techniques, vineyard processes, cellar skills, etc. That was the very first time that producers started to talk to each other about their work; before that they did not like each other that much... We got along so well that a wine dealer, who owned a wine shop in California, coined the term The Barolo Boys. And when we went to visit him there, he gave us t-shirts with our names on them. Our main

idea and main purpose was to make a wine that could be great immediately in that very moment in time and also great after 20 years.

These informal networks served as mobilization mechanisms. They also aided the construction of a common schema for modern Barolos and Barbarescos. Altare stressed this point: “We are together also to give a message, a unique reason, because if you come to me, I’ll tell you my philosophy; and if you go to my neighbor and the philosophy changes you will be confused.” Silvia Altare explains that they sit at a table, blind-taste their wines, and say things like,

“My favorite is number 10” ... “Okay, number 10. Whose wine is this?”

“Grasso” ... “What did you do with this wine?” ... “I did three days of fermentation, using this kind of wood, etc.” ... “Okay maybe next year we will do this.”

It is a continuous experiment...It is a mutual friendship, and we put in money for the big expenses, like buying a tractor or other equipment, and we share. We help each other not just in the vineyard but also in tasting each other’s wines. It is always research, research, research.

As modernists were mobilizing, their cause was helped by a scandal that broke out in March 1986 when a series of deaths were linked to the consumption of wine adulterated with methanol. It was later found that about thirty producers cut their wines with methanol to increase alcohol content. Eventually, 26 deaths were linked to the methanol adulteration, a number of people went blind, and bans on the export of Italian wine were put in place by several countries. The methanol scandal was a watershed event that opened a political opportunity for winemakers and induced them to think about quality rather than quantity and opened Italian winemakers to new ideas. Claudio Conterno described the impact

In 1986 the methanol scandal broke. In my opinion that destroyed completely all the links that existed... I can ensure you that those 6 months were months of confusion and rage... a generation that didn’t have experiences was very open to receive new ideas.

The methanol scandal also taught consumers that high quality wines also meant higher prices and buying from established winemakers was an important guarantee of quality that ensured that the wine was actually made only from grapes, and certain grapes at that. Thus the scandal created

opportunities for winemakers rather than merchants to benefit from the sale of wine. Gaja recalled that

[W]e started to make money with this business only after 1986, after the methanol scandal. Before then, throughout the 1980s, it was otherwise very difficult to make money because those who were able to earn something were those who had a trading activity. Our country has always had an over-production problem so if you had the skill to explore the market, you could buy grapes at a low price or buy un-bottled wine and then sell with good markups. So money was made by merchants, not by the estate wineries. It was only about 15–20 years ago that wineries started being successful.

If informal networks mobilized winemakers and the methanol scandal created a political opportunity for modern practices to take hold, crusaders like Altare, Clerico, Sandrone, and Scavino sought to frame the *barrique* as an essential tool for *reliability* in crafting high-quality wines that appealed to customers. They crusaded for the identity of a winemaker as a creative interventionist or engineer rather than as a passive spectator of nature. In other words, they emphasized authenticity as creativity and originality.

Clerico drew on film-making as an analogy and implied that: “Winemaking is like filmmaking and the difference between being an *actor* and being a *director*. In the cellar we don't sell wine, we just *make* it” (emphasis his). Luciano Sandrone explained that, instead of making wines from specific vineyards, he “makes vineyards from wines” by creating “vintages” for each parcel and date of harvesting. The final selection is made in the cellar. Unsurprisingly, this modernist movement engaged in a strong critique of traditional winemaking. Many rebels claimed traditional Barolo/Barbaresco was bad wine—too tannic, unbalanced, oxidized, and containing off-putting aromas. Consider, for instance, Elio Altare’s characterization of his father’s wine

[M]y father...used a long maceration—2 to 3 months. It was not for making good wine. He was making it in that way because it was easy. The second problem was the use of big barrels... When my father made great wines, it was not because he was a good producer; it was just because he was lucky... I would like to make wine that is good to taste, that can be good for most people. The way that traditionalists make wine is old, outdated. It could be a good wine; but often it has a lot of defects.

Many argued that wines aged in *botti* that were not cleaned regularly had distasteful smells. According to Gigi Piumatti (chief editor of the *Gambero Rosso* guide),

Producers started using *barrisques* because of the bad smell that the large wood casks can produce (often these casks were left uncleaned). One of the most important differences, that you might have not perceived because things have changed, is the bad smell—Barolo was considered good only if it smelled like ‘merdino’ (manure).

Gianni Fabrizio, who was part of the conversation, added

This is the typicality that is not good, that it is not quality, it’s only dirt. It was the typical bad smell that you could find in 95 percent of Barolo. The most important innovation of this area was the use of *barrisques* as a solution to get rid of this bad smell. The solution to remove such bad smell then was the use of smaller wood containers, but unfortunately these give a lot of wood flavor.

Responses of Critics to the Modern Wines. Our informants agree that the critics responded more favorably to the modern wines. One wine journalist reported that the guides tended to favor modern wines because, when 50 or more wines are tasted in a day, the modern wines, with their soft tannins and fruit-forward nature, stand out more than austere traditional wines. Daniel Thomases noted that the *Wine Spectator* and the *Gambero Rosso* guides were enthusiastic supporters of the modern approach. Other interviewers argued that Parker also appreciated modern wines because they were closer to the wines of Burgundy. Audience reaction is a vital stimulus for winemakers. Silvia Altare explained that her father

...does not work only for money, but also for the glory. I think he cares much more about a page on a newspaper. He doesn't like to do shipping, payments, and he doesn't even know these things. I look after the bank, I do all this stuff. He just cares if someone calls him for an interview, and all these [related] things.

Critical acclaim also translates to market success. Both producers and consumers rely on expert ratings to anticipate final quality before the wines mature. Corsi and Ashenfelter (2001) point out that maturation depends on a number of unobserved biochemical processes to attain high quality and as a result, experts play an influential role because their ratings are the only information consumers have

at hand to make purchasing decisions. Expert opinions have strong effects on prices when wines are aging and consumers do not have direct experience of actual quality. An editor of one of the influential guides discussed the consequences of receiving the guide's highest ratings

After they receive the three glasses, some producers raise their prices a lot. I don't know how much net sales increase, I can't say. I can say that the wine that gets the award sells out very quickly. Before we disclose the award list, there is strong pressure on the part of producers who keep calling us, trying to know if they have won or not. When the list is official, former friends who didn't win are not friends anymore. This gives me a great responsibility because I know that my evaluations will affect these producers and their businesses.

The Traditionalists' Counter-critique. The modernist movement which had started in the early 1980s with Altare's symbolic act flourished due to the support of critics and consumers. The very success of modernists fueled a traditionalist backlash. Modernists had made claims for authenticity as producers of original and creative wine but forcefully rejected typicality and traditional practice as authentic. Traditionalists countermobilized around regional typicality and preservation of traditional practice as the essence of authenticity—making a wine unique to Barolo/Barbaresco rather than making wines that tasted of the “international” style of winemaking.

Despite the modernists' effort to differentiate and personalize their wines, traditionalist producers assert that the use of *barriques* is a cellar trick which strips the wine of its terroir and regional identity, and, instead, produces a homogeneous international style. The rhetorical assault on the authenticity of the modernists comes in two forms. One is technical: the use of modern practices diminishes the long-term value of Barolo and Barbaresco by reducing its distinctiveness. The advocates of this position fear that the current high status and high prices for these wines cannot be sustained in international competition with huge Australian and American wineries if they lack a strong regional identity and typicality. Aldo Vacca voiced this view

Some producers, like us, decided to stick to the old way... The most important reason was that producers like us thought that going in [the modernist] way was maybe a good way to make good wine but not necessarily better than the old way. Moreover, making it

in the modern way will produce wine more and more similar to the wine that comes from other parts of the world. Because the more oak you have in the wine, the more that oak is going to cover the natural flavor of the grapes, and then you make a wine that can be similar to wine that is made in Tuscany, California, or Australia. You would lose your power: uniqueness. Our uniqueness is that the wine we make is not easy to drink. In the short-term this could not be an advantage, but in long-term it is.

Similarly, Giacomo Conterno (Director of the Poderi Aldo Conterno winery) argues that Barolo producers should seek to “intensify the personality of Nebbiolo and its site identity, to make the opposite of a Coca-Cola wine.” For him, this entails the rejection of *barrique* for Barolo (although he does use such modern practices as temperature control of fermentation and roto-fermentation).

Other leading traditionalists offer a more fundamental critique. They argue that the rejection of tradition represents a capitulation to the market and constitutes a kind of moral transgression.

According to Giuseppe Rinaldi,

As a matter of fact, what happened was that many new producers started to follow Gaja... It was positive because young people, instead of leaving the country, started to cultivate the land. The damn shame was that, instead of saving the tradition of this land, they followed the way of the modernist, in other words, the way of the market.

The trend in the use of *barriques* has been influenced (and encouraged) by a global model. The U.S. market, for example, demands such a standardized and homogenized taste. The *barrique* is a technique that can boost production and make fermentation shorter in order to reduce the time-to-market. Yet, the *barrique* is not the tradition. Any use of the *barrique* is crossing the tradition, because it is not part of our tradition.

The image in Figure 2 shows a chair and made with bent and cut staves from a *barrique* proudly displayed in Rinaldi’s cellar. The label on the chair proposes that this is the best use of non-traditional barrels—assembling furniture rather than aging wine.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

Maria Teresa Mascarello, who inherited Cantine Mascarello Bartolo from her father Bartolo, summed up the traditionalists’ view of modernists: “A modern winemaker is like Berlusconi. He is

the model. He embodies this way of looking at the market, at the economy.” Shortly after founding the Forza Italia political movement in 1993, Silvio Berlusconi became prime minister of Italy for two terms, in 1994 and 2001. He rose rapidly in the political arena as a newcomer advocating a neo-liberal program, and the organization of his political party assumed a form closely linked to a single business enterprise (Ginsborg 2003). Berlusconi is also Italy’s richest person; he owns controlling shares of the largest national media group and several other businesses ranging from financial services to sport teams. The second line of traditionalist critique draws an association between rampant market orientation and a lack of integrity, with Berlusconi personifying the loss of the pre-existing social order and its subjugation to the rules of economic competition. Previous analyses of movement-counter-movement dynamics confirm that the opposition to a movement tends to portray the conflict as involving larger value cleavages in society (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996: 1639). Rinaldi inveighed

When you have a wine that is really tannic like Barolo—and this feature is very typical, you have to accept Barolo as it is. You do not have to make a wine for everybody. If you don't like it, don't drink it. The main problem is the interference with the nature of the wine just to make it more attractive for the market. The thing is that traditional wine must be done in the traditional way, not following the market way... [The modernists] made it into a typical mass product instead of distinguishing it from the others. It is a damn bad thing, because a land like this, with a history, a tradition, and an old identity, erased everything it had to become more attractive on the market.

A Period of Contention. The traditionalist discontent that had taken place largely in informal discussions but had begun to gain ground since the early 1990s broke into the open in 1996. *La Stampa* (March 7, 1997, p. 73) of Turin reported

A bad mood meanders through the Langhe regarding the production methods of Barolo, and producers are by now split. The heart of the matter is a small 225 liter barrel that came from France about ten years ago, the mythical barrique that with its young wood transfers sweeter perfumes and tannins.

During the course of 1996 the dispute between the two sides has come to the fore once again during the meetings organized by the Consorzio of Barolo in the context of a revision of the discipline. The dispute has become so fierce that the director of the

Consorzio, Giancarlo Montaldo, has sent a letter to all producers in the area (dated February 21). The call to producers is clear: “What is wrong and dangerous is to criticize the work done by colleagues because it is deemed too old-fashioned, or on the contrary because it is excessively cast toward the future.”

At about this time Teobaldo Cappellano, a staunch traditionalist, debated Carlo Petrini, the President of the Arci Gola Slow Food association, in the columns of a local weekly about the merits and demerits of the *barrique*. In 1997 Bartolo Mascarello wrote an open letter to the president of the wine consortium in Barolo criticizing “French-Californian models” and proposed that the use of “classical method” on the label be authorized for wines made using traditional techniques. He issued the clarion call “there is one and only one Barolo, defend it!” and started using the handwritten label ““Il ne faut pas faire des *barrique* mais des *barricades*,” i.e., “*barricades*, not *barriques*.”¹

USE OF *BARRIQUE* AS AN INDICATION OF MODERNITY

The proponents of the arch-traditionalist position (who some informants called “the Taliban”) see the situation as black and white—there is tradition and everything else. For them, the traditional and modern stand in stark opposition. Others, including the modernists with whom we spoke and most of the journalists and critics that we consulted, see a continuum ranging from the ultra-traditional producers who use only *botte* to the ultra-modern who use only *barrique*. We were told that Mascarello, Rinaldi, and Roberto Conterno (now running Giacomo Conterno winery) are prototypes of the traditional end, that Roberto Voerzio and the Rivetti brothers of La Spinetta are prototypes of the ultra-modern end, and that Altare now sits a bit more toward the middle (because he now ages his Barolos only in *barriques* that were used for aging Barbera and then Nebbiolo Langhe (a lower-grade Nebbiolo-based wine) in the two previous vintages, which lessens the oaky flavors).

In our field work, we took pains to understand the basis of the distinction between tradition and modernity in this context, the nature of the boundary between the associated categories. As we noted above, each category embodies a cluster of practices (type of barrel, length of maceration, degree of

¹ The label is signed “Robespierre.” *Barriques* were used to make *barricades* during the French Revolution.

control over fermentation, type of yeast, and so forth). Moreover, many used both types of barrels, either by producing some wines aged only in *botti* and others aged only in *barriques* or by aging particular wines partly in *botti* and partly in *barriques*. Nonetheless, the evidence we have collected suggests the *barrique/botti* distinction (like Dylan's electric guitar) serves as what Hannan et al. (2007) call a minimal test code for membership in these categories. Knowledge that a producer uses *barriques*, say, leads outside audience members to treat as a default that they also use most, if not all, of the modern practices of vinification.

Altare's destruction of the *botti* surely focused attention on the choice of barrel as central to the opposed identities. Moreover, the choice of barrel is highly observable to anyone who enters a cellar and is durable, because the wine sits in the barrel for three to five years. Other aspects of vinification are only observable during brief periods of time in the winemaking process.

We also sought the views of intermediaries in wine markets about the relevance of the category distinction (between modern and traditional) to consumers and on the tie of *barrique* to the modernist category. Interviews with wine merchants in Alba and Milan and with sommeliers in elite Milan restaurants suggest these agents perceived cultural fault-lines in Barolo/Barbaresco that coincide with the divide between the modernist and traditionalist categories and that the use of *barrique* is indeed a test code for membership in the modernist camp. For instance, one sommelier, from a restaurant whose wine menu lists on separate pages the Piedmont wines aged in *botti* and those aged in *barrique*, told us that

[Our restaurant] has a wine chart where this kind of difference is highlighted. Differences are based on the production method...If there are intermediate situations, we put producers in one of the two categories according to our judgement.

Another sommelier remarked

If we consider the methods of production, the difference is between those that make wine exclusively in large barrels, the traditional producers, and those that employ small barrels, who are more innovative.

A third said “Basically, I believe that there are only these two categories, traditional vs. modern producers.” We concluded that use of *barrique* is indeed a test for modernity in the context of Barolo and Barbaresco production and marketing. By a happy coincidence, we have been able to collect systematic data for all relevant producers on their choices of barrel over time.

UNDERSTANDING VARIATIONS IN THE RATE OF DEFECTION TO MODERNISM

All available data indicate the modernist movement continued to gain ground during much of the 1990s. Critics raved about the modern wines; and the market prices of traditional wines fell below those of the modern wines (as we show below). Many new producers started using *barriques* at the start of production, and this trend increased over time. For instance, our data indicate that 48 producers entered Barolo/Barbaresco production during 1978–89; of these, 13 (20%) used *barriques* in their first vintage. During 1990–2000, there were 39 new entrants and 22 (56%) began with *barriques*.²

[Insert Figure 3 about here]

More important, there was widespread defection among tradition as increasing numbers of producers adopted *barrique aging* (and other modern practices). Figure 3 shows the year-to-year variation in the proportion of traditionalists in the previous vintage who had switched to modernism in the focal year. Note that probability of defection rose in the 1990s and peaked at nearly 0.10 in 1996 before declining to roughly 0.03 in the last three years of observation.

The Role of Collective Identity. Clearly there were strong incentives for those using traditional practice to defect to modernism. After all, the critics preferred the modern wines and gave them higher ratings, which, in turn, secured higher prices. What could conceivably inhibit defections to modernism? We suggest that the flow of defections sparked the recognition of a “traditionalist” category. The contents of this category were not new, but the boundary it implies was new. The rise

²These counts come from telephone interviews with the producers who were listed at least once in the Veronelli guide. We obtained information on the date at which the winery started operations and the date (if any) of the first use of *barriques*.

of “modernism” gave rise to a collective recognition that those still hewing to the long-established practices of the region were “traditionalists.”

When a social movement seeks to propagate a new category and associated identity by launching a critique of the dominant category (Taylor and Whittier 1982), the identity associated with the besieged category is activated, and its members often organize a counter-movement (Useem and Zald 1982). We argue that counter-movements seeking to preserve traditional identities make claims to authenticity based on loyalty to tradition and embed such claims in an ideology of moral superiority. Authenticity in this sense entails the social ordering of genuineness and presupposes that what is genuine differs from what is strategic for self-presentation (Taylor 1992; Fine 2004).

As we noted at the outset, authenticity claims are inherently polemical. Asserting that one category is authentic simultaneously claims that the paired category is inauthentic (Heinich 1996; McCannell 1973; Warde 1997). Thus, claims to authenticity arouse emotion and impel individuals to invest time and energy. Jasper (1998) distinguishes between reciprocal emotions and shared emotions. Reciprocal emotions consist of the feelings of movement participants to each other such as friendship and solidarity. Shared emotions are also held by movement members, but the object lies outside the movement—an external threat or enemy. Both reciprocal and shared emotions reinforce each other. Authenticity allows movement participants to experience the emotions of solidarity vis-à-vis each other, and feelings of anger and outrage versus their targets.

In the case of Barolo and Barbaresco, the traditionalists claim authenticity from making wines using the local traditional practices, wines that reflect the Nebbiolo grape and the terroir. They insist on resisting homogenization to international taste and the siren call of higher prices and larger markets. For many of our interviewees who were traditionalists, the use of the *barriques* was a “betrayal” and the “crossing of tradition.” Our respondents expressed anger and contempt at modernists, as can be seen from their language and analogies

Winemaking for me is not improvisation. For me, it is the work that my father had transferred to me. So it is part of my identity. I don't want to erase my roots, my history,

because it identifies me. (Maria Teresa Mascarello, winemaker at Cantine Mascarello Bartolo).

My clients are first of all those who believe in Piedmont's culture. (Giacomo Conterno of Poderi Aldo Conterno)

We want to continue to make Barolo—not a wine that can be confused with a Californian wine. Of course we don't make it just for pleasure, we make it for money. But we do it in the traditional way, because we believe in some rules and ideas, not only in the “Barolo of the money.” (Giuseppe Rinaldi)

In the late 1990s, a formal group called *Vini Veri* (Real Wines) was formed by Teobaldo Cappellano, Rinaldi, and other traditionalists. It expresses a profound opposition to the industrialization of vineyards and winemaking. The group identified a series of dangers in modern winemaking and published a manifesto of principles and a set of self-imposed rules that aim at confronting each of these dangers (www.viniveri.net). The danger list includes “homogeneity of smell and taste,” “leveling off and standardization of diversity across vintages,” and “loss of typicality.” To tackle them, the *Vini Veri* manifesto invokes the principles of, respectively, “respect for the natural micro-fauna of the fruit of the cellar,” “preservation of vintage diversity to maintain the wine's history and identity,” and the “fostering of features of the territory and grape variety.” In turn, the group has formulated specific rules to make real the principles of the manifesto: “mandatory use of natural yeasts already present in the harvested fruit” (rule 7), “use of concentration” is forbidden, except for natural drying” (rule 9), and “protection of natural fermentation temperature” (rule 11). *Vini Veri* declares that it practices “minimalism in the cellar.”, or as Cappellano himself told us “you don't need machines, you need [to do] just nothing.”

Collective entities like *Vini Veri* epitomize simultaneously a rebellion against the rise of internationalism in wine production and a defense of tradition. Moreover, collective identity was the glue that held traditionalists together, and prevented defection to modernism despite the allure of favorable ratings and higher prices.

But how did the traditionalist category become activated and salient? We suggest that lightning rod issues, the salience of a threat, and the activation of a boundary between oppositional categories played important roles. We discuss each of them below.

One contributing factor was the existence of lightning-rod issues that sparked the construction of categorical oppositions and induce collective protest by crystallizing grievances. Typically, these issues open up political opportunities, create shock effects, and provide emotional intensification of grievances (Jasper 1998). As a result, they activate and strengthen identities (Meyer 2007). In the case we are considering, the great recognition accorded to modern wines by critics was perceived by traditionalists to be unfair and unjust. The claims made by and for “modernists” convinced the other producers that they were “traditionalists” and made this category salient. A simple, visible, and compelling issue was the number of modern wines receiving the highest awards by the guides. Aldo Vacca echoed the sentiments of many traditionalists when he said: “The problem is that *Wine Spectator* and Parker tend to appreciate more the wines that appear more modern.” Rinaldi averred that the guides

gave low scores to producers that did not embrace innovation. It all drove the producers and also the markets into the road to homologation. Modern producers obtained the highest scores, the guides gave awards to their wines, and their wines were in high demand (and at high prices).

The sheer growth of modernists and their critical success posed a salient threat to the traditionalist identity. Psychologically salient targets of negative attention enable activists to dramatize a system’s inherent contradictions and vulnerabilities (Gamson and Meyer 1996; McAdam 1994) and to articulate an oppositional category, a set of agreed upon codes that tell what is authentic. The availability of such a code provides a collective basis for shifting away from purely utilitarianism (choosing actions that result in favorable outcomes), which surely favors defection in the circumstances. Instead, the movement provides a code, a set of principles for authentic action. The code constitutes a collective and principled basis for upholding traditional practices, for adopting the identity “traditionalist.”

This line of argument leads us to expect that the flow of defections rises initially with the proliferation of modernism but to slow as the traditionalist movement gains strength and the boundary between the categories sharpens. Because we lack any direct evidence about the strength of the movement, we cast our hypotheses in terms of the factors that we believe strengthened the movement: high levels of modern density and extensive critical success of modernists. We surmise that both of these factors inhibited defection.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSES OF MARKET INCENTIVES TO DEFECT FROM TRADITION

We begin by documenting the market incentives for defection from tradition, by analyzing the reactions of critics and retail prices.

Critical Evaluations. We use ratings from the annual guide *I Vini di Veronelli* (hereafter Veronelli guide). We rely on this source because it provides more extensive coverage over a longer period than the other guides and, crucially, tells for each wine reviewed whether it was aged in *botti*, *barrique*, or both. (The appendix provides details.) The guide assigns each labeled wine a rating expressed in stars, ranging from one (“good wine”) to three (“excellent wine”).³ The guide also confers an award of distinction (“super three stars”) to wines that it considers outstanding; for simplicity we refer to this rating as four stars.

We are interested primarily in whether traditional wines (those aged only in *botti*) get penalized compared to wines that use any *barrique*. We created a pair of dummy variable, *Traditional wine*, set to 1 if the particular wine was aged only *botti* and 0 otherwise, and another *Traditional winemaker*, set to 1 if in that vintage the producer employed only *botti* for all his/her Barolos and Barbarescos, and 0 otherwise. We used this binary classification in view of the assessments of our sommelier informants that there were two sharply defined categories in the market.

³Since the second edition, the guide assigns a trifolium symbol to products reviewed for the first time, which indicates the overall good quality of the wine but does not imply any specific rating. We exclude wines that receive trifolium symbols, and consequently producers whose wines are all rated for the first time, from the rating analyses.

The control variables include a set of dummies for: the rating of the wine in the previous vintage, whether the producer makes Barbaresco, whether the wine is a *reserve (riserva)*, is reviewed from the barrel before the end of the aging process (*divenire*), and is called a *cru* (its label records a particular vineyard). We also controlled for the *maximum price category* calculated over all wines made by a producer in the focal vintage.⁴ Although their relationship is only imperfect, prices are utilized as signals for quality, and ratings could improve as prices increase. We included a variable that measures *producer tenure* in the guide as the difference between the vintage rated for each producer and the first (minimum) vintage that was ever reviewed by the guide for that producer. For producers higher tenure implies that their wines have been reviewed for a longer period and/or older vintages of their wines receive review vis-à-vis other producers. In either case, higher values of the variable should indicate better reputation or a privileged position, which might positively affect the ratings. We also accounted for the *overall quality level of each vintage* to account for weather related fluctuations.⁵ To account for additional time-dependent effects, e.g., the tendency of critics to assign higher or lower ratings over time, we included a final control variable that is equal to the *vintage year* being reviewed, set to zero for 1961 (the earliest vintage (partially) reviewed by the guide).⁶

As we noted above, the number of stars received by a wine label ranges from one to four.

Because we cannot assume that the star categories are equally spaced, we estimated a generalized

⁴Price data come from the Veronelli guide and refer to retail distribution prices, excluding restaurants where the markup is higher and more variable. In the guide prices are expressed in alphabet letters, ranging from A (less than €7) to L (over €50). We created a variable that assigns a corresponding numerical scores to each bracket, where A = 1 and L = 10 and calculated the maximum price value for all wines made by a producer. Over the years, the guide employed a different number of price brackets therefore our maximum price variable adjusts for this variation dividing the numerical maximum price bracket for each producer by the maximum price bracket used in that specific edition of the guide.

⁵We use the quality rating assigned by the *Wine Advocate* magazine to wines produced in Piedmont and Tuscany in each vintage. As the *Wine Advocate's* website states, this vintage guide “should be regarded as a very general overall rating slanted in favor of what the finest producers were capable of producing in a particular viticultural region.” (<http://www.erobertparker.com>). The quality rating is expressed using a 100 point scale ranging from 50 (appalling vintage) to 100 (extraordinary vintage).

⁶We also tried several specifications that allow the differences in ratings of traditional and nontraditional wines to vary over time. However, in no case did adding these interactions improve the model fit substantially or significantly.

ordered logit model that allows the coefficients to differ for each of the star-category comparisons (McCullagh and Nelder 1989).⁷

The results appear in Table 1. Note the interpretation of the results is as follows: the first column's estimated coefficients are the log-odds of a particular wine being rewarded 2, 3, or 4 stars versus being rewarded 1 star; the second column shows estimates of the log-odds of a wine appearing in the 3 or 4 star category versus being in the 1 or 2 star category; and the third column comparison is 4 stars versus 1, 2, or 3 stars. The understanding among producers and wine journals finds support in these results: a traditional wine has a significantly lower chance of receiving four or even three stars.⁸

Notice that the effect of being a traditional producer (making only traditional Barolos and Barbarescos) is small and insignificant in Table 1. This is because the effect of traditional practice shows up in the wine. If we drop the distinction between traditional and nontraditional wines from the specification reported in Table 1, then the traditional-producer effect becomes negative and significant.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Internet Prices. Next we examine prices. Because the prices mentioned in the Veronelli guide are those suggested by the producer and not the actual market prices, we gathered data from the Internet about the online prices of Barolos and Barbarescos. We utilized the website www.wine-searcher.com, which has retail price listing from over 7,800 merchants of wines from around the world. Price data were limited to wines from vintages between 1995 and 2000. Prices of wines made much before 1995

⁷We began with an ordered logit regression model that is developed as a nonlinear probability model where the binary logits for each category are cumulated contrasting categories above each category j with category j and below. However, the ordered logit model specification makes the assumption of proportional-odds, i.e. the estimated slopes are constant across all star categories. We tested this assumption by performing a Brant test on the ordered logit model (Brant 1990). Results show that the proportional-odds assumption is violated ($X^2 = 156.70, p > X^2 = 0.000, df = 30$) which lead us to instead use a less restricted model specification.

⁸As additional checks, we tested the validity of our data source. In unreported analyses we re-estimated critics evaluation using data collected from the *Gambero Rosso* wine guide, and continued to find a negative and significant effect of penalties assigned to traditional wines relative to modern (results are available from the authors upon request).

would be subject to other forces such as scarcity that might make results unstable, and we have no data on Barolos or Barbarescos after the 2000 vintage. We conducted a random stratified sample of the wines by their star rating, ensuring each of the star ratings would be adequately represented. A total of 550 unique wine-vintages prices were collected.

Not all Barolos and Barbarescos have prices quoted on the Internet. So we sought to adjust for selection effects using a Heckman-style selection approach. We estimated the probability of a wine's price being quoted on the Internet, and then estimated the effects of the covariates on the price of the wine taking account of the probability of selection. For the selection equation we used a dummy for *divenire* wines, vintage quality, maximum producer rating, and producer tenure. For the price equation we included covariates used in the ratings analysis, dummies for wines, traditional producers, Barbarescos, *riservas*, *crus*, vintage quality, and producer tenure.⁹

Does critical acclaim translate into market success? Table 2 shows the answer is yes, as expected (when we control for the same covariates used in analyzing ratings). Wines with 2, 3, and 4 stars receive substantially higher prices—a four-star wine sells for \$32 more on average than a one-star wine. A three-star wine gets on average \$16 more than a wine with only one star. Recall that our earlier analysis showed that traditional wines get lower ratings on average, which means that they face a price penalty due to lower ratings. Over and above this, Table 2 shows that traditional wines command lower prices net of the critical ratings (roughly \$9 less on average). Overall, then, these results support the widespread view that higher ratings ensure higher retail prices.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

The Hazard of Defection from Tradition. We define a defection from tradition as a producer's shifting from exclusive use of *botti* to some use of *barriques*, either used exclusively or in combination with *botti*. In this section we present results of an analysis of defections among those producers who began as traditionalists among the 254 producers who ever had a Barolo or Barbaresco reviewed in

⁹We also tested whether allowing the effect of traditional wine on price to vary by year would improve the fit; and we learned that it does not.

the Veronelli guide in its first fifteen editions. Because the guide only reviews “good” wines from “good” producers, it does not necessarily cover a producer’s full history even during the years of its publication. So we contacted the producers and asked them when they began production of Barolo/Barbaresco and when, if ever, they first used *barriques* to age these wines.¹⁰ Because we have full winery histories and the shift to modernism began in 1978, we begin the observation window with that year. These interviews revealed that 219 producers began with traditional production and over half (111) defected from tradition with the study period (1978–2000).

Because the data extracted from responses to our telephone interviews cover producer years without corresponding reviews in Veronelli, we cannot associate ratings and prices with all producer years of observation. When we control for ratings and producers, the start of the observation period changes to 1982 (because the Veronelli guide began publishing in 1981 and we lag information on ratings and prices in our analysis) and only producers with rated wines in a vintage at risk of defection in that vintage. As a result, the number of producers at risk of a defection falls to 149 in the data with ratings and the number of defection during 1982–2000 falls to 59.

We used the number of defectors from tradition receiving four stars, the highest possible rating, as a measure of a lightning-rod issue. Recall that we expect the hazard of defection falls as the modernists triumph in critical reviews. We also expect the growth in the number of modernists will have a nonmonotonic (inverted-U shaped) effect on the hazard of defection. Therefore we also include a quadratic effect of the number of modernists. As Figure 4 shows, the density of modernists rises steadily over the observation period.

[Insert Figure 4 about here]

Given the oppositional contrast between the traditional and modern categories, it seems likely the number of traditional producers will also affect the hazard of defection. Notice in Figure 4 the number of traditionalists is roughly 160 at the start of the period we analyze with the full data (1978–2000), rises to about 180, and then declines steadily to about 110. After experimenting with a number

¹⁰We were not able to interview four of the producers; and we used information from the guide and from the Internet to fill in the relevant information.

of functional forms for the effect of traditional density, we found we could achieve a good fit simply by using a dummy variable that equals 1 for years in which traditional density falls below 150 and equals zero otherwise.

Based on our reconstruction of the history of mobilization, we break the period of analysis into three pieces: 1978–85, 1986–96, and 1997–2000, and we estimate period. Adding these period effects allows us to rule out a simple alternative story, that the pattern of defections simply tracks consumer tastes that vary over the observation window, e.g., there was little demand for the modern wines before 1986, demand increased sharply and remained high until the mid-1990s, and then began to decline in the late 1990s as the novelty of the modern style declined.

We also control for a producer’s maximum price in the prior rated vintage and prior maximum rating, vintage quality, and a dummy variable for producing Barbaresco, and the number of wine labels of Barolo/Barbaresco the Veronelli guide reviewed for a producer. The descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis of defections can be found in Table 3.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

We examined the defection process using event-history methods. Exploration of various specifications of tenure-dependence revealed that none improved significantly over a tenure-independent (exponential) specification. This result surprised us, because we were expecting the strength of the traditional identity to increase with tenure, which would generate a pattern of negative tenure dependence. In hindsight, we think the lack of tenure dependence makes sense in the context. According to our reading of the situation, the traditionalist category gets constructed in the debate over modernism. And, this construction “hits” the relevant producers at roughly the same time; in other words, the impact of the rise of modernism on the identities of those following traditional practice does not depend upon their tenure.

Table 4 reports the estimates of exponential hazard models to assess the conditions under which traditional (*all-botti*) producers defect from tradition. Column 1 uses the full data (the data from the guide supplemented with the telephone interviews). The effects of interest involve the density of

modern producers. The first-order effect is positive and significant, and the second-order effect is negative and significant. The implications of these estimates are shown in Figure 5, which plots the hazard as a function of modern density N_m when all other covariates are zero (that is, it plots the effect of the constant and the quadratic effect of modern density.) Note that the hazard of defection rises as N_m increases, but when N_m hits roughly 96, the relationship turns negative such that the hazard is quite low when N_m hits its observed peak level (144). We interpret this result as indicating that the initial spread of modernism induced traditionalists to join the bandwagon but that a high density of modernists posed a salient threat and activated a traditional identity and inhibited defection. (Net of these effects, the effect of traditionalist density is not significant.)

[Insert Figure 5 and Table 4 about here]

Next we turn to analysis of spells with associated measures of ratings (and thus of defectors with four-star ratings, a key covariate). The results appear in column 2 of Table 4. We see that the number of wines made by modernists that have received four stars has a significant negative effect on defection—so it served as a lightning rod issue and prevented defection. The number of modern producers again has a nonmonotonic effect on the hazard of defection. Figure 5 shows this effect of the number of modern producers parallels results from the analyses that could not control for ratings and for variables constructed from ratings. Notice the effect is much stronger in the analysis that controls for ratings.

Now traditionalist density also affects the defection hazard. When traditionalist density fell below 150, the hazard of defection was significantly lower. Put differently, as the number of traditionalists fell due to defections, the hazard of defection fell. This effect suggests an oppositional contrast strengthened the boundary of the “traditionalist” category and lowered defection rates.

The estimates in Table 4 also make clear that it was not the low-performing producers who accounted for the bulk of the defections. Neither the maximum rating nor the maximum price from the prior vintage has a significant effect on the hazard of defection.

Finally, we explored specifications in which the hazard is affected by the (a) the degree to which recent entrants into the production of Barolo and Barbaresco used *barrisques* and (b) the recent critical success of nontraditional wines (as measured by either the proportion of four-star ratings in the previous vintage that went to modern wines or the odds that that a modern wine wins four stars relative to the odds for a traditional wine). We wanted to see whether adding these covariates would weaken or eliminate the effects of the producer densities. It turns out that this is not the case: the effects of an inflow of modern wineries and recent critical success do not affect the hazard of defection significantly, and the inclusion of these effects does not diminish the density effects on which we have concentrated.

ROBUSTNESS CHECKS: ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

We now consider a set of plausible alternative explanations for our key findings and try to rule them out. Here we briefly report the relevant findings (full details are available from the authors).

The first concern is that some traditionalists might not have defected because they lacked the necessary capabilities. Was the dearth of capabilities or high switching costs an issue? It might seem that use of *barrisques* requires higher up-front investment, because the barrels are used for only a few years and must be replaced while *botti* are used for much longer periods. In an interview Eugenio Gamba, who is the largest producer of *botti* and *barrisques* in Italy, explained that the two types of barrels have comparable base costs: a 225 litre *barrisque* costs €570 and *botti* cost from €180 to €320 per hectolitre. Yet, used *barrisques* are sold on a secondary market, particularly to winemakers in the southern Italian regions or to local wineries that use them for lower-end products.

So were capabilities the issue? If capabilities were the issue and traditionalists generally lacked key capabilities, then those who defected would tend to get penalized—they would not receive upgrades and would instead, receive downgrades from critics. We estimated the effect of defection on the probability that a producer's maximum rating rises and (separately) for the probability that the

maximum rating falls.¹¹ We find that defection increases the probability of upgrade significantly at the 0.01 level (the estimated effect of defection is 1.537 with a standard error of 0.356). By contrast, defection reduces downgrade probabilities (the estimated effect of defection is -0.787 with a standard error of 0.379 so this effect is significant at the 0.10 level). So defectors are rewarded with upgrades and are less likely to suffer downgrades.

We think this pattern casts some doubt on the capability explanation. However, it does not address the possibility that traditionalists with high capabilities defected and gained higher ratings but those with inferior capabilities did not defect. In this light, it is interesting to note in Table 4 that a producer's maximum rating does not affect defection. So, if the most capable traditionalists defected, the capabilities involved did not show up in their traditional wines as judged by the critics.

A second explanation is that some winemakers stay traditional because they can free-ride on the high prices generated by the enthusiasm for the modern or the international wines. Modernists get higher prices, and this (or the rise of international prices) might also drive up traditionalist prices. We gathered data on prices of Californian wines and modern Barolos and Barbarescos. We again use a Heckman procedure as in Table 1. We find that modernist prices have no impact on the prices of Barolos and Barbarescos (the estimated effect of the average price of the modern Barolos and Barbarescos is 0.057 and the standard error is 0.228); the average price of Californian wines is negative and significant at the 0.10 level (the estimated coefficient is -0.385 with a standard error of 0.165). These results cast doubt on the explanation of free-riding.

A third alternative explanation is that traditionalists stay traditional because they do not seek to enter a crowded terrain populated by lots of modernists (including many defectors from tradition). If this were so, defectors who came in late would receive lower ratings and lower prices. We estimate specifications for wine ratings that parallel those whose estimates appear in Table 1, including a dummy for defector producers, the density of modern producers, and the interaction of these two

¹¹We estimated logit regressions using the generalized estimating equations procedure (with an exchangeable correlation structure) to correct for potential bias due to correlation between ratings observations on the same producer (Liang and Zeger 1986).

terms. These additions do not improve the fit of the model significantly (the likelihood ratio test statistic equals 12.14 with 9 degrees of freedom). None of the three interaction terms is significant at even the 0.10 level individually. Thus we do not find any support for this crowding argument.

A fourth and final alternative explanation is that traditionalists stay traditionalists because they can exploit stochastic variations in quality—so, when quality improves, traditionalists strike it rich and receive high ratings. The biggest source of stochastic variation in winemaking is climate (rainfall and sunshine). If the alternative story were true, traditionalists should gain more than modernists when vintage quality is high. So we re-estimated the wine-rating analysis and added an interaction between the vintage quality and traditional-wine. In fact, we find some evidence that modernists benefit significantly more than traditionalists from favorable vintages (the estimated effect of the interaction of tradition with vintage quality on the odds of receiving the highest rating is -0.176 with a standard error of 0.064). So stochastic variations benefit modernists, not traditionalists!

One hard-to-rule-out alternative explanation builds on a kind of mover-stayer story. Suppose that the set of winemakers using traditional practices consists of two subtypes: a hard core that is deeply committed to tradition and a set of pragmatists who happen to have begun with traditional practice but are not committed. As the returns to modernism grow, the pragmatists will tend to defect; but the hard core (people like Mascarello and Rinaldi) will never defect. Eventually the set of still-traditional producers will consist entirely of the hard core and the hazard of defection will drop to zero. In such a case, no activation of identity would be needed to cause the hazard to fall. In light of this alternative, it is informative that the hazard of defection does not vary with tenure as a traditionalist, as would be the case in a mover-stayer process.

DISCUSSION

Our findings show that traditional producers incur costs (lower ratings and lower sales) by sticking with *botti*. They define themselves as authentic producers in opposition to modernists. Indeed, the emergence of a “traditional” category was sparked by a lightning rod issue (higher ratings for wines by defectors from tradition), stoked by a threat (large numbers of modernists), and fired by

categorical opposition. In this context, our study makes a contribution by examining the bases of authenticity claims.

It is tempting to portray modernists as inauthentic, as driven by money, and traditionalists as driven by love. In this view, profit-maximizing modernists seek high prices and utility-maximizing traditionalists *consume* tradition and so choose lower prices (Scott-Morton and Podolny 2002). Such a portrait treats individual producers as atomistic decision-makers and overlooks the collective sources of identity and motivation. Modernists themselves had to mobilize collectively to construct the “modernist” category and to gain supporters from new entrants. Moreover, the modernist interpretation of winemaking constitutes a different claim of authenticity, one that embraces creativity. Breaking with traditional practice and adopting *barriques*, among other technologies, was motivated by a desire to make original (and technically excellent) wines. In this sense, modern winemaking constitutes a set of practices that is looser to define (and observe) than traditional. Giorgio Rivetti of La Spinetta told us that “If you go to a good restaurant and the food is great, you don’t wonder how it has been prepared, or who the cook is. You just say that the food is great!” and Roberto Voerzio said “The proof of the wine, after all, is in the drinking. If you’ve got a great wine, it doesn’t really matter how you made it.” (Rosso and Meier 2002: 197). Thus our study extends research on authenticity by presenting a compelling case of competing logics of authenticity. One (the modernist) employs a logic of consequence, the other (the traditional) a logic of rules, to use March and Olsen’s (1989) terms. One embodies authenticity by intervention that leads to originality in the interest of gaining good outcomes in the market. The other seeks authenticity through rule-based abstention that leads to genuineness.

The contention over *barrique* and *botti* in Barolo parallels the tussle between *nouvelle* and classical cuisines in French gastronomy in two respects (Rao et al. 2003, 2005). First, insurgents—modernists in Barolo and *nouvelle cuisine* exponents in France—gain fame and glory. Second, there was considerable cross-over from one category to another. If *nouvelle cuisine* chefs later borrowed classical techniques and classical chefs adopted the modern techniques, many traditionalists adopted

modernists' practices such as shortened maceration times and temperature control. Nevertheless, two important differences remain and merit explanation. Unlike classical cuisine chefs who did not counter-mobilize, traditionalists in Barolo did. Why was there a counter-movement of traditionalists in the Langhe? If the cross-over of techniques eroded boundaries between classical and nouvelle cuisine (Rao et al. 2005), such cross-over did not undermine the boundaries between traditionalists and modernists in the Langhe. Why did the type of wood barrel become the marker (test code) of the boundary?

Our study suggests that traditionalists counter-mobilized due to the success of the modernists, because they saw modernism as a threat to their way of life, to their local culture—in short, to the regional identity embodied in the typicity of a Barolo or Barbaresco. Hence, Bartolo Mascarello's rallying cry "There is one Barolo—defend it!" Moreover, the small geographical scale allowed face-to-face contact among producers; and the existence of common organizations such as the consortia made collective mobilization feasible. Furthermore, Bartolo Mascarello was a charismatic figure who was able to rally people to the cause of preserving tradition.

The size of wood barrels became the locus of contention because it was a visible feature of production, had consequential impact on taste, and was easy to police by critics and consumers. Winemakers invite critics and audiences to their cellars, and the first thing one sees is the barrels in which the wine ages. The size of the barrel relative to the amount of wine is decisive for taste—one can put "wood in the wine," as modernists do, and soften it and make it oaky, or put "wine in the wood," as traditionalists do, and make it retain its tannins (the phrases in quotes are taken from an interview with Elio Grasso). Sommeliers and consumers can easily discern the difference, and the former can easily explain it to the latter. By contrast, maceration times or vineyard techniques are opaque to consumers and critics, have indirect effects on wine, and are not easy to monitor.

Insofar as classical cuisine was concerned, it had no regional mooring and was divorced from a specific region such as Burgundy or Provence. Classical cuisine operated on a much wider scale—the whole of France as opposed to a handful of villages. There was no rallying figure in classical cuisine.

If there was one, it was Escoffier who was dead and gone. Moreover, critics found it hard to patrol the boundaries of classical and nouvelle cuisine when chefs started borrowing and blending techniques (Rao et al. 2005). There was no analogue to wood barrels as the fault line. As a result, there was no counter-movement in classical cuisine, and no hot boundary.

Our findings also extend the reach of ecological research in two ways. First, they shed light on the roots of inertia. Early formulations held that organizations are rewarded for reliable performance, and thereby, develop internal routines and external relationships (Hannan and Freeman 1984). A number of studies have demonstrated the disruptive consequences of changes on the vital rates of organizations, but they illustrate the *process* effects of change - that managers underestimate unit interdependencies and as a result, lengthen durations of reorganizations and increase mortality (Barnett and Carroll 1995; Hannan et al. 2003). Recently, some studies have begun to examine the *content* effects of changes by arguing that organizational changes are disruptive because they violate social codes of conduct and incur penalties. Hannan, Baron, Hsu, and Kocak (2006) found that changes in employment blueprints increased failure rates and depressed growth rates, whereas, the replacement of the founder-CEO did not impair survival but depressed growth rates. Changes in employment blueprints were identity-threatening changes which violated the normative expectations of employees, triggered resistance within the organization, and impeded successful change. Rao et al. (2005) studied *haute cuisine* restaurants and distinguished between the codes of conduct for classical cuisine and nouvelle cuisine and showed that external evaluations improved when restaurants undertook more code-preserving changes than their direct competitors but declined when they initiated more code-violating changes than competitors.

In sharp contrast, this paper investigated a scenario where critics favored modern wines over traditional wines and did not penalize defectors. Instead, defectors received upgrades implying that there were neither external constraints such as sanctions nor internal constraints such as capability. Yet, many producers chose to stay with the tradition. Rather than the threat of penalties, authentic identity is a foundation of inertia: a substantial number of traditionalists persisted with tradition

because they regarded it as the authentic thing to do, the normatively right thing to do, and they incurred costs by being inert. These costs became a badge of honor and the source of identity.

Second, our findings show that collective action activates identity and shapes organizational categories. However, compared to existing accounts we see at least two important distinctions. First, where others emphasized the dichotomy between large generalists and small specialists as the source of contention for the construction of authentic forms (Carroll and Swaminathan 2000), we show that identity is activated in the contention between specialist organizations in the absence of high concentration and market partitioning. In fact, the weaker is the reception for traditionalism, the stronger is the opposition with modernism. Second, while previous studies found that the strength of the insurgent movement increases with the inflow of defectors (Rao et al. 2003), we find that the size of the insurgent movement actually reduces the abandonment of tradition, and the identity of the countermovement *strengthens* with the increasing number of insurgents. Interestingly the process is aroused via simple densities, a result that provides new significance to the line of theory and research on density-dependence.

Finally, our results speak to neo-institutional accounts of conformity. Neo-institutionalists have relied on the imagery of force and pressure to describe the impact of institutional influences, and conceptualized organizational responses as a spectrum of organizational responses ranging from passive conformity at one end, to outright defiance at the other end (Oliver 1997). Whether an organization succumbs to institutional pressure or resists it hinges on the extent to which the environment has power over organizations. If organizations garner technical gains and legitimacy, then they have little choice but to conform (Goodstein 1994). However, if institutional standards are uncertain, a range of acceptable practices might be acceptable, and organizations have more discretion to pursue their strategic interests (Goodrick and Salancik 1996). Producers of Barolo and Barbaresco faced strong institutional pressures to abandon tradition—doing so allows them to secure greater approval from the audience (proxied by ratings) and material gains (higher prices). They have little power over critics such Veronelli. Yet, they do stick with aging exclusively in *botti* and associated

traditional practices. The underlying mechanism builds on categorical membership and identity rather than the power of incentives. Some producers persist with traditional practices because they define themselves in terms of the land and its terroir, and they believe that only authentic way to make Barolo wine is to use *botti*. By doing so, they are willing to incur lower ratings and lower prices.

APPENDIX: DATA ON CRITICAL EVALUATIONS AND PRICES

We relied on the Veronelli guide because it provides the most comprehensive data on Italian wines, and covers more wineries and a much longer period of coverage than alternative data sources like *Gambero Rosso's Italian Wines*, Parker's *Wine Advocate*, or the *Wine Spectator*. The Veronelli guide has reviewed over 10,000 "good Italian wines" by 2,000 "good winemakers" every year since 1981, and is considered an authoritative source on wine in Italy. Its founding editor, Luigi Veronelli, was internationally acknowledged as Italy's most celebrated wine and food critic. The Veronelli guide enjoys wide circulation among expert and non-expert audiences, including wine merchants, restaurant sommeliers, and consumers seeking direction in their purchase decisions. The annual list of outstanding wines has achieved high standing inside and outside the industry. For example, the release of a new edition of ratings receives broad coverage in the media and is featured in every major Italian national newspaper.

The guide provides information organized by producer and geographical location. Three key product details are displayed: the type of barrel employed to age the various vintages of each wine, the retail price category; and a critical evaluation. The evaluation follows a tasting done by Luigi Veronelli and his three coeditors; all of them are wine experts. (After Veronelli's death in 2004 the coeditors continue the operation). The guide rates each wine employing a single-blind tasting method. In fact, our data source is regarded as reliable and impartial.

The observation period for our data corresponds to the vintages covered by the guide during its first fifteen editions, beginning in 1981 and ending in 2005. The Italian law regulating wine appellation systems requires that the products age for a period variable from at least two (Barbaresco) to at least three (Barolo) years prior to their release on the market and, consequently, to their review by the critics. Such a rule imposes a systematic time lag on the structure of our data. For example the 2005 edition reviews wines from the vintages of 2001 and 2002 as the latest available for Barbaresco, and 2000 and 2001 for Barolo. To allow for full comparability across the wines we end our observation window in 2000. Despite the fact that the guide goes back to review certain famous

wines in vintages as early as 1961 (as in the case of Giacomo Conterno's famous Barolo Monfortino), we start our analysis with the vintage of 1978 or 1982, depending on the covariates needed. All our interviews revealed that experimentation with cellar techniques was negligible before the 1980s; therefore restricting the initial date of observation avoids inflation in the estimated effects of the use of traditional techniques. Moreover, the guide editions reviewing the very early vintages contain missing information about techniques.

As a result, our most inclusive sample consists of all labels of Barbarescos and Barolos and their respective producing wineries, which have received a rating in the Veronelli guide during the period 1981–2005. The sample includes 869 different wines (labels) and 254 producers that appear in the guide at least once.

In our analyses that control for ratings and prices, we used values from the previous vintage as covariates. This means that these analyses treat dependent variables for vintages beginning with 1982. Because of the rules about aging noted above, we end the window of observation with the 2000 vintage.

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FIGURE 1

THE FAMOUS “NO BARRIQUE NO BERLUSCONI” LABEL DESIGNED BY BARTOLO MASCARELLO



FIGURE 2

A CHAIR MADE OF THE STAVES OF A *BARRIQUE* IN GIUSEPPE RINALDI'S CELLAR IN BAROLO.
THE SIGN READS "THE BEST USE OF *BARRIQUES*"



FIGURE 3
NUMBERS OF DEFECTIONS FROM TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES
OF WINEMAKING IN BAROLO AND BARBARESCO BY VINTAGE

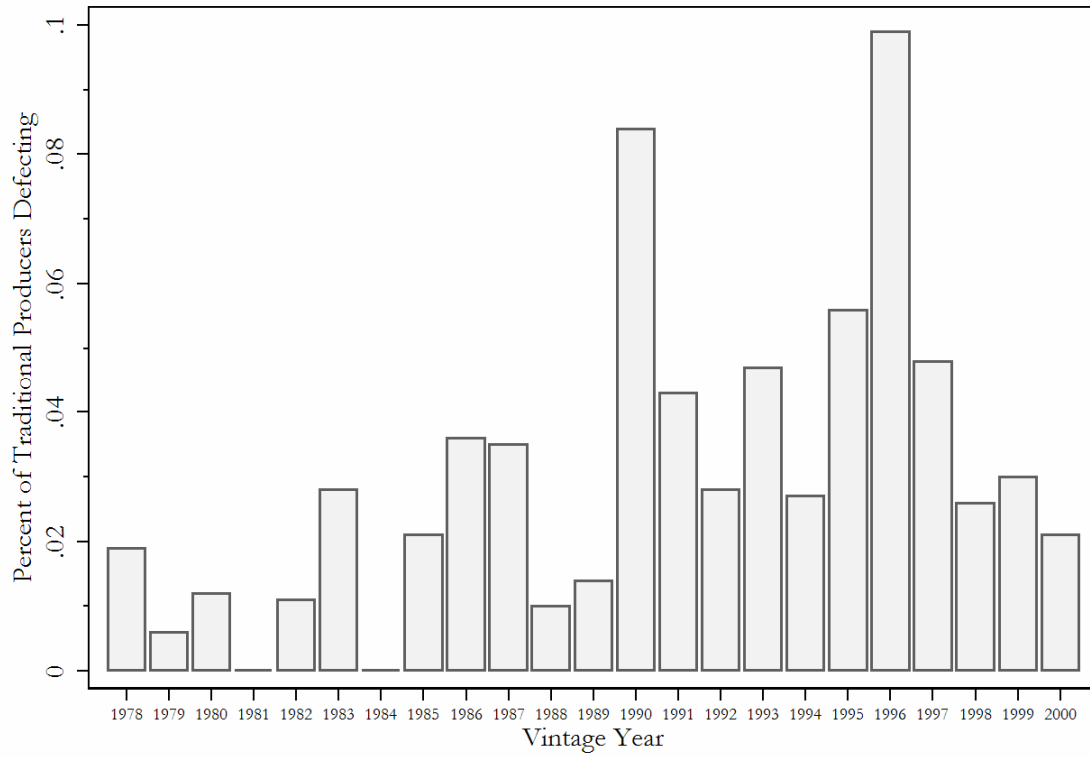


FIGURE 4
DENSITIES OF TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL PRODUCERS OF BAROLO AND
BARBARESCO BY VINTAGE

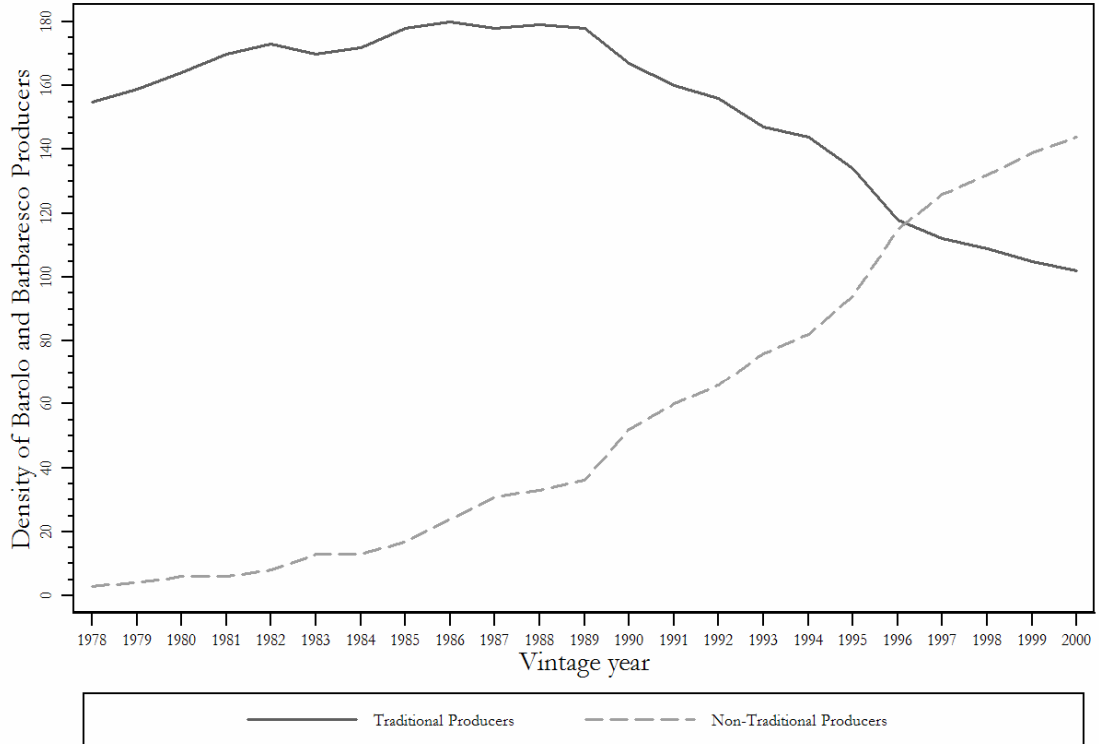


FIGURE 5

MULTIPLIERS OF THE RATE OF DEFECTION FROM TRADITION

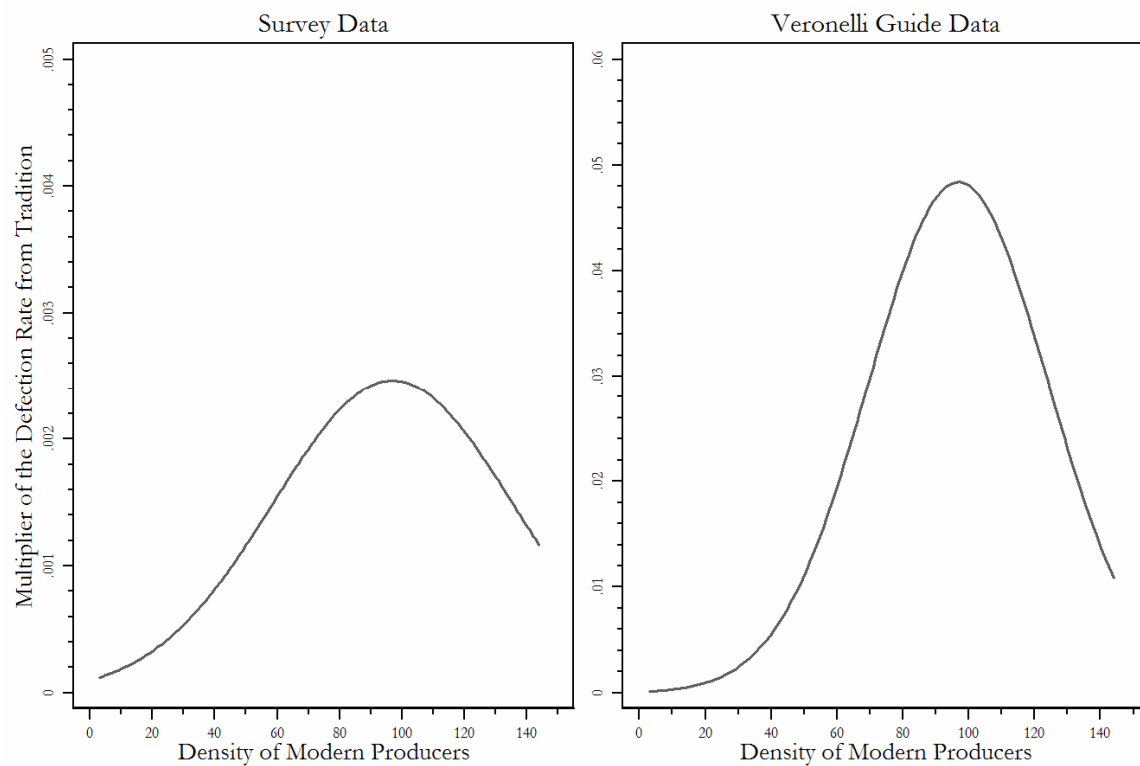


TABLE 1
DETERMINANTS OF CRITICAL RATINGS OF BAROLO AND BARBARESCO WINES, 1992–2000
(MAXIMUM-LIKELIHOOD ESTIMATES OF A GENERALIZED ORDERED LOGIT REGRESSION)

Variable	> 1 star		> 2 stars		> 3 stars	
Constant	10.885	.	−1.786	(1.288)	−11.021	* (4.267)
Prior rating (vs. four-stars)						
1 star	−24.047	*** (1.764)	−7.141	*** (0.708)	−4.947	*** (0.797)
2 stars	−19.761	*** (1.635)	−5.084	*** (0.549)	−3.733	*** (0.305)
3 stars	−1.221	(1.725)	−1.767	** (0.549)	−2.439	*** (0.290)
Traditional wine	−0.364	(0.294)	−0.675	*** (0.193)	−0.834	* (0.401)
Traditional producer	0.184	(0.312)	0.278	(0.201)	0.595	(0.380)
Barbaresco wine	−0.246	(0.193)	−0.294	* (0.127)	−0.087	(0.216)
<i>Riserva</i> wine	−0.663	(0.463)	0.837	*** (0.239)	0.652	(0.391)
<i>Cru</i> wine	0.922	*** (0.220)	0.629	** (0.224)	0.869	(0.774)
<i>Divenire</i> wine	−1.040	** (0.347)	0.188	(0.220)	−0.801	(0.505)
Retail price v_{-1}	2.435	** (0.701)	2.590	*** (0.461)	1.971	** (0.659)
Producer tenure	0.003	(0.019)	0.020	(0.012)	0.035	* (0.017)
Vintage quality	0.072	*** (0.017)	0.008	(0.010)	0.079	* (0.036)
Year (1961=0)	0.128	*** (0.033)	0.061	** (0.023)	0.044	(0.029)
Pseudo R ²	0.458					
Log-likelihood	−1,464.92					
Model X ² (39 df)	2,474.81 ***					
Number of observations	2,405					

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; robust standard errors in parentheses. v denotes a (rated) vintage year

TABLE 2
DETERMINANTS OF INTERNET RETAIL PRICES OF BAROLO AND BARBARESCO WINES, 1995–2000
(MAXIMUM-LIKELIHOOD ESTIMATES OF A REGRESSION MODEL WITH SELECTION)

Variable			
<i>Price equation</i>			
Constant	60.565		(32.048)
2 star ratings	−0.882		(2.277)
3 star ratings	7.856 *		(3.062)
4 star ratings	20.734 ***		(4.738)
Traditional wine	−8.913 ***		(2.540)
Traditional producer	3.551		(2.537)
Barbaresco wine	4.305		(5.502)
<i>Riserva</i> wine	−3.294		(5.086)
<i>Cru</i> wine	−5.688 *		(2.569)
Producer tenure	0.607 ***		(0.170)
Vintage quality	0.091		(0.342)
<i>Selection equation</i>			
Constant	−5.580 ***		(0.712)
<i>Divenire</i> wine	−5.896 ***		(0.120)
Producer tenure	0.016 **		(0.005)
Vintage quality	0.043 ***		(0.008)
Max producer ratings	0.232 ***		(0.030)
Arc tan(ρ)	−0.401 ***		(0.076)
Ln(σ)	3.213 ***		(0.066)
Log-pseudolikelihood	−3,805.01		
Model X ² (10 df)	68.12 ***		
Wald X ² ($\rho=0$)	27.66 ***		
Number of observations	2,862		
Number of censored observations	2,132		
Number of uncensored observations	550		

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; robust standard errors in parentheses.
 v denotes a (rated) vintage year

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ANALYSES OF THE HAZARD OF DEFECTION

INTERVIEW DATA	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Dev</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Barbaresco Producer	0.413	0.492	0	1
Vintage quality	86.413	7.917	70	96
Pre-1986 period	0.280	0.449	0	1
1986-1996 period	0.476	0.499	0	1
Density of traditional producers <150 _{v-1}	0.391	0.488	0	1
Density of non traditional producers _{v-1}	61.137	47.820	3	144

VERONELLI GUIDE DATA	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Dev</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Barbaresco Producer	0.342	0.475	0	1
Maximum rating _{v-1}	1.936	0.990	0	4
Maximum price _{v-1}	0.595	0.187	0.167	1
Number of labels _{v-1}	2.183	1.728	1	13
Vintage quality	90.043	6.441	74	96
Pre-1986 period	0.084	0.277	0	1
1986-1996 period	0.717	0.451	0	1
Density of traditional producers (<150) _{v-1}	0.402	0.490	0	1
Density of non traditional producers _{v-1}	67.824	42.393	8	144
Number of 4-star 'defector' wines _{v-1}	6.079	7.000	0	35

TABLE 4
DETERMINANTS OF THE HAZARD OF DEFECTION FOR TRADITIONAL PRODUCERS
(MAXIMUM-LIKELIHOOD ESTIMATES OF CONSTANT-HAZARD SPECIFICATIONS)

	<i>Interview data</i> (1978–2000)		<i>Veronelli guide data</i> (1982–2000)	
Constant	–9.209 ***	(1.853)	–9.327 ***	(1.878)
Barbaresco producer	0.237	(0.147)	0.400	(0.250)
Maximum rating v_{-1}			–0.071	(0.151)
Maximum price v_{-1}			0.657	(0.938)
Number of labels v_{-1}			–0.026	(0.224)
Vintage quality	0.031	(0.016)	0.018	(0.016)
Pre-1986 period	1.377	(0.793)	–13.641 ***	(0.963)
1986-1996 period	0.561	(0.566)	–0.567	(0.954)
Density of traditional producers v_{-1} is less than 150	–0.401	(0.419)	–1.454 **	(0.501)
Density of nontraditional producers v_{-1}	0.067 **	(0.025)	0.130 ***	(0.033)
Density of nontraditional producers ² v_{-1}	–0.0003 *	(0.0001)	–0.0067 ***	(0.0002)
Number of 4-star “defector” wines v_{-1}			–1.225 ***	(0.342)
Pseudo log-likelihood	–171.77		–94.20	
Model X ²	34.32 ***		8,003.62 ***	
Number of observations	4,261		887	
Number of producers	219		149	
Number of events	111		59	

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; standard errors adjusted for clustering on producers in parentheses. v denotes a (rated) vintage year