

Friends, Favours and Cliques:

Relational Mechanisms of Recognition in Peer-Based Tournament Rituals

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Abstract

The present study exposes the influence of relational mechanisms that are critical for understanding how evaluations occur in peer-based tournament rituals. Specifically, we look at the extent to which cultural producers' social ties to the members of the evaluating audience (i.e., whether they worked together in the past), their level of cliquishness (i.e., the extent to which they are embedded in the same cliques) and reciprocity (i.e., whether the producers rewarded audience members in the previous tournaments rituals) shape awards allocation decisions. We engage in a qualitative exploration of our setting to contextualize our hypotheses and understand the process by which awards are allocated and the role that relationships between jurors and project-participants play in affecting peer recognition in tournaments rituals. We then test and find support for our hypotheses within the context of the Norwegian advertising industry by looking at cultural producers' chances of being rewarded in "The Silver Tag" – the most important digital advertising awards contest in Norway – during the period 2003-2010. By unveiling the centrality of social mechanisms that cut across the audience-producer interface, the use of a mixed-method approach offers systematic insights into the relational underpinnings of peer-based tournament rituals. The results of the analysis have important implications for the growing research on social evaluations and peer recognition.

Keywords: Peer evaluation, audiences, jury, direct ties, cliques, reciprocity, status, awards, tournament rituals, cultural fields, advertising.

INTRODUCTION

There is no form of symbolic capital so ubiquitous, powerful, and widely talked about as the award. Awards have always been centre stage in cultural industries, but they have now spread into virtually every institutional field (English, 2005). Well-known examples in the cultural fields are the Academy Awards (Baumann, 2007), the Booker Prize (Anand & Watson, 2004), the Nobel Prize (e.g., Zuckerman, 1996) and the John Bates Clark Medal in economics (Gallus & Frey, 2016). The corporate sector too has witnessed a significant increase in the number of prizes, including awards for the most innovative designs and the best CEO (Shi, Zhang, & Hoskisson, 2017). Operating as judgment devices that channel evaluating audience's attention and create sharp discontinuities between winners and losers, awards serve as crucial mechanisms for shaping the prestige structure of existing fields (Goode, 1978; Rossman & Schilke, 2014). As such, they have been the object of considerable attention from organizational and social analysts interested in understanding who/what is rewarded and by which metrics (Allen & Parsons, 2006; Cattani & Ferriani, 2008; Rossman, Esparza, & Bonacich, 2010; Childress, Rawlings, & Moeran, 2017).

Despite working in different research streams, scholars concerned with the drivers of recognition typically agree on two types of arguments. One class of explanations focuses on the characteristics of the producers, i.e., the actors who are part of the consideration set of the audiences in charge of allocating symbolic capital. Studies in this tradition have drawn attention to such characteristics as producers' status and reputation as central judgment devices structuring the audience-producer interface (Bielby & Bielby, 1994; Rossman et al., 2010; Braden, 2016). Another line of inquiry examines particular features of the evaluating audiences, including their disposition, cognitive orientation or structural position, and how they ultimately affect award allocation choices (Negro & Leung, 2012; Cattani, Ferriani, & Allison, 2014). These studies have identified a number of factors shaping evaluative outcomes beyond the "true" quality of the object under evaluation, thus contributing to unveiling the "social magic" that creates discontinuity out of continuity (Bourdieu,

1984: 117). By focusing on either side of the producer-audience interface, however, these perspectives have overlooked the existence of social relationships between audience members and producers that often characterize the settings in which awards allocations occur.

This is almost invariably the case in peer-based evaluative settings, where producers and audiences partake in the same professional community and so may have few degrees of separation from each other. Yet evidence on such social fabric and its role in shaping recognition is scant, as stressed by various scholars. For instance, Lamont notes that there is still “an urgent need for more systematically cumulative work on [...] the impact of prior network contacts on evaluative [...] outcomes” (2012: 214). In their study of the evaluation of novelty, Criscuolo and colleagues point out that “little attention has been given to the social context of selection” (2017: 4). Tournament theorists likewise call for studies more sensitive to the social fabric in which tournament rituals are embedded, arguing that “incorporating constructs and relationships from social network theory could help place tournaments more squarely into their contexts” (Connelly et al., 2013: 36). The present analysis addresses these calls by examining whether and to what extent the presence of various relational mechanisms linking producers and audiences has systematic effects on audiences’ awarding decisions. In particular, we focus on the following three relational mechanisms: prior social relationships, reciprocity and cliquishness. Theoretical reasons corroborated by our interview data and archival sources suggest that each of these mechanisms provides different yet complimentary insight into the relational underpinnings of audiences’ evaluations of producers’ offers.

The theoretical rubric under which we develop and advance our arguments combines insights from two theories: the theory of cultural fields and consecration rituals, a perspective associated especially with the work of theorists like Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 1993) and others in this tradition (Anheier, Gerhards, & Romo, 1995; Allen & Lincoln, 2004); and network theory (Granovetter, 1973; White, Boorman, & Breiger, 1976). Analysts in the cultural fields’ tradition see fields as arenas of exchange and contestation in which actors strive to secure prestige and esteem from their peers. This

competition shapes evaluative practices and gives rise to social structure, understood here as social topology, which positions actors relative to each other according to the combination of symbolic and social resources available to them. In analytic terms, the field is a “network, or a configuration, of objective relations” among positions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 97). While the Bourdieusian perspective delineates “the broad contours for a relational approach to consecration” (Childress et al., 2017: 2) and offers insights into the underlying logic of distinction that separates producers between “winners” and “losers,” network theory provides the conceptual and analytical tools required to inform, define and test the relational mechanisms affecting award allocation decisions. Examining these mechanisms and their effect on evaluative outcomes poses several empirical challenges. It requires complete information on the full set of producers struggling for recognition, and such data are rare. In addition, information about the relationships between audience members and producers is difficult to obtain. Tracking these relationships through prior joint experience – the approach pursued here – further requires detailed information on the career histories of both audience members and producers. Finally, the true quality of cultural producers’ offers is typically unobservable and difficult to infer unequivocally even after consumption. The challenge, therefore, is to adopt an approach that enables the researcher to ascertain the presence of relational effects independent of the true quality of the producer’s offer.

To deal with these data issue we rely on an unusual combination of field-based qualitative evidence and large sample statistics on the Norwegian advertising field from 2003 to 2010. This setting has many features that make it valuable to our inquiry. First, advertising excellence is assessed in the course of award contests by juries (audiences) of professional peers that clearly discriminate among winners and losers. The audience members are typically accomplished (high-status) advertising professionals who won accolades in the past and specialize in the same advertising categories as the contest participants. In this role, audience members not only judge the work of their peers but also contribute to defining the criteria by which future work eventually is evaluated (Fletcher, 2008).

Second, given the project-based nature of the industry – with advertising professionals transitioning from project to project over time – it is not uncommon for audience members to have collaborated with peers whom they end up evaluating later on. Audience members and producers partake in the same collaborative network structure and are variably distant from each other. We could then associate each contest with fine-grained relational metrics at the audience-producer level. Third, jury members rotate frequently and so an award recipient in a given year may end up being a jury member later on. This enabled us to examine the potential for reciprocation dynamics more systematically. Fourth, we had unique access to industry insiders at multiple levels because one of the co-authors was formerly a manager in the industry. Like other studies that propose context-specific hypotheses, we conducted multiple interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the award context and associated evaluation dynamics. We found that jury members are more likely to reward advertising projects when those projects include producers who have direct ties to them (i.e., worked with jury members in the past), are linked to them by reciprocal exchanges (i.e., rewarded current jury members in the past), and are members of the same structural cliques. Our findings lend support to the existence of a relational-based pattern of recognition. The effects are markedly large and statistically highly significant. We use a series of specifications and diagnostics to ensure the effects are not spurious and rule out omitted variables biases.

Our study makes three main contributions. First, we explicitly address recent calls for more evidence on the conditions shaping social evaluations in tournament rituals by highlighting the importance of focusing on social mechanisms that cut across the audience-producer interface. Second, we expound the influence of three relational mechanisms that are critical for understanding how awards allocation decisions are made in peer-based tournament rituals. The importance of these mechanisms was confirmed by our field work and interviews with field insiders. That such mechanisms affect the allocation of is not merely an ‘ordinary view’ of the world, but also one with scientific merit. The relational mechanisms we propose have indeed the potential to inform future

studies on consecration in cultural fields as well as evaluative outcomes in organizations more broadly. Finally, consistently with Bourdieu's idea of the economic conversion value of symbolic capital in cultural fields, we demonstrate how these mechanisms contribute to stratifying producers not only in symbolic space, but also in economic space – particularly in those contexts where awards are used as proxies for the quality of a producer's product offerings.

The paper is organized as follows. We start by discussing the ritualistic nature of award contests in cultural fields and reviewing work on the social processes that govern evaluative outcomes in such settings. Next, we develop our hypotheses on different relational mechanisms linking jurors and project-participants within the context of the Norwegian advertising industry. To this end, we engage in a qualitative exploration of our setting to contextualize our hypotheses and understand the process by which awards are allocated and the role of relationships between jurors and project-participants in affecting peer recognition in tournaments rituals. We then describe the analytic method used in the analysis and present the results along with a series of supplementary robustness checks. We conclude by elaborating the implications of our study for research on social evaluation, peer recognition and stratification in fields of cultural production.

THEORY

Fields, Rituals and Rewards

The ability to impose judgments of symbolic legitimacy, or the power to consecrate, is central to the understanding of the ritualistic dynamics by which cultural fields tend to reproduce themselves. Typically, formal rites of cultural consecration occur in the course of tournament rituals entailing the presentation of prizes and awards that recognize excellence. The notion of tournament rituals emphasizes processes that distribute prestige and provide order to fields by encapsulating “a particular vision of reality that those staging it wish to impose on the social structure in which they are embedded” (Anand & Jones, 2008: 1038). Accordingly, ritual theorists suggest that tournament rituals

serve as mechanisms for social integration that facilitate and/or reinforce the expression of shared meaning and understandings as reflected in the field canons (Bourdieu, 1993).

In the context of tournament rituals, such mechanisms typically operate via ceremonial judgments of worth in which field audiences with the authority to dispense symbolic capital disclose their preferences (Allen & Parsons, 2006; Rossman et al., 2010) by selectively allocating esteem and approbation among competing producers. Examples of such tournaments include the Oscars, Grammy Awards, Tony Awards, the Judgment of Paris wine-tasting contest, and so on. What is at stake in such rituals, however, is not just rank, fame or prestige, but also and perhaps more importantly, “the disposition of the central tokens of value in the society in question” (Appadurai, 1986: 21) or, in other words, the very definition of what constitutes value in a field. As Taylor (1987: 145) notes, “the formal conferring of honour [...] is especially important for maintaining legitimacy of the *élite*” and reinforcing the status position of its members (see also Goode, 1978). Particularly in the context of peer-based evaluative settings “such judgements perpetuate accepted practices by reinforcing quality and values” (Patterson et al., 2014: 79; Shymko & Roulet, 2016) that resonate with who the evaluators are and what they stand for – a process that Bourdieu (1988: 259) labels as “consecration through contagion.” Prizes and awards, in other words, “epitomize the idea of peer recognition and offer symbolic capital to those who build upon orthodox rules of production” (Shymko & Roulet, 2016: 11). To the extent that prizes and awards symbolize ideals – and, therefore, are part of a ranking process of social desirability – they are likely to be associated with actors who themselves share the core values of the *élite* through their positions in the prestige hierarchy.

Perhaps the most prominent manifestation of this process of self-reproduction is the disproportionate amount of formal recognition accorded those who already occupy high-status positions. Merton’s notion of the “Matthew effect” is a reminder that honour begets honour, attracting recognition and resources that make subsequent honours more likely (Merton, 1968). For instance, studies have shown that screenwriters of equivalent accomplishment receive more

recognition when represented by high rather than low status agencies (Bielby & Bielby, 1994). The same is true for the consecration of movie professionals who work with élite collaborators (Rossman, et al., 2010). But there are other subtle ways in which producer- or audience-level socially derived stratifying criteria may creep into the rewarding choices of evaluators. Producers' legitimacy as inferred, for instance, by their position within the core or the periphery of the field's social structure is one of those criteria (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008).

The consistency between the producers' offers and those of their masters is another such criteria, as evidenced in the analysis of the ritualistic conferral of stars to top chefs in haute cuisine (Slavich & Castellucci, 2016). Other studies point to the patterning of cultural producers' recognition along gendered lines (Allen & Lincoln, 2004; Schmutz & Faupel, 2010). Socio-cognitive fit between the schema-based identity – defined by the audience – and the features of the producers under scrutiny – is another well-known stratifying selection mechanism that operates independently from the actual skill or ability on the part of the producer. For example, evidence on the bestowing of awards of distinction to wine producers in the context of wine tasting rituals is consistent with this idea (Negro & Leung, 2012). A similar view focuses on the correspondence between the particular discourse of value that regulates the practice of consecration within different audiences and the socio-topographic location of the cultural producers those audiences evaluate. Findings on consecration of competing professionals by different audiences in the context of the feature film industry are supportive of this view (Cattani et al., 2014).

In short, there is increasing evidence that points to the role of producer or audience level socially derived criteria in patterning the distribution of honours in society. Yet, even though from a Bourdieusian perspective “consecration is a fundamentally relational social process” (Childress et al., 2017: 51), surprisingly there exists little evidence that focuses on the potential stratifying effect stemming from the existence of “social intercourses” (Blau, 1977) that cross the audience-producer interface, effectively linking the two ends of the interface to each other. A particularly apt illustration

that intuitively evokes these mechanisms is the controversial deliberation of the 67th Venice Film Festival's Jury led by Quentin Tarantino. Although Tarantino asserted that the award decisions were based on film's intrinsic merits, his former partner Sofia Coppola won the award for best picture for her film – *Somewhere* – and his long-time friend Hollywood director Alex de la Iglesia won two awards, one of which was for best Director for the film *Balada Triste De Trompeta (A Sad Trumpet Ballad)*. Also, his mentor (he was the executive producer of Tarantino's 1992 debut feature film *Reservoir Dogs*), Monte Hellman, won a special career prize that the Jury created ad hoc for him. There is a paradoxical quality to this example. Journalists and commentators the world's over voiced their outrage pointing fingers at Quentin Tarantino's social intercourses with award recipients, with many of them also referring to the Jury's awarding decisions as manifestations of a “clan” effect.¹ And yet, there is a general awareness that these dynamics are inextricably intertwined with the manner in which recognition is granted and distinctions are made. This point is forcefully present throughout Bourdieu's treatment of consecration rituals and also implicit in founding statements in the field of the “New Economic Sociology,” such as Granovetter's proposition that “people in all cultures seek, in varying degrees, the non-economic goals of approval status and power which are available only in social contexts through networks of others” (2017: 22). But how strong, pervasive and systematic are these relational dynamics? What specific mechanisms drive them? How relevant are they vis-à-vis other established explanations of cultural recognition?

Informed by theory and mixed-methods analysis of jury deliberations within the context of digital advertising awards in Norway, we seek to address these questions by focusing on three relational

¹ See for instance:

<http://elnacional.com.do/triunfa-en-venecia-el-clan-tarantino-con-premio-a-coppola-y-de-la-iglesia/>;
http://www.la-razon.com/index.php?_url=/la_revista/clan-Tarantino-consagra-Venecia_0_1248475178.html;
<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2010/09/12/espectaculos/a09n1esp>;
<http://lahora.com.ec/index.php/noticias/show/1101016851/-1/EI%20%E2%80%98clan%20Tarantino%E2%80%99%20triunfa%20en%20Venecia.html#.WLCzcjs1-00>.

mechanisms, which correspond to the three mechanisms evoked in the Tarantino example: prior social relationships (Coppola/Iglesia), reciprocity (Coppola /Hellman), and cliquishness (“clan” effect).

EMPIRICAL CONTEXT

We test the importance of a relational understanding of tournament rituals with hypotheses about audiences’ award allocation choices in the context of the Norwegian digital advertising industry. Like in other fields of cultural production, advertising excellence is usually honored through awards contests (Helgesen, 1994) in which competing producers are evaluated by juries composed of peers who specialize in the same advertising categories as the contestants. In the area of digital advertising, the most prestigious award contest in Norway is The Silver Tag Award. Arranged by the Norwegian Interest Organization for Interactive Marketing (INMA) – a non-profit interest organization that works for the advancement and utilization of digital advertising media – The Silver Tag is a contest open for participation to all Norwegian advertising agencies. As the contest runs on a monthly basis, active professionals tend to submit their latest work on an ongoing basis so participating into the contest multiple times. The multiple entry nature of the contest produces a repeated game in which active professionals that are appointed jurors may happen to evaluate projects by professional peers who previously served as jurors. This point notwithstanding, all jury members share one important characteristic: they are high status professionals who won in previous competitions and therefore tend to be the expression of the prevailing canons in the field (Bourdieu, 1993). To illustrate this point, consider that during our observation period jury members on average won 10 times as many awards as non-jury members in The Silver Tag.

The conservatism of the field is reflected in the field’s extremely high degree of concentration of recognition. Among the 1734 professionals who ever entered The Silver Tag contest over the 2003-2010 period, only 299 individuals won the award one time while only 53 individuals won the award twice. In the tail of the distribution, only 32 individuals won 4 or more awards during this period. This reproduction of prestige through the dominance of a limited set of professionals and their

corresponding aesthetic standards is particularly apparent when one examines the distribution of awards in *The Silver Tag* further. In Figure 1 we plot the award distributions for jurors and non-juror professionals on a log-log scale (with log of awards on the x-axis and log of the number of jurors or professionals on the y-axis). Note that unlike the tail of a random bell curve whose distribution thins out exponentially as it decays, the distributions resemble a power law.² Although these distributions aggregate awards over the study period, they offer some hint of the prestige dynamics that shape the field, mimicking what would be expected for award attainment from a process of stratification whereby every increase in recognition leads to a greater chance of recognition in the future.

<Insert Figure 1 here>

The sociological implications of this type of distribution are highly consequential. When a relatively small group catalyses a large proportion of the field's recognition, they gain resource and power advantages that accumulate over time and lead to the formation of an élite (Kadushin, 1995). Perhaps the most extensive treatment of these dynamics has been offered within the body of work on cumulative advantage spurred by Merton (1968), which has uncovered a number of organizational and sociological mechanisms responsible for the self-reinforcement of prestige (DiPrete & Eirich, 2006). In our study, we test for the existence of preferential awards allocation mechanisms resulting from the underlying social structure in which both audiences and producers partake. This leads us to a very important feature of our setting that substantiates the meaning of such structure and enables its empirical tractability. Organized as an ecology of temporary projects, the advertising industry relies significantly on extended personal networks and one-off teams (Grabher, 2002, 2004). As summarized by Grabher (2002: 252) "Like jazz bands [...] vary their composition of instruments and players from time to time [...] teams in the creative realm of advertising production regroup from project to

² A power law is a mathematical expression for a distribution that is unlike a normal bell curve with a peak in the middle, where most nodes have a similar number of ties. A scatterplot or histogram plotting power-law decay is a continually decreasing curve where values on the Y axis approximate a linear function of those on the X axis raised to a fixed power α hence where $\log y = C + \alpha \log x$ where C is the intercept constant.

project.” From a network analytic point of view, the industry entry (and exit) of professionals as members of a project-team translates into a traceable and tractable bipartite collaborative structure. The links in this structure are direct ties among professionals who work on the same project as well as indirect ties among professionals linked by professionals who work on more than one project. Both types of ties have substantial meaning because in spite of the temporariness of each project the professionals that usually form a project-team work intensely together to combine their diverse skills into a single, seamless production. Each project involves several weeks of collaborative brainstorming, storyboarding and difficult editing, as well as moments of celebration and commiseration that promote strong social bonds among the teammates. These ties form “the basic social infrastructure of project-based organizing in advertising” (Grabher, 2002: 249). It is because of these particular features in conjunction with the peer-based nature of The Silver Tag’s evaluative process that patterns of collaboration sometimes result in a partner on one project being a member of the jury assessing another project.

We conducted several interviews aimed at gaining deeper contextual understanding of the Norwegian advertising field and the prestige dynamics associated to The Silver Tag tournament in particular. One of the authors also followed the Norwegian advertising news press very closely during the study period and consulted archival materials. Our goals were to verify the role of interpersonal dynamics in evaluative tasks, and to ascertain how these dynamics are interpreted and enacted. We were also interested in gaining insights into the aesthetic criteria underlying allocation choices and their perceived role in shaping the professional identity of the field. The interviewees include a panel of field insiders consisting of elite advertising professionals, advertising professionals struggling to make their mark, advertising awards contest jurors, and representatives from industry associations. Specifically, we interviewed professionals who competed in The Silver Tag contest and past jurors. While most of our respondents worked for elite advertising or digital media agencies, some also worked for less prestigious agencies. Finally, we interviewed the managers from the Norwegian

interest organization for interactive marketing (INMA) that arranges “The Silver Tag” awards contest. Overall, we conducted 16 interviews that lasted between 20 minutes and 2 hours. Topics included collaborative practices, meaning and relevance of awards, evaluation criteria, perceptions of distance or proximity in the social space, personal anecdotal evidence of jury’s decisions and deliberation processes. Descriptive data on the sampled agencies and respondents are reported in Table 1.

< Insert Table 1 here >

All respondents agree that The Silver Tag Awards is a source of prestige within the Norwegian advertising field. The tagline used by one of the industry flagship magazines in the aftermath of the award’s institution was: “*The award is going to create new heroes in the advertising industry.*” Likewise, two of our interviewees emphasized the crucial role of the award as a source of credibility as well as power:

“To win The Silver Tag means an enormous amount, in particular for a job where we all have put down so much work... (winning) proves that we have achieved something we have worked hard for, and that is to deliver at a high level in everything we do regardless of how big or small the task is.

There is no single factor other than those awards that I can think of that suddenly makes somebody very attractive and that moves them from one agency to another at any cost [...] What gives power and influence here? There is no getting around it; those awards matter a lot... There is no doubt that it makes everything much easier for you as a professional in the profession in all possible ways... Winning awards... is the most important parameter for your personal career development, salary, status, everything.”

These awards not only shape individual careers but also signal stylistic standards at the field level, reflecting precise position takings and symbolic demarcation efforts. For instance, several interviewees mirrored the perception of a “magical division” (Bourdieu, 1984: 6) between the official canon and everything else (Braden, 2009; DiMaggio, 1982), frequently pointing to the existence of a clear distinction between an élite and the rest. There was also a consensus about the tendency of juries to reify this division through conventional choices based on a canonical understanding of what a good idea is supposed to look like. When asked about the criteria for judging quality, interviewees often invoked the idea of conservatism and reproduction of established categories. Two, in particular, noted:

“What characterizes a good idea... is formula oriented. It’s been like that for many years. Ideas they you recognize are formula ideas. There are certain ideas that win... and they are quite similar... That says something about conservatism in the juries. If you see something you are not familiar with, and you don’t know whether

it's good or bad because you just get a strange feeling...then it's difficult to discuss it. When it's easy to discuss it...it's easier to get it through because of the confidence of those present”.

Those awards... are not catalysers for thinking in new ways. They are catalysers for clinging to old ways of looking at things, old formulas and old categories.”

Unsurprisingly and consistently with established cumulative advantage arguments, when we probed the basis of these tendencies towards self-reproduction various informants stressed the existence of “status beliefs”—beliefs that are discussed as valid in public displays of honor, and which rank individuals, organizations, or objects according to their expected ability to contribute to valued outcomes (Ridgeway, 2014). Advertising professionals expect prestigious colleagues to create work of better quality and this expectation creates an evaluative advantage. As two of our interviewees with significant jury’s experience put it:

“It’s always much easier to win if you have won before ... because jury members are humans that make choice based on experience. And it’s a bit like that [well-known creative teams] have a tendency to score incredibly well on work that is really only average. And that is because you are positively biased... You really want that the work they do is of high quality.

The whole thing is very human. The jurors are human, and it is unavoidable that they are biased in the evaluation they make. They are influenced by the candidates’ prior achievement and esteem and [...] by the opinion of the most experienced jurors.”

Interestingly, several of the interviewees went a long way in characterizing the inner workings of the jury as “professional,” “fair,” “impartial,” “made with best intentions” and cautiously designed to avoid any favorable treatment.³ Yet, despite rules and procedures that aim to reduce possible conflicts of interest, most former members of the jury we interviewed openly emphasized not only the effect of prior achievements on evaluations, but also the enveloping of such evaluations into “interpersonal

³ Our interviews and archival sources clearly suggest that the jury evaluation process is cautiously designed to ensure procedural fairness. It proceeds as follows. All jury members produce a personal shortlist of their five favourite projects. These shortlists are subsequently compiled to identify the jury’s shortlist of five projects. Next, the jury discusses each project on this shortlist and each jury member argues for his or her preferred winner under the leadership of the jury president. After discussing the shortlist, the jury members vote for their preferred projects on the jury’s shortlist. The jury then sums up and averages the votes to establish the extent of success attained by each project in the evaluation process. Whenever jury members have a clear conflict of interest – e.g., they were involved in a project that was submitted to the contest or an advertising agency for which they were currently working submitted a project – they are not allowed to partake in the evaluation of that project: they have to exit the jury room and wait in the hallway while the project is being discussed. For this project, the score of the juror with a conflict of interest is set equal to the average of the other jurors’ scores. Once the jury evaluation process is finished, the jury issues a justification – drafted by the jury president – that accompanies the announcement in industry media.

patterns of value commitments” – as one of them put it – that inevitably channel attention, energy and information, subtly shaping attributions of ability. For instance, when asked about the evaluative implications of juries composed of individuals with prior experience working in project-teams together with candidates, interviewees routinely invoked the possibility of relationship-driven preferential allocation processes. One of them in particular, a senior copywriter, was very explicit about this point:

If two projects are equally good, then the project where project members and jurors know each other will win [...] it is that these people share the same opinion about what is “important” and “not important”, as well as what is “right” and not “right.” They (the projects made by the candidates previously tied to the jurors) might therefore score higher on the criteria valued by the jurors who ‘administer the truth’ about what is good and not so good.

A senior copywriter and frequent juror with more than 20 years of experience described his experience in the industry as somewhat similar to being a member of a “gang” to convey the sense of belonging and commonality in aesthetic preferences elicited by intense patterns of direct and indirect interaction. Another interviewee echoed this point by characterizing the industry as cliquish, due to a combination of small numbers, interpersonal acquaintance and frequent interaction:

There is a small gang, and we sit and talk advertising all the time. OK, this is going in this direction, this is what is right now, this is what we would like to emphasize. We want to stretch ourselves after these ideals, these goals. And then we share a common platform for what we think is good. And that makes us share common things. And if we think the same things, then we tend to reward ideas that are common to our own”

The Norwegian advertising industry is small...you meet the same people time and time again. It is therefore unavoidable that it becomes cliquish. Project members and jurors who know or who ... [know about] each other are part of this cliquishness.

Likewise, one creative director hinted at one preferential-allocation process based on some sort of mutual support, what he referred to as “camaraderie”:

I am convinced that good old-fashioned camaraderie plays a big part, not in terms of explicit bargaining, but more as an implied and continuous levelling of ‘some for all’ – within a circle of people who know each other.

In sum, the image that emerges from our qualitative immersion into the advertising field appears to mirror the general understanding of tournament rituals as means of symbolic demarcation. By regulating the distribution of prestige, The Silver Tag award contributes to the reproduction of a social order, including patterns of social relationships, characterized by inequality and self-perpetuation. This

patterning of prestige may perhaps appear particularly striking considering the high turnover in jury membership and unusually high frequency of the contest. Yet it is consistent with Bourdieu's relational understanding of how consecration rites serve the elite's purpose of filling their own ranks. For, however one conceives of them, audiences' evaluations of advertising projects do not occur in a social vacuum. Not only are audiences cognizant of the identities of the producers, which then results in well-known status-driven attributions, but their judgments flow across peer-based relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. These judgments arise in social settings that can be conceptualized as networks of interpersonal loyalties, reciprocity and influence, and so can be depicted using the vocabulary of network theory and analytic tools – to which we now turn.

HYPOTHESES

To formalize the role of these networks in shaping consecration choices in the context of the Norwegian advertising industry we develop the background for three hypotheses on relational drivers of award bestowal. The first focuses on the effect audience-producer direct ties resulting from prior collaborations. The second focuses on a key relational mechanism in social exchanges, the tendency towards reciprocity. The third focuses on how audiences' evaluations of producers' work may be affected by their being jointly located in structurally cohesive regions of the network, i.e., cliques. Each of these hypotheses corresponds to distinct mechanisms increasing the audience-producer social proximity. Taken together, they define the framework of a comprehensive perspective on relational sources of recognition in tournament rituals.

Direct Ties

The more basic definition of social proximity is simple adjacency in a network, whereby two actors are proximate if and only if they are directly tied. In our setting, this tie exists whenever a member of the jury has prior experience working with a member of the project under evaluation. We expect the presence of such ties to carry significant weight in orienting award decisions. To appreciate the logic

of this expectation we need to further elaborate on two earlier observations. First, the members of the audience are selected based on their own legitimacy and power to consecrate, i.e., they are peers who have received multiple awards and as such they embody the field's dominant aesthetic logics. It is important to point this out since prior literature has systematically shown that elite peers are especially prone to resist work that departs from the established canons because of their vested interest in guaranteeing "the continued reproduction of the legitimacy of those who produce or defend the canon" (Bourdieu, 1993: 20). Indeed, when the evaluation criteria "are tightly held by an academy of peers, there is an orientation to traditional canon of arts" (Peterson, 1979: 157). Second, the relationships that are forged in the course of developing advertising projects are the forum in which tastes flow and interpenetrate – or, as McLean put it, they are "sites of taste convergence" (2016: 101). They elicit bonding and encourage shared value commitments that allow the congealment of different visions into a unitary project identity. This is a crucial observation because we know from social psychological research on social identity that independence of judgment is "compromised by any relationship that builds a common identity" (Moore et al., 2006: 7) between evaluators and those evaluated, even without any conscious intention to indulge in favoritism (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Thompson, 1995). As Hagstrom noted long ago in his work on the collaborative production of culture in scientific projects, participants in these networks "share commitments to values, heuristics, models and exemplars" (1976: 97). That is, they tend to share not only particular ethical orientations but also cognitive predispositions and linguistic practices. Likewise, our interviews suggest that project participants do not merely exchange information; they produce and reinforce similar attitudes towards the field as well.

We can now build on the previous arguments to substantiate our hypothesis. To the extent that awards are key "arbiters of canon" (Watson & Anand, 2006) in the field, audience members will favor projects that are reflective of the canon they themselves embody as consecrated members of that field. And to the extent that the relationships that are created in the course of prior advertising

projects are sites of normative convergence (McLean, 2016), the presence of audience-producer ties underlying any given project should help explain inter-audience variance in the propensity to reward that project relative to other competing projects. This speculation resonates with studies adopting a social network conception of social distance that show that individuals are more willing to share their resources – in our case their prestige – with people they are directly connected to, as well as to exhibit greater pro-social behavior towards people who are just a few step removed in their social network than towards more distant others (Goeree et al., 2010; Baldassarri & Grossman, 2013). Recent findings on the preferential allocation of funding to projects whose members share their spatial location with members of the evaluating panel (Criscuolo et al., 2017) are consistent with this prediction. In addition, jury members may allocate more attention to scrutinizing projects submitted by former collaborators. As a result, besides being in a better position to articulate and motivate their preference, they can “also ensure that other panel members think through the project thoroughly” (Criscuolo et al., 2017: 20). Accordingly, we posit:

Hypothesis 1: When creative projects compete for recognition in tournament rituals, audience members are more likely to reward those projects whose members collaborated with them in past.

Reciprocity

In his seminal book *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), Bourdieu insists on reciprocity as a fundamental principle of structuration of the social world. Reciprocity, the giving of gifts to another in return for gifts received, is a defining feature of social exchange and a powerful determinant of human behavior (Gouldner, 1960). As elaborated by exchange theorists, social life consists of a vast series of exchanges where favours, information, esteem and other valued items are given and received (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). An important condition for the emergence of reciprocal behavior is the repetition of the exchange situation which allows actors to decide whether or not to reciprocate for benefits received in previous exchanges (Axelrod, 1984). In our setting, for instance, producers might

one day become judges and therefore be asked to evaluate the work of former jury members who evaluated their work in previous awards competitions.

The expectation that one should reciprocate for benefits received in the past in order to continue receiving them (Blau, 1964) explains why failure to discharge obligations is often subject to sanctions (e.g., unwillingness to exchange with the same actors in the future). If an individual supplies a benefit, then the expectation is that the receiving party should respond in kind (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).⁴ Typically, individuals seek to reciprocate in ways that increase the likelihood that the exchange partner will notice their effort (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Only when the recipient of a favor repays the giver is that sense of indebtedness eliminated or at least reduced. As conceptualized in research on group behavior, reciprocity implies that judgments and mutual expectations are influenced by relational effects which extend beyond those that can be attributed simply to social ties (i.e., friendship). Previous psychological research on reciprocity and social satisfaction has established how these expectations vary with the nature of the relationship linking givers and recipients. In her laboratory study on reciprocity in social exchange and satisfaction, for instance, Rook (1987) found reciprocity to have a greater influence in exchanges with peers (e.g., friends) than with kin (i.e., family members). Individuals tend to perceive the benefits from peers as being motivated by genuine altruistic sentiments, while those from family members as being motivated also by a sense of duty. This finding is particularly important given the peer-based nature of the evaluative dynamics that distinguish our setting.

When extended to our setting these ideas and findings suggest that as producers become members of the evaluating audience, they may feel compelled to reciprocate by rewarding the work

⁴ The notion of reciprocity adopted in this paper implies that someone must return, repay or give back to the initial giver. Some authors, on the other hand, argue that this is not a ‘sine qua non’ condition. For instance, *serial* reciprocity exists “when people respond to being beneficiaries of something good by “passing it on” in turn to someone else. In many cases, this someone else is seen as meaningfully similar to the original giver, or the nature or purpose of the serial return is similar to the nature or purpose of the original gift—for example, “giving back” to your teachers by becoming a teacher yourself” (Moody, 2008: 132).

of former evaluators who rewarded their work in the past, even in the absence of any previous (working) relationships with them. Social exchange theory indeed predicts that recipients of positive actions (e.g., an award) tend to experience a sense of indebtedness that “can be reduced through reciprocation” (Seetton, Bennett, & Liden, 1996: 219). Field theoretic perspectives trace the source of this sense of indebtedness to field participants’ fundamental attempts to preserve or increase their own symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Accordingly, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: When creative projects compete for recognition in tournament rituals, audience members are more likely to reward those projects whose members rewarded them in past.

Cliquishness

While the most restrictive definition of social proximity is simple adjacency in a network, generalizations of adjacency, as measure of social proximity, retain the idea that actors are proximate to the extent that they are jointly located in structurally cohesive regions of the network. As pointed out by Marsden and Friedkin (1993: 131), generalizations of social proximity “permit two actors to be proximate, *while not directly tied*, if they are connected by numerous short connections via intermediaries” (emphasis added). This idea can best be appreciated by referring to Figure 2. As illustrated, nodes 1 and 2 can be jointly located in the same cohesive set, despite not being directly connected (sub A); or they can be directly connected without necessarily being members of the same cohesive subset (sub B). The distinction is substantial because it reflects alternative – yet complementary – mechanisms by which social proximity may trigger mutual preference. In other words, though both *adjacency* and cohesion may lead to preferential allocation, the logics behind this observed behaviour are rather different. Adjacency is based on particularized past experiences of interaction, while cohesion can be viewed as a generalization from particularized to diffuse norms of behaviour pertaining to a broader set of people who share membership in a given sub-network.

< Insert Figure 2 here >

Network based models of social influence suggest that structurally cohesive networks facilitate convergence toward common schemes (Harary, 1959; Friedkin, 1998). For example, building on social network studies concerned with the transmission of cultural codes, Cattani et al. (2008) argue that network cohesion signals membership in a collective identity and reduce ambiguity about evaluative criteria. By signalling membership, cohesion fosters the emergence of a more tightly linked and coherent community, i.e., a ‘catnet’ (White, 1992), in which members share connections and cultural categories. Sometimes the cohesiveness of the group may become so pronounced that “in-group members [...] can develop negative attitudes toward out-group members” (Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2011: 181). In line with this view, network-analytic literature on social capital suggests that network cohesion is likely to divide actors into insiders and outsiders (Thomas-Hunt et al., 2003; Phillips et al., 2004; Lutter, 2015), fostering exclusion and in-group/out-group discrimination. According to Bourdieu, members of a social group develop a specific habitus, which is socialized, shared, and maintained (often unconsciously). The habitus imparts the “feel for the game” (Blair, 2009: 121) and makes membership visible, creating distinctive features that signal belonging or exclusion.

In our setting, two distinctive features are likely to exacerbate the extent to which audience members and producers who are part of the same cohesive subset will exhibit this “in-group” orientation. First, competition for recognition is a zero-sum game. If one producer is honoured with The Silver Tag another one is excluded. Such circumstances are likely to accentuate audiences’ efforts to demarcate the symbolic boundaries that separate member from non-member. This is a definitional feature of tournament rituals and, more broadly, of fields of cultural production (Becker & Pessin, 2006). As noted by Becker and Pessin (2006: 276), “whatever happens in this field is a zero-sum game [...]. Naturally, then, people struggle and fight over the limited space. The people who control the limited space try to keep it all for themselves and their allies and prevent newcomers from getting any of it.” As mirrored in our qualitative evidence, this exclusionary process may easily slide into creeping

parochialism and cliques engaged into a “process of claims for recognition, acceptance and dominance” (Baum, 2011: 1675). Second, due to the project-based structure of collaborations, at any given point in time audience members and producers can simultaneously be members of more than one cohesive subset. Thus, cohesiveness is not merely a dichotomous state resulting from joint location in a structurally cohesive regions of the network but may vary dramatically depending on the number of mutually interpenetrating cohesive structures that audiences and producers share, that is, how cliquishly interconnected they are. In light of the previous arguments, we thus hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: Creative projects competing for recognition in tournament rituals are more likely to be rewarded when the degree of cliquishness between audience members and producers increases.

METHOD

Data

To identify organizations and professionals competing for symbolic recognition in the Norwegian digital advertising field, we collected data on all projects entered into “The Silver Tag” – the monthly Norwegian digital advertising awards contest – from May 2003 to April 2010. The data were available from the online “The Silver Tag” archive published by INMA. While most of the firms submitted their projects indicating the names of all project participants, some firms did not. To collect all missing data for some of the project participants, one of the co-authors contacted each agency by email or by phone to retrieve the names of these producers. In the process, we also double-checked the names we had collected directly from the archive published by INMA and corrected any inconsistency with the help of people from the advertising agencies. As a result, the dataset is truly unique. The data comprise a total of 1,734 distinct individuals, 350 distinct organizations and 902 projects over a total of 75 contest months.⁵ Unlike the usual award scheme practice of reporting winners and/or nominees

⁵ June/July each year was combined into one contest generation by the Norwegian interactive marketing interest organization responsible for the contest, INMA. In addition, INMA combined March/April 2004 and August/September 2004 into two distinct contest generations. This practice produces a total of 11 competitions per year – without counting the aforementioned exceptions in 2004.

only, the data contain the losers as well. Thus, the data enable comparisons between winners and losers as well as comparisons between previously consecrated and non-consecrated producers.⁶ We collected data on all jury members in “The Silver Tag” awards contest from May 2003 to March 2010 from “The Silver Tag” website and industry press. Each jury served from May to April in the following year during the years 2003-2006 and from April to March during the years 2006-2010. In total, we collected data on 7 juries, whose size over the study period varied from 4 (for the first jury) to 11 (for the last jury) members.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable measures the outcome of an evaluation process where jury members bestow an accolade (award or honorable mention) on projects selected from among the larger set of projects eligible in a given month. In this process, each project faces a trial from each juror, and may succeed or lose at these trials. For each project facing evaluation trials by the jury members in a given month, we coded the dependent variable 1 if a project reached the 5th place; 2 if a project reached the 4th place; 3 if a project reached the 3rd place, 4 if a project reached the 2nd place, and 5 if a project reached the 1st place (i.e., won the award). For all remaining projects in the same contest month that did not place, we set the dependent variable equal to 0. The dependent variable is therefore categorical and ordered in terms of levels of peer recognition.

The scale for our dependent variable represents an approximation of the underlying voting process in which a fixed number of jurors cast their votes on each project, and some projects are favored by one or more jurors while others are not. The number of jurors in a given month defines the number of voting trials that each project faces. The actual jury evaluation process in The Silver Tag illustrates our interpretation. In this process, all projects face a trial by each juror who individually scrutinizes each project. Each judge then compiles a shortlist of projects s/he favors. The jury then

⁶ In two contest months, August 2005 and May 2006, no projects were deemed worthy to win.

compiles the jury members' shortlist to make up the jury's top 5 shortlist. Each juror then proceeds to cast his or her vote on the projects on the jury's shortlist. The best project receives 5 points, the next best project receives 4 points, and so on, from each juror. The jury then adds up the points awarded by each juror and divides the sum by the number of jury members. The projects that do not make the shortlist receive zero votes from the jurors and hence zero points. Although the accolade is assigned to the project, all individuals who are involved receive it as well.

Independent variables

Direct Ties. The first hypothesis looks at the impact of direct between audience members and candidates on the likelihood of receiving an accolade. We computed this variable by first generating bipartite project affiliation network matrices based on the monthly "The Silver Tag" digital awards contest using Ucinet, version 6 for Windows (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002). A well-known issue in establishing the existence of a social connection is how long this connection should persist. Assuming no relationship decay over the study period would imply an overestimate of the number and duration of connections in the network by maintaining false ties to inactive professionals. However, given the fast-pace nature of the industry and, in particular, after our interviews with industry participants, it was unclear whether a professional not involved in any advertising projects for about 2 years should still be considered an active member of the industry. Accordingly, we created our adjacency matrices adopting a 24-month moving window that was updated monthly.⁷ Using these matrices, we then calculated the minimum nearness or proximity between each individual advertising project member and the peer jury members. Because our unit of analysis is the project, we created the variable *direct ties* by looking only at direct ties between jury and project members. We then computed the proportion of jury members with a direct tie to project members over the total number of project members.

⁷ Adopting a shorter (one year) or longer (3 years) moving time window yields very similar results.

Figure 3 illustrates how we computed the measure. In the example, the circles on the left represent professionals working on a focal project; triangles on the right represent peers who serve as jury members in charge of evaluating the focal project; and the circles in the center are professionals who had previously worked with both project and jury members, thus creating indirect pathways between them. In the example, two jury members have direct contacts with two out of four project members, so the *direct ties* variable is equal to 0.5.

<Insert Figure 3 here>

Reciprocity. We created the *reciprocity* variable that captures the extent to which jury members reward project whose members were jurors in the past and who – in that role – had rewarded one or more of the current jury members. For each project, in other words, the measure tallies the number of current jurors who won or received an honorable mention by project members serving as jurors over the previous two years and whose work happened to be under evaluation during the focal context month. Again, we normalized the number of jurors at risk of reciprocating by the number of project members under evaluation.

Cliquishness. The strict clique definition (maximal fully-connected sub-graph) may be too strong for many purposes. It insists that every member or a sub-group have a direct tie with each and every other member. A more common approach is to allow for cases of cliques where members are not so tightly connected. For instance, one could define an actor as a member of a clique if this actor is connected to every other member of the group at a distance greater than one. Indeed, the path distance two is typically used. This corresponds to being “a friend of a friend.” This approach to defining sub-structures is called *n*-clique (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005). The *n*-clique criterion specifies that the maximum geodesic distance or path length between any dyad cannot exceed *n*. For example, a 3-clique is one in which the members are connected either directly (distance 1) or indirectly through a common neighbor (distance 3). In our paper, we chose a value of *n* equal to 2 because values greater than 2 are difficult to interpret sociologically (Borgatti et al., 2013; Scott, 2000; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Path

lengths greater than 2, in fact, involve more distant and weak links and while “long, weak chains of connection may be very important for the overall structure of the network [...], it is not at all clear that they are appropriate for the definition of cliques” (Scott, 2000: 116-117). The very idea of a clique seems to demand relatively close linkages and so it would be difficult to justify the identification of n -cliques with values of n other than 1 or 2. We set the minimum size equal to 3 (the default value in Ucinet). This gives the smallest group size which is to be considered a 2-clique.

To compute our *cliquishness* measure, we first computed the n -clique measure for each juror-professional dyad over the 24-month moving window that was updated monthly using Ucinet, version 6 for Windows (Borgatti et al., 2002). This measure indicates the number of cliques of which a juror and a professional are both members. For each project, we then computed the median of the n -clique values of the professional working on the same project. The variable thus measures the level of *cliquishness* between jury and project members competing in any given monthly contest.

Control variables

To rule out alternative explanations for the hypothesized relationships, we included several control variables in our models.

Project quality. The main empirical challenge to test the actual effects of the relational mechanisms of interest is to control for the quality of the project under evaluation. In cultural fields, social evaluations are only marginally based on an objective observation of quality (Salganik et al., 2006). For this reason, evaluators focus on the elements they can directly associate with the quality they are trying to assess (Shymko & Roulet, 2016). The advertising field insiders we interviewed suggested that, during our observation window, projects of high quality were likely to exhibit certain measurable attributes besides the unmeasurable idiosyncratic aspects of the creative idea underlying each project. First, higher quality projects tended to be technologically advanced and innovative in terms of technological application. In the early years of digital advertising, the technological constraints on creative digital advertising solutions were considerable because downloading speed was

slow. As a result, creative work in digital advertising was mostly limited to relatively static, low resolution, banner advertisements. With the diffusion of broadband technology and increasing downloading speeds, the opportunity space for creating digital advertising solutions expanded. In particular, digital advertising professionals seized the opportunity to create more sophisticated creative solutions of higher quality involving visually appealing interactive content based on video/film, sound, 3D animation and streaming technologies. Second, high-quality projects make use of abundant resources in order to develop more ambitious solutions. The likelihood of observing social ties between jury members and producers also increases with the size of the project, i.e., the number of individuals working on the same project. Although other unobserved characteristics might affect project quality, the technical sophistication of a project and the number of people working on it represent a reasonably good approximation of a project's underlying quality. This is consistent with the evaluation criteria that INMA expects the jury members to use when they choose the winning digital advertising projects. Winning projects should in fact be selected “based on solid creative ideas, exploiting opportunities in the media, innovative work that transcends boundaries, ideas that engage and involve the user and that create enthusiasm, aesthetics, use of advertising formats, choice of technology, relevant use of interactivity and strategy, and how it all relates to the brand” (www.solvtaggen.no).

Based on these insights from field insiders, we thus generated the variables *project sophistication*, *joint project* and *project size* as proxies for these general characteristics of high quality projects. To measure *project sophistication*, we generated a variable that differentiates projects based on the type of technologies that they employed. The variable tallies the number of agencies specializing in 3D-animation, film production, radio production, or back-end streaming involved in a given project. Although this variable does not capture the actual manner in which the technologies are applied, it discriminates projects for which the producers had the opportunity to leverage those technologies from projects for which this opportunity was unavailable. In other words, the variable captures the ‘potential’ technical

sophistication of a project. Also, the variable does not simply reflect jury members' perceived level of sophistication, which then reduces the risk that purely subjective considerations might be driving jury members' decisions. We measured *joint project* as inter-firm collaboration at the project level by creating a dummy variable that takes on the value of 1 if the project was created by two or more firms, and 0 if the project was created by one single firm. Lastly, we measured *project size* as the total number of individuals on each advertising project. In this respect, a larger number of project participants serve as a proxy for larger project budgets and a higher number of hours available in the project to create ambitious high effort solutions. This variable also controls for the likelihood that direct ties between jury members and cultural producers may increase with the size of the project team.

We generated our *project quality* variable by estimating a single-factor measurement model based on our three proxy variables for project quality using the SEM command in Stata 14. The variables yielded positive and highly significant factor loadings on the latent project quality factor. The *project size* factor loading was 9.908 and $p < .000$, the *project sophistication* factor loading was .896 and $p < .000$, while the *joint project* factor was constrained to 1. Finally, we obtained our *project quality* variable by calculating the predicted values for the latent project quality factor.

Status. Previous research has used network centrality to measure status (for a review see Sauder Lynn, & Podolny, 2012). While awards reflect social esteem and respect, i.e., some form of public valuation, centrality pertains to a position of importance in a network. We, therefore, tested the first hypothesis by creating the *status* variable using Bonacich beta-centrality (Bonacich, 1987). The measure counts the number of individuals in the project with a Bonacich beta-centrality above the median in the global “Silver Tag” network over the total number of individuals working on the same project in a particular month contest based on a 24-month moving affiliation network window (see below). We also chose a more conservative cutoff to define high-status professionals – i.e., values greater than .85 (for a similar approach see Jensen 2008) – which yielded very similar results.

Prior positive co-experience. Some jurors may have collaborated with candidates on projects in the past and won with them. Such prior positive co-experience may represent a source of positive disposition when the juror in question casts her votes over the competing candidates. Previous social network research has shown how social ties can be a source of social benefits (e.g., more favorable evaluations) or social liabilities (e.g., less favorable evaluations) depending on whether relationships between evaluators and candidates are positive or negative (Labianca & Brass, 2006). Insofar as prior interactions have resulted in the achievement of a positive outcome they are likely to affect evaluators' disposition towards the work of their past collaborators. We therefore identified The Silver Tag projects in which a current candidate and juror collaborated and won the award during the prior 24 months. We created the indicator variable *prior positive co-experience* for which we assigned a value of 1 if there were one or more such instances for a given project and 0 if there were no such instances.

Median experience. Project members' past experience with digital advertising projects might account for their differential ability to contribute to the project as well as understand what exactly jury members are looking for in a project. We then tallied the number of projects prior to the focal project that each producer entered into The Silver Tag contest. For each project, we then calculated the *median experience* of all producers involved.

Conflict of interest. As mentioned earlier, jurors with a conflict of interest are not allowed to partake in the evaluation of a particular project. Two cases that INMA contemplates as conflict of interest are: a) project and jury members work for the same firm, and b) jurors are members of projects they are supposed to evaluate. To control for effect of these situations on jury deliberations, we generated an indicator variable that is equal to 1 if one or more project members had a colleague in the jury or a juror was a member of the project, and 0 otherwise. It is worth noting that the variable does not measure prior collaborations but only employment in the same firm or project co-membership.

Competitive intensity. The larger the number of projects compete for recognition in a given contest month, the more intense the competition and the lower the likelihood that a given project will win. We therefore counted the number of projects competing for recognition in each contest month to control for project concentration.

MODEL

Given our dependent variable, the ordered logistic model specification would be the appropriate model to estimate the probability of attaining greater levels of peer recognition (i.e., award, honorable mention, no placement). The model is based on the assumption that there is a latent continuous outcome variable and that the observed ordinal outcome arises from discretizing the underlying continuum into j -ordered groups. The thresholds estimate these cutoff values. This assumption, known as the proportional odds assumption, is not satisfied in our data. For this reason, we opted for a different estimation approach. The ordinal logistic model is one of many models subsumed under the rubric of generalized linear models (GLMs) for ordinal data (McCullagh & Nelder, 1989; Hardin & Hilbe, 2012). Different link functions can be specified to estimate a GLM model. The logit link function is a reasonable choice when changes in the cumulative probabilities of observing a particular value of the outcome variable are gradual – which is the case in our data. Accordingly, we modeled the probability of each project receiving more votes in a given contest month. We estimated our models with the GLM command in Stata 14, specifying the binomial family and set the binomial denominator equal to the number of jurors evaluating the competing projects in each month. We estimated our models with maximum likelihood, clustering the competing projects on each contest month. We modeled the probability of jury members favoring a given project by creating an aggregate outcome for each project of either no placement, 5th place, 4th place, 3rd place, 2nd place or 1st place in a given contest month. We report significance levels based on Huber-White robust standard errors to control for any residual heteroscedasticity. We also clustered projects on firm, but the results were qualitatively similar to those reported here (see below).

Additionally, we sought to contextualize the statistical results with new qualitative insights. We interviewed again four professionals with jury membership experience to whom we had talked earlier, eliciting their reactions to hypothetical situations reflective of our hypotheses. We conducted these new interviews, which lasted on average 30 minutes, in February and March 2017. We use excerpts from them to add texture and further interpretation to the econometric analyses.

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics and correlations for our measures are presented in Table 2. We first checked the correlations among all independent and control variables and found no evidence of multicollinearity. The condition number (Belsley, Kuh, & Welsch, 1980) for the matrix of independent variables was 4.41. This value as well as the singular values ranging between 1 and 4.41 were all well below the suggested threshold of 30. The low condition numbers suggest that multicollinearity is not likely to be an issue in our models.

We began by testing the effect of each social determinant of recognition in isolation. We first estimated a model with robust standard errors in which we entered the three variables of theoretical – i.e., *direct ties*, *reciprocity*, and *cliquishness* – separately. The model stratifies by contest month, so each stratum corresponds to a choice set for the jury in a particular month. In Model 1 in Table 3, the coefficient for *direct ties* was 1.280 ($p < .01$). In Model 2 the coefficient for *reciprocity* was 1.206 ($p < .01$) and in Model 3 the coefficient for *cliquishness* is .020 ($p < .01$). When the ratio of jurors with direct contacts to project members increases the odds of receiving an accolade increase. Jury members seem to prefer projects in which the members involved are closer to them in the collaborative peer network. Jury members also seem to prefer projects with project members who previously served as jurors and in this capacity rewarded the current jurors. Finally, jury members seem to prefer projects submitted by project members who belong to the same clique as themselves.

Next, we introduced our control variables as shown in Model 4 of Table 3. Specifically, the coefficients of *status*, *project quality* and *competitive intensity* were significant and in the expected direction.

The coefficient for *conflict of interest* was moderately significant. The coefficients for *median experience* and *prior positive co-experience* were not statistically significant.

The coefficient of the *direct ties* variable remained highly significant ($p < .01$) and in the expected positive direction (1.381) even after all controls were included (Model 5). Similarly, the coefficient for *reciprocity* was positive (.867) and highly significant ($p < .01$) when controlling for the same set of variables in Model 6. The coefficient for *cliquishness* was also highly significant ($p < .01$) and positive (.017) with the same set of controls in Model 7. When the three variables of theoretical interest were included together in the model, they continued to be significant and the sign of their coefficient in the expected direction (Model 8).

To facilitate comparisons across different variables, Figure 4 shows the percentage change in the odds of receiving an accolade after exponentiating the standardized coefficient of the variables used in the analysis for 1-standard deviation variation. Besides confirming the strong impact of the variables *project quality*, *competitive intensity* and *status*, the figure shows that the three variables of theoretical interest – *direct ties*, *reciprocity*, and *cliquishness* – strongly affect the dependent variable. Starting with hypothesis 1, increasing *direct ties* by 1-standard deviation increases the odds of receiving an accolade by 32 percent. When we asked former jury members about their views on this mechanisms they were very consistent and in line with our argument that individuals are more likely to give favourable evaluations to people they have previously collaborated with. In particular, the interpretation that emerged from these interviews was twofold as it points to project collaborations as means for (a) interactively congealing individual efforts into shared aesthetic visions and value commitments, and (b) channeling attention. According to three informants:

If you have worked, say, in agency x before, and you bring with you a vision and a concept from there, you always root a little for those you have been developing that vision with in previous project ventures

I think you tend to attribute people a good dose of competence automatically. So, if I for example see a person I have worked with before [...] other things being equal I will attribute this person a little extra competence, sort of 'free competence', even if the job is not that good. So it is like you attribute competence maybe to people because you know them and maybe you know something about this person that makes you think this must be good.

If you know someone from previous joint projects [...] you are more open to evaluate the project [...] you will be more positively inclined and think there must be more to this project than this and look two times at the project because you appreciate the idea behind the job to a larger extent if you know those who made it.

Hypothesis 2 is also strongly supported: a 1-standard deviation increase in the *reciprocity* variable increases the odds of receiving an accolade by 26 percent. Interviews with former jury members, however, revealed a mixed attitude towards this result. While this finding resonated with some interviewees' experience, it also raised genuine surprise mainly because of the difficulty of remembering the composition of past juries. As three of them stressed:

It is probably correct to assume there is a tendency to reciprocate but it is surprising that jurors have such a long memory and think about it [...] perhaps it is unconscious.

This (i.e., the tendency to reciprocate) surprises me a little. Maybe it is unconscious, that you in some way think better of projects because you know that they liked your project. But I do not think it is conscious.

The only thing I can say about the tendency to reciprocate is that it does not surprise me at all.

Given these mixed reactions, even though the results are in line with our predictions, the specific mechanisms underlying the reciprocity effect require further investigation. On the other hand, we surmise that one possible reason for these mixed reactions may be individuals' reticence to reveal what might be interpreted as a blatant exchange of 'favours.'

Finally, increasing *cliquishness* by 1-standard deviation increases the odds of receiving an accolade by 9 percent therefore lending support to hypothesis 3. Once again, the interviews helped us to add texture to these findings and further validate the logic underlying the postulated effect. In particular, our informants consistently described the industry as being small and fragmented, and also shared their sense of belonging to particular "social circles," "schools" or "movements" grounded in common aesthetics and values, without presupposing direct acquaintance or collaboration. According to three of them:

Based on what you believe in professionally [...] there are different 'schools' of communication [...] And then I think it is much easier to actually become impressed by those projects because [...] you know each other's work and therefore will give the project a better score in a jury evaluation [...] there are different circles of people, different cliques, some have gone to school together or they know about each other [...] I definitely think they will share points of view regarding good and bad projects.

It's a small industry...if I worked closely with someone in the past who now works with another professional, then the likelihood that I and that professional will share preferences is high.

The advertising industry is a small industry [...] there are circles where we say 'OK this is going in this direction, this is what is right now [...] we want to stretch ourselves after these ideals and then we share a common platform for what we think is good. And if we think the same things, then we tend to reward ideas that are common to our own.

Some professionals may form ties to jurors with a higher propensity than other professionals and consequently be more proximate to jury members in the collaboration network. Because jurors are representatives of the field's elite, high-status professionals may have a higher hazard of forming direct ties to jurors than low-status professionals. Failure to account for differences in the jury tie formation hazard is likely to introduce bias into the estimates. We therefore first ran a probit model and included the tie formation hazard – i.e., the inverse Mill's ratio – as a regressor in our full models (Heckman, 1979). We estimated the first stage selection equation at the individual level. The dependent variable in the selection equation was set equal to 1 if a professional had a direct tie to a juror at time t and 0 otherwise. We used *individual status* and *individual experience* in digital advertising as explanatory variables and the dummy variable *creative* (the variable takes on the value of 1 for individuals occupying the professional role of 'art direct' or 'copywriter' and 0 otherwise) as our exclusion restriction variable. The correlations between the criterion and the other variables in the first stage were quite low at .08 and .10. The correlation with the dependent variable in the second stage was also quite low at -.07 and this correlation was not significant. The underlying logic of the criterion is that creatives are part of most projects and they tend to have the responsibility for choosing collaboration partners (they maintain professional networks in order to do so), coordinating creative content in projects, and to sit on the juries more frequently. Consequently, creatives are more likely to have worked with (and so have direct ties to) jury members than non-creative professionals. Since the same professionals may appear multiple times, we clustered on professional to allow the errors to be correlated within each professional. We then entered the (project) mean of the individual-level inverse Mill's ratios in our final second stage project-level models. Model 9 in Table 3 reports the results for our main

relationships of theoretical interest when adjusting for the hazard (λ) of having direct ties to jurors. The *Inverse Mill's Ratio* (λ) is not significant and the overall pattern remains stable. Table 4 reports the results for the full models when we clustered on firm (Model 10-11). The results confirmed the main patterns of the full models in Table 3.

<Insert Figure 4 and Tables 2, 3 and 4 here>

Robustness Checks. To rule out any aggregate effect stemming from our latent quality measure, we also estimated our full models with the latent quality measure components. Model 12 in Table 5 reports the results of the full model with the separate coefficients for *project size* (.071, $p < .01$), *joint project* (.326, $p < .10$), and *project sophistication* (.304, $p < .01$) in the model. The overall pattern remained stable, and it remained stable also in Model 13 when adjusting for the hazard (λ) of having direct ties to jurors. We also estimated our full model (Model 8) replacing the *direct ties* measure with the project median *social proximity* to jurors. To compute social proximity, we first calculated the median geodesic distance between each individual advertising project member and the peer jury members. We grouped together individual producers with social distances from jurors equal to or greater than 6, and assigned them the value 6. This operationalization follows the six degrees of separation theory according to which, by means of introduction, everyone is six degrees or fewer away from any other person in the world (Milgram 1967). Thus, a chain of “a friend of a friend” statements can be made to connect any two people in a maximum of six steps. As our unit of analysis is the project, we created the *social proximity* variable as the median of each project member’s median distance from jury members. The pattern remained stable and the coefficient for *social proximity* was positive (2.753) and significant ($p < .05$). Finally, the results are basically the same when we estimated the full model (Model 8) orthogonalizing all explanatory variables. The results for the median *social proximity* and orthogonalized models are available from the authors upon request.

To further investigate the relationship between the three relational mechanisms and the allocation of awards, we estimated the average treatment effect of *direct ties*, *reciprocity*, and *cliquishness*

on the likelihood of receiving an accolade. We estimated the average treatment effect (ATE) from our observational data using the nearest-neighbor matching technique. This technique imputes the missing potential outcome for each subject (here project) using an average of the outcomes of similar subjects (projects) that received the treatment. The average treatment effect is then computed by taking the average of the difference between the observed and imputed potential outcomes for each subject (project). We matched projects by calculating the Mahalanobis distance similarity measure for all projects based on our set of covariates. We defined the treatment level for each project based on our *direct ties* variable. Specifically, each project was treated using the .5 cut-off rule. This cut-off classifies as treated projects in the upper decile, making the test very conservative. All projects with a value of *direct ties* > .5 were assigned the value of 1 (treated) while those with *direct ties* ≤ .5 were assigned the value of 0 (untreated). To adjust for sample bias when matching on more than one continuous covariate, we specified a bias-corrected estimator to ensure consistent nearest neighbor estimations (Abadie & Imbens, 2006, 2011). We calculated the bias-correction term based on our set of continuous covariates. We then estimated the average treatment effect using robust standard errors. The results presented in Table 6 show a significant positive ATE for treatments greater than the chosen cutoff value. In Model 14, the ATE for *direct ties* > .5 is 1.482 ($p < .05$). We also estimated the ATE of the *reciprocity* variable using the cutoff rule of .5 to identify the treatment group based on our set of covariates. This cut-off classifies as treated the projects in the upper decile, again making the test highly conservative. The results are reported in Model 15 and shows a positive (1.618) and significant ($p < .01$) ATE for *reciprocity* > .5. Finally, we estimated the ATE of the *cliquishness* variable using a cut-off rule of 3.75 to identify our treatment group based on our set of covariates. The results show a positive (4.519) and significant ($p < .05$) effect for *cliquishness* > 3.75 (Model 16). Although we cannot claim causality, the results of these analyses lend additional support to the relationship between our variables of theoretical interest and the allocation of awards in peer-based tournament rituals.

<Insert Tables 5 and 6 here>

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Over the past twenty years a large and growing stream of work at the intersection of organizational research, economic as well as cultural sociology has contributed to our understanding of evaluative processes as deeply interactional, emotional and mobilizing the self-concept of evaluators as much as their connoisseurship (George et al., 2016). In particular, organizational scholars have revealed various forms of preferential allocation at play in cultural fields such as peer bias (Cattani et al., 2014), status beliefs (Bielby & Bielby, 1999) and typecasting (Zuckerman et al., 2003). These studies demonstrate that recognition is not the result of a socially disembodied process of quality assessment in which audiences in charge of relinquishing valued symbolic resources apply a set of objective criteria consistently. Our findings extend this line of work by highlighting the influence of relational mechanisms that are critical for understanding the evaluative outcomes of peer-based tournament rituals. With only a few exceptions, the reward patterning caused by the existence of “social intercourses” (Blau, 1977) cutting across the audience-producer interface has been mostly bracketed out from studies concerned with the distribution of recognition in cultural fields. Drawing on the Bourdieusian understanding of cultural fields and on key tenets in network theory, we exposed the role of direct ties, reciprocity and cliquishness in shaping audiences’ allocation of awards among competing cultural producers. Based on a combination of qualitative findings and statistical testing, we found these three mechanisms to be large and significant predictors of winning projects, above and beyond status and quality considerations. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in the number of jurors with direct ties to project members increases the odds of gaining recognition by 32% ($p < .01$); a one standard deviation increase in the reciprocity measure increases the odds of gaining recognition by 26 % ($p < .01$); and a one standard deviation increase in the degree of cliquishness between jurors and producers increases the odds of gaining recognition by 9% ($p < .01$).

Interviews with field insiders confirmed and helped us to substantiate the supposition that these relational effects underlie a fundamental process of self-perpetuation inherent to peer-based

consecration rites, whereby the allocation of symbolic capital to a particular social object (i.e., actor, project, style, etc.) is at the same time a claim to the cultural legitimacy of the object itself. As Bourdieu put it (1985: 19): “When different producers confront each other, it is in the name of their claim to orthodoxy or, in Weber’s terms, to the legitimate [...] use of a certain class of symbolic goods; when they are recognized it is their claim to orthodoxy that is being recognized.” Overall, our findings point to the importance of “bringing relationships back in” to the analysis of consecration processes and, in so doing, offer several contributions within the broadening scholarly debate on the “growing importance of social evaluations in organizational life” (George et al., 2016: 10).

Research on Tournament Rituals

Tournament rituals have a distinct and recognizable symbolic structure that, in some culturally defined way, is removed from the routines of economic life, usually taking the form of a public spectacle (Anand & Watson, 2004; English, 2005). Participation in these rituals is both a privilege granted to influential social actors in a given field and an instrument of symbolic demarcation among them. According to Bourdieu (1986: 22), this demarcation is affirmed and reaffirmed through the *alchemy of consecration*, i.e., the symbolic constitution produced by social institution rites such as tournament rituals. As these rituals “articulate and reinforce cognitive categories that are central to a community” (Anand & Jones, 2008: 1038), they aim to reify the canons shared by the members of that community. By focusing on social mechanisms that cut across the audience-producer interface our findings direct attention to the role of the social structure in promoting the diffusion of shared aesthetic canons and standards of judgment. In the context of peer-based tournament rituals, these mechanisms contribute to explaining why members of the evaluating audience may be more favorably disposed towards projects whose members are more socially proximate to them and also why they endeavor to distinguish their “clique” from other “cliques” competing for the same scarce reputational resources (awards) through the alchemy of consecration.

Our study also seeks to respond to a few recent calls from tournament theorists who have voiced the need to be more sensitive to the social context in which tournament rituals take place. An important insight of our paper is to demonstrate how incorporating constructs and analytic tools from network theory helps to place tournaments more squarely into their contexts and, in so doing, to inform tournament theory by “exploring the influences of the social characteristics of participants on tournament outcomes” (Connelly et al., 2013: 36). Notably, because only a subset of all social interactions are captured by a network constructed exclusively from project affiliation data, our findings should be interpreted as a lower bound on the importance of the social structure in patterning recognition. This interpretation is strengthened by the additional finding that the relational effects remain salient despite the co-location (i.e., in Oslo) of most of the advertising firms in our data set. In other words, while geographical proximity allows for multiple types of interaction among economic actors, it does not wash away the effect of interactions that involve project collaboration, be they direct or indirect.

We know from past extensive research that high-status candidates engender audiences’ expectations of high competence, which in turn shapes the way audiences perceive the outcomes they are supposed to evaluate. Audiences “see quality” through the lens of status cues (Kim & King, 2014) – at times even irrespective of any direct linkage between those cues and actual quality. By shifting attention to the audience-candidate network, we identified important boundary conditions that may alter the saliency of status cues, as suggested by the drop in significance level of the status variable when audience-producer relational effects are accounted for. On the one hand, the proposed relational mechanisms reduce the need to infer quality from status-based screening, as encoded in a publicly observable status hierarchy; on the other, and also in line with some of our field informants’ interpretation, such mechanisms reflect similarity in preference and taste. The realization that these mechanisms may substitute for candidates’ lack of or low levels of status, and even supersede status

effects, suggests that the role of status in catalyzing recognition might be more circumscribed than previously thought.

Research on Symbolic Capital

Our relational approach offers a new lens through which appreciating the economic conversion value of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1993). Particularly in societies where the search for knowledge about one's worth in relation to others is intense, awards are crucial sources of recognition (Gallus & Frey, 2016) and consumers treating them as judgment devices “transmute the producer's symbolic capital into economic capital” (Rossman & Schilke, 2014: 88). Thus, awards won in film festivals may increase tenure at the box office, literary prizes may ensure access to exclusive distribution channels, and medals in science may increase an actor's chances of getting research grants. All these may help in the same way as general prestige rankings, but their presumed objectivity gives them special independence in swaying decisions, especially of people who have little direct knowledge of the recipient in question (Goode, 1978). In our contest, winning awards likewise is highly consequential for producers and their employers as awards can help advertising agencies attract clients:

“Awards become an easy measurement tool of where on the creative ranking the agency is. So, if a client is looking for a very creative agency, they know where to look because those are the ones that have won the most awards” (interview with the art director from a digital advertising agency).

The economic conversion of symbolic capital is even more evident in the following quote:

“[Awards] is our only marketing channel. This, I can write press releases about. I cannot write press releases about anything else. I can write press releases about how well we perform internationally or nationally. I can get a lot out of that. For us, it means business. Because we get press, we get clients” (interview with a copy writer from a digital advertising agency).

Thus, while one might be tempted to consider the network-based preferential allocation process documented in our study for its purely symbolic import if it had no effects beyond the attainment of recognition, recognition in turn has significant economic conversion value. Thus, while one might be tempted to consider the network-based preferential allocation process documented in our study for its purely symbolic import if it had no effects beyond the attainment of recognition, recognition in

turn has significant economic conversion value. This strong relationship can best be appreciated in Figure 5, which plots the linear prediction of operating profits based on the total number of The Silver Tag awards won by each firm in the previous year. The story that emerges from this analysis mirrors the qualitative insights. Recognition is patterned along relational lines and is conducive to economic opportunities. This preferential allocation pattern, as a result, places a significant burden on peripheral cultural producers who are loosely connected to the field's insiders. Stated differently, relational mechanisms contribute to stratifying organizations not only in symbolic space, but also in economic space – particularly in those contexts where awards are used as proxies for the quality of a firm's product offerings. As agents of consecration, social audiences play a key role in strengthening the market power of some firms by promoting their product offerings vis-à-vis those of other firms, so enhancing the perceived level of differentiation of those firms relative to competition (Cattani, Porac, & Tomas, 2017).

<Insert Figure 5 here>

Research on Peer Evaluation

As Jan-Paul Sartre (1948: 98) famously quipped: “There are qualities that we acquire uniquely through the judgment of others.” This is especially so for the quality of a cultural object “which is so difficult to define because it exists only in, and through, the circular relations of reciprocal recognition among peers” (Bourdieu, 1985: 19). Because cultural objects are subject to different interpretations, they exist within overtly competitive social arenas of consensual or contested meaning, in which peers – in their quest for distinction – engage in symbolic struggles over the criteria defining the legitimate modes of production and expression. The outcomes of these struggles are canonical understandings of worth, which elite peers enforce and reinforce through award contests. As stressed by Shymco and Roulet (2016: 41): “The process of peer recognition [...] relies on the institutionalization of tools such as awards or rankings and is hence more likely to lead to a self-reinforcing [...] evaluation.” The relational mechanisms we highlighted are part and parcel of this self-reinforcing process of recognition. In fact,

not only are elite peers likely to have vested interests in preserving established notions of worth but also to use their own “power to consecrate” to protect them. The rich body of sociological evidence on peer resistance in art (White & White, 1965) and science (Barber, 1961) is especially indicative of this protective attitude. As an illustration, consider the French Academy of Fine Arts (Académie des Beaux Arts) in the 19th century. The French Academy assessed artwork and rewarded artists with prizes based on the evaluation of gatekeepers, who were members of the Academy. Success in the system depended upon receiving recognition from the Academy. In theory, the work by the artist was evaluated objectively; in practice, the gatekeepers increasingly attempted to maintain their own power and that of their followers. As a result, artists associated with Academy members were more likely to win awards. Over the years, the members of the Academy took turns obtaining symbolic awards for their own affiliates, thus effectively assuring the continuity of the Academy’s orthodoxy (White & White, 1965). Here we point to ‘friends, favours and cliques’ as analytically grounded relational manifestations of this stratifying process that map closely onto the social structure of the field in which audiences and producers face each other in their quest for distinction.

Limits and Future Research

Peer-based tournament rituals and awards contest more broadly share similarities with other settings that should encourage efforts at generalizability, but they also present unique features that should invite cautious consideration of possible boundary conditions. Promotion processes in labor markets strike us as a particularly interesting case in point for appreciating this tension. Let us first focus on the commonalities. Just like awards’ recipients in our setting, employees who are given promotions rank higher in prestige than those who are not. Also, similarly to our setting, social networks structure the matching process between professionals and positions, and symbolic resources (e.g., promotion) are allocated on the basis of evaluative practices among peers. There is even evidence suggesting that these decisions are patterned along cognitive lines in a way that closely resemble the normatively laden judgments that shape the distribution of symbolic capital in Bourdieusian fields. Recent research, for

example, has demonstrated that job candidates exhibiting cultural fit with evaluators receive more attention and enjoy more favorable hiring outcomes because evaluators are more likely to fight for candidates with whom they feel a spark of commonality (Rivera, 2012). Indeed, a comparison of the fine-grained interpersonal processes through which network and cultural based similarities shape homosocial reproduction in labor markets and domains of cultural production seems to us a promising avenue for future research. But let us now consider the differences. First, while the recipient of an award is certified as having already performed a particular task at an exceptional level, someone who is promoted has not yet proved he can do the job at all. The judgment is a manifestation of the evaluator trust about the future, rather than the evaluation of an achievement already reached (Goode, 1978). Second, to accept a promotion is to agree to carry out a specific set of performances as long as one holds the position. In this respect, promotions clearly differ from awards. Third, and related to the previous point, awards are typically bestowed for an exceptional achievement in a specific type of activity. By contrast, the range of activities expected for one who has been promoted is usually wide. Words of caution should therefore accompany efforts at extending our results to the prestige dynamics that distinguish this, as well as other similar peer-based evaluative contexts such as funding committees in science (Boudreau et al., 2016), selection panels in charge of R&D decisions (Criscuolo et al., 2017), auditioning of musicians for symphony orchestras (Goldin & Rouse, 2000), or online user communities (Dahlander & Frederiksen, 2012). In short, if individuals aspire to awards and participate in tournament rituals it is because the prestige they get from them is socially distinct and embedded in a very particular symbolic structure (Goode, 1978). Thus, we encourage studies seeking to further explore the allocation of prestige with respect to both the stratifying impact of awards and the nature of the social processes that regulate their distribution.

To the extent that the relational mechanisms discussed in this paper place a burden on players less entrenched in the field's prevailing canons, the question is then how do peripheral players whose view is more likely to challenge the orthodoxy can gain traction in an established cultural field. The

question is particularly relevant considering that, with relatively few exceptions (e.g., Cattani et al., 2014; Goldberg, Hannan, & Kóvacs, 2016; Criscuolo et al., 2017), previous organizational research assumes that audiences are homogeneously aversive to novel claims, especially so when evaluative canons are agreed upon. When audiences are receptive to novel offers, prevailing research conventionally attributes such a reaction to the reputational resources deployed by the producer. Yet these resources are unlikely to be available to producers who are weakly embedded in the social structure of the field (i.e., newcomers, outsiders, mavericks, etc.) and therefore unconnected to the field's insiders. Understanding the sources of variability in audiences' receptiveness to novel claims is a fascinating problem and one that merits further inquiry.

Our data do not capture the process by which jury members arrive at their decisions, in particular how their (often) conflicting opinions are reconciled and consensus on which projects to reward is reached. Our combination of archival and interview data offered some insights, but future work should examine the underlying micro-processes in greater detail. A different methodological approach such as conducting an experiment in a more controlled setting (i.e., laboratory) would be better suited to gain such nuanced understanding of the evaluative dynamics. Conducting a laboratory experiment would also help deal with the main empirical challenge of our study: controlling for the quality of the project under evaluation. As mentioned earlier, our data do not allow us to measure project quality directly. Although this is a limit common to most studies conducted in settings where the quality of a cultural object is highly subjective, we believe that the latent quality measure used in the analysis is a reasonably good proxy for the actual quality of a project – as some of our informants also confirmed. Future research might find this aspect worthy of more systematic investigation.

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Figure 1. Awards Distribution for *Jurors* and *Non-Jurors*

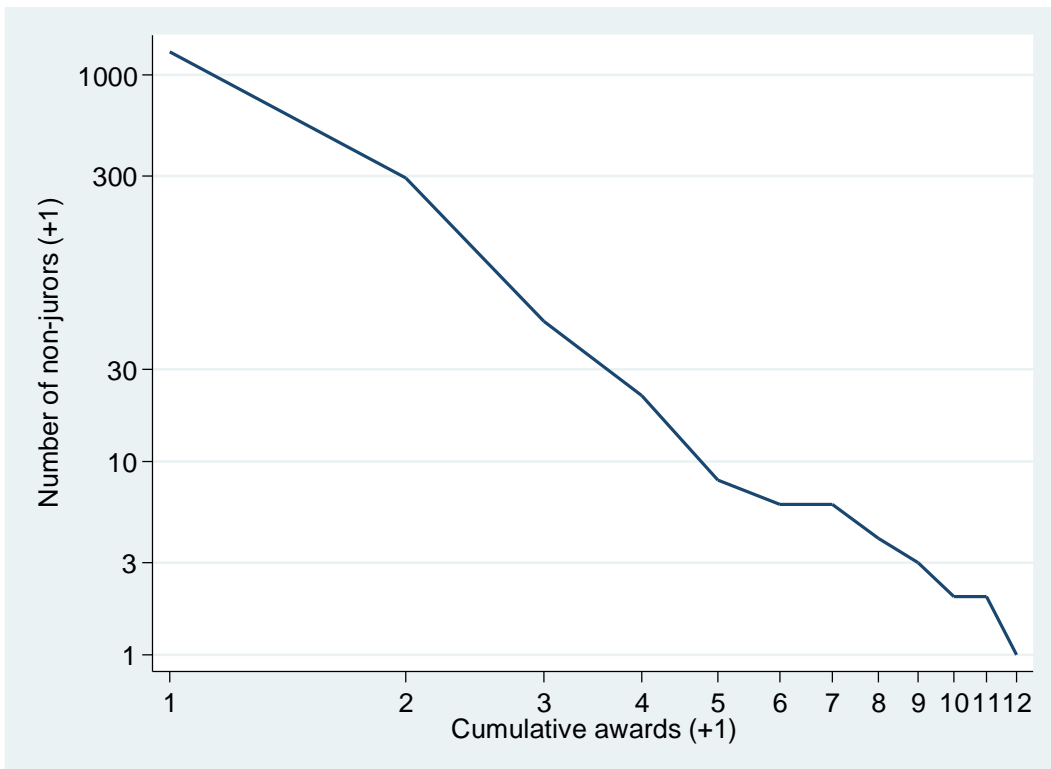
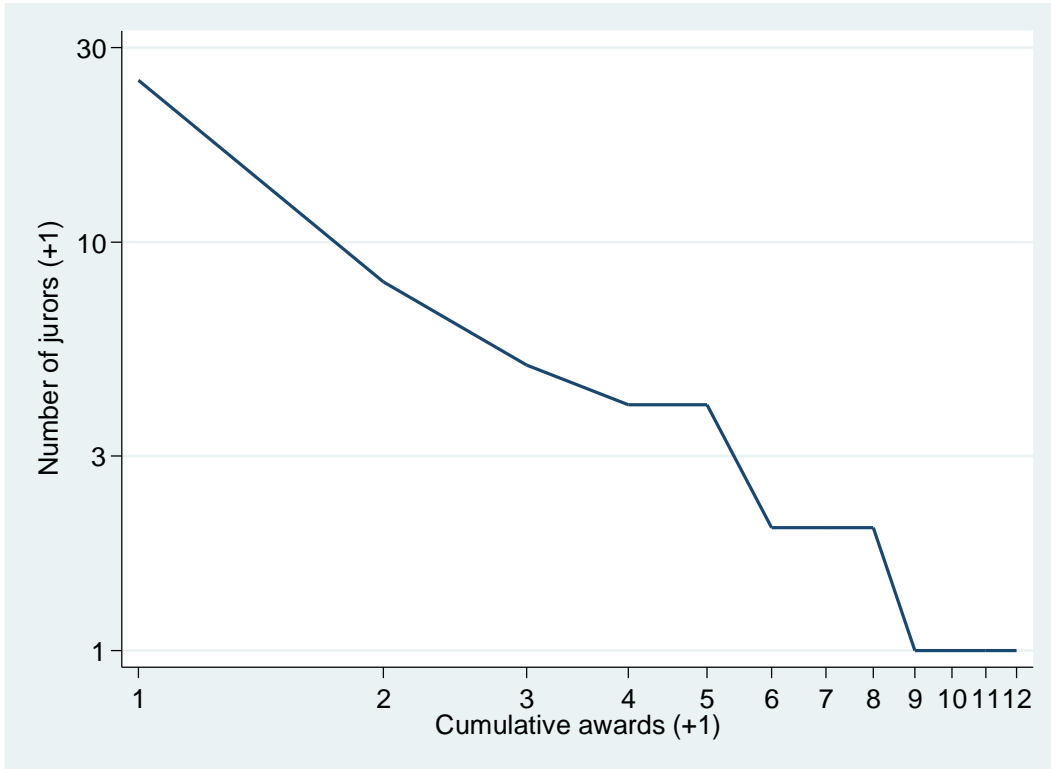
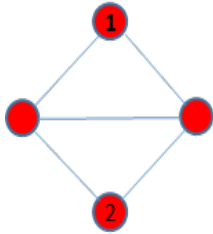


Figure 2. Cohesion vs. Connection

2a Co-membership without connection



2b Connection without co-membership

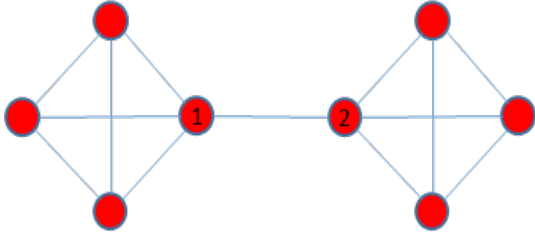
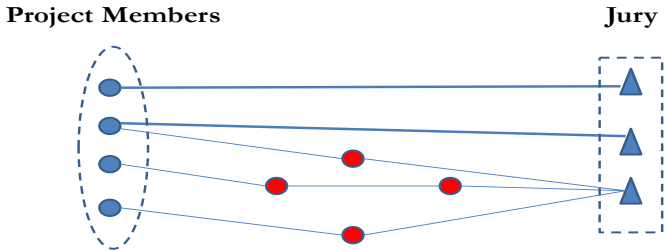
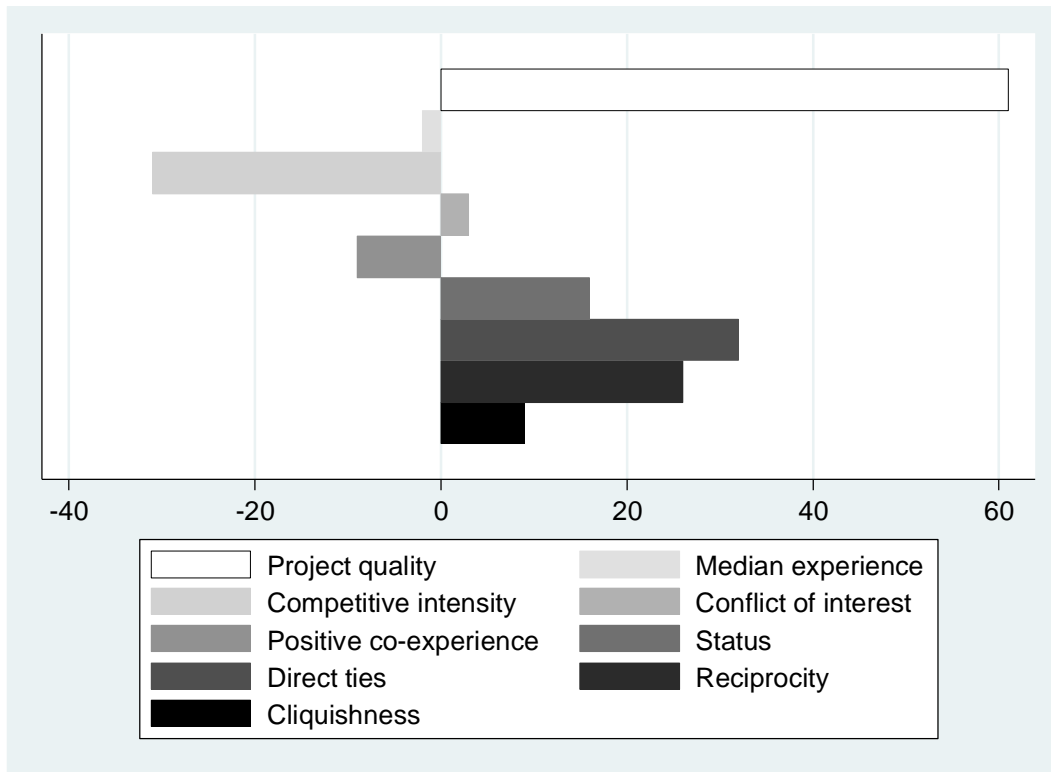


Figure 3. Computing *Direct ties*



$Direct\ ties = 2/4 = .50$

Figure 4. Percentage Change in Odds of Receiving an Accolade (Exponentiated Standardized Coefficients) for 1 StdDev Variation in the Variables



Note: Changes in the odds of receiving an accolade are shown for a one-standard deviation change in the variables. The changes in odds are calculated based on exponentiated standardized coefficients from Model 9 in Table 3 with all control variables and the *direct ties*, *reciprocity*, and *cliquishness* variables to allow for comparison.

Figure 5 – The Silver Tag Awards Won and Operating Profits

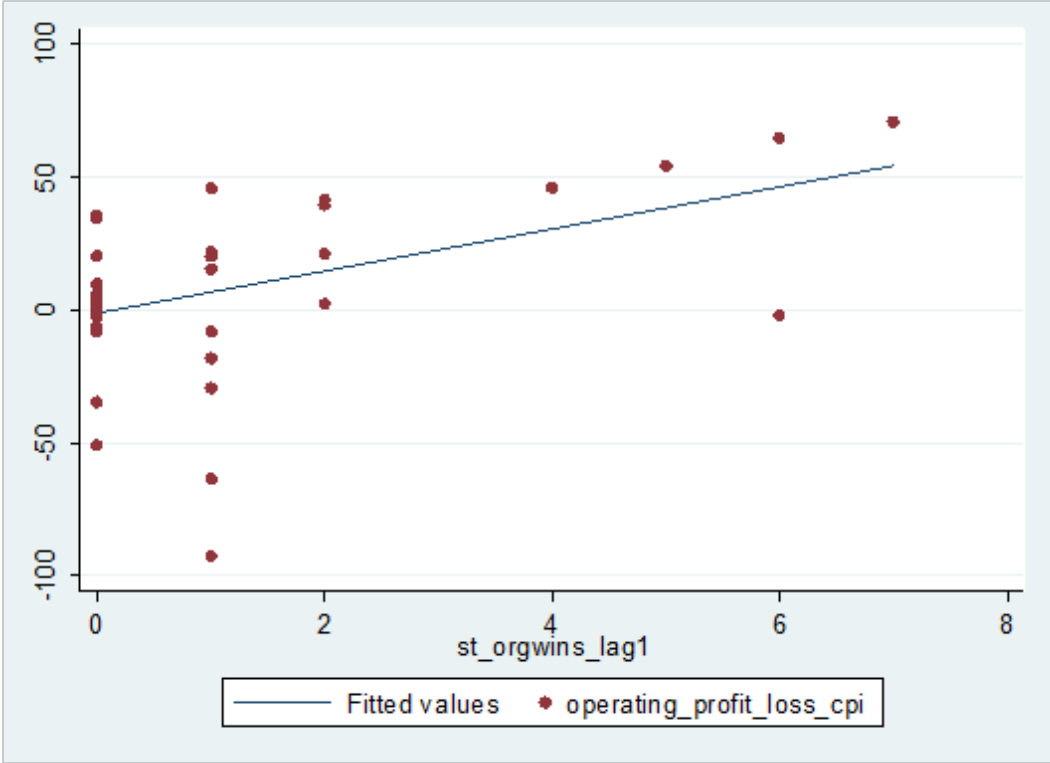


Table 1. Descriptive Data on Agencies Sampled for Interviews

Agency	Agency size	Services	Digital awards	Respondent's role
Advertising	75-100	Full service ^a	Yes	Digital advisor
Advertising	75-100	Full service	Yes	Copywriter; Managing director
Advertising	50-75	Full service	Yes	Digital advisor
Advertising	40-50	Mass communication	Yes	Copywriter
Advertising	10-20	Mass communication	No	Copywriter
Advertising	10-20	All media	No	Art director
Digital	20-30	Digital	Yes	Art director
Digital	5-10	Digital	No	Digital advisor
Digital	5-10	Digital	Yes	Digital advisor

^aFull-service agencies typically offer a wide range of services such as mass communication, direct marketing, digital, design, and sometimes media brokering. For some roles, we interviewed more than one professional for a total of 16 distinct interviews.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients

Variables	Mean	Std Dev	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Allocation of accolades	1.078	1.730	1									
2. Project quality	0	.254	.31*	1								
3. Median experience	3.529	3.989	.07	-.10*	1							
4. Competitive intensity	15.369	5.960	-.22*	-.04	-.01	1						
5. Conflict of interest	.436	.496	.19*	.21*	.17*	-.09*	1					
6. Prior positive co-experience	.261	.439	.18*	.28*	.20*	-.03	.55*	1				
7. Status	.439	.402	.24*	.37*	.26*	-.05	.28*	.38*	1			
8. Direct ties	.146	.197	.17*	.01	.30*	-.02	.49*	.53*	.38*	1		
9. Reciprocity	.069	.272	.31*	.09*	.16*	-.15*	.20*	.19*	.17*	.17*	1	
10. Cliquishness	.335	4.028	.07†	-.00	-.03	-.01	.01	-.04	.09*	-.03	-.02	1

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

N = 654

Condition number = 4.41

Table 3. Generalized Linear Model (clustered on contest/month)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.
Project quality				1.554**	1.835**	1.570**	1.574**	1.876**	1.873**
				(.28)	(.30)	(.27)	(.28)	(.30)	(.30)
Median experience				.012	.003	.00	.014	-.006	-.009
				(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)
Competitive intensity				-.066**	-.070**	-.060**	-.068**	-.061**	-.061**
				(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Conflict of interest				.267†	.150	.191	.257	.056	.053
				(.15)	(.16)	(.16)	(.15)	(.16)	(.16)
Prior positive co-experience				.025	-.169	-.041	.048	-.215	-.218
				(.15)	(.16)	(.16)	(.15)	(.17)	(.17)
Status				.587**	.448*	.545*	.549**	.360†	.355
				(.21)	(.21)	(.22)	(.21)	(.21)	(.22)
Direct ties	1.280**				1.381**			1.399**	1.398**
	(.28)				(.29)			(.33)	(.33)
Reciprocity		1.206**				.867**		.857**	.855**
		(.14)				(.12)		(.11)	(.12)
Cliquishness			.020**				.017**	.021**	.021**
			(.00)				(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Inverse Mill's ratio (λ)									-.079
									(.67)
Constant	-2.348**	-2.270**	-2.144**	-1.735**	-1.740**	-1.830**	-1.731**	-1.830**	-1.718†
	(.07)	(.06)	(.07)	(.21)	(.19)	(.22)	(.21)	(.20)	(.99)
N	654	654	654	654	654	654	654	654	654
Log pseudo likelihood	-1219.04	-1181.82	-1241.55	-1085.20	-1071.51	-1056.21	-1082.59	-1040.03	-1040.02
AIC	2442.09	2367.63	2487.10	2184.41	2159.01	2128.43	2181.18	2100.06	2102.03

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ -- Standard errors in parentheses

Table 4. Generalized Linear Model (clustered on firm)

	Model 10	Model 11
	Coeff.	Coeff.
Project quality	1.876** (.33)	1.873** (.33)
Median experience	-.006 (.02)	-.009 (.03)
Competitive intensity	-.061** (.01)	-.061** (.01)
Conflict of interest	.056 (.17)	.053 (.17)
Prior positive co-experience	-.215 (.17)	-.218 (.18)
Status	.360† (.20)	.355† (.20)
Direct ties	1.399** (.31)	1.398** (.31)
Reciprocity	.857** (.14)	.855** (.14)
Cliquishness	.021** (.01)	.021** (.01)
Inverse Mill's ratio (λ)		-.079 (.66)
Constant	-1.830** (.24)	-1.718† (.90)
N	654	654
Log pseudo likelihood	-1040.03	-1040.02
AIC	2100.06	2102.03

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ -- Standard errors in parentheses

Table 5. Generalized Linear Models (clustered on contest/month)

	Model 12	Model 13
	Coeff.	Coeff.
Project size	.071** (.02)	.071** (.02)
Joint project	.326† (.19)	.325† (.19)
Project sophistication	.304** (.09)	.304** (.09)
Median experience	-.007 (.02)	-.011 (.03)
Competitive intensity	-.061** (.01)	-.061** (.01)
Conflict of interest	.108 (.17)	.105 (.17)
Prior positive co-experience	-.233 (.17)	-.237 (.17)
Status	.377† (.21)	.371† (.22)
Direct ties	1.322** (.33)	1.319** (.33)
Reciprocity	.855** (.12)	.852** (.12)
Cliquishness	.021** (.00)	.021** (.00)
Inverse Mill's ratio (λ)		-.106 (.68)
Constant	-2.618** (.25)	-2.465* (1.028)
N	654	654
Log pseudo likelihood	-1038.12	-1038.09
AIC	2100.24	2102.18

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ -- Standard errors in parentheses

Table 6. Matching Using Near Neighbor Estimation

	Model 14 Direct ties > .5	Model 15 Reciprocity > .5	Model 16 Cliquishness > 3.75
ATE	1.482* (.62)	1.618** (.29)	4.519* (2.18)

AI robust standard errors

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$