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Gatekeeping and the Use of Contested Practices in Creative Industries: The Case of Fur in Fashion

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Abstract. In creative industries, a producer's choice to use specific cultural practices is often driven by considerations of industry-specific notions of creativity and artistic vision. Creative producers claim autonomy over which practices are deemed desirable or legitimate, creating resistance to influences from outside the industry, such as from social movements. This study proposes that in such contexts, externally-driven change depends on the role of prominent gatekeepers. We consider how shifts in their discourse translate and amplify external social movement pressures for producers. We further argue that higher-status producers respond more to the changing discourse of these gatekeepers, to whom they are more tightly connected. This leads to a dynamic that is counterintuitive in the context of creative industries in which higher-status producers, who can benefit most from preserving the status quo, show greater responsiveness to external pressures when translated through gatekeeper discourse. Our empirical analysis uses a unique data set related to a prototypical contested practice: fur use in high-end fashion. These findings highlight the complex role of gatekeepers in creative industries and indirect pathways through which external social movements drive change.

Supplemental Material: The online appendix is available at https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2022.1591.

Keywords: creative industries • fashion • fur • gatekeepers • social movements • status

1. Introduction

In creative industries, gatekeepers such as literary critics, culinary journalists, and fashion editors play a key boundary-spanning role in resolving uncertainty on both sides of the market interface (Hirsch 1972, Lampel et al. 2000, Khaire 2017). For consumers, gatekeepers use their technical and contextualized knowledge to explain the principles that value one good over another. They translate the precepts of creative production into something intelligible and palatable to nonexperts in broader society's culture and norms. For producers, gatekeepers help to structure principles of consumer reception and valuation, enabling producers to make decisions with some degree of anticipation (Espeland and Sauder 2007, Hsu et al. 2012). As agents of consecration, they also help create, maintain, and refine the shared aesthetic distinctions that determine who is (and is not) deemed worthy of admiration and respect within the field (Cattani et al. 2014, Rossman and Schilke 2014).

To maintain legitimacy in this boundary-spanning role, gatekeepers strive to display independence from producers and their interests (Hirsch 1972, Caves 2000). Yet, gatekeepers are also professionals who espouse values and beliefs in concordance with their identities as key participants within a creative industry (Becker 1982). Such shared identities foster alignment with the creative producers they cover (Foster and Ocejo 2015) and a bias that favors traditionally held aesthetic ideals (Glynn and Lounsbury 2005). This is even more likely for prominent gatekeepers who cultivate professional—even personal—relationships with producers, as part of the networking that is key to influential gatekeeping (Smits 2016). Thus, gatekeepers strive to balance the need to preserve relationships to producers with the necessity to retain their influence as independent arbiters of taste both within and outside the industry. In times of stability, when industry participants engage in cultural practices that are largely accepted or unquestioned by those outside the industry, gatekeepers can maintain this balance by making judgments in accordance with established industry norms.

Yet, when norms from outside the industry regarding cultural practices clash with those embraced by producers, this tension—between gatekeepers as industry participants vs. neutral boundary-spanners—intensifies. The present study considers the importance of brokers' identities vis-à-vis the groups they connect (Gould and Fernandez 1989, Fernandez and Gould 1994,

Foster et al. 2011) and focuses on situations when the tensions about the role of gatekeeping emerge. Contestation over organizational practices is a widespread phenomenon that arises when groups disagree sharply in their interpretations of a practice's legitimacy or ethical value. Social movements directly challenge producers, including large multinational and public corporations, from a wide variety of industries when practices are viewed as conflicting with changing societal values (Briscoe and Safford 2008, Bartley and Child 2014, Soule et al. 2014, McDonnell et al. 2015, Amenta and Polletta 2019). Such challenges can destabilize existing normative systems and result in change among producers seeking to retain legitimacy and approval in the eyes of external constituents and broader society (McAdam and Scott 2005, Briscoe and Gupta 2016, Hiatt and Carlos 2019).

Yet, contestation can take on a distinct flavor in creative industries. Producers strive to earn the recognition and esteem of peers such as fellow artists and creators, as well as key industry participants such as critics, dealers, and prize committees, whose collective deference reifies the industry's status ordering (Becker 1982, Bourdieu 1993, Jones et al. 2016, Fine 2018). In such contexts, a producer's engagement in a practice is often driven by aesthetic and status-based considerations grounded in the specific traditions and culture of an industry (Bourdieu 1993). This cultural history guides market participants in judging that works are creatively original and novel—core dimensions on which value within creative industries is assessed (Jones et al. 2016). In their pursuit of creative autonomy and peer recognition, producers are predisposed to resist external pressures and preserve the established practices and the culture within which they have been embedded (Fine 1996, Glynn and Lounsbury 2005).

When contestation over a cultural practice arises, creative industry gatekeepers play a unique and integral role in the translation of social movements challenges. Gatekeepers represent a key boundary-spanning audience that creative producers consider in their production decisions (Hirsch 1972). Through their narratives, gatekeepers can highlight or downplay the significance of societal values and beliefs, shaping insiders' perceptions of external constituencies' right to question existing practices. As they use the language of accepted industry frameworks, gatekeepers lend legitimacy and make tangible the sense of a shifting cultural landscape (Durand et al. 2007). Conversely, if gatekeepers dismiss or ignore the moral imperatives of external concerns, they reaffirm the existing normative system in the industry and cultural producers' autonomy from external forces to change.

Gatekeepers play a key role in managing tensions between social movement activists and various stakeholders, including producers, in industry settings outside of the creative industries (Lee et al. 2017). Yet, the importance of creative autonomy and ambiguous evaluation criteria derived from cultural cues within creative industries suggests gatekeepers will play a particularly influential role among creative producers firmly wedded to the industry's status hierarchy. In general, studies find higher-status players to be the most resistant to change in established practices, as challenges to the status quo threatens their privileged positions in the industry hierarchy (Becker 1974, Glynn and Lounsbury 2005). Yet, we expect the influence of changes in prominent gatekeepers' evaluative discourse to be strongest on higher-status creative producers, given their dependence on gatekeepers for continued recognition and tendency toward developing relational ties. When prominent gatekeepers incorporate contestation over practices in their evaluative discourse, we expect producers at higher status levels to be most responsive to pressures to change. We develop theory on the role of prominent gatekeepers with regard to externally driven change, focusing on two processes: amplifying influence from social movement activism external to the industry and filtering status-based influence internal to the industry.

Our empirical setting is the global high-end fashion industry. We focus on a strongly contested organizational practice in contemporary societies—the use of animal fur in fashion (Strege 2014). Among fashion houses—the firms that design, produce, and sell clothes—the incorporation of fur into runway collections has long been a marker not only of luxury but also of a house's technical artistry and thus relevant to assessment of a house's place in the status hierarchy (Strege 2014). Fur's meaning in broader society, however, began to change in the late 1970s and early 1980s as contemporary animal rights organizations started portraying the use of fur by the global fashion industry as a cruel, morally problematic practice (Simonson 2001, Atkins-Sayre 2010). Animal rights activists focused efforts directly on producers, aiming to reduce fur's supply and consumption in a supply-driven industry where consumers choices are constrained by what is offered to them by fashion houses each season (Kawamura 2018). Their efforts attracted substantial media and public attention (Adams 2017).

Yet, for a substantial period, most fashion houses refused to give way to activist pressures. Fashion insiders associated fur not just with luxury and technical artistry but also with the pursuit of creativity unbound by the moral constraints of society. Over the first two decades of the 21st century, change began to percolate as producers substantially decreased their use of fur. What stimulated this change? As we describe, it does not appear to be the direct result of

public attention to the oft-spectacular activism of animal rights groups or trends in consumer demand for fur.

Instead, our empirical analysis suggests that change entered the industry when prominent gatekeepers, who had praised the luxuriousness of fur for decades, gave increasing consideration to societal norms through selective mentions of fur's contested status in their evaluative narratives. Gatekeepers' attention to contestation amplified the impact of antifur collective action on fashion houses' use of fur—particularly for actions that followed accepted institutional channels. It also interacted with producers' propensity to engage with contested practices based on their status. Counter to general expectations that higher-status producers, who benefit most from preserving the status quo, will be more resistant to change than their lower-status counterparts, we find higher-status producers to be more responsive to changes reflected in gatekeepers' discourse. Finally, post hoc analyses suggest that, as higher-status producers discontinued fur use, others throughout the market followed, creating a "trickle-down" pattern often found in status hierarchies (Crane 1999).

2. Producers and Gatekeepers in Creative Industries

The value ascribed to goods produced in creative industries is steeped in aesthetics, experiences, and symbolism (Townley et al. 2009). This makes using and displaying the "right" cultural practices (e.g., the choice of a given fabric or technique in fashion) a key artistic and strategic concern that reflects a producer's claimed identity and position in the social order of the market (Breiger 2005, Cappetta et al. 2006, Cillo and Verona 2008, Godart and Galunic 2019). The success of a creative choice can be linked to the tension between imitation and differentiation at the heart of fashion as a social process (Lieberson 2000, Alvarez et al. 2005, Aspers and Godart 2013, Askin and Mauskapf 2017). This deliberate choice of cultural practices may appear to conflict with norms of creative autonomy, as Jay (1992, p. 17) observed:

> [T]he construction of the creative genius as a figure of unconstrained power, who produced art by breaking rather than following rules … Like art itself, the genius was often construed as unbound by non-aesthetic considerations, cognitive, ethical or whatever.

Yet, creative choices reflect the self-contained ecosystem that creative industries operate within—as bounded fields which aspire to exercise a high degree of autonomy from broader societal perspectives (Bourdieu 1993). Within these bounded fields, producers make creative choices that signal a particular identity and earn peer acceptance and esteem (Daskalaki 2010). When consecrating works in their field, creative professionals follow standards shared among cultural elites but are distinct from consumers' standards (Bourdieu 1993, Rossman and Schilke 2014). In highbrow performing arts, these standards are often upheld by gatekeepers such as critics, who evaluate creative offerings with a positive bias for long-standing aesthetic ideals (Glynn 2002). As a result, practices celebrated for authenticity, creativity, and artistic vision within an industry can conflict with values that pervade broader society (Khaire 2017). For example, chefs who put *foie gras* on their menus often dismiss challenges from animal rights activists for the practice's perceived cruelty—a test by external challengers of "their cultural authority and expertise in the culinary world" (Desoucey 2016, p. 188). In a similar vein, creative endeavors such as Jeremy Scott's 2017 "garbage couture" (Peoples 2017) or John Galliano's wet fish as models' catwalk accessories (Mills 2014) are regarded as boundary pushing by industry insiders but off-putting to mainstream consumers.

Amid constant change, valuation of creative production is challenging and uncertain. Gatekeepers help inform consumers' understandings of cultural production (Mears 2011, Menger 2014)—relating organizational practices to an industry's historical and cultural context, defining new categories, and elaborating distinctive frameworks for discriminating value (Kennedy 2005, Espeland and Sauder 2007). At the same time, their evaluative discourse helps establish a basis on which creative and production decisions are made (Becker 1982). They provide industry recognition and reflections of producers' work that influences the esteem of peer artists and creators (Becker 1982, Bourdieu 1993, Fine 2018).

Gould and Fernandez (1989) propose that gatekeepers' social or group identities shape how they enact their roles as information brokers and influence others in their field. Although professional gatekeepers rest on the boundary between producers and consumers and strive to maintain legitimacy through independence, they can also occupy key institutional positions through intense involvement with the industry's history, norms, and participants. Although not a peer to producers, gatekeepers are creative professionals steeped in their field's discourse and traditions and possess to some degree a shared identity or alignment with creative producers in their respective fields.

This sense of shared identification can be particularly strong between prominent gatekeepers and high-status producers. In creative markets, gatekeeping (like production) is fundamentally hierarchical. That is, some gatekeepers accrue more influence than others (Van Rees 1987, Shoemaker and Reese 2014). In some creative industries such as book publishing, this comes naturally, as reviewers are often successful book authors, or "practitioners of the art they are reviewing" (Childress 2017, p. 171). In other domains,

gatekeepers are nonpractitioner professionals evaluating a single or multiple art forms as their vocation (Shrum 1996). In that case, gatekeepers gain reputation as arbiters of taste, quality, and cultural legitimacy through extensive industry knowledge and demonstration of their expertise (Becker 1982, Shrum 1991, Caves 2000, Rossman and Schilke 2014). Editors for *Wine Spectator* in wine, *The New York Times* for Broadway theater, or (as in our current context) *Vogue* for fashion are examples of prominent gatekeepers who have grown to exert profound influence on their creative fields.

Producers who have achieved success have often done so with the approval and support of prominent gatekeepers (Hirsch 1972). As White and White (1965) observe in their historical account of the emergence of Impressionism, a circle of favorable critics who developed friendships with core artists such as Degas, Monet, and Renoir, played an integral role in providing recognition and support to the artists. Such relationships benefit both sides. Gatekeepers benefit from privileged access to information, and producers benefit from recognition and sponsorship (Olson and Waguespack 2020). These relationships can lead to preferential treatment for established producers by gatekeepers, within norms of independence and legitimacy. For example, well-established film producers and directors receive more lenient parental guidance classifications than smaller independent producers by the Motion Picture Association of America's ratings entity (Waguespack and Sorenson 2011). Studying film and video games, Olson and Waguespack (2020) find evidence that critics appear to strategically manage time disclosure of negative reviews to balance the tension between preserving positive relationships with producers and maintaining credibility among lay consumers who rely on the reviews for information.

3. Gatekeeper Discourse as Legitimizing External Contestation

In the social movements literature, interdependency between social movements and their targets is a major factor shaping both how producers recognize and respond to pressures to change (Briscoe and Gupta 2016). Insiders (e.g., employees) are highly dependent on, and knowledgeable about, targeted producers. They engage in activism mainly through legitimate channels, such as advocacy and policy reform. In contrast, outsiders (e.g., social movement organizations) show lower dependence on and knowledge about targets, which tends to lead to more disruptive tactics that impose material and reputational costs (Katzenstein 1998, Vasi and King 2012).

Prominent gatekeepers in creative industries fall somewhere in the middle along the insider-outsider spectrum. This distinguishes them from the general media typically studied in the social movement literature that serve to shape public attention for activist efforts (Smith et al. 2001). Because of their interdependencies and shared identities as members of a creative field, gatekeepers have more influence on creative producers' decision-making. From a gatekeeper perspective, alignment with industry players helps to assure their legitimacy. However, too much stability can be problematic because the influence of gatekeepers also depends on demonstrating novel opinions (Caves 2000). This can lead gatekeepers to diverge at times from producers' established aesthetic frameworks (Kremp 2010). As they attempt to keep on the leading edge, gatekeepers look to broader societal trends and concerns and incorporate them into their evaluative narratives.

Prominent gatekeepers' evaluative discourse follows accepted industry frameworks. When they assimilate changes in societal values and norms, they do so in a manner that resonates with creative producers. The consideration of societal contestation over existing cultural practices highlights for producers the social and reputational risks in the eyes of the broader public or general consumers, as well as among their peers. In this way, gatekeepers lend legitimacy to shifting societal values and norms that can disrupt the value system on which the industry rests (Rao et al. 2003, Scott 2003). Producers will respond to gatekeepers' acknowledgement of changing societal values and norms in their discourse. Instead of rejecting gatekeepers' attempts to recast practices as irrelevant or an unacceptable breach of their autonomy, producers are more likely to follow gatekeepers' views.

Hypothesis 1. *The likelihood of creative producers' use of a cultural practice decreases with greater consideration of external contestation over the practice from prominent gatekeepers.*

We expect a main effect of prominent gatekeeper discourse on creative producers' use of a contested practice. We also expect interaction effects with two other factors: the outside constituents supporting the contestation, and the inside producers targeted by the contestation. The first interaction is with social movement activism. Social movement activists aim to pressure organizational decision makers to change practices by exploiting their concerns with maintaining positive reputations in the eyes of external constituents (McDonnell and King 2013). External challenges to organizational practices often arise in the form of organized social movements that spotlight practices deemed socially or morally problematic (Walker et al. 2008). Such movements aim to change the status quo by critiquing the value placed by producers on particular practices and promoting new criteria of moral worth

(Amenta and Polletta 2019). As activists demand change by those who hold power and resources, they also contribute to aligning the industry with changing societal values and norms (McAdam et al. 2001, Morrill et al. 2003, Briscoe and Safford 2008, Hiatt et al. 2009).

Yet, creative producers' cultural autonomy weakens social activists' ability to change use of contested practices (Smith et al. 2001). Without gatekeeper recognition, social movement activity receives public attention but will have limited impact on producers' decisions about contested practices. Social activists' challenges can even embolden producers to pursue creativity at the expense of social approval. Yet, when prominent gatekeepers begin to incorporate external concerns in their discourse, this will shape producers' attention to and interpretation of activists' challenges. Gatekeepers' consideration is expected to increase the perceived legitimacy and influence of social movement challenges on creative producers' strategies, further decreasing producers' engagement with the practice.

Hypothesis 2. *The likelihood of creative producers' use of a cultural practice decreases with the interaction between consideration of external contestation over the practice from prominent gatekeepers and social movement activism.*

The second key process shaping responsiveness to gatekeepers' considerations involves status-based industry dynamics among producers. Organizational research suggests that audiences expect higher-status producers to have superior production-related capabilities and interpret deviant acts more leniently for higher-status producers than they would for lower-status producers (Phillips and Zuckerman 2001, Sgourev and Althuizen 2014). On the one hand, this suggests that higher-status producers enjoy greater creative autonomy to pursue practices without concern as to how these are received. However, there are two reasons that this may not hold in the current context. First, Phillips et al. (2013) observe that this kind of status-based leniency occurs in the case of capability-based nonconformity such as stylistic choices but does not apply to actions that represent moral or commitment-based violations (Hahl and Zuckerman 2014). In a similar vein, McDonnell and King (2018) argue that—relative to their lower-status counterparts—high-status producers are more severely punished when they have been found to engage in moral transgressions. If a practice previously valued within a creative industry is subject to moral re-evaluation, a higher-status position no longer shields a producer from potential censure. In that sense, the protection offered by status is dynamic, and depends on the evolving valence of their creative choices.

A second reason concerns the stability of status positions within creative industries. To be sure, creative producers who have achieved success and prestige enjoy some degree of security in their positions. Yet, they still face uncertainty over how they will be evaluated in the future (Nelson 1970, Darby and Karni 1973, Salganik et al. 2006). The importance of originality as a basis for status in creative professions (Jones et al. 2012, Jones and Massa 2013) pushes producers to explore new trends (which may be rejected) or risk being perceived as stale or repetitive. As a result, stories abound of artists, performers, and authors who became successful unexpectedly or after being rejected multiple times and of those who "flopped" after great success. Status thus contributes to, but is no guarantee of, continued success (Lynn et al. 2009).

When misalignments between frameworks emerge, they can threaten higher-status producers' positions within the field's social structure, increasing perceptions of the risks involved in adhering to existing positions and practices. In such cases, higher-status producers will be more likely to adapt to changing gatekeeper discourse. This is not only because of producers' increased awareness of the shift that comes from their relational proximity, but also because of the benefits from their position within the creative industry. Rao et al. (2005) show that compared with their lower-status counterparts, higher-status French chefs were quicker to embrace Nouvelle cuisine, a category rewarded by prominent journalists that challenged established culinary traditions. Higher-status producers can move more quickly to redress misalignments with prominent gatekeepers' valuation systems. If they do, this will help maintain their standing in the industry and the support they receive from gatekeepers. When prominent gatekeepers increasingly pay attention to contestation over an organizational practice, we expect higher-status creative producers to adjust more their decisions to use the practice.

Hypothesis 3. *The likelihood of creative producers' use of a cultural practice decreases with the interaction between consideration of external contestation over the practice from prominent gatekeepers and producer status.*

4. Empirical Setting

For centuries, fur was considered a natural and prestigious fabric, with a strong functional value (Strege 2014). It later became a symbol of luxury and status (Veblen 1899, Gusfield and Michalowicz 1984). Karl Lagerfeld, the late creative director for Fendi, explained: "[we] have always treated it as the most luxurious fabric" (Blott 2017). Fur's value in conveying status is because of its connotation of luxury and association with superior technical capabilities.

Among animal rights groups such as the Animal Liberation Front, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and the Fondation Brigitte Bardot,

on the other hand, fur has increasingly become the ultimate symbol of the "cruelty animals suffer for [people's] vanity" (Elliott 2014). As they progressed together with a broader movement at the crossroad of ethics and environmentalism, pervasive in various spheres of society (Hargrove 1992), moral concerns over the use of fur became a recurring central focal point of activists' protest activity (Simonson 2001, Atkins-Sayre 2010).

The direct influence of antifur activists on production decisions and fur use is unclear. A recurring target of PETA activists, Italian designer Miuccia Prada famously declared herself "bored with fur" and produced a 2007 runway collection entirely of fake fur (Curwen 2007, Mirchandanii 2007). Other designers responded to antifur activism by defending fur as an act of artistic resistance against activist pressure. For example, French couturier Jean-Paul Gaultier declared "They piss me off because they're violent … . Frankly I don't give a damn. I will continue to do fur, I love doing fur" (AFP 2009) after protestors disrupted his Fall 2009 fashion show.

In contrast, fashion editors offered rich commentary on designers' choices to use fur in their reports on runway collections. Arguably the most prominent of such editorial voices comes from *Vogue* (Kim and Kim 2022). It is commonly referred to by fashion industry observers and academics as "the world's most influential fashion magazine" (Weber 2006). There are multiple gatekeepers that have influence on this industry—such *Journal du Textile*, which offers creativity rankings of fashion houses (Seong and Godart 2018). However, none besides *Vogue* offers systematic coverage across countries, over long periods of time, and for every runway collection shown in the major fashion capitals. *Vogue*'s editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour, has been referred to as "a kingmaker," acting as both a close friend and sponsor to important fashion designers (Weiss 2014). Petter (2019) observes that "[w]hen Wintour supports someone or something, people listen, which is why *Vogue* has become such a cultural touchstone for people in the industry under her leadership." Even well-established designers seek *Vogue*'s endorsement of their runway collections. As Balenciaga's Nicolas Ghesquière noted, "There is always a moment when you question whether Anna will like it or not, for sure. I think any designer who says the contrary would lie" (Weiss 2014). *Vogue* runway reports target industry insiders, unlike other articles in the magazine that are more for the public. We focus on these reports in our empirics.

Vogue has long celebrated the use of fur for its luxuriousness and technical artistry. Take, for example, the following excerpt from *Vogue*'s 2016 Fall ready-to-wear report for Italian designer Gabriele Colangelo (Codinha 2016b):

> Fur, in all of its sumptuous, finger-sinking glory, is Gabriele Colangelo's, and he demonstrated that on his Fall 2016 runway.

Table 1 provides additional excerpts of *Vogue* commentary related to fur. At times, however, *Vogue*'s editors mused on the contested nature of the fur used in a fashion house's collection. Take the description of Socha (2015) of German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld's *haute fourrure* ("high fur") show during Paris Couture Week:

> When it comes to the hair of animals, Lagerfeld is a magician and a scientist, continually exploring new techniques and pushing the boundaries of design with one of the world's most precious—yet still divisive—materials.

Such accounts suggest a translation of fur use into a narrative highlighting the creative risk taken by designers who choose to incorporate it into their collections. This is consistent with recurring notions of creative genius in cultural domains.

Increasingly, however, fashion editors' narratives took note of shifting views in using fur. Fashion reporters began posing questions about whether this was a tenable organizational practice from the standpoint of consumer and societal tastes. See, for example, the following excerpt from French fashion house Longchamp's Fall 2018 ready-to-wear report (Leitch 2018):

> They did indeed look cozy, but the way the wind is blowing and consumer tastes are evolving, real fur soon seems set to go the way of the leather-clad smoking pipe.

5. Analysis

5.1. Data

Our empirical analysis examines fur use by fashion houses. The data cover every fashion house runway collection from the Spring 2000 until the Fall 2018 season in a major fashion capital (Paris, Milan, London, and New York). Although other cities organize fashion shows, these major fashion capitals constitute the core of the fashion system. We used *Vogue's* online website to compile the list of fashion houses, because *Vogue*'s editors report on all fashion houses that held a fashion show in these venues, without exception. This website is the common and unique reference for all editions of *Vogue*—international editions of *Vogue* do not offer alternative reviews, and the online website constitutes an exhaustive data set. Our data start in 2000 when *Vogue* began to systematically report collections online. We used press clippings and official sources such as corporate websites to add organizational data such as age and location. Our data set includes 670 fashion houses with at least two fashion shows in our observation period with a focus on

Table 1. Fur-Related Excerpts from *Vogue* Reports

Topic	Quote
Positive valence: Celebrating fur's luxury	The beauty of this collection was found in its lush fabrications and equally rich embellishments, evidenced most sensationally in a mink coat stitched with teardrop pearls, and more subtly by pieces like a cable-knit sweater and matching skirt featuring delicate thread embroidery of flowers (Phelps 2017).
	A touch of fur surfaced on collars and detachable gilets; mink dyed in a precious moonlight-silver shade had a shimmering brilliance. It graced the goose-down padded lining of a streamlined masculine coat, belted high at the waist with a knotted sash. Textures were richly substantial, yet had a malleable, sensual feel. Even the most rigorous shape seemed to melt into fabulous nothingness" (Cardini 2018).
Positive valence: Celebrating fur's artistry	Gilles Mendel comes from a family of furriers, going back generations, and he really knows his way around the material. Even a person who chooses not to wear fur can appreciate his artistry. In the good-looking collection he showed today, he really outdid himself with his laser-cut minks, in particular the trim black coat sliced in a pattern so subtle, it had to be touched to be believed. Luxe, luxe, luxe (Singer 2013).
	The core of the house of Fendi, however, is what they're technically able to do with fur and leather. Sometimes it's subtly expressed, as in a green leather coat with flowers applied via a heat process rather than sewing, or fur inlaid as stripes and checks. The house is leagues ahead of others in technical expertise. (Mower 2017)
Positive-to-neutral valence: Fur as creative risk	As the show progressed, it became clear that the modified pajama suits and fur-patched jackets were designed to be seen … Overall, this outing was creative in a way that will excite some guys and seem unhinged to others. For now, it paints a favorable picture of Risso as someone who feels no obligation to play it safe (Verner 2017).
	The Theatre des Champs-Elysees, where Karl Lagerfeld showed his first haute fourrure collection for Fendi tonight, has a special meaning for him. It was where Igor Stravinsky premiered his Rite of Spring in 1913, causing one of the greatest scandals in theatrical history. A similar uproar might have been anticipated tonight from the antifur lobby, but security kept PETA at bay (Blanks 2015).
	A master with fur, Basso's chubby chinchillas and mixed fox vests will find favor with those eager to flout PETA's warnings, but trickier pieces like a transparent coat paneled in mink seemed best suited for the fantasy of runway" (Okwodu 2017).
Neutral-to-negative valence: Considerations of contestation over fur	McCartney's woke approach to sustainability, especially her animal-free policy, is her biggest contribution to the fashion of today, followed closely by her commitment to practical chic (Phelps 2018).
	For those looking to make no waves other than pleasing sartorial ones, Alaverdian had oversize faux shearlings, quilted bomber jackets, and an elegantly feminine eyelet leg-of-mutton sleeved top, all of which would happily contribute to ensembles that require absolutely no explanation at all (Codinha 2016a).
	Oftentimes, innovation is borne out of limitation. Such is the case with Osklen, a brand whose commitment to sustainability and ethical production practices precludes it from working with certain materials, like python or stingray (Phelan 2017).
	Hannah Weiland received a poem from her younger brother..."Some had doubts, but you proved them wrong; faux is in and fur is out." Pretty prescient, given the way so many big-name designers—Michael Kors, Alessandro Michele at Gucci—are reexamining their relationship with using some animal skins in their collections (Holgate 2018).

women's ready-to-wear, the most important segment of the industry, both in terms of economic and cultural importance (Manlow 2007).

5.2. Estimation

Our data followed fashion houses in a longitudinal design. We used panel logit regression models to estimate each fashion house's likelihood of using fur in at least one of its runway collections each year. We conducted our main estimations with random effects and clustered standard errors at the fashion house level. To check for consistency in findings across different estimation methods we conducted supplemental analyses using event-history models.[1] Fashion houses can use fur multiple times during the analysis period, and we modeled the time to fur use through multiple failure event model specifications. The times to fur use are likely correlated within each unit (fashion house). To model intraunit correlations, we implemented shared frailty models that account for unobserved heterogeneity and random effects among units (Cleves et al. 2016). A frailty model is a heterogeneity model where the frailties (latent multiplicative effects on the hazard function) are assumed to be specific to a unit. A shared frailty model is a random effects model where the frailties are common (shared) among groups of units and are randomly distributed across units. Frailty models also allowed us to examine how preexisting differences in the amount of fur use across status hierarchies can explain subsequent variation in fur use (i.e., the decline in fur use will be greater for fashion houses that had used it more before). We estimated models using shared frailties specified in two ways: (1) the number of times that fashion houses used fur in prior years and (2) the status score of the fashion house. This approach can account for heterogenous times-to-failure, particularly the different hazard of fur use that fashion houses in the same group by prior use or status position experience.[2] The findings are consistent with those obtained through logistic regression, suggesting that heterogeneity in the potential to drop for higher-status houses or houses that used fur more in the past is unlikely to explain the main findings (see Tables S1 and S2 in the online appendix).

We also estimated conditional fixed effect logistic regression. In our setting, fixed-effects specifications would be less representative as they omit a large proportion of fashion houses in our sample—those which never use fur during the analysis period (281 houses, ~42% of sample) or those that use fur every season (6 houses, ~1% of sample). The fixed-effects estimations replicate the patterns obtained in the main analyses with random effects logistic regression, with one exception. In the fixed-effects models, fashion house status shows a coefficient smaller in magnitude and statistically significant in most but not all model specifications. The interaction between status and *Vogue* consideration of contestation over fur use loses statistical significance. One reason for this difference can be that fixed-effects regressions estimate variation in parameters within and not between fashion houses. Organizational status tends to be inertial, and we see limited changes in status for fashion houses.

6. Measures

6.1. Outcome Variable

Our outcome variable was a dichotomous indicator equal to one if a fashion house used fur in a given year and zero otherwise. We determined whether a fashion house used fur in each year's Fall or Spring collections using *Vogue*'s runway reports, which provide detailed description of the elements used in all collections shown in the major fashion shows (Hill 2004). Of the 670 fashion houses in the data set, 389 (~58%) used fur at some point in the time window of the study.

Figure 1 depicts the proportions of ready-to-wear runway collections that used fur from 2001 to 2018. This figure shows an overall decline over time in use of fur in runway collections, with small peaks and dips along the way. During the latter half of our time period, after a peak in 2011, there is a fairly steady decline in fur use overall.

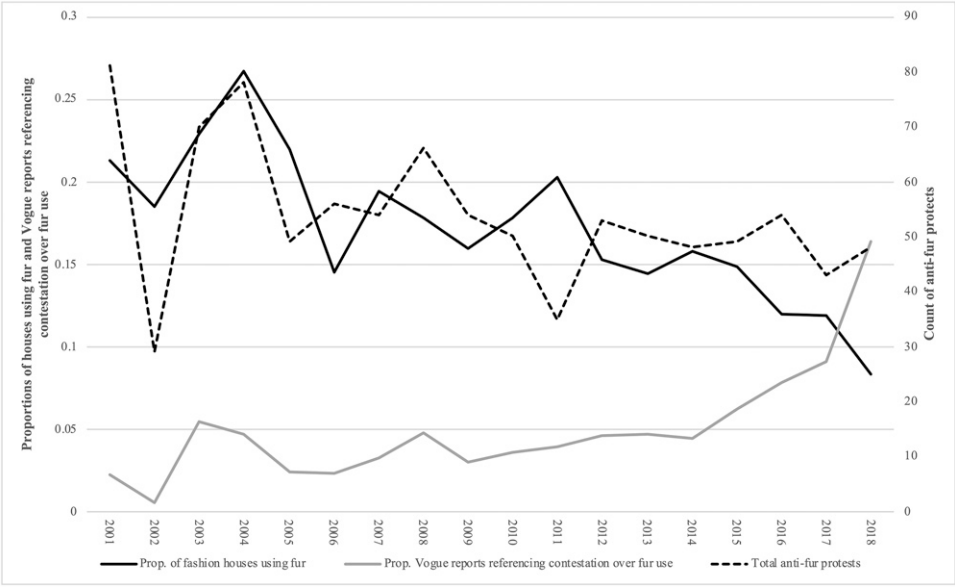
6.2. Covariates

Our key covariates were (i) fashion gatekeeper discourse on ethics, (ii) antifur social movement activism targeting fashion houses, and (iii) fashion house status.

6.2.1. Gatekeeper Consideration of Contestation over a Cultural Practice. To measure gatekeeper discourse regarding societal contestation over the ethics of fur use and related production concerns, we analyzed the text of *Vogue* runway collection reports over time. *Vogue* editors' reports describe not only the trends—colors, materials, patterns, or looks—used in each of the collections, but also their tone, impression, and overall character. Editors provide contextual notes and commentary on the designer's conceptual approach and inspiration, and various personal life anecdotes that are deemed relevant. We first read through numerous *Vogue* reports to gain an understanding of how broader social and ethical considerations were discussed over the period studied. These reports included references both to designer-driven concerns and fashion editor's interpretations of designer's collections.

Next, we constructed a list of relevant keywords for text analysis. We performed standard text processing techniques to measure whether each *Vogue* review in our database referenced any ethics-related keywords.

Figure 1. Yearly Trends in Key Variables: Fur Use by Fashion Houses, *Vogue* Consideration of Contestation over Fur Use, and Anti-Fur Protests



An initial set of keywords was identified based on coding of 200 randomly selected reports for terms related to ethical concerns. Terms identified through this coding were inputted into several online thesauri, and synonyms were added to the overall list. We then coded an additional 100 randomly selected reviews to make sure the expanded keyword list captured references to contestation-related concerns. Our final list contained 35 distinct text strings or phrases related to the ethics of fur use and related production concerns, such as "ethical*," "cruel*," "slaughter*," "vegan*," "animal free," and "animal rights." This measure is designed to reflect external social views regarding the role such considerations play in production. We also constructed a more restrictive variable that reflects terms specific to fur- and animal-related concerns—excluding general strings such as "sustainab*." Supplemental estimations using this alternative variable show patterns consistent with the main findings (see Table S4 in the online appendix).

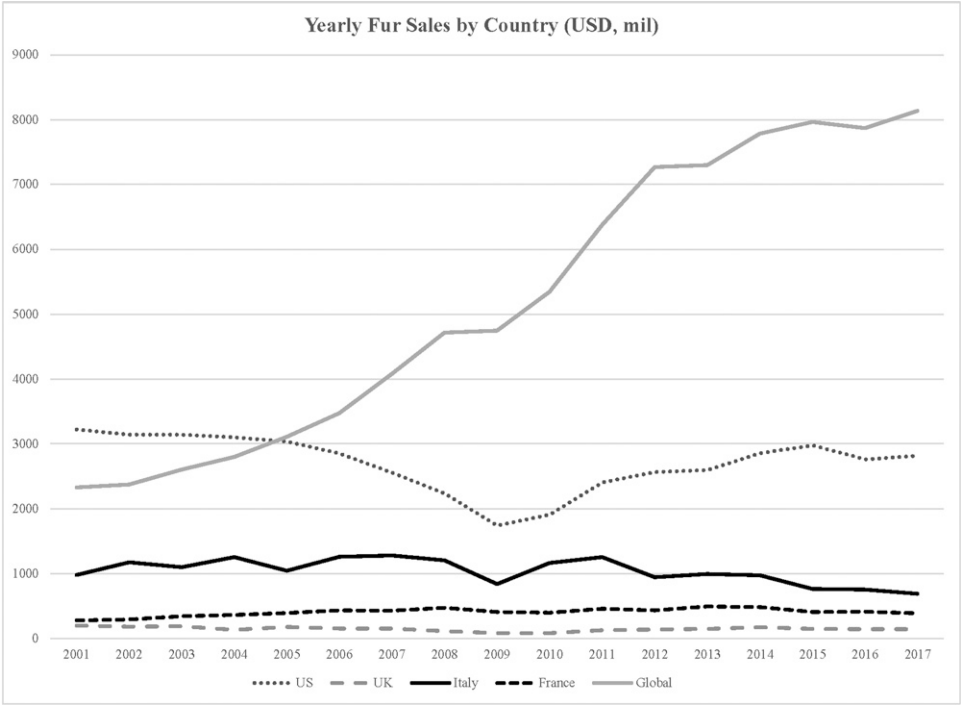
Figure 1 also shows the proportion of runway collection reports that reference contestation each year from 2001 to 2018. We see a steady increase in references in collection reports, with gradual increase starting around 2009 that rises in magnitude around 2014.

6.2.2. Antifur Social Movement Activism Targeting Fashion Houses. Our next set of measures relates to antifur social movement action against fashion houses. We collected data on all events surrounding the use of fur by fashion houses as reported in selected newspapers in the four countries where the fashion capitals are located: France, Italy, United Kingdom, and United States. Because events organized by social activists are more likely to be reported where or close to where they occur, we collected information from a mix of global and local online archives of newspapers (Olzak 1989, Oliver et al. 2003).

For the French data, we relied on *Europresse*'s online archive, the most comprehensive source for Francophone news reports. For the Italian data, we used the online archives of the *Corriere della Sera*, an Italian daily newspaper published in Milan and the largest in the country, and *La Repubblica*, also a daily general-interest newspaper headquartered in Rome and the second largest. For British and American data, we gathered information on fur-related collective action in the fashion industry reported in newspapers using information tool Factiva's "Major News and Press Release Wires." To identify social movement activity, we used the following search terms: ((antifur or profur) or (fur* and "animal rights" and fashion) and (boycott* or protest* or campaign* or attack* or demonstrat*)). Similar terms were used in French and Italian (e.g., "anti-fourrure" in French, and "pelliccia" or "pellicce" in Italian). Our data include any report for events against fur use.

Our measure *antifur social movement action* counts events targeting the fashion houses in all four countries in the prior year. Events covered in multiple newspapers or articles were counted once in the analysis.

Figure 2. Yearly Trends in Fur Demand



For each event reported, we collected information on several features, including the date and location, type of claim, form of event, the targets of the event, and named associations and/or organizations involved with the event. Figure 1 displays yearly counts of antifur activism from 2001 to 2018. A comparison of the lines in Figure 1 shows that *Vogue*'s consideration of contestation over fur in runway reports is seemingly unconnected with the antifur events; this suggests that *Vogue* is not simply a reflection of antifur social movement activity, but a separate factor to influence fashion houses.

6.2.3. Fashion House Status. Our measure of *fashion house status* reflects industry insiders' assessments of fashion houses' relative social position and is based on the hiring of fashion models by fashion houses each season (Godart et al. 2014, Kim and Kim 2022). Fashion models play a crucial role in the construction of fashion houses' public image and status during fashion week (Mears 2011). Similarly, fashion models gain from the status of the houses for which they work. In other words, there is a concomitant "status diffusion" (Graffin et al. 2008) from houses to models, and from models to houses, reflecting a dynamic status matching process similar to processes seen in domains such as law (Phillips 2001).

We used a network approach to measure status by constructing a matrix where the columns and rows are fashion houses, and the cells are the numbers of models the houses have in common. We computed a Bonacich status measure in which the centrality of a fashion house is determined by the centrality of the models to which it is connected (Podolny 1993, Bonacich and Lloyd 2001). Higher-status houses have higher centrality; they overlap in their hiring of higher-status models. Examples of higher-status houses in our data set include the following: Chanel, Christian Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, and Hermès. In the lower ranges of status rest fashion houses such as Nanette Lepore, Randolph Duke, and Elie Tahari.

We compared the mean status scores of fashion houses classified as *Haute couture* by the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode—an exclusive designation for fashion houses, French or foreign, that adhere to the strict regulations governing made-to-measure clothing craftsmanship. A *t*-test comparing group means shows that average status is substantially higher among couture versus noncouture houses (mean = 1.1 versus 0.4, respectively; $p < 0.001$), supporting our status measure's validity.

Covariates were lagged one year prior to each focal season (i.e., two seasons). This lag covers the typical period of time prior to fashion shows when creative decisions are made, from the initial definition of a collection's themes by using a mood board gathering various stylistic influences and aspirations, to prototyping, to the final adjustments to the designs themselves

Table 2. Summary Statistics and Pairwise Correlations for Covariates in Regression Analysis of Fur Use by Fashion Houses, 2001–2018

	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
1.	*Fur use*	0.258	0.438														
2.	*Fashion house status*	0.319	0.390	0.12													
3.	*Vogue consideration of contestation over fur*	0.045	0.189	−0.11	−0.15												
4.	*Antifur social movement action*	50.59	8.503	0.04	0.08	−0.38											
5.	*Share of high-status houses that quit fur*	0.197	0.091	−0.04	0.33	0.01	−0.04										
6.	*Antifur action against focal house*	0.028	0.028	0.07	0.16	−0.04	0.02	0.03									
7.	*Fashion house visibility*	225.0	49.45	0.03	0.43	−0.05	−0.04	0.17	0.20								
8.	*Fashion house age*	2.629	1.050	0.12	0.43	−0.00	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.41							
9.	*Prior fur use*	1.757	2.638	0.20	0.43	0.11	−0.08	0.19	0.18	0.39	0.40						
10.	*French fashion house*	0.188	0.391	0.03	0.15	−0.09	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.14	0.30	0.07					
11.	*UK fashion house*	0.201	0.401	−0.10	−0.10	0.00	−0.01	−0.03	−0.00	−0.05	−0.16	−0.14	−0.25				
12.	*US fashion house*	0.445	0.497	−0.04	−0.23	−0.02	−0.02	−0.05	−0.07	−0.15	−0.28	−0.10	−0.43	−0.45			
13.	*Fur sales*	33567.56	9944.57	−0.12	−0.15	0.62	−0.47	0.13	−0.09	0.06	−0.01	0.15	−0.01	0.00	0.06		
14.	*Number of fashion houses*	267.295	105.707	−0.13	−0.17	0.50	−0.49	0.03	−0.06	0.05	−0.01	0.15	−0.02	0.00	0.06	0.97	
15.	*Time trend*	10	4.565	−0.12	−0.12	0.80	−0.50	0.13	−0.06	0.07	−0.01	0.16	−0.02	0.00	0.06	0.98	0.98

in fittings (Sproles and Burns 1994, Godart and Galunic 2019). In the year prior to the focal season, fashion houses develop knowledge of the range of stylistic elements they expect to be acceptable and successful, and they select from this range.

6.3. Controls

Our analyses included additional lagged control variables that help to account for alternative factors that influence fur use. We first include the count of *antifur action against focal house*. This count of actions allowed us to determine whether differences in social movements' propensity to target particular types of fashion houses (e.g., higher-status houses) may be driving any patterns uncovered. We include *fashion house age*, measured as the number of years since founding, as determined through fashion encyclopedias (Price Alford and Stegemeyer 2014). Older fashion houses may have specific routines in which the use of fur has been integrated as part of their organizational identity. We also control for *prior fur use, or* the past count of runway collections that each fashion house has used fur, because fashion houses who have used fur in the past have the capabilities and perhaps greater inclination to use it in the future. We include a control for *fashion house visibility* in the media, as highly visible houses can receive greater public pressure to avoid use fur use. We measured visibility by counting the number of articles in Factiva covering a given fashion house that do not reference an antifur collective action event during the year prior to the focal fashion season (Seong and Godart 2018). We used all languages available in Factiva to avoid linguistic bias and focused on articles tagged as related to the fashion industry to limit measurement error. We also control for the constant-dollar value of global *fur sales*, collected from Euromonitor International (Cullen et al. 2004). Figure 2 depicts the trends in demand globally and in the four countries of origin of the fashion houses in our data.

Accounting for fur sales helps to address an alternative account that fur-based adoption is driven primarily by customer demand. In analyses unreported for brevity, we explored whether demand needed to be modeled with domestic versus nondomestic effects or with year-to-year changes instead of yearly levels. Under these alternative measurement approaches, the pattern of findings of the main covariates and the explanatory power of the estimations remained consistent. We also include controls for the *number of fashion houses* in the industry to account for competitive crowding effects that could affect the likelihood of using fur to differentiate in the market and dichotomous variables for the country of origin of each fashion house: *United States, United Kingdom, France*, and *Italy* (as reference). Country-of-origin can affect design choices such as the use of fur, because of

Table 3. Random Effects Logit Regression of Fur Use by Fashion Houses During 2001–2018

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Fashion house status	0.385*	0.343*	0.365*	0.947**
	(0.169)	(0.170)	(0.169)	(0.324)
Antifur social movement action	−0.008	−0.007	−0.016	
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.011)	
Vogue consideration of contestation over fur		−9.826**	−27.180	−6.081
		(3.545)	(19.641)	(4.088)
Antifur social movt. action × Vogue consideration			0.321	
			(0.355)	
Fashion house status × Vogue consideration				−15.642*
				(6.986)
Control variables				
Antifur action against focal fashion house	0.276	0.275	0.274	0.244
	(0.167)	(0.171)	(0.171)	(0.168)
Fashion house visibility	−0.0003**	−0.0003**	−0.0003**	−0.0003**
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Fashion house age	0.132	0.138	0.137	0.124
	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.070)
French fashion house	−0.485*	−0.494*	−0.494*	−0.480*
	(0.190)	(0.191)	(0.192)	(0.185)
UK fashion house	−1.028***	−1.051***	−1.053***	−1.023***
	(0.209)	(0.210)	(0.211)	(0.206)
US fashion house	−0.561**	−0.577**	−0.575**	−0.566**
	(0.175)	(0.176)	(0.177)	(0.172)
Prior fur use	0.020	0.020	0.018	0.038
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Fur sales	−0.00002	−0.00004	−0.0001*	−0.00003
	(0.00002)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)
Number of fashion houses	−0.001	0.002	0.003	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Time trend	−0.043	0.016	−0.036	−0.006
	(0.076)	(0.078)	(0.093)	(0.076)
Constant	0.355	0.468	0.984	−0.106
	(0.442)	(0.449)	(0.721)	(0.336)
Rho	0.191	0.193	0.195	0.178
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Log pseudolikelihood	−2,092.408	−2,089.18	−2,088.809	−2,087.541

Notes. N(obs) = 3,901; N(groups) = 651. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

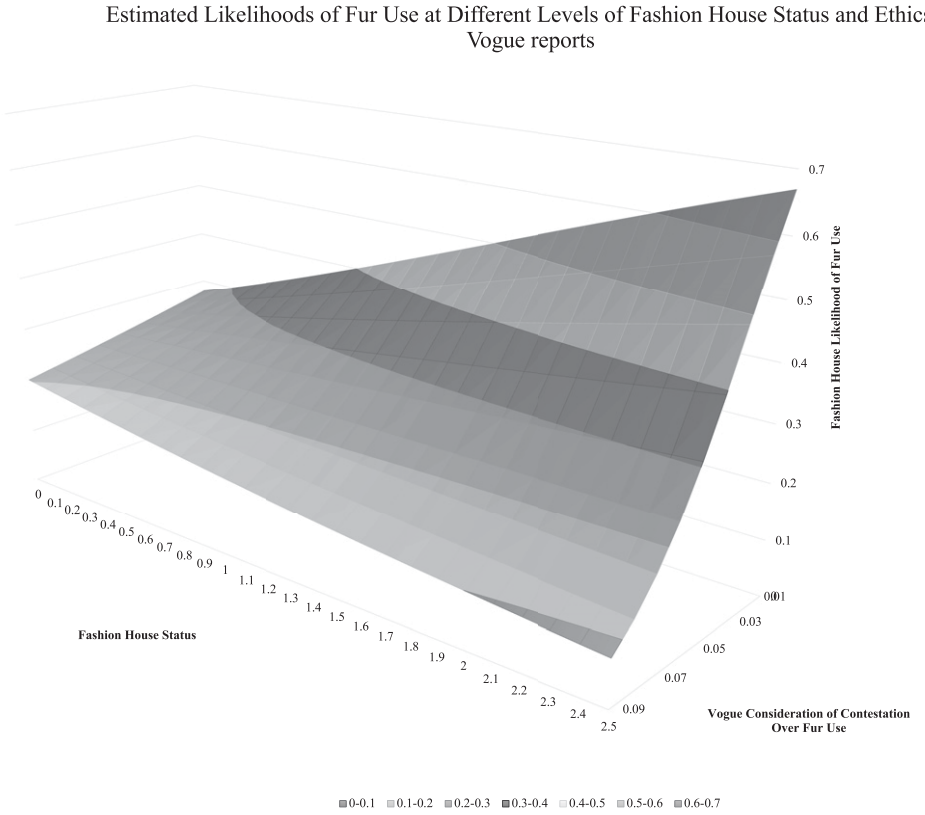
varying national traditions that influence designers' practices and fashion houses' identities (Rantisi 2004) and differing levels of public acceptance of wearing animal fur (Freeman 2006). Accordingly, we see substantial differences in use of fur according to the national origin of each house: 62% of Italian houses used fur compared with 40% of French, 30% of American, and 26% of British houses. In unreported estimations, the pattern of results is not sensitive to inclusion or exclusion of fashion houses from any one of the four countries. We also investigated regional influences on fur use through a set of indicators for the country its runway collection shows in each year. Locations for fashion shows vary in cultural recognition, with France and Italy considered to have the most prestige and influence (Steele 1998, 2003). Controlling for these helps to address spurious correlation particularly for the social activism variables, where more antifur events can occur in more prominent locations to attract greater attention. The pattern of findings is not sensitive to this alternative measure of geographical location. Finally, we include a linear *time trend*.

7. Findings

7.1. Results from Main Analysis

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and pairwise correlations, and Table 3 contains the main regression estimates. Collinearity diagnostics indicate moderate variance inflation factors (VIF). For our specification in Model 2 in Table 3, the average VIF is 5.52, ranging from 1.08 to 30.18. The VIF for the main covariates are all lower than 5, the threshold above which model correction is warranted (Allison 1999): 1.68 for fashion house status; 3.33 for *Vogue*'s consideration of ethical concerns over fur use; and 1.44 for antifur social

Figure 3. Conditional Probabilities of Fur Use at Different Levels of Status and *Vogue* Consideration of Contestation over Fur Use



movement action. The highest VIF values are associated with two control variables: *fur sales* and *number of fashion houses*. Excluding these results in a mean VIF of 1.65. The range of VIF in this case also decreases from a minimum of 1.08 to a maximum of 2.34.

Table 3, Model 1, shows a baseline model with key covariates. The coefficients of both the *antifur action against focal fashion house* and *antifur social movement action* are nonsignificant. Model 2 adds *Vogue's consideration of contestation over fur use* in its runway reports. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, gatekeeper consideration of external contestation over fur use has a significant negative association with subsequent fur use ($b = -9.826$, $p = 0.006$). This holds net of control variables, including the time trend, which is not statistically significant. Higher fashion house status is associated with a significantly higher likelihood of fur use ($b = 0.343$, $p = 0.044$), reflecting the general insider association between luxury and fur use.[3]

Model 3 includes the interaction between *antifur social movement action* and *Vogue consideration of contestation over fur*. We do not find support for Hypothesis 2, which predicted a significant negative effect of this interaction on fur use ($b = 0.321$, $p = 0.37$). Model 4 includes the interaction between *fashion house status* and considerations of contestation over fur use in *Vogue* reports. The interaction term shows a negative and significant effect ($b = -15.642$, $p = 0.03$). We provide an interpretation of the effect in Figure 3, which shows marginal effects for fashion house status and *Vogue* considerations over contestation on fashion houses' fur use. We see that, when *Vogue* pays less consideration to contestation over fur use (toward the back right-hand side of the three-dimensional figure), the likelihood of use fur in runway collections increases substantially with status. However, as the *Vogue* variable increases, the likelihood of fur use decreases sharply among higher-status fashion houses. For example, a fashion house whose status is roughly one standard deviation above the mean moves from a conditional probability of 0.38 to 0.16 of fur use as the *Vogue* consideration variable increases across its range. By comparison, a house with roughly one standard deviation below the mean moves from 0.28 to 0.20. This pattern of results supports Hypothesis 3.

7.2. Results from Additional Analyses: Distinguishing Between Types of Social Movement Activism

In post hoc analyses, we explored differences in types of social movement tactics targeting the fashion industry. Research distinguishes between institutional tactics that

Table 4. Random Effects Logit Regression of Fur Use: Institutional vs. Extra-Institutional Social Movement Action

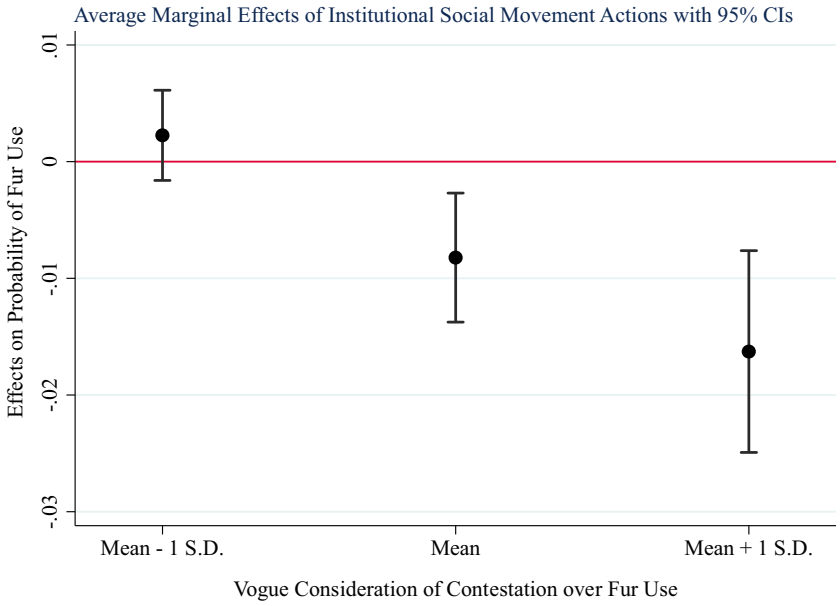
Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fashion house status	0.335*	0.443*	1.344***
	(0.170)	(0.173)	(0.355)
Vogue consideration of contestation over fur	−9.324**	51.786*	76.303**
	(3.620)	(24.224)	(18.027*)
Antifur institutional social movement action	0.001	0.127***	0.154***
	(0.011)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Antifur extrainstitutional social movement action	−0.006	−0.008	
	(0.006)	(0.012)	
Antifur institutional social movt. action X Vogue consideration		−3.270***	−3.885***
		(0.821)	(0.820)
Antifur extrainstitutional social movt. action X Vogue consideration		0.177	
		(0.397)	
Fashion house status X Vogue consideration			−22.751**
			(7.574)
Control variables			
Antifur action against focal fashion house	0.271	0.264	0.236
	(0.171)	(0.171)	(0.167)
Fashion house visibility	−0.0003*	−0.0003**	−0.0003*
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Fashion house age	0.137	0.126	0.105
	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.070)
French fashion house	−0.493*	−0.487*	−0.468*
	(0.191)	(0.194)	(0.185)
UK fashion house	−1.053***	−1.047***	−1.005**
	(0.210)	(0.212)	(0.206)
US fashion house	−0.579**	−0.563**	−0.544**
	(0.176)	(0.178)	(0.172)
Prior fur use	0.020	0.014	0.040
	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.035)
Fur sales	−0.00004	−0.00004	−0.00002
	(0.00002)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)
Number of fashion houses	0.002	0.004	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Time trend	−0.005	−0.341**	−0.413***
	(0.089)	(0.125)	(0.111)
Constant	0.298	−2.038**	−3.089***
	(0.404)	(0.894)	(0.734)
Rho	0.193	0.199	0.177
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.037)
Log pseudolikelihood	−2,088.373	−2,081.576	−2,077.372

Notes. N(obs) = 3,901; N(groups) = 651. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

involve conventional procedures for organizational action versus extrainstitutional tactics that bypass conventional channels (Bartley and Child 2014). Institutional tactics tend to be used by activists who have access to more material and symbolic resources and even engage in exchange or social relations with organizational decision makers. We coded as *antifur institutional social movement action* those events that involved petitions, flyers, film, public discussion/meeting, advertising campaign; press conferences; letters written to individual; and legal maneuvers, lawsuit, referenda, state propositions.

In contrast, social movements that lack conventional power or resources to enact change can employ disruptive extrainstitutional actions to gain media attention and increase the salience of an issue among the broader public (Koopmans and Olzak 2004, King and Soule 2007, King and Pearce 2010, McDonnell and Werner 2016). Organizational decision makers dismiss extrainstitutional tactics by activist groups perceived as marginal to their interests (Vasi and King 2012). This may be the case in creative industries. *Antifur extrainstitutional social movement action* measures disruptive events including public rally, protest, demonstration, boycott, or campaign against firm's products; drama/performance/runway storming; protest at a meeting or conference; and attack by instigators of protest against individuals or buildings. If these tactics lead to distinct effects on producers' use of a contested practice, the lack of support for Hypothesis 2 may be because of combining institutional and extrainstitutional activism in a single variable.

Figure 4. (Color online) Average Marginal Effects of Institutional Anti-Fur Social Movement Action on the Probability of Fur Use



In Table 4, Model 1 shows that neither institutional nor extrainstitutional social activism has statistically significant direct effects on fashion houses' fur use. In Model 2, we examine indirect effects in line with Hypothesis 2. We interact *Vogue's consideration of contestation over fur use* with the counts of institutional and extrainstitutional events separately. The interaction term for institutional events shows a negative and significant effect ($b = -3.270$, $p < 0.001$), whereas the interaction term for extrainstitutional events is nonsignificant ($b = 0.177$, $p = 0.66$). When activists use conventional tactics, the likelihood that fashion houses use fur decrease as *Vogue* pays greater consideration to external contestation over fur use.

We represent this effect graphically using average marginal effects in Figure 4. The plot shows the effect on the probability of fur use of a one-unit change of antifur institutional social movement actions. The figure shows the effect of antifur institutional actions at representative values of the *Vogue's* discourse on contestation over fur use (mean and mean ± one standard deviation). The average effect of antifur events becomes more negative as *Vogue's* runway reports increasingly acknowledge contestation over fur use. When *Vogue* pays limited consideration to contestation over fur use and this variable is below its mean value, one additional antifur event has an effect not significantly different from zero (the bracket for the confidence interval crosses the dashed line at zero; $p = 0.24$). When the *Vogue's* variable is at its mean, one additional antifur event is associated with a 1% reduction in the probability of fur use ($p = 0.004$). For values of the *Vogue's* variable above its mean, we observe on average a 2% reduction in the probability of fur use for each additional antifur event ($p < 0.001$). This pattern is consistent with Hypothesis 2 for institutional social activism. Model 3 simultaneously estimates the effects of the interactions between gatekeepers' consideration of contestation over fur use and antifur institutional actions, and between gatekeepers' consideration and fashion house status. The main pattern of effects holds.

In other analyses, we considered three alternative mechanisms driving fashion houses' move away from fur: emulation of high-status producers who have quit using fur; emulation of highly visible producers; and the rise in use of alternative fabrics such as faux fur. First, high-status producers are visible role models subject to emulation by others (Haunschild and Miner 1997, Strang and Soule 1998, Rao et al. 2005), and the adoption and conspicuous display of cultural practices are a way for organizations to attempt to signal a favorable social position vis-a-vis others (Breiger 2005, Godart and Galunic 2019). Given the close ties between *Vogue* and high-status fashion houses, it may be that these fashion houses' choices to use or discontinue fur are what is driving other fashion houses' choices with regards to fur use—and that *Vogue*'s discourse merely *reflects* but does not *influence* fashion houses' decisions.

To explore this, we measured higher-status houses' discontinuation of fur with the *share of high-status houses that quit fur* for each focal house. We did not rely on public announcements from fashion houses about discontinuing fur use since these announcements are not issued systematically. Instead, we measured years since a fashion house's last use of fur in its

runway collections. More than 92% of houses that used fur twice or more did so three years or less from their last use. We used three years as a plausible cutoff to infer that a house has quit using fur. Including or excluding the few outliers that reused fur after longer time spells from the analysis does not change our findings. In Table S5, Model 1, in the online appendix, the proportion of higher status houses that have quit fur use shows a negative association with a focal house's fur use ($b = -2.585$, $p < 0.001$). Model 2 simultaneously estimates the effect of higher status houses quitting fur with the effects of the interactions between gatekeepers' consideration of contestation over fur use and antifur institutional actions and between gatekeepers' considerations and fashion house status. The main pattern of results described earlier continues to hold. This suggests two things. First the signals sent by higher-status fashion houses are followed by other houses' decisions with regard to fur use. Second, the role of *Vogue*'s discourse in amplifying external challenges is distinct from the influence of higher-status houses' role modeling on other houses' decisions to use fur.

We next explored the presence of visibility- (rather than status-) based emulation. We modeled the rate that fashion houses higher in media visibility relative to a focal house quit fur use. We also included a control for fur quit rate by lower-status houses. Both were nonsignificant, suggesting that quitting fur by higher-status houses sends a signal regarding the (un)desirability of this organizational practice. Finally, we considered whether the move away from fur use was driven by the adoption of alternative practices such as faux fur by elite fashion houses. In recent years, technological advances in the production of faux fur has made it an attractive alternative material (Davis 2019). We included covariates reflecting the use of faux fur by higher- and lower-status fashion houses. We find that, although higher-status houses' use of faux fur is associated with decreasing use of real fur by others, the effects of our key predictive variables remain. Results for these last two sets of analyses are presented in Table S6 in the online appendix.

8. Discussion

In this study, we identified a distinct process by which prominent gatekeepers shape creative producers' interpretations of cultural practices challenged by outsiders (i.e., social movements), as well as their use. Creative producers value control over their work, and often dismiss external challenges to existing practices—particularly those associated with authenticity, creativity, and artistic vision—that could reduce their creative autonomy. Yet, producers view external challenges as more credible and legitimate when framed within prominent gatekeepers' discourse. Consistent with this, higher-status producers connected with prominent gatekeepers are less likely to use a contested cultural practice as critics' acknowledgement of external pressures increases. The contribution of these arguments is fourfold.

First, we add to the literature on how producers react to external influences (Wang et al. 2016), looking at the link between gatekeepers and industry-level status dynamics (Bowers and Prato 2019). We show that prominent gatekeepers in the creative industries can influence how insiders react to external forces through their interpretive schemes. Studies of creative industries hold that contestation over the "sacred aesthetic beliefs, as embodied in particular conventions" represent an attack on the meaning system that supports the existing status hierarchy (Becker 1974, p. 774). High-status producers should generally be more resistant to challenges to existing conventions, as they benefit the most from existing arrangements (Glynn and Lounsbury 2005). Our finding that, in the creative industries, higher-status producers show greater responsiveness to external pressures when translated through gatekeeper discourse is novel, and points to key contextual conditions shaping which positions in the status hierarchy may be most responsive to pressures to change: the influence/orientation of gatekeepers and contestation over the morality of a practice rather than capability-based concerns. High-status producers take signals from prominent gatekeepers, who are themselves more attuned to external change and novelty. When gatekeepers show interest in change, these producers interpret this signal as the anticipation of trends that will diffuse in the industry, and as a cue that the relationships with the gatekeepers may be at stake.

Second, and related to the previous contribution, our study integrates two streams of research on the creative industries: the dynamics of cultural elements (Askin and Mauskapf 2017, Godart and Galunic 2019) and the role of gatekeepers (Coslor et al. 2020). Producers' use of cultural practices needs to be considered in a broader social context that includes creative industry insiders, outsiders, and gatekeepers at their interface—while considering the position of gatekeepers within the field (Shoemaker and Reese 2014). Gatekeepers navigate disparate cultural domains and attempt to establish and disseminate shared conceptions of value across them. In our study, the origin of change from high-status producers is "exogenous" but it needs to be interpreted by prominent gatekeepers to be incorporated in a creative industry's "endogenous" dynamics. In that sense, gatekeepers act as an interface between exogenous and endogenous cultural change dynamics (Kaufman 2004).

Third, we add to the literature on social movements and the dynamics of contested practices in markets, which has shed light on the pathways through which social movement tactics influence organizations' adoption of controversial practices (Fiss et al. 2012, Briscoe et al.

2015). Recent studies such as Hiatt and Carlos (2019) have examined how activists' frames can influence producers' perception of strategic opportunities. We show how prominent gatekeepers' discourse facilitates social movements' efforts to frame market opportunities. The filtering of social movement action by industry gatekeepers can influence a range of decisions, including the founding of new ventures, organizational strategies, and the use of a contested practice. Producers and external stakeholders alike have strategic interests in influencing the market gatekeepers who selectively interpret and filter information for both sides of the market interface (Hirsch 1972). Our focus on existing creative firms rather than new ones also allows to examine the interplay between gatekeepers and industry social structure in response to social movement driven contestation over a valued cultural practice.

Finally, our study has some implications for research on network brokerage and in particular theories of how the brokers' identities impact the way in which they enact their roles (Gould and Fernandez 1989, Foster et al. 2011). Studies have highlighted the importance of considering a broker's identity vis-à-vis the groups they connect: whether they share a group identity with one vs. the other group, or occupy an identity distinct from each. In the typology of Fernandez and Gould (1994), *liaisons* connect two other distinct groups, whereas *gatekeepers* screen resources from the outside for members of their group. Liaisons are expected to be disinterested mediators because they are independent of the other groups. When liaisons take a position, their neutrality or independence is questioned, and their influence diminishes. Gatekeepers (as in Fernandez and Gould) are not expected to be disinterested because they represent a group. Creative industry intermediaries such as *Vogue* do not fit clearly into either of these roles, instead occupying a more liminal position where they identify as creative professionals yet remain distinct from the producers themselves. This liminal position presents an interesting dilemma. In principle, intermediaries are neutral mediators, yet they are also close to producers. When they embrace change and the activists' views, producers may question their loyalty. At the same time, by staying close to the producers and the status quo, intermediaries risk being perceived by activists as coopted by the producers. The implications of liminality for these kinds of tensions can be explored more.

Our study has several limitations. First, our research question called for a setting with a clear hierarchy of gatekeepers (Hirsch 1972, Shoemaker and Reese 2014). Whether this holds in other types of industries needs further consideration. We should also consider the explicit role of cultural norms such as the aesthetic alibi and creative autonomy—dimensions that are absent in other contexts such as talent management practices (Fiss et al. 2012). Generalizing our findings requires greater examination of the forms of gatekeeping across contexts, and the hierarchy of gatekeepers.

Second, we study whether fur is used in any part of a fashion house's runway collection or not. This fits both with our available empirical data and animal rights activists' portrayal of fur use, as something that you cannot use "just a little bit of" without consequences. Still, some research considers the extensiveness of an organization's use of a contested practice (Ansari et al. 2010, Fiss et al. 2012). Some models explore threshold levels of use by producers at which collective action coalesces (Granovetter 1978). Measuring contested practices as a continuous variable—such as type of animal fur, or the way it is incorporated into runway collections—could explore additional factors that interact with how a contested practice is used and modified over time.

Third, the case of fur is a social movement without a vigorous "counter-movement," perhaps because of the weak collective orientation of fashion houses. This sets it apart from other contested practices in which we observe movement-countermovement dynamics, for example, in "pro-choice" and "pro-life" conflicts in the United States (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Further research could examine how countermovements influence gatekeepers. In our case, there appears to be some push to interpret fur as a natural, sustainable fabric that is more environmentally friendly than alternatives such as faux fur (Davis 2019). For now, however, the use of fur appears to be losing momentum, within acknowledgement of this historical practice as morally problematic by an increasing share of industry insiders.

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Endnotes

[1] Results for supplemental analyses not reported here are available on OSF at https://osf.io/bq7a5/?view_only=788d6912dc4245aeae558a9dcd26bf73.

[2] In these models, we also included dichotomous variables for each quartile of status. This way the hazard of fur use for each fashion house is estimated with respect to other fashion houses in the same status quartile. The first (top) status quartile is the omitted category, so the fashion house status variable measures the effect of status positions from lower to higher in the top status quartile.

[3] We used text analysis to verify that the use of fur is associated with luxury within fashion. Using a parallel process for constructing our

keyword list for ethics, we constructed a list of text strings related to luxury, such as "elegan*," "sumptuous*," "extravagan*," "grandios*," and "luxur*." We conducted a *t*-test comparing mean counts of luxury terms used in fashion editor reports of houses that used fur versus did not use fur. The test showed significantly higher counts of luxury-related terms ($p < 0.001$) in collections using fur (1.49 words, on average) compared with collections without fur (0.97, on average).

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