

**THE INTERPRETATION AND EDITING OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY STORIES  
IN COORDINATED FIELDS: THE CASE OF A REGIONAL WINE CLUSTER.**

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**Sub-theme 32: Bridging Perceptions of Organizations: Identities, Images, and  
Reputations**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this paper we examine how a collective identity story circulates within an established coordinated field and what are the processes that influence the continuous interpretation and translation of the collective identity story by different actors. We take the empirical case of an established regional wine cluster and we approach the field with a nested case study design. Our grounded model illustrates the processes by which the *Consorzio* and wineries make sense and give sense of the collective identity story at the associative, inter-organizational and organizational level. In addition, our model emphasizes the influence of mirroring processes (Dutton and Dukerich 1991; Hatch and Schultz 2002) on the narrative work supporting collective identity maintenance or favoring change, by illustrating the role of different types of construed external image: the organizational, the collective, and that of cluster leaders. We discuss the implications of these findings for research investigating the micro foundations of collective field identities by showing the explanatory power of theories of organizational identity dynamics at a supra-organizational level. Furthermore we discuss implications for the understanding of how organizations construct their identities by drawing on narratives circulating in the social groups in which they are embedded.

## INTRODUCTION

The recent debate regarding the dynamics between structuration and agency within supra-organizational environments increasingly moves closer neo-institutionalism and organizational communication (Suddaby, 2011). Recurrent questions ask how institutions communicate or how communicating institutionalizes (Lammers, 2011; Hardy, 2011; Suddaby, 2011). The debate addresses concepts like institutional messages (Lammers, 2011), rhetorics (Suddaby, 2011), and identity stories (Fiol and Romanelli, 2012; Wry, Lounsbury and Glynn 2011) to explain how signification occurs within institutional fields and how institutional logics (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999) persuasively constrain meaning or change meaning in the continuous translations operated by individual actors. Collective identity stories are considered relevant means to understand how actors make sense and give sense of emerging institutional fields (Fiol and Romanelli, 2012) and how field expansion is coordinated (Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011). Many authors recognize that leading and central actors often play a key role in strategically coordinating collective identity stories and managing their meanings (Glynn, 2008; Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011; Fiol and Romanelli, 2012). At the same time, it is widely acknowledged by the most recent literature that organizations are not cultural dopes, but rather “cultural operatives” that “appropriate, interpret, and assemble” available cultural resources into their identity construction and into their storytelling (Glynn and Watkiss, 2012: 81). The debate on cultural entrepreneurship and institutional work recently has especially increased interest in the discursive mechanisms by which central actors try to maintain institutionalized meanings and by which other actors instead slowly change the meanings of institutional labels or more radically try to disrupt institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Our paper aims to contribute to this wider debate by exploring how a collective identity story circulates within an established coordinated field and what are the processes that influence the continuous interpretation and translation of the collective identity story by different actors. We take the empirical case of an established regional wine cluster. Our object of analysis is the collective identity story of the regional cluster, and we explore how it is interpreted, re-elaborated, and communicated at different levels: the associative collective level, the inter-organizational level, and the individual organization level. Furthermore, we explore the processes influencing the interpretation and the editing of the collective identity story at each different level. Our emerging model matches with theoretical frameworks on organizational identity dynamics (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Dutton, Dukerich, and

Harquail, 1994; Pratt and Foreman, 2000), supporting the usefulness to apply this framework at a supra-organizational level of analysis.

The paper is organized as follows. First we provide a brief review of the debate on how meanings circulate in organizational fields and on the role of collective identity stories for sensemaking and identity construction. Then, after introducing our case study approach and methods, we provide a narrative illustration of our emerging findings. Finally, we discuss the implications of our grounded model to the literature on discursive institutional work (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) and on organizational identity construction and development (Gioia, Patvardhan, Hamilton, and Corley, 2013; Schultz, Maguire, Langley, and Tsoukas, 2012).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The circulation of meanings in institutional fields**

The understanding of how identity meanings circulate within organizational fields is still in its early stages. The concept of “institutional logics” (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999) inspired a great part of the recent debate on how organizations make sense of the collective fields they are embedded in and how collective meanings are reproduced and changed through time. Institutional logics provide the supra-organizational patterns (both symbolic and material) and cultural accounts that organizations use as raw material to sensemaking. They also provide the editing rules for organizational interpretation, contributing to the maintenance of collective identities (Weber and Glynn, 2006). In their reinterpretation of Weick’s work on sensemaking (1995), Weber and Glynn (2006: 1644) argue that institutional fields supply “raw material” to organizational sensemaking, and these materials circulate in the field, mobilized by “institutional carriers.” They elaborate on three mechanisms that explain how the institutional context enters into organizational sensemaking. Priming is the mechanism by which organizations import social cues by the institutional field; editing explains how institutions guide the editing of social cues by organizations, providing them with social feedback; and finally “triggering”, by which the ambivalence and endogenous contradictions in the institutional fields trigger organizational sensemaking (Weber and Glynn, 2006: 1648). If Weber and Glynn are more concerned with widening the understanding of institutional influence, going beyond the classic conceptualizations of isomorphic forces, other scholars try to further understand how organizations make use of institutional cues and editing rules to introduce variation in the field. Sahlin and Wedlin (2008) propose that editing by organizations is a repetitive translation of templates that

circulate in the institutional environment; the continuous editing process may gradually change the focus, content, and meaning of the original template.

Many recent contributions on how sensemaking, editing, and translation occur within institutional fields have a language-centered discursive approach (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Despite the seminal work of Meyer and Rowan, which already in 1977 stated that “a most important aspect of isomorphism with environmental institutions is the evolution of organizational language” (Meyer and Rowan, 1977: 349), only recently has the interest on organizational texts grown. Understanding how texts circulate within fields is deemed relevant not only to unveil the processes by which organizations use institutional templates, but also to observe how micro-organizational sensemaking have an upward influence on macro-institutional discourses through the dissemination of organizational texts (Powell and Colyvas, 2008; Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004). The role of organizational texts has increasing relevance in the literature on institutional work, especially because, according to a discursive view on institutional maintenance and change, “institutionalization does not occur through the simple imitation of an action by immediate observers but, rather, through the creation of supporting texts.” Furthermore, “the actions of individual actors affect the discursive realm through the production of texts” (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004: 640). Hence, the rise of attention focuses on the linguistic social construction of institutions through linguistic cultural entrepreneurship by organizations (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Chreim, 2005) and on how new legitimacies are built (Khair and Wadhvani, 2010; Navis and Glynn, 2010, 2011; Fiol and Romanelli, 2011; Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011).

In this paper, we focus particularly on how texts circulate within established organizational fields, analyzing their “trajectories” (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004: 646) and understanding how they are emanated, interpreted, and translated by different actors within the field. More specifically, we observe the circulation of a specific body of texts, a collective identity story of a regional cluster of wineries.

### **Collective identity stories**

Some authors refer to collective identity stories as privileged vehicles through which meanings and institutional logics circulate within fields (Fiol and Romanelli, 2012; Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011). Collective identity stories are the crystallization of the narratives that circulate among actors in a field and that provide edited accounts of who they are and what they do. Therefore, stories are “a key communication mechanism that functions both to help define the identity core of the collective and to delineate the boundaries of

membership that constitute it” (Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011: 450). Collective identity stories can be seen as institutional messages (Lammers, 2011) that carry institutional logics inside a field by providing not only raw material to organizational sensemaking, but also specific editing rules and an elaborated template of what it means to be a field member (Fiol and Romanelli, 2012). Furthermore, collective identity stories influence the field legitimation and expansion by signaling to external audiences through “verbal or written expressions” the image of a “coherent category with a meaningful label and identity” (Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011: 450). These authors propose that, when entrepreneurs clearly signal a collective identity story, the chances of emerging fields legitimation and survival grow. In fact, entrepreneurs enhance the impact of the collective identity story on external audiences by aligning their organizational identity stories with collective labels and meanings (Fiol and Romanelli, 2012), thus facilitating a coherent expansion of field members (Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011). Identity stories are types of texts that are “recognizable, interpretable, and usable in other organizations” which “are more likely to become embedded in discourse than texts that do not” (Phillips et al., 2004: 644). Collective identity stories provide in fact discursive resources on which organizations draw to define their identity stories, and, as Chreim (2005: 571) emphasizes, “social discourses are available only as a range of possible themes for defining identity,” thus giving rise to the “hermeneutic composability” of organizational identities. This means that organizations engage in a narrative construction that can maintain or modify the meanings of the collective identity story in the reinterpretation of each organization.

Despite recognizing the power of collective narratives and stories for the emergence and growth of organizational fields, previous works do not focus on the processes by which collective identity stories as institutional meanings circulate within their fields and are continuously translated and edited (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008; Weber and Glynn, 2006) by organizations. The coordinating role of narrative construction by trade associations and leading actors is often acknowledged (Glynn, 2008; Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011; Fiol and Romanelli, 2012). Especially relevant is their work on creating and spreading authoritative narratives (Wry, Lounsbury and Glynn, 2011) but also of valorizing, demonizing, and mythologizing narratives that contribute to maintaining the normative foundations of institutional fields (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). However, the empirical exploration of this narrative coordination is still scarce, and it is especially unclear; yet how the stories that emanate from central powerful actors, are transmitted to other actors, or how less powerful actors contribute to support or change these centrally crafted stories.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Considering the exploratory nature of our research questions, we opted for a case study design (Yin, 2003). We selected a regional wine cluster, Franciacorta (Italy), as an extreme revelatory case (Eisenhardt, 1989), providing both relevance and visibility of the processes to be investigated. A regional wine cluster resembles the characteristics of an organizational field as an aggregation of organizations that “constitute a recognized area of institutional life” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 148). Regional wine clusters could also be considered to be communities as institutional orders, as defined by Marquis, Lounsbury, and Greenwood (2011: xvi). In these communities, not only social proximity is relevant, but even more it is the “interest in a common goal and a common identity” that shapes firms’ actions.

We chose to adopt a single case with a nested design comprising embedded units of analysis. In fact, we deemed it relevant to obtain insights into the collective identity story (i.e., the case) and individual organizations’ interpretation and translation of the story (i.e., embedded units of analysis). This design enabled us to explore the trajectories of the collective identity story between the macro supra-organizational level (i.e., the cluster/trade association) and the micro organizational level (i.e., wineries). We approached the field with a transcendental realist view (Miles and Huberman, 1994), with a theoretical background providing some working definitions and guidelines and with inductive observation from the field patterns, regularities, and relationships. Hence, our approach enabled us to elaborate on our findings based “both on the researchers’ and the participants’ worldviews” (Marshall and Rossman, 2011: 93).

### Data collection and analysis

Our methods comprise qualitative interviews with representatives of the trade association (henceforth the *Consorzio*) and of wineries (16), observations of cellar tours and trade fairs (13), document analysis of corporate promotional materials (2011-2012), and press clippings on Franciacorta provided by the *Consorzio* (2011). After extensive readings about our case and two non-structured interviews with our key informant from the Franciacorta *Consorzio*, we selected the first sample of nine wineries communicating more and less conforming identity stories and representing different firm sizes. Then we added four wineries during qualitative data collection using a snowball technique in order to include wineries that represented emerging different cases from the ones previously selected until we achieved data saturation (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki, 2008).

With concern for the *Consorzio*, we conducted four non-structured interviews with our key informant, and we analyzed all available collective promotional materials (website, brochures, press kits, books). Furthermore, we analyzed the press clippings on Franciacorta to analyse the collective identity story communicated by *Consorzio*'s representatives in interviews released to the press. We contacted the entrepreneur/owner/founder (these are generally overlapping roles) for each winery in the sample. When a conversation was not possible with the individual in such a role, we interviewed another member of the management (member of the owning family). In only two cases, we interviewed people not pertaining to the owning family: one was a communication manager and the other the managing director and oenologist of the winery. Overall, for each winery in the sample, we conducted one interview (90-120 minutes in duration) plus one observation of the cellar tour (60-120 minutes). Corporate promotional materials comprise the website, press kits, brochures, and in a few cases corporate books.

We used all of the sources to gather data on the collective identity story (both written and oral) and its different interpretations and translations by various wineries. In addition, we used interviews and observations to gather data on actors' perceptions and relationships with other actors.

Interview transcripts, field notes, document texts, and pictures were all inductively coded with the help of the software Atlas.ti 6. We conducted a thematic analysis of our data (Miles and Huberman, 1994) that allowed us to inductively proceed from first-order themes to overarching theoretical dimensions (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, 2013). We assigned a code label close to the transcripts' primary language for a total number of 285 primary codes. Then we proceeded with inferential coding and grouped the codes into 33 first-order themes, which were further grouped under 19 second-order themes and finally distilled into 8 overarching theoretical dimensions (see Figures 1 to 3). We then analyzed emerging themes using matrix displays (Miles and Huberman, 1994), triangulating data from different sources and comparing emergent patterns of findings with extant theories (Yin, 2003). For presentational purposes, here we described the steps of analysis as a linear process. However, the analytical process was incremental rather than linear. Data condensation into overarching dimensions started after the first interviews and observations and proceeded until all data were collected. In the meantime, both within-case reports and cross-case analysis were continuously revised after the addition of new wineries' data. The incremental analysis processes allowed us to maintain the design and keep the emerging conclusions flexible. First of all, thanks to the first round of analysis, we were able to add four embedded units to the nested case design,

facilitating follow-up of surprising findings and consideration of cases that were different from those identified in a preliminary phase (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki, 2008). Second, the incremental process of analysis allowed us to compare constantly our emerging findings with extant theories (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Lincoln and Guba 1985) at different steps of elaboration, checking for competing explanations based on different theories (Denzin, 1978; Jick, 1979). To reduce possible biases of the main researchers, progressive findings were constantly discussed with two other researchers. Furthermore, provisional findings at different steps of the analysis were discussed with the key informant of the *Consorzio* and with peer colleagues.

### **The case**

Franciacorta is situated in Lombardy, next to Brescia, about 100km from Milan. It is a very small area, 2483 hectares of vines. Lombardy is an industrial region, however as one wine blogger says about Franciacorta “Seen from above, you’ ll see breathtaking undulating hills, gorgeous lakes and vast green valleys spotted with olive trees” ([www.winebloggersconference.org](http://www.winebloggersconference.org)). Historically Franciacorta was the countryside of the city of Brescia, where noblemen had their country residence. Many of these estates still exist, and in some cases they became the location of contemporary wineries. Despite this country and agricultural tradition, after Second World War, Franciacorta, like all the areas around Brescia, were mainly renown for the iron and steel industry. There were farms and families producing red wine, like elsewhere in Italy, but mainly for personal nutritional purposes and local commerce. The turning point for Franciacorta wines is in 1961, when an oenologist recognized that Franciacorta had the perfect climate to produce white sparkling wines using the *chamenoise* method. This oenologist, Franco Ziliani, with the financial support of a nobleman, Guido Berlucchi, produced the first *Pinot di Franciacorta*, and this was the first time that the name Franciacorta was appearing on a wine label. A group of local noblemen and entrepreneurs soon followed their example, reconverting their agricultural estates to winegrowing and winemaking, or acquiring plots to produce wine ([www.franciacorta.net](http://www.franciacorta.net)). As the wine blogger Robert McIntosh reports ():

“In that year [1961], Franco Ziliani [...] created 3000 bottles of a sparkling wine for the Guido Berlucchi winery ... and it sold well. So well, that the local entrepreneurs didn't just decide that they liked the wine, they decided to MAKE it, and so the region of Franciacorta was born and the fabulous, well-equipped and architecturally varied wineries we know today sprang up virtually overnight to establish the region.”

Some of them started as private productions, but given the quality of the wines produced, soon started to sell their wines. Already in 1967 this group of 11 producers managed to get the DOC appellation (denomination of controlled origin), just one year later their creation, and in the same year as other wines with much longer tradition, like e.g. the Chianti Classico (Ziliani 2011b). Since these denominations are regulated by law, a disciplinary was written: for the first time some legally protected elements of the collective identity were fixated, clearly sanctioning its boundaries, and communicating them to new entrants.

Since then there has been an exponential growth of producers and hectares cultivated. Already in the seventies the number of producers doubled, and the foundations of the regional rigor of production were set. Following the Italian oenological renaissance, that started to encourage quality wine productions against the industrial low cost wines characterizing the Italian market of the 50s and 60s, Franciacorta producers decided to pursue a philosophy of extreme quality. The challenge was to produce a high quality Italian champagne, and most producers were experimenting with the bottle refermentation, although other methods were still allowed. During the eighties the number of producers doubled again, especially thanks to entrepreneurs operating in other industries who decided to invest in winegrowing and winemaking, by acquiring old vineyards or planting new ones, and hiring the best oenologist and agronomists available on the market. In 1983 more than one million of *Pinot di Franciacorta* were sold ([www.franciacorta.net](http://www.franciacorta.net)). The early nineties constituted a milestone in the history of Franciacorta wine: a voluntary consortium was founded to protect the legal denomination and also to promote and communicate the collective identity story. It is of few years later (1995) the award of the DOCG, the highest recognition available in Italy. The name Franciacorta is now deposited as a trademark, and the *Consorzio* is supposed to protect and promote the collective trademark. Today the *Consorzio* has 104 associated wineries, which represent the 97% of Franciacorta producers ([www.franciacorta.net](http://www.franciacorta.net)), with a board that comprises 17 winery representatives, plus an external CEO.

## FINDINGS

Our emerging model (Fig. 4) represents the dynamics of sensemaking and sensegiving according to which the collective identity story is interpreted, edited, and communicated.

We applied terminology from Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) to describe how the *Consorzio* and wineries make sense and give sense of the collective identity story, since our data matched with their theory of sensemaking and sensegiving between the CEO and

organizational members. Our model shows that organizations make sense of the collective identity story at the associative level, at the inter-organizational level, and at the individual organizational level. However, if all wineries interpret the collective identity story at the organizational level, sensemaking at the inter-organizational level and at the associative level involves less wineries. Especially at the associative level, few wineries participate directly; that is, those wineries elected into the *Consorzio*'s board. Furthermore, wineries' upward feedback to the associative level is not equally distributed among cluster members. Confrontation among wineries and the *Consorzio* happens mainly during collective events, like collective ceremonies, trade fairs, and socializing events (inter-organizational sensemaking). Here some feedback on wineries' sensemaking is directed upwards to the collective level; however, participation in these events is not plenary, but is usually limited to those firms that have a better perception of the collective identity and of the *Consorzio*. These wineries, together with the *Consorzio*, energize the continuously revised collective stories through their formal external sensegiving (Group A in Fig. 4). The *Consorzio* devotes considerable effort to signal the collective identity story (associative sensegiving), not only to external audiences, but also to associated wineries in an effort to foster an alignment of individual wineries' identity stories to the collective story. Despite this, wineries that participate less to associative and inter-organizational sensemaking translate the collective identity story by changing the narratives that accompany the mandatory authoritative rules (Group B in Fig. 4).

Beyond giving an overview on how the collective identity story develops in the circulation among actors at different levels within the cluster, our model also shows that sensemaking at all levels is influenced by internal perceptions on how cluster actors are perceived by external audiences. In organizational identity theory, Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) define construed external image as the internal perception of how others view the organization. Our model shows that different types of construed external image influence the interpretation and editing of the collective identity story operated by the *Consorzio* and by individual wineries. Specifically, all actors' narrative constructions seem to be influenced by the construed external image of Franciacorta, of one's own winery, and of leader wineries. In this section, we illustrate the emerging processes of sensemaking and sensegiving about the collective identity story by the *Consorzio* and by wineries. Finally, we illustrate the influence of the construed external image on the above-mentioned processes.

### **Associative sensemaking and sensegiving**

Since its founding, the *Consorzio* engaged in the strategic effort of narrating a highly recognizable and representative identity story, distinguishing Franciacorta wines from other Italian and international white sparkling wines. Since then, the collective identity story has been continuously developed and integrated by the board of the *Consorzio*, which is principally constituted by historical wineries and all leader wineries. The board decides about the disciplinary, together with technical commissions, and makes strategic decisions about what Franciacorta would like to become. The collective brand identity project is exemplary of the fact that strategic sensemaking is restricted to the board, with few contributions from other wineries. In 2010, the *Consorzio* decided to renew the collective logo of Franciacorta and to create a new collective claim. One winery entrepreneur and member of the *Consorzio*'s board narrates as follows:

“[The external agency] read all the history of Franciacorta, and then there was the board of the *Consorzio*. Eighteen people, therefore [the agency] got much more than one interview; board representatives gave a whole series of inputs, of what we imagined, and we participated [in the] whole development project. The same happens with the agency that keeps media relations [...]. These are the best experiences I had in the *Consorzio*'s board, participating into the communication crafting [...]. The board is very active, and eighteen people absolutely give the sense of what we need [to communicate]”

Other interviewees, not participating personally on the board, were only aware that the logo was renewed, but were not at all involved in the sensemaking process behind the redefinition of the claims and narratives accompanying the new logo.

Wineries on the board negotiate the narratives that should represent the identity of Franciacorta in the communicated stories (Fig. 1) by continuously refining and restricting the definition of collective membership, by interpreting and recalling the collective past, and by envisioning the collective future. The collective identity story signalled by the *Consorzio* reflects sensemaking efforts. The story is, in fact, composed by four types of narratives (Fig. 2). The first type comprises the legally defined narratives of Franciacorta, as reported by the disciplinary. Based on extant theories of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011), we labeled these narratives authoritative. Authoritative narratives define the legitimate practices of the cluster and set the boundaries of membership to the cluster. The disciplinary of production is the main reference text defining who Franciacorta is, and its progressive refinements are narrated into promotional materials to describe how the collective identity of the Franciacorta wine cluster has progressively developed and what it makes recognizable and unique today. The following excerpts show

this continuous reiteration of the progressive restrictions imposed upon the Franciacorta wine through the disciplinary, in order to sharpen its distinctive profile:

“1993 – On August 2nd, after two years of self-discipline, the new disciplinary imposes as the only allowed method the natural bottle refermentation: the designation classic method is cancelled and the obligation to produce the wine in the allowed winegrowing areas is introduced.

[...]

1996 – On May 17th the wine-growing and wine-making code of Franciacorta is approved, new and complex regulations even more restrictive than the production disciplinary.

[...]

1997 – [...] On June 1st the work of the group of area wine-growers for the production control of each vineyard starts: the production sentinels.

[...]

2010 – [...] the new production disciplinary of Franciacorta is published. New limitations are imposed in order to increase the production rigor, with the aim to further elevate the average qualitative level” ([www.franciacorta.net/storia](http://www.franciacorta.net/storia)).

The second type of emerging narratives includes the history of the cluster; that is, the myths of the pioneers and the successful achievements obtained during 50 years. We labeled them as mythologizing narratives, because they match with the mythologizing category of institutional work according to which institutional actors support the normative foundations of their fields by providing historical good examples of legitimate conduct (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

The narration of the mythology of the cluster develops around the milestones that characterized the growing success of Franciacorta, which was legally ratified by the increasingly prestigious denominations DOC, DOCG, and the European law CE753/02. Given the short history and fast development of the cluster, two other recurring narratives about the history of the cluster are the “Franciacorta miracle” and the courage of the pioneer “enlightened entrepreneurs” – the heroes that made it possible:

“The even greater credit of the Guido Berlucchi [winery], when they produced the *Pinot di Franciacorta*, consisted in realizing a miracle, not achieved by firms that had more history, tradition, resources, and years, and that produced in Piedmont and Trentino, and that did not succeed in making their wines get off the ground in terms of distribution, image, and sales. [Berlucchi succeeded in proposing] its wine as a recognizable and elitist product, in a time when a narrow Italian middle class refused to drink national quality products. They succeeded in breaking the spell of the French product, perceived as ‘the must,’ the reference wine for knowledgeable and wealthy consumers. [...] Then even greater credit had many producers, [...] who were the first presidents, they had the merit to create the *Consorzio* and let it grow [...]. Without these sacrifices and without those twenty producers that had the courage to set the basis for the development of Franciacorta, we would not be at the point we are today” (interview released by current *Consorzio*’s President to Sommelier.it, April 3rd 2011).

The “few brave men” and their forward-looking investments are also emphasized on *Consorzio*’s website. They founded Franciacorta and gave the imprinting for a brand-new wine cluster collective identity:

“The stages, beginning as very strenuous, were then burned in a few years, with the birth and rise of Franciacorta dizzying. One of the successes of the ‘formula’ of Franciacorta, paradoxically, was to have no tradition of ancient wine with which to relate. This allowed [them] to operate only to achieve the best result without going through historical influences that would have only delayed the growth process. In the late seventies the Italian wine was in turmoil, [and thus] was born the era of production and consumption of different quality and entrepreneurs in Franciacorta already sensitive to this new demand, invested and pointed on the cultivation of the vine from which wine to obtain a soon to cross the territorial limits of ‘Franzacrta.’ And so from the interweaving of random situations and personal passion, study, business experience and investment of a few brave men and emulation which led him to do things better than others have done (in fact, to overcome them), has originated the current phenomenon called Franciacorta” ([www.franciacorta.net/modern viticulture](http://www.franciacorta.net/modern_viticulture) – English version).

The third type of emerging narratives describes the central tenets of what it means to be a Franciacorta winery, acclaiming the common positive characteristics and collective values of the cluster. We labeled them valorizing narratives as they contribute to valorize the positive elements of the cluster identity that “illustrate the normative foundations” (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006: 232) of the local field. Extreme quality is strenuously remarked in all texts, especially related to the Franciacorta method. Then the quality also declined into “excellence,” which is not only a property of the wine and of the territory but is also the culture of the whole wine cluster: “[We] interpret and spread the culture of excellence, of which Franciacorta is a natural ambassador” ([www.franciacorta.net/news](http://www.franciacorta.net/news)).

Technology, together with competence, passion, and a unique terroir, contributes to the achievement of excellence. “Blend of passions” is the tagline chosen to support the new collective logo since 2010, and the passionate commitment of entrepreneurs and winemakers is often emphasized in the description of associated wineries. According to the *Consorzio*, wineries are trim and elegant places imprinting upon the product also to be; that is, “it is better to grow up in a beautiful place than in a shoddy place” (Press kit: Franciacorta. *L’architettura delle cantine*: 1), and winemakers themselves are refined taste lovers:

“In Franciacorta wineries precious treasures hide. Wines resting on *pupitres* for months and years. But not only wines. Sometimes wineries’ owners are real taste lovers. And not only for eonological taste” (Press kit: Franciacorta. *I tesori artistic delle cantine*: 1).

One of the payoffs of *Consorzio*'s communication is "Franciacorta, the Wine, the Land." In fact, the territory is not only described for its characteristics related to winegrowing. "The Land" is also depicted as a beautiful destination, with traits that are coherent to the described wine identity. Therefore, the *Consorzio* consistently narrate valorizing narratives on the territory, which contribute to further define the collective identity of the wine cluster.

Finally, envisioning narratives characterize the collective identity story narrated by the *Consorzio*. We labeled them as envisioning because they express the desired future image (Gioia and Thomas, 1996; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991) of what Franciacorta will likely be in the next 10-20 years, according to the *Consorzio*, which envisions Franciacorta to become an internationally renowned premium wine:

"When 15 year old vines will be 30 years old [...] we'll do great things. [Being young] Franciacorta misses a relevant number of harvests with the right vineyards to give an appropriate measure of its capabilities. The quality of Franciacorta in twenty years will be extraordinary, because we already have today important wines. We'll do an extraordinary step up in class, and therefore I'm very optimistic of our qualitative future" (Interview released by Maurizio Zanella, President of the *Consorzio* to *Sommelier.it*, April 3rd 2011, Ziliani 2011a).

The collective identity story is signaled by the *Consorzio* both to external audiences, through promotional events, websites, and media relations, but also to member wineries. The *Consorzio* communicates its version of the collective identity story within the cluster both through internal media directed to all members (newsletters, official communications, corporate design book), and through purposively created collective gatherings. These take place beyond regular meetings of the *Consorzio*'s general assembly and collective promotional events, and they are occasions during which the *Consorzio* energizes internally the collective identity story.

### **Wineries' sensemaking and sensegiving of the collective identity story**

Except for the few board members, wineries make sense of the collective identity story mainly at the organizational level. A consistent group of wineries (Group A in Fig. 4) also participates in inter-organizational sensemaking, which takes place during collective events and dyadic relationships between wineries. Especially noteworthy are the recurring meetings called "Being Franciacorta," during which winemakers meet not only to discuss collective research projects and promotional strategies, but also to socialize. This is generally where sensemaking at the inter-organizational level occurs (Fig. 1).

“It’s important to participate, to share experiences, it’s important also to criticize, it’s important to bring one’s own small brick of experience [...] when you go to the collective tastings with the *Consorzio*, you talk with colleagues, it is enriching because you share experiences... ‘you know I tried that new machinery’ and so on...” (Winery manager)

These collective events are often occasions during which wineries’ interpretations ratchet upwards to the *Consorzio*. However, participation in these kinds of events is reported especially by those entrepreneurs that positively perceive the collective identity (Group A in Fig. 4). These wineries often also report to be friends with other wineries’ entrepreneurs, with whom they meet and discuss beyond official occasions. These social relationships are often also occasions to talk about what is “right” and what does not properly represent Franciacorta and therefore should be corrected. According to these wineries, the *Consorzio* has the duty to control illegitimate actions; however, social relationships among wineries are a good means to intervene on “incorrect” narratives about Franciacorta:

“It happens that you hear at tastings, or you see on websites or brochures an incorrect language or a completely wrong and misleading story [...] usually we try to let them know, we try to talk to them, or a group of colleagues approach [these wineries] and we try to let them understand that what you say is important. [...] Otherwise, since among colleagues there are often good relationships, we organize to meet at lunch and we discuss over these kinds of things” (Winery entrepreneur).

These wineries’ entrepreneurs and managers have a positive perception of the collective identity story, and they think it is a good strategic and an educational means to preserve the collective Franciacorta identity in a moment of fast growing of the cluster. They also appreciate the availability of a story that reminds wineries “who we are as a group” and provides useful inputs to edit individual identity stories and to make sure they are consistent with the collective story in order to contribute to create a coherent image of Franciacorta for external audiences. Talking about what she narrates to present the winery to externals, an entrepreneur says the following:

“When somebody asks us further information, we always refer to the *Consorzio*’s website, or to the *Consorzio*’s brochures because they provide detailed technical information on the method itself, which we can say express the rigor of the region and of the production.”

Other wineries instead participate less in collective and inter-organizational sensemaking (Group B in Fig. 4). They feel less represented by the collective identity story, and they fear some power imbalance in the elaboration of the collective identity story happening at the level of the *Consorzio*, especially regarding the story of a future desired

collective identity. They regret that the collective identity story is explored by few wineries, representing elder members of the cluster and not considering the instances of younger members, who respect collective history but, at the same time, feel the need to innovate. A manager says:

“I believe that now the approach [of the *Consorzio*] is to keep the group aligned, avoiding breakaways, but especially keeping a status quo, therefore an oligarchy that wants to govern in spite of actors that could move with a greater autonomy.”

These wineries thus translate the collective identity story into their identity communications in a way that prevents sanctioning (e.g., by conforming to the legal disciplinary), but that introduces innovative narratives that are not conforming to the mainstream meaning of the collective identity story (Fig. 2). Mythologizing collective narratives are not reproduced by these wineries, who are often critical toward collective past celebration:

“[We don’t want to narrate] the nth story of an entrepreneur coming from another industry and investing in winemaking; [of these stories] Franciacorta’s history is full. [...] Franciacorta was born thanks to these investments [...] you don’t come to Franciacorta to find peace, you go to Chianti to have a walk in vineyards; in Franciacorta you cannot walk ten minutes without a plane flying over your head...” (Winery manager).

Furthermore, envisioned narratives are often much distinctive compared to the mainstream ones included into the collective identity story. Here is an example of a winery entrepreneur narrating a very distinctive vision compared to a collective one:

“In my personal ambition, as I see this project [ her winery], and I don’t know if I will get to see it, or my sons and grandsons will... the idea is the following: to cover one day all the fizz traditions, and therefore there will be [winery name] Prosecco, [winery name] Champagne. And there will also be the Australian classic method or the Napa Valley one...” (Winery entrepreneur).

When talking about themselves, members of these wineries often refer to the fact that their sensemaking happens more at the organizational level (Fig. 1), rather than at the inter-organizational or collective level:

“I start from the assumption that how I produce my wine is something that must be developed within my firm [...] it is my research work, aimed at bringing to the glass what I think is the maximum level of expression of my thought” (Winery manager).

This is different from what emerges during interviews with managers and entrepreneurs that are more involved in the cluster collective life. In their case, inter-organizational and collective sensemaking are often mentioned and highly valued;

furthermore, energizing the collective identity story is more relevant than personal disagreements. One winery manager says the following:

“Obviously in some occasions there were some disagreements [among associated wineries] on some promotional or even technical decisions [...] for instance, we had some discussions on specific aspects of the disciplinary [...] we, as technicians have an idea, the *Consorzio* has a different one, and also other wineries, therefore sometimes we found things that we didn’t like, but being in Franciacorta, we simply accepted them. [Regarding what we communicate,] if there’s a majority, we follow it, and if we are wrong, we are wrong all together.”

### **The influence of construed external images**

In the previous paragraph, we illustrated how sensemaking about the collective identity happens at different levels, and we mentioned that different perceptions of the collective identity story characterize wineries’ participation in inter-organizational and collective sensemaking. Here we elaborate further on different types of construed external images that seem to influence both wineries’ and the *Consorzio*’s sensemaking and narrative crafting.

First of all, our data emphasize a strong influence of the collective construed external image on wineries’ interpretation and reproduction of the collective identity story. All wineries that energize the collective identity story by conforming to the associative narratives (Group A in Fig. 4), have a positive perception of the collective external image of Franciacorta (Fig. 3). The successful image of Franciacorta stimulates a feeling of self-esteem on these entrepreneurs, further reinforcing their supportive interpretation of the collective identity story. In organizational identity theory, the internal perception of how others view the organization – construed external image – is considered a key influential variable on identification and on the consequent management of organizational impressions toward external audiences (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994). In this case, it is not only the perception of wineries’ images, but also the perception of the image of the whole cluster that influences wineries’ interpretation and editing of the collective identity story. Actually, the collective construed external image seems even more influential than the organizational construed external image on these wineries’ interpretation and re-elaboration of the collective identity story.

“If you talk about Brescia twenty years ago, the iron rod, iron, weapons, and cutlery [come] to your mind. When you talk about Brescia today, Franciacorta comes to your mind, hence we overturned a concept of territoriality and therefore I believe that today this district talks about wine and passion” (Winery manager to visitors of cellar tour).

Other wineries interpret the collective identity story in a very conservative way and do not integrate into their organizational stories the most recent narratives elaborated within the collective identity story – the ones that refer more to luxury and glamour. These wineries (a few in Group A) fear the over-adaptation of the collective identity story to external images, which they like only to a certain extent. In fact, they perceive a loss of authenticity compared to the emerging years' collective identity story, and they fear a gap between the image that is developing and the actual practices of Franciacorta winemaking.

“Sometimes Franciacorta is seen as the product of a marketing effort, rather than a product with intrinsic value. This disappoints us, because we realize that maybe we don't tell enough about our values and our vintners' reality, of an artisan and agricultural product. Now there's this image of a glossy and glamorous territory...” (Winery entrepreneur).

Finally, wineries that translate the collective identity story by introducing non-conforming narratives into their wineries' identity stories emphasize some negative aspects of what they believe is the Franciacorta collective image. In particular, even while acknowledging the success of the last 50 years, these wineries emphasize that the success has been mostly for the cluster leader firms, and the collective identity story too much resembles the image of those leader wineries:

“I contested the book, and the picture in which all producers were wearing tuxedo[s]. Franciacorta is not consumed in gala dinners, [but] is consumed in wine bars every day, and therefore the message is not coherent with who we are, and especially with who we will be. [...] only two, three, five, maximum ten Franciacortas are products for important *vernissages*, not sure all one hundred [are]” (Winery manager).

Representatives of the *Consorzio* recognize that they take inspiration from the successful image of leader wineries to edit the collective identity story, because the objective of such a story should be to enhance the positive collective image of Franciacorta in the wake of leaders' successful image (interviews with key informant). The construed external image of leader firms seems relevant also for wineries. In fact, the successful image of leader firms, which is often referred to when the envisioned identity of individual wineries is mentioned, stimulates a feeling of self-esteem and self-enhancement among entrepreneurs. This feeling influences the editing of the collective identity story into wineries' stories, insofar as wineries try to emulate leaders.

“There are some wineries that finely represent at the Italian and international level the name Franciacorta. They are renowned, esteemed, and I appreciate them [...] obviously they have much more resources but [...] we always looked at who stays ahead of us” (Winery manager).

We call this emerging perception of leaders' image, construed external image of leaders. We acknowledge that, originally, the concept of construed external image refers to an internal perception held by organizational members about external judgments on the organization itself, and in this case we refer to the perceptions held by wineries' members about the image of another winery. However, being leader firms members of the same cluster, we believe that what wineries think about the external image of leaders resembles much more the concept of construed external image, than that of leaders' image perceptions. In fact being leaders considered by many managers also the prototypes and the ambassadors of the cluster, their image is inherently related to the collective image of the whole cluster.

The relevance of collective and leaders' construed external image does not exclude the influence of the organizational construed external image on wineries' sensemaking and consequent sensegiving on the collective identity story. In particular, our data show that wineries that energize associative narratives often refer to the fact that they need to do so, because they are not yet renowned as individual wineries. These wineries also report that they are proud to energize narratives that contribute to reinforce their image of Franciacorta members. To the contrary, those wineries that translate the collective identity story report that they believe they have a niche image that is not necessarily related to the fact that they produce Franciacorta (in fact, sometimes they also produce other wines), and therefore they do not feel the need to conform totally to the associative narratives and to support the mainstream collective identity story.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The aim of our paper was to explore how a collective identity story circulates among different actors (i.e., coordinating actors and organizations) and how it is interpreted and edited by them within a coordinated organizational field. We explored the context of a regional wine cluster with a coordinating trade association. Our grounded model (Fig. 4) illustrates the processes by which the *Consorzio* and wineries make sense and give sense of the collective identity story. In addition, the model shows that sensemaking and sensegiving processes are influenced by different types of construed external image: the organizational, the collective, and that of cluster leaders. We believe that, with these emerging findings, our work makes three main contributions. The first two have implications for the stream of research investigating the micro foundations of collective field identities (Fiol and Romanelli, 2012; Weber and Glynn, 2006; Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008) by showing the explanatory power

of theories of organizational identity dynamics at a supra-organizational level. More specifically, we discuss the contribution of analysing collective and leaders' construed external images and internal associative sensegiving for the understanding of collective identity maintenance. Finally, as a third contribution, we discuss the implications of our emerging model for the understanding of how organizations construct their identities by drawing on narratives circulating in the social groups in which they are embedded.

As a first contribution, our model emphasizes the influence of mirroring processes (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Hatch and Schultz, 2002) on the narrative work supporting collective identity maintenance or favoring change. In fact, we extend previous works on mirroring and construed external image at the organizational level by identifying three different types of construed external image working in supra-organizational groups and influencing both associative and organizational sensemaking. Our data show that the *Consorzio's* board keeps "an eye on the mirror" (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 551) of Franciacorta external image when interpreting who it is as a regional cluster and when developing narratives of the collective identity story. This resembles what happens at the managerial organizational level (Gioia and Thomas, 1996). However, differently from organizations, the members of the regional cluster, which are represented by the collective identity story, are not individuals but organizations themselves. Organizational images mirror back to the *Consorzio*, together with the collective Franciacorta image. Hence, members of the *Consorzio's* board not only hold a construed external image of the group, but also see the reflection of the single organizations of the cluster. Consequently, the way external entities view individual organizations of the cluster has an effect on how the collective identity is interpreted, envisioned, and narrated by the *Consorzio*. This seems especially true when considering the construed external image the *Consorzio* has about the leader wineries of the cluster for two reasons. One is that the leaders together produce more than 50% of the overall Franciacorta production, and the second is that they have more resonance on external audiences, especially specialized media (Wry, Lounsbury, and Glynn, 2011), which means an enhanced availability of images in which the *Consorzio* can mirror. For what concerns sensemaking within single organizations, we see that also here the concept of construed external image could involve not only perceptions that organizational members hold of how the organization is perceived outside, but also perceptions of how the cluster is perceived outside and even how other members of the cluster are perceived outside. The mechanism of maintenance of the self-esteem given by group affiliation (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) clearly explains why the construed external image of a super-ordinate identity could affect

organizational sensemaking. Usually wineries are proud to belong to a reputed regional cluster, because this enhances organizational members' self-esteem and also because this belongingness pays in terms of categorical status recognition (Zhao and Zhou, 2011). It is more interesting to note the concern organizational members have about the image of the leader organizations in the cluster. In fact, the positive perceptions of leaders' external image seem to enhance the self-esteem of other organizations and their pride in being part of the cluster. This also affects the way in which wineries interpret and enact the collective identity of the cluster in a way to preserve the good image of the cluster and of the leaders, which are considered ambassadors of the collective identity. To the contrary, a negative perception of leaders' external image leads wineries to narrate identity stories that differentiate them from those leaders. Even if our aim was to expand the understanding of how collective identity stories circulate in coordinated fields, we believe that the role of different construed external images could be generalized also in contexts in which coordination is lower or where there is no coordination at all. In fact, even in the absence of an active associative sensemaking and sensegiving, organizations can still mirror the collective external image of their group and its most prominent organizations. Research on highly sensitive industries has already partially addressed the issue of how industry images affect organizations' identity work (Winn, McDonald, and Zietsma, 2008). To our knowledge, the issue of how leaders' images affect other organizations' sensemaking in a supra-organizational group is less explored, but it could provide a finer-grained understanding of how organizations, in absence of coordination and dense relationships, still conform to and imitate cluster prototypes (Staber, 2010). Considering specifically the regional community fields (Marquis, Lounsbury, and Greenwood, 2011), there is ample debate within the economic literature studying regional business clusters about the fact that leader firms are increasingly less local, often acquired by multinational groups. A recurring question is how this loss of local relationships and local relevance could affect the very survival of a regional business cluster (Camuffo and Grandinetti, 2011). We believe that obtaining a refined understanding of how the image of leaders could influence the stability or change of the local cluster identity could contribute to our understanding of the impact of leaders' globalization on local identity maintenance.

As a second contribution, our model extends the understanding of how coordinating actors manage collective identity maintenance and change using narratives. Previous theories mainly focused on the role of collective identity stories in the legitimation of nascent supra-organizational groups (Fiol and Romanelli, 2012) or in the coherent growth of these groups, thanks to effective inviting stories attracting coherent new members (Wry, Lounsbury, and

Glynn, 2011). Our model instead expands the understanding of how coordinating actors try to manage the internal alignment of organizational stories to the collective identity story through internal sensegiving and by creating occasions for inter-organizational sensemaking. Our results emphasize that, in a regional cluster context, the dynamics of interpretation and communication of the collective identity story are comparable to the dynamics of identity sensemaking and sensegiving as discussed in organizational identity theories. In particular, the influence and negotiation in the collective identity story among actors in the cluster resembles the sensegiving and sensemaking dynamics of the organizational identity construction between the CEO and organizational members (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). The effort to spread internally the collective identity story by the *Consorzio* echoes the managerial symbolic use of meta-identities to aggregate multiple identities within organizations (Pratt and Foreman, 2000: 34). Our findings in fact show that the trade association constantly works to signal narratives internally, thus reminding individual organizations of what they were as a regional cluster, what they are, and what they want to become. Furthermore, the trade association seems to foster organizational story alignment by adapting the collective identity story to the construed external image of cluster leaders, enhancing the probability that cluster members would align to an identity story that enhances their self-esteem (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994) and that members would energize the collective identity story through their organizational identity stories. These dynamics contribute to a more refined understanding of how institutional coordinators operate their work related to the maintenance of institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), managing the alignment of identities through narratives. This also has practical implications, insofar as our findings show that managing stories is a relevant means to try to nurture local identities and manage the symbolic capital of a territory (Brunori and Rossi, 2007: 196) that is a common intangible resource, both for practice (Belussi, 1999) and for communication strategies (Alberti and Sciascia, 2007; Gehlar et al., 2009; Ishida and Fukushige, 2010).

As a final contribution, we believe that the processes outlined in our model provide an expanded understanding of the identity work by which organizations interpret and translate the discursive resources (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004; Vaara et al., 2007) available at their institutional field level and construct their identities with cues circulating in the broader social groups in which they are embedded (Lerpold, Ravasi, van Rekom, and Soenen, 2007; Gioia, Price, Hamilton, and Thomas, 2010; Schultz et al., 2012; Kroezen and Heugens, 2012; Gioia et al., 2013). Our findings show that particularly relevant in these dynamics is the role of perceptions: perceptions of narratives circulating within the supra-organizational group and

perceptions of external images of the group and of its most reputed members. In our case, organizations having positive perceptions of collective narratives and positive construed external images of the cluster and of its leaders were more likely to align their organizational identity stories to the collective identity story. On the other hand, organizations having less positive perceptions were more likely to translate the collective identity story by aligning with authoritative narratives, but at the same time adding new meanings to them. Involvement in associative and inter-organizational sensemaking is similarly relevant to the likeliness that organizational stories conform to or translate the collective identity story. Even if our findings seem to suggest that perceptions are influencing also participation to collective and inter-organizational sensemaking, further research is needed to better understand the causal relationship among these variables. Our work is not without limitations which should be addressed in developing future research on the topic. First of all, as in the nature of all qualitative inductive research, our findings need replication and testing. In particular, we foresee the usefulness of replicating our study in organizations' communities where the local common identity is less relevant for the product and where there is less coordination. In fact, we are aware that the wine industry is a context in which regional collective identity is particularly relevant because of the link between the product and the territory (Carlsen et al., 1997). This makes the collective identity a resource for marketing and branding strategies (Christy and Norris, 1999; Swaminathan, 2001) and for achieving categorical status (Zhao and Zhou, 2011). This provided us with a rationale for selecting a wine cluster for an exploratory study; however, it limits our findings with respect to their generalizability to contexts in which the local identity is less relevant for commercial and promotional strategies, as it happens for instance for many typical manufacturing regional business clusters. Furthermore, our case represents a revelatory extreme case in which 97% of the wineries are associated with a *Consorzio*. Although interestingly we found different interpretations and translations of the collective identity story even in such a cooperative field, further research should be addressed to different contexts in which the commitment to the collective is lower. Especially interesting would be the exploration of those contexts in terms of how different types of organizational translations contribute to changing the collective identity stories through internal feedback to the associative level and, through the action of changing, construed external images. In a case like the one just described, a longitudinal approach would also help to better understand the processes by which the evolution of external images influences the transformation of collective and organizational identity stories.

To conclude, through this paper our aim was to expand the limited understanding of how collective identity stories circulate within supra-organizational groups and how they are interpreted, reproduced, and transformed by individual actors. Our exploratory findings provide a grounded model that emphasizes the dynamics between multi-level sensemaking, associative and organizational sensegiving, and mirroring processes. We believe that these findings contribute to the growing debates on the discursive field maintenance and evolution (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), and on how organizations construct their identities with cues circulating in and around them (Schultz et al., 2012). We found that some identity dynamics widely acknowledged at the organizational level proved useful to explain collective identity stories circulation and transformations within supra-organizational groups. We propose that the broad literature on organizational identity construction, development, and change could provide a useful theoretical lens to guide further research on how coordinating actors and individual organizations work to develop, maintain, and disrupt institutionalized collective identities. Some work has already been done in this direction to understand the development of new collective identities (Gioia et al., 2013). With our findings, we suggest that a further promising avenue for future research is the exploration of how identity dynamics between associative, inter-organizational, and organizational level intervene in processes of the adaptive instability (Gioia, Corley, and Schultz, 2000) of supra-organizational collective identities.

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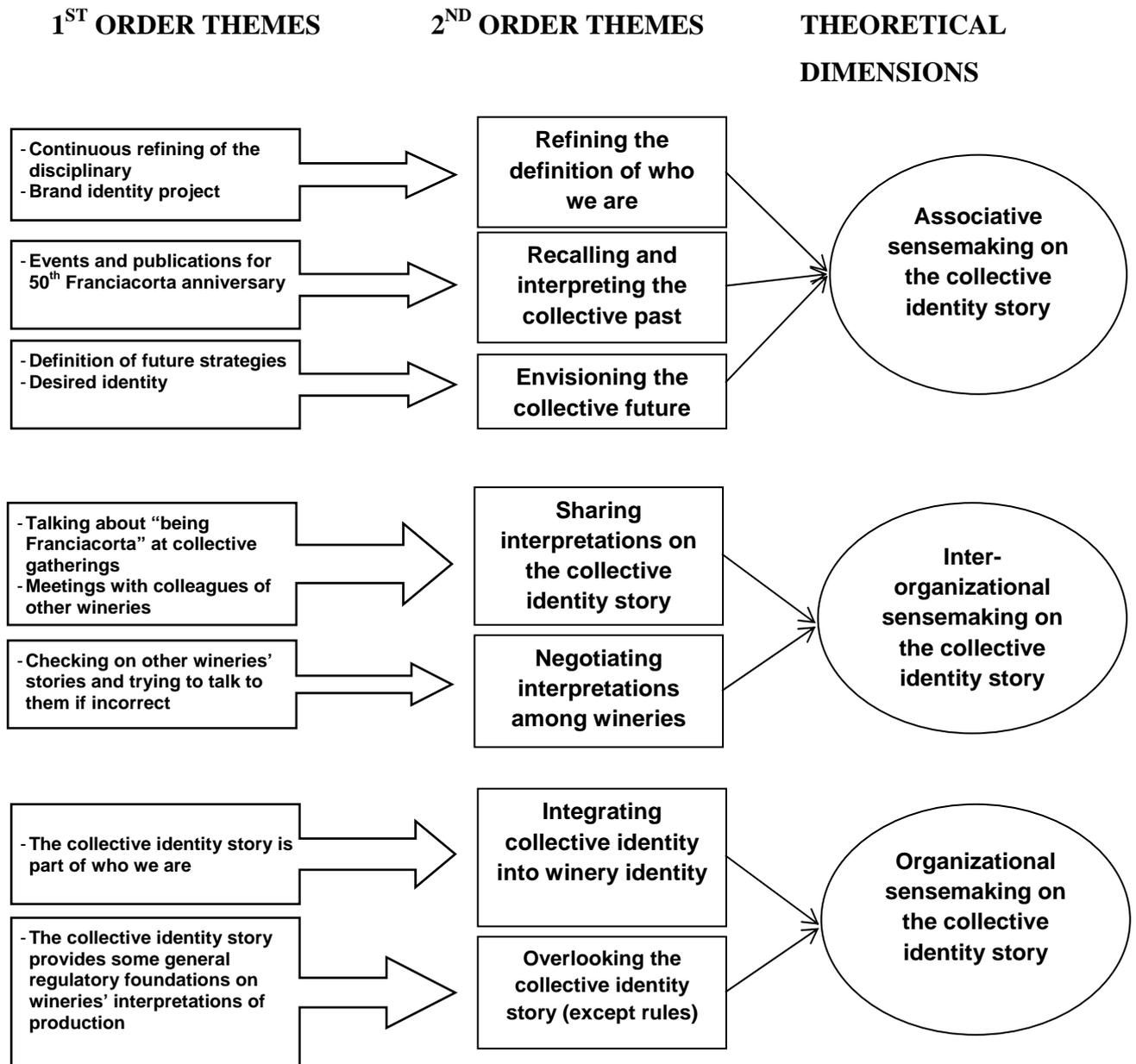


Fig. 1 Data structure sensemaking.

**1<sup>ST</sup> ORDER THEMES**

**2<sup>ND</sup> ORDER THEMES**

**THEORETICAL  
DIMENSIONS**

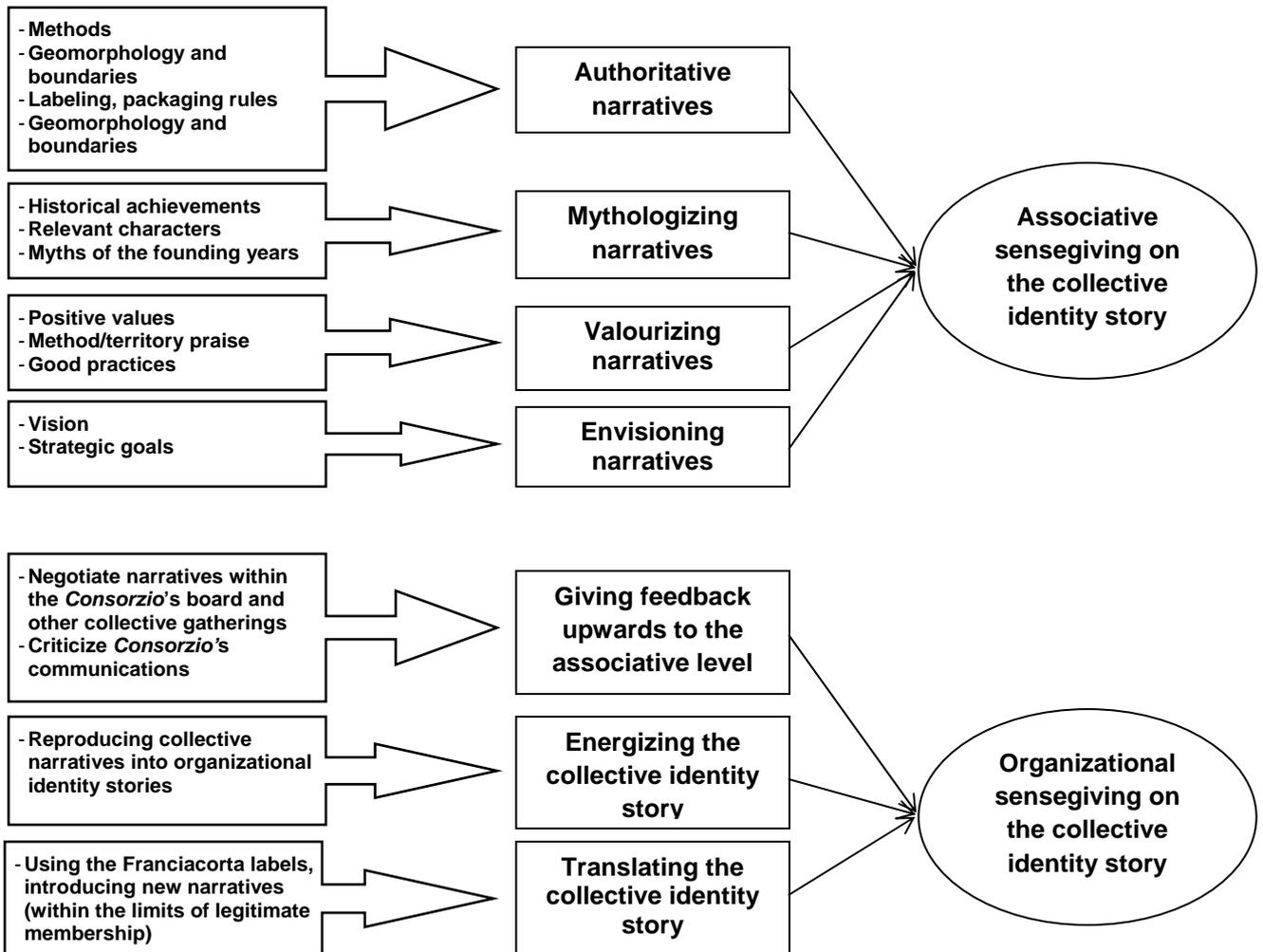


Fig. 2 Data structure sensegiving.

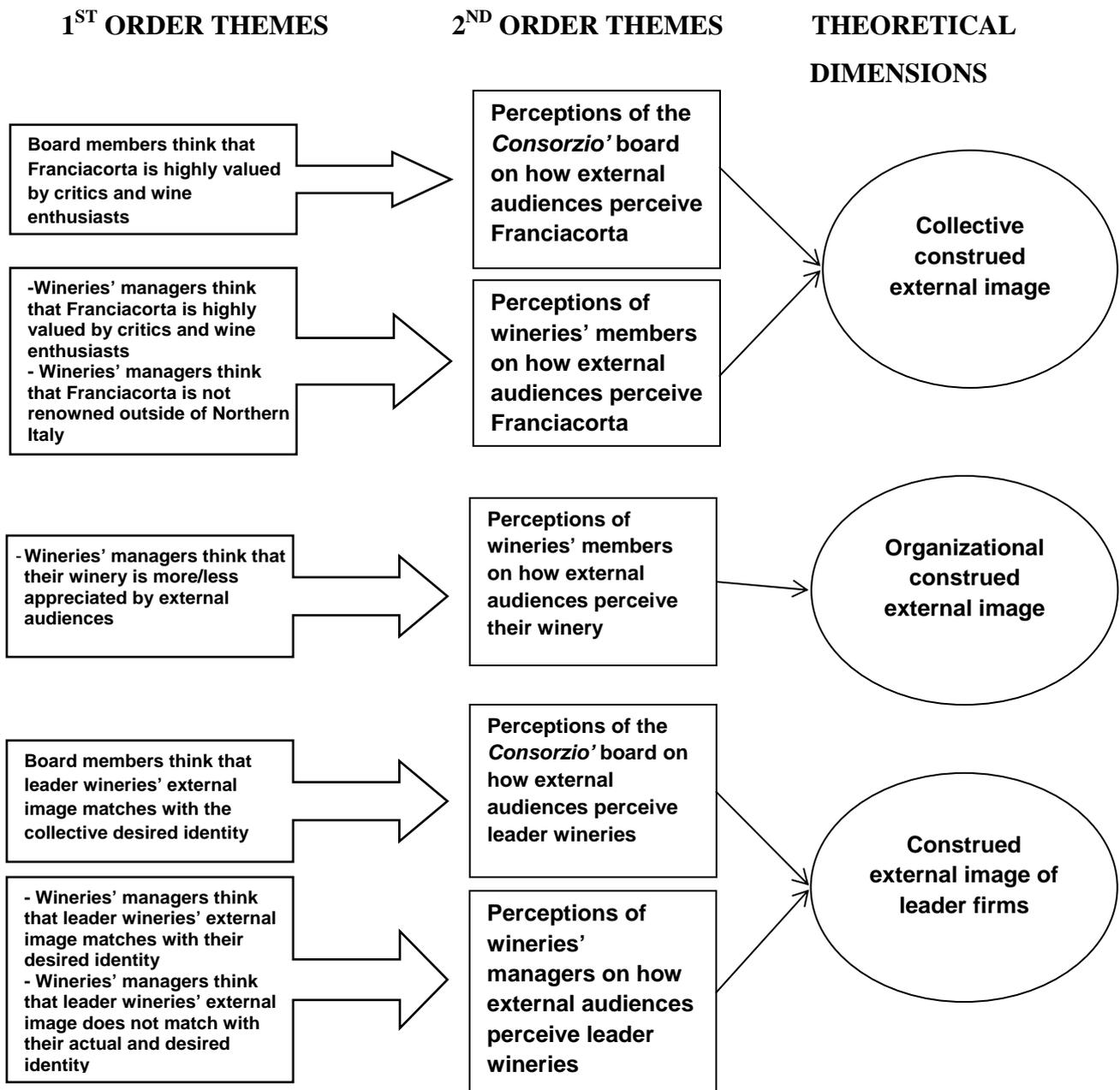


Fig. 3 Data structure construed external image.

