Response to Technological Change: The International Wine Industry, 1850–1939

The paper compares the response to technological change and demand for institutional innovation in five very different wine producing nations (France, Spain, Algeria, Australia, and the United States). The international transfer in knowledge associated with grape production, and in particular the rapid advances in eliminating the obstacles to successful winemaking in hot climates, radically changed the locus of production of the industry and in turn threatened the livelihood of many traditional

growers. Yet while international changes in production technologies and the integration of national markets encouraged a concentration of economic activities everywhere, the political voice and bargaining power of growers, winemakers, and merchants differed greatly within individual countries. The paper discusses the political economy of institutional change and government intervention in each of the five countries in the areas of product adulteration, producer cooperatives, and appellation contrôlée.

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