The Portuguese Wine Ratings: an old Product, a new Assessment
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Typically, wine is an experience good, i.e., its quality is unknown before consumption, and wine drinkers tend to be risk-averse people. As a result, expert and consumer opinions may help to fill an information void. Robert Parker (RP) of the Wine Advocate and various experts at the Wine Spectator (WS) are well-known wine gurus. In terms of consumer evaluations the information contained in the web page www.cellartrack.com deserves special attention, since its ratings depict, a-priori, the preference of an average buyer. Moreover, and specifically taking into account Portuguese wines, one of the most relevant expert references is João Paulo Martins (JPM) annual publication Guia dos Vinhos de Portugal.

Following the classic example of the Bordeaux region, and being aware of its importance in consumer purchases and in the definition of wine prices, there are an increasing number of wine regions and producers who submit their wines to the raters’ appreciation. Portugal, particularly in the last decade, has been following this tendency, with increasing numbers of Portuguese wines that emerge on the list of ratings of RP and WS gurus.

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Using the ratings published in 2010, by RP, WS, JPM and cellartrack.com, the main aim of this paper is to test whether there are differences and consistency between the ratings assigned by experts and consumers and, additionally, to assess if the score attained by a specific wine is influenced by color attributes and grape region (geographic origin). The statistical analysis shows that, with minor differences, there is consistency between the different ratings. Furthermore, the results of the regression models indicate that red wines tend to have higher scores and, in geographical terms, Douro wines are in a prime position.

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