Three Vignettes about Wine Tastings and Competitions

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Abstract

Three vignettes taken from separate wine tasting events but contributing to a single theme are presented. The first based on numerical ratings given by judges in the 2010 Oregon Wine Awards quantifies the distortion introduced by comparatively easy graders. The second looks at the method used in the California State Fair Commercial Wine Competition as it relates to one the author had proposed using the Borda Count. Finally, the results of a comparative tasting of Southern Oregon and Virginia viogniers and cabernet francs that were determined using the Borda Count are discussed. In particular, the Borda Scores used to determine the societal ranking served as normalized metrics for assessing how close the competition really was.

These examples are intended to discourage the use of numerical ratings which frequently lead to a violation of “one judge, one vote” and to reinforce the use of rankings aggregated using the Borda Count. The Borda Scores provide strength of preference without the distortions resulting from the use numerical ratings.

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