

”First in a Little Iberian Village”
versus ”Second in Rome” :
A Wine-Based Test for
Collective Reputation Effects

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Abstract

How do individuals or things through their own reputation (e.g. researchers, football players, scientific articles, wine producers...) give birth to a group's reputation and conversely how do they take advantage of this group's reputation (resp. a laboratory, a football team, an academic journal, a vineyard...) ? To be a leader in a rather unknown organization or to be a follower in a well-known organization : what is better ? A long time ago, Julius Caesar declared that he "would rather be first in a little Iberian village than second in Rome".

This article aims at testing the accuracy of this famous quotation and more generally intends to analyse the complex relationship existing between the two dimensions of reputation : individual and collective. The theoretical model –a static simultaneous equation system– is econometrically estimated from a dataset concerning no less than 124,000 wine quality opinions by about 6,000 different European consumers. These opinions concern the main wines currently supplied in 7 different countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland, United-Kingdom). The results are in line with Julius Caesar's intuition.

Key Words : Collective and individual reputations, Wine.

JEL Classification :