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A RESOURCE-BASED VIEW OF WINE QUALITY IN THE SPANISH REGION OF CASTILLA-LA MANCHA

This study uses the resource-based view to analyze the business strategy of wineries that earn the appellation denomination of origin "De Pago" in the Spanish region of Castilla-La Mancha. Wineries that use legal protections to demonstrate their wine quality might employ this distinction to generate and maintain a competitive advantage that reflects the value of their internal resources, which are valuable, rare, not imitable, and unsubstitutable. To test this supposition, this study investigates 7 D.O. De Pago wineries as exemplary cases.

Keywords: D.O. De Pago, resource-based view, competitive advantage, Spanish wine, quality wine, Castilla-La Mancha.

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РЕСУРСНИЙ ПІДХІД ДО ЯКОСТІ ВИНА В ІСПАНСЬКІЙ ОБЛАСТІ КАСТИЛЬЯ-ЛА МАНЧА

У статті на основі ресурсного підходу досліджено бізнес-стратегії виноробницьких підприємств, які отримали право брендувати продукцію за місцем походження — "Де Паго" в іспанській провінції Кастилья-Ла Манча. Винні заводи, які використовують правову підтримку своєї марки вина, можуть застосовувати цей підхід для створення і підтримки конкурентної переваги, яке відображає вартість їх внутрішніх ресурсів, коштовних, рідких, неповторних і незамінних. Для перевірки цього припущення досліджені 7 виноробень регіону де Паго.

Ключові слова: D.O. De Pago, ресурсний підхід до якості, конкурентна перевага, іспанське вино, якісне вино, Кастилья-Ла Манча.

Таб. 2. Рис. 1. Літ. 22.

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РЕСУРСНИЙ ПОДХОД К КАЧЕСТВУ ВИНА В ИСПАНСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ КАСТИЛЬЯ-ЛА МАНЧА

В статье на основе ресурсного подхода исследованы бизнес-стратегии винодельческих предприятий, которые имеют право брендировать продукцию по месту происхождения — "Де Паго" в испанской провинции Кастилья-Ла Манча. Винные заводы, которые используют правовую поддержку своей марки вина, могут применять этот подход для создания и поддержания конкурентного преимущества, которое отражает стоимость их внутренних ресурсов, ценных, редких, неподражаемых и незаменимых. Чтобы проверить это предположение, исследованы 7 винных заводов региона де Паго.

Ключевые слова: де Паго, ресурсный подход к качеству, конкурентное преимущество, испанское вино, качественное вино, Кастилья-Ла Манча.

1. Introduction. The wine-producing industry has key importance in Spanish region of Castilla-La Mancha, for both economic and social reasons. As a strategic

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sector, it represents the largest geographical area of wine cultivation in the world; its nearly 600,000 ha account for 50% of Spanish vineyard surface area, 17.6% of Europe, and 7.6% of the world's surface area (Ministry of Agriculture of Castilla-La Mancha, 2007).

Quality wine production depends on multiple factors related to vineyard (Martin, 2009) including climate characteristics, regional latitude, the grapes used, elaboration process, technological advances, harvest traditions and so on. In Spain, the certification of a wine's quality depends on a denomination of origin (D.O.) system that indicates the region or area where wine has been produced. This legal protection certifies quality stems from the Consejo Regulador, a control council that enforces pertinent rules and regulation. Each D.O. region has its own Consejo Regulador, also responsible for marketing the wines produced in that region, so the wines can market both the region of origin and their quality. As of 2007, there were 67 D.O. in Spain, which also can earn a Denomination of Origin Calificada (D.O.C.), or a status indicating a consistent track record for quality. Beyond this quality recognition, the D.O. De Pago is a legal denomination assigned to individual, single-estate wine with a remarkable reputation of excellence, based on its viticulture and wine-making practices. This designation also indicates the winemaker follows very specific regulations pertaining to the types of grapes planted, the maximum yields harvested, the minimum length of time the wine is aged, and the type of information on the wine label. Wineries that seek to attain D.O. De Pago status must submit their wines to the Consejo Regulador laboratory and a tasting panel. The wines that earn D.O. De Pago status feature the regional stamp of the related Consejo Regulador on the label. Therefore, these unique wines result from a close relationship between the vineyard and the winery and offer exceptional quality that is well recognized at the market by both wine experts and consumers (MAPA, 2010).

Habitual wine customers can easily recognize the wines produced in famous regions such as Ribera del Duero or Rioja. However, in the Spanish region of Castilla-La Mancha, there are 9 D.O.: Almansa, La Mancha, Manchuela, Mentrída, Mondejar, Ribera del Júcar, Ucles, Valdepenas, and Jumilla (part of which is located in the nearby region of Murcia). It also contains 7 D.O. De Pago: Dominio de Valdepusa, Finca Elez, Pago Guijoso, Dehesa del Carrizal, Pago Florentino, Pago de Campo la Guardia, and Casa del Blanco. The 9 denominations of origin and 7 estate wines with D.O. De Pago reputations extend over a surface area of nearly 280,000 ha (Ministry of Agriculture of Castilla-La Mancha, 2007). In Castilla-La Mancha, wine production ranges between 20 and 25 mln hectoliters, approximately half of which is table wine, 22% must, 17% distilled wine, 6% wine with some D.O., and 5% Wine de la Tierra de Castilla (Ministry of Agriculture of Castilla-La Mancha, 2007). Focusing just on D.O. De Pago, production is less than 1% of the total in the region; that is, very few winemakers pursue such excellence and remarkable wines with very high recognized quality.

Such winemakers also want to promote a culture of terroir (Martin, 2004; Wilson, 1999). This French concept, derived from the word "terre" or earth, denotes special characteristics that geography bestows on particular varieties of agricultural products. Agricultural products produced in the same region tend to share similar soil, weather conditions, and farming techniques, which contribute to determine the

unique qualities of a crop and generate "a sense of place" embodied in certain characteristic qualities (Torres, 2006).

The basics of this strategy require an appropriate mixture of unique resources and owner capabilities, as well as distinctive characteristics of a unique microclimate. The synergetic effect of this resource combination has resulted in D.O. De Pago winemakers rediscovering an age-old concept: high quality wine from Spain (Brostrom and Brostrom, 2008). Wine producers using this strategy believe they can exploit their differentiated resources to succeed in the highly competitive, global, high-quality wine market. Therefore, this study adopts a resource-based view (RBV) to develop a conceptual framework of the strategy wine producers with a D.O. De Pago certification use to gain a competitive advantage. Accordingly, a case study of the 7 recognized single-state wine producers in Castilla-La Mancha provide a test of this proposed framework; the results offer key implications for both research and practice.

2. Conceptual framework. A cornerstone of modern strategic management is the resource-based view, according to which firm resources include assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, and knowledge controlled by a firm. These resources enable the implementation of strategies that improve efficiency, effectiveness, and profits (Barney, 1991). Some researchers also hold that the RBV comprises resources and capabilities separately (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993).

From a strategic perspective, we also distinguish key resources and capabilities, which are firm specific and determine the competitive advantage of firm. For example, immobile resources linked to the soil or implicit processes for transferring know-how within firm are key resources (Hoopes et al., 2003; Makadok, 2001). In contrast, indistinct resources and capabilities are tradable and not specific to a firm, so they are easily accessible to competitors. Firms that control and exploit their key resources and capabilities are more likely to gain competitive advantages than firms that acquire resources and capabilities from the market (Barney and Clarck, 2007).

The RBV recognizes the value of the effective management of strategic resources available to a firm. This concept is closely linked to the competitive advantage a firm attains when it can create more economic value than a marginal competitor in its industry (Porter, 1980). However, just as important as the existence of competitive advantages is the sustainability of these advantages (Hoopes et al., 2003). Some competitive advantages are fleeting; others are long lasting. The RBV therefore asserts that a firm attains a sustainable competitive advantage only when it creates more economic value than a marginal firm in its industry and those other firms cannot duplicate the benefits of its strategy (Barney and Clarck, 2007).

As its main assumptions, the RBV indicates that firms within an industry tend to be heterogeneous in the resources they control and resources are not perfectly mobile across firms (Barney and Clarck, 2007). Thus, not all of a firm's resources are economically valuable; some might even have no impact on a firm's strategy, even if they are heterogeneous and immobile (Barney, 1991). To understand the sources of sustained competitive advantage, we consider 4 criteria (Barney, 2001):

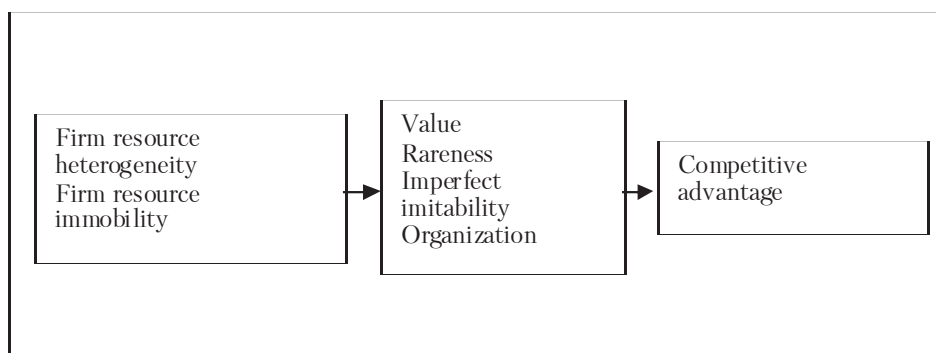
1. Valuable, in the sense that resource can exploit opportunities or neutralize threats in firm's environment. Valuable resources enable a firm to conceive of or implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1991).

2. Rare among the firm's current and potential competition. If firm resources are not rare, many firms can conceive of and implement similar strategies, such that they are no longer a source of competitive advantage, even if the resources in question are valuable (Wernerfelt, 1984).

3. Imperfectly imitable, in the sense those other firms cannot obtain rare and valuable resources through direct duplication or substitution in the market. Firm resources are imperfectly imitable (or costly to imitate) if they reflect unique historical conditions, a causally ambiguous link to the firm's sustained competitive advantage, and a socially complex generation process (Dierickx and Cool, 1989).

4. Able to be exploited by the firm's organizational processes, because resources and capabilities are included within the firm's formal reporting structure, explicit management control systems, and compensation policies. Therefore, in combination, exploitable resources and capabilities can enable a firm to realize its competitive advantage potential (Barney, 1991).

These attributes of firm resources each are necessary but not sufficient conditions for a sustained competitive advantage. Accordingly, resources must be assessed in terms of their heterogeneity and immobility (Figure 1), but a firm with a sustainable competitive advantage cannot necessarily maintain it forever. Changes in technology, demand, and broader institutional contexts can erase a source of competitive advantage (Makadok, 2001).



Source: Barney and Clark (2006, p. 69).

Figure 1. Theoretical framework

With this theoretical framework, we specify the conditions in which certain situations (heterogeneity and immobility) and resources (value, rare, inimitable, and useful) provide a source of competitive advantage for winemakers that earn the D.O. De Pago appellation. We study specifically the competitive strategy of D.O. De Pago Winemakers in the region of Castilla-La Mancha.

3. D.O. De Pago wineries in Castilla-La Mancha. Following Yin (1993), we undertake an exploratory study based on the descriptive analysis of D.O. De Pago wineries, using the RBV framework. We collect information on the key aspects related to owner(s), origin, philosophy, microclimate, technology, state properties, varieties, and complementary business.

To select the wineries for this case study, we used the Official Diary of Castilla-La Mancha (DOCM, 2010), which records public activity and outlines regional laws.

Using an advanced search menu from the affiliated website, we identified the name and legal characteristics of the estate wines that have received a D.O. De Pago appellation in the region. To gather complementary data, we visited the official web sites of each winery, as well as the sites designed to promote the D.O. De Pago (e.g., Great Growths of Castile, 2010; *Divinum Vitae*, 2010) or wine tourism in Castilla-La Mancha. Finally, we undertook a strategic analysis of the following winemakers: Domino de Valdepusa, Pago Finca Elez, Pago Guijoso, Pago Dehesa Del Carrizal, Pago Florentino, Pago La Guardia, and Pago Casa Del Blanco.

3.1. Dominio de Valdepusa. The Dominio de Valdepusa is located near Malpica de Tajo, in the province of Toledo. At the historic location of the Casa de Vacas Estate, owned by the same family since 1292, Carlos Falco, the Marquis of Grinon, has gained a reputation as a promoter of the Great Growths of Castile association. With an outstanding winemaking operation, the winery occupies 50 ha, 42 of which are planted with wines, including 14 ha of the original Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard planted in 1974. Since 1991, it has progressively expanded with new Syrah (1991) and Petit Verdot (1992) vineyards, both pioneering projects in Spain, as well as a new Graciano vineyard (2000). These vineyards all employ the Lyre and Smart-Dyson trellis systems.

A specific, single-estate D.O. appellation was awarded by the regional authorities to Dominio de Valdepusa on July 19, 2002; together with Finca Elez, it was the first estate wine in Spain to receive this appellation. Its certification was ratified by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture (February 21, 2003) and the European Union (April 14, 2004).

3.2. Pago Finca Elez. Finca Elez covers a surface area of 40 ha, located in El Bonillo (Albacete), at the heart of the Sierra de Alcaraz, 1,080 m above the sea level. The owner Manuel Manzanegue is an actor, director, and theater owner (he has won the National Cinema Prize and National Theatre Prize). As his philosophy, he aims to create an exclusive product of the highest quality. After an extensive analysis of the soils, microclimates, and types of vineyards, he chose to locate his winery in the Finca Elez estate in southern Albacete province.

The special varieties in this estate include white grapes such as Chardonnay and reds such as Cabernet-Sauvignon, Merlot, Tempranillo, and Syrah. The grapes harvested in these vineyards are processed by a winery located on the Manzanegue family estate. An order on July 19, 2002, from the Regional Ministry of Agriculture confirmed the D.O. De Pago status for some wines produced by this vineyard.

Finca Elez is unique because its location near the Sierra de Alcaraz means a breeze blows nearly constantly from the mountains, and significant temperature differences between day and night times encourage grape growth. The property therefore represents a true "domain," in the sense that the varieties come from Bordeaux and Burgundy (France). Its Syrah vines originated in the Rhone Valley, and a Tempranillo vineyard was planted very close to the winery to avoid the need to transport these grapes over long distances.

This winery ensures that each of its wines is distinct and can be qualified as single-estate wines. Some of these wines have received international awards; for example, the Finca Elez red was ranked sixth of more than 100 Cabernets worldwide by *Weinwirtschaft Magazine* in Germany.

3.3. Pago Guijoso. Pago Guijoso is composed of 12 small holdings, located in El Bonillo (Albacete), which borders Albacete and Ciudad Real at the head of the Guadiana River. It is approximately 1,000 m above the sea level. Owned by the Sanchez-Multiterno family, this estate grows the following grape varietals: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc (white), Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, and Tempranillo (red).

This winery uses hand-picking for its grape harvest. It also adopts an environmentally friendly philosophy, such that it avoids the use of herbicides, pesticides, and so forth. These aspects are particularly notable considering the location, which offers extraordinary landscapes but poor soil. The 98 ha of manicured vines appear well in tune with the surrounding natural environment. Furthermore, its philosophy embraces cutting-edge research as a means to improve the quality of wines. For example, it has applied for ISO 9001:2000 certification from BVQI, Spain's leading certification agency. It is among the few wineries in the world that has achieved comprehensive certification of its entire winemaking process, from the vineyard to the cellar.

Its first wine, produced in 1990, followed purely traditional methods. With an indication of the estate's potential, the owners built a bodega in 1993. The official endorsement for D.O. Pago Guijoso occurred on November 15, 2004.

3.4. Pago Dehesa Del Carrizal. The Dehesa Del Carrizal estate extends over a surface area of more than 22 ha, located in Retuerta del Bullaque in the province of Ciudad Real. The origin of this vineyard dates back to 1987, when the land owner, Marcial Gomez Sequeira, decided to plant 8 ha with Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. In the following years, 14 additional ha were planted with Chardonnay, Syrah, Merlot, and Tempranillo.

Marcial Gomez Sequeira is a well-known businessman, game hunter, and wine enthusiast. During hunting trips, he discovered that many of great red wines included some variety of Cabernet Sauvignon. Therefore, he experimented with this grape on his estate-, the first to do so, because the Montes de Toledo region was considered the domain of deer, mountain goats, and boar. He solicited the assistance of the Marquis of Grinon (Valdepusa) to discover the true quality of the grapes; within 5 harvests, they established the potential for Cabernet Sauvignon success in this region. Gomez Sequeira therefore followed through on the project he had begun almost as a game in the 1980s.

3.5. Pago Florentino. Pago Florentino is located in the municipality of Malagon, in Ciudad Real province. The 58-hectare estate, known as La Solana, belongs to the Arzuaga group of wineries and grows Tempranillo, Syrah, and Petit Verdot varieties. Although purchased in 1997, its first wine did not emerge until 2002, and it acquired its status on August 20, 2009.

The philosophy of this winery focuses on low density planting and lower productivity to increase quality. The La Mancha microclimate is brutally hot in summer and quite cold in winter. The minimum alcohol content of these varietals is 12.5%, and the wines contain a minimum of 90% of Tempranillo variety. Florentino Arzuaga, the owner of the winery, demands the wine be aged for 8 months in a mixture of French and American oak barrels. He believes that in addition to establishing a track record of consistent quality, wines should be produced from estate-grown grapes and be processed and aged in a winery located on the estate.

3.6. Campo de la Guardia. Campo de la Guardia D.O. De Pago is located in La Guardia (Toledo). The 81-hectare estate belongs to Bodegas Martue, which also owns with wineries in Spain and Portugal. Campo de la Guardia began when Fausto Gonzalez and Julian Rodriguez planted vines in 1990, including Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, and Tempranillo. It is located 700 m above sea level and consists of two estates: Campo Martuela and El Casar. The sandy-calcareous soil, combined with cold winters and warm summers as well as many hours of sun exposure, favor fleshy, concentrated wines. To achieve high quality and ferment the grapes under controlled temperatures, this winery harvests at night. Throughout the year, it focuses on high-quality, low yield production, such that it produces only 800 grams per vine for some of its grape varieties. The controlled yield ensures faithfulness to the terroir. This D.O. De Pago acquired its status on August 20, 2009.

3.7. Pago Casa Del Blanco. Finally, Pago Casa del Blanco is located in Manzanares (Ciudad Real). A family business founded by Joaquin Sanchez in 1995, it adopts a clearly stated philosophy: quality and not quantity, respect for the environment, 100% inspection, R&D, added value, wine culture promotion, professional attitude, and customer service. It is the most recent recipient of the D.O. De Pago legal appellation, as of June 25, 2010.

This winery restructured its vineyard to produce wines over which it maintained total control, that is, from grape to market. The vineyard covers an area of 92 ha. As special varieties, it planted white grapes such as Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc and red grapes including Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Tempranillo, Malbec, and Cabernet Franc.

Its research efforts are notable. The family gained experience with wine production by researching how wine behaves in microvinifications and studying various vinification techniques. By combining tradition and modernity, this winery pursues the most advanced and revolutionary technologies, along with a consistent control plan and ability to trace all products. New installations reflect environmentally friendly building techniques; its innovative practices also that reduce the estate's use of water. For example, the vineyard is linked to a hydraulic network that relies on a dam in combination with a drip irrigation system. This system helps enhance the soil (which is lime, sand, and basic pH) and mitigate the extreme weather conditions.

4. Discussion and conclusion. We explore the distinctive characteristics of 7 wineries located in the Castilla-La Mancha region of Spain. As the results in Table 1 reveal, a common factor in all their philosophies converges on a key idea: They produce wines with the goal of attaining the highest market quality recognition. However, each vineyard uses considerably different methods to achieve this goal, as well as unique resources that they use. We note the following differences in particular:

- Unique microclimate and soil (weather, soil pH, altitude).
- Low production (few hectares planted, traditional harvesting methods).
- Technology used (plantation system, irrigation, chemical analysis).
- New grape varieties (mostly from outside the region).
- Complementary business activities (wine tourism, hunting, gastronomy).

Table 1. D.O. De Pago Wineries in C-LM

Pago Title	Location (Province)	Pago recognition	Grape varieties (red & white)	ha
Dominio de Valdepusa	Malpica de Tajo (Toledo)	2002	Red: Cabemet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, and Petit Verdot;	50
Pago Finca Elez	El Bonillo (Albacete)	2002	Red: Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Tempranillo and Syrah	40
Pago Guijoso	El Bonillo (Albacete)	2004	Red: Cabemet Sauvignon, Merlot, Tempranillo and Syrah; White: Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.	98
Carrizal	Retuerta del Bullaque (Ciudad Real)	2006	Red: Gamacha Tintorera and Syrah	42
	Malagon (Ciudad Real)	2009	Red: Tempranillo, Syrah and Petit Verdot	58
	La Guardia (Toledo)	2009	Red: Cabemet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Tempranillo, Syrah, and Petit Verdot; White: Chardonnay.	81
Pago Casa del Blanco	Manzanares (Ciudad Real)	2010	Red: Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Petit Verdot, Malbec y Cabemet Franc; White: Sauvignon Blanc y Chardonnay	92

Source: DOCM Data.

These heterogeneous vineyards possess immobile resources, so following the RBV framework, we analyze the 4 key parameters through a series of questions about the business activities of the firm:

1. Do valuable resources enable wineries to respond to environmental threats or opportunities?
2. Are resources rare and currently controlled by few competing wineries?
3. Can wineries without certain resources obtain those resources without a cost of disadvantage?
4. Are firms organized to support the exploitation of their valuable, rare, and inimitable resources?

We summarize these questions and their answers in Table 2 and thus observe that only geographical resources related to microclimate and soil, together with the owner's own philosophy, meet all 4 criteria. These resources therefore contribute most significantly to establishing wine quality. Terroir in particular offers a source of sustainable competitive advantage and superior economic performance for firms. The owner's philosophy also cannot be imitated perfectly but only imperfectly substituted in the form of professional management practices. Although technology can add value, because it is valuable, rare, and usable, it is less significant because it is imitable.

Other factors, such as limited production, the cultivation of new grape varieties, and complementary business activities, are valuable and usable but provide only temporary competitive advantages.

Table 2. Analysis of wineries' resources

Group of resources	Value	Rareness	Inimitability	Usable
Owner's philosophy and management capabilities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Microclimate and soil (Terroir)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Technology	✓	✓	x	✓
Low production and traditional practices	✓	x	x	✓
New grape varieties	✓	x	x	✓
Complementary activities	✓	x	x	✓

This strategic analysis employs the RBV framework to clarify and understand the evolution of general practices in Castilla-La Mancha, which previously focused solely on the production of vast quantities of table wine. The D.O. De Pago owners represent the entrepreneurs who have enhanced market recognition of the quality of wine produced in this region — in a region that makes approximately half of Spain's wine, a high-risk but apparently successful strategy.

We recognize the limitations of our exploratory, descriptive approach (Yin, 1993). For example, we used the secondary data collected from official entities (D.O.C.M., CLM regional government) and the wineries' web sites. We offer only an internal view of competitive advantage, which ignores key external aspects, such as the increasing quality and perceptions of the value of Spanish wines. There also might be cluster-based or regional effects on wineries' activities.

Further research should extend our work by pursuing a deeper, explanatory analysis based on interviews with owners and data about the wineries' economic performance. Recent research suggests a perceptual gap in the wine recognition achieved by experts and consumers (Schiefer and Fisher, 2008), what would be a research study for D.O. De Pago wineries. Furthermore, considering the new business strategies used by small and elite winemakers, it would be interesting to study the strategic dilemma between cooperation and competition for market success (Taplin, 2010).

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