Title
The Sweet Wines of Constantia: a Feasible First PDO From the South African Wine Sector?

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Conference Poster Session

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Keywords
Muscat de Frontignan
Constantia
Geographical Indication
Intellectual property
South Africa

Research Question
Is it feasible to register the Sweet Wines of Constantia as a product of Protected Designation of Origin from the South Africa wine industry?

Methods
Evaluated the production methods, terroir and history of the production of these wines and potential benefits and costs of implementation of the Geographical Indications scheme in the context.

Results
In conclusion, registration could have a positive impact on the economy and would stimulate important discourse in the South African wine industry.

Abstract
The importance of quality and sustainability symbols has seen an increase over recent decades, whether influencing or influenced by consumption trends of foods and beverages.
South African wines tend to be undervalued, especially in international markets. However, recent years have seen a movement of South African wines, from focus on quantity to quality. With this in mind, many could use the current market trends as an opportunity for valorization of sustainable, quality brands.

The Geographical Indications (GI) scheme has been a successful scheme particularly in the European market, used as a tool to generate incentive for consumption of local goods, for rural development, increased revenue derived from exports, and to generate incentive for sustainable production and marketing practices. All of these activities influence economic activity, particularly when considering international trade. As all WTO countries are called to follow procedures set by the TRIPS agreement, this makes for an interesting point of discussion on how it might peak international discourse on PDO/PGI registration. South Africa does not hold much air time on international news, so this particular conversation could cause one of many small waves to provide a more positive view on the country’s strengths.

The impacts of this scheme are varied depending on the ways in which it is harnessed, but are generally seen as positive for the producers and the supporting economy.

When referring to the wine industry of South Africa, the Western Cape is an obvious choice as a place to search for PDO opportunity. It has a lot to offer due to the intensity of biodiversity and terroir variations and the resultant uniqueness of its agricultural products, including in wines. Winemaking in the Western Cape has an established history, starting in 1655. These terroir and tradition in winemaking provide an interesting foundation for products of traditional and geographical origin.

With the fact that names used in the GI scheme are intended to boost marketing potential and protect intellectual property, using names with strong reputation on international markets could reinforce confidence in the South African wine sector and the Wine of Origin scheme currently implemented. The South African wine industry has shown capacity to run one of the best systems of origin and regulation for its wines, suggesting potential to utilize existing systems as the backbone for the implementation of the GI scheme. Despite this, there is no legally recognized scheme to categorize wines according to quality and tradition. A wine of particular origin could have

The potential for the South African industry to support this scheme has been explored in academic literature and is assumed to be possible.

To progress the assessment of potential of the implementation of the GI scheme, it could be useful to apply the scheme in a case study.

The Constantia pocket presents a strong case as the first South African PDO for the wine sector. The main varieties planted in Constantia include Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and Muscat de Frontignan. These grape varieties facilitate the creation of still red and white wines as well as sparkling wines, all of which have potential to benefit from a PGI that covers the Cape Town ward, or from a PDO that focuses on the Constantia Valley. The Constantia pocket has proven strong in its reputation and in fetching premium prices since it’s establishment in the 1650’s.

This thesis will look at this potential in the context of one particular wine, of the many options available from which a PDO could be created for Constantia: the sweet wines of Constantia, produced from dried Muscat de Frontignan grapes only.

The Sweet Wines of Constantia are historically famous wines from the Constantia Valley in South Africa. These wines represent the potential that South African wines hold in sustaining competitive value on the global market.

These wines have established reputation, traditional code of practice, as well as the terroir and prestige fitting for the first South African PDO wine, as is discussed in detail in this thesis.

The impacts of the implementation of the GI scheme within the South African wine industry was explored and a SWOT analysis has been carried out. To further qualitative research, interviews were conducted with the CEO and marketing manager of Groot Constantia and with various agents responsible for the registration of Rooibos as
South Africa’s first registered PDO product. The method of PDO registration was also discussed in this thesis, inspired by methods that were performed for the registration of Rooibos/Red Bush Tea.

Registration of such a PDO in the wine industry could stimulate discourse in the confidence of the rules of winemaking in South Africa. There is much that is accepted as general law, which wine enthusiasts seem to trust to be followed rather than enforced. To add to general discourse within the South African wine sector, there is a push to celebrate tradition while there is a simultaneous desire to allow innovation and prevent restriction within the industry.

It is assumed that the implementation of the GI scheme would act as a tool to improve strength in marketing, rural development, reputation and value of South African wines, although willingness and collaboration are two of many challenges that would have to be addressed in the process. It seems that a PDO for the Wines of Constantia is feasible, and the results of such a policy would require careful monitoring if it were to be implemented in order to assess the impact. In conclusion, further market research is suggested.

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