



## ABSTRACT

**Title:**

BRIDGING TIES IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: FROM A DOMESTIC  
CLUSTER TO AN INTERNATIONAL DIVERSIFIED FIRM

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S5. Glocal clústeres: aspectos críticos y nuevas trayectorias

**Abstract:** *(minimum 300 words)*

International networks with distant agents have been demonstrated of great help for firms to minimize the difficulties of entering in foreign markets and increasing their international competitiveness (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009; Nowiński and Rialp, 2016; Presutti et al., 2016). International suppliers, clients or competitors could be used to identify new opportunities, obtain business advice, assist in foreign negotiations, or open doors in their home markets, among others (Johanson and Mattsson, 1988; Phillips McDougall et al., 1994; Yli-Renko et al., 2002).

Considering its relevance, the objective of this research is to better understand how firms can establish these bridging ties, and how these ties affect their capacity to further develop their internationalization. In particular, we aim to understand how the strength



of the relationships, the density of those connections, as well as their experience in the domestic network with bridging ties, influence firms capacity to establish new bridging ties.

This empirical study is developed in La Rioja wine cluster, located in northern Spain. Wine production has recently emerged as a dynamic and fairly knowledge-intensive activity. The main data sources used to obtain the list of wineries in the target population were the directories drawn up by the Regulatory Council of the Rioja Designation of Origin (the number of wineries in this directory came up to 580). The data for this study were collected through the use of a structural survey. The survey data collection period ended in September 2017. The population from which the sample is drawn consists of wineries that fulfil the following requirements: (1) they belong to the Rioja Designation of Origin, (2) they are wine-making processors, (3) they are obliged to present accounting information to the authorities. In total, 123 valid questionnaires were obtained. There are 88 exporting firms and 35 non-exporting firms.

Empirical evidence firstly confirms that establishing bridging ties with international agents foster the acquisition of valuable international knowledge (Sandberg, 2014). By these bridging ties, firms develop a kind of indirect relationships with contacts of their contacts, which provide the firm with access to new ideas and business opportunities (Agndal et al., 2008; Ellis, 2000). Also, we confirm that these bridging ties are positively related to the development of strong ties in the international market, the presence of bridging ties in their domestic networks. Nevertheless, the level of cohesiveness in the international and the previous experience in the domestic market as wineries producers was no significant.

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