

Disparities in recognizing GIs: causes, consequences, possible evolutions

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Introduction

- Geographical Indications (GI) are labels indicating that a product possesses "a" **specificity linked to the territory** of origin,
- The **criteria** on which the recognition of the GI is based **should be stable**, shared and known by the different countries
- But ... the implementation of **GIs does not offer full guarantees** in this regard / great diversity of qualities communicated under the large umbrella of the GI

Rationale

- To what extent can a rating system be considered reliable if it does **not always present equivalence**, neither conceptual nor practical, between countries?
- How appropriate is a global system that benefits **countries with a lower level of requirements** to recognize GI?
- What are these drifts in the recognition process **due to**?

Sources of Drifts

- Technical
- Political
- commercial

At a Technical level

- **Ambiguities** that come from the **regulations themselves**, especially under the PGI (but not only)
- The **consideration of reputation** as a sufficient element to support a differentiation through PGI.
- The consideration (or not) of **human factors** (such as know-how) as essential.
- **Diverse interpretations** of these elements explain, in part, the range of GI products that present a low degree of specificity with a weak link with their territory.

Source at the political and institutional level

- The presence of officials with **little specific technical training** in the GI
- Mechanisms of institutional organization for **monitoring and control** undemanding regarding the technical bases of the GI,
- The **pressures** that can be exerted for a product to be recognized through GI, although there are no technical bases that justify
- the **combination** of several of them.
- **Independence and absence of conflict of interest is required** (but not always ensured) between the GI recognition bodies and the political power.
- **Health standards, poorly adapted to artisanal productions,** marginalize local products in their more typical versions.

Source at the commercial level

- **Market-oriented strategies** can also lead to select only the products (and then process, genetics and practice) adapted to the wishes of certain market niches outside of the area of origin.
- It can lead to the marginalization of typical systems and products and on the other hand to **loss of specificity**.

Framework

Technical	Political and Institutional	Commercial
<p>Reputation as a sufficient element to support a differentiation through PGI. Territorial Anchorage (only symbolic quality) vs Territorial Typicity)</p>	<p>Structures with little demand for technical analysis (Spain, or Austria, Costa Rica). Recognition of a GI product with a national area (ex. Feta in Greece, Café de Costa Rica)</p>	<p>Selection of processes and products according to market criteria.</p> <p>Domination of a short-term vision where GI is reduced as a fashion.</p>
<p>New products with superior commercial quality (Kiwi del SEB).</p>	<p>Influence of political actors on technical decisions.</p>	<p>Loss of specificities in the production and product processes.</p>
<p>The technical proof is enough (Cerdan et al. 2011).</p>	<p>Inclusion of IPs within Qualified GIs (Brazil)</p>	
<p>Industrial techniques (silage, milk pasteurization, cosmopolite breeds) accepted while other GI products prohibit them.</p>	<p>Sanitary and commercial regulations little adapted to "handmade" products. Counter-selection of local systems and products</p>	<p>Marginalization of local systems and products based on local markets or short chains (Champredonde, 2014).</p>

Consequences

- True **place-based** product vs **territorial anchored** products
 - great differences in cost of production or inclusion of new technologies, margins and incomes as well.
 - i) **Coexistence in a given country**: GI products with contrasted situations
 - ii) **Competition between countries**: Countries with a large number of products benefit from the GI policy including products with low legitimacy.
 - iii) **Asymmetries between continents**: Europe presents a large number of recognized products compared to continents such as America, Asia or Africa.
- **Confusion** at customer level
- The **credibility** of the GIs is affected

Conclusions

- **Indications of source** (a relation to the territory without any specificity) should be **clearly differentiate** from indications of origin (the place associated to specificity)
- The **protection of names** would be reserved to the GI ...
.... new debates could take place around the exclusive use of the name
- This would contribute to achieving a **more objective and reliable system**, in view of its perpetuation.