Disparities in recognizing GIs: causes, consequences, possible evolutions

CHAMPREDONDE Marcelo, INTA, Argentina champredonde.marcelo@inta.gob.ar
CASABIANCA François, INRAE, France, fcasacorte@gmail.com
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.
• **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.
<table>
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<th>Technical</th>
<th>Political and Institutional</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
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<td>Reputatation as a sufficient element to support a differentiation through PGI. Territorial Anchorage (only symbolic quality) vs Territorial Typicity</td>
<td>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)</td>
<td>Selection of processes and products according to market criteria.</td>
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<td>New products with superior commercial quality (Kiwi del SEB).</td>
<td>Influence of political actors on technical decisions.</td>
<td>Domination of a short-term vision where GI is reduced as a fashion.</td>
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<td>The technical proof is enough (Cerdan et al. 2011).</td>
<td>Inclusion of IPs within Qualified GIs (Brazil)</td>
<td>Loss of specificities in the production and product processes.</td>
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<td>Industrial techniques (silage, milk pasteurization, cosmopolite breeds) accepted while other GI products prohibit them.</td>
<td>Sanitary and commercial regulations little adapted to &quot;handmade&quot; products. Counter-selection of local systems and products</td>
<td>Marginalization of local systems and products based on local markets or short chains (Champredonde, 2014).</td>
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Consequences

• True place-based product vs territorial anchoraged 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.