


GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

INDICAÇÕES GEOGRÁFICAS SOB A PERSPECTIVA DO DESENVOLVIMENTO SUSTENTÁVEL
INDICACIONES GEOGRÁFICAS A TRAVÉS DE LA PERSPECTIVA DEL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE

Vitória Aparecida Cardoso

PhD student in Politics, Economics and Governance of Sustainable Development at the University of Vermont. Master in Agribusiness and Development by the Graduate Program in Agribusiness and Development at Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho.
vitoria.cardoso@uvm.edu

 0000-0002-2068-3684


João Augusto Rodrigues

Bachelor in Business Administration from the State University "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (UNESP).
joao.augusto@unesp.br

 0000-0003-3711-7598

Amanda Negreti

PhD student at the Graduate Program in Agribusiness and Development (PGAD), Faculty of Science and Engineering (FCE), UNESP, Tupã. Master in Agribusiness and Development from the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FCE), UNESP, Tupã.
amandanegreti.unesp@gmail.com

 0000-0001-7371-159X

Ana Elisa Bressan Smith Lourenzani

PhD student at the Graduate Program in Agribusiness and Development (PGAD), Faculty of Science and Engineering (FCE), UNESP, Tupã. Master in Agribusiness and Development from the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FCE), UNESP, Tupã.
Ana.lourenzani@unesp.br

Mailing address: Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho, Câmpus de Tupã. Rua Domingos da Costa Lopes, 780 – Jardim Itaipu, CEP: 17602-496, Tupã, SP – Brasil.

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ABSTRACT:

While globalization promotes the homogenization of consumption, it is possible to observe during the last years a change in consumers' behavior towards a valorization of local products produced traditionally. In this context are the Geographical Indications (GIs), responsible for identifying the origin of a given product or service when its place of origin has become known for its production or when certain product quality is linked to its demographic origin. The GIs also preserve local traditions and the natural environment, as well as foster farmers' market access, which makes these labels be seen as a development tool. Therefore, this work verifies the potential of GIs to contribute to the dimensions of sustainable development (SD), which are economic, social, and environmental. A bibliographic literature review was carried out. Results show that a GI can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainability, which are social, economic, and environmental.

KEYWORDS: Traditional Product; Literature Review; Sustainability Dimensions.

Introduction

As various movements toward the homogenization and globalization of markets are emerging, on the other hand, there are changes in consumption patterns that encourage demand for local products, which value quality standards linked to the origin and specific modes of production. Geographical Indications (GIs) are an essential strategy in this scenario, as they value intangible assets linked to a particular territory (Niederle, 2009). GIs are industrial property assets, and they are used to identify the origin of a given product or service when its place of origin has become known for its production or when certain product quality is linked to its demographic origin.

GIs as well as other labels can represent essential strategies for achieving SD, as these distinctive signs offer several advantages for producers, service providers, and consumers because preserving local traditions facilitates market access and encourages local development (INPI, 2020). Radic *et al.* (2023) explain that GIs are capable of promoting SD because labels aggregate value to the products, becoming them more competitive in the markets, contributing to the protection of human rights (for preserving the cultural identity of territory and society), contribute to environmental protection, incentivizing the preservation of GI's region. Then, the GIs can represent an important strategy to achieve SD.

Regarding SD, it is based on the idea that meeting the needs of present generations must be done through the proper use of natural resources so that they are preserved for the use of future generations. This form of development does not only seek economic growth, which is necessary but not enough. A better and more complete life is sought for all, that is, the full enjoyment of human rights, which is reflected in equality, equity, and solidarity (Calegare & Silva Júnior, 2011).

To achieve SD, it is necessary that three dimensions are respected: the economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Dias, 2009; FAO, 2014). The 2030 Agenda, by presenting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), constitutes one of the main international efforts to achieve SD. It establishes an action plan for achieving prosperity at the global level and encourages world peace through partnerships between nations, institutions, and society (Jannuzzi & Carlo, 2018).

GIs are related to some SD Goals (SDGs), established by the United Nations (UN), such as the second one, to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" (UN, 2015, p. 18). By promoting sustainable production involving local agriculture, GIs lead to sustainable agriculture's growth and contribute to inclusion, income generation, and local employment, often contributing to the maintenance of farmers' lives. Therefore, the research question was: what is the potential of GIs to contribute to the dimensions of SD?

This study will use the three-bottom line of sustainability, covering the environmental, social, and economic dimensions, because they are the most addressed in the literature. Some studies understood GIs and sustainability, for example, the construction of a framework for the use of GIs for sustainability, through a participatory process of the agents (Vandecandelaere *et al.*, 2021). Other studies search to understand the relationship between sustainable production and GIs in different locations and products, such as oysters, in France, or mountain regions that produce cheeses, in Spain (García-Hernandez *et al.*, 2022), or identifying the economic sustainability of indigenous

people who market rice with the GI, in Thailand (Petruang & Napasintuwong, 2022). Then, it was possible to observe the scarcity of studies to analyze GI and SD, using literature as a basis.

In this way, the main objective of this paper is to verify the potential of GIs to contribute to the dimensions of SD, which are economic, social, and environmental. This study presents a scientific contribution to fill this research gap, demonstrating the potential of GIs in contributing to SD covering three dimensions: environmental, social, and economic. As a social contribution, there is an attempt to help farmers or entities that use GI labels (or those who wish to use that signs) to demonstrate various ways that GIs can contribute to the three dimensions of SD.

The article is structured as follows the introduction, the methodological processes used to do this work are presented, followed by the results and discussions, with a deeper understanding of the existing literature, as well as the main dimensions of SD addressed by the GIs and the general discussions of the study. The last section corresponds to the final considerations, with an overview of the main findings and insights.

Methodological Procedures

The research method chosen for this research was the bibliographic review which, for Cervo and Bervian (2002), aims to collect information and previous knowledge about specific research problems and is based on sources of scientific studies. Thus, to answer the present research problem, information and previous knowledge were sought in the scientific literature about GIs. The three dimensions of SD are economic, social, and environmental. Thus, the sources consulted were scientific articles and book chapters in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, being bases of international scope, with strict policies for the assignment of journals and classification systems (Wang & Waltman, 2016). Similarly, the Scielo database was used because it covers national documents. It is worth noting that the choice of GI focused on food products, such as cheese, and meat, presenting the research's relationship with agribusiness. Likewise, three dimensions of SD were selected for the research, according to Doernberg *et al.* (2022), when citing the numerosity of authors who use the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, being the tripod of sustainability commonly cited among the articles. Therefore, those three dimensions were selected to find more information in the context of GI.

Some of the techniques of bibliographic research are descriptive research, which seeks to observe, record, and analyze the phenomenon studied (Cervo & Bervian, 2002). Thus, the researcher observed the studies referring to GIs, and recorded and analyzed them when considering the phenomenon of the present research, being the potential of

GIs to contribute to the dimensions of SD. The descriptive research allowed the use of content analysis of the documents consulted, aiming to investigate and interpret the manifest content of the communications contained in the bibliographies analyzed about the potential of GIs to contribute to the dimensions of SD (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008), three main analysis phases were carried out: the preparation, organization, and generation of the research report. For preparation, the unit of analysis was selected, with the themes being GI and the three dimensions of SD. In the organization phase, categories and subcategories were created; the categories were defined a priori based on the three dimensions of SD. After that, the researcher created subcategories according to the similarities found in the documents on each category. For example, more than one author reported economic sustainability (category) and cited income and employment generation in GI regions (building the subcategory). In addition to similarity, the researcher observed data that does not belong to the same category of SD dimensions, enabling the comparison between different authors' perspectives on this topic in the context of GIs. In the last phase, there was the report generation, by exposing formats of graphic representations for a better visual presentation and organization of the collected and analyzed information.

Results and Discussions

To present the context of the research analyzed, the main countries and products studied with GI were identified. Thus, it was noticed a higher number of surveys covered Brazil (29%), Italy (29%), and Spain (25%). The others, such as Argentina, are below 10%. This result is in line with Pivetta (2021), citing that Brazilian GIs are constantly developing.

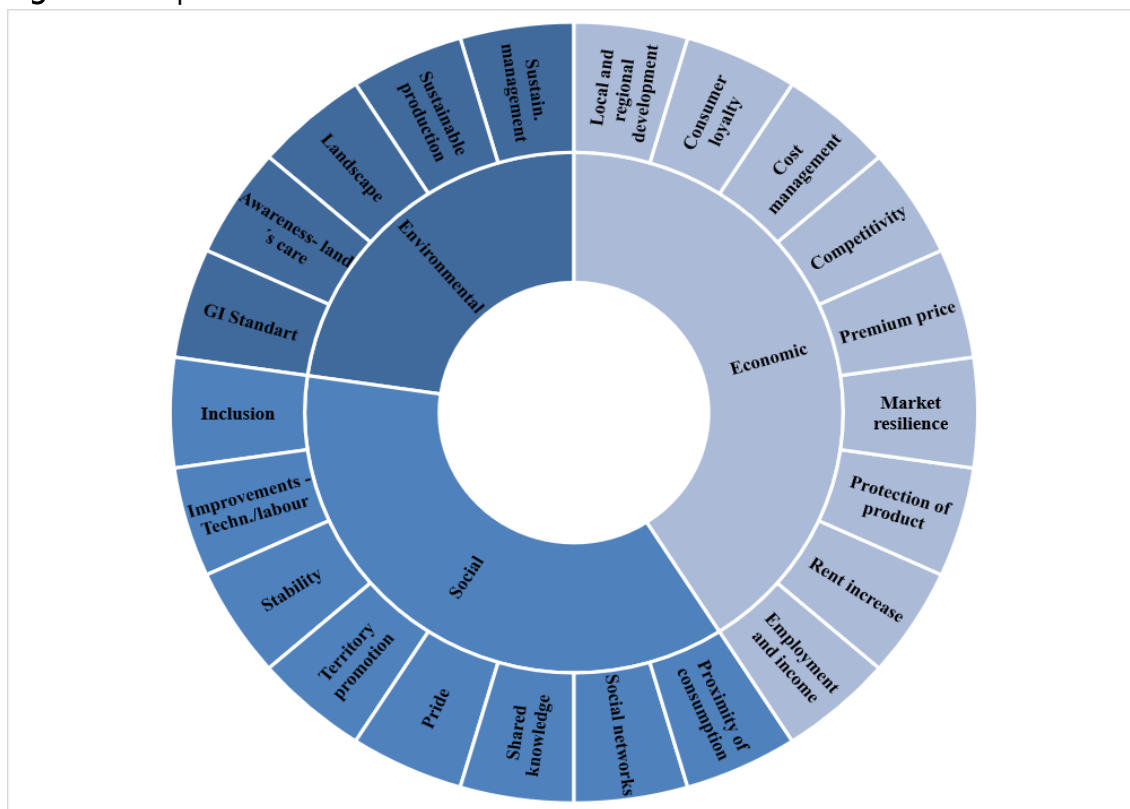
This is observed, mainly with the increase of GI in recent years, and a government incentive regarding patents and industrial property rights. According to the INPI (2023), there are currently more than 100 GI registrations in force in Brazil, including some foreign Denominations of Origin, such as wines, sparkling wines, and cheese. There was a 55% increase, comparing the last two decades 2001-2012 (36 labels) and 2013-2022 (65 labels).

This increase may impact on more interest from the public and scientific society, resulting in more publications on GI. In the same way, the main products studied with the GI seal were wines (25%), meats (20%), and cheeses (20%), while the other items presented a percentage below 15. This result indicates possible research gaps concerning GIs study with a focus on some products, such as coffee and olive oil (5%). In the Brazilian scenario, it is worth highlighting a range of study opportunities involving the problem of

this article with the Coffee culture, since coffee is one of the products with the most registrations in the country, 16 (15% of the total) (INPI, 2023).

Regarding the potential of GIs to contribute to the dimensions of SD, Figure 1 sets out the categories, of the following dimensions: environmental, social, and economic, together with their respective subcategories.

Figure 1 The potential of GIs to contribute to the three dimensions of SD



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Regarding the potential of GIs to contribute to the environmental dimension, there were reports about introducing more sustainable management in rural properties, including protecting and conserving natural resources, and reducing negative environmental externalities. This more sustainable management, aimed at alternative agriculture, is supported by the SD Goals, which punctuate actions to eradicate hunger and poverty, protect the environment and the climate, and guarantee the quality of life (Arfini *et al.*, 2019).

This factor is also related to the sustainable production of regions with GI, such as crops diversification, including those of the same species, organic production, maintenance, and biodiversity protections, as cited by Bardají *et al.* (2009), when cited those farmers practice extensive livestock farming in mountainous regions. This action

contributes to biodiversity and habitat necessary for the survival of species of cattle in that region.

These productive ways are related to meeting standards, regulations, and technical specifications to use a GI. The technical specifications booklet is the document prepared by the producers and/or service providers whose objective is to describe the product or service represented by the GI, as well as the way to obtain registration, quality control, and process standards (INPI, 2019).

In the environmental aspect, GI labels contribute to the regulations and forms of production of products and provision of services, whose methods are aligned with the environment. Those who have the labels “guarantee its sustainability, acting on both the environment and cultural and social dimensions combined together” (Arfini *et al.*, 2019, p. 4).

The researcher observed reports, such as Froehlich and Corchuelo (2017), about the influences of institutional agents or entities that seek local development by making those involved aware of land care as a way of valuing and conserving the territory. These results align with Marescotti *et al.* (2020), that, GIs can incorporate ecological rules and production to preserve resources and territories, and they have the potential to perform positive influences on the environment.

In addition to contributing to the enhancement of the territory, positively impacting the environment and local development, the use of GI makes it possible to contribute to the social sphere, with the social dimension, there were reports of the inclusion of less favored producers and areas, resulting in generation and guarantee of income and employment for them (Arfini *et al.*, 2019).

Dal Ferro and Borin (2017) expound on agricultural intensification in mountainous regions, allowing intensive, local, small-scale labor, preventing land abandonment, and including farmers, who would be marginalized in a dominant food system. It was possible to identify quotes on the sense of stability of some farmers, in which they maintain their performance in the field and local rural communities, promoting local rural development.

Adding to this is the sharing of information about techniques, know-how, and social and cultural values that are intangibly embedded in the product and/or service. For those who are in the region, it gives rise to a sense of pride and belonging to the stories and traditional aspects, which is later translated into cultural heritage, through the preservation of know-how and local traditions (Arfini, *et al.*, 2019a; Pereira *et al.*, 2018). Social aspects are also related to technological and labor improvements to meet the requirements of the production mode specified by some GIs. Similarly, the researcher

identified the creation or strengthening of collaborative social networks, through associations and cooperatives.

These elements involve collective efforts to achieve common interests, positively impacting the development of the territory, pride feelings, identity of farmers, and their feelings about belonging to the territory or region. These factors lead to valorization and local and regional promotion, such as the development of tourism actions. These results align with Fronzaglia (2021), that some GI areas present the potential to associate value to territorial assets for tourism and gastronomy, among other services associated with natural or human resources.

Examples of tourism and adding value to the place are some European countries, such as Italy and France, in which their territories often are linked production of food, demonstrating a cultural heritage, in which production practices are associated with local cultures, transmitted through generations and people from diverse origins (Sellito *et al.*, 2018; Joosse *et al.*, 2021). In other cases, Brazil, for example, is growing that connection, between GIs and tourism, contributing to the local society and rural farmers, such as Wine Route in Bento Gonçalves - RS, through the GIs that represents southern wines and sparkling wines and generates regional development. Another brazilian case is the GI that corresponds to Canastra cheese, providing ecotourism to the Serra da Canastra National Park, with the landscapes and waterfalls of the State of Minas Gerais. Besides, the Route of specialty coffees in the regions of Southern Minas, Zona da Mata, Belo Horizonte, and Cerrado Mineiro, which gains notoriety with the Specialty Coffee IGs.

In this sense, GIs can potentially contribute to the economic dimension concerning regional and local development, benefiting the actors involved directly, such as the generation of employment and income, and those indirectly involved, such as those who work in tourism, and restaurants.

The impacts of GIs are in encouraging rural producers, adding value to their products and services provided, differentiating them from others and providing increased competitiveness in the markets (Fagundes *et al.*, 2012). In addition, the implementation of the GI brings other gains in the economic sphere, such as: i.) Appreciation of the place of origin – stimulation of tourism; ii.) Product traceability; and iii.) Uniform distribution of the price paid for the product along the production chain (Jenoveva Neto *et al.*, 2016).

GIs also potentially contribute to increasing the actors' competitiveness and market resilience by demonstrating product differentiation, increased technology used in production, know-how, and cultural, traditional, and local factors denote product authenticity, in addition to protecting the region from opportunistic actions and

counterfeits (Pereira, *et al.* 2018). These factors, in line with Raustiala and Munzer (2007), and Marescotti *et al.* (2020), contribute to the insertion and permanence of competitive advantage in the market, because products with GI seals present their differential, with opportunities for the ascent, in response to the demand that seeks local traditions and authenticity of products.

Thus, the differential and adding value to products allow actors to apply premium prices that contribute to a better income for those involved. However, according to Cei *et al.* (2018), it is not possible to generalize because the price does not guarantee the best economic performance of some local actors, due to high production costs, due to employing traditional production, generating high costs. In the same way, a GI label does not always guarantee a price premium because this factor depends on the product's quality and the consumer's knowledge about the origin or production processes.

However, it is an alternative that aims to provide income distribution, quality of life, and well-being for producers. And for consumers, on the other side of the supply chain, product traceability is provided, as a way of protecting the product, as well as other information about the origin, mode of production, and other characteristics informed through registration.

Final Considerations

It was observed that there is still a wide range of research opportunities in GI and SD and the relationship between them, mainly research that addresses the three pillars: social, economic, and environmental, and emphasizes how a GI can contribute to this context. There is the potential of GIs to contribute to the three dimensions of SD, especially regarding the goals developed by the UN.

However, it was observed that, especially in the economic dimension, it is not possible to generalize a greater financial return to those involved based on price premium, which is necessary for the consumer to recognize the quality of the product or origin. Thus, actions that promote and disseminate information about GIs are important to raise consumer awareness about the specific origins or quality of products. Given this observation, it is up to public and/or private bodies to seek ways to communicate to society the value that GIs compete for and how these distinctive signs are significant for regional development and rural communities. As a research limitation, the current study did not cover other dimensions of sustainability, such as governance, when the theme of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) is addressed.

Thus, in future studies, it is suggested that field research be carried out with producers and service providers who hold the registration, as well as those who wish to

request it. In addition, understanding how the records contribute to their particularities, in specific regions. Identifying the contributions of green infrastructure to SD through the inclusion of other dimensions, such as governance encompassing the coordination of the actors involved.

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RESUMO:

Enquanto a globalização promove a homogeneização do consumo, é possível observar nos últimos anos uma mudança no comportamento dos consumidores para a valorização dos produtos locais produzidos tradicionalmente. Neste âmbito estão as Indicações Geográficas, responsáveis por identificar a origem de um determinado produto ou serviço quando o seu local de origem se tornou conhecido pela sua produção ou quando determinada qualidade do produto está ligada à sua origem demográfica. Também preservam as tradições locais e o ambiente natural, além de favorecer o acesso dos agricultores ao mercado, o que faz com que esses rótulos sejam vistos como uma ferramenta de desenvolvimento. Portanto, este trabalho verifica o potencial das IGs em contribuir com as dimensões do desenvolvimento sustentável (DS), que são econômicas, sociais e ambientais. Foi realizada uma revisão bibliográfica da literatura. Os resultados mostram que uma IG pode contribuir para as três dimensões da sustentabilidade, que são social, econômica e ambiental.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Produtos Tradicionais; Revisão de Literatura; Dimensões de Sustentabilidade.

RESUMEN:

Si bien la globalización promueve la homogeneización del consumo, es posible observar en los últimos años un cambio en el comportamiento del consumidor hacia la valorización de los productos locales producidos tradicionalmente. Dentro de este ámbito se encuentran las Indicaciones Geográficas, encargadas de identificar el origen de un determinado producto o servicio cuando se ha dado a conocer su lugar de origen para su producción o cuando una determinada calidad del producto está ligada a su origen demográfico. También preservan las tradiciones locales y el entorno natural, además de favorecer el acceso de los agricultores al mercado, lo que hace que estas etiquetas se vean como una herramienta de desarrollo. Por lo tanto, este trabajo verifica el potencial de las IG para contribuir a las dimensiones del desarrollo sostenible, que son económicas, sociales y ambientales. Se realizó una revisión bibliográfica de la literatura. Los resultados muestran que una IG puede contribuir a las tres dimensiones de la sostenibilidad, que son social, económica y ambiental.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Productos Tradicionales; Revisión de la Literatura; Dimensiones de la Sostenibilidad.