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Environmental effects of Geographical Indications and climate change

Geographical Indications (GIs) are labels that recognize products with specific identities, linked to the environmental and cultural characteristics of their places of origin. In theory, GIs related to agrifood products are recognized for favoring more sustainable production systems and are part of a set of strategies that aims to counter the notion of food as commodities and promote territorial development (Larson, 2007; Vandecandelaere et al., 2018). We explored the relationship between agrifood GIs and environmental sustainability, based on an integrative review of the scientific literature, in which 28 studies with empirical evidence of the results of GIs were analyzed. Regarding environmental effects, 68% of the studies (n = 19) reported only positive effects, 14 % (n = 4) mentioned only negative effects, 14% (n = 4) identified positive and negative effects simultaneously (ambiguous) and 4% (n = 1) did not find any type of environmental effect that could be related to GI (neutral). We were able to distinguish sixteen types of positive effects and five types of negative effects. Two positive effects stand out: the role that GIs can play in conserving traditional agricultural landscapes, maintaining biodiversity and scenic beauty associated with these landscapes, and acting as a barrier against productive intensification, both cited in 11 articles. Productive intensification appears as the most frequently mentioned negative effect, in 8 articles, and the decrease in genetic variability, in 5 articles. Opposite effects have often been pointed out by different studies. This apparent contradiction indicates how heterogeneous the environmental results from the GIs may be and stresses the importance and urgency of understanding what factors influence their environmental performance. Although few studies have directly addressed the climate issue, it is possible to relate the reported environmental effects to this context to understand the potential roles and impacts of GIs. In this sense, it was observed that GIs can contribute to mitigating climate change, as they favor more complex, biodiverse and less intensive production systems, which, *a priori*, have a lower emission potential or a greater potential for sequestering greenhouse gases (Belletti, 2015; Pantera, 2018). It was also observed that they can facilitate adaptation to the effects of ongoing changes, as they have been associated with more resilient productive and social systems, in which production techniques are more adaptable to environmental changes through the social organization promoted by the GIs (TASHIRO, A.; UCHIYAMA, Y.; KOHSAKA, 2019). Finally, the review unveils that, despite the prevalence of positive environmental effects, most GIs studied in economically developing countries, with greater social inequality and also higher biodiversity (Mexico, India, Morocco and Brazil), had some kind of negative environmental effect. GIs were designed in Europe, in an institutional, historical and landscape context very different from that found in the countries of the global South (Bowen, 2010). Thus, to trigger positive effects, this tool cannot simply be transferred from one location to another, but it needs to be carefully adjusted to the different realities.

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