

# Introduction

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This volume is about the emancipatory power and democratizing role of geographical indication (GI). Specifically, and through the presentation of original international research, it probes whether the implementation of GI represents a progressive alternative to the socioeconomic trends and outcomes that characterize the contemporary global neoliberal agri-food system. Supported by a long-standing debate on its relevance and ability to affect agricultural markets, GI is defined as “a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin” (WIPO 2015, 8). Moreover, it is often referred to as tool that attaches additional market value to a product by linking it to a specific place, its culture and traditional forms of production (Artini et al. 2016; Parasecoli 2017). The place-based value of GI products (in short, GIs) is further legitimized by the concept of terroir. Lacking adequate translation in many major languages, including English, terroir is used in its original French to indicate the combination of environmental, cultural and socioeconomic factors that shape the production of a specific agri-food product (Patterson and Buechsenstein 2018; Wilson and Johnson 1999). An agri-food product, this construct indicates, has a set of inalienable characteristics that distinguish it from, and make it more valuable than, similar products. The probing of the theme of the relevance GI as a tool for socioeconomic development and democratization of agri-food follows a sociological approach. This posture implies placing the analysis within the context of not only sociological debates – as opposed to legal and administrative discussions, as it is frequently the case – but also relevant social phenomena such the globalization of society and the neoliberalization of social relations. Additionally, it pays attention to the social implications of the evolution of market relations that characterize capitalism.

To be sure, the selection of the theme of the emancipatory role of GI should not be a surprise to those who follow the evolution of agriculture and food in the global neoliberal era. These students are aware of the many challenges that the corporatization of, and capital concentration in, agri-food engender for producers, consumers, agricultural communities and society as a whole (Bonanno and Wolf 2018; Howard 2016; Sekine and Bonanno 2016). In this context, relevant is the claim made by pertinent research about the desirable

consequences engendered by the implementation of GI. Accompanying the assertion that GI adds value to local agri-food products, proposed arguments stress a number of additional beneficial consequences, including the augmentation of the economic well-being of producers and their communities, the availability of better quality food for consumers, the protection of heritage products and safeguarding the environment (Calboli and Wee Loom 2017; Paus 2010; Van Caenegem and Clearly 2017). However, GI is also a complex concept/process whose evolution contains conditions that are contradictory and, in some instances, inadequate to promote the well-being of stakeholders, their communities and, ultimately, society as a whole (Gangjee 2012; Guthman 2004; Hughes 2017; Parasecoli 2017; Zukin 2008). Given this background, the research question – whether the implementation of GI is a tool that can improve the conditions of all its stakeholders – earns further legitimacy.

The contradictory nature of GI finds its roots in the origin of the concept and its early implementations. As Blancaneaux (this volume) documents in the mature example of French wine, GI was implemented in the early 20th century to instill discipline among regional producers in order to uphold quality within a context of unstable agriculture (plant disease) and market shifts (increasing urban interest in certified wine), but the integrity of the system incrementally eroded as the number of certified regions reached saturation and as industrial-scale production became commonplace in GI regions. This points to one of the fundamental paradoxes of GI, namely that production regions are encouraged to maintain historical production systems and delimited borders but are also inexorably pushed by market forces to expand production and penetrate new regions. This integration of GIs into trade, particularly international trade, has thus broadly come to define the *raison d'être* of GI. The effort to reconcile this contradiction is particularly sharp in developing and agri-export-oriented countries such as Turkey (see Nizam, this volume) and Cambodia (Feuer, this volume). The origin of GI in Western Europe and its expansion abroad as a form of intellectual property protection for European products has thus been, on reflection of world systems theory, considered as tantamount to neocolonialism (Arewa 2006; Broude 2005; Pretorius 2002). In fact, even exporting the idea that Indigenous products and their associated intangible cultural capital should be commoditized and traded (even at higher value) is questioned (Frankel 2011; Posey 1990).

However, in the contemporary globalized neoliberal world, the rather frequent and heterogeneous use of the term *GI* perhaps best defines the complexity of its status. Neoliberal globalization has promoted the diffusion of local agri-food products worldwide (Bonanno and Constance 2008; Burch and Lawrence 2007; Howard 2016). This situation rests on the standardization of production and products and the opening of markets whereby the elimination of barriers to the circulation of commodities allows increasingly homogenous products to move with accelerated velocity across the socioeconomic space (Bonanno 2017). Supported by the neoliberal construct of unrestricted competition, the standardization of production and the increased global circulation

of agri-food goods have fostered the emergence of *food from nowhere*. This phenomenon refers to the dominant status of food items whose *ubiquity, anonymity* and *uniformity* promote relatively low prices and high levels of availability and consumption. These are factors that, through the universalization of industrial food, augment the profits of large transnational corporations (TNCs) and their control of all facets of food production and distribution (Carolan 2013; Clapp and Fuchs 2009; Sekine and Bonanno 2016; Wolf and Bonanno 2014). Additionally, this situation fosters conditions that penalize family and Indigenous producers, labor, local farming communities, and the socioeconomic development of less-advanced regions, while undermining the safeguard of the environment and preservation of natural resources.

Opposition to the global neoliberal evolution of agri-food resulted in the emergence of not only incisive critiques of corporate agriculture but also practical initiatives that include civic agriculture, farmers markets, organic production, urban agriculture, slow food and more. Despite its pre-neoliberal origins, GI is often placed on this list of instruments designed to oppose corporate agri-food by privileging the stabilization of foods' origins, histories and traditions as prescribed by the concept of *terroir* (Calboli and Wee Loom 2017; Van Caenegem and Clearly 2017). Indeed, one of the main benefit of GIs is that they are impersonal and not connected to a specific rights holder. This means that first arrival or market position does not necessarily lead to the consolidation of power (Addor and Grazioli 2005, 870). However, because GI policies are inherently designed, and indeed promoted to third countries, as a malleable and culturally/institutionally adaptable framework (O'Connor and Company 2005), they are vulnerable to juridical and legislative loopholes that can be taken advantage of by politically or economically powerful agents. In practice, then, TNCs are in a position to co-opt various GIs if the product in question can be shaped to fit capitalist logic. Contributors to this book present cases across this spectrum: TNCs having low interest in a relevant GI (Sekine, this volume), TNCs deflected by public producers (Hegnes and Amilien, this volume), TNCs partially capturing a production region (Feuer, this volume) and TNCs aggressively appropriating a GI (Renard and Domínguez Arista, this volume). In great empirical detail, these cases demonstrate common tactics through which the "spirit" of GI can be undermined as well as some institutional mechanisms that are employed to preempt co-optation.

Due to the crisis of traditional forms of contestation such as strikes and demonstrations, almost all these other initiatives are based on individual and consumption-centered actions (Bonanno and Wolf 2018). These aspects played a relatively limited role in the historically relevant 20th-century process of producing cheap and abundant food for the expanding urban/industrial population (Clapp 2016; Le Blanc 1999). But as the social dimension of food evolved from its original role of a basic social need to the contemporary cultural experience, the objective of generating cheap and abundant food became not only less attractive but also a process that should be questioned and ultimately opposed (Carolan 2013; Parasecoli 2017).

Food as understood as a social experience entails a number of important social implications that remain relevant for the possible emancipatory dimension of GI. First, and as already mentioned, the issue of alternative agri-food is framed almost exclusively in individual terms. Accordingly, individuality and individual preferences take primacy over structural, collective factors – such as industrial relations, conditions of production and power concentration – in establishing desirable developments for agri-food (Warde 2014). The wishes of individual consumers, in other words, represent the ultimate factor of the way agri-food ought to be. Second and because individuals act as consumers, the evolution of agri-food remains exclusively contained within market relations. This implies that food can be understood only as a commodity as its *raison d'être* is centered on production for market exchange and the generation of profit. Alternative views of food – such as food as a human right or as a decommodified entity – cannot be contemplated. A particular contradiction of GI emerges in this, as specialty products are meant to be simultaneously exclusive, unique and rare, whereas specialty production (i.e., new GI production certification) is meant to be widely accessible to all producers as a form of rural development. Third, as market relations remain transcendental, the best possible option for the future organization of agri-food is that of a “fair” market. This outcome, however, remains based on a situation that offers inconsistent instruments to combat the tendency toward the concentration and centralization of resources typical of capitalism and the ability of large corporations to co-opt alternative forms of producing and distributing foods. Finally, individual food consumption understood as an experience is income-sensitive. This means that affluent segments of society are those that are more likely to be involved in the formal practices of this type of consumption. While this situation is not necessarily undesirable, the discrimination of less affluent social groups represents an indictment of this understanding of food.

In the specific case of GI, the alternative to the dominant form of corporate agri-food and the global neoliberal regime that supports it is expressed in at least three ways: (1) the defense of tradition and its cultural traits; (2) the requalification of the local with its uniqueness and history and (3) protection from the unwanted consequences of market competition. As far the issue of the *defense of tradition and its cultural traits* is concerned, particular importance is given to the disintegrating consequences of the domination of food from nowhere. As the production and consumption of industrial food damage small and medium producers and consumers alike while benefiting corporations, attempts to recover the cultural and traditional dimensions of food are seen as generalized antidotes against the standardization and mass production of food.

Largely dwelling on the concept of terroir and the importance of the local, the implementation of GI initiatives centers on efforts to differentiate traditional and culture-rich local foods from the poverty of food from nowhere. In this context, the homogenization and standardization promoted by neoliberal globalization are interpreted as factors that foster the disappearance of specific identities and ways of life as the local is colonized by the transcendental global.

Local food, therefore, is transformed into an instrument to oppose the otherwise so appealing predictability, affordability and convenience of industrial food and the loss of identity that goes with it. The familiarity of global food brands, fast food restaurants and the overall food from nowhere, in other words, is countered by the rediscovery of the originally local, its culture and history and the different identities that it entails.

*This requalification of the local and its history* parallels broader contemporary identity movements, whereby difference is elevated as a source of strength and a proven form of emancipation. Paradoxically, however, this requalification of local food and its history stands not only on the phenomenon of globalization but also on the existence of global markets capable of absorbing the unique niche goods that the many “local” producers generate. At the cultural level, localism remains anchored in cosmopolitanism, revealing the dialectical relation between the local and the global and its social construction. As the global is understood as the outcome of transnational economic forces, the local with its tradition and history is also reified or invented to promote its historical agri-social dimensions that can be consumed in the market. The frame for the commodification of these “narrative” features of agri-food products (as opposed to only flavor, quality and aesthetics) is enabled by GI legislation. Inspired by a “modernist” search for an absolute “authenticity,” the requalification of the local and its tradition actually manifests itself through highly negotiated and contested definitions that are “validated” by the varying opinions of experts and magistrates and deny the dynamic and contingent histories that led to the contemporary “authentic.”

Emphasis on the local further translates into providing importance and support to established local ways of life, ways of production and their products. Because of their uniqueness, these established practices are viewed as threatened by not only modernization but also any form of progress. In essence, this posture offers a rejection of the proposition that progress could add to the quality of local life, production and products, assuming, by definition, that the past is more desirable than the future. As this might be the case in numerous situations in which modernization led to the colonization and/or destruction of the local, this view further proposes that a conservation of the past is a desirable response to the contractions of the present and the uncertainties of the future. Glossing over the many contradictions associated with the unconditional support for the “desirability” of the past, this posture oddly equates conservatism with progressiveness.

The social construction of the local that is typical of GI unconditionally presumes the natural superiority of the local over the global. Local food is always assumed – rather than proved – as better than other types of food by valorizing dimensions, such as tradition and small scale, which are socially constructed (tradition and locality make it better, by definition). Additionally, it is automatically endowed with desirable characteristics, such as natural taste, and often unjustifiably associated with positive outcomes, such as the safeguarding of biodiversity and the environment. Although it is undeniable that some of

these aspects would survive the rigorous scrutiny of critics for many products, it is also the case that these contentions distract from the more fundamental limits of fetishizing the local and the fallacy of automatically equating the local with better. As documented by research presented in this volume and elsewhere, local traditions and history are not immune from undesirable social phenomena such as racism, discrimination, labor exploitation and inequality.

The unintended or unexpected outcomes of GI policies, what we refer to as policy contradictions, arise due to the disparity between the wide range of positive expectations of GI and the limited number of characteristics that are commonly, or can legally be, protected. This reflects the conflation of GI as an ideal (a historical regional product) and as a legal tool (a certified product), a reality which is coming into starker relief as more countries in the world adopt discrete GI policies. In many of these new countries, the technical processes of setting up a mechanism for certification takes a back seat to the popular imagination of high-value exports and aspirations for domestically famous products to join the rarefied space occupied by Champagne, Parmigiano Reggiano and Jamón serrano. But the realities of competing within the high-value agri-food market place dominated by Europe may finally represent only an illusory opportunity to rectify chauvinistic cultural hierarchies of food culture established through imperialism (Arewa 2006). Other common misconceptions that are not exclusive to new-entry GI countries include unjustified assumptions about the prevalence of secondary impacts, such as safeguarding the environment and protecting small-scale farmhouse production. This confusion surrounding the GI ideal and its technical implementation arises in the debate about the protection of Indigenous knowledge, which is often highlighted as one of the important benefits of GI without critically reflecting on whether, or to what extent, this encodes repressive or patriarchal practices (Coombe and Malik 2017).

Despite the documentation of such contradictions by legal scholars and rural sociologists, the notion of embeddedness remains a fundamental component of assumed opposition to the global neoliberal food system. It is the unique way in which food is locally produced and prepared that allows local communities to claim ownership over this component of their ways of life and to oppose banal consumerism and homogenization. Accordingly, processes that oppose the global neoliberal colonization of the sphere of food production and consumption cannot fail to consider the importance of embeddedness. It is the relevance of scrutinizing the importance of the local that further legitimizes the objective of this book.

The potential use of GI as a *protection against unwanted consequences of market competition* places it among the tools designed to steer the economy away not only from crises but also from undesirable patterns of development. Additionally, it is seen as an instrument that opposes colonizing corporate forces and their ability to co-opt local tradition, culture and history. The global-local dialectical relationship previously mentioned is relevant here as well. It allows GI foods to access expanding global markets. Yet simultaneously, it provides them the necessary protection to mitigate the consequences of open competition. To

achieve this situation, culture, history and tradition are transformed into commercial items that add value to these food items. Following a classical sociological analysis, there is a requalification of culture, history and tradition from entities based on substantive values to entities that find their power through their commercialization. Accordingly – and as these are socially constructed items – their construction takes an *instrumentally rational* turn, as it needs to be commensurate to the requirements of the pursuit of profit. Alternative forms of rationality, such as self-sufficiency, barter networks, informal quality approval and other non-commoditized forms of agri-food circulation often referred to as the “culture economy,” are therefore automatically excluded (Ray 1998). Obviously, this is not uncommon; it is a dominant occurrence under neoliberalism. However, it signals the fact that alternatives to the functioning of the free market are constructed in market terms.

Unrestricted competition and market fluctuations remain among the most significant dangers that GI proponents wish to oppose. In this context, the protection of local products that the GI label offers is accompanied and, in some instances, substituted by cases in which the value of local products, productions and ways of life is not simply exported but employed to requalify the local and attract the business of non-local actors. Specifically, this situation refers to initiatives, such as agritourism, local culinary festivals and celebrations of the local food and landscape, that transform the local not only into a tool for economic development but also into an instrument that empowers Indigenous communities and promotes the safeguarding of biodiversity and the environment.

This reality suggests why there are no systematic and structural safeguards to ensure the emancipatory power of GI, even as there are opportunities to mitigate or defang some of the undesirable consequences of capitalism in some cases. In this volume, we explore the future viability and usability of GI as it spreads to new territories and matures in its core regions. In each chapter, authors engage with the expectations, assumptions and contradictions of GI while contributing to a broader dilemma: Can the emancipatory elements of GI be obtained by tinkering and optimizing the legislative apparatus, or will GI wage a losing campaign against the inexorable forces of neoliberalism? To this end, the case studies reflect on the constellation of institutional and juridical factors that impact the capacity for each region or country to meaningfully challenge the neoliberal co-optation of some historically important or symbolic products.

## **The evolution of GI**

The roots of the GI system date back to the BCE era (Takahashi 2015). In ancient Greece, for instance, the terms *Corinthian wine* and *almond of Naxos* associated these products’ qualities with their places of origin. In the Middle Ages, the seals of guilds indicated the quality of locally produced food items (Thévenod-Mottet and Marie-Vivien 2011). As markets expanded and the distance between producers and consumers increased, geographical identification – often in the

form of recorded names and/or logos – became increasingly sought after to communicate agri-food products' quality, features and reputations to consumers. With expanding use, pertinent legal measures were introduced. In the early modern era, legislations concerning GIs appeared in France (e.g., Roquefort in 1411 and Bresse Chicken in 1591), Switzerland (e.g., Gruyere in the 17th century), Hungary (e.g., Tokaji-Hegalja wines) and Italy (e.g., Chianti) (Gatti, Giraud-Héraud, and Mili 2003; Takahashi 2015).

In the 18th century, the further expansion of agri-food trade prompted the signing of international agreements to protect well-known agri-food items, as in the case of the 1712 trade agreement that granted protection to France's Champagne, Bordeaux wines and Provence olive oil (Takahashi 2015). In 1883, the signing of the *Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property* marked the establishment of the first GI international accord (Calboli and Wee Loon 2017; Echols 2008; Parasecoli 2017; Takahashi 2015; Thévenod-Mottet and Marie-Vivien 2011). The primary purpose of this document was to prevent fraud, consumer deception and unfair competition. Still in effect, the Paris Convention, currently counts on 177 signatory countries (World Intellectual Property Organization 2018a). The following 1891 Madrid Agreement provided specific rules for indicating a food item's source. In 2018, it counts the participation of 101 countries (World Intellectual Property Organization 2018b).

In the early 20th century, agri-food product quality deterioration and fraud prompted the introduction of legislation in a number of European countries. In France, measures to prevent consumer misinformation about wines' quality and origin were introduced in 1905. Similar legal procedures to protect additional agri-food items such as cheese, ham, olive, fruits and vegetables were instituted in 1919 (Calboli and Wee Loon 2017; Echols 2008; Parasecoli 2017; Takahashi 2015; Thévenod-Mottet and Marie-Vivien 2011). In Spain, legislation for the protection of local wines dates back to 1925, whereas in Italy – the country with the second greatest number of GI agri-food products – similar rules were introduced in the post-World War II years. Simultaneously, the rapid expansion of agri-food commerce led to new international agreements such as the 1951 *Stresa Convention* on cheese that was signed by eight countries and the 1958 *Lisbon Agreement* that, signed by twenty-seven countries, offered international protection to agri-food products and the registration of appellations of origins. These agreements sanctioned GI's global role as a tool that identifies agri-food products and their quality.

When the GATT Uruguay Round (1986–1994) and the subsequent World Trade Organization (WTO) regime (1995–present) radically reduced tariff barriers and price support programs for agri-food products, the European Union and its allies engineered a new role for GI. These countries understood GI as a tool to support not only traditional and disadvantaged forms of agriculture – including family farming and family farms located in mountain regions and islands – but also rural communities and traditional cultures (Calboli and Wee Loon 2017; Sekine 2015). Globalization, urbanization and the industrialization



of agri-food and their negative consequences on rural communities also provided shared support for this position (Parasecoli 2017).

At the international level and within the framework established by the WTO system, the application of GI legislation turned into a controversy between the European Union (EU) and the United States. The European Union and countries that adopt its model – also known as “Old World Countries” or “GI-friends” – share the tenet that the quality, characteristics and reputation of GI products are strictly confined to their places of origin and therefore cannot be reproduced in other locations. Subscribing to the concept of terroir, these countries favor a GI system that grants a high level of protection to agri-food items with GI status. Known as *sui generis*, this system consists of three categories of protection. The first, protected designation of origin (PDO), is granted to products that are uniquely and exclusively associated to a geographical area. In this case, production, ingredients, labor and know-how should be generated in the designated area. The second category, protected geographical indication (PGI), is less stringent in that it allows for ingredients to originate outside the designated area. The third and even less stringent category, traditional specialties guaranteed (TSG), refers to products that are not associated with a specific area but instead require the use of traditional ingredients and production know-how (Calboli and Wee Loon 2017; Echols 2008; Ilbert 2012, Parasecoli 2017; Takahashi 2015; Thévenod-Mottet and Marie-Vivien 2011).

The United States and a host of additional countries – including Australia, Argentina, Canada and Chile, also known as New World countries or as the United States and the Cairns Group – employ the mark system, wherein GI status can be granted to protect the commercial value and uniqueness of products. In this case, GI items can be freely produced by those who own the appropriate rights. Accordingly, rather than the association with a place, its culture and history (i.e., terroir), this system emphasizes brand recognition since GI agri-food products are distinguished by the quality and reputation of their brand names. The mark system consists of two categories: *trademarks* and *collective marks*. The trademark category refers to granting to an individual or a company the exclusive rights to produce, use and exploit a specific product. This product is considered private property, and its production is at the exclusive discretion of its owner. Collective marks indicate goods whose production is associated with the activities of a group that owns the mark. The group determines the standards and quality control of the mark. The coexistence of, and competition between, these two GI systems continues as the European Union and the United States ask uncommitted countries to support their own system, switch or apply a dual system (Parasecoli 2017; Sekine 2015).

This international dispute has unfolded despite the implementation of the 1995 TRIPS Agreement (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement). This is an international treaty that was designed to protect GIs and includes among its signatory countries not only the European Union and the United States but also almost all the other countries in the world. In 2003, the United States and its allies challenged the EU GI legislation in the

WTO, citing that the European Union was in violation of TRIPS (Echols 2008; Parasecoli 2017; Sekine and Bonanno 2018; Takahashi 2015). In 2005, the WTO rejected the US claim, concluding that the European Union's GI legislation does not violate the terms imposed by TRIPS. However, because of the long-standing negotiations and concessions between the two sides, the protection of GIs within TRIPS remains open to both systems. First and as claimed by the European Union, TRIPS grants the highest level of protection only to wine and spirits. Simultaneously and as claimed by the United States, it accords a lower level of protection to other agri-food products (Thévenod-Mottet and Marie-Vivien 2011). Second, TRIPS allows signatory countries to independently establish GI regulation and, in effect, de facto permitting the coexistence of the sui generis and mark systems. Additionally, it allows host country courts to adjudicate disputes over GIs. Finally, the TRIPS Agreement's definition of the interconnection among the quality, characteristics and terroir of GI products is less stringent than that contemplated by the Lisbon Agreement (Calboli and Wee Loon 2017; Thévenod-Mottet and Marie-Vivien 2011). The Lisbon Agreement indicates that "The country of origin is the country whose name, or the country in which is situated the region or locality whose name, constitutes the appellation of origin which has given the product its reputation" (Article 2[2]). It also stipulates that "'appellation of origin' means the geographical denomination of a country, region, or locality, which serves to designate a product originating therein, the quality or characteristics of which are due *exclusively or essentially* to the geographical environment, including natural and human factors" (Article 2[1]). Arising from this strict view, the Lisbon Agreement has been contracted after 60 years by only 29 countries. Conversely, the TRIPS Agreement employs a more permissive understanding of GI, whereby "a given quality, reputation or other characteristics of the good are *essentially* attributable to its geographical origin" (Article 22[1]). In essence, it endorses a notion of GI that combines two of the aforementioned categories of GI contemplated by the EU system: PDO and PGI. Following the notion adopted by the TRIPS Agreement and the European Union's PGI certification, GI status can be awarded to products whose reputation is simply linked to the pertinent geographical area but whose ingredients are not local.

In the new century, the consequences of the 2005 WTO ruling and the lenient nature of the TRIPS definition of GI translated into the worldwide proliferation of lessened forms of sui generis GI legislations. This notably includes a number of newcomer countries in East Asia, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan, South Korea and even North Korea. In 2015 and following the TRIPS Agreement and the European Union's GI legislation, the Geneva Act amended Article 2(1) of the Lisbon Agreement (Calboli and Wee Loon 2017; Thévenod-Mottet and Marie-Vivien 2011). This revision identifies two categories of GI: geographical denomination – that is, equivalent to the European Union's PDO – and geographical indications – that is, equivalent to the European Union's PGI. It also contemplates the existence of GI products less connected with their origins, such as TSG. In its effort to promote

the adoption of the *sui generis* approach by other countries, the European Union supported the Genova Act. However, the support of reduced forms of *sui generis* GIs can be interpreted as a contradictory step that limits the very use of the concept of terroir in the granting of GI status in the attempt to expand the use of the *sui generis* approach. Additionally, the less stringent approach to the granting of GIs is generally considered more favorable to large agri-food corporations than to small and medium producers, further contradicting the claim that GI is a tool that promotes local, artisanal and small-scale production.

### **The organization of the book**

The book's research question, whether GI offers a progressive alternative to the socioeconomic trends and outcomes that characterize the contemporary global neoliberal agri-food system, is explored through twelve original chapters and a conclusion, which are organized into four parts. Chapter 1 – the only chapter constituting the first part of the book – “Theoretical assumptions” – is authored by Alessandro Bonanno: “Geographical Indication in agri-food and its role in the global neoliberal era: a theoretical analysis” discusses the role of GI under the global neoliberal agri-food regime. Bonanno's argument rests on the analysis of two opposite theories that define the debate on GI. The first is the dominant neoliberal theory of the free market, whereas the second refers to the broad group of theories that contemplate the political and state-based regulation of the market. Under each of these two theories, the foreseen role of GI differs in order to correspond with the various formulae of socioeconomic development. Stressing the characteristics and contradictions of these two theories, Bonanno contends that in the neoliberal camp, the support of intellectual property rights contradicts the fundamental neoliberal tenets of the open access to markets and unrestricted competition. In the state intervention camp, the state regulation of markets promotes conditions that contradict the requirements for market expansion. These two sets of contradictions, Bonanno concludes, problematize the use of GI as a tool for the emancipation of subordinate groups.

The second part of the book is entitled “The Asian context” and includes chapters that directly discuss instances of the implementation of GI policies in Asia. The first of these chapters, by Hart N. Feuer, is “Geographical Indications out of context and in vogue: the awkward embrace of European heritage agricultural protections in Asia.” Feuer sheds light on the rollout of European-style GI laws in East Asia by comparing Japan and Cambodia. He documents how Asian countries share a perception of terroir related to agri-food products which has, in addition to pressure from the WTO, animated almost all countries to adopt *sui generis* GI policies. In both of the evaluated countries, Feuer determines that the institutional models of GI ultimately adopted are broadly in line with European norms, but they more quietly emphasize the domestically important secondary benefits of GI, such as public quality assurance, rural development and marketing. This strategic, utilitarian deployment of GI

policies may, however, hasten the decline in consumer's independent capacity for evaluating food quality and threatens the undocumented diversity associated with small-scale decentralized production and informal quality evaluation.

In the following chapter, "The Impact of geographical indications on the power relations between producers and agri-food corporations: a case of powdered green tea matcha in Japan," Kae Sekine discusses the extent to which GI contributes to the democratization of existing power relations in the food system and promotes sustainable territorial development. Her analysis is centered on the case of the Nishio matcha, which is a GI certified under the collective trademark and *sui generis* systems. Both these systems are currently employed in Japan. Sekine offers a brief history of the matcha (powdered green tea) food system, stressing its structure and changes. She also underscores the conflicting interests of the two primary socioeconomic groups characterizing this production. Small family producers of green tea leaves operate in a market controlled by processing corporations who set prices, grade quality and shape production practices. This situation leaves family producers in a subordinate position to corporate processors, who then pass on this economic vulnerability to tea leaf pickers as poorly paid manual labor. Given these conditions, Sekine concludes, this case study shows that GI does not systematically guarantee the democratization of the agri-food system and ensure sustainable territorial development. Accordingly, corrective public policies for the implementation of GI should be implemented.

This book's second part concludes with the chapter "Provenance for whom? A comparative analysis of geographical indications in the European Union and Indonesia," by Cinzia Piatti and Angga Dwiartama. Comparing the significantly different GI systems of Indonesia and the European Union, the authors propose a three-dimensional analysis – based on the scrutiny of sociocultural factors, the ecological context and power relations – that allows them to illustrate the three moments characterizing the creation of GIs. These moments consist of market integration, institutionalization and the acquisition of provenance labels. By analyzing these moments, Piatti and Dwiartama stress how power differentials are created and eventually manifest themselves and the implications that this process has for the formation of alternatives to the dominant neoliberal agri-food regime. Their conclusions underscore the problematic nature of GI as an emancipatory tool. They stress that while dominant social and power relations are reproduced despite GI processes, the possibility – albeit more theoretical than actual – for different patterns of socioeconomic development continues to exist.

The third part of the book – "Cases from Europe" – begins with a chapter by Derya Nizam: "How to use geographical indication for the democratization of agricultural production: a comparative analysis of geographical indication rent-seeking strategies in Turkey." In line with the volume's research question, Nizam's objective is to analyze the potential of GI to generate local institutional resources that can empower agri-food producers and rural communities in a way that helps them to combat their dependence on the dominant agri-food

regime. Analyzing the cases of three olive oil GIs from Turkey's Aegean region by using the commodity chain analysis method, Nizam illustrates the characteristics of these GI products and tracks their respective processes of formation and governance. In her analysis of the diverging outcomes among the cases, she concludes that participatory forms of governance (reflexive localism) offer better opportunities for more equitable and independent forms of socioeconomic development. These forms of governance do not depend on GI but may be able to use the process of GI formation as a supportive context.

The following chapter, "Geographical indications – a double-edged tool for food democracy: the cases of the Norwegian geographical indication evolution and the protection of stockfish from Lofoten as cultural adaptation work," by Atle Wehn Hegnes and Virginie Amilien, discusses the importance of the process of adaptation in the implementation of GIs. Probing the overall question whether GI is a universal tool for local socioeconomic development, the authors analyze the Norwegian case of stockfish from Lofoten. They argue that the abstract construct of GI needs to be translated into practical forms of adaptation. These forms of adaptation are essential components of the implementation process. Additionally, they continue, adaptation work is fundamental because the results of GI implementation heavily depend on how social, cultural, political and economic interactions take place, including the interface between the complex local sphere and the global ordering established by WTO regulation. Concluding that GI is not a universal tool for socioeconomic development, the authors stress not only the complexity of the consequences that adaptation entails but also, and more importantly, the emergence of contradictory conditions that cause adaptation and simultaneously promote processes of aggregation, emancipation as well as alienation and exclusion.

Adding to the discussion on instances from Europe, the chapter by Romain Blancaneaux, "The decline of the French label of origin wine," probes the consequences of the proliferation of GIs in the wine sector in France. Blancaneaux illustrates that the original emergence of the denomination of origin (DO) labels provided an effective form of protection for producers and consumers and a way to safeguard the quality of wines and stabilize markets. Over time, however, the market for DO wines swung between two extremes: exclusivity and profusion. In the early decades, production restrictions and quality standards increased prices, making protected wines accessible only to affluent consumers. As the number and production of DO wines increased, the exceptionality of protected wines was gradually transformed into the norm, *de facto* eliminating many of the advantages that the early implementation of this process had generated. As a result, the assumption that GI is a tool that can be increasingly refined over time to better realize socioeconomic development has been strongly discredited. The chapter concludes by cautioning against optimistic assumptions about the increasing abundance and long-term use of GIs.

The chapter by Anastasiya Shtaltovna and Hart N. Feuer "Modern resilience of Georgian wine: geographical indications and international exposure" concludes this section. Using wines from the Republic of Georgia as an example,

Shtaltovna and Feuer describe the resilience that winemaking has achieved by using idiosyncratic social and political processes. Considered the oldest wine-making region of the world and having survived a great number of political and economic changes over thousands of years, Georgia and its winemakers have been able to defend and maintain unique varieties and production specifications that are embedded in local culture and history. This resilience, the authors continue, is associated with broad support from elite and peasant groups alike. Pushed by neoliberalism and enhanced exposure to international wine conventions, the government is hoping to employ GI to perpetuate this resilience of their wine culture. In this effort, GI is understood as a potential tool to valorize and protect tradition, but given their past successes in using domestic resources, local producers are wary of external mechanisms. Shtaltovna and Feuer observe that there are important differences between the European-created concept of GI and the Georgian wine tradition, in that the Georgian understanding of quality in wine typically privileges varietal diversity over territory and is co-created through consumption patterns that are embedded in historical social networks. The potential discrepancy with the European conceptualization of quality wines leads Shtaltovna and Feuer to question whether GI can realistically form a parallel track of valuation for export that does not disrupt the Georgian tradition.

The fourth and final part of the book is devoted to cases from the Americas. It opens with two chapters, each of which discusses cases from Latin America. The first of them is “The multilevel, multi-actor and multifunctional system of geographical indications in Brazil,” by Paulo Niederle, John Wilkinson and Gilberto Mascarenhas. Analyzing the case of Brazil, the authors contend that the understanding of GI as an emancipatory tool is shared in Latin America. GI is seen as an initiative that fosters the connection between producers and consumers by promoting short value chains and valorizing food culture and local know-how. Following this view, GI is considered part of the broader process of relocalization and patrimonialization of the food system. Simultaneously, they contend, GI products are open to co-optation by mainstream producers that use the institutional unevenness of GI to secure competitive advantages. Looking at three sectors – wine, coffee and cheese – Niederle, Wilkinson and Mascarenhas illustrate the advantages and disadvantages of the institutional flexibility of the Brazilian GI system. This flexibility is designed to respond to the different realities of the Brazilian productive and cultural landscape. However, it is also the result of the low levels of normative enforcement and the deliberate effort to transfer a significant part of decision-making to sectorial and territorial actors. In this context, institutional flexibility managed to adapt GIs to different realities. Simultaneously, however, it also creates openings for strategic behavior that can foster institutional arrangements to regulate the system. The net result, they contend, has been the creation of GIs that are based not on common principles but rather on the relative negotiation power of different stakeholders. They conclude that this complex and multifaceted GI system has

engendered an institutional instability that diminishes its effectiveness as an emancipatory tool.

This part continues with the chapter “The geographical indication of mezcal in Mexico: a tool of exclusion for small producers,” by Marie-Christine Renard and David Rodolfo Domínguez Arista. Employing the case of the GI status granted to mezcal in Mexico, Renard and Domínguez Arista illustrate the discriminatory consequences that this process generated. Mezcal, the authors document, is a traditional alcoholic beverage often distilled by small producers in various Mexican states. To promote its production and marketability and safeguard its tradition, the government of Mexico granted mezcal a denomination of origin label in the mid 1990s. Led by the industry elite of large producers, this process engendered the establishment of GI areas that followed established political-administrative borders rather than agroecological and historical boundaries. The result was the exclusion of a great number of small producers from protected zones. Attempts were made to force these producers to abandon the use of the word *mezcal* and instead to employ obscure labels, such as *komil* or *agave aguardiente*. In their conclusions, Renard and Domínguez Arista stress that this case is an instance in which GI is transformed from an emancipatory tool into an instrument of exclusion.

The next two chapters analyze instances from North America. The first of them is Anelyse M. Weiler’s contribution: “Whose labor counts as craft? Terroir and farm workers in North American craft cider.” Weiler illustrates the development of the niche market of craft cider in Canada and the United States. This market’s projected image, Weiler contends, is constructed on the idea of small- to medium-scale artisans producing in a unique geographical region and following traditional practices and values. Some members of this network of producers, she adds, wish to enhance their commercial viability by establishing a GI. While still on the early stages of development, Weiler documents how the establishment of GIs raises a contradictory situation in which artisanal production rests on the widespread employment of racialized immigrant labor even though this phenomenon clashes with the ideals of many producers and consumers. In effect, Weiler continues, the success of artisanal cider production is based on the exploitation of immigrant farm workers that are deprived of the material and symbolic rewards associated with this production. This is a situation, she concludes, that is difficult to rectify, because it requires the elimination of significant logistical and cultural barriers through the introduction of extra-sectorial policy changes.

The second and last chapter of this final part is “The potential role of geographical indication in supporting Indigenous communities in Canada,” by Donna Appavoo and Monika Korzun. It probes the issue of whether GI can be a beneficial tool for Indigenous communities and a source of protection for Indigenous food in Canada. Claiming that this is an important and yet understudied topic, Appavoo and Korzun illustrate the similarities between the classic objectives of GI and the challenges that Indigenous people face. These

challenges include the protection of Indigenous knowledge; the safeguarding of history; the defense of traditional ways of life, including food and food sources; the expansion of rural employment; and the fortification of rural alliances. They also discuss the shortcomings of GI, stressing that it can marginalize or even penalize family producers and communities, reproduce power unbalances and allow corporations to use it to their advantage. Analyzing a number of key aspects relevant to GI schemes and Indigenous communities – such as local knowledge, land access, market access and legal protection – Appavoo and Korzun conclude that despite the possible limits of GI, it has a potentially important role to play in the emancipation of Indigenous communities in Canada.

The volume ends with “Conclusions: comprehensive change and the limits and power of sectorial measures,” by the book editors. Based on, but also adding to, the arguments presented in the volume, it provides an answer to the book’s research question about the emancipatory power of GI under globalization and neoliberalism. It opens with a brief summary of the overall conclusions derived from the book, which critically reflect on the potential for GI to transform and re-organize the agri-food sector in spite of broader constraints at the societal level. Overcoming thorny agri-food constraints requires comprehensive approaches that involve the restructuring of current social arrangements. Following this analysis, the overarching conclusion presented is that GI does not offer systematic solutions to structural problems highlighted by some classic and contemporary literature. However, while GI cannot structurally change the agri-food sector, it generates a number of consequences that can be relevant for emancipatory efforts. In this regard, the chapter indicates six additional conclusions. First, it concludes that the emancipatory role of GI depends on local social relations and socioeconomic conditions, which are in turn contingent on existing structural factors and the exercise of human agency. The second conclusion states that the success of GI depends on the way it is implemented. Implementation involves contradictory processes that may include the loss of heterogeneity, local identity and vernacular institutions. The third conclusion states that GI does not necessarily represent a safeguard against the functioning of the free market, because emancipatory results are often endogenously countered by opposing consequences. The fourth conclusion underscores that GI represents a socially and politically aggregating force that is both necessary and beneficial but is often accompanied by episodes of distrust and conflict. The fifth conclusion refers to the claim that GI protects the environment and supports the sustainable use of natural resources. This claim can be rejected because historical food systems upon which GIs are based do not consistently inhere ecological values. The sixth conclusion indicates that GI supports the desire of producers to remain in farming and food production despite adverse conditions. The chapter ends by contending that the emancipatory power of GI in all its implementations is contradictory in that it contains elements that promote but also hamper its ability to improve the socioeconomic conditions of stakeholders and democratize the agri-food sector.



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