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# GI contribution to sustainability: The “terroir” and the agro-ecological practices

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**GI contribution to sustainability:  
The “terroir” and the agro-ecological practice**

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**FAO seminar on Geographical Indications sustainability  
In collaboration with Strength2Food project  
Wednesday 9 May 2018 - Roma**

### Personal involvements


- As researcher in Corsica island / in France, Italy, Spain, But also in Viêt-nam, Argentina, Morocco...
- In French Research institutions  
ANR Agriculture for Sustainable Development / project called PRODDIG  
**Promoting sustainable Development by the Geographical Indications**  
17 research units
- In several Research projects  
within Europ / Dolphin project  
Worldwide / Synergi project
- In **European Working Group on Localized AgriFood Systems (SYAL)**
- In **INAO** / national expert for public decision making about PDO and PGI



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### Sustainable Development: what is at stake ?

- Ensure the needs of today without endanger the needs of the future generations
- A problematic of resources / manage the renewability / only one planet
- Care the welfare of the less doted / poverty and precarity to be eliminated
- The 3 pillars economical, environmental and social / hard to balance.  
More a question of trade-offs

**Sustainable Development = More a pathway than a stable state to reach  
Enhance Transitions and Overcome Lock-in effects**



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### GI definition = a promise of sustainability


- GI is more than the protection of the geographical names on the market.  
An anticipated answer to activities delocalization, to banalization of feeding habits, to the loss of knowledge and culture of urbanized people.
- By the notion of « terroir », identifying a place-based production
- An heritage building insuring a transmission between generations




**GI Systems seem to have a lot of advantages for fulfilling the  
expectations of Sustainable Development**



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### Agro-Ecology / The 10 principles

- Diversity
- Co-creation and sharing of knowledge
- Synergies
- Efficiency
- Recycling
- Resilience
- Human and social values
- Culture and food traditions
- Responsible governance
- Circular and solidarity economy




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### Terroir ? A definition highly compatible with Agro-ecology


- A terroir is
  - (1) a delimited geographical area
  - (2) where a human community
  - (3) over the course of history generates and accumulates a collective body of production knowledge
  - (4) based on a system of interactions between biophysical and human factors.
  - (5) The sequence of socio-technical steps involved
  - (6) reveals originality, (7) confers typicity (8) and earns a reputation
  - (9) on a good originating in the geographical area in question.



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## Agro-ecology providing useful questions to GIs

- Place of farmer  
Farmer first / Rebalance the vision of GI
- Production system is core / the interactions to stimulate  
More efficient and more resilient
- Reshaping the whole food system at territorial level

### • 4 illustrations of such renewed questions



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## Q1 – Diversity vs Specialization

- Terroir = dynamism of interactions within the production system thanks to technical culture... but GIs are using GMO, pesticides and antibiotics.  
Local breeds and varieties? Sustainable management of the diseases and pests?  
Local strains for processed food? Integration of wildlife into the pastures, the forests, the landscape? Ecosystemic services  
**Identification of the landscape (ie eco-system functioning) as a real GI production?**
- Successful GIs lead to a risk of specialization.  
Insure that the large set of products provided by the local GI system are maintained and respected (avoid the risk of territorial geopardize).  
**Survival and valorization of the co-products put in the shadow of the GI?**



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## Q2 - Value-added sharing / democracy and equity

- Distribution of the VA along the chain?  
The virtuous circle needs to allow the reconstitution of the local resources and know-how. For example : the milk price in the cheese chains.  
More the rules are concerning the raw material, better the farmers have legitimacy for VA sharing / Empowerment of farmers into the GI system.  
**How to assess such equity (and not only hope that it may happen)?**
- Distribution within an heterogeneous area?  
All the fractions of the area are not equivalent.  
Need to make sure that the production is not concentrating in the most favorable parts while difficult parts are depopulating.  
**How to reach some spatial justice in GIs?**



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## Q3 – Rooting GI products into their local culture

- Local people are considered as the best experts of the typical products... but the GI system is more oriented by the markets able to produce the major value added, in a globalized world.
- GI products **not only for export or up-market** / include the typical food into the scholar canteens and the public food procurement / make frequent animations toward local people in the several marketplaces
- GI product as part of the **local heritage** / make sure the transmission of culture to the young generation is effective.
- GI food as crucial element of the **food sovereignty**  
Food security needs to increase the capacity of the local population to produce its own food.



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## Q4 – Managing long term GI evolution

- Transition toward SD : a question of trajectories  
Trade-offs are designing the choice made by the GI governance.  
**Compare trajectories and not « level of sustainability »?**
- Ability to deal with the innovations provided by the regime.  
Accept (and adapt) some and rejecting other / For example : in PDO Comté, cheese curing machine is accepted while milking robot is rejected.  
**How to simulate the protection mechanisms of the GI in order to manage and orient the innovation pathway?**
- Anticipate and prepare the long term effects of such choices on resources, techniques, production units (Nb, size), market evolution, regulation changes...  
**How to ensure a prospective ability for the GI governance?**



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## Conclusion

- Transition toward SD : Not only a correction of the supremacy given to economic issue, adding some consideration for environment and society.
- A need to **reshape** the whole food system.  
More room to the raw material production, the ecosystem services.  
More attention to equity and democracy  
Less dependency to globalized markets  
Higher territorial embeddedness
- **GI stimulated by Agro-ecology**  
**May become the pioneer of the agricultural transition to SD**



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