Are geographical indications strenghtening their territorial anchorage? An analysis of cheese product specification amendments

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Aims and Methodology

The analysis is based on a critical review of the 116 non-minor amendments to the PSs of PDO-PGI cheeses (product class 1.3) in the EU until 2021, made by the **research team**, analysing and classifying each of them.

1. First, we developed a database to manage all the information from the amendments: what each modification changed, its **directionality** (tighter or looser rules) and **justification** (5 categories: market; technology/research; policy/legal; identity/quality; the environment)

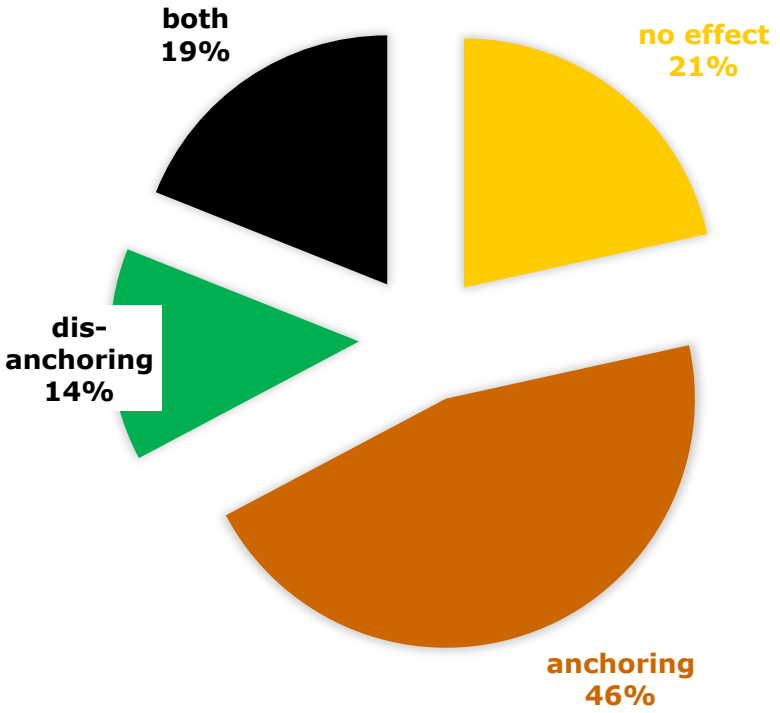
2. After this step, a further analysis has been carried out to understand whether each amendment strengthens or loosen the **anchorage GI product-territory**, across some **main variables** where we believed anchorage is more relevant: breeds, density/yields, animal feed typology and pasture rules, use of milking robot, rennet/starters, and use of raw milk.

This presentation focuses on whether the evolution of the PDO-PGI cheeses is leading towards **higher anchorage of the products to their territories.**

Analysis by single amendment: overview

Anchoring strategies aim to tightly connect a product to its place of origin, ensuring authenticity and higher specificity, while **disanchoring strategies** involve loosening that connection, often to accommodate modernization, technological innovations, market expansion, or broader consumer appeal.

- 25 of the 116 amendments have no effect on anchorage
- The remaining 91 amendments (78.4%):
  - 53 amendments go only in the direction of anchoring (42 in France)
  - 16 amendments go only in the direction of disanchoring (only 3 in France, 10 in Italy).
  - 22 amendments are ambivalent (have both anchoring and disanchoring effects)



Anchoring / disanchoring: overview by variable

				Anchorage			
	Total	total anch/disanch	total variable	More anchored	Less anchored	Unclear or no effects on anchorage	% more anchored/total variable
FARM LEVEL							
Breeds	116	80	49	31	4	14	63%
Density/Yields	116	80	30	20	1	9	67%
Feed typ	116	80	64	12	0	52	19%
pastures	116	80	36	21	0	15	58%
PROCESSING LEVEL							
Milking robot	116	49	3	0	3	0	n.r.
Starters and rennet	116	49	39	25	8	6	64%
Raw/pasteurized milk	116	49	15	13	2	0	87%
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA							
Overall geographical area	116	72	33	10	22	1	30,3%
Upstream indirect delocation	116	72	49	44	5	0	89,8%
Downstream indirect delocation	116	72	22	16	6	0	72,3%

Total: total number of amendments analysed
Total anch/disanch: total number of amendments affecting anchorage at farm /processing / geographical area levels
Total variable: total number of amendments affecting the specific variable

Some first results as example: breeds

Out of the 116 amendments examined, **49 (42%) have introduced modifications** as regards the breeds allowed for milk production, the highest percentage of modification being in France (84%).

Most of the amended rules are aimed at reinforcing the anchorage to the territory. Specifically, strengthening the link to the territory of origin is obtained through:

- **inclusion of local breeds not mentioned in the PS** (2), mainly autochthonous breeds (landraces), justified on their better adaptability to the local environment;
- the **admittance of specific breeds only**, justified by the higher adaptability to the local context and the specific quality of the milk for cheese production (16);
- **provision of a minimum presence of specific breeds in each heard** (7) or minimum percentage of milk coming from specific local breeds (2);
- the obligation for the animals to be **raised in the geographical area** (Bleu d'Auvergne) or **be born and raised** in the farm or geographical area (5).

Some other amendments are meant to **reduce the anchorage**. A GI three sheep breeds to the PS as more adapted to semi-fixed housing, now needed because of the increased presence of wolves; another GI introduced Prim'Holstein breed due to its higher productivity.

Conclusions

Caveats:

- ❑ the analysis capture the movements, but not the starting point: higher anchorage doesn't mean that at last the PS is loose as regards anchoring
- ❑ The intensity of each modification could not be assessed

The analysis will show the dynamic of the PDO-PGI cheese sector in the EU, highlighting:

- **Where**? the direction of the movement (loosening or tightening the rules, and anchoring/dis-anchoring the product from its territory)
- **Why**? the justifications for these movements (market issues? Climate change? Etc.)
- **What**? which are the areas/variables where the modifications are more frequent
- **Who**? the differences among countries
- **When**? The differences along time

Policy implications (both public and private sector)

Thank you