

# **Master thesis - The legal development of Geographical Indications and their consumer's awareness at the marketplace**



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## **Abstract**

Nowadays, Geographical Indications business is extremely important, but general awareness and knowledge towards this sector is not proportionate to its size. GIs include several famous and well-recognised food products as Parmigiano Reggiano or Feta cheese, however is consumer aware of what there is behind these particular products? These foodstuffs do not only come from very precise area of our planet, but they also have particular processing steps and they stick to strict and old traditions. Since GIs developed into an actual market sector, public attention has grown and even regulations upon these products became stricter day by day. Thus, it is interesting to churn out how GIs regulations changed and developed through the years and how are they perceived by consumers and the thesis treats exactly these themes.

First thesis sub-chapter introduces reader to Geographical Indications world, passing through pivotal steps towards GIs protection and mentioning their business numbers all around the world. Second sub-chapter is focused on GIs EU Regulations. This part shows most relevant EU regulations around Geographical Indication agricultural stuffs and it also shows how these regulations changed in the past years. Third sub-chapter takes into account consumer's confusion definition. Subsequently, this definition is applied to GIs marketplace and to consumers' behaviour at the purchase. Furthermore, real case laws on GIs are described, with the view of giving relevance to the study. Thesis second part has the purpose of answering to the research question and giving an idea of consumers' awareness towards Geographical Indications. Therefore, social science approach has been used, including a questionnaire in order to test consumers on some GIs statements. The last part of the thesis shows the results obtained from the survey, through statistical tests. They point out a generalised confusion of the consumers consulted in the survey and that is why, in my opinion, GIs regulatory framework needs a change with the introduction of some adjustments.

## **List of abbreviations**

EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GI	Geographical Indications
PGI	Protected Geographical Indication
PDO	Protected Denomination of Origin
TRIPS	Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TSG	Traditional Specialities Guaranteed
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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## Introduction and Relevance

Geographical Indications concept spread importantly in the last decades. In fact, there are some Geographical Indication products (GIs), which are masterpieces in the food culture of some countries. One of these is Parma Ham, which is a PDO (Protected denomination of origin) well-known product by which Italy is identified by the consumers. For instance, a product like Mozzarella di Bufala Campana PDO identifies the whole sector, in this case mozzarella di Bufala sector (Coldiretti, 2017). In the year 2018, there are more than 3000 European GIs products and the number is continuously increasing. Therefore, the business generated by GI products in Europe is absolutely relevant, especially for European countries that focus their attention on Agri-food sector as France or Italy. Indeed, Italy alone includes 816 GIs products: 571 PDO products, 243 PGI (Protected geographical indication) products and 2 TSG (Traditional specialities guaranteed) products (including food and wine) (Qualivita, 2017).

GIs have a particular and strict product specification, which makes them special products with a special production process. Following EU Regulation 1151/2012, PDO certification has the higher level of tradition protection, where all production phases have to be carried out in a certain area. PGI products have at least one production phase carried out in a certain area, while TSG products result from a mode of production, processing or composition corresponding to traditional practice for that geographical area (no production phases involved) (EUR-LEX, 2012).

EU Regulations on Geographical Indications are the result of a development process started before the establishment of TRIPS and which is continuously changing (WIPO, 2018). The development of GI Regulations also brought an increasing level of protection for products involved and even more transparency for the final consumer (EUIPO, 2017). Nevertheless, even though EU Regulations provide strong protection for origin certified products, compared to non-GI goods, there are still some case laws, which highlight consumer's confusion on the topic. For instance, famous Parmesan case shows that consumer's point of view on GIs products is not always clear. In this case, a product (Parmesan) without any type of origin certification created unfair competition to "Parmigiano Reggiano PDO" (The Guardian, 2014).

For this reason, it is extremely interesting to assess consumer's awareness regarding Geographical Indication goods and assess which are the characteristics of these products. It is important to evaluate even consumer's awareness in case they have to choose between GI and non-GI product, or within GIs goods, in order to flesh out some critical issues regarding EU Reg. 1151/2012, or label rules in EU Reg. 1169/2011 (EUR-Lex, 2011) (EUR-Lex, 2012).

However, during the assessment of consumer's consciousness at GIs purchase, it is even crucial evaluating other factors. Considering these products, which can be protected by GI certification, they are usually produced in rural areas. GIs protection ensures rural development and provides income flows to these areas, by creating employment opportunities (Dogan B., Gokovali, U., 2012). Furthermore, GI producer has to bear high costs, in order to comply with product specification. These include both direct costs, like certification costs to the institutions and indirect costs, like investments for structural adjustment, raw materials of higher quality and re-organization of production process. Surely, these extra costs imply "premium" prices for final consumer, influencing his decision at the purchase. (Belletti G., Burgassi T., Marescotti A., Scaramuzzi S., 2007).

## **Problem description**

Geographical Indications goods are extremely peculiar products. This peculiarity made GIs highly regulated, with the introduction of specific quality certifications suitable only for this kind of products.

On the one hand, this specificity in the food sector is positive, because it enhances the competitiveness of this market and it improves the average quality of food products. On the other hand, this specificity can bring confusion to consumers' minds. This confusion influences both consumers' side, since they cannot take an informed choice regarding GIs, and it has an impact even on GIs producers, since they do not experience fair competition with no-GIs, whether their products are not perceived as quality certified.

GIs, due to their several specificities, need an important amount of economic resources in order to be produced. The obligation of using local ingredients and many local resources lifts up production costs of these types of products. Consequently, GIs prices available at the marketplace are higher, compared to no-quality certifications goods.

For this reason, it is pivotal that final consumer is aware of what he is buying. If he is not conscious that GIs have certain specific characteristics that make their price higher, he cannot make an informed choice. Moreover, there is lack of fair competition between GIs and no-GIs, since the final consumer would go for the cheaper product (without the right knowledge of the products).

Thus, using a questionnaire with the purpose of testing consumers on GIs could be a useful tool for both purposes. With the evidence of "consumer's confusion" upon GIs, new methods of advertisement and consumers information could be taken into consideration, in order to permit an informed choice at the marketplace. Furthermore, being aware of the presence of consumer's confusion would be helpful for GIs producers, which at least are conscious of the miscomprehension of these products. Then, they can make their evaluations on products prices and on the products themselves.

## Research question and Research design plan

### **Which is Italian and Dutch consumer's level of awareness and confusion upon GIs at the purchase, taking into account GI agricultural foodstuffs EU Regulation?**

Following sub-questions will be in line with thesis structure:

- Which is the historical development of Geographical Indications? Geographical Indications went through a long process of development. They were included in Intellectual Property Rights in TRIPS and since that time GI topic rose importantly (WIPO, 2018). Even EU Regulations changed significantly, ensuring higher level of protection to GI goods (EUIPO, 2017).

- Which is the current development of GIs business? Geographical Indications business is continuously increasing, that is why it is interesting to find out its size at the moment (Qualivita, 2017). Economic part related to GI could help to understand better EU GI Regulations and also why they got this level of protection. Moreover, this part gives more relevance to the study, showing the importance of GIs in the food market.

- Which are EU Regulations whom protect Geographical Indications? Geographical Indications protection is enabled by different EU Regulations, which cover agricultural foodstuffs, wines, aromatised wines and spirit drinks, but the study will focus upon EU Regulation 1151/2012 for the protection of GIs agricultural foodstuffs. (EUR-Lex, 2008), (EUR-Lex, 2012), (EUR-Lex, 2013), (EUR-Lex, 2014).

- Which is GI agricultural foodstuffs EU Regulations development through the years? GIs EU legislation slightly increased its protection through the years (for instance, with the strict product specification of PDO products) (EUIPO, 2017).

- Which are relevant case laws on GIs consumer's confusion? Giving some case laws examples on consumer's confusion upon GI agricultural foodstuffs is extremely important, in order to give significance to the study. In addition, they are useful to clarify the issue, showing real examples.

- What does "s confusion" mean? Assessing consumer's awareness/confusion upon GIs is the main purpose of this thesis, so it is firstly necessary trying to define "consumer's confusion" on the social science side. Subsequently, with the help of the questionnaire, it is possible to assess consumers' confusion, related to particular GI products.

- Which is the best tool, in order to assess consumer's awareness on GIs? There is no better way of evaluating consumer's knowledge on Geographical Indications, than directly involve the subject included in the research. In fact, most of the studies discuss about the issues of EU agricultural foodstuffs regulation without taking into account consumer's perspective or vice-versa. Questionnaire understands consumer's attitudes, perceptions, motives, beliefs and, in general, it collects their opinions to a phenomenon of interest to the researcher. Furthermore, Likert scale structure is extremely useful, because thanks to some statements, researcher can assess consumer's awareness and knowledge upon GIs characteristics.

- Which are final correlations between questionnaire outcome and EU GIs Regulations? The survey outcome will show consumer's knowledge regarding GIs. Questionnaire aim is helping to highlight consumer's confusion on GIs, adding some statements (for instance on GIs EU Regulations), whose answers imply consumer's level of awareness. Survey outcome will not give a definitive result to the study, but due to the interpretation of its answers and the statistical part, it can give a significant overview on consumer's confusion upon GIs. Finally, even thanks to EU Regulations and case laws literature review, source of consumer's confusion can be identified in GIs EU legal framework.

# 1. Elaboration

## 1.1.1 GIs international historical steps

The first important question is: What are Geographical Indications? Following WIPO definition, “A geographical indication is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place. In addition, the qualities, characteristics or reputation of the product should be essentially due to the place of origin. Since the qualities depend on the geographical place of production, there is a clear link between the product and its original place of production”(WIPO, 2018). Nowadays, GIs are extensively protected, but this is the result of a long process that passed through important events. In fact, there are some crucial dates in the development of GIs, which permitted to reach the actual situation.

The first one is Paris Convention for the protection of industrial property in 1883, where, for the first time, “indication of source” and “appellation of origin” were covered. However, at this stage the protection level of GIs was still quite low, because even though blame against false products was in place, nothing was carried out against misleading products. Paris Convention states that “any product bearing falsely as an indication of origin the name of a locality or of a determined country, when the indication is joined to a fictitious commercial name or a name borrowed with fraudulent intention”. For instance, if a company that sold food products gave false information about a Geographical Indications good infringed the rules, giving only ambiguous information (on the package for example) it was in accordance with the law (WIPO, 2018).

The second important event is Madrid Arrangement on Indications of Source, in 1891. It was a massive turning point upon falsification theme. In fact, GIs restrictions moved from foodstuffs, with only false information (Paris Convention), to even products with deceptive information. It meant that also misleading products could be withdrawn from the market and it led to a higher level of protections for all the food products under Geographical Indications. Madrid Agreement also raised the attention on which products needed to be protected and which did not need this kind of protection. For example, generic and descriptive products fell out from geographical indications domain (WIPO, 2018).

A further step of GIs development is the Lisbon Agreement for the protection of appellation of origin, in 1958. It states that the product is protected only if its characteristics are exclusively related to the geographic environment, including human and natural factors. It is quite clear how the description of the “protected product” is more accurate compared to the statements wrote down in the Paris Convention and in the Madrid Agreement. Moreover, an additional step on imitation issue was made: all the imitation terms (for instance such as, kind, like) that could make the consumer in trouble, were banned (WIPO, 2018).

Finally TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights), where Intellectual property appears in trade topic for the first time, including also Geographical Indications. Article 22 of TRIPS is dedicated to Geographical Indications: in the first paragraph a definition of the term is given, “indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a Member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin”. In the second paragraph there are some directives for EU Member States in order to protect GIs products. Indeed, products need to be truly made in certain areas and not misleading the consumer. Moreover, Member States have to prevent any use

of Geographical Indications, which constitutes an act of unfair competition (WTO, 2018).

The most influential thing, which comes out from these events, is how the protection level of GIs has improved through the years. It is clear how during the Paris convention the term “Geographical Indications” was extremely broad and through Madrid and Lisbon Agreements it acquired a more narrow meaning, with the consequence of a higher protection for the product.

### **1.1.2 GIs European historical steps**

At European level, Geographical Indication products as wines, spirits and agricultural foodstuffs had different legal development. First legal protection regarding wines dates back to 1970 and this is the first sort of protection for GIs. Council Regulation of 28 April 1970 laid down special provisions relating to quality wines produced in specified regions (EUR-Lex, 1970). Last European legal reform concerning wines is EU Regulation 1308/2013, which lays down stricter and more specific rules for wine sector (EUR-Lex, 2013).

After about 20 years, even EU Regulation on spirits was put in place. Indeed, EU Regulation 1576/89 of 29 May 1989 set general rules on definition, description and presentation of spirit drinks (EUR-Lex, 1989). Last modify of this Council Regulation is EU Regulation 110/2008 “on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks” (therefore, including also labelling requirements) (EUR-Lex, 2008).

Finally, even GI agricultural stuffs achieved their EU legal framework under EC Council Regulation 2081/1992. Cassis de Dijon case (Case 120/78) was a massive turning point on GI agricultural stuffs legislation and protection, since German liquor importer was refused permission to import “Cassis de Dijon” liquor into Germany from France, as “Cassis de Dijon” would have violated German law requiring fruit liquors to contain a minimum alcohol volume of 25%.

This kind of protection carried out by German government was ruled by the Court of Justice as a “quantitative restriction of import” and not in compliance with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (EUABC.com, 2018). This event was pivotal, in order to realise the necessity of a common approach to protect GI agricultural stuffs. Furthermore, an intense pressure from more “agricultural countries” in EU (especially Italy and France) pushed the adoption of EU Regulation 2081/92 on the protection of “protected Geographical Indications” (PGI) and the protection of “protected designations of origin” (PDO). Last amendment regarding agricultural stuffs legislation is EU Regulation 1151/12, which brings important changes. First of all, Member States have more central role in the registration of GIs, compared to previous Regulation. In addition, an additional modify is that, partly as a result of the ruling by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2005, the EU is able to receive applications from producers in third countries applied directly to the Commission for registration of product names under the EU system. Previously, these producers had to pass through their national authorities, which could be unwilling or unable to process the application (Eur-Lex, 1992) (EUR-Lex, 2012).

It is quite clear from this turn of events how Geographical Indications topic has deep-rooted history and it came out almost 50 years ago. Moreover, its development passed through several turning points. In fact, Geographical Indications theme got more and more attention, due to an increasing number of GIs products all over Europe, which meant more specific legislation upon products.

### 1.1.3 Current GIs value in EU

Currently, there are more than 10,000 Geographical Indication goods protected all over the world and many more that could be potentially protected. What stands out from Table 1 is that European Union owns the majority of GIs and the number exceeds 3,000 units (in 2017). Furthermore, the difference between EU and USA, which is the second country for GIs, numbers regarding this kind of products is extremely significant (Qualivita, 2017).

\* Table 1. *GIs world ranking (ITC, 2017).*

COUNTRIES	GIs	COMPOSITION
<b>European Union</b>	3275	1357 food products, 1579 wines, 339 spirits.
<b>USA</b>	910	730 wines, 100 spirits, 80 food products.
<b>Switzerland</b>	682	660 wines/spirits, 22 food products.
<b>New Zealand</b>	600	550 wines/spirits, 50 food products.
<b>Australia</b>	427	427 wines
<b>China</b>	403	23 wines/spirits and other products.
<b>India</b>	238	69 food products.
<b>Russia</b>	223	33% food products.

Even though GIs counterfeiting plague raised recently, latest studies from European Commission state that the business behind GIs products in Europe is around 55 billion of Euros, precisely 54.3 Billion of Euros. However, in table 2 is showed that 90% of the total economic value of GIs in Europe resides in only 5 EU countries, namely Italy, France, Germany, UK and Spain (study still includes UK as European country because it was carried out before Brexit). Moreover, 60% of the total asset is accounted by Italy and France alone. Italy, for example, can count on really famous and important GIs products as Prosciutto di Parma PDO (2.3 Billion Euros business), Parmigiano Reggiano PDO (1.3 Billion Euros business) or Grana Padano PDO (1.1 Billion Euros business) (Qualivita, 2017).

\* Table 2. *GIs business ranking in EU (Qualivita, 2017).*

COUNTRIES	COMPOSITION	ECONOMIC VALUE
<b>France</b>	241 Food, 432 Wine, 78 Spirits.	20.8 Billion Euros
<b>Italy</b>	293 Food, 523 Wine, 39 Spirits.	11.8 Billion Euros
<b>Germany</b>	89 Food, 39 Wine, 35 Spirits.	5.7 Billion Euros
<b>Spain</b>	195 Food, 131 Wine, 28 Spirits.	4.6 Billion Euros

These numbers show the scale of GIs phenomenon through the years in Europe and all over the world. Consequently, GIs topic deserves a proper level of legislation, which is currently ensured by EU institutions, in order to regulate this specific type of products. The necessity of a further protection comes from both consumer and producers side. Together with the development of GIs, even the development of misleading origin certified products raise significantly. Thus, EU Regulations have to protect consumer against these misleading practices and ensure them transparency regarding GIs topic. In addition, producers claim that consumer should be aware of the quality derived by GI products when they have to choose between them at purchase point.

## 1.2 EU Regulation on Agricultural foodstuffs

### 1.2.1 Regulation historical development

As presented at the beginning of the thesis, the first approach towards the protection of agricultural GIs is EU Regulation 2081/1992. For this reason, it is interesting to show the most relevant articles of this regulation.

Firstly, article 2(2) defines Geographical Indications products. PDOs are defined as “products originated in that region, specific place or country, and the quality or characteristics of which are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with their inherent natural and human factors, and the production, processing and preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area”. PGIs are defined as “products originated in that region, specific place or country, and which possess a specific quality, reputation or other characteristics attributable to that geographical origin and the production and/or processing and/or preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area”.

Article 4 enunciates GIs product specification, which has to include at least: (a) the name of the agricultural product or foodstuffs, including the designation of origin or the geographical indication; (b) a description of the agricultural product or foodstuff including the raw materials, if appropriate, and principal physical, chemical, microbiological and/or organoleptic characteristics of the product or the foodstuff; (c) the definition of the geographical area; (d) evidence that the agricultural product or the foodstuff originates in the geographical area; (e) a description of the method of obtaining the agricultural product or foodstuff and, if appropriate, the authentic and unvarying local methods; (f) the details bearing out the link with the geographical environment or the geographical origin; (g) details of the inspection structures; (h) the specific labelling details relating to the indication PDO or PGI, whichever is applicable, or the equivalent traditional national indications; (i) any requirements laid down by Community and/or national provisions. Furthermore, article 12(1) sets down rules for GIs from third countries. Third country has to: “be able to give guarantees identical or equivalent to those referred to in Article 4”.

Subsequently, article 13 and 14 are the most interesting and relevant articles regarding this thesis. Indeed, there are many case laws, where these two articles are pivotal. Article 13 lays down misleading practices, which are not in compliance with EU law, against GIs goods: “(a) any direct or indirect commercial use of a name registered in respect of products not covered by the registration in so far as those products are comparable to the products registered under that name or insofar as using the name exploits the reputation of the protected name; (b) any misuse, imitation or evocation, even if the true origin of the product is indicated or if the protected name is translated or accompanied by an expression such as style, type, method, 'as produced in, imitation or similar; (c) any other false or misleading indication as to the provenance, origin, nature or essential qualities of the product, on the inner or outer packaging, advertising material or documents relating to the product concerned, and the packing of the product in a container liable to convey a false impression as to its origin; (d) any other practice liable to mislead the public as to the true origin of the product”. Moreover, article 14(1) states that the application for registration of a trademark corresponding to one of the situations referred to in Article 13 and relating to the same type of product shall be refused, provided that the application for registration of the trademark was submitted after the date of the publication provided for in Article 6(2). In addition, trademarks registered in breach of the first subparagraph shall be declared invalid. (EUR-Lex, 1992).

At a later stage, EU Regulation 20181/92 has been replaced by EU Regulation 510/2006. This new EU Regulation is extremely similar to the old one, even though there are few relevant changes. In fact, amendments involve the rules to apply for registration of a GI product coming from a Member State in the EU register.

Regarding the procedure at national level, applications shall be presented to the relevant national authority of the EC Member State in which the Geographical Indications area is located. The application shall include: “the name and address of the applicant group; the specification, which includes following documents: (a) the name of the agricultural product or foodstuff to be registered, (b) a description of the agricultural product or foodstuff (including the raw materials and principal physical, chemical, microbiological and organoleptic characteristics of the product or the foodstuff), (c) the definition of the geographical area and details indicating the raw materials coming from a geographical area larger than or different from the processing area, (d) proof of the link between the agricultural product or the foodstuff and the defined geographical area where it comes from, (e) a description of the method of obtaining the agricultural product or foodstuff and the authentic and uniform local methods as well as information concerning packaging, (f) details bearing out the link between the quality or characteristics of the agricultural product or foodstuff and the geographical environment or, the link between a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the agricultural product or foodstuff and the geographical origin, the name and address of the authorities or bodies verifying compliance with the provisions of the specification and their specific tasks; any specific labelling rule for the agricultural product or foodstuff in question; any requirements laid down by Community or national provisions”.

New EU Regulation 510/2006 even allows producers from third countries to register their names in the European GI register, allowing for the protection of their products in the Members States of the European Union. Nevertheless, there are new rules to apply for registration of a GI product coming from a third country in the EU register. Applications have to be presented directly to the European Commission in Brussels or to the competent authority of the third country concerned. Application features are the same compared to the application of GIs goods of a Member State country, but with few additions. Indeed, application should also include: a single document, containing the main points of the specification, as the name, a brief description of the product, specific rules concerning packaging and labelling, a definition of the geographical area from which the agricultural product or foodstuff comes from and proof of the link between the product and its geographical origin; proof that the name in question is protected in its country of origin.

Furthermore, applications shall be sent to the Commission in one of the official languages of the institutions of the European Union or with the attachment of a certified translation in one of those languages. Finally, the use of Community symbols PDO and PGI or the indications “Protected Geographical Indication” and “Protected Designation of Origin” will be optional for third country GIs goods registered in the European Commission register. (EUR-Lex, 2006) (oriGIn, n.d).

### **1.2.2 Current EU Regulation 1151/2012**

Last evolution of GIs regulatory framework is EU Regulation 1151/2012. First of all, article 1(1) sets up regulation objectives stating that this Regulation shall ensure “fair competition for farmers and producers of agricultural products and foodstuffs having value-adding characteristics and attributes”. This first objective refers to the fact that GIs producers deserve a “special legal protection”, in order to exploit added value of their products. In fact, fair competition between no-

GIs and GIs is ensured only if consumer is able to understand the differences between the two product segments. Furthermore, article 1 objective is to guarantee “ the availability to consumers of reliable information pertaining to such products”. This part is related especially on label topic, because compulsory information need to be sufficient and they have to be clear to final consumer, with the purpose of avoiding confusion or doubts in consumer’s minds at the marketplace. More specifically, article 4 points out PDOs and PGIs legislation objectives stating that the Regulation is established for “securing fair returns for the qualities of the products” and “providing clear information on the value-adding attributes of the product to consumers”. Here again, the article stresses on the importance of fair competition between origin certified goods and non-origin certified products and it even focuses on the importance of exhaustive information related to the product, but taking into account PDO and PGI specifically.

Article 5(1) states that “designation of origin” identifies a product: “(a) originating in a specific place, region or, in exceptional cases, a country; (b) whose quality or characteristics are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural and human factors; (c) the production steps of which all take place in the defined geographical area”. Whereas, in article 5(2) “geographical indication” identifies a product: (a) originating in a specific place, region, or country; (b) whose given quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to its geographical origin; (c) at least one of the production steps of which take place in the defined geographical area”. Therefore, article 5 shows the differences in the processing steps between PDO and PGI goods.

Article 7(1) highlights product specification, which both PDO and PGI have to follow, in order to gain GIs legal protection: (a) the name to be protected as a designation of origin or geographical indication, as it is used, whether in trade or in common language, and only in the languages which are or were historically used to describe the specific product in the defined geographical area; (b) a description of the product, including the raw materials, if appropriate, as well as the principal physical, chemical, microbiological or organoleptic characteristics of the product; (c) the definition of the geographical area delimited with regard to the link referred to in point (f) (i) or (ii) of this paragraph, and, where appropriate, details indicating compliance with the requirements of Article 5(3); (d) evidence that the product originates in the defined geographical area referred to in Article 5(1) or (2); (e) a description of the method of obtaining the product and, where appropriate, the authentic and unvarying local methods as well as information concerning packaging, if the applicant group so determines and gives sufficient product-specific justification as to why the packaging must take place in the defined geographical area to safeguard quality, to ensure the origin or to ensure control, taking into account Union law, in particular that on the free movement of goods and the free provision of services; (f) details establishing the following: (i) the link between the quality or characteristics of the product and the geographical environment referred to in Article 5(1), or (ii) where appropriate, the link between a given quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product and the geographical origin referred to in Article 5(2); (g) the name and address of the authorities or, if available, the name and address of bodies verifying compliance with the provisions of the product specification; (h) any specific labelling rule for the product in question. Article 7 shows all the characteristics, which PDO and PGI product has to contain, in order to be defined as a GI good. Thus, every linkage between product and origin area has to be highlighted in the product specification, with a view to gather all features, which make the product “special”.

Concerning GIs visual part, article 12(2) declares that GIs goods have to show Union symbols, in order to publicise Geographical Indications. Furthermore, article 12(3) says that even the “registered name” of the product shall appear on the label.

Article 13(1) is extremely relevant, especially in similarity confusion cases. Indeed, the article points out that GIs names registered within European Union shall be protected against: “ (a) any direct or indirect commercial use of a registered name in respect of products not covered by the registration where those products are comparable to the products registered under that name or where using the name exploits the reputation of the protected name, including when those products are used as an ingredient; (b) any misuse, imitation or evocation, even if the true origin of the products or services is indicated or if the protected name is translated or accompanied by an expression such as ‘style’, ‘type’, ‘method’, ‘as produced in’, ‘imitation’ or similar, including when those products are used as an ingredient; (c) any other false or misleading indication as to the provenance, origin, nature or essential qualities of the product that is used on the inner or outer packaging, advertising material or documents relating to the product concerned, and the packing of the product in a container liable to convey a false impression as to its origin; (d) any other practice liable to mislead the consumer as to the true origin of the product”. In addition, article 13(3) states that administrative steps, in order to prevent these types of misleading practices, should be taken impartially by Member States where GIs is produced or marketed. Regarding the relationship between GIs and trademarks, article 14(1) declares that, in case of “evocation” issue, trademark registered first, has the priority and the other one shall be invalidated. Furthermore, article 14(2) states that where a GI name contravenes article 13(1) the trademark which is not protected by GI can continue to be used as long it was established in good faith within the territory of the Union. Good faith means that the trademark was established fairly, so as to not destroy the right of the other trademark, in order to receive the benefits of the registration.

After the section dedicated to PDO and PGI goods, the Regulation focuses on Traditional specialities guaranteed. Article 17 sets the objectives of the Regulation about TSG, which completely resemble PDO and PGI objectives. Article 18(1) says that traditional speciality guaranteed describes a specific product or foodstuff that: “(a) results from a mode of production, processing or composition corresponding to traditional practice for that product or foodstuff; (b) is produced from raw materials or ingredients that are those traditionally used”. Moreover, for a name to be registered as a traditional speciality guaranteed, it shall: (a) have been traditionally used to refer to the specific product, or (b) identify the traditional character or specific character of the product”. It is quite clear from TSGs description that specificity level of these kinds of products is lower compared to PGI products and it is lower especially compared to PDO goods, which have the higher connection to a given area. In fact, in TSG products none of the production processes should compulsorily be carried out in a determined area.

In article 19(1) TSGs production specification is described and it comprises: “(a) the name proposed for registration, in the appropriate language versions; (b) a description of the product including its main physical, chemical, microbiological or organoleptic characteristics, showing the product’s specific character; (c) a description of the production method that the producers must follow, including, where appropriate, the nature and characteristics of the raw materials or ingredients used, and the method by which the product is prepared; (d) the key elements establishing the product’s traditional character”.

Article 23(2) points out that there is a compulsory Union symbol also for TSG products. Article 23(3) says that even in this case the registered name submitted under European Commission shall be visible on the label.

Finally, article 24(1) states that any TSG good shall be protected against “any misuse, imitation or evocation, or against any other practice liable to mislead the consumer”. Here, it is evident how the paragraph regarding protection against misleading practices is extremely restricted compared to that one in PDO and PGI section. In fact, the high specificity of PDO and PGI goods allow many firms to initiate misleading practices against the original product, with the view of confusing consumer. (EUR-Lex, 2012).

### **1.2.3 Major changes in GIs agricultural Regulation**

The objective of this new Regulation is to create a single legal instrument for the protection and promotion of the quality level of agricultural products (especially PDO and PGI goods). It regulates different quality schemes for agricultural products and it tries to make it easier, but at the same time safer, providing a more efficient system for the protection of these schemes.

General objectives of the EU Regulation 1151/12, laid down in Article 1, are fair competition for farmers and producers, availability to consumers of reliable information on the products, respect for Intellectual Property Rights and integrity of the internal market. In addition to PDOs, PGIs and TSGs, this new Regulation provides rules for the creation of optional quality terms, relating to the characteristics of one or more categories of products. First optional quality term established by this Regulation is “mountain product”. Furthermore, there is a question whether to establish a further optional quality term for “product of island farming”. The Regulation explicitly says that other optional quality terms may be created in the future (EUR-Lex, 2012).

Concerning PDOs and PGIs, the new Regulation is mainly the same as the previous EU Regulation 510/06. However, it introduces a significant amount of modifications and amendments. First of all, there is faster registration procedure and a reduction in the opposition period from six to three months. Furthermore, it is used a clearer and more detailed explanation of the rules on controls. Moreover, it is included the possibility of inserting new goods in the GIs register, which belongs to products from third countries that are protected in the EU under an International Agreement to which the EU is a contracting party. Added to the last point, there is even the possibility of registering PDOs and PGIs for other types of products not mentioned in the previous EU Regulation. In addition, using PDO and PGI logos for products of EU origin is an obligation (but only after a transition period). Finally, the specification about PDOs and PGIs protection in cases of use of PDOs and PGIs, which are not covered by the registration, and in cases of use which results in misuse, imitation or evocation is extended. It also refers to cases where the products for which the PDOs and PGIs are used and employed as an ingredient of another product. Moreover, the provision where Commission must take appropriate administrative and legal steps to prevent or stop the unlawful use of PDOs and PGIs (changing the position where it is the parties concerned who must take steps in order to have illicit uses) expired.

Regarding TSGs, the main new points are the increase from 25 to 30 years of the minimum period of use on the market of the term can be registered and a provision, where the use of registered TSGs is reserved in the EU. Instead, under the previous EU Regulation, TSGs registration could take place for identification purposes without reservation of the registered name in the EU (EUR-Lex, 2006) (EUR-Lex, 2012) (Sironi GE., 2013).

#### 1.2.4 Side GIs Laws

Besides EU Regulation 1151/2012, there are some secondary laws related to Geographical Indication agricultural foodstuffs.

First of all, Regulation 1169/11 provides food information for final consumer regarding every foodstuff within European Union, therefore it is relevant also for GI goods. First section of the Regulation lists all mandatory information, which has to be contained in the final product. Article 9 resumes all these compulsory information, which will be explained in detail in this Regulation section: the name of the food; the list of ingredients; any ingredient or processing aid listed in Annex II or derived from a substance or product listed in Annex II causing allergies or intolerances used in the manufacture or preparation of a food and still present in the finished product, even if in an altered form; the quantity of certain ingredients or categories of ingredients; the net quantity of the food; the date of minimum durability or the 'use by' date; any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use; the name or business name and address of the food business operator; the country of origin or place of provenance; instructions for use where it would be difficult to make appropriate use of the food in the absence of such instructions; with respect to beverages containing more than 1,2 % by volume of alcohol, the actual alcoholic strength by volume; a nutrition declaration.

Moreover, article 7 states that information shall not be misleading for the final consumer, especially in these cases: in food characteristics and its nature, identity, properties, composition, quantity, durability, country of origin or place of provenance, method of manufacture or production; by attributing to the food effects or properties which it does not possess; emphasising the presence or absence of certain ingredients and nutrients; representation of an ingredient, which is naturally contained in the food and it has been replaced by a new one. Furthermore, food information shall be accurate, clear and easy to understand for the consumer.

Finally, article 8 says that the responsibility about food information is all up to the business operator (which is the legal or natural person liable of placing the product on the market) and he has to notify the possibility of the presence of non-compliant information as soon as possible (EUR-Lex, 2011).

EU Directive 2005/29 concerns unfair business-to-consumer practices. Indeed, the purpose of this European directive is to achieve a high level of consumer's protection regarding unfair commercial practices harming consumers' economic interests (article 1).

Article 5 gives the definition of "unfair commercial practices": "(a) it is contrary to the requirements of professional diligence; (b) it materially distorts or is likely to materially distort the economic behaviour with regard to the product of the average whom it reaches or to whom it is addressed, or of the average member of the group when a commercial practice is directed to a particular group of consumers". In addition, unfair commercial practices are divided into misleading practices and aggressive practices.

Article 6(1) defines misleading practices, which involve any untruthful information that push final consumer to take decision he would have never taken otherwise. The misleading information shall include following elements: existence or nature of the product, main characteristics of the product, price of the product, the need for a service or repair, consumer's rights. Moreover, article 6(2) enunciates misleading practices involved: "(a) any marketing of a product, including comparative advertising, which creates confusion with any products, trade marks, trade names or other distinguishing marks of a competitor; (b) non-compliance by the trader with commitments

contained in codes of conduct by which the trader has undertaken to be bound, where: (i) the commitment is not aspirational but is firm and is capable of being verified; (ii) the trader indicates in a commercial practice that he is bound by the code”.

However, even omitting product features can mislead consumer’s choice and for this reason article 7 concerns “misleading omissions”. In fact, consumer can be misled by the omission of certain information about the product he is purchasing. Elements and practices involved in article 7 are the same compared to article 6.

Next to misleading practices, the Directive defines aggressive practices in article 8(1): “A commercial practice shall be regarded as aggressive if, in its factual context, taking account of all its features and circumstances, by harassment, coercion, including the use of physical force, or undue influence, it significantly impairs or is likely to significantly impair the average consumer's freedom of choice or conduct with regard to the product and thereby causes him or is likely to cause him to take a transactional decision that he would not have taken otherwise”.

Furthermore, article 9 points out when the use of harassment, coercion and physical force should be taken into account: “(a) its timing, location, nature or persistence; (b) the use of threatening or abusive language or behaviour; (c) the exploitation by the trader of any specific misfortune or circumstance of such gravity as to impair the consumer's judgement, of which the trader is aware, to influence the consumer's decision with regard to the product; (d) any onerous or disproportionate non-contractual barriers imposed by the trader where a consumer wishes to exercise rights under the contract, including rights to terminate a contract or to switch to another product or another trader; (e) any threat to take any action that cannot legally be taken”. (EUR-Lex, 2005).

Further relevant side regulation is EU Regulation 664/2014 regarding Geographical Indications products symbols on the package (APPENDIX)). Reg. 1151/2012 explains very in detail the characteristics of GI foodstuffs, but the obligation of GIs symbols is present only in EU Regulation 664/14.

EU Geographical Indications logos play a crucial role in recognising GIs product, because, as previously stated, there are huge differences within these quality certified products and final consumer must choose consciously at the marketplace. Therefore, this regulation shows visually PDO, PGI, and TSG logo in the ANNEX at the end of the regulation section.

Moreover, article 1 further adds that products covered by these symbols shall be obtained completely within the indicated area. Nevertheless, since feed entirely obtained in the denominated area is not technically practicable, it can be sourced from outside the denominated area with certain restrictions. In fact, feed sourced from outside that area can be added, provided that product qualities or characteristics essentially due to the geographical environment are not affected. Feed sourced from outside the defined geographical area shall, in any case, not exceed 50 % of dry matter on annual basis (EUR-Lex, 2014).

Also EU Regulation 668/2014 is relevant for GI goods because it lays down rules for the application of EU Regulation 1151/12. Article 1 points out that the name of a GI product shall be registered in its original script and article 2 states that the geographical area of GIs shall be defined in a precise way that presents no ambiguities, referring as far as possible to physical or administrative boundaries. Even EU Regulation 668/14 refers to feed. Indeed, article 3 declares that

product specification of a product of animal origin, which has been registered as GI, shall contain detailed rules on the origin and the quality of feed.

Article 4(1) expresses that “the product specification for a PDO or PGI product shall identify the procedures which operators must have in place as regards the proof of origin concerning the product, raw materials, feed and other items that, according to the product specification, are required to come from the defined geographical area”. Moreover, article 4(2) sets down what the operator shall specifically identify: “the supplier, quantity and origin of all batches of raw material and/or products received, the recipient, quantity and destination of products supplied, the correlation between every batch of inputs”. Last part of the regulation describes GIs registration and amendment procedures already explained in the chapter regarding EU Regulation 1151/2012 (EUR-Lex, 2014).

Last document is not a regulation, but rather the decision number 71 released by the European Commission in 2007. This decision is interesting, because it sets up a scientific group for the designation of Geographical Indications products.

Article 2 says that EC may consult this expert group in order to establish a new GI good. So it is not compulsory, but it is highly recommended by the European Commission. Third article shows the members allowed to be part of this scientific group.

Article 3(1) asserts that the members of the group shall be appointed by the Commission from specialists who have responded to the call for applications to this end, and who are highly qualified in the different technical and scientific aspects and together cover the widest possible range of scientific and technical disciplines and, consistent with this criteria, on the basis of a geographical distribution which reflects the diversity of scientific issues and approaches in the Community. Article 3(2) further says that the group shall be composed of 11 members and candidates found suitable for the position.

Finally, article 4 communicates that the group shall elect a chairman and two deputy chairmen from its members and the election shall take place by simple majority of the members. The election shall take place by simple majority of the members. Lastly, the Commission representative may invite experts or observers with special expertise on a matter on the agenda to participate in the group's work where appropriate and/or necessary (EUR-Lex, 2007).

### **1.3 Consumer's confusion case laws on GIs**

In spite of really severe EU regulations for GIs, there are some case laws on this topic. Nowadays, it is not surprising that companies try to protect their products through names, symbols, or other design characteristics, which identify a certain product in consumer eyes. It is even not surprising that some companies tend to “imitate” colours, packages, shapes and graphics, especially of successful products placed on the market. The result is that what we usually see on the market, it is rather “innovative imitation”, than “new”.

The word “imitate” typically means that there is an effort to reproduce main ingredients and characteristics of a determinate product. In fact, the aim is to reproduce also price, advertising, marketing, but not to “copy” the baseline product. Some of these imitations are legally allowed, others are not legal at all (Levitt T., 2018). Imitation is vastly present in GIs world and it leads often to similarity confusion in consumer's minds. However, GIs market includes many “special” goods, which gained this denomination through many historical steps that gradually recognised GIs. This pattern mixed with the economic one, since GIs require high level resources, justify the raising attention on GIs case laws. In the next sections some case laws will be listed, in order to understand consumer's confusion applied on real GIs case laws.

#### **1.3.1 Parmesan case (C-132/05)**

On March 21 2005, EU Commission initiated proceedings for failure to fulfil obligations against Germany, stating that Germany had failed to take the necessary measures to proceed against the marketing on its territory of products designated as “Parmesan”, which do not comply with the product specification for the protected designation of origin “Parmigiano Reggiano PDO”. Following article 13(1) of EU Reg. 2081/1992 every GI product shall be protected against “(a) any direct or indirect commercial use of a name registered in respect of products not covered by the registration in so far as those products are comparable to the products registered under that name or insofar as using the name exploits the reputation of the protected name; (b) any misuse, imitation or evocation, even if the true origin of the product is indicated or if the protected name is translated or accompanied by an expression such as style, type, method, as produced in, imitation or similar; (c) any other false or misleading indication as to the provenance, origin, nature or essential qualities of the product, on the inner or outer packaging, advertising material or documents relating to the product concerned, and the packing of the product in a container liable to convey a false impression as to its origin; (d) any other practice liable to mislead the public as to the true origin of the product”. Court found out that there is phonetic and visual similarity between the names “Parmesan” and “Parmigiano Reggiano” and that this is the case in a situation where the products have a similar appearance, namely they are hard cheeses. Moreover, while leaving open the issue of whether or not the name “Parmesan” is an exact translation of the PDO “Parmigiano Reggiano” or of the term “Parmigiano”, the conceptual proximity between those two terms, giving out from different languages, must also be taken into account. All these factors bring confusion to consumer's mind, when PDO “Parmigiano Reggiano” is compared to a hard cheese, having the name “Parmesan”.

On February 26 2008, the Court concluded that the name “Parmesan” is an evocation of the PDO “Parmigiano Reggiano” and it misleads the consumer and therefore it is prohibited (EUR-Lex, 2008).



\* Figure 1. *Parmigiano Reggiano PDO and Parmesan cheese.*

### 1.3.2 TOSCORO vs Toscano case (C-510/15)

The dispute in question arose from the application for registration, filed by Roberto Mengozzi, on June 17 2002, of the word mark TOSCORO for goods in classes 29, which includes mainly food stuffs of animal origin (meat, fish, poultry, meat extracts; preserved, frozen, dried and cooked fruits and vegetables; jellies, jams, compotes; eggs; milk and milk products; oils) and 30, which includes mainly food stuff of plants origin (coffee, tea, cocoa and artificial coffee; rice; tapioca and sago; flour and preparations made from cereals; bread, pastries and confectionery; edible ices; sugar, honey, treacle; yeast, baking-powder; salt; mustard; vinegar and sauces condiments; spices; ice) of the official classification provided by EUIPO.

In 2003, TOSCORO was registered as EU trademark. After a first declaration of invalidity of this trademark, because of the registration of “Toscano” PGI as olive oil, the applicant (Roberto Mengozzi) filed an appeal against the cancellation of the trademark. On June 2 2015, EUIPO partially up-held the appeal and the Board of Appeal held that TOSCORO olive oil was not in compliance with articles 13(1) and 14(1) of EU Reg. 1151/2012. Article 13(1) follows perfectly article 13(1) of EU Regulation 2081/92 examined in “Parmesan case” section. Article 14(1) states that registration of a designation origin or geographical indication product shall be denied, when a product of the same type has already submitted it to the European Commission.

On February 2 2017, General Court declared TOSCORO trademark not in compliance with EU legislation, according to article 13(1) and 14(1) of EU Reg. 1151/2012, where PGI products (and even final consumer) shall be protected against any “misuse, imitation or evocation, even if the true origin of the product is indicated or if the protected name is translated or accompanied by an expression such as ‘style’, ‘type’, ‘method’, ‘as produced in’, ‘imitation’ or similar”. In fact, the General Court recalled that a trademark that evokes a protected geographical indication (PGI) must be declared invalid, provided that it has been registered after the PGI and that it covers goods of the same type (EUR-Lex, 2017).



\* Figure 2. *Toscana PGI and TOSCORO oil.*

### 1.3.3 Cambozola case (C-87/97)

The case law begins on February 27 1997, with “Consorzio per la Tutela Formaggio Gorgonzola DOP” opposed to Käserei Champignon Hofmeister GmbH & Co. KG and Eduard Bracharz GmbH. First of all, intervener stated that the product was against article 2 of the Agreement between the Austrian Government and the Italian Government on geographical designations of origin and names of certain products, signed in Rome on 1 February 1952. This agreement prohibits the importation and sale of all products bearing, or displaying on their packaging or in their trade marks, designations and names, which are liable to mislead the public as to the origin, variety, nature or specific qualities of those products or goods. Furthermore, intervener said that “Cambozola” is not in compliance with articles 13(1) and 14(2) of EU Regulation 2081/92. However, applicant answered that there was no “evocation” of “Gorgonzola PDO” with the meaning of article 13(1) of EU Reg. 20181/92 and no likelihood of consumer’s confusion in this case.

Subsequently, The Court concluded that the term "Cambozola", used for a cheese, could be regarded as an evocation of the designation "Gorgonzola". Nevertheless, the Court observed that it was for the national court to determine whether the requisite conditions were satisfied for allowing the use of the trademark "Cambozola", despite the fact that it is an evocation and as such in principle prohibited. This trademark (Cambozola) was registered before the entry into force of the Community protection of the designation "Gorgonzola PDO".

On March 4 1999, sentence ruled by General Court stated that it was for the national court to decide whether conditions laid down in Article 14(2) of EU Regulation 2081/92 allowed the use of an earlier trademark to continue, nonetheless the registration of the protected designation of origin “Gorgonzola PDO”. National court should taking into account particularly the law in force at the time of registration of the trade mark, in order to determine whether this registration could have been made in good faith (regarding both national and international legislation) in order to determine whether “Cambozola” did not constitute an attempt to deceive the consumer (EUR-Lex, 1999).



*\* Figure 3. Gorgonzola PDO and Cambozola cheese.*

#### **1.3.4 Grana Padano case (C-291/03)**

On 2 February 1998, Biraghi SpA filed an application, pursuant to EU Regulation 40/94, with the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market, for the registration of the word mark “GRANA BIRAGHI” as a Community trademark. The goods in respect of which registration was sought are in Class 29 of the Nice Agreement concerning the International Classification of Goods and Services, as revised and amended, and correspond to the following description: “Cheese, in particular cheese from cows’ milk, mature cheese, hard cheese, whole cheeses, portions of cheese with or without rind, packaged cheese of various sizes, grated and packaged cheese”.

The mark applied for was registered on 2 June 1999 and published in the Community Trade Marks Bulletin of 26 July 1999. On 22 October 1999, the “Consorzio per la tutela del formaggio Grana Padano” (the applicant) filed an application, pursuant to Article 55 of EU Regulation 40/94 (article regarding the Application for revocation or for a declaration of invalidity of a community trade mark), asking for the invalidity of GRANA BIRAGHI trademark. It maintained that the registration of that mark was contrary to the protection of the designation of origin “grana padano” pursuant to EU Regulation 2081/92. Furthermore, applicant argued that the trade mark was not in compliance with article 7(1)(g) of EU Regulation 40/94, which says that “trade marks which are of such a nature as to deceive the public, for instance as to the nature, quality or geographical origin of the goods or service” are invalid. Moreover, article 8(1) states that even name similarity between two registered trademarks could be reason to annul the latest one.

By decision of 28 November 2001, the Cancellation Division allowed Consorzio’s application for a declaration of invalidity on the basis of Article 14 of Regulation No 2081/92. On 24 January 2002, Biraghi appealed against that decision on the grounds of the generic and descriptive nature of the term “grana”. By decision of 16 June 2003, the First Board of Appeal allowed Biraghi’s appeal, annulling the Cancellation Division’s decision and rejecting the application for a declaration that the Community trademark “GRANA BIRAGHI” was invalid. The reason for this annulment was that The Board of Appeal found that the word “grana” was generic and described an essential quality of the goods in question. Therefore, on the basis of Article 13(1) of Regulation No 2081/92, the existence of the PDO “grana padano” did not preclude the registration of the sign GRANA BIRAGHI as a Community trademark. At the end, GRANA BIRAGHI was allowed to remain in

the market, because it was not confusing for the final consumer, according European Board of Appeal (EUR-Lex, 2007).



\* Figure 4. *Grana Padano PDO and GranBiraghi cheese.*

Nevertheless, similarity is not the only cause, which can bring confusion to consumer's mind. Next section presents an European case law regarding Geographical Indications, which is not inherent to similarity confusion, but rather it refers to the product itself. Indeed, GIs main characteristic is their specificity and uniqueness and altering product characteristics or production phases can indirectly mislead the consumer at the marketplace.

### 1.3.5 Parma Ham case (C-108/01)

The question raised in 1997 between Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, an association of producers of Parma ham (established in Italy), Salumificio S. Rita SpA, a company also established in Italy, a producer of Parma ham and a member of the Consorzio, of the one part, Asda Stores Ltd, a company established in the United Kingdom, an operator of supermarkets, and Hygrade Foods Ltd, even established in the United Kingdom, an importer of Parma ham, of the other part. The issue concerned the marketing in the United Kingdom under the protected designation of origin "Prosciutto di Parma PDO" of Parma ham sliced and packaged in that Member State.

The main cause of this litigation was the fact that Asda Stores sold ham bearing "Parma Ham" label, even though it was purchased from Hygrade Foods Ltd, which itself purchased the ham boned but not sliced from an Italian producer who is a member of the Consorzio. Indeed, the ham was sliced and hermetically sealed by Hygrade in packages each one containing five slices. Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma put the attention especially upon EU Regulation 2081/1992 concerning GIs agricultural foodstuffs and even on EU Regulation 1107/1996 regarding GIs goods registration. Article 2(2) of EU Regulation 2081/92 states that "designation of origin: means the name of a region, a specific place or, in exceptional cases, a country, used to describe an agricultural product or a foodstuff: (a) originating in that region, specific place or country, and (b) the quality or characteristics of which are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural and human factors, and the production, processing and preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area; ...". Therefore, all production steps needs to be

carried out in the same area and Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma argued that in this case Regulation has not been followed in compliance with EU legislation. Moreover, article 8 points out that “The indications PDO... or equivalent traditional national indications may appear only on agricultural products and foodstuffs that comply with this Regulation”. Lastly, article 13(1)(a) provides that registered names need to be protected against any direct or indirect commercial use of a name registered in respect of products not covered by the registration, because those products are comparable to the products registered under that name or because using the name exploits the reputation of the protected name. Furthermore, the applicant referred that “Parma Ham” is registered as a PDO product under EU Regulation 1107/96, thus the packaging could not be executed out of the protected area. Combining all these factors, applicants thought that the sale of this ham under PDO logo could be misleading for final consumer.

However, Asda and Hygrade doubted whether such a condition could be part of the Community legislation. In fact, the United Kingdom Government considered that EU Regulation 2081/92 did not give producers the right to prohibit the sale under a PDO certification of a product sliced and packaged outside the region of production.

Finally, Court ruled that “where the use of the protected designation of origin “Prosciutto di Parma PDO” for ham marketed in slices is made subject to the condition that slicing and packaging operations be carried out in the region of production, this constitutes a measure having equivalent effect to a quantitative restriction on exports within the meaning of Article 29 EC, but may be regarded as justified, and hence compatible with that provision”. Thus, the product was not judged misleading for final consumer (EUR-Lex, 2003).



\* Figure 5. Prosciutto di Parma PDO and Hygrade Prosciutto di Parma.

## **1.4 Consumer's confusion and GIs**

Confusion is particularly present and relevant during consumer's purchase at the marketplace and it has been established that "knock off" packaging (namely packages which resemble other packages present on the market) create consumer's confusion. Confusion can make consumer more promiscuous, by decreasing product loyalty and disrupting even the loyalty towards a certain brand, leading to loss of sales for the company involved. This is because consumer feels to abandon the purchase, or switch to other products categories that he feels more comfortable to choose. Furthermore, company can even lose trade with direct or indirect competitors. One final implication for the company or brand involved is that confused consumer is not able to choose consciously anymore, but he will even give wrong suggestions to a potential consumer (Kahnemann D., 2005). Therefore, "consumer's confusion" is a situation that can influence also GIs at the marketplace. Since these products have extremely specific characteristics (and sometimes even complex features) they can be absolutely sensitive to any kind of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. For this reason, it is interesting to define and study "consumer's confusion", trying to link this subject to GIs topic.

### **1.4.1 Defining consumer's confusion**

Following Mitchell, Walsh and Yamin, consumer's confusion definition in "Towards a conceptual model of consumer's confusion" states that it is "a conscious state of mind that can occur either in the pre- or the post-purchase situation and have not only a cognitive dimension, but also a behavioural one". Extant literatures divide consumer's confusion in three different categories, which are generated by different sources (Mitchell V., Walsh G., Yamin M., 2005).

First category of consumer's confusion occurs when an imitator "resembles the mark in appearance, sound, or meaning that a prospective purchaser is likely to be confused or misled" However, product similarity is not necessary misleading for the final consumer. In fact, this confusion does not occur when consumer already knows properly a certain product, so product similarity confusion can be defined as: "a lack of understanding and potential alteration of a consumer's choice or an incorrect brand evaluation caused by the perceived physical similarity of products or services" (Diamond S., 1981).

Second consumer's confusion category is characterised by information overload. Indeed, huge brands number enables consumer's confusion, but also massive load information on the products can put unavoidable doubts in consumer's mind. Especially nowadays, the number of products (and therefore products information) placed on the market reached an extremely high level and it does not seem to decrease soon. Nevertheless, consumer's confusion caused by information overload is not related only to products proliferation, but even to the increase in the amount of "decision-relevant" information. An increase in the amount of "decision-relevant" information means that, with an overload of product information, final consumer's choice at the purchase will be more difficult. Thus, overload information confusion is defined as "a lack of understanding caused by the consumer being confronted with an overly information rich environment that can- not he processed in the time available to fully understand and be confident in the purchase environment" (Simon H., 1962).

Finally, some authors refer consumer's confusion to product complexity, ambiguous information and false or misleading claims. This falls into miscomprehension notion, where often consumers are

not able to process and extrapolate the right or logical meaning referred to a certain product information or claim. Specifically, in miscomprehension consumer extracts two or more logically incompatible meanings, then he realizes it but he still does not know which of the meanings is correct. Particularly in the food market (so even in GIs market), consumer's confusion occurs not only because of similar varieties or huge load information to absorb, but because "credible" sources, as television programs for instance, undermine consumer's confidence in the accuracy of producers' claims. Following previous thoughts, complexity consumer's confusion is defined as "a lack of understanding during which consumers are forced to reevaluate and revise current beliefs or assumptions about products or the purchasing environment" (Cohen M, 1999).

However, these three dimensions are strictly interrelated and not independent. In fact, no clearness is likely to increase with a growing number of alternatives (information overload) and similarity confusion often coincides with a lack of clarity.

#### **1.4.2 Consumer's confusion variables**

Nevertheless, consumer's confusion is not "black or white", indeed it is driven by both behavioural and cognitive factors together. There are some "moderator variables" that importantly affect consumer's confusion and drive consumer at the marketplace.

The first one is consumer's *Individual characteristics*, which is based on how a person can control his stimuli at the purchase. *Age*, because an individual acquires experience through his life and this feature modifies his approach in this field. Even *gender* is relevant, because women probably are more involved in certain type of products where they manage to avoid confusion and vice-versa. *Cognitive style* divides subjects in "sharpeners" and "levellers" (Mitchell V., Walsh G., Yamin M., 2005). People who are levellers tend to select many memories from the past, in order to clarify and categorize information acquired lately. On the other hand, sharpeners seem to select fewer memories when they process new knowledges. Sharpeners tend to have more accurate identifications of new knowledge and they can relate latest acquired material to old material with more specificity. By contrast, levellers inaccurately mix characteristics of memories together and then simplify the new material or classify it wrongly. They can miss to distinguish features among similar, even if not identical, objects. This could result in definitions of later knowledge that are ambiguous (Rayner SG, Riding RJ, 2000).

The *decision-making style*, which defines three kind of consumer: passive, with an accepting behaviour; concrete, with fact-oriented approach; non-adaptive, which struggles when he has to move from his comfort zone, obviously regarding products choice. Furthermore, decision-making attitude has some factors, which have links with consumer's confusion like perfectionism, novelty-fashion consciousness, and price-value consciousness. Perfectionist consumer tends to buy only high quality products, which are expensive. Therefore, they are subjected to similarity confusion, because looking only into quality characteristics, they are in trouble in presence of several quality products. Novelty-fashion seekers try to get as many information as possible from social media and this is indeed a source of confusion (especially information overload type). Moreover, fashion changes rapidly and this factor increases consumer's ambiguity confusion. On the other hand, price-value consciousness consumers want the best value for the money during the purchase. Thus, they are less vulnerable to similarity, overload and ambiguity confusion.

*Field independent* individuals organize visual stimuli and are able to locate a sought-after component, so they are less likely to experience overload and especially ambiguity confusion.

*Equivalence range* refers to an individual, who generalizes stimuli presented to him. He considers every stimulus (even if it is absolutely marginal) the same and this situation leads consumer to have higher confusion regarding similar products.

Finally, *shopping environment* affects importantly consumer's minds. For instance, a supermarket where products are constantly moved can further confuse final consumer during the purchase. Moreover, there are even mediator variables, which affect "shopping environment".

*Time constraints* can lead to a rush consumer's decision-making, which often means a wrong choice (Mitchell V., Walsh G., Yamin M., 2005). However, time constraints can reduce overload confusion because, knowing the time constraints, consumers might seek to acquire and process less information. *Social environment* refers to the presence of other people during consumer's purchase. Opinions and suggestion made by another individual can increase consumer's confusion.

*Experience*, of course, is a positive factor, in order to decrease consumer's confusion. Brengman stated that experienced consumers are less likely to carefully compare products they buy regularly and are less likely to be exposed to overload confusion, than inexperienced ones. This is partly true because, even though experienced consumer consider a greater number of information dimensions, they look at fewer number of brand alternatives and partly because the knowledge, which stems from experience, facilitates information processing (Brengman, M, Geuens, M., De Pelsmacker P., 2001).

Lastly, consumer's *involvement* in the purchase is extremely important. Low-involvement has a positive result upon overload confusion, because consumer is not eager to process further information, but he is prone to ambiguity confusion, because he is less likely to examine ambiguous information, in order to understand them. High-involvement has opposite result compared with low-involvement, regarding information overload. However, this type of consumer is incline to put more effort in understanding and examining ambiguous information and this, of course, reduce ambiguity confusion (Mitchell V., Walsh G., Yamin M., 2005).

### **1.4.3 Consumer's confusion consequences**

Mitchell, Walsh and Yamin suggest attribution theory, in order to define consequences of consumer's confusion. "Attribution" word stems from the fact that most of consumers attribute their confusion to external sources, which bring unfavourable consequences. These consequences are specifically negative word-of-mouth, dissatisfaction, cognitive dissonance, decision postponement, shopping fatigue, reactance, decreased loyalty, decreased self-confidence and confusing other consumers.

Confused consumers, due to products similarity, are prone especially to postpone purchase decision (Mitchell V., Walsh G., Yamin M., 2005). In fact, they are aware that one of the products they are going to buy is the wrong one, so they need more time to reach a decision outcome. Another option is even the abandon of the purchase, because consumers want to avoid difficult trade-offs in the purchase decision. Nevertheless, sometimes consumers go for a no-option when both choices are attractive, as a result of they feel ashamed to be not able to select properly between their choices (Luce MF, 1998). Lack of brand loyalty is also a consequence of similarity consumer's confusion. Indeed, confused consumers, who perceive stimulus similarity and have trouble in distinguishing products and brands, will find it difficult to reward a certain product or brand with their trust.

Overload information confusion leads consumers to interrupt purchase decision for a while. Consumers need to separate useful and useless amount of information and reduce attributes number,

in order to have a final choice. However, this great effort, with the purpose of reaching the optimal product choice can result in consumer's dissatisfaction. On the other hand, people usually affected by overload information confusion tend to develop product loyalty and cognitive abilities. Consumer's loyalty requires less decision making, information seeking, brand evaluation and the prospect of having to process less information and having less comparisons is likely to be appreciated by those who are prone to overload information confusion. Moreover, consumers are likely to feel better prepared for purchase decisions with a greater amount of information. Hence, consumers tend to prefer larger stores, with a greater assortment, to smaller stores with a poor assortment. The abundance of products and information, which today consumers encounter, is unlikely to decrease their self-confidence.

Confusion from ambiguous stimuli involves consumers who suffer from miscomprehension, which, how we said in the previous section, occurs when the consumer extracts more than one logical meaning from the information he gets. Nonetheless, ambiguity confusion is unlikely to result in negative word-of-mouth, if final consumers attribute their inability to understand a product to themselves and not to the product manufacturer. In the same way as information overload, ambiguity confusion is likely to push consumers to search for ways, which permit satisfactory decisions. Therefore, brand and product loyalty leads to fewer comparisons, which means less unclear stimuli. On the cognitive side, consumers do not blame manufacturers and retailers for their perceived ambiguity, but instead they blame themselves, with the quite obvious consequence that consumer will undermine his self-confidence (Mitchell V., Walsh G., Yamin M., 2005).

#### **1.4.4 Consumer's confusion coping strategies**

In order to avoid, or at least reduce confusion at the purchase, consumer can adopt "coping strategies". But, it is extremely important that consumer is conscious of his state confusion, with the view of improving his situation. Authors point out four different type of confusion reduction: 1) clarify buying goals; (2) seek additional information; (3) narrow down a set of alternatives; (4) share or delegate purchase decision (Figure 1).

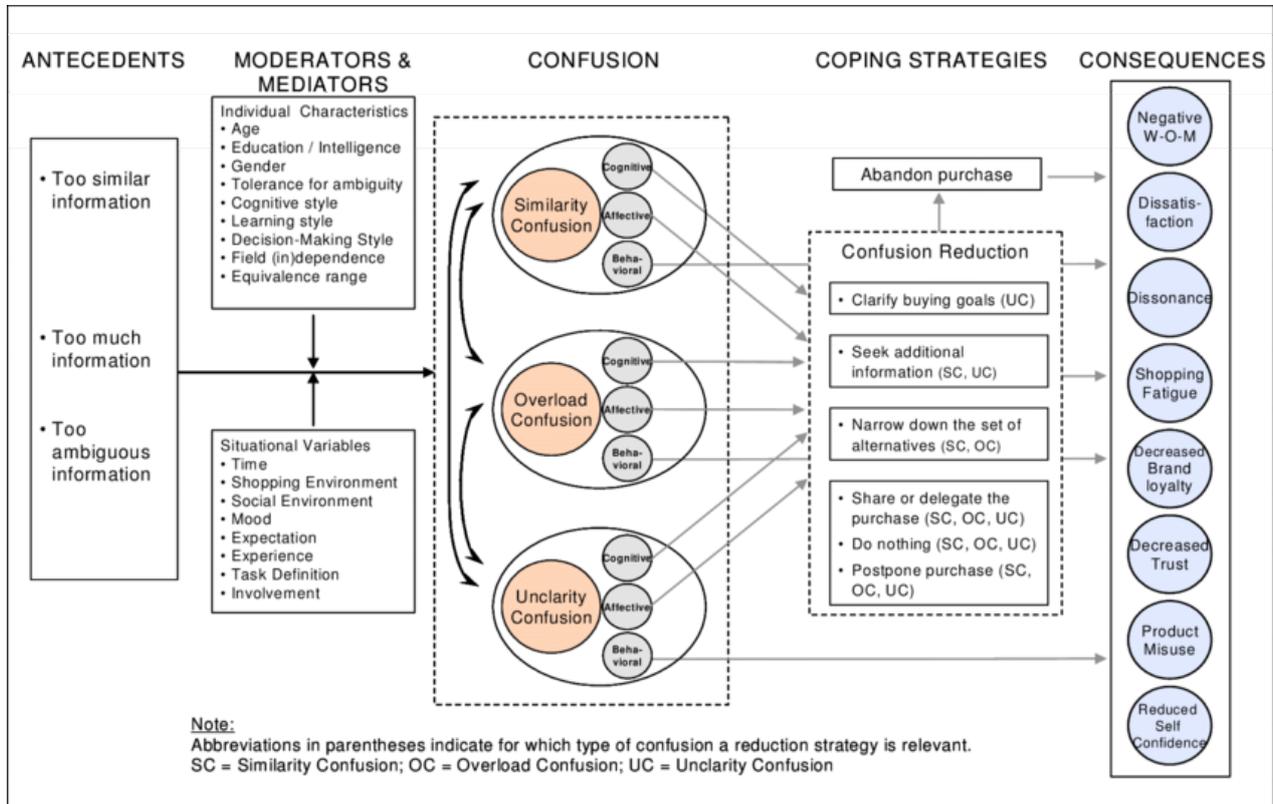
Similarity confusion leads to coping strategies as further research on additional information and narrowing down a set of information. This is the result of the presence of many similar products in consumer's options and he needs to investigate more the products, in order to have a clear choice at the purchase. As a result of this process, consumer will postpone the purchase and sometimes he delegates someone with the purpose of carrying out the acquisition for him.

Even in overload information confusion, consumer narrows down information, with a view to select more useful attributes for the purchase and discard superfluous attributes. Consequences are the same compared to similarity confusion: consumer will postpone the purchase and in some cases he will delegate or share the acquisition.

In ambiguous confusion consumer has primarily to clarify his buying goals. First of all, consumer has to extract the correct meaning from information on the product he wants to buy. In order to so, consumer reduces his confusion by seeking additional information upon the product. The result of this process is to postpone the purchase, in case the consumer purchases the product directly, otherwise he can delegate the acquisition to someone he can trust (Mitchell V., Papavassiliou V., 2017).

In conclusion, we can say that consumer's confusion is an extremely complex field of study. There

are different kinds of consumer's confusion (similarity, information overload, ambiguity), which result in different consequences for final consumers. In addition, consumer's confusion is a variable state affected by cognitive, behavioural and affective components, which make consumer's confusion even more difficult to evaluate.



\* Figure 6. *Conceptual Model for Antecedents Moderation and Consequences of Confusion (Mitchell, Vincent-Wayne).*  
Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Conceptual-Model-for-Antecedents-Moderation-and-Consequences-of-Confusion\\_fig1\\_265428188](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Conceptual-Model-for-Antecedents-Moderation-and-Consequences-of-Confusion_fig1_265428188)

## **2. Materials and methods**

### **2.1 Questionnaire theoretical framework**

#### **2.1.1 Questionnaire relevance**

The aim of the survey is to assess consumer's awareness (and even confusion) regarding Geographical Indication goods at the marketplace. In fact, the past has showed different case laws regarding consumer's confusion regarding GIs, for instance Parmesan case. In this case, consumer attributed same properties to Parmesan and Parmigiano Reggiano PDO, but the issue is that latter has Geographical Indications certification and first one has not. GIs help importantly the rural development of the concerned area and they also imply a higher level of both ingredients and processing steps carried out in a specific area. For this reason, it is crucial to evaluate if average consumer can distinguish between GI and no-GI goods and which is their level of awareness about them.

#### **2.1.2 Questionnaire research**

From the questionnaire can be extracted three main hypothesis.

The first one argues that consumers' knowledge about GIs logos is not enough to understand the different traits of them. Therefore, H1 states:

H1) Consumers do not recognize the differences between PDO, PGI and TSG logos.

The second hypothesis focuses on quality items: this research aims to prove that there is not a statistical difference in the interaction of logos and nationality factors on consumers' answers given about quality items. As a result, H2 states:

H2) The interaction between nationality and logos upon quality items does not yield a statistical significance.

Finally, the third and last hypothesis claims that knowledge of consumers about GIs logos is not affected by their nationality. Specifically, H3 states:

H3) Knowledge about different GIs logos (PDO, PGI and TSG) does not differ between Italian and Dutch consumers.

#### **2.1.2 Research method**

Consumer's awareness towards Geographical Indications has been carried out through a questionnaire/survey. Probability sample has been taken into account and the questionnaire population will cover all subjects who individually purchase foodstuffs at the marketplace (assuming every person from 18 years old on). Survey has been distributed among Dutch and Italian respondents especially through email and social media, because it is a cheap and even feasible method, since survey contains visual part.

Qualtrics program has been used, in order to design the questionnaire and spread it to respondents. Likert scale questionnaire has been adopted and it was characterised by statements with parameters from 1 (Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree). This kind of questionnaire fits perfectly with the study, because it permits to evaluate the level of awareness (and confusion) that consumers have

towards Geographical Indications, rating answers from 1 to 5. Open-ended questionnaire would give an extremely broad answers outcome, which it would result in a really difficult data analysis. Moreover, this kind of survey is effective on a small group of people, which in this case would not give significance to the survey. Furthermore, questionnaire included visual part, showing different Camembert and Serrano ham front packages, with the three different GIs logos (PDO, PGI and TSG) plus a No logo front package (APPENDIX). This part has been designed due to evaluate consumer's awareness between GIs and non-GIs goods and within GIs products, presenting real products packaging.

Survey has been distributed to several Italian and Dutch consumers, but since most of the surveys were not completed, 100 responses for each country have been taken into account. "Distribution part" started on the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 and it took about 2 months. It has been divided in two parts: first of all, survey has been spread to Italian respondents until the 22<sup>th</sup> of January, then it has been distributed to Dutch consumers until the 28<sup>th</sup> of February.

### 2.1.3 Questionnaire measures

- **Independent variable**, which is respondent nationality. It is a variable that is being manipulated in this experiment in order to observe the effect on the dependent variables (Gilbert A., Gilbert JR, 1987). In this study, dependent variables are quality and consumer's behaviour.

- **Dependent variable 1**, which is quality. Dependent variable represents the output, whose variation is being studied (Gilbert A., Gilbert JR, 1987). Indeed, consumer's quality perception of Camembert cheese and Serrano ham is certainly affected by the independent variable. Items related to quality cover taste, quality certification, rural development, ethical issues, provenance area, ingredients and processing steps of Camembert and Serrano ham;



\* Figure 7. *Le Chatelain Camembert and Revilla Serrano Ham.*

- This product shows Geographical Indications quality certification:
- This product is guaranteed to have the authentic taste of the area of origin:
- This product helps to improve rural development of the denominated area:
- This product gives a contribution to natural preservation of denominated area:
- This product carries on the traditional know-how of the denominated area:

- This product is environmental friendly, reducing pollutant transportations in the denominated area:
- Product is originated 100% in the Normandy (Serrano) region:
- Product ingredients are entirely obtained in the Normandy (Serrano) region:
- Only a part of product ingredients come from the Normandy (Serrano) region:
- All processing steps of this product are carried out in the Normandy (Serrano) region:
- At least one processing step of this product is carried out in the Normandy (Serrano) region:
- None of the processing steps of this product are carried out in the Normandy (Serrano) region:

- **Dependent variable 2**, which is consumer's behaviour. This second dependent variable is interesting, in order to evaluate even different level of consumer's confusion at the marketplace determined by different nationalities. Items cover consumer's mood while he purchases these kinds of products and his consequences at the purchase, in order to establish confusion type whose they are affected;

- Your behaviour while you buy Geographical Indications product consists in:
  - 1) Seeking additional info
  - 2) Changing your buying goals
  - 3) Narrowing down possible alternatives
  - 4) Delegate or post-pone the purchase
- If you bought a product with Geographical Indications, after the purchase you experience:
  - 1) Shopping fatigue
  - 2) Dissatisfaction
  - 3) Less trust in GIs goods
  - 4) Less trust in purchasing brand
  - 5) Misunderstanding of the product

- **Control variables**, which, in contrast with the other variables, they stay the same in the whole questionnaire. These variables are needed in order to detect, for instance, who does not eat meat or cheese and he will answer the statements about meat and cheese products differently. It can also be that the answers are the same but this can be taken into account when there are outliers in the data (Gilbert A., Gilbert JR, 1987). Items are:

- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Muslim
- Jew

- **Biographical data**. At the end of the survey there is a section devoted to respondent characteristics. This part is important because it shows respondents features, which influence survey answers and the final data analysis. Biographical data are:

- Age
- Gender
- Nationality

## 2.2 Statistical techniques

Survey answers registered on Qualtrics program have been exported to SPSS statistical program. Here, it is possible to carry out some statistical tests, in order to give relevance to the data acquired from the questionnaire.

Main purpose of the study is to assess consumer's awareness towards Geographical Indications. First of all, there is the need of running Principal Component Analysis test, in order to detect if survey items can be reduced into few variables. Subsequently, if Principle Component Analysis allows to proceed in this way, it is possible to create new items. Finally, it is essential to verify whether new items created are reliable to run further statistical tests, therefore Cronbach's Alpha test is needed.

After this preliminary section, some statistical tests should be run, with the view of answering to thesis main hypothesis. The first step is carrying out Oneway ANOVA test, with the view of comparing conditions on age and gender of the sample. This test is useful to highlight if some respondents answers vary because of biographical data, either answers are different because of reasons outside age and gender domain. Next step is running again Oneway ANOVA test, but in this case with the purpose of seeing the impact of logo factor upon quality items. Subsequently, MANOVA test, with reduced dimensions, is used. This test permits to have two different fixed factors (nationality and logo), in order to study the interaction of these factors upon quality questionnaire items. Finally, T-Test value has been run, with the purpose of testing the last hypothesis, which consists of test respondents' knowledge and behaviour at the market place, based on consumers' nationality.

## 3. Data Analysis

### 3.1 Results

#### 3.1.1 Sample description

200 respondents have been consulted for the questionnaire. Half of the 200 respondents are from one of the country examined and the second half consist of 100 respondents from the other country object of the study. Respondents' age in the survey varies. 18-25 years old respondents are 103 and they represent more than 50% of the total population, precisely the 51.5%. 55 respondents are between 25 and 50 years old (27.5%) and the rest of the sample is more than 50 years old and represents the 21% of the total population. Moreover, 135 of the 200 respondents are male (67.5%) and 65 respondents have female gender (32.5%).

In order to evaluate the impact of age condition on respondents' answer, Oneway ANOVA test has been carried out. There was a significant effect of age condition on "Label"  $F(2,197) = 7.377$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , "General quality"  $F(2,197) = 3.610$ ,  $p = .029$  and "Specific quality"  $F(2,197) = 9.945$ ,  $p < .001$  (Table 3).

Furthermore, using Tukey HSD it was possible to detect the differences between age groups. In table 4 "Label" item 18-25 group shows statistical significance with both 26-50 ( $p = .001$ ) and >50 ( $p = .040$ ) groups. 26-50 group highlights statistical significance with 18-25 group ( $p = .001$ ) and no significance with >50 group ( $p = .745$ , ns). Finally, group >50 shows statistical significance with 18-25 group ( $p = .040$ ), but not with 26-50 group ( $p = .745$ , ns).

In "General quality" item 18-25 group shows no statistical significance with >50 group ( $p = .338$ , ns), but it has regarding 26-50 group ( $p = .026$ ). 26-50 section underlines statistical significance with 18-25 group ( $p = .026$ ) and no statistical significance with >50 group ( $p = .658$ , ns). Group composed by >50 years old people does not point out any statistical significance with both 18-25 group ( $p = .338$ , ns) and 26-50 group ( $p = .658$ , ns).

Finally, regarding "Specific quality" item, Tukey test foregrounds the same trend as in "Label" item. 18-25 group shows statistical significance with both 26-50 ( $p < .001$ ) and >50 ( $p = .007$ ) groups. 26-50 group brings out statistical significance with 18-25 group ( $p < .001$ ) and no significance with >50 group ( $p = .853$ , ns). Group >50 shows statistical significance with 18-25 group ( $p = .007$ ), but not with 26-50 group ( $p = .853$ , ns).

\* Table 3. Oneway ANOVA test on age condition on quality items.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
<b>Label</b>	6.690	2	3.345	7.377	.001
<b>General quality</b>	86.686	2	1.589	3.610	.029
<b>Specific quality</b>	6.858	2	3.429	9.945	.000

\*Table 4. Tukey test HSD on age condition on quality items.

	Age	Age	p	95% Confidence Interval		
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
<b>Label</b>	18-25	26-50	.001	.1374	.6685	
		>50	.040	.0109	.5932	
	26-50	18-25	.001	-.6685	-.1374	
		>50	.745	-.4267	.2250	
	>50	18-25	.040	-.5932	-.0109	
		26-50	.745	-.2250	.4267	
	<b>General quality</b>	18-25	26-50	.026	.0283	.5515
			>50	.338	-.1155	.4581
		26-50	18-25	.026	-.5515	-.0283
			>50	.658	-.4396	.2024
		>50	18-25	.338	-.4581	.1155
			26-50	.658	-.2024	.4396
<b>Specific quality</b>	18-25	26-50	.000	.1642	.6274	
		>50	.007	.0773	.5851	
	26-50	18-25	.000	-.6274	-.1642	
		>50	.853	-.3488	.2195	
	>50	18-25	.007	-.5851	-.0773	
		26-50	.853	-.2195	.3488	

Regarding behavioural items, there was a significant effect of age condition on “Actions” item  $F(2,197) = 9.672$ ,  $p < .001$  and “Feelings” item  $F(2,197) = 8.922$ ,  $p < .001$ . “Info” item shows no statistical significance  $F(2,197) = .860$ ,  $p = .425$ , ns (Table 5). Therefore, following Tukey test table 6 will interpret only items that have been resulted significant.

Taking into account “Actions” item, 18-25 group shows statistical significance with >50 group ( $p < .001$ ) and it does not show any with 26-50 group ( $p = .175$ , ns). Furthermore, 26-50 group emphasizes statistical significance with >50 group ( $p = .040$ ), but not with 18-25 group ( $p = .175$ , ns). The group of >50 years old sample highlights significance with both 18-25 group ( $p < .001$ ) and 25-50 group ( $p = .040$ ).

“Feelings” item follows the same flow as the previous section. In fact, 18-25 group shows statistical significance with the older group ( $p < .001$ ) and it does not show any significance with 26-50 group ( $p = .174$ , ns). 26-50 group points out statistical significance with >50 group ( $p = .040$ ) and no

statistical significance with “18-25” section ( $p = .174$ , ns). >50 group again highlights statistical significance with both 18-25 and 26-50 groups ( $p < .001$ ) ( $p = .040$ ).

\* Table 5. *Oneway ANOVA test on age condition on behavioural items.*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
<b>Info</b>	1.790	2	.895	.860	.425
<b>Actions</b>	13.591	2	6.795	9.672	.000
<b>Feelings</b>	21.231	2	3.429	8.922	.000

\*Table 6. *Tukey test HSD on age condition on behavioural items.*

	Age	Age	p	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
<b>Actions</b>	18-25	18-25	.175	-.0799	.5813
		>50	.000	.3094	1.0342
	26-50	18-25	.175	-.5813	.0799
		26-50	.040	.0155	.8267
	>50	26-50	.000	-1.0342	-.3094
		>50	.040	-.8267	-.0155
<b>Feelings</b>	18-25	18-25	.174	-.1030	.7574
		>50	.000	.3663	1.3095
	26-50	18-25	.174	-.7574	.1030
		26-50	.040	-.0171	1.0386
	>50	18-50	.000	-1.3095	-.3663
		26-50	.040	-1.0386	.6864

Concerning gender condition, it has not showed significance on every quality item: “Label”  $F(2,197) = .358$ ,  $p = .700$ , ns; “Generic Quality”  $F(2,197) = 1.920$ ,  $p = .149$ , ns; “Specific Quality”  $F(2,197) = .198$ ,  $p = .821$ , ns (Table 7).

Moreover, as in the age condition section, table 8 does not report any influence of gender condition “Info” item,  $F(2,197) = .854$ ,  $p = .427$ , ns. On the other hand, “Actions” [ $F(2,197) = 5.107$ ,  $p = .007$ ] and “Feelings” [ $F(2,197) = 4.788$ ,  $p = .009$ ] items show statistical significance.

\* Table 7. *Oneway ANOVA test on gender condition on quality items.*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
<b>Label</b>	.347	2	.174	.358	.700
<b>General quality</b>	1.719	2	.859	1.920	.149
<b>Specific quality</b>	.150	2	.075	.198	.821

\*Table 8. *Oneway ANOVA test on gender condition on behavioural items.*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
<b>Info</b>	1.778	2	.899	.854	.427
<b>Actions</b>	7.492	2	3.746	5.107	.007
<b>Feelings</b>	11.850	2	5.925	4.788	.009

### 3.1.2 Measures description

As stated in the “Questionnaire theoretical framework” section, survey has been divided in two parts: the quality part and the behavioural part. The first group consists of “Label”, “Authentic taste”, “Rural development”, “Natural preservation”, “Traditional know-how”, “Environmental friendly”, “Origin”, “Ingredients”, “Ingredients2”, “Process”, “Process2” and “Process3” items. Behavioural items are characterised by “Searching for additional info”, “Changing buying goals”, “Narrowing down possible purchase alternatives”, “Delegate or post-pone the purchase”, “Shopping fatigue”, “Less trust in Geographical Indications products”, “Less trust in purchasing brand” and “Misunderstanding of the product”.

This division has been done in order to evaluate specifically consumers’ behaviour at the marketplace and GIs quality perception perceived by the consumers. Nevertheless, before the statistical tests, both quality and behavioural items have been divided in three main items, which represent them. This step is called dimension reduction and it increases the interpretability and the efficiency of handling degrees of freedom.

Concerning quality items, “Authentic taste”, “Rural development”, “Natural preservation”, “Traditional know-how” and “Environmental friendly” have been coded as “General Quality” items. Furthermore, “Origin”, “Ingredients”, “Ingredients2”, “Process”, “Process2” and “Process3” have been renamed as “Specific Quality” variables. Same procedure has been performed for consumers’ behaviour items. “Searching for additional info” item has been catalogued as “Info” item. “Changing buying goals”, “Narrowing down possible purchase alternatives”, “Delegate or post-pone the purchase” and “Shopping fatigue” items have been included into “Actions” item. Finally, “Dissatisfaction”, “Less trust in Geographical Indications products”, “Less trust in purchasing brand” and “misunderstanding of the product” items have been coded as “Feelings” item.

However, before survey items have been divided into reduced items, Principal Component Analysis has been performed on both behavioural and quality items. Taking into account quality items, they have been reduced into “General quality” and “Specific quality” items, looking at KMO and Bartlett’s Test table, Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity shows  $p < .001$ , therefore principal component analysis can be conducted. Furthermore, only component 1 has been interpreted, since it has an eigenvalue above 1.0, reproducing 82.47% of total variance (eigenvalue and rotated component loadings are presented in the APPENDIX).

Behavioural items have been divided into “Actions” and “Feelings” items and looking at KMO and Bartlett’s table, Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity shows  $p < .001$ , thus principal component analysis can be conducted. Moreover, only component 1 has been interpreted, because it has eigenvalue above 1.0, reproducing 88.474% of total variance (eigenvalue and rotated component loadings are presented in the APPENDIX).

After this items subdivision, it is essential to evaluate whether it is valid to test thesis hypothesis on this sample with the measures obtained from dimension reduction. Thus, Cronbach’s Alpha test has been performed upon the items of the new variables. This test has been conducted both on behavioural and quality new items.

Looking at quality items, “General quality” was measured by five items ( $\alpha = .919$ ), scored on a 5 point scale and “Specific quality” was measured by six items ( $\alpha = .715$ ) scored on a 5 point scale. Regarding behavioural items, “Actions” item was measured by four items ( $\alpha = .724$ ) scored on a 5 point scale and “Feelings” item was measured by four items ( $\alpha = .898$ ) on a 5 point scale.

In conclusion Chronbach’s Alpha test shows that our data are consistent and reliable in order to carry on our research.

### 3.1.3 Hypothesis test

First hypothesis focuses on the fact that consumers cannot discern between different GIs logos. In order to detect these differences, Oneway ANOVA test has been carried out, with logo as a factor and items as dependent variables. Looking at Table 9, it shows that logo factor is significant on “General Quality” item [ $F(3,1596) = 22.629$ ,  $p < .001$ ] and “Specific Quality” item [ $F(3,1596) = 12.882$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. Taking into account Tukey HSD test (Table 10), it is possible to detect consumers’ perception towards every different item. Considering “General Quality” item, No logo variable highlights statistical significance with all GIs ( $p < .001$ ). PDO variable shows statistical significance with No logo variable ( $p < .001$ ) and no significance with PGI variable ( $p = .999$ , ns) and TSG variable ( $p = .993$ , ns). TSG variable follows exactly same PDO trend and PGI variable points out statistical significance with No logo variable ( $P < .001$ ), but no statistical significance with PDO and TSG logos ( $p = .999$ , ns). In fact, mean shows no different perception by the consumers regarding GIs logos, since PDO ( $M = 3.53^b$ ), PGI ( $M = 3.54^b$ ), TSG ( $M = 3.55^b$ ). On the other hand, no logo product is perceived differently ( $M = 3.11^a$ ). Regarding “Specific Quality” item, No logo variable shows statistical significance with all GIs variables: PDO and PGI ( $p < .001$ ) and TSG ( $p = .018$ ). PDO variable does not present statistical significance with PGI variable ( $p = .924$ , ns) and it shows significant difference with No logo ( $p < .001$ ) and TSG variables ( $p = .035$ ). PGI variable again highlights statistical significance with No logo variable ( $p < .001$ ), but there is no statistical significance with PDO ( $p = .924$ , ns) and TSG ( $p = .160$ , ns) variables. Finally, TSG variable does not underline any statistical significance with PGI variable ( $p = .160$ , ns), but he does

with No logo ( $p = .018$ ) and PDO ( $p = .035$ ) variables it points out that, on average, respondents are neutral whether no-logo, PDO, PGI, TSG products bear quality certifications. However, the specific mean of every logo show a slight difference between them, because no-logo ( $M = 3.10^a$ ), PDO ( $M = 3.38^b$ ), PGI ( $M = 3.35^b$ ) and TSG ( $M = 3.26^b$ ).

\*Table 9. *Oneway ANOVA test on logo factor on quality items.*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
<b>General quality</b>	55.660	3	18.553	22.629	.000
<b>Specific quality</b>	19.360	3	6.453	12.882	.000

\*Table 10. Tukey test HSD on logo factor on quality items.

		Variable	Logo	Mean	p
<b>General quality</b>	Tukey test	No logo		3.11 <sup>a</sup>	
		No logo	PDO		.000
		No logo	PGI		.000
		No logo	TSG		.000
		PDO		3.53 <sup>b</sup>	
		PDO	No logo		.000
		PDO	PGI		.999
		PDO	TSG		.993
		PGI		3.54 <sup>b</sup>	
		PGI	No logo		.000
		PGI	PDO		.999
		PGI	TSG		.999
		TSG		3.55 <sup>b</sup>	
		TSG	No logo		.000
		TSG	PDO		.993
TSG	PGI		.999		
<b>Specific quality</b>	Tukey test	No logo		3.10 <sup>a</sup>	
		No logo	PDO		.000
		No logo	PGI		.000
		No logo	TSG		.018
		PDO		3.38 <sup>b</sup>	
		PDO	No logo		.000
		PDO	PGI		.924
		PDO	TSG		.035
		PGI		3.35 <sup>b</sup>	
		PGI	No logo		.000
		PGI	PDO		.924
		PGI	TSG		.160
		TSG		3.26 <sup>b</sup>	
		TSG	No logo		.018
		TSG	PDO		.035
TSG	PGI		.160		

\*a, b: different superscripts denote difference at  $p < .001$

Second thesis hypothesis focuses on the interaction between logo and nationality factors. Twoway MANOVA is helpful to test two different independent variables on different items and to assess the interaction of these two independent variables on the items object of the study.

First of all, Logo factor is statistically significant on quality items,  $F(6,3182) = 14.717$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Wilks'  $\Lambda = .947$ . Also Nationality factor is statistically significant on quality items,  $F(2,1591) = 24.856$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Wilks'  $\Lambda = .970$ . Finally, even the interaction between Nationality and Logo

factors (Nationality \* Logo) results statistically significant,  $F(6,3182) = 21.319$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Wilks'  $\Lambda = .924$ .

Furthermore, Test of Between-Subjects Effects highlights the effect of every factor on both “General quality” and “Specific quality” items. Logo factor is statistically significant on both general and specific items ( $p < .001$ ), Logo \* Nationality shows exactly the same trend. On the other hand, Nationality factor does not present any statistical significance on “General quality” item ( $p = .074$ , ns), but it is significant on “Specific quality” item ( $p < .001$ ) (Table 11).

*\*Table 11. MANOVA test on the interaction between nationality and logo factors.*

	Dependent variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
<b>Logo</b>	General quality	55.660	3	18.553	24.295	.000
	Specific quality	19.360	3	6.453	13.161	.000
<b>Nationality</b>	General quality	2.449	1	2.449	3.207	.074
	Specific quality	7.981	1	7.981	16.275	.000
<b>Logo * Nationality</b>	General quality	90.306	3	30.102	39.417	.000
	Specific quality	10.882	3	3.627	7.397	.000

Last thesis hypothesis is based on the fact whether nationality is a relevant factor in consumers' general knowledge on GIs (and even their behavioural reaction at the marketplace). In order to detect Italian and Dutch consumers knowledge about GIs T-Test has been carried out.

Table 12 points out the effect of nationality factor on logos object of the thesis. Here, No logo variable is the only one influenced by respondents' nationality, since it shows statistical significance,  $t(198) = -6.324$ ,  $p < .001$ . On the other hand, GIs logos don't show any significance: PDO,  $t(198) = 1.196$ ,  $p = .233$ , ns; PGI,  $t(198) = 1.798$ ,  $p = .074$ , ns; TSG,  $t(198) = 1.570$ ,  $p = .118$ , ns. The mean reflects this trend, since there is a big difference and significant difference between Italian ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = .75$ ) and Dutch ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) consumers perception of “No logo” variable, but there is not significant difference between Italian PDO ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = .47$ ), PGI ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = .46$ ), TSG ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) knowledge and Dutch PDO ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = .74$ ), PGI ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) and TSG ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = .79$ ) one.

*\*Table 12. T-Test with nationality factor on GIs logos.*

	Italian M	Dutch M	t	df	p
<b>No logo</b>	2.80	3.46	-6.324	198	.000
<b>PDO</b>	3.57	3.47	1.196	198	.233
<b>PGI</b>	3.59	3.44	1.798	198	.074
<b>TSG</b>	3.51	3.36	1.570	198	.118

Looking at table 13, it is possible to assess respondents' behaviour at the marketplace. "Info" item does not bring out any statistical significance related to respondents' nationality,  $t(198) = -.809$ ,  $p = .419$ , ns. However, "Actions" [ $t(198) = -5.229$ ,  $p < .001$ ] and "Feelings" [ $t(198) = -6.718$ ,  $p < .001$ ] items highlight a statistical significance regarding nationality condition. In fact, there was no significant difference between Italian ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) and Dutch respondents ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ) both moderately agree for the need of further information when they have to purchase GIs. Regarding "Actions" item there is a significant difference, since Italians are mostly neutral on the matter ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = .69$ ), while Dutch people are neutral, but they tend to moderately agree with these statements ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = .92$ ). Lastly, "Feelings" item shows that Italians moderately disagree with these statements ( $M = 2.18$ ,  $SD = .95$ ), on the other hand Dutch segment is mainly neutral about the matter ( $M = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ), again there is a statistical significance.

*\*Table 13. T-Test with nationality factor on behavioural items.*

	Italian M	Dutch M	t	df	p
<b>Info</b>	4.11	4.23	-.809	198	.419
<b>Actions</b>	2.82	3.43	-5.229	198	.000
<b>Feelings</b>	2.18	3.16	-6.718	198	.000

## 3.2 Discussion and Recommendations

### 3.2.1 Discussion

Starting with sample conditions, which are extremely important in the questionnaire, data analysis shows that they influence consumers' answer, even though the influence differs within the two conditions. Quality items score highlights that respondents' age is significant. The major differences are between 18-25 years old consumers and the groups "26-50" and ">50" years old. Since the questionnaire is referred to products that consumer usually purchases at the supermarket, these differences are abundantly comprehensible. The percentage of consumers between 18 and 25 years old, which is used to purchase food products at the marketplace, is extremely lower and less used to do it compared to the other two groups. Consequently, going frequently to the supermarket helps consumer to have particular perceptions upon certain products. Answers differences between "26-50" and ">50" groups are less significant, because these two groups are more related, since (on average) they are characterised by self-sufficient people obliged to go to the supermarket in order to provide food for themselves and for their families.

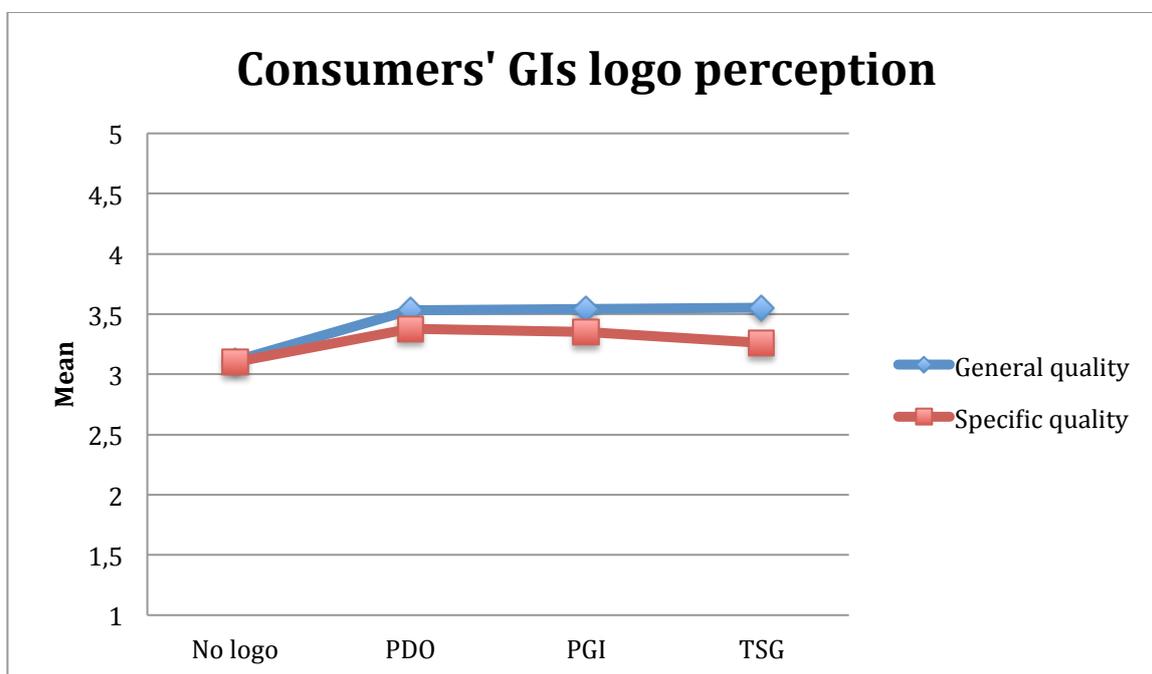
Regarding behaviour items, it is possible to detect almost the same trend between the same groups, except for "Info" item, which is no significant. Here, the difference is more evident between ">50" group and the other two groups. This flow is due to the fact that Geographical Indication goods are really particular products, which require a specific knowledge, and more information are probably needed for every consumer, regardless of his/her age. In this case, the differences are probably characterised by a different approach to the purchase. Younger age means also a different view towards food products, compared to, for instance, mothers and fathers that have to provide food for their children. "Info" item does not present significance, mainly because, since GIs are most of the time niche products, average consumer is not already informed about them and he has to collect further info. Hence, it is not matter of age and this is the reason why answers are not determined by respondent age.

Items analysed taking into account gender condition did not reveal high rate of significance as in the age section. Related to quality items, "Label", "General Quality" and "Specific Quality" do not highlight any significance regarding respondents' gender. Nevertheless, in behavioural answers rate of significance of gender condition is higher. In fact, except for the lack of significance on "Info" that is peculiar for every condition, other behavioural items are significant. That is because regarding GIs knowledge and comprehension gender does not make big differences, but it does with regard to behavioural matter. Males and female have different character features, which are evidently blown during purchases at the marketplace.

Furthermore, measures obtained by dimension reduction show high consistency, therefore they are valid in order to test efficiently our hypothesis. Regarding thesis hypothesis, the study is focused particularly upon three. The first one is that consumers cannot discern between different GIs logos, therefore they have same perception upon them. Next hypothesis covers the relationship between logo and nationality conditions. Hypothesis declares that nationality does not influence logos recognition and thus this interaction will not show statistical significance. Last hypothesis focuses on consumers' knowledge and behaviour at the purchase, saying that nationality is not a relevant factor on this topic. These hypothesis have the purpose of testing consumers' awareness towards GIs, since literature review shows consumers' confusion examples on the matter. Indeed, in the

elaboration of the thesis five clear examples of consumer's confusion on GIs have been reported. Nevertheless, there are not studies that take into account both social science side (considering consumers' behaviour) and the legal side, concerning GI agricultural foodstuffs. Even though some scholars took into account Geographical Indications theme, many papers on GIs cover regulations side, but they leave aside consumers' aspect, such as Blakeney's book. It eviscerates GIs most relevant legislations (covering protection topic), the implementation of these legislations within Europe and some case laws. This book gives an extremely clear overview upon GIs theme, but it does not go further, taking into consideration consumers' perception (Blakeney M., 2014). On the other side, the study carried out by Adinolfi, De Rosa and Trabalzi contains social science subject, but it does not contain the Regulatory aspect of GIs. The paper focuses on evaluating consumers' perception on GIs category (through a survey), however the purpose is related only to marketing scopes (Adinolfi F., De Rosa M., Trabalzi F., 2011). Thus, it does not link survey outcome to GIs regulatory framework.

Survey answers point out that the results are not equal to the first hypothesis, since consumers slightly discern between the different logos. Looking at figure 8, it is easy to understand that consumers separate quite clearly "No GIs" from GIs, but they are not totally aware about differences within GI foodstuffs logos. The mean should be different between PDOs, PGIs and TSGs, since they have different qualities and characteristics. Indeed, PDO logo is the stricter one and TSG logo is the more "permissive" one. However, the values for all GIs stick almost to the same numbers.



\* Figure 8. Consumers' perception on Geographical Indication products logos.

Moreover, one of the main aims of this study is detecting in which way nationality influences consumers' perceptions towards GI agricultural foodstuffs (especially the role played by GIs logos), since second thesis hypothesis says that nationality does not have an impact on consumers' logo perception.

Statistical tests are against the second thesis hypothesis (since they are not equal to the second hypothesis) and they demonstrate that nationality and logo interaction is truly significant on both “General Quality” and “Specific Quality” items. Questions regarding ingredients origin, or the area of specific GIs processing steps need an extreme knowledge regarding these products and probably this is the main key to explain these countries differences shown by statistical data. Italian food culture, well known all around the world, pushes average Italian consumer in giving high importance to food products purchase and the same statement cannot be built up for Dutch people. Food, in the Italian mentality, is something more than a simple uptake in order to feed the body, but rather a “social” element fundamental in the daily routine. Therefore, Italian consumers’ exposure on GIs is higher and this factor certainly influences their perception towards this particular type of products. Furthermore, Italy is the biggest producer of GI agricultural (and wines) products in the world and this element surely plays an important role in matter of awareness regarding GIs.

Last hypothesis involves Italian and Dutch people knowledge on the items presented in the thesis questionnaire. The purpose is giving a final overview about GIs awareness, focusing separately on the two countries subjects of the study.

Through survey answers, it is possible to detect that the result is not equal to the third thesis hypothesis, since Italian consumers’ awareness on GIs is more elevated compared to the Dutch one. Concerning GIs, answers trend follow almost the same flow between Italian and Dutch consumers. Major differences are located in the products without quality certifications. Here, Dutch consumers show more difficulties in recognising that these products do not bear quality labels. This outcome can be related again to the fact that Dutch consumers have less familiarity with these products.

This fact is also related to consumer’s behaviour section outcome. Dutch consumers scored, on average, higher than Italians and this is a clear signal of their discomfort when they have to purchase GIs. On the one hand, Italians’ answers express a type of confusion especially derived from information overload, since they scored high on items like “Info”, but they also demonstrated loyalty to products involved in the research (with information overload consumers can tend to seek for less decision-making). These results are totally understandable, because, as already stated in the previous section, Italian consumers are daily pumped full by several GIs.

On the other hand, Dutch consumers have proved to be sensitive to every kind of confusion. Besides information overload confusion, they scored higher also for “Narrowing down purchase alternatives”, which is related to similarity confusion, and they also agree with items like “Changing buying goals” and “Misunderstanding of the product”, which are related to ambiguity confusion. Nevertheless, while Dutch consumers’ behavioural scores reflect the trend of quality section, the results of Italian consumers’ behaviour segment are disconnected with quality section scores. In fact, Italians showed only information overload confusion symptoms, even though they clearly misunderstood the differences within GIs. Probably the wide Italian food culture influences and misleads Italian consumers’ perception about GIs, pushing them to undermine some important features. On the other hand, Dutch consumers are probably conscious of their limited knowledge about GIs and this awareness is also reflected in the scores on their behaviour at the marketplace.

However, both Italian and Dutch consumers show a clear misunderstanding on GIs, especially on “Specific Quality” items. Even though they recognise general qualities of GIs, they have trouble when statements are more specific. When it comes to identify ingredients provenance and processing steps placement, consumers are not informed enough, since they were not able to discern between the different GIs during the questionnaire. Survey results are an excellent assist to transit to the recommendations section.

### **3.2.2 Recommendations**

Questionnaire outcome demonstrates consumer's confusion, both on survey answers regarding GIs quality items and on consumer's behaviour at the marketplace answers. Therefore, it is possible to give some recommendations for further researches, in order to manage this issue.

First of all, quality certifications number can be decreased. In fact, this thesis has been taken into account only GIs, however there are many more types of quality certifications related to foodstuffs. Concerning GIs, the number could be decreased up to two certifications, one having a product entirely produced in the denominated area and another one, which represents a product that has in part been produced in the same area. This strategy has the purpose of facilitating consumers' understanding and choice at the marketplace, taking part on EU Regulation 1151/2012. Furthermore, more studies could be carried on focusing on the logo of GIs. For instance, looking at EU Regulation 664/2014, PGIs and TSGs logos colour is the same and this can mislead final consumer. A new questionnaire could be given to respondents, proposing different colours and evaluating the effect on consumers. Moreover, PDOs and PGIs image on the logo is the same and diversifying it could be an option to help consumers.

Nevertheless, all these recommendations involve the amendment of EU regulatory framework and thus they are quite demanding and not extremely easy to apply, or at least they are not quick to apply. A further option could be adding booklets or leaflets on GIs packaging. This strategy would not need to modify directly European legislation upon GIs and it would not change products label. Adding information on the existing label could bring information overload confusion in consumers' minds. Moreover, putting booklets or leaflets as an external tool could help final consumer with the information needed regarding GIs.

### **3.2.3 Limitations**

First limitation refers to the study design. Indeed, respondents' age and gender are not perfectly distributed within the sample taken into account. Respondents between 18 and 25 years old represent more than a half of the total sample. Moreover, males and females are not equally distributed, since male group forms more than 60% of the questionnaire sample. However, a good few respondents have been included in the survey (200) and they are properly divided into 100 Italian consumers and 100 Dutch consumers.

Second study limitation is related to statistical limitations. Some control variables has been introduced in the questionnaire like "vegetarian", "vegan", "muslim", "jew", because respondents with these characteristic could have a distorted view on the survey products, since most of them do not eat and buy them. While "vegan", "muslim" and "jew" variables do not show significance in the statistical analysis regarding GIs quality perception, MANOVA test shows "vegetarian" variable  $p < .001$ , so it has statistical significance. Furthermore, some control variables, regarding Camembert cheese product, like milk intolerance, or pregnant women have not been taken into account. Nevertheless, "vegetarian" variable is significant only for specific quality items as "Components" and "Processing steps" and vegetarian respondents in the survey constitute only the 7% of the sample, precisely 14 respondents in total.

## 4. Conclusions

The major aim of the thesis was assessing consumers' awareness towards Geographical Indication agricultural foodstuffs. However, the scope was centred on two specific bunches of consumers: Italian and Dutch consumers. In fact, thesis objective was not only to determinate a specific level of awareness/confusion related to the final consumer, but also showing the possible influence that a specific nationality could bring on GIs quality perception. For this reason, two extremely different countries, as regards as food culture, have been examined in the study. The initial hypothesis assumed that nationality would have not influenced sample answers, neither regarding GIs logos, neither regarding GIs quality perception. Nevertheless, consumers' answers and the subsequent statistical analysis demonstrated that nationality truly influences GIs perception. Statistics showed significance of nationality condition on both the hypothesis pointed out before, especially on specific items. These items, which include ingredients provenance and processing steps location, require a quite high level of knowledge and Italian consumers, in the survey, scored higher than the Dutch ones. This means that probably the broad Italian food culture helped respondent in answering more correctly than the others. In spite of everything, thesis hypothesis were not formulated only upon nationality matters, but they had also the purpose of testing consumer's awareness within GIs products and logos. Indeed, one hypothesis declared that consumers were not able to detect products peculiar qualities through their logos. The outcome said that average consumer can discern between no-GIs and GIs products, but he has difficulties when it comes to detect the specific GIs logo.

Last hypothesis results call for further researches in GIs field. Studies with more resources and more respondents could be carried out with the view of acquiring extreme solid and relevant data on this topic. Thanks to further researches outcome, legislators could decide whether intervene on actual laws and in which extent. However, GIs regulatory framework amendment is not a precondition in order to improve final consumer's understanding of GIs. There are also substitute ways that can help consumer's understanding of GIs. For instance a better products advertisement, or better information about different types of GIs, could be valid options. In fact, energies and resources employed for specific GIs should be recognised, for the sake of the consumers and for the good of the producers.

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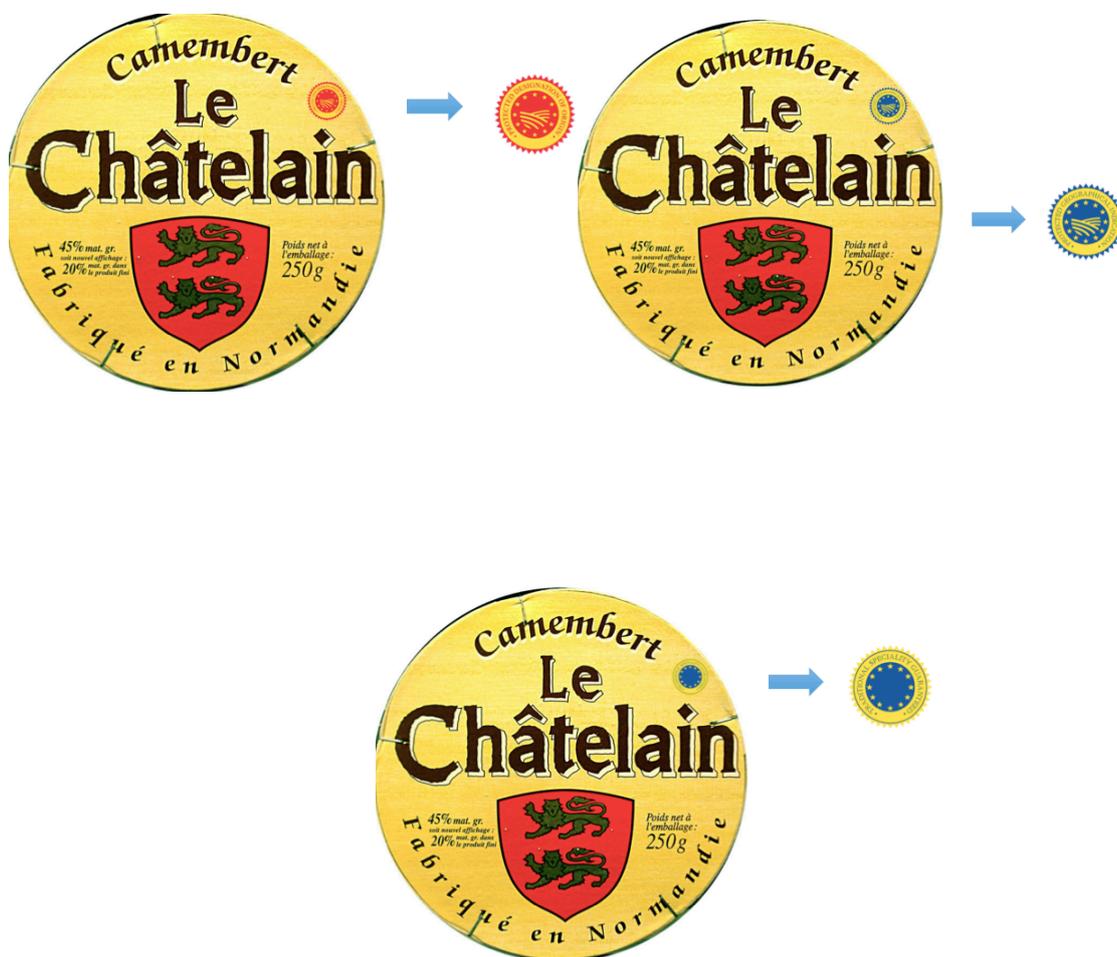
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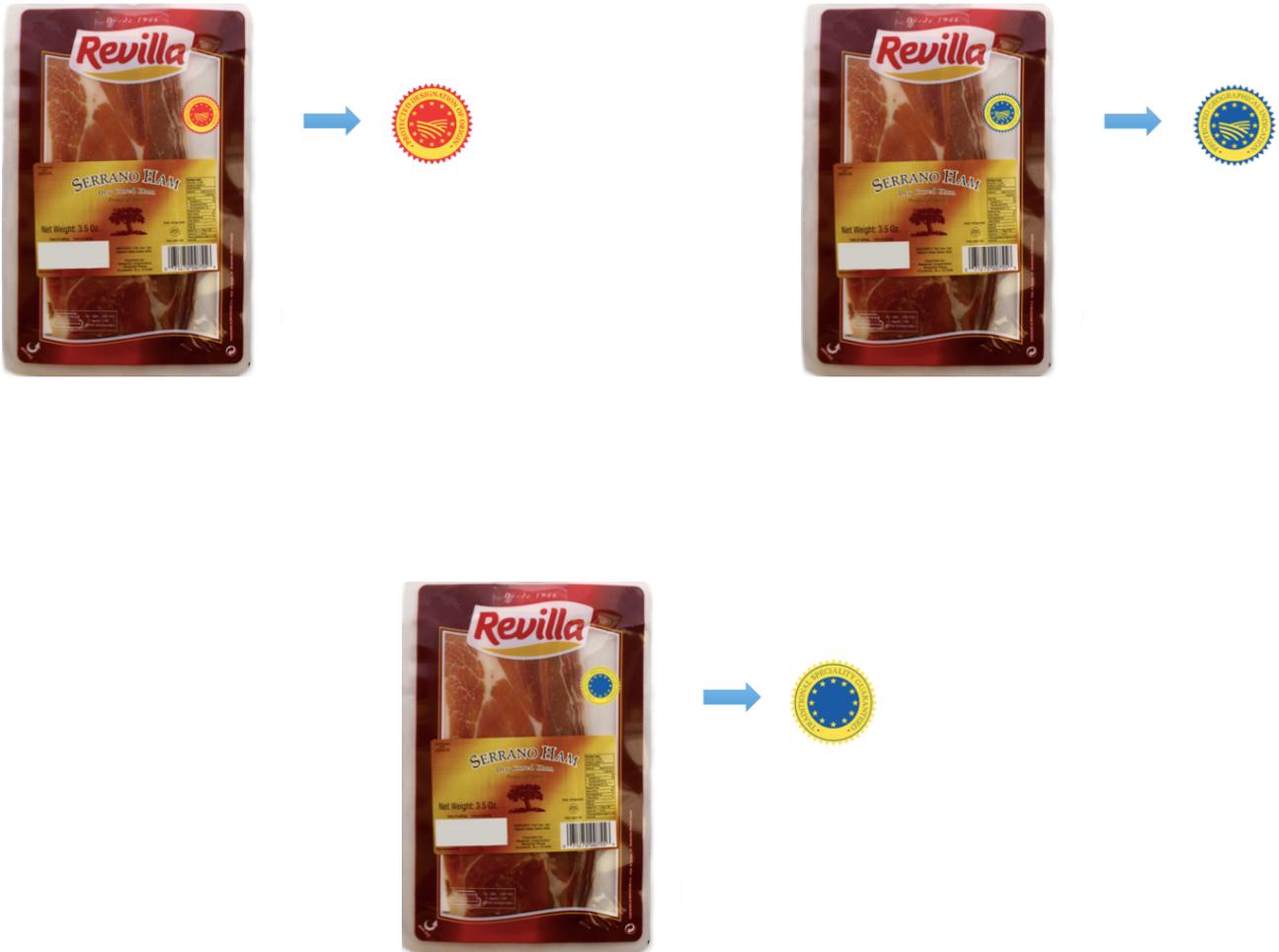
## APPENDIX



\*Figure. Geographical Indications Symbols: from the left PDO logo, PGI logo, TSG logo. Retrieved from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014R0664&qid=1555510782216>



\*Figure. Camembert survey front package with PDO (top on the left), PGI (top on the right) and TSG (at the bottom) logos.



\* Figure. Serrano ham survey front package with PDO (top on the left), PGI (top on the right) and TSG (at the bottom) logos.

\* Table from SPSS. Total variance of Principal component analysis on quality items.

Component	Initial Eigenvalue			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1,649	82,467	82,467	1,649	82,467	82,467
2	,351	17,533	100,000			

Only one component was extracted. The solution cannot be rotated.

\* Table from SPSS. *Total variance of Principal component analysis on behavioural items.*

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1,769	88,474	88,474	1,769	88,474	88,474
2	,231	11,526	100,000			

Only one component was extracted. The solution cannot be rotated.