

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AS A TOOL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION OF BRAZILIAN HANDICRAFTS



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ABSTRACT

Geographical Indications are intellectual property tools that recognize products or services by their geographical origin, attributing them notoriety, cultural identity and quality. This article analyzes Geographical Indications as instruments for the development and protection of Brazilian handicrafts, highlighting their importance for the appreciation of local production and cultural heritage. The research, of a qualitative and descriptive nature, mapped the Geographical Indications related to Brazilian handicrafts and carried out a content analysis referring to four dimensions: Intellectual Property Attributes, Notoriety and Differentiation, Relationship with the Geographical Area and Control Structure. The results show that Geographical Indications strengthen the link between products and tradition, promoting authenticity, quality and socioeconomic development. It is concluded that Geographical Indications add value to handicraft products, protect traditional know-how and boost the economic growth of communities, contributing to sustainability and the preservation of local culture.

Keywords: Intellectual Property. Culture. Origin. Product. Handicrafts.

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INTRODUCTION

Geographical Indications recognize products or services by reason of their geographical origin in a given location and that incorporate attributes and characteristics of notoriety, cultural identity, origin and quality, derived from natural or human factors.

The granting of recognition of a Geographical Indication confers intellectual property rights and exclusivity of association with the geographical name or locality of origin to its applicants, who are a representative collective entity which will obtain ownership of the registration. In Brazil, the registration of Geographical Indications is regulated by Law 9.279, of May 14, 1996.

The recognition of Geographical Indications can occur through the Indication of Origin (IP) and Denomination of Origin (DO) modalities. Law 9.279/96, in its article 177, regulates the attribution of the recognition of Geographical Indication by Indication of Origin to the locality that becomes known with reference to the production or manufacture of a certain product or service. In turn, the granting of registration by Designation of Origin occurs when the region or its territory has a product or service with qualities or attributes associated exclusively or essentially with its geographical environment, plus natural and human factors.

The objective of recognizing a region through Geographical Indication is to highlight the originality of a particular product or service, inserted in the history of that region and its people, its culture, reputation and identification. Recognition can generate benefits and market implications, the continuity of local identity and tradition, enhancing the sustainable development associated with a commercial practice of that product or service over time (Kegel; Carls, 2015).

There are numerous regions in the country that enjoy the benefits of recognition by Geographical Indications for their products and stand out in the recognition of the notoriety and expertise of the forms of production in their regions, in addition to carrying intrinsic elements of origin and quality as a reference for their consumers, whether nationally or internationally.

In this context, there are artistic manifestations and creations from local handicraft products, which carry with them the legacy of their identity formation and the forms of expression of a people or locality. From this perspective, the need for the protection, preservation and recognition of the owners of the property of such manifestations is highlighted.

Thus, handicrafts are considered an economic activity that generates work, income and has a strong characteristic of cultural representation; since the artisan has as a work tool the local raw material, often inherent and of origin in his region; in addition to the expertise of manual techniques that follow traditional methods and have traveled through generations in the informality of traditions (Engler; L; Guimarães, 2015).

Therefore, the Geographical Indications for handicraft products are seen as instruments for the protection of cultural heritage and the valorization of the production of local handicrafts, in order to promote greater visibility to the creations and, consequently, the expansion of the commercialization of products, the promotion of the stimulation of associativism and the appreciation of local cultural identity (Mello, 2015).

Thus, the present study has as its theoretical basis the field of Intellectual Property and its implications as a mechanism for the protection of creations, specifically the theme of Geographical Indications for local handicraft products. The objective of this article is to analyze aspects of Intellectual Property for handicraft products linked to geographical origin, highlighting intellectual property attributes, notoriety and differentiation, relations with the geographical area and control structure.

From an overview of the national scenario of Geographical Indications granted in the country and the legal mechanisms in force in the national territory related to the matter, it is possible to understand the aspects related to Brazilian handicrafts and the panorama of Geographical Indications of handicrafts associated with the local cultural identity of their manifestations.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological aspects and procedures of this research have a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory character. Considering the general objective of the study (to analyze the aspects of Geographical Indications for handicraft products in the context of intellectual property), first, the mapping of the Geographical Indications granted in Brazil was carried out, and, for this, the database of the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) was used.

After the survey of all the concessions in force in the country, the specific indications of the handicrafts, their regions of occurrence, registration characteristics and content analysis of the Technical Specifications were identified, in order to know the intellectual

property attributes involved, the aspects of notoriety and differentiation of their products and qualifications required for the use of the geographical name.

From the documentary analysis of the norms of the Geographical Indications analyzed, it was possible to determine the study categories and perform the analysis of the defined attributes and dimensions.

RESULTS

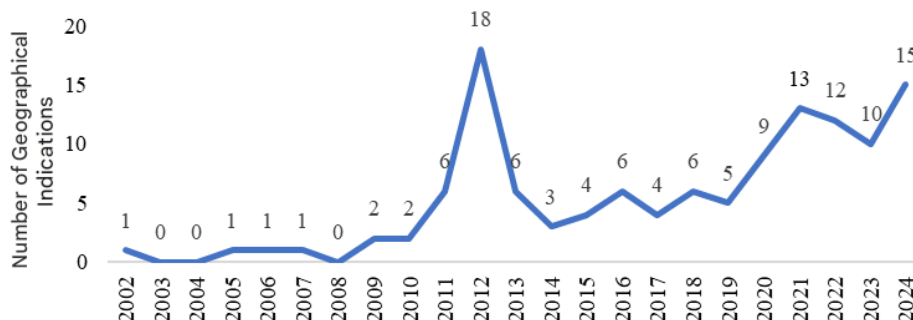
Brazil is part of several international agreements that regulate and encourage the promotion of Geographical Indications. Although the number of registrations of Geographical Indications has increased in recent years, there is still a lot of potential for numerous regions of the country to be recognized.

Given the richness of biodiversity and economic activities in Brazil, the country favors many possibilities for recognized regions and for those that will be called Geographical Indications. Data from the BPTO and the information presented in this research point to the growth of applications granted in recent years and prove that the practices associated with traditional knowledge that enjoy recognition guarantee the intellectual property rights reserved to producers in the protected region.

The first Geographical Indication registration granted by the INPI was foreign, requested by Portugal for the Vale dos Vinho Verde Region, in 1999. Only in 2002 was the first national GI granted, with the recognition of the Indication of Origin of red, white and sparkling wines for the Vale dos Vinhedos region, in Rio Grande do Sul. Aprovale (Association of Producers and Fine Wines of Vale dos Vinhedos) holds the rights and ownership of this GI (INPI, 2016).

The graph in Figure 1 shows the number of Brazilian Geographical Indication concessions, in the Indication of Origin and Denomination of Origin modalities, in the period from 2002 to 2024.

Figure 1: Evolution of the number of Geographical Indications granted in Brazil (Period: 2002 to 2024)



Source: INPI (2025).

The analysis period finds that in Brazil there are 124 Geographical Indications granted. Of note is the performance of the government and institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), the Micro and Small Business Support Service (SEBRAE), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), Universities that contribute significantly to the process of recognition of Geographical Indications existing in the country that, in recent years, have directed actions to encourage and disseminate the importance of this protection for local development. In addition, these agents play a fundamental role in the articulation and dissemination of intellectual property protection systems, especially with regard to studies and analyses of future Geographical Indications in the country (Brandão, 2016).

Table 1 presents the mapping of specific Geographical Indications for handicraft products and manifestations, place of occurrence, product, year of concession and number of municipalities covered.

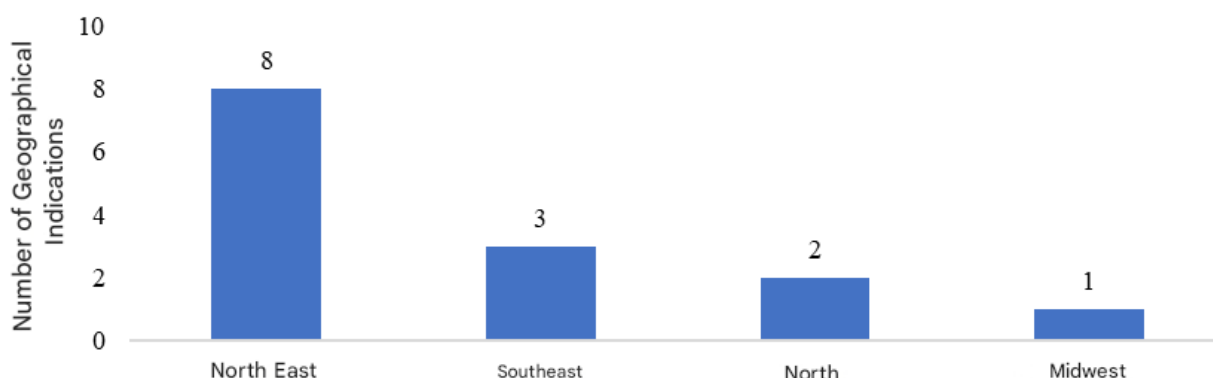
Table 1: Geographical Indications for Brazilian handicraft products

Geographical name	Product	Local	Year	Municipalities
Goiabeiras	Panelas de barro	Espírito Santo	2011	1
Região do Jalapão	Capim Dourado	Tocantins	2011	8
Divina Pastora	Renda	Sergipe	2012	1
Paraíba	Algodão colorido	Paraíba	2012	223
Pedro II	Opala	Piauí	2012	1
São João Del Rei	Peças em estanho	Minas Gerais	2012	1
Cariri Paraibano	Renda	Paraíba	2013	8
Mundaú-Manguaba	Bordado	Alagoas	2016	6
Pirenópolis	Jóias em prata	Goiás	2019	1
Caicó	Bordado	Rio Grande do Norte	2020	12
Jaguaruana	Redes	Ceará	2021	1
Resende Costa	Têxtil	Minas Gerais	2021	1
Jaguaribe	Renda	Ceará	2024	1
Raposa	Panela de barro	Roraima	2024	1

Source: Data Sebrae (2025).

14 Geographical Indications were identified for handicraft products in Brazil, which cover 219 municipalities. Artisanal practices involve embroidery, lace, textiles, jewelry making, and clay pots. The recognized regions are an important market segment, moving the local economy, tourism and promoting job and income generation.

Figure 2: Number of Geographical Indications of Brazilian Handicrafts by region (Period: 2022 to 2024)

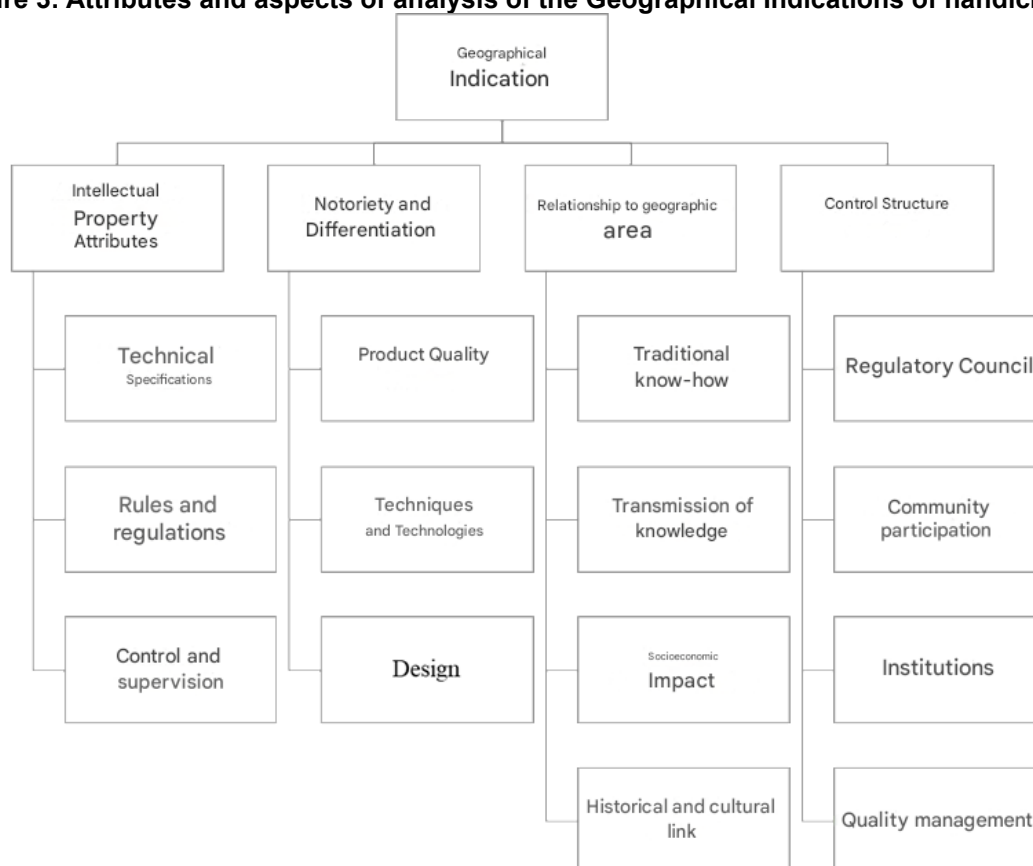


Source: Elaboration by the authors (2025).

The graph in Figure 2 shows the quantitative distribution of Geographical Indications for handicraft products by regions. The Northeast region of Brazil stands out with the largest number of Geographical Indications, present in the States of Ceará, Piauí, Paraíba, Sergipe and Alagoas.

Analyzing the contents contained in the Technical Specifications Notebooks and documentary collection of each of the Geographical Indications studied, it was possible to carry out a categorization and definition of the dimensions of analysis related to the aspects of intellectual property related to each artisanal practice.

Figure 3: Attributes and aspects of analysis of the Geographical Indications of handicrafts



Source: Elaboration by the authors (2025).

From the content analysis carried out, it was possible to code the following categories "Attributes of Intellectual Property", "Notoriety and Differentiation", "Relationship with the geographical area" and "Control Structure".

The "Attributes of Intellectual Property" refers to the technical characteristics, standards and control mechanisms that guarantee the authenticity, quality and legal protection of the products associated with the Geographical Indication. This category is directly linked to the legal and technical aspects that differentiate the product and protect it against counterfeiting or misuse.

"Notoriety and Differentiation" brings together the elements that give recognition and uniqueness to the product, making it unique and valued in the market. This category is related to the reputation of the product and the factors that differentiate it from other similar ones. The category "Relationship with the geographical area" refers to the historical, cultural and socioeconomic link between the product and the region of origin. This category highlights how the product is rooted in local identity and how it contributes to community development.

Finally, the "Control Structure" category is the mechanisms and institutions responsible for ensuring that the products associated with the Geographical Indication comply with the standards and technical specifications. This category is related to the governance and supervision of the use of the Geographical Indication.

The content analysis identified, based on the frequency of occurrence and evidence of the elements and subcategories, the results:

Table 1: Content analysis of the categories and subcategories of analysis

Category	Subcategories	Content analysis
Attributes of Intellectual Property	Technical Specifications	"... handmade, pedal machine..."
	Standards and regulations	"... use of sterling silver..."
	Control and inspection	"... Regulatory Council..."
Notoriety and Differentiation	Product Quality	"... embroidered exclusively by hand..."
	Techniques and Technologies	"... manual modeling..."
	Design	"... own designs with opals..."
Link with the geographical area	Traditional know-how	"... activity rooted in the locality..."
	Transmission of knowledge	"... passed down through generations..."
	Socioeconomic impact	"... income generation for women..."
	Historical and cultural link	"... indigenous tradition and sacred rituals..."
Control Structure	Regulatory Council	"... technical institutions..."
	Community participation	Local producers in management and control
	Institutions	Universities and specialized entities
	Quality management	"... seals of authenticity..."

Source: Elaboration by the authors (2025).

For the category "Analysis of Intellectual Property", according to the definition, the Geographical Indication of Pirenópolis evidences the requirement that the attributes of intellectual property must include the use of sterling silver (92.5% pure silver) and natural gems, in addition to the control made by the Regulatory Council. In the "Notoriety and Differentiation" category, Renascença lace from Cariri Paraíba is notorious for its delicate and exclusive embroidery, made by hand, which differentiates it from other industrialized lace.

The "Relationship with the geographical area" The clay pots of Goiabeiras are deeply linked to the local culture, with indigenous techniques dating back to the pre-colonial period, and are an important source of income for families in the region. As for the "Control Structure", the regulatory council of Paraíba provides for members elected by the community and representatives of technical institutions, who will be responsible for supervising the use of the geographical name and ensuring the quality of colored cotton

products. The definitions of the categories helped to organize the content analysis and to understand how each category relates to the Geographical Indications of handicrafts.

DISCUSSION

Among the many benefits of geographical indication certification is the improvement of the product and its differentiation in relation to similar products. Certification adds value attributes, facilitates the insertion of the producer for commercialization, protects the product, strengthens producer associations and, above all, values the region through the promotion and preservation of local culture and identity.

The relationship between Geographical Indication and territorial development is undeniable. The recognition of certification by Geographical Indication implies the appreciation of the region by the inhabitants themselves, who start to strengthen their traditions and work for the maintenance of the natural characteristics of the territory.

In addition, the protection by Geographical Indication of products implies credibility and trust in the eyes of consumers, leading to an increase in the demand for products, in order to boost the economic growth of the protected territory (Nascimento; Dallabrida, 2016).

The insertion of the traditional product in the competitive dictates of the market, demands from the artisan skills that distance him from the learning acquired in the context of tradition. From interferences in the production process, handicrafts cease to be traditional handicrafts and become handicrafts of cultural reference, defined as "those that value the production of handicraft techniques and take in their result a portion of history from the context of their producer. It results from a planned invention of artists and designers, joining artisans" (ARTESOL, 2012).

Mello (2015) mentions that the development of artisanal products, when combined with technical innovation and creativity, brings new meaning to the making of the artisan craft, incorporates the dynamic cultural process and reelaborations.

Creations originating from the manifestations of traditional handicrafts are subject to intellectual property rights. Jungmann and Bonetti (2010) associate the intellectual property right related to the information or knowledge that can be incorporated into the product and an unlimited number of its copies, anywhere in the world, and not with the copied object itself. Thus, intellectual property rights are translated into the information or knowledge reflected in these objects and copies, being, therefore, an intangible asset.

Mello (2015) points out the need to protect the rights of innovation and originality in the making of a product in order to guarantee its exclusivity, commercial benefits, and also to prevent agents outside the creation process from having advantages over the merit of the artisans' work.

The Brazilian artisanal sector is a valuable space for innovation, full of potential and requires actions for its development. The revitalization of products, the modernization of design, the adjustments of historical-cultural elements, an original packaging and creativity at the service of creations, show innovations and possibilities in the artisanal activity.

The Brazilian handicraft market still finds it difficult to achieve its goals. It is necessary to promote means of distribution, access to markets and the integration of regional marketing networks. Improve the strategies for bringing products closer to consumers, as well as bringing new sources of components or raw materials closer together. In terms of management, it is necessary to strengthen business organizations that have a collective and community character. In addition to community, artistic, managerial and entrepreneurial training actions (Matos; Larovere, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The content analysis carried out shows that the Geographical Indications for handicraft products are strongly based on traditional know-how, on the relationship with the geographical area and on the notoriety conferred by specific techniques and materials. The control structure, through Regulatory Councils, guarantees the authenticity and quality of the products, contributing to the socioeconomic development of the communities.

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