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SYSTEMS AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT: ANALYSIS AND CASE
STUDIES

**TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE AND LOCALIZED AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS: A
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN RURAL TERRITORIES**

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Territorial governance has become a key analytical lens in debates on territorial development, environmental sustainability, and the organization of localized productive systems in rural areas. Amid mounting environmental pressures, regional inequalities, and changing agri-food systems, institutional arrangements linking public authorities, private actors, and civil-society organizations decisively shape local economic, environmental, and socio-territorial outcomes. In this study, territorial governance is conceptualized as a relational process that moves beyond hierarchical coordination, foregrounding cooperation, negotiation, and collective action across actors and scales, as well as the valorization of territorial assets such as local knowledge and biocultural heritage. This study examines the economic impacts of environmental policies in Brazilian rural territories from a comparative perspective informed by the international literature on territorial

governance and Localized Agri-Food Systems (SIAL/LAFS). It analyzes how differences in governance arrangements condition territories' capacity to translate environmental policies into tangible economic outcomes, focusing on institutional coordination, the valorization of territorially embedded products and services, and collective action dynamics rooted in local sociocultural identities. Methodologically, the study conducts an integrative systematic review of national and international empirical research, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods addressing the economic, environmental, and institutional dimensions of governance in localized productive systems. Findings suggest that coordinated, participatory, and institutionally robust arrangements are associated with more favorable economic effects, income gains, strengthened localized agri-food systems, and greater capacity to convert biocultural heritage into economic and symbolic value, while mitigating environmental–economic trade-offs. By contrast, fragmented governance is more often linked to distributive conflict, weak cooperation, and limited effectiveness in converting environmental and cultural assets into sustainable economic benefits. Overall, economic impacts are not automatic: they depend on governance quality and on the capacity to articulate localized systems, biocultural heritage, and collective action, underscoring the need for territorially sensitive public policy for sustainable rural development.

Palavras-chave: territorial governance; localized agri-food systems (sial/lafs); environmental policies; biocultural heritage; rural development.