

**Worldwide Perspectives on Geographical Indications
Rome, FAO, 18 - 21 February, 2025**

**Strategic alliances in Consortia:
driver of proximity for knowledge
and innovation exchange in the
agri-food industry**

PARALLEL SESSION:

Innovations in Governance (2a1) – 18.02.2025



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Survival of the species and the resulting requirement to provide food for all living creatures are factors questioned in light of major climatic events.

Agriculture experiences great challenges on a daily basis that undermine these crucial elements.

Innovation is the resilient response to continuous climate change and helps to improve the relationship with the environment.

MOTIVATION

**Agriculture and farming are responsible for part of the greenhouse gas emissions
BUT
agriculture is the sector responsible for guaranteeing the supply of human beings**

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Governments are currently moving in this direction, promoting research and funding projects oriented towards sustainable innovation.

Research institutes are exploring improved techniques.

Agri-food companies often lack the availability to invest in innovation, since they are often relatively small firms and possess few resources to devote to R&D techniques.

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In light of the strain on the agri-food sector and the consequent strategic action required from companies, this work is proposed to delve into the spatial relationship between companies to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the relational aspect influence the long-term survival of olive oil firms?

RQ2: Can consortium membership improve the resilience of firms that produce certified olive oil?

- SMEs Collaboration Advantages → Enhances resilience and growth in the agri-food sector.
- Climate Impact Analysis → Studies spatial dependency and climate event effects.
- Strategic Partnerships → Evaluates knowledge exchange and long-term benefits.

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Intellectual Capital for Sustainable Agri-food firms

Intellectual Capital (composed by human expertise, R&D, and biotechnology) helps agriculture adapt to climate challenges.

- **Structural Capital:** Systems, IT, and certifications boost efficiency.
- **Relational Capital:** Networks and partnerships drive innovation.

→ *Ferraris et al., 2020; Paoloni et al., 2020, 2021*

Olive Oil & Climate Change

Due to extreme weather, Italian olive oil quality is at risk.

Maintaining standards protects its reputation and market value → GIs are the solution!

→ *Vandecandelaere et al. (2020)*

Cooperation for Resilience

Consortia, cooperatives, and SMEs integration strengthen competitiveness, stabilise markets, and ensure sustainability.

There is the need to have **common strategies to reduce costs**, enhance benefits and boost members' contractual power

→ *Belletti et al., 2007*

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Spatial Analysis

- **Bai and Li (2021)**
Methodology for analyzing cross-sectional interactions and firm longevity in spatial contexts.
- **Jeanty et al. (2010); Baltagi & Bresson (2011); Gebremariam et al. (2011); Hauptmeier et al. (2012)**
Regional economic studies capturing macroeconomic shocks with heterogeneous local effects.

Sample

Italian agri-food involved in Ateco Codes:

- **012600 code for growing oleaginous fruits**
- **104110 code for the manufacture of oils and fats.**

Data were collected from AIDA Bureau Van Dijk and the website of firms for the indication of belonging in Consortia and Certification obtaining.

Identification of variables via Intellectual Capital (IC)



1. Structural Capital:

- Patents, copyright and intellectual property.
- Knowledge management and information sharing systems.
- Company brand and reputation.
- Relations with customers, suppliers and business partners.
- Advanced information technology and infrastructure.
- Cosentino et al., 2020



1. Human Capital:

- Employees' skills and knowledge.
- Capacity for innovation and creativity.
- Education and training level of employees.
- Employee turnover and retention rate.
- Skills and career development programmes.
- Pennings et al., 1998.



1. Relational Capital:

- Quality of customer relations and customer loyalty.
- Strategic partnerships and alliances with other organisations.
- Collaborative networks with suppliers and other stakeholders.
- Image of the organisation within the community and institutions.
- Paoloni et al., 2020.

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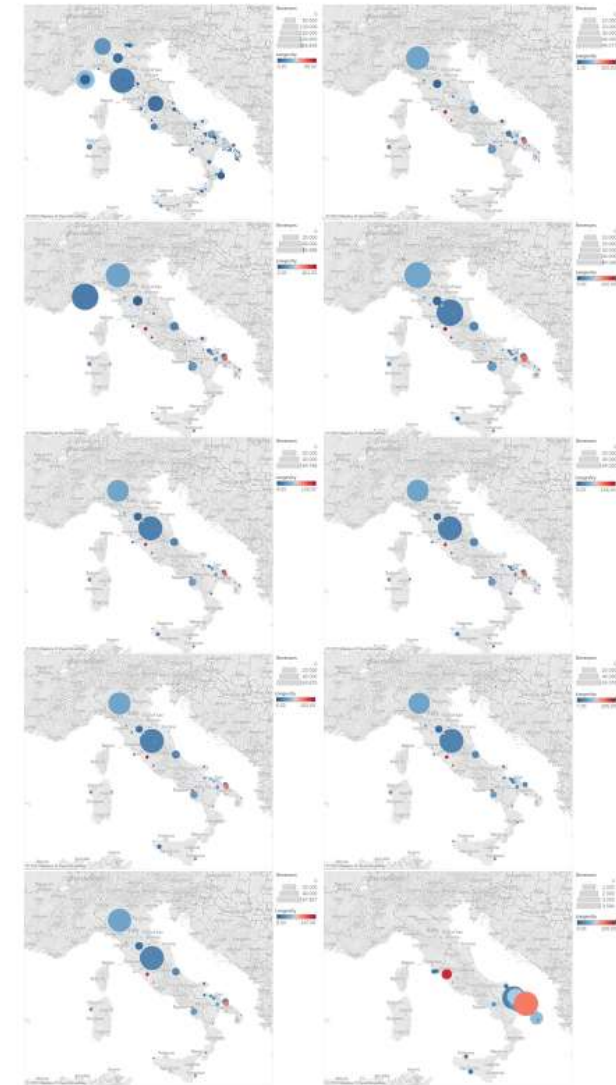
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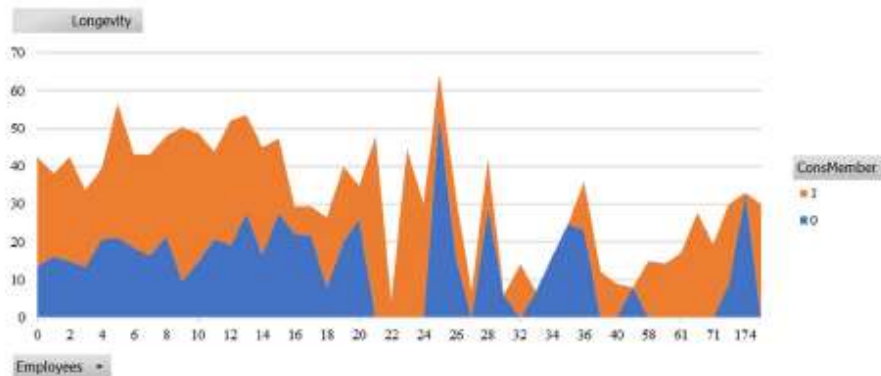
Results

Annual Overview of Revenues and Longevity

- an overview of the variability of revenues according to the bubble size.
- the colour varies as the firms under analysis become mature.
- the gap between the North and the South is marked in the representations of years and expresses the ability of those few companies considered to maximise sales revenues



Longevity and Employees, based on ConsMember dummy variable



Observing the different distributions of the variables Employees and Longevity, it emerges that the enterprises belonging to the consortium on average **are more persevering over time**, albeit with few Employees involved in the production process. It should be noted that the agri-food sector is strongly characterised by contracts for seasonal work.

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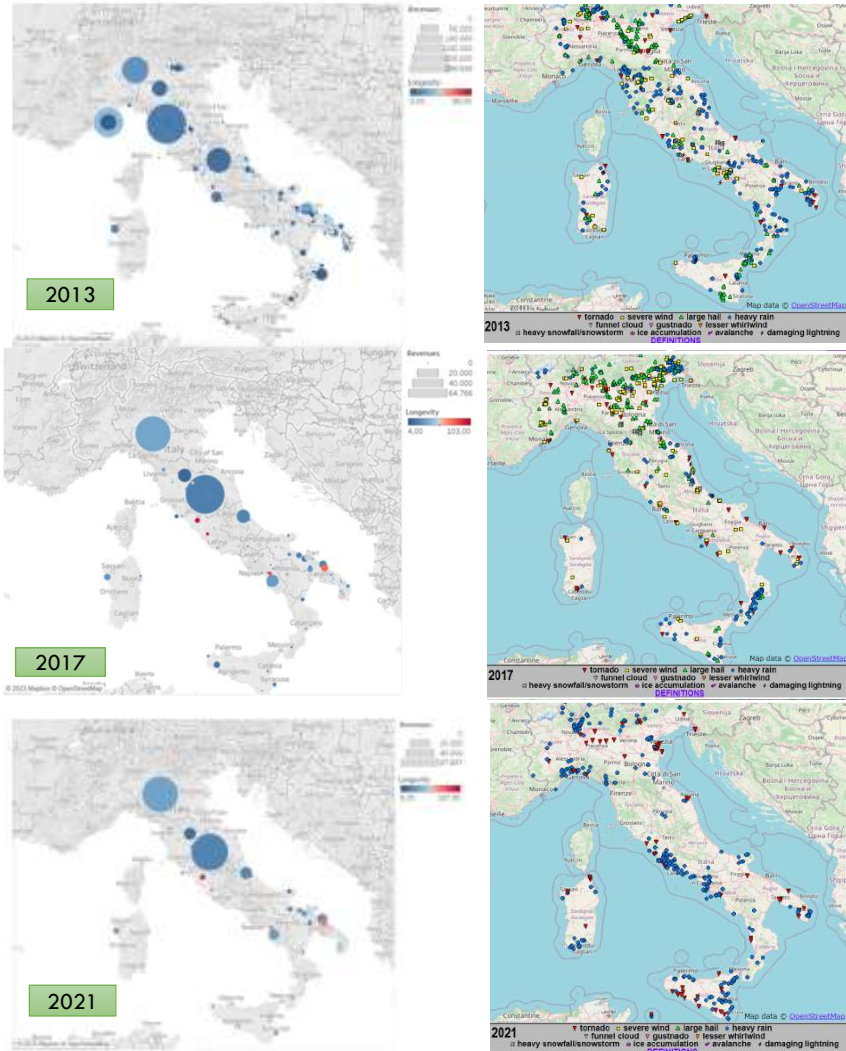
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Comparison between geographical distributions of
-Annual Overview of Revenues and Longevity
-Italian climate phenomena year by year
(maps from the European Severe Storms Laboratory)

Clusters of points, corresponding to areas in which multiple companies are located, often correspond with areas exposed to climatic risks.

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Significance of both models (SEM and SAR) for all years.

In the agri-food context, the discussion is even more intense in light of the continuing challenges in the sector.

In line with (Ardito et al., 2019; Cano-Rubio et al., 2021), **survival** becomes accessible through cooperation orientated to innovation and the flow of information (Craig and Dibrell, 2006; Cano-Rubio et al., 2021).

The purpose of this work was to explore if agri-food companies benefit from sharing know-how, quality products and innovative ideas within strategic partnerships, and whether geographical location favours this type of strategic alliance.

The longevity of the firm results related to factors of consortium membership, possession of certification, the attitude of the territory to create cooperatives and consortia, and economic factors.

Geographical proximity can also help in the reconsideration of these values that every company should not underestimate.

Geographical proximity can help the development and innovation of this sector and sub-sectors.

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THANKS FOR YOUR PRECIOUS ATTENTION



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