

L'Atlante delle Filiere

Analysis and perspectives for the revitalisation of marginal supply chains in Italy

The research

The research, carried out in 2021 by the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo with the contribution of Fondazione Cariplo, analysed 22 short supply chains, deeply rooted in specific territories and based mostly on the work and collaborations of micro and small companies in the farming, processing, and Horeca sectors. The research team aimed at assessing the overall health of the supply chains by providing guidelines of intervention in support of these realities.

Research objectives

- **Identification of representative Italian agri-food value chains** (Criteria: small-medium scale; link to local food and agricultural heritage; existence of producers' associations and/or food quality schemes)
- **Analysis of their embeddedness** in the local foodscapes and their **potential and fragilities** (economic, social, and environmental)
- **Design of guidelines to support their re-launch and enhancement**, also considering the current and potential role of digital technologies

Research design

The team developed a qualitative research protocol that combined bibliographic analysis, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic observation through which all the supply chains were analysed.

- Phase I: Identification of fragility descriptors (Literature review)
- Phase II: Scouting and selection of agri-food value chains (Literature review and Exploratory research)
- Phase III: Analysis of selected agri-food chains according to the fragility descriptors (Bibliographical analysis & Fieldwork)

The Fragility Descriptors

- **Structure:** The descriptor takes into account the scale of the companies, the number of employees, their average age, and turnover.
- **Market access:** The descriptor analyses the data related to logistics and the commercial networks in its extension and intensity.
- **Communication:** The descriptor considers the media presence and the use of multi-channel strategies for communication and marketing purposes.
- **Innovation:** The descriptor presents the use of tools linked to the Industry 4.0 (e.g. digital communication, e-commerce, etc.), and the propensity to innovation.
- **Networking:** The descriptor takes into account the social and relational capital of the producers, as well as their participation in associations.

The case studies

22 short supply chains:

- deeply rooted in a specific territory and linked with its food heritage;
- based on SMEs only;
- related to marginal areas subject to socio-economic, and environmental fragilities.
- subject of intervention of specific business or public institutions such as producer associations, cooperatives, consortia, etc.

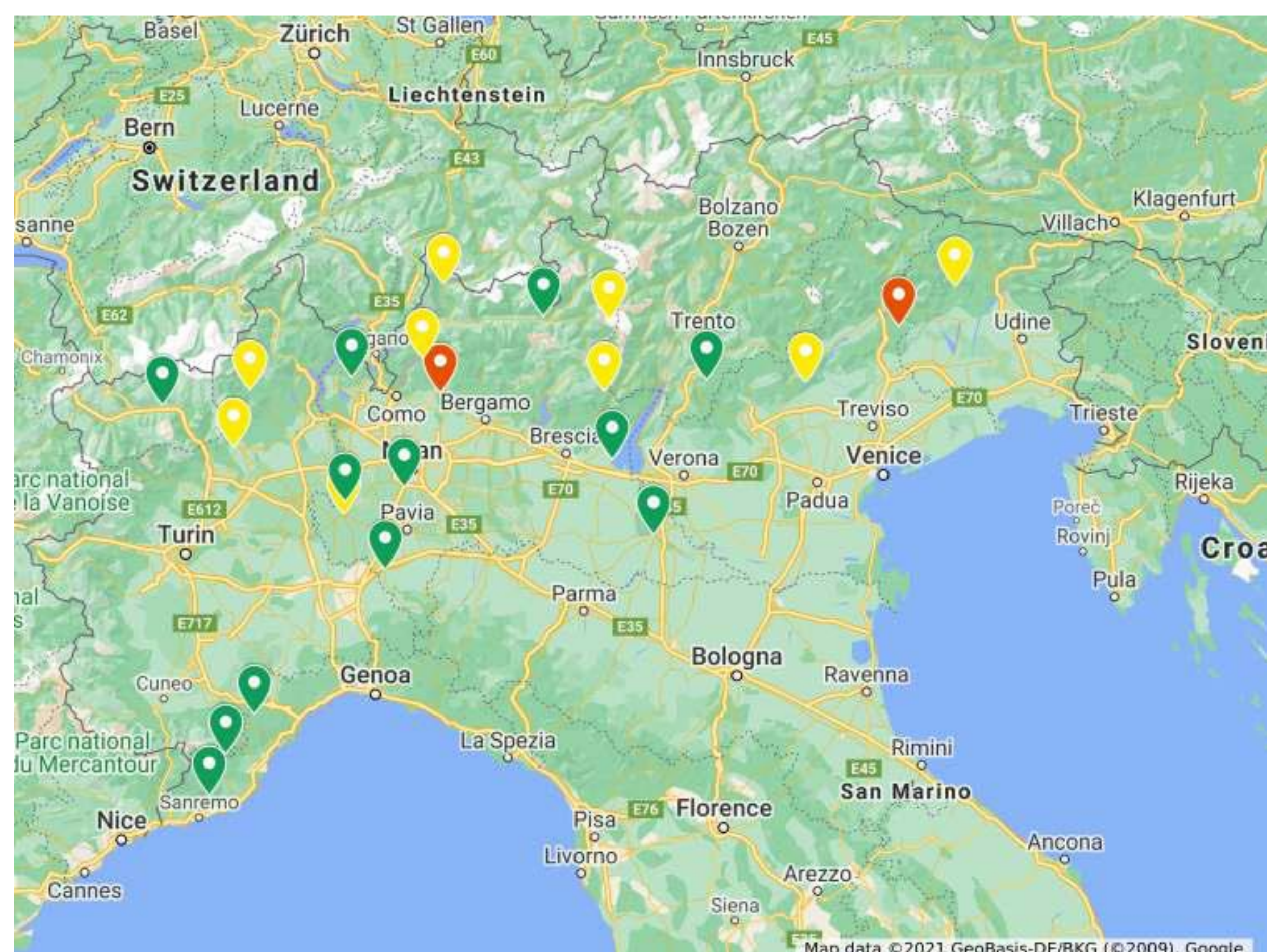
Findings

The survey highlighted a picture in which structural fragility is noted, given the limited number of their companies and the advanced age of their workers, and a difficult collaboration between local players. Against this, it indicates their commercial dynamism and great capacity for product and process innovation capable of experimenting with new marketing and tourism models.

The assessment of the local fragilities represents a step forward to developing better development plans and raising awareness in the general public about the value, and the delicate nature of food heritage, eliciting new involvement and participation as well as, potentially, new entrepreneurship.

Suggested lines of action

- Provision of financial facilities for the recovery and/or reactivation of production, processing and sales realities.
- Development of credit systems to encourage innovation and support actors already involved in the value chain.
- Promotion of meetings and/or activities to create commercial alliances within the value chain or between several value chains.
- Development or enhancement of digital platforms for commercial and/or tourism promotion purposes.
- Creation of interregional working groups to exchange experiences and develop bottom-up solutions.



The map identifies the supply chains analysed. Vegetable supply chains are shown in green, animal supply chains in red, and processed products in yellow.



← Scan the QR code for downloading the Atlas

For more information concerning the project and its output, visit:

<https://www.unisg.it/ricerca/atlane-delle-filiere-analisi-e-prospettive-per-il-rilancio-delle-filiere-marginali-sul-territorio-nazionale/>

A project funded by Fondazione Cariplo and completed by the University of Gastronomic Sciences in collaboration with Slow Food.
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