

Literature review WP 2

Italy

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Review report

1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE MOST RELEVANT RESULTS

1.1. Typical products, competitiveness and organisation

A wide literature on typical products (TP) is focused on their role within Small-Medium Enterprises (SME) local systems and in particular in agro-food districts. Some authors state that TP are one of the fundamental characteristics of local systems and agro-food districts (Iacoponi, 1990; Cecchi, 1992; Bertolini, 1998), others state that typicality is renewed by the local system flexibility and its capacity to reply to external pressures (Belletti, Marescotti, Rossi e Rovai, 1998). This flexibility derives from the endowment of contextual knowledge and the rapid flow of information within the system, in addition to the peculiar organisation of relations between firms (Belletti, Marescotti e Scaramuzzi, 2001; Begalli, 2000).

Within this theme also the role of local banks is deepened. As a matter of fact these banks are part of the system and therefore possess a contextual knowledge that gives them the opportunity of financing the firms of the system at lower information costs and of allocating credit better than other banks (Scaramuzzi, 2001).

Abstracts

Belletti, G. ; Marescotti, A. ; Scaramuzzi, S. (2001).

Il ruolo dell'organizzazione dei sistemi produttivi locali nella tipicità dei prodotti agricoli: alcuni spunti di riflessione.

Giornata di Studio "Tra globalizzazione e localismo: quale futuro per i sistemi produttivi territoriali?", Università degli Studi di Cassino - Dipartimento Economia e Territorio, Cassino, 6 aprile 2001

The paper points out, through the analysis of some case studies, the mechanisms through which some agricultural products have renewed their typicality and therefore their notoriety on intermediate and final markets. These mechanisms have been identified in the peculiar organisation of the relations among the agents within the product system. These relations are horizontal and vertical, economic and not, and have been built in space and time. One of the most important elements that underlies the relations among the agents is the contextual knowledge that is shared by all the agents belonging to the system and that is also at the basis of the phase markets involving agents at different stages of the chain.

This set of relations strengthens the "reputation" of the product coming from that particular area. The competitive advantage is therefore obtained thanks to the capacity of the system to reproduce itself adapting its output and thus contributing to the renewal of its notoriety.

Belletti, G. ; Marescotti, A. ; Rossi, A. ; Rovai, M. (1998).

Territorially based promotional strategies of a traditional vegetable product: the case of spinach in Val di Cornia and Val di Serchio.

in: Arfani F. ; Mora C. (Eds), "Typical and traditional products: rural effect and agro-industrial problems", 52nd EAAE Seminar, Università di Parma, Facoltà di Economia, pp. 349-364

The paper analyses some promotional activities based on the territorial origin undertaken for spinach in the production areas of Val di Serchio and Val di Cornia (Tuscany, Italy). In order to understand the role of the "territory" in the promotion of spinach, it was necessary to study the process of restructuring faced by the production areas over the last decades.

In this context, the unsuccessful outcome of the activities analysed - as emerged from the on-field investigation conducted through open interviews with the various operators involved in the production areas and along the trade channels - would suggest a low importance of the "territory" (territorial origin as a marketing lever). Nevertheless, the "territory" emerges as a strategic "production factor", as a result of the advantages gained by local farms through the long process of knowledge and skill accumulation and the (high rate of reaction and adaptation) of the production systems achieved by means of the high number of relations among the farms in the area.

Scaramuzzi S. (1998).

Tradition, cooperation and competition in the ornamental plants chain: the case of Tuscany.

in: Arfani F. ; Mora C. (Eds), "Typical and traditional products: rural effect and agro-industrial problems", 52nd EAAE Seminar, Università di Parma, Facoltà di Economia, pp. 405-418

The paper aims at analysing the role played by tradition within the development of the structure of the ornamental plants chain in the Pistoia area (Tuscany) and the reasons, opportunities and limits to undertake specific actions for the promotion of the Tuscan nursery production.

After the analysis of the historical roots of the nursery production in the area, the paper proceeds with the description of the structure of the chain, with special reference to the characteristics and peculiarities of the organisational relationships among nurseries. These are key-elements to identify the opportunities and limits to the promotion of Pistoia ornamental plants. The fundamental role of tradition for the capillary development of a thick network of formal and informal relationships resulting from the diffusion of experience and the rapid flow of information among the agents of the chain is illustrated. All these elements together represent a very sound lever for a further and long-lasting penetration of the market.

1.2. Effects of PDO/PGI on the supply chain and on the relations between firms

The use the actors of the local supply chain make of the PDO/PGI is directed to defend the product "geographical name" and to regulate its use against the misuse of both local and external actors. Actually the actors who promote the initiative aim at limiting the use of the product name, by defining rules on the production process and products specifics.

Such an "institutional barrier" obtained through product reputation institutionalisation (Polidori and Romano, 1997), by creating a common protective belt on the market, partially shifts the competitive problem to the sharing of origin rent among local firms which adhere to PDO/PGI (Rocchi and Stefani, 2001; Giovannetti, 1988). The recognition process of a PDO/PGI often raises conflicts between different economic actors typologies and interests (Rossi e Rovai, 1999).

First, conflicts may arise on the decision to apply for a PDO or a PGI; second, conflicts are normally present in the definition of the Product Specifications, with particular reference to the delimitation of the production geographical area, and to the specification of the production process and of product characteristics (Anania e Nisticò, 1999; Carbone, 1996 e 1997). In conclusion, the achievement of a PDO/PGI generates winners and losers, as it deeply affects the possibility the various typologies of actors involved in the production system of the typical product have in appropriating the rent of origin, and strongly modifies the distribution of the rent connected to the typical product (Belletti, 2000).

Abstracts

Belletti G. (2000).

Origin labelled products, reputation, and etherogeneity of firms.

in: Sylvander B. ; Barjolle D. ; Arfani F. (Eds), "The socio-economics of Origin Labelled Products in Agri-Food Supply Chains", INRA Actes et Communications, n.17-1, pp. 239-260

Analysis of reputation through "quality premia" models enhances the ability of explanation that the reputation concept has in the case of typical products. The commonly accepted meaning of reputation as simply "notoriety" becomes inadequate, and the information mechanism it generates becomes associated with a set of (firm)product-specific investments sustained by the firms in the supply chain of the typical product. Within this framework, we can improve analysis of the process of establishment, development and exploitation of the typical product in the context of the great transformation of the agro-food system and of the growing differentiation of the firms and interpret problems caused by the processes of institutionalisation of reputation by means of protection of designation of origin of the product.

Rossi A. ; Rovai M. (1999).

La valorizzazione dei prodotti tipici. Un'analisi secondo l'approccio di network.

Rivista di Economia Agraria, LIV, n.3, settembre, pp. 369-398

The valorisation of typical products. An analysis through the network approach

The paper analyses the evolution process that has occurred in a small mountain production system in the north of Tuscany, i.e. the Garfagnana spelt production, which has survived over time into the local tradition but has recently undergone an intense revitalisation process. The case is interesting because of the evolution developed with regard to the necessity/ opportunity of setting up strategies of valorisation of typical local products. In particular, that process concerns on the one hand the interaction between the local context and external context, on the other the building of a specific identity by the local rural community. The authors analyse the central aspects of that evolution process by means of the network analysis, with particular attention to the role of the relations among the various actors involved and their changing over time, in a view of their importance in influencing the organisation and the development potential of the local system.

1.3. Collective and interactive marketing

The use of suitable marketing strategies and methods to typical products is an issue which has recently been faced by Italian literature. As a matter of fact the fact that firms producing typical products are mainly SME often does not allow the implementation of traditional strategies both in terms of costs and of a sufficient supply of the product to orientate the consumer's demand.

That is why collective marketing is suggested and in particular the potential and effective role of Consortia and Local Administrations is analysed (Antonelli, 2000).

Another relevant issue is related to interactive marketing. The necessity of a tight dual relationship between firms and consumers is based on the one side on the importance of the information of the consumer so that he can attach value to the typical product and on the other side on the information producers should have on the expectations of consumers in order to meet them (Endrighi, 1999).

Antonelli G. (2000).

Volumi di offerta e marketing. Il caso dei prodotti agro-alimentari tipici.

Economia Agro-Alimentare, Anno V, n.2, pp. 47-80 -

This paper aims at assessing the possibility of applying business marketing techniques to firms in the agro-food sector specially to small and medium sized firms producing typical and traditional agro-food products.

It then draws the attention on the usefulness of an approach to marketing in the agro-food sector from the point of view of a relationship perspective.

The second part of the paper gives the results of an empirical survey carried on a sample of Consortia for Protection of Italian typical products like cheese and ham, in order to investigate their collective marketing strategies compared to the individual ones carried out by associated firms. The results show that while larger processing firms try to develop their own marketing strategy under an own brand, small producers rely mainly on the marketing activities conducted by Consortia. Further, although all Consortia show a strong interest in marketing and the need to develop general promotion of the PDO brand, their approach to market seems more consistent with a production oriented philosophy rather than a market oriented one. Finally, the paper shows the importance of a better co-ordination and of co-operative relationships between the different actors of the supply chain to develop a more effective marketing strategy in the sector of typical products.

Magni C. ; Santuccio F. (1999).

La competitività dei prodotti agro-alimentari tipici italiani fra localismo e globalizzazione.

Rivista di Economia Agraria, LIV, n.2, giugno, pp. 299-324

This article synthetically describes the international competitive environment of the Italian agro-food products considering the WTO negotiations and the foreview of the Common Agriculture Reform, proposed by Agenda 2000. In addition, the authors try to outline some major points in the present discussion about the role of the typical products separating the one which are certified by European Community (DOP, IGP) from the others which are "simply" typical.

This methodological introduction leads the authors to make an estimate of the economic value of the typical productions compared with the total agro-alimentary domestic productions. This valuation shows some interesting results, particularly about the sector cheese's.

From this analysis it's possible to notice the important of the typical products in the cheeses sector and their role in the southern agriculture. The analysis arises that the typical Italian cheeses have many competitive opportunities on the international and European market.

At last, the authors suggest some Agro-food Policy interventions to support typical Italian products.

Endrighi E. (1999)

La valorizzazione delle produzioni tipiche locali. Dal concetto di valore alle indicazioni operative.

Rivista di Economia Agraria, LIV, n.1, marzo, pp. 3-26

The valorisation of typical local products. From the concept of value to the operative indications.

The concept of value is on the basis of valorisation and, therefore, of the development of the typical local products. On the one hand, the creation of value, that is new wealth, is the aim necessarily pursued by the firm involved in the system of the typical product; on the other hand, the attribution of value to such products and the same interventions supporting the relative system, depends on the ethics accepted by the society in a certain moment.

The valuation passes, therefore, on the one hand, through the activities of subjects/functions "actuators" of inventions/attribution of value and, on the hand, through the action of the "supporters", who are responsible for the strategies meant to develop the company and environmental conditions favourable to the creation/attribution of value in the typical local product.

For customers, the crucial element is the value chain, as, on the one hand, it is necessary that it contains the cultural and cognitive assumptions in order to attribute value to the typical product, and, on the other hand, the producers should attempt to satisfy the specific expectations relevant to such products; under such conditions, one should adopt methods and practices of interactive marketing. Such companies should pursue effectiveness and efficiency by assigning a fundamental role to the material resources and no-material characterisations, operating in a local system capable of favouring a merger, in a developed, reticular way.

2. SELECTION OF SCIENTIFIC AND RECENT (SINCE 1980) PAPERS, PUBLICATIONS, MEMORIES AND STUDIES IN THE COUNTRY (INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL MEETINGS HELD IN ENGLISH)

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Iacoponi L. ; Brunori G.

Il marchio "schietto ligure". L'innovazione organizzativa nella valorizzazione dei prodotti locali.

Edizioni Il Borghetto, 1994 Pisa

Idda L. (Ed.)

La percezione della qualità nelle filiere agroalimentari della Sardegna.

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1995, Roma

Gregori M. ; Garlatti S. (Eds.)

Il marketing collettivo dei prodotti agroalimentari.

Università degli Studi di Udine, 1997 Udine

Nomisma

Prodotti tipici e sviluppo locale. Il ruolo delle produzioni di qualità nel futuro dell'agricoltura italiana.

VIII Rapporto Nomisma sull'agricoltura italiana, 2000, Bologna

Salvini E.

Apicoltura e mercato del miele: vincoli ed opportunità del marketing dei mieli italiani.

Pacini Editore, 1996 Pisa

Van der Meulen H. ; Ventura F.

La costruzione della qualità. Produzione, commercializzazione e consumo della carne bovina in Umbria.

CESAR, 1994, Assisi

2.2. Congress Proceedings, Journal Article, Book Sections, Thesis 2001-1973

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Il ruolo dell'organizzazione dei sistemi produttivi locali nella tipicità dei prodotti agricoli: alcuni spunti di riflessione, Giornata di Studio "Tra globalizzazione e localismo: quale futuro per i sistemi produttivi territoriali?"

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Economia Agro-Alimentare, 5(3), dicembre 2000, pp. 216-236.

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Discussion report

1. NEEDS FOR NEW RESEARCH

1.1. Typical products and modern distribution chains

Consumers and consequently Italian modern distribution chains are showing a growing interest in typical products. Nevertheless there are no theoretical or empirical studies deepening the problems that producers are facing in the relationship with these firms, the effects on the characteristics of the products deriving from the requests of the distribution chains, an assessment of the effects at organisational and economic level for the firms.

1.2. Co-operatives and typical products

In Italy co-operatives are deeply involved in the production, processing and marketing of typical products. There are no specific studies on the analysis of the reasons for this diffusion, in particular it is necessary to find out if they represent a better organisation model to preserve typicity, to preserve the peculiar organisation of firms within typical products systems, to ease the introduction of these products within modern distribution chains, to facilitate their protection through Designations of Origin.

1.3. Direct sales and organisation of the firm

The use of short channels for typical products is widely suggested by literature because they allow a better information of the consumers and to rise the added value for the producer within the value chain. A new issue is represented by e-commerce, but very little has been done to explore the potentials and limits of this sale method. In general further research is needed on the adaptation required in the organisation of the firm by this kind of channel (visit of the farm, packaging, direct information on production methods)

1.4. PDO/PGI success factors

The success of PDO/PGIs is strictly tied to the number of firms using the designation. At present not many studies have been carried out in Italy on the criteria firms use to decide whether to use designations or not, and on the ways firms use PDO/PGIs on different marketing channels. Further research is needed to understand firms decision processes and identify critical variables.

2. POLICY RELATED ISSUES

2.1. Liberalisation of trade and OLPs

The effects of the liberalisation of trade on OLPs must be further investigated as the adverse effects of liberalisation may be not only on the products *per se* but on the whole production system and rural development of certain areas, whose economic relaunch opportunities may sometimes be based only on their typical agro-food products.

2.2. The role of OLPs supply chain within rural development strategies

OLPs sometimes represent an identity element and an aggregating factor of the local community around a development project. The role of the policy maker within these aggregating processes in making the diversified interests of the actors converge on a single project is to be deepened.

2.3. Monitoring PDO/PGI impacts on the supply chain

The identification of the critical success/failure factors of PDO/PGIs is important for the policy maker to better understand the critical elements in the initiatives to be supported.

