

Abstract

Are small gastronomic firms in the Neu- and Altstadt district of Mainz cooperatively linked? And if so, what does this network look like?

Due to prevailing competition both among themselves and with larger, better-off chains and fluctuating economic cycles, small gastronomic firms¹ are especially vulnerable. In the last two years in particular, the gastronomic sector has been threatened and subjected to a high financial burden, as social life has been severely restricted under the former Covid-19 regulations and gastronomic firms have had to remain closed for months at a time as a result. This is even though they are essential to the cultural identity of a city.

Studies of businesses in the tourism, gastronomic, and retail sectors indicate that in the case of high vulnerability, particularly regarding risky and uncertain environments, cooperation between businesses serves, among other things, as a protective mechanism. The resulting cooperation sometimes further enables competitive market advantages, as it can also contribute to the reduction of complexity and strategic action. The prevention of organizational death through social networks has also already been researched.

For this reason, this study aims to investigate how small gastronomic firms in Mainz's Neu- and Altstadt protect themselves against this vulnerability and whether they can achieve protection by cooperating with each other. Accordingly, our research question is: "Are small gastronomic firms in the Neu- and Altstadt district of Mainz cooperatively linked? And if so, what does this network look like?"

In this study, the field is first explored through four semi-structured interviews. Based on the information gathered, a quantitative questionnaire will be designed, the results of which will allow generalizable statements about the field in addition to subjective insights.

Research Group: Beatrice Seryi, Lars Helmstädter, Fernando Gordillo, Sally Kiwus

¹Small firms: 10-49 persons employed and 2-10 mill. Eur. annual sales: based on the definition of Statistisches Bundesamt following the recommendation (2003/361/EC) of the European Commission according to sales and employee size classes, <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Branchen-Unternehmen/Unternehmen/Kleine-Unternehmen-Mittlere-Unternehmen/Glossar/kmu.html>, accessed on 03.08.2022.