



Industrial Districts

Evolution and Competitiveness in Italian Firms

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The multidisciplinary, quantitative approach adopted by the author, enables her to 'de-structure' the 'canonical' idea of the ID and evaluate the normative value. Supported by multivariate and econometric analyses, she identifies four general types of ID each with different development paths, performances, inter-organizational relations, and regulatory rules and institutions. The results demonstrate that IDs on average achieve better static or dynamic economic performance than non-ID areas. The analysis also highlights critical points of rupture in the socio-economic equilibrium of IDs which may impair their future competitiveness and social sustainability. The author offers a critical appraisal of the organizational literature on IDs, claiming for caution in their depiction as 'cooperative systems' and goes on to present the first steps towards a 'microfoundation' of a theory on IDs.

'... this structural analysis of industrial districts in Italy provides a creative and thoughtful contribution to the understanding of the nature of industrial transformation and innovation processes at sub-national levels. It will be of considerable interest to policymakers, scholars and many others concerned with regional development, innovation and organisational studies.'

– Tim Turpin, Australian Journal of Regional Studies

'This splendid addition to the literature on the Italian industrial districts deserves reading by all those that are interested in the local geography of production and innovation. Ivana Panizza provides a fascinating critique of the "canonical" industrial district concept which leads her to an empirically based typology of industrial districts, whose evolution and performance follow distinct paths.'

– John Cantwell, Rutgers University, US

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