



# Industrial renewal in Italy ...

Facing, after the destructive effects of the Great recession, the persistent challenges of current globalization and instability of capitalisms

*(Crisis and transition)*

Nonetheless needed for the health of Italian economy and society; not only preserving the areas of industrial excellence, legacy of strong local factors (reactive IDs, fourth capitalism, organizational and territorial variety), but also developing new and renewed industrial capabilities

*(Manufacture matters)*

... and a possible role of university place based relations

Promoted by

- increasing importance of research-related innovation in high-tech clusters, in made in Italy districts and in creative urban clusters
- spreading and evolving activities of university **third mission**, though facing various barriers – ref. Osservatorio della Fondazione CRUI per il dialogo e la cooperazione tra università e imprese, RAPPORTO 2015

# Manufacture matters for Italy, what can be done?

## Industrial policies and strategies with system and multi-scale features

Industrial strategies and various public policies often focus on the defense of the elements of industrial excellence inherited from the past

However, the current challenges require more than that!

A strong jump towards innovation and internationalization:

*hardly stimulated by “traditional” interventions supporting individual firms (even when they are large firms) or individual systems of SMEs (even when they are lively systems)*

*towards a more complex conceptual framework, addressing processes and actions developing at various territorial and organizational scale:*

- ❑ The territorial scales: local, regional (including industrial districts, major urban systems, etc.), national
- ❑ The organizational scales: not only including systems of SMEs and poles of large firms, but also various intermediated networks built on skills, inter-business, internationalization and innovation needs/opportunities

**University, local policies and strategies** - in particular University & made in Italy Districts, H-T and Creative urban clusters, rural systems with a high density of natural heritage

*more systematic relationship between the world of research and that of local industry and SMEs, directed to promoting a more intense introduction of scientific-technological-organizational inputs and skills within the productive processes, could be considered as wishful thinking in Italy – however:*

- ❑ Districts and clusters often include a number of medium-sized enterprises which have some connections with universities, and they may help to develop networks
- ❑ Universities are moving from the promotion of single functions of technology transfer, to the implementation of system-based actions specialized in the exchange of knowledge, and in job placement activities consistent with the specificities of the local industry
- ❑ Also large firms are changing. They are increasingly adopting open innovation models, which imply a systematic scouting of the available sources of invention and of existing capabilities to co-development at universities and/or at small, innovative companies

## **University, regional and national platforms – including the specific function of major urban (metropolitan) areas**

*Processes integrating a disperse wealth of local resources in regional/ national wide INNOVATION PLATFORMS would be necessary given the increasing openness and transversality of knowledge creation. Where and how in relation to made in Italy? Look to driving ideas on new ways of understanding life and work , as:*

- ❑ Culture, Science and High technology on/around Arts, Crafts and Food → HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR WORLD MARKETS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SYSTEMS
- ❑ Cities with dense cultural and landscape heritage → ENERGY, MOBILITY, BUILDING INDUSTRIES FOR SUSTAINABLE WORLD HERITAGE CITIES AND COUNTRYSIDE
- ❑ Social Innovation and Local welfare → REDUCING COSTS, SUSTAIN QUALITY AND SOCIAL COHESION, REALIZING NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR WORD MARKETS
- ❑ Green Investments and areas of large environmental crisis → HUGE MONEY FOR RESTORATION AS LARGE DEMAND FOR INNOVATIVE GREEN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Relations with ongoing policies, like the National Technological Clusters, the Regional Innovation Districts, EXPO 2015, the EU Cluster Excellence Initiative, etc.:  
**University based units are crucial actors in such networks**

## Conclusion: at the core

Industrial districts experiences tell that the basis of renewal (and resilience) of localized industry is a collective effort based on social and cultural attitudes shared in systems of life and work

The engagement of Universities in place-based industrial development is also a question of contribution to the renewal of such cores attitudes

In conclusion, some hints on what that may mean:

- ❑ the reproduction of basic skills and attitudes towards entrepreneurship and trust is related to new pools of human capital combining industry, craft, technology, and new knowledge services embedded locally but extending in larger networks
- ❑ capacities for international collaborations and digital communication are helped by skilled agents who have more than one homeland, for examples a wider number of graduates combining international curricula with local experiences
- ❑ innovation in SMEs asks for a business culture of open networks promoted by streams of modern managerial science
- ❑ the emergence of symbolic structures and cognitive networks at the national and global scale through which the place can renew its identity is associated to very specific combinations of local tradition and creativity with high culture and science

Of course Universities are not always ready for such wide engagement! Nor the perception of policy-makers of such opportunity is normally supportive