



Marie Skłodowska- Curie RISE  
MAPS-LED  
Multidisciplinary Approach to Plan Smart Specialisation Strategies  
for Local Economic Development



## The inland areas in Italy and RIS3 implementation

*MAPS-LED First Mid-term Meeting*

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# The territorial imperative

- a major part of Italian regions is characterized by the presence of a settlement system based on "minor centers". Many scholars have labeled these territories "inland areas";
- the inland areas have important resources both environmental and cultural;
- because of their proximity with the network of the industrial districts, inland areas may become the focus of integrated development policies in the frame of a territorial cohesion.

# The incidence of inland areas in the national settlement system

Classificazione Comuni	Numero	%	Altitudine	Popolazione	%	Variazione % 1971-2011	Superficie	%
Polo	219	2,7	145	21.223.562	35,7	-6,8	29.519	9,8
Polo intercomunale	104	1,3	166	2.466.455	4,1	22,7	6.251	2,1
Cintura	3508	43,4	215	22.203.219	37,4	35,8	81.815	27,1
Intermedio	2377	29,4	395	8.952.266	15,1	11,6	89.448	29,6
Periferico	1526	18,9	607	3.671.372	6,2	-8,1	73.256	24,3
Ultra-periferico	358	4,4	627	916.870	1,5	-5,3	21.784	7,2
<b>TOTALE</b>	<b>8092</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>59.433.744</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>9,8</b>	<b>302.073</b>	<b>100,0</b>

*Fonte:* Elaborazione UVAL-UVER su dati Istat – Censimento della popolazione 1971 e 2011

# The geography of “inland areas” in Italy



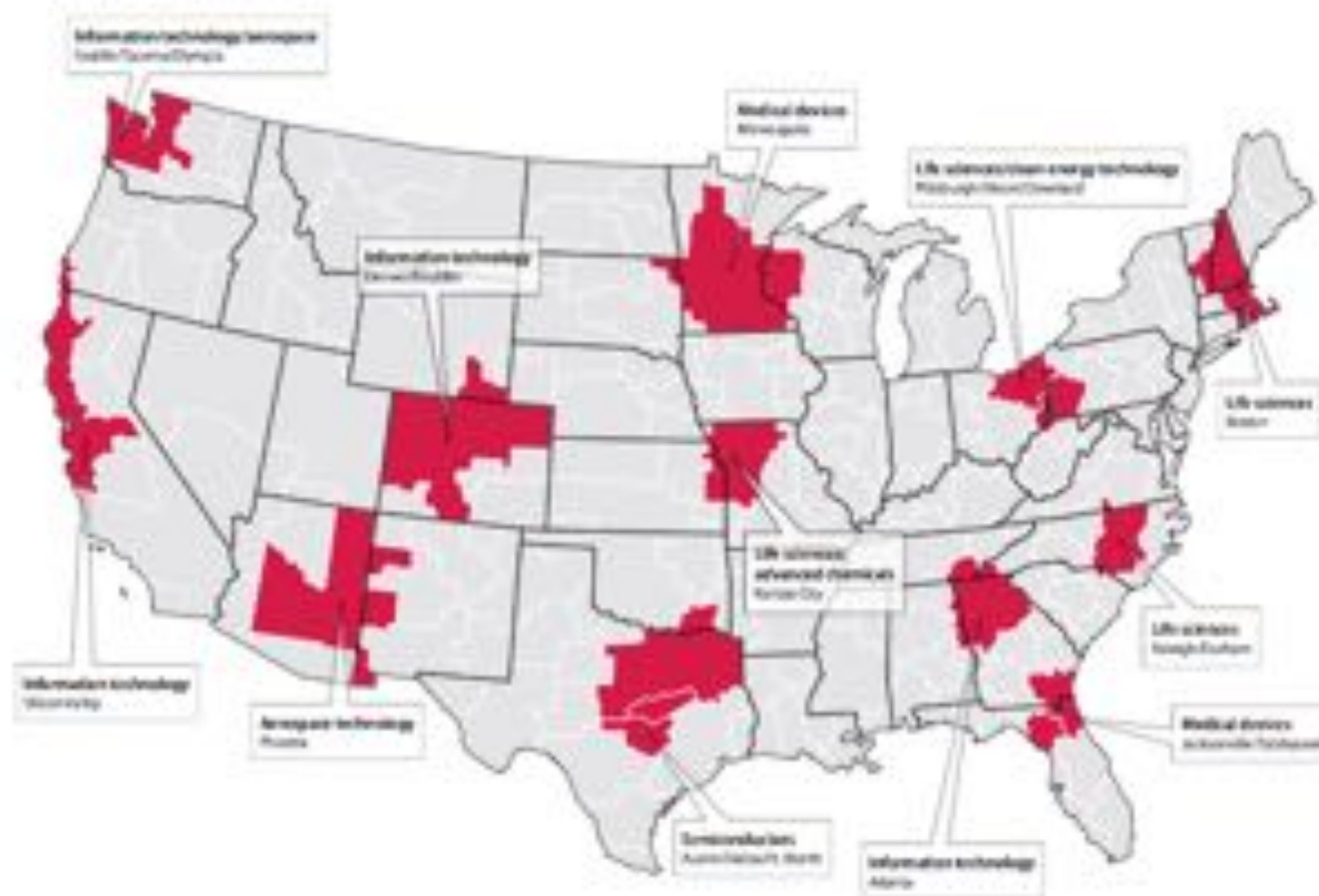
# The centrality of knowledge

In socio-economic systems knowledge acquires the central role of a dynamic force with two different characterizations:

- as a specific element;
- as a common good.



## USA: a selection of high-tech trade cluster



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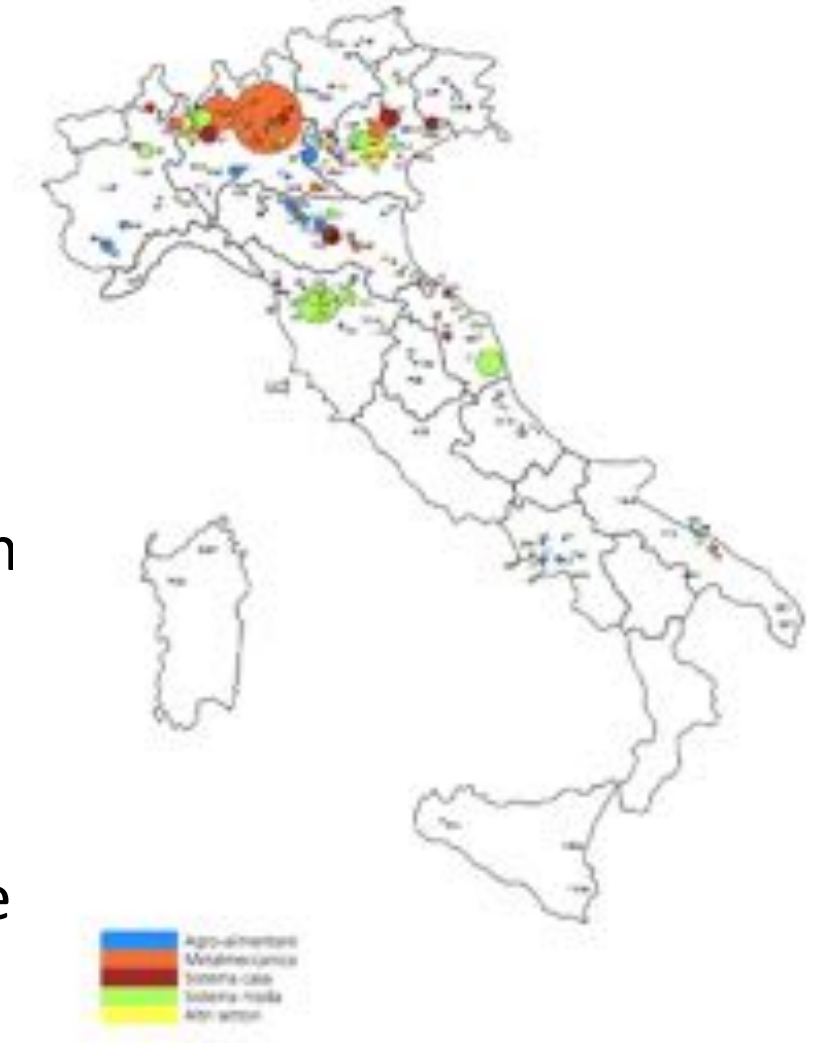
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# the spatial consequences of innovation process

- unlike the US, in Italy the link between urbanization and technological processes can be easily analyzed in the industrial districts;
- starting point is made by the liaison between city and innovation;
- a specific role is played by the brownfields in metropolitan areas which act as incubator of innovative enterprises.



# the differences between industrial districts and trade clusters

- the approaches to regional development, centred on concepts of networks, local production systems, districts and clusters, opens up a split in traditional theories;
- view from an italian look-out, the geography of trade clusters suggest how it could have been our national reality if we had followed a different path

Smart Specialisation Strategies	Clusters
<b>Similarities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers of performance: productivity and innovation are critical for sustained growth</li> <li>• Multiple factors influence productivity and innovation</li> <li>• Importance of proximity and local spill overs and a critical role of locational context</li> </ul>	
<b>Differences in emphasis</b>	
Exploring emerging market opportunities	Critical mass
Facilitating knowledge spill overs between knowledge domains	External effects through shared infrastructure and input markets
Exploit related variety between knowledge domains	Groups of companies in related industries
Drive structural change of an economy by embedding innovative practices in economy and society	Enhancing performance of a set of linked companies

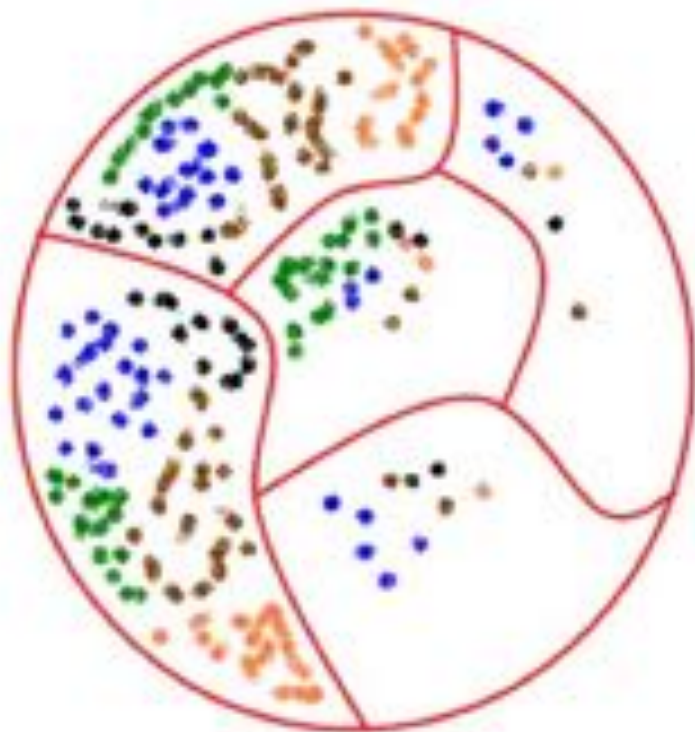


# the ambivalent nature of clusters

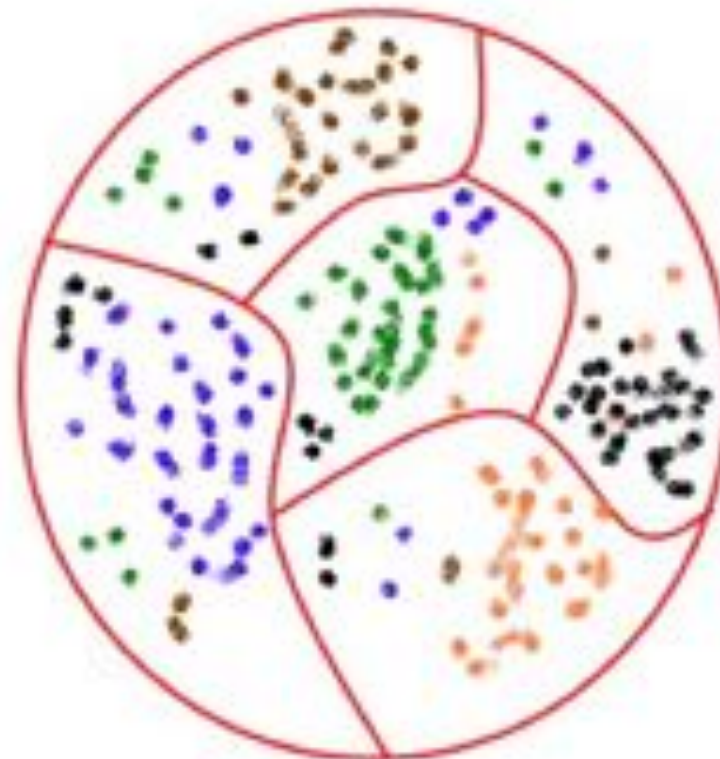
- The features of the new technologies are the basis of a complex redefinition of innovative processes and their spatial organization;
- despite criticism we assume the existence of a close link between the concentration of interconnected companies and the presence of some forms of spatial agglomeration where businesses networks are indivisible from the urban framework;
- it is convenient to distinguish two different meanings: the first is related to the cluster in his most complete and radical dimension, which does not imply any particular localization benefits; the second one is linked to a social network model in which the trust relations are disclosed by joint lobbying & ventures, informal alliances, reciprocal arrangements in trading.

## two types of cluster

***Overall clustering*** – some  
areas overloaded of activity,  
others almost empty



***Sectoral clustering*** – most  
regions get a cluster



# The opportunities of Smart Specialization Strategy

- In the relations between different forms of knowledge and spatial aggregation, smart specialization strategy is able to promote a recomposition between conflicting models;
- Smart Specialisation is a strategic approach to economic growth through targeted support for research and innovation;
- many scholars have suggested that the smart specialization strategy is difficult to design being based on a new academic framework that must now be translated into practical politics;
- this criticism forgets the value of Italian experience in industrial districts, where the encounter between demand and supply of new technologies has opted for the testing of place-based policies.

# Conclusions

- The Cluster Theory is a useful tool to describe the behavior of firms and innovative processes at the regional scale and large Metro, but it proves less effective at the urban scale;

As Foray said we can assume that RIS3 is not the same thing as a cluster policy. If the latter does not change the issue of knowledge homologation and duplication of R&D, Smart specialisation offers a more complex vision and makes the whole system capable of reaping the benefits of proximity.

## short bibliography

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- Foray, D., *Smart specialisation: from academic idea to political instrument, the surprising destiny of a concept and the difficulties involved in its implementation*, Warsaw, 2011
- Iacobucci, D. e Guzzini, E., *La 'Smart Specialization Strategy' delle regioni italiane e le politiche nazionali per la ricerca e l'innovazione*, CMET, Ancona, 2015.





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**Thank you for  
your attention**

