



# The Global Challenge to Industrial Districts: Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Italy and Taiwan

Paolo Guerrieri

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The current trend towards globalization is posing a substantial challenge to SME clusters to restructure and reach out to distant markets and knowledge sources, while at the same time exploiting the advantages of local factors and agglomeration. This book represents a first attempt to analyze these issues in detail, employing novel empirical evidence.

The authors focus on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Italy and Taiwan, two countries in which these businesses characterize the national industrial structure. They find that in the current climate of globalization, there is no best practice model for organizing an industrial cluster since a diversity of successful institutional arrangements is possible. They demonstrate that over time SME clusters can evolve and that globalization can reshape their upgrading options by providing a variety of international knowledge linkages. Thus, the authors conclude that the development of local and global networks and new interactive modes of knowledge creation, which have co-evolved as a result of globalization, have provided the necessary conditions for competitive survival.

Taking a multidisciplinary approach, the authors utilize a number of analytical tools to evaluate their survey data and present an original comparison between the experiences of two countries that are facing the challenges of globalization, often with differing strategies. This book will be of great interest to industrial and international economists, policymakers, and corporate and SME managers.



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