

Identity and Identification in Industrial Districts

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to extend the concept of identity and identification to the study of industrial districts. The theoretical model presented explains how identity and identification occur within localized production networks and examines how the process of identification affects the industrial districts' performance and competitiveness. The study adopts a multi-disciplinary approach which integrates the traditional framework rooted in the fields of regional studies, governance structures, and management theory with some theoretical contributions developed in the field of social psychology. The concept of district identity is proposed as the missing link between the traditional macro-perspective based on shared culture, history, and values and a micro-founded approach to the study of industrial districts. It is stated that, through the process of identification, district identity explains at the actor level the adoption of distinctive behaviors, such as commitment, trust, and cooperation, which represent the ultimate source of competitive advantage of the district model.

Key words: industrial districts, inter-organizational networks, organizational identification, social identity