

Acknowledgements

This research monograph is a product of the two authors' collaboration under the auspices of the WEID project, financed by the EU 5th Framework Programme 2001-05 (under contract no. HPSE-CT2001-00098). WEID, a shorthand for 'West-East Industrial Districts Re-location Processes: Identifying Policies in the Perspective of EU Enlargement', was an interdisciplinary research project that brought together more than twenty researchers from a dozen or so research institutions spread across Eastern and Western Europe.

We incurred many debts while writing this book. First, and foremost, to our WEID colleagues, with whom we shared the good and the difficult times of gathering primary and secondary data, analysing complex evolutionary patterns and developing policy options. After a difficult and prolonged start that required the development of a shared language for dealing with such complex phenomena across a number of disciplines and countries, and what could be termed a 'methodological war', the WEID team was able to pull itself together through the difficulties, typical of large international interdisciplinary projects, with a good professional spirit and a healthy sense of humour. The success of WEID, however, is largely due to the tireless work of our coordinators Ruggiera Sarcina and Debora Giannini from the Istituto Guglielmo Tagliacarne (IGT, Rome), that facilitated WEID's research with excellent administrative skills. Our warmest thanks to them.

The WEID team provided us with stimuli and enthusiasm about the importance of clusters and industrial districts in Europe. Our gratitude for their help and contribution go especially to Manu Ahedo, Michela Bastianelli, Fiorenza Belussi, Lucio Biggiero, John Cantwell, Mahtab Farshchi, Hans-Werner Franz, Odile Janne, Marko Jaklič, Rainer Lichte, Frank McDonald, Daniel Manate, Wim Martens, Mimmo Mauriello, Alvis Mesthene, Marianna Nagy, Artur Ochojski, Brigitte Ollier, Ivana Paniccia, Ulrik Røhl, Alessia Samarra, Massimo Tomassini, Heinz-Josef Tuselmann, and Hugo Zagorsek. A special word of thanks to Anja Cotič Svetina, for her invaluable help with information about the Slovenian economy and clusters.

Thanks are also due to Matthew Pitman, Felicity Plester, and Caroline Phillips from Edward Elgar publishers for help with typesetting this book.

We would also like to thank the 500 or so firm and institutional representatives that provided primary data as well as the DG: Employment, Enterprise, Regio, and Research officers that fostered the overall effort.

Susana Borrás would like to acknowledge LTH and Lund University (Sweden) for the generous invitation as Lise Meitner guest professor in the Spring semester 2007 at CIRCLE. My special thanks to its director Charles Edquist, who made my stay possible and provided an exciting academic opportunity which was highly inspiring for the book. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the International Centre for Business and Politics, Copenhagen Business School (Denmark), and at CIRCLE, Lund University (Sweden) for their invaluable comments throughout the process of writing this book.

Dimitrios Tsagdis would like to acknowledge Roskilde University (Denmark) for an Associate Research Professorship during 2003-04 and Hull University Business School (UK) for a brief study leave during 2006-07. Prof Gerard De Zeeuw for advice and discussions on methodology. Dr Qihai Huang and Dr Caterina Muzzi for SPSS analysis in the early and late stages of the WEID project respectively. The former and Mr Pier Andrea Podda for primary data collection in the Scottish ICT cluster and UK RDAs. The latter also for reviewing draft chapters on Italy and the CZ, and Mr Conrad Roemhild for reviewing the Germany draft chapter. Dr Ioannis Salamouris and Mr Mohammed Dauda for post-WEID SPSS analysis and related discussions. Dr Stilianos Alexiadis for input and feedback on regional economics and externalities. Mrs Chrysoula Papatriantafyllou for tireless language revisions in WEID interim reports and draft book chapters, Ms Christina Tan for assistance with the index. Among the many institutional representatives who went beyond their call of duty to help with WEID and this book special thanks ought to go to Ross Brown, Janko Burgar, Gary Marsh, Philip Raines, Simona Rataj, and Reza Zadeh. My thanks should also go to a number of individual researchers located all over the globe that took time to provide additional information to their published work relevant to various aspects of the issues raised in this book; they are too numerous to list individually and most remain only electronic acquaintances. I hope one day to be able to meet them and thank them in person.

Last but not least, apologies should go to those whose contributions we have forgotten. Still, we wish to thank them. Neither they nor the people whose contributions we have been able to mention, are to be held responsible for the fact that we may not have profited sufficiently from what they have contributed. Still, we hope that they will recognise some of it, and that they will appreciate the way it has been used.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to our families, whose love and support made the hard process of writing this book more bearable. Our most sincere thanks for their patience and encouragement; this book is dedicated to them.