

University of Groningen

## Stated locational preferences of entrepreneurs in Italy

Musolino, Dario Antonino

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*

2015

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Musolino, D. A. (2015). Stated locational preferences of entrepreneurs in Italy [Groningen]: University of Groningen

**Copyright**

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

**Take-down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

# **Stated locational preferences of entrepreneurs in Italy**

The patterns, the characteristics and the explanatory factors of the Italian entrepreneurs' mental maps

ISBN: 978-90-367-8092-6

ISBN (E-publication): 978-90-367-8091-9

English correction: Patricia Ellman (Perfect Copy)

Cover image: Everett Historical/Shutterstock.com

Printed by: Ipskamp Drukkers BV, Enschede, the Netherlands

© Dario Musolino, 2015

All rights reserved. Save exceptions by law, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, by print, photocopying, or otherwise, without the permission from the author.



university of  
 groningen

# **Stated locational preferences of entrepreneurs in Italy**

The patterns, the characteristics and the explanatory factors of the  
 Italian entrepreneurs' mental maps

**PhD thesis**

to obtain the degree of PhD at the  
 University of Groningen  
 on the authority of the  
 Rector Magnificus Prof. E. Sterken  
 and in accordance with  
 the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on  
 Monday 28 September 2015 at 12.45 hours

by

**Dario Antonino Musolino**

born on 4 May 1971  
 in Reggio Calabria, Italië

**Supervisor**

Prof. P.H. Pellenbarg

**Co-supervisor**

Dr. W.J. Meester

**Assessment Committee**

Prof. P.P.P. Huigen

Prof. G.J. Hospers

Prof. L. Senn

# Stated locational preferences of entrepreneurs in Italy

## CONTENTS

<b>1. Background and research design</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1. The theoretical background	9
1.2. The empirical background	10
1.3. Why Italy?	13
1.4. The research questions	14
1.5. The design of the questionnaire survey	15
1.5.1 The research population	15
1.5.2 Spatial units to be rated	17
1.5.3 The electronic questionnaire	19
1.5.4 Means of communication: the web survey	20
1.6. The design of the verbal interviews	23
1.7. Outline of the thesis	23
<b>2. The complex economic geography of Italy: the North-South divide and the industrial districts</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1 The North-South divide: a long-lasting story	25
2.1.1 The internal gaps	28
2.1.2 Why such a divide?	29
2.2 The industrial districts	35
2.2.1 The key characteristics	35
2.2.2 External economies and competitive advantages	37
2.2.3 Globalisation and structural changes	38
2.2.4 The current state: some key figures	39
2.3 Conclusions	41
<b>3. The main results of the web questionnaire survey</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1 Results at the macro-regional and regional scales	43
3.2 Results at the provincial scale	46
3.3 The North and South of Italy: differences in the level of the geographical depth of the mental maps	49
3.4 Conclusions	51
<b>4. Stated locational preferences of different groups of entrepreneurs and predominant spatial patterns: evidence from the statistical analyses</b>	<b>53</b>

4.1	The mental maps of Northern, Central and Southern entrepreneurs: different ratings but similar patterns	53
4.2	Entrepreneurs by economic sector, firm size, and export orientation: analyses and reflections	57
4.3	The mental maps by socio-demographic characteristics: sex, age, and education level	59
4.4	The spatial patterns in the minds of entrepreneurs: the results from the principal component analysis	60
4.5	Conclusions	67
<b>5.</b>	<b>Explaining the shape of the mental maps of entrepreneurs: evidence from the qualitative research actions</b>	<b>69</b>
5.1	Motives for place ratings. Evidence from content analysis applied to open questions	69
5.2	Underlying patterns and forces: evidence from the thematic analysis of the direct open interviews	74
5.2.1	Three explanatory keywords: agglomeration economies, centrality and accessibility	76
5.2.2	Are the peripheral areas in Northern Italy attractive?	81
5.2.3	The low attractiveness of the Mezzogiorno: only a question of the Mafia?	82
5.2.4	The role of legal uncertainty and inefficient bureaucracy	85
5.2.5	How the human capital shapes the North-South divide in territorial attractiveness?	86
5.2.6	Amenities and quality of life: the positive face of all Italian regions	88
5.3	Conclusions	89
<b>6.</b>	<b>Entrepreneurs from Italy and from other European countries: differences and similarities in their mental maps</b>	<b>91</b>
6.1	A comparative analysis of the shape of the mental maps	91
6.2	A comparison of the thickness of the mental maps	95
6.3	What about the the effect of ‘locational self-preference’? A comparative analysis by place of residence	96
6.4	Perception and reality: some tentative comparative reflections	99
6.5	Comparative analysis of the results of the principal component analysis	100
6.6	The content analysis of the qualitative data in Italy and in the Netherlands	104
6.7	Conclusions	107
<b>7.</b>	<b>Conclusive remarks and policy implications</b>	<b>109</b>
7.1	The key patterns of the mental maps of Italian entrepreneurs: final reflections	110
7.2	Remarks about the inconsistencies between perception and reality	111
7.3	What are the policy implications?	112
	<b>Bibliographical references</b>	<b>115</b>

<b>Annexes</b>	<b>121</b>
Annex 1. Questionnaire	121
Annex 2. List of the main questions/themes for the semi-structured direct interviews	127
<b>Summary in English</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Riassunto (Summary in Italian)</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>145</b>



*In memory of my mother*