BAE 10th Anniversary paper

Rural areas between locality and global networks. Local development mechanisms and the role of policies empowering rural actors
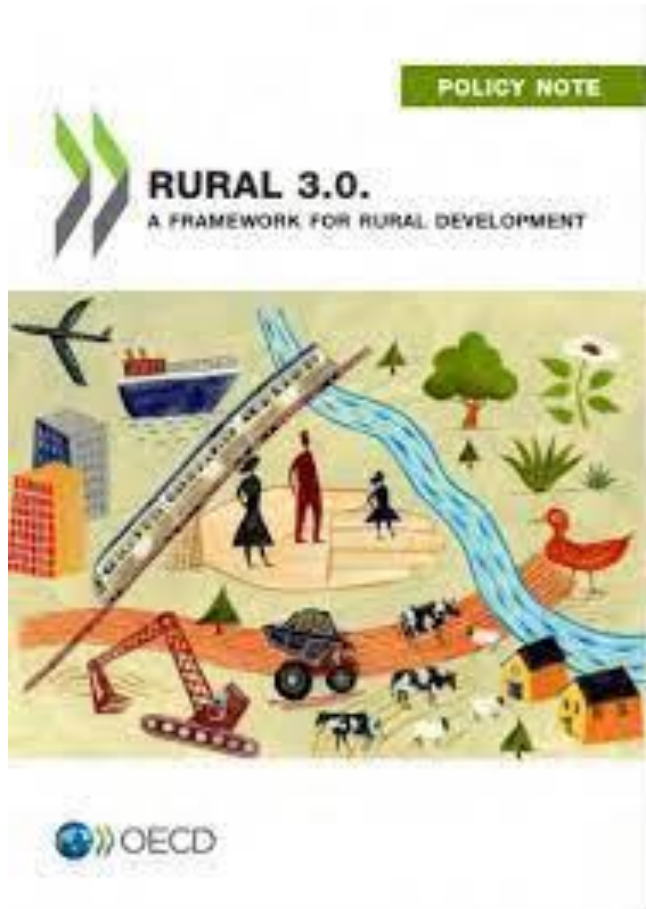
Francesco Mantino (CREA-Policy and Bio-economy)

10th Anniversary BAE Webinar series, 6th May 2022

Objectives and structure of this paper

- **Explore** how the diversity of rural areas is represented in literature
- What are the theoretical approaches explaining this diversity and what development mechanisms are behind that
- Explore how these achievements have influenced the policy framework
- Draw the general features of an alternative model for policy design
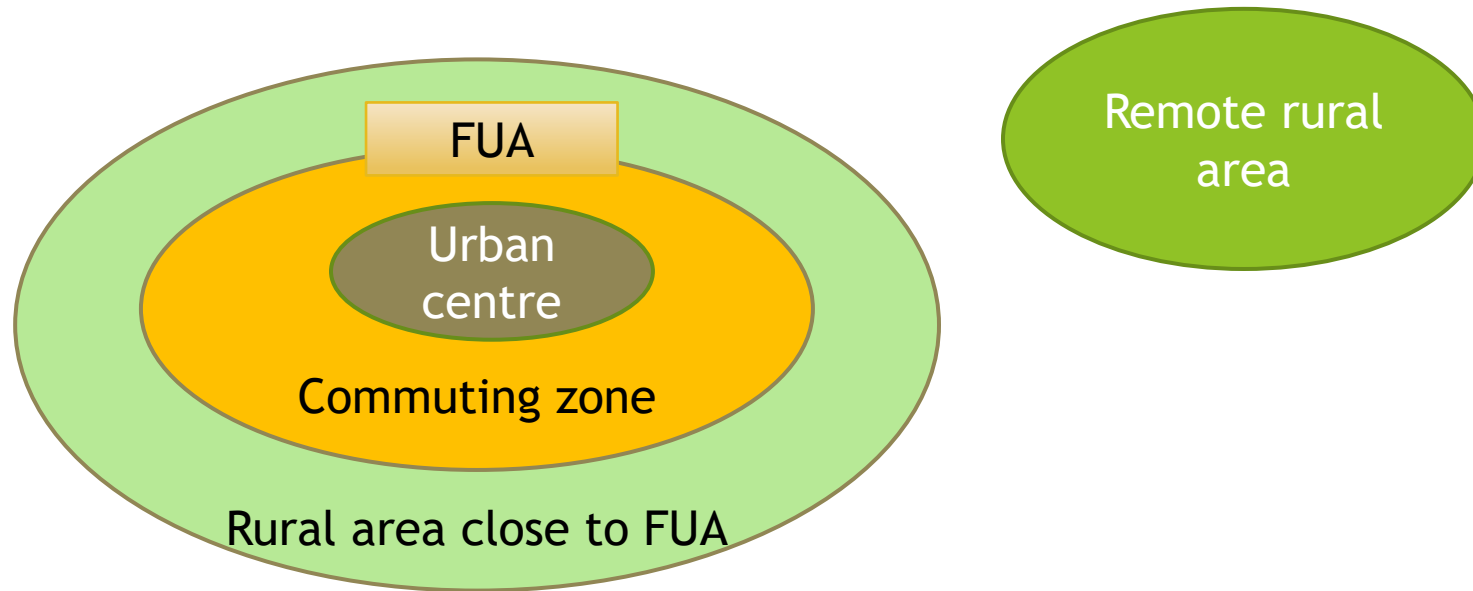- Draw up implications for future research and policy actions

The representation of the rural diversity and increasing rural-urban disparities

▶ move from simple indicators of population density and percentage of rural population to more elaborate criteria

▶ each country has developed its own definition of rurality

▶ Six types of approaches:

- administrative

- morphological (or demographic)

- locational

- landscape (land-cover and climatic conditions)

- functional

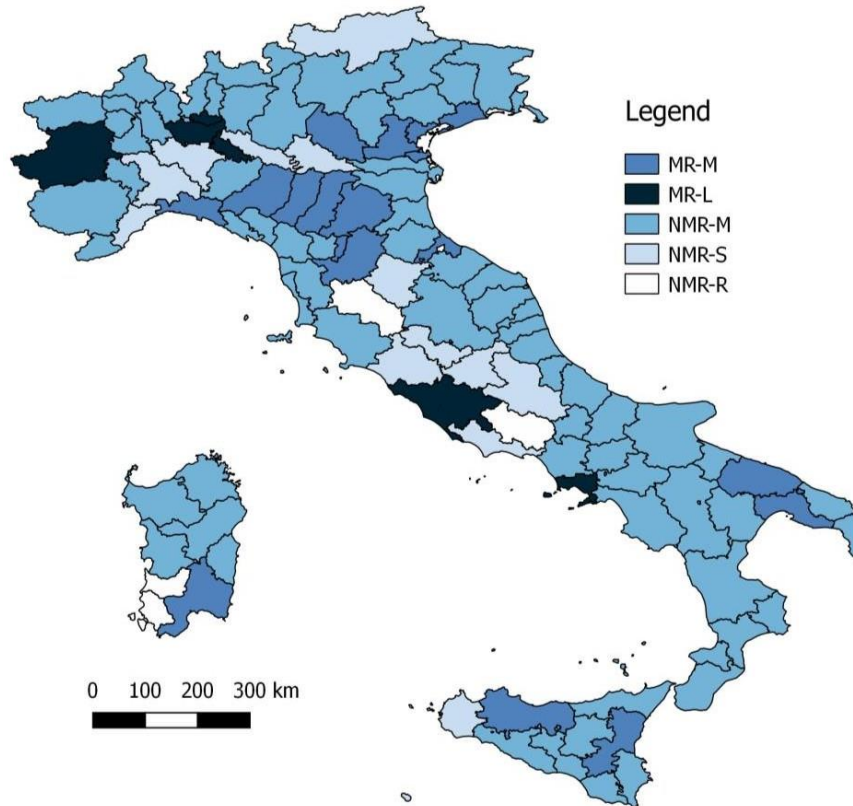- mixed approach (at least two combined approaches)

OECD Framework for rural areas definition

How "rural" is operationalised into the OECD Functional Urban Area

OECD territorial classification - Italy

Type	Population	Pop (%)	Regions	Regions (%)
MR	26,699,964	44.07%	22	20.00%
NMR	33,889,482	55.93%	88	80.00%
MR break-down				
MR-M	12,644,957	20.87%	6	5.45%
MR-L	14,055,007	23.20%	16	14.55%
Total	26,699,964	44.07%	22	20.00%
NMR break-down				
NMR-M	27,993,259	46.20%	71	64.55%
NMR-S	4,909,868	8.10%	13	11.82%
NMR-R	986,355	1.63%	4	3.64%
Total	33,889,482	55.93%	88	80.00%

Legend
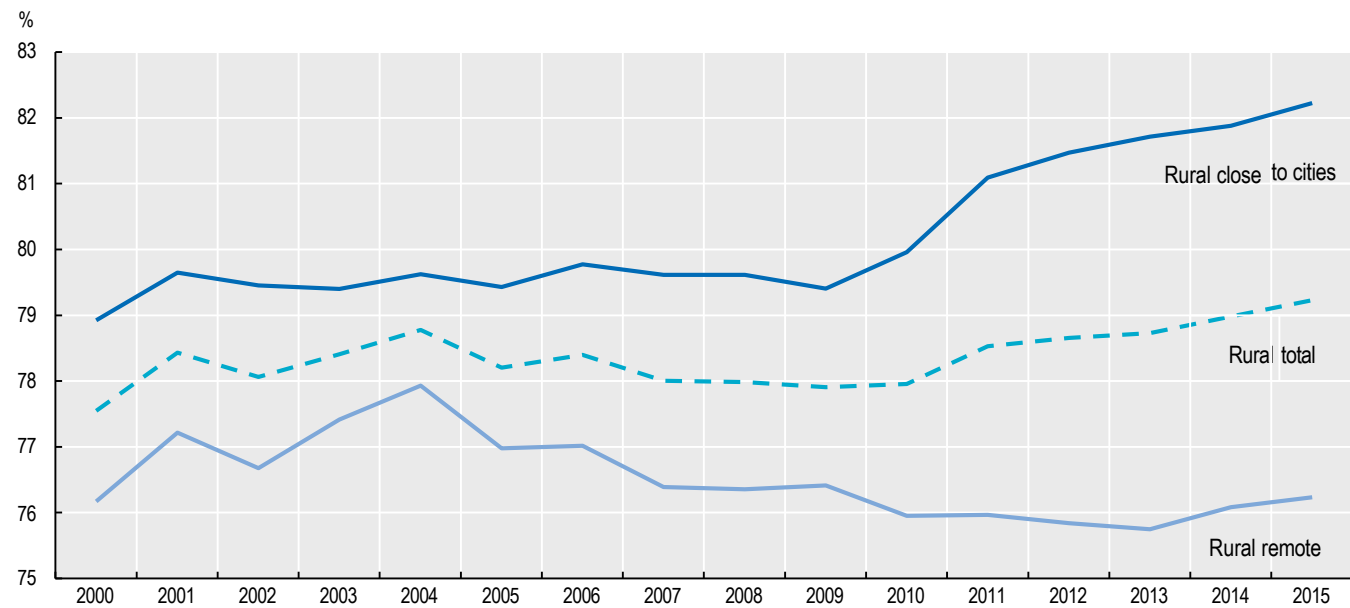- MR-M
- MR-L
- NMR-M
- NMR-S
- NMR-R

0 100 200 300 km

Metropolitan regions (MR)

- large metro (MR-L)

- metro (MR-M)

Non-metropolitan regions (NMR)

- with access to metro (NMR-M)

- with access to a small/medium city (NMR-S)

- remote (NMR-R)

"proximity allows stronger linkages between urban and rural places"

A series of relevant European projects

Rural areas and socio-economic transition

- SHERPA (H2020)
- RELOCAL (H2020)
- RURALISATION (H2020)

Rural-urban relations

- ROBUST (H2020)
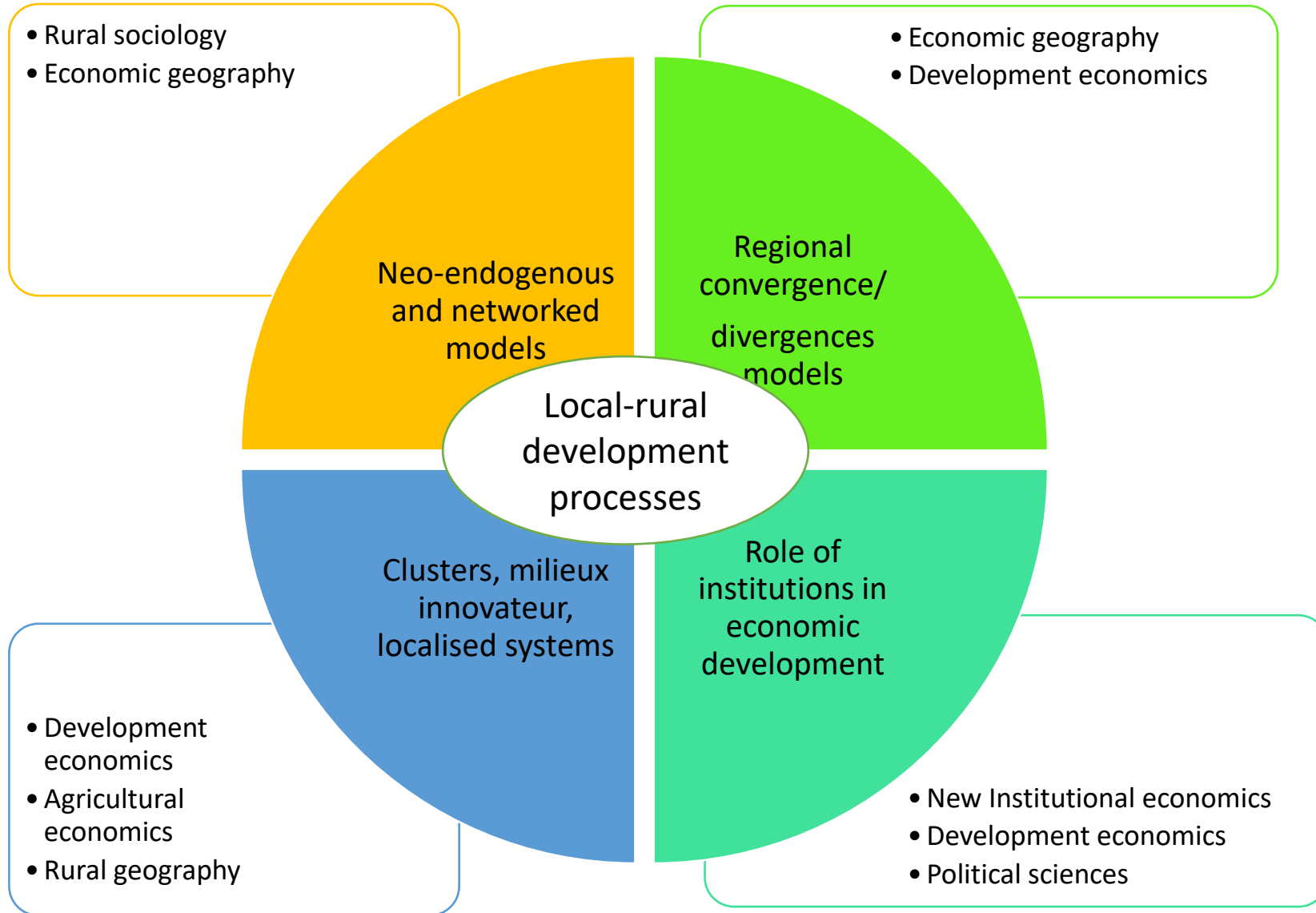
Peripheralisation and marginal rural areas

- PROFECY (ESPON)
- ESCAPE (ESPON)
- SIMRA (H2020)

Rural ecological/sustainable systems

- PEGASUS (H2020)
- PROVIDE (H2020)
- UNISECO (H2020)
- MOVING (H2020)

Research achievements as results of different disciplines

- Rural sociology
- Economic geography

- Economic geography
- Development economics

Neo-endogenous and networked models

Regional convergence/ divergences models

Local-rural development processes

Clusters, milieux innovateur, localised systems

Role of institutions in economic development

- Development economics
- Agricultural economics
- Rural geography

- New Institutional economics
- Development economics
- Political sciences

Some relevant research achievements which make more complex the analysis of development disparities

▶ polarisation across regions and NUTS3 units even higher

▶ Neo-endogenous theories: more autonomous functions of rural areas, deriving from the territorial/social capital

▶ Peripherality also involves intermediate, urban and metropolitan areas

▶ networks enabling connectivity between rural areas, adjacent urban areas and mainly beyond the geographical proximity
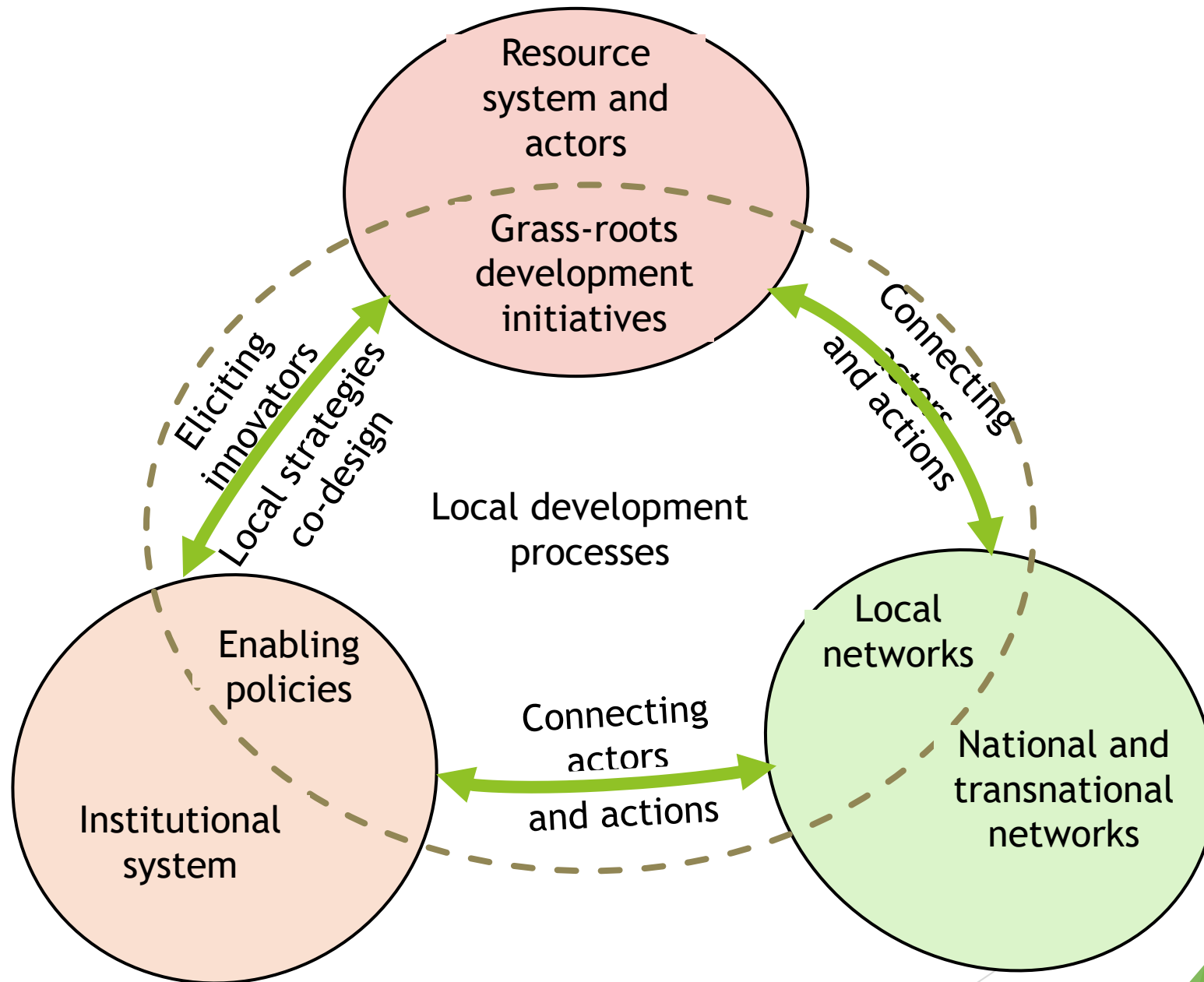
Different kind of networks go beyond the close geographical proximity

- **Knowledge and technological networks**: linkages with actors involved in the scientific and technical support, knowledge and information, organisation and marketing, and finally implementation of regulatory standards

- **Business networks** in rural areas to transmit information and promote innovation.

- broader connectivity and "virtual proximity" across the space are also relevant for remote rural areas.

- **Food-networks** that go beyond the territory where productions are based

- **Political and social networks:** the three most common reasons for using rural development networks were to obtain advice and information, identify sources of funding, and share local learning and experience (Miller-Wallace, UK, 2012)

Why the gap between official rural areas definitions and research achievements ?

- ▶ Insufficient pressures from policy makers for more detailed official definition of rural areas

- ▶ Official definitions based on too aggregated data

- ▶ a lack of data on several aspects at the right geographic scale, in particular on climate and environment performance and on social challenges, quality of life and well-being.

- ▶ Lack of efforts in connecting and interchange between different available sources

- ▶ Difficulty to achieve reliable and generalised information on networks

From agglomeration forces to a more complex frame of drivers

Key issues for research and policy

- move from a functional model to another approach based on the territorial capital endowments of rural areas, including access to essential services and networks

- developing a rural area concept based on the variety of functions that rural areas play

- fill persistent data gaps at the correct geographical scale (local in many cases), RUSTIK and GRANULAR (HEurope)

- focus on how different rural areas can face the different transitions (Long Term Vision for Rural Areas)

- Policy impact applied to a mix of different policies, including all CAP instruments (Rural Proofing)

Thanks so much!

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- If you can, please send any comment to:
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