

INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS AND INTER-FIRM CO-OPERATION: AN ANALYSIS OF STYLISED MODELS OF INTER-FIRM NETWORKS

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Abstract

The article discusses the institutional diversity of inter-firm networks, suggesting that they should be understood as institutional forms conditioned by the characteristics of technologies mobilised to make feasible the production in these environments. The analysis is organised in three stages. First, an analytical framework is developed, introducing some elements related to structural characteristics of these networks and to the determinants of network competitiveness. Then, some elements associated with the technological complexity of the environment are used to characterise different “stylised models” of inter-firm networks. Specifically, four kind of networks are identified: traditional networks, technology structured networks; complex technology networks and technology-based networks. The main characteristics of those “stylised models” are presented, emphasising the determinants of network competitiveness in each situation. Finally, a conclusive section identifies some investigation lines to be explored in the future.