

Title: Fuzzy boundaries, networks and firms' objectives. A framework of analysis

Author: Grazia Ietto-Gillies, South Bank University

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a framework for the analysis of business networks from the standpoint of the firm. A wider view of networks is taken than the purely inter-firm partnerships usually considered in the literature. The framework put forward has two main features. The first one relates to the analysis of the boundaries and networks from the perspective of three main dimensions: the organisational, locational and proprietary/asset ownership dimensions. Several typologies are considered within each of these dimensions. Correspondingly to the three dimensions, the typologies exhibit different degrees of internationalism or geographical or ownership fragmentation. The second feature relates to the analysis of the following elements which affect the choice of network configuration by the firm: strategic objectives; efficiency elements and scope for control. Several strategic and efficiency objectives are considered. The control elements are broken down into strategic and operational control. The possible use, advantages and limitations of the framework are analysed.

Key words: Firms, Networks; Organisation of production.

JEL: D21; D23