Exploring network configuration in service ecosystems. Evidence from Southern Italy

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This paper aims to explore the characteristics of network structure in service ecosystems, by adopting a social network analysis approach. More specifically, our paper tries to investigate which network configurations – open, closed or small words- characterize service ecosystems and which type which types of actors hold a central position in service ecosystem network. In order to answer to our research questions, we take empirical evidence from six industry-specific service ecosystems located in the Campania Region (South of Italy) by conducting a social network analysis (SNA), by taking data from the official PONREC platform (Programma Operativo Nazionale "Ricerca e Competitività" 2007-2013) to map relationships between the actors in all systems. Our findings revealed that in service ecosystems, network brokering positions are mostly undertaken by academic institutions, suggesting the efficacy of Regional Government programs in stimulating inter-organizational cooperation among actors of different nature. Secondly, it emerged a tendency toward an open and small world network structure. Our work contributes to the strand of literature focusing on the relational dimension of service ecosystems by proposing an empirical and quantitative approach to the study of their relational dimension.

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