

**Competition and Cooperation: the Networking Model of the Italian School System
The Emilia-Romagna case study**

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Recent years have witnessed a clear challenge to educational institutions and their commitments to lifetime learning. A basic tension marks these developments: first, a desire for progress, choice and dynamic change of the organization; secondly, a strong wish to build learning community and stability of values. In the essay we explore the possibility that a new form of community might emerge, offering a framework for trust in dynamic and diverse relationships, and reconciling greater degrees of solidarity, autonomy and learning improvement. In particular, the analysis of the Italian case with regards to networks of schools and other institutions offers the possibility to reflect on new models of network management and educational leadership.

Our empirical analysis is focused on the study of the relation among traits that explain the attitude of schools to work within networks made of different organizations, such as: local entities, school authorities, health care organizations, universities, other organizations. The research methodology is based on a national sample of 733 primary and secondary schools collected by INVALSI (National Institute for the Evaluation of the Educational System). Indicators related to the dataset are obtained by applying the Rasch Analysis and the Ordinary Least Square Method (OLS).

In particular, the Emilia Romagna case study is taken into account in order to test the specified model of relations in a significant area from an economic, politic, and social perspective.