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Social networks as a source of value in economic systems: theory and examples

Fernando Vega-Redondo

The talk will be divided in three parts. First, I will discuss four important instances where, indeed, the social network is the key basis for the generation of economic value. A first one will revolve around the notion of structural holes, a second around the so-called viral marketing, the third will explain how networks of collaboration affect entrepreneurship and R&D, and the fourth will center on economic globalization (i.e. what it means and its consequences). The second part of the talk will be mostly theoretical and discuss briefly an abstract (but hence versatile) model on the last phenomenon mentioned: globalization in a large and geographically disperse world. Finally, the third part of the talk will build upon some of the insights obtained from the aforementioned theoretical model to outline the main features of a very concrete project of economic development that is currently in preparation. This project aims at exploiting the communication possibilities afforded by modern IT technologies to bring the benefits of globalization and economic collaboration to a geographically disperse set of villages in rural Ghana.

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