Creativity and networks: addressing the role of individual cognition

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Venue: Seminar Room, Department of Economics and Management

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Abstract
The study of individual creativity has abundantly shed light on the advantages individuals derive from their relational capital. The debate has mostly investigated the kinds of ego-network structures and social ties, namely weak or strong ties, which provide information, support and other resources that individuals can tap into to increase their own creativity. Such a debate however has overlooked how individuals cognize their network, departing from a silent assumption that individuals know what relations they and other establish. Such an absence is particularly salient in light of mounting evidence of the incapacity of individuals to accurately cognize their network. What does that entail on the creativity of individuals? Does the accurate cognition of the social network positively influence individual creativity as individuals know where to get what they need? These questions drive our research. We administered a questionnaire to all employees and supervisors of a small company in the media industry and found that the belief of being embedded in a dense network of advice seeking relationships positively influences individual creativity. On the contrary, the accurate cognition of the social network does not help individuals be more creative. Taken together, our results show that creativity draws mostly on motivational and psychological aspects rather than a rational and calculative behavior. Our results contribute to the literatures of social network and creativity, and cognitive networks.