

The PhD project investigates how social ties shape the labor outcomes of migrants, with a focus on three key areas: workplaces, intimate partnerships and language skills. Drawing on Blau's concept of opportunity structures, it argues that migrants and natives face different conditions for forming social relationships and that these differences drive persistent gaps in labor market outcomes. The empirical analysis uses population-wide Austrian administrative data linking individuals to workplaces, households and income records over the period 2010–2022. The first part examines ethnic workplace segregation in Austria, constructing professional networks from co-worker relationships and using firm closures as an exogenous source of job displacement to identify how network characteristics causally affect labor market outcomes. The second part studies the role of committed intimate partnerships, using the demographic composition of local partner markets as an instrument for partnership type and exploiting the unique position of German migrants (who share Austria's language and partially culture but still lack locally embedded social ties) to isolate network effects from cultural assimilation. The third part investigates whether the returns to host-country language proficiency are gender-specific, instrumenting proficiency with the interaction of age at arrival, linguistic distance and a female dummy, and testing whether gender gaps in career outcomes reflect differential access to occupations or barriers within them. Together, the three parts build a unified account of how bonding and bridging social capital is formed and how it translates into economic outcomes.