

Call for papers for the organized session on

## The role of networks in education and labor markets

June 23-29 2025, Sunbelt, Sorbonne Université / Sciences-Po Paris



We look forward to receiving abstracts for **the panel on *The Role of Networks in Education and Labor Markets*, at Sunbelt 2025 in Paris, 23 - 29 June.**

Ever since Mark Granovetter's seminal contribution 'The Strength of Weak Ties,' the importance of social networks in labor markets has been evident. This organized session builds on Granovetter's foundational insight that connections play a critical role in labor markets. Discussions address how networks shape career and study choices, provide employment or hiring opportunities, affect wages, and employer behavior, and lead to occupational closure in labor markets.

**Personal networks affect study and career choices** and ultimately, also labor market outcomes. Friends, classmates and family members influence educational decisions, e.g. the transition from high school to university. We thus welcome contributions examining how social relations influence educational choices and pathways. Exploring how friendship networks impact study choices potentially also sheds light on mechanisms leading to labor market segregation.

Second, **social networks connect workers with potential employers**. Personal connections – or social capital – are important for initial job placement, but also for long-term career growth. Understanding how networks shape access to good quality employment and career advancement may also help us better understand income disparities. This session is also looking at these referral networks from employers' perspectives. Employers rely on referral networks to assess candidates to mitigate information asymmetries present in hiring. In addition, employers coping with uncertainty in markets may imitate other employers' strategies.

Third, the session **is interested in better understanding occupational closure**, investigating how employers and associations cooperate to establishing and maintaining occupational boundaries. Topics may cover the role of professional associations, credentialing practices, and network-driven gatekeeping in shaping access to occupation, and the implications of occupational closure for labor market competition and social mobility.

Finally, the session **aims to address the transformative impact of online platforms like LinkedIn, Upwork on labor markets**. Moreover, digital forms of working allow collaboration to take place across space and require new forms of connections. Digital platforms and forms of working have revolutionized how workers and employers connect, enabling broader market access, but also bear the risk of increasing inequalities.

**Abstracts can be submitted following this link:**

[Sunbelt](#)

**Deadline for submission of abstracts: February 20th, 2025**

Any questions regarding the panel **The Role of Networks in Education and Labor Markets** can be directed to Annatina Aerne (Trinity College Dublin [aernea@tcd.ie](mailto:aernea@tcd.ie)), Mattia Vacchiano (University of Geneva, [mattia.vacchiano@unige.ch](mailto:mattia.vacchiano@unige.ch)), or Maria Prosperina Vitale (Università degli Studi Salerno, [mvitale@unisa.it](mailto:mvitale@unisa.it)).