

Ahmet Gulek CV

<https://ahmetgulek.github.io/>
agulek@stanford.edu

Academic Positions

Stanford Immigration Policy Lab

Postdoc under the supervision of Ran Abramitzky and Jens Heinmueller

Sept. 2025 – Present

Palo Alto, CA, USA

Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology – MIT

PhD in Economics

Advisors: Joshua Angrist, Daron Acemoglu, Amy Finkelstein

Aug. 2019 – May 2025

Cambridge, MA, USA

M.A. Economics, Koc University

2019

B.S. Mathematics; B.A. Economics, Koc University

2017

Lycée de Galatasaray

2013

Fields of Interest

Labor Economics, Applied Econometrics, Development Economics, Spatial Economics, Public Economics

Published Papers

Driving While Hungry: The Effect of Fasting on Traffic Accidents (*Journal of Development Economics*, May 2024)

Working Papers

Effects of Immigrants on Non-host Regions: Evidence from the Syrian Refugees in Turkey (Job Market Paper)

Abstract: This paper investigates how immigration-induced wage shocks can propagate beyond the regions receiving immigrants through the production network. Using the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey as a quasi-experiment and the near universe of domestic firm-to-firm transaction data from VAT records, we show that the immigration shock propagates both forward and backward along the supply chain. Firms in non-host regions who directly or indirectly buy from host regions demand more labor. Firms who sell to host regions weakly increase their sales. Estimates imply an elasticity of substitution between labor and intermediate goods of 0.76 and an elasticity of substitution of nearly 1 between intermediates. Counterfactual analyses show that the spillover effects on non-host regions are economically meaningful when the host regions are central nodes of the domestic trade network. For example, a 1% increase in labor supply in Istanbul decreases real wages in Istanbul by 0.56% and increases real wages in the average non-host city by 0.38%

Formal Effects of Informal Labor: Evidence from the Syrian refugees in Turkey (submitted)

Abstract: I study the effects of Syrian refugees, who are denied work permits and thus can only work informally, on Turkish firms and workers. Using travel distance as an instrument for refugee location, I show that low-skill natives lose both informal and formal salaried jobs. I document two mechanisms: formal firms reduce their formal labor demand and new firms do not enter the formal economy. Estimates imply an elasticity of substitution of 10 between formal and informal workers. Counterfactual exercises predict that granting refugees work permits would have created up to 120,000 formal jobs in the economy through higher informal wages.

Synthetic IV estimation in panels (with Jaume Vives-i-Bastida)

Abstract: We propose a Synthetic Instrumental Variables (SIV) estimator for panel data that combines the strengths of instrumental variables and synthetic controls to address unmeasured confounding. We derive conditions under which SIV is consistent and asymptotically normal, even when the standard IV estimator is not. Motivated by the finite sample properties of our estimator, we introduce an ensemble estimator that simultaneously addresses multiple sources of bias and provide a permutation-based inference procedure. We demonstrate the effectiveness of our methods through a calibrated simulation exercise, two shift-share empirical applications, and an application in digital economics that includes both observational data and data from a randomized control trial. In our primary empirical application, we examine the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on Turkish labor markets. Here, the SIV estimator reveals significant effects that the standard IV does not capture. Similarly, in our digital economics application, the SIV estimator successfully recovers the experimental estimates, whereas the standard IV does not.

Formal Effects of Informal Labor Supply and Work Permits: Evidence from Venezuelan Refugees in Colombia (with Dany Bahar and Isabel di Tella)

Abstract: Whether refugees should have work permits is an active policy debate. We formalize the relevant trade-offs of providing work permits to refugees and test them empirically. Our setting is the Venezuelan refugee crisis in Colombia. The keys to our analysis are (1) refugees arrive without work permits initially, and (2) Colombia started granting work permits to Venezuelans in waves. Using a shift-share design and relaxing the exogeneity of shares assumption by employing Synthetic IV à la Gulek and Vives (2023), we find that the arrival of informal refugees displaced formal and informal natives in salaried jobs, which suggests high substitutability between informal and formal labor in production. Work permits allow middle to high-skill refugees to find formal jobs and work closer to their skill level, reducing the mismatch in the economy. This comes at a cost to some natives, who lose their formal jobs, and at a benefit to others, who observe increases in salaries.

Occupational Heterogeneity of Child Penalty in the United States (submitted)

Abstract: I investigate how parenthood reshapes employment patterns across occupations and how this occupational heterogeneity contributes to earning disparities. Using a novel rotating panel approach to estimating child penalties, I document that both men and women change occupations. The well-established null effect of fatherhood hides that men's employment rate decreases in some occupations like finance and increases in others like construction. Women leave most occupations but select into occupations with part-time options. These occupational changes explain one-third of the income penalty for women, most of the income penalty for men, and most of the wage penalty for both genders.

Work in Progress

How does remote work impact the gender inequality in the labor market? Evidence from the United States (with Christina Langer)

Draft coming soon.

Awards, Grant, and Scholarships

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| Best Paper Presented by a Graduate Student Award, International Association for Applied Econometrics Conference | 2024 |
| MIT Hausman Dissertation Fellowship | 2023 |
| MIT Global Seed Fund (\$26,000) | 2023 |
| MIT Shultz Fund | 2022-2024 |
| MIT Center for International Studies Summer Study Fellowship | 2022-2023 |
| Institute for Humane Studies | 2023-2025 |
| Unicredit Foundation Crivelli Europe Scholarship | 2019 |

Teaching

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| 14.662 Labor Economics 2 (graduate) | 2025 |
| 14.41 Public Finance & Public Policy (undergraduate) | 2024 |
| 14.01 Principles of Microeconomics (undergraduate) | 2023 |
| 14.01 Principles of Microeconomics (undergraduate) | 2021 |
| 14.64 / 14.661 Labor Economics (undergraduate/graduate) | 2021 |

Professional Activities

Refereeing

American Economic Review: Insights, Journal of Development Economics, European Economic Review, The Economic Journal

Seminars and Conferences

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| Barcelona Summer Forum Migration, CEPR-Rockwool Annual Labor Symposium, Society of Labor Economists, Econometric Society World Meeting, Lindau Nobel Meeting, 18th AFD-World Bank Migration and Development Conference (planned), AEA/ASSA 2026 (planned) | 2025 |
| International Association of Applied Econometrics, Society of Labor Economists, Identity & Conflict Lab at Yale, American Causal Inference Conference, IZA workshop on Labor Markets and Innovation during Times of War and Reconstruction, Bilkent University, Koc University, Ted University | 2023-2024 |

Service

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| Organizer, MIT Labor Lunch | 2021-2022 |
| Founder & Captain of MIT Economics basketball team | 2019-2025 |

Activities, and Interests

Languages: Turkish (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate)

Interests: Basketball, Argentine Tango, Salsa, Fitness, Chess