

Ayah Bohsali

PhD Economist specializing in Development and Urban and Spatial economics.
Date of Birth: 17/04/1998 — Nationality: Lebanese American
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<https://ayahbohsali.github.io/>

Education

- **Universitat Pompeu Fabra**, Barcelona, Spain — 09/2020 – 06/2026
PhD Candidate in Economics
PhD Thesis: *Conflict, Forced Displacement, and Growth: Evidence from Uganda*
- **Barcelona Graduate School of Economics**, Barcelona, Spain — 09/2019 – 07/2020
Master Program in Economics, Degree awarded by Universitat Pompeu Fabra and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
- **American University of Beirut (AUB)**, Beirut, Lebanon — 09/2016 – 06/2019
B.A in Economics, GPA: 4.0/4.0, Graduated with High Distinction

Professional Experience

- **Centre de Recerca en Economía Internacional (CREI)**, Barcelona, Spain
Research Assistant — 07/2022 – 12/2024
Co-authored the working paper *Team Size and Performance: Experimental Evidence from India* (joint with G. Barboni and E. Giannone), contributed to empirical design, data analysis and writing.
- **Universitat Pompeu Fabra**, Barcelona, Spain
Research Assistant — 07/2021 – 09/2021
- Co-authored the working paper *Short-term Effects of Air Pollution on Adolescents' Economic and Social Preferences* (joint with J. Apesteguia, X. Basagaña, D. Puig, and H. Llavador)
- **Instructor and Teaching Assistant (TA) Experience**
 - TA for undergraduate Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Labor Economics and Data Analysis — 10/2021 - 04/2025
 - Master Project Advisory TA (Barcelona School of Economics) — 03/2023 - 07/2024
Managed 5 groups of 5 people (2023) and 8 groups of 5 people (2024) in developing research ideas and writing their Master's Thesis.
 - Instructor: co-developed and taught Introduction to Programming in R for Master's students — 09/2023 - 10/2023
- **UNDP**, Beirut, Lebanon
Economic Development Intern — 05/2019 – 07/2019
 - Drafted economic reports and briefs on the Lebanese economy.
 - Supported negotiations on equitable tax policy reform.
 - Conducted research on social and economic affairs, leading to key policy recommendations.
- **Amel Association**, Beirut, Lebanon
Research Intern — 01/2018 – 04/2018
Researched market assessment and entry strategies for the Soap Cooperative project, interviewed key stakeholders.

Conferences and Workshops

Presented own research externally at

- Upcoming:* Cities & Development Workshop (Harvard); World Bank–KDI School 6th Development Impact Conference. 2025:
- CEMIR Junior Economist Workshop on Migration Research — ifo Institute, Munich
 - Oxford Development Economics Workshop 2025 — St Catherine's College, Oxford
 - European Economic Association Congress — Bordeaux School of Economics
 - 1st Workshop of Early Career Women in Economic Geography and Spatial Economics — London School of Economics
 - Urban Economics Association Meeting — Humboldt University, Berlin
 - CSAE Conference: Economic Development in Africa — St Catherine's College, Oxford

2024: 49th Simposio de la Asociación Española de Economía; Urban Economics Association Meeting, Copenhagen;
BSE Ph.D. Jamboree.

Co-organized:

- 2023–2024: CREi International Lunch Seminar.
- 2022–2023: UPF Applied Economics Student Workshop.

Working Papers

Conflict, Forced Displacement and Growth: Evidence from Uganda

Abstract: I study the long run economic impact of a large-scale forced displacement policy in Uganda that took place between 1996 and 2006 during the civil war. This policy forcibly relocated approximately 90% of the affected districts' population into Internal Displacement Camps for up to ten years. The mass displacement led to a lasting increase in population density in the localities hosting camps, which persisted for nearly a decade after people were free to return to their villages of origin. Harmonizing novel administrative data, I document that the forced displacement episode led to a permanent reallocation of labor across space and sectors, increasing schooling among younger generations and triggering a shift from agriculture to non-agriculture employment. I show that the long-term effects of forced displacement are stronger in places where camps lasted longer, and had higher population size. I develop a general equilibrium model that rationalizes these results.

Team Size and Performance: Experimental Evidence from India

Summary: We run the first randomized controlled trial where 1,582 women were randomly assigned to 206 groups of different size and encouraged to engage in a production process. We find smaller teams to perform better than larger teams and that technology diffuses non-linearly with team size. Network analysis shows smaller teams are more centralized than medium and larger. To estimate the welfare effects of the intervention, we propose to build a network model with a heterogeneous group size and coordination costs.

Gender and Consumption Inequality

Summary: This paper analyzes consumption differences between single men and women using the Consumer Expenditure Survey. I establish a new set of facts: first, that overall consumption expenditures are lower for women than for men and that the gender consumption gap behaves similarly to the gender wage gap. Second, that the gender consumption gap narrows with income, as does consumption heterogeneity by goods type. Lastly, I show that whereas poorer women hold less liquid assets than poorer men, this is not the case for women with income above the 40th percentile. A two-period model shows that income differences and parenthood are key drivers of these patterns and help explain their economic implications.

Languages & IT Skills

- Languages: English (Native), Arabic (Native), Spanish (Advanced), French (Intermediate), Italian (Beginner)
- IT Skills: Python, R, STATA, Julia, MATLAB, Microsoft Office, QGIS, ARCGIS

Achievements

- Winner of Suad Sabbagh Sanioura Memorial Prize — 05/2019
- IMF Fund Challenge Winner — 04/2019

Interests

Theater (acting and directing experience), team sports, playing the guitar and piano, reading fiction. Community engagement, having volunteered as an English tutor for adult Syrian refugees with Jusoor NGO in Beirut.

References

Professor **Elisa Giannone** (advisor)
CREi, BSE & UPF
Email: egiannone@crei.cat

Professor **Jaume Ventura** (advisor)
CREi, BSE & UPF
Email: jventura@crei.cat

Professor **Gianmarco León-Ciliotta**
UPF, BSE & IPEG
Email: gianmarco.leon@upf.edu