

Elif Erbay

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eliferbay.github.io

Istanbul University, Department of Economics

eliferbay.econ@gmail.com

Research Interests

Education, Migration, Gender, Inequality

Academic Positions

Research Assistant, Istanbul University

Oct 2018 - present

Research Assistant, Dogus University

Sept 2017 - Sept 2018

Education

Visiting Fellow, UNU-WIDER

Fall 2025

Ph.D. in Economics of Education, University of Zurich

2024 - 2025

8th Course Programme for Doctoral Students in Economics of Education

Ph.D. in Economics, Istanbul University

2020 - 2025

Thesis Title: Three Essays on Intergenerational Educational Mobility and Inequality

M.A. in Economics, Bogazici University

2017 - 2020

Thesis Title: The Effect of Syrian Refugees on the School Enrollment of Youth in Turkey

B.A. in Economics, Bocconi University (Erasmus program)

2015 - 2016

B.A. in Economics, Bogazici University (Double major)

2014 - 2017

B.A. in Management, Bogazici University

2012 - 2017

Publications

"Prolonged Guesthood: How Syrian Refugees Shaped Turkish Politics?" (2025) *joint with E. Kübra Usta*, Economics & Politics.

"Women Empowerment through Compulsory Schooling Reform: The Case of Türkiye" (2024) *joint with E. Kübra Usta*, in Pursuing Sustainable Development Goals, IU Press.

"Syrian Refugees and Human Capital Accumulation of Native Children in Turkey" (2023) *joint with Murat Kırdar and Selcen Çakır*, Journal of Human Capital, 17(4), 557-592.

"The Effect of Covid-19 on Primary School Enrollments: Evidence from Turkey" (2023) in Post Covid Era: Future of Economies and World Order, IU Press.

Projects

"CA21143 - Transnational Family Dynamics in Europe (TraFaDy)", supported by COST (2022-2026)

"224K648 - The Effect of Syrian Refugees on Local Elections in Turkey: Analysis of Redistributive Policies", supported by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (2024-2026)

Working Papers

"All the 'Missing' Ladies: Attribution Bias in Candidate Selection after Electoral Setbacks" *joint with Selcen Çakır and Konstantinos Matakos, forthcoming in **Electoral Studies***

Abstract: How do parties update candidate lists after electoral setbacks, and what does this mean for women's representation? We exploit Turkey's 2015 back-to-back parliamentary elections as quasi-experimental leverage and implement a difference-in-differences design that compares the governing Justice and Development Party (JDP) to the Republican People's Party (RPP), whose March 2015 primaries largely fixed the district-level gender composition of slates. Falling short of a single-party majority in June was followed by a roughly 40% contraction in the JDP's women candidates and a disproportionate downgrading at electable ranks, interrupting a decade-long upward trend. The contraction is concentrated in conservative strongholds. A rank-weighted decomposition shows that net removals, rather than simple demotions, account for most of the decline; changes outside electable ranks are smaller and imprecisely estimated. Event-time estimates indicate the shock produced a one-off adjustment that reverted by 2018. Taken together, the evidence is most consistent with a mix of statistical discrimination where seats are at stake and attribution bias that overshoots, illustrating how elite responses under compressed timelines can quickly erode representational gains in closed-list systems.

"The Effect of Gender Norms on Intergenerational Mobility in Türkiye"

Abstract: This paper investigates whether and to what extent local gender norms causally shape intergenerational educational mobility of women in Türkiye. I combine three waves of Turkish Demographic and Health Surveys (TDHS) between 2008-2018 with retrospective migration histories and construct a region \times year indicator of gender norms for the period 1993-2018. The analysis focuses on daughters aged 21-49 whose mothers attained at most primary school and who migrated internally between ages 12-29. Intergenerational mobility is measured using mother-daughter educational attainment. The empirical strategy compares mobility outcomes of daughters who move across regions at different ages, and exploits variation in exposure to local gender norms generated by differences in age at move. The results show that moving to a more gender-egalitarian region at key schooling margins increases bottom-to-up mobility linearly in exposure time, whereas a placebo outcome – bottom persistence – exhibits no meaningful effect. Heterogeneity analyses indicate that these gains are driven by moves into more egalitarian destinations, while moves into more patriarchal regions do not generate symmetric losses, consistent with the idea that earlier exposure to egalitarian norms is difficult to undo. Additional evidence shows that daughters who move to destinations with smaller gender-norm gaps between origin and destination – i.e., lower cultural distance – experience larger increases in upward mobility, in line with an adaptation mechanism.

Work in Progress

"The Evolution and Distribution of Intergenerational Educational Mobility in Türkiye"

"The Effect of Maternal Education on the Early Childhood Development: Causal Evidence from Turkey"

"Religious Attire and Political Representation: A Study of the Headscarf Ban in Turkey," *joint with Selcen Çakır and Konstantinos Matakos*

Workshops and Conferences

2024: Applied Economics Conference (Serbia), Turkish Economic Association 31st Conference on Economics (Turkey), Gebze Technical University Departmental Seminar (Turkey), Turkish-German University Economics Conference (Turkey)

2023: Workshop on Difference-in-Differences (*Instructor: P. Sant'Anna*); University of Warwick CAGE Summer School (UK), Turkish Economic Association 30th Conference on Economics (Turkey)

2022: Workshop on Difference-in-Difference with Panel Data (*Instructor: J.M. Wooldridge*); International Growth Center Virtual Ph.D. Course (*Modules on Education; Credit, insurance, and risk; and Migration*)

Fellowships and Grants

The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, Ph.D. Scholarship	2021 - present
The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, M.A. Scholarship	2018-2020
Bogazici University, High Honor Degree in Graduation	2017

Languages

English (advanced), Turkish (native), Italian and Spanish (beginner)

Computational Skills

Stata, R, Python, and L^AT_EX

References

Prof. Emine Tahsin, Istanbul University, Department of Economics	eminetahsin@gmail.com
Prof. Murat Kırdar, Koc University, Department of Economics	mkirdar@ku.edu.tr
Assoc. Prof. Tolga Aksoy, Yıldız Technical University, Department of Economics	toaksoy@yildiz.edu.tr
Assist. Prof. Selcen Çakır, Bogazici University, Department of Economics	selcencakir1@gmail.com