

MERVE BETUL GOKCE

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EDUCATION

Ph.D.

Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey
Department of Economics

2024 (Expected)
Integrated Program

Exchange Student

Delft University of Technology, Netherlands
Faculty of Technology, Policy and Management

Spring 2015
Master-Level Courses

Bachelor of Science

Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey
Department of Industrial Engineering

2011 - 2016

RESEARCH & TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP

Bogazici University, Department of International Trade

2019 - Present

- INTT 527 Research Methods (M.A.)
- INTT 227-228 Applied Statistic I & II (B.A.)
- INTT 125 Information Systems For Trade (B.A.)

Bogazici University, Department of Economics

2017 - 2018

- EC 101 Introduction to Microeconomics (B.A.)
- CMPE 150 Introduction to Computing for Economics (B.A.)

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Applied Microeconomics, Labor and Demographic Economics, Migration, Gender and Violence

COMPUTER SKILLS

STATA, R, Python, Matlab, SPSS, L^AT_EX, Microsoft Office

WORKING PAPERS

Intergenerational Power Shift and the Rise of Non-arranged Marriages Among Refugees
with Andrew D. Foster and Murat G. Kirdar [[Paper Link](#)] (Revision Requested from "Demography")

The experience of war and refugee status can alter intra-family dynamics and therefore have implications for family formation, including marriage. This study investigates marriage patterns among Syrian refugees in Turkey. Utilizing the nationally representative 2018 Turkey Demographic Health Survey (TDHS), we conduct a duration analysis of marriage outcomes among Syrian refugees in Turkey tracking women throughout their residence in prewar Syria, postwar Syria, and Turkey. We find that early marriage is more prominent among refugees who were unmarried at the time of migration than those married before migration; the mean marriage age drops from 19.6 in prewar Syria to 19.1 in postwar Syria and 18.1 in Turkey. Using the TDHS and prewar Syrian surveys, we show that this finding aligns

with the observed declines in household income and young women's opportunity cost of marriage. Our duration analysis also reveals a notable shift from traditional arranged marriages to more modern forms among refugees in Turkey. An intergenerational power shift may drive the shift toward non-arranged marriages. After arrival in Turkey, parental wealth and employment decline. In contrast, Syrian youth have higher age-adjusted employment rates than in prewar Syria. Moreover, for demographic groups with stronger intergenerational power shifts, non-arranged marriages increase more.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Effects of Civil War and Forced Migration on Intimate Partner Violence among Syrian Refugee Women in Jordan with Murat G. Kirdar [[Paper Link](#)]

This study investigates the impact of the Syrian civil war and refugee status on the risk of physical intimate partner violence (IPV) among Syrian women in Jordan, a country hosting a significant refugee population. We analyze data from the 2017-18 Jordan Population and Family Health Survey, which includes a nationally representative sample of Syrian refugees. Using the information on the timing of first violence after marriage within a discrete-time duration analysis, we examine the hazard rates of IPV exposure across different periods: prewar Syria, postwar Syria, and refugee status. Our findings demonstrate that war and refugee status increase the risk of IPV, with the most substantial impact observed in the initial years after marriage. Furthermore, the rise in IPV after the refugees' arrival in Jordan diminishes over time. The study identifies the economic strain resulting from lower household wealth and refugee husbands' employment losses as a driver of the rise in IPV. In addition, we explore whether the civil war and refugee status alter marriage patterns, which could contribute to the observed effects on IPV. Both the civil war and forced migration lower the marriage age and increase the incidence of non-cousin marriages at the expense of cousin marriages - both of which are associated with a higher risk of IPV. However, we observe no changes in age and education gaps between spouses or in polygamous marriages, which could also contribute to the observed increase in IPV.

The Effect of Increasing Rental Prices on Student Mobility Patterns in Turkish Higher Education

During Turkey's high inflation period starting in 2021, underpinned by significant shifts in governmental policies, rental prices experienced a dramatic rise. This research aims to determine whether and to what extent these escalating costs have affected the decisions of over one million students to relocate to other cities for university, from among the three million annual university entrance exam participants. Utilizing comprehensive datasets crawled from the Higher Education Council's Atlas, I have compiled seven-year panel data, capturing nearly 9,000 university departments each year. It evaluates the openness ratio of undergraduate programs to students from other provinces, considering student origins, inflation-adjusted rental indices from real estate databases, and statistics on dormitory capacities and student aid. The model is designed to capture regional and temporal variations in rental prices, which have seen a tenfold increase in major cities versus a 2-3-fold rise in smaller cities. The study isolates the potential impacts of rental prices on student mobility patterns by introducing fixed effects for department, university, province, and year-specific factors. This study paves the way for comparative analyses and policy formulations in other locales grappling with the intersection of economic factors and educational migration.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS/SUMMER SCHOOLS

- Turkish Economic Association, The 30th Conference on Economics, Antalya-Turkey, November 2023
- CSS Summer School, "Recent Advances in Computational Social Sciences Methods", ISI Foundation, Turin-Italy, July 2023
- European Commission, MSCA-IF-2020 Global Fellowship Project, Workshop on the Economics of the Refugee Migration, Bogazici University, June 2023

- Social ComQuant Workshops, "Conflict and Forced Migration: Social Media as Event Data", Koc University, March 2023
- European Commission, MSCA-IF-2020 Global Fellowship Project Meeting, An Analysis of Educational, Labor Market, Demographic and Health Outcomes of Syrian Refugees in Turkey, Hacettepe University, January 2023
- International Istanbul Economics Research Conference, Istanbul University, November 2022

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

The Council of Higher Education 100/2000 Doctoral Scholarship 2017 - 2019

- Support for doctoral research in thematic priority fields in Turkey

Honor Degree 2016

- For the students whose GPA is 3.00 or above in undergraduate in Bogazici University

Achievement Scholarship of Turkish Prime Ministry 2011 - 2016

- For top 100 students in University Entrance Exam

PERSONAL

Date of Birth: 22.01.1994

Citizenship: Turkish

Languages: Turkish (Native), English (Advanced, TOEFL iBT: 103/120)

REFERENCES

Murat G. Kirdar, Department of Economics, Bogazici University, murat.kirdar@boun.edu.tr

Arhan S. Ertan, Department of International Trade, Bogazici University, arhan.ertan@boun.edu.tr

Selcen Cakir, Department of Economics, Bogazici University, selcen.cakir@boun.edu.tr