MIT Economics

AHMET GULEK

OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION
Stanford Immigration Policy Lab
agulek@stanford.edu
agulek@mit.edu
https://ahmetgulek.github.io

HOME CONTACT INFORMATION
Mobile: 773-595-7480

MIT PLACEMENT OFFICER
Professor Stephen Morris
semorris@mit.edu
617-253-5193

MIT PLACEMENT ADMINISTRATOR
Mrs. Shannon Robinson
shmay@mit.edu
617-324-5857

DOCTORAL STUDIES

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
PhD, Economics, May 2025
DISSERTATION:
"Effects of Immigration on Labor Markets: Theory, Methods, and Evidence"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE
Joshua Angrist, Daron Acemoglu, Amy Finkelstein

REFERENCES

Professor Joshua Angrist
MIT Department of Economics
77 Massachusetts Avenue, E52-436
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-253-8909
angrist@mit.edu

Professor Daron Acemoglu
MIT Department of Economics
77 Massachusetts Avenue, E52-446
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-253-1927
daron@mit.edu

Professor Ran Abramitzky
Stanford Department of Economics
579 Jane Stanford Way
Stanford, CA 94305
650-723-9276
ranabr@stanford.edu

Professor Jens Hainmueller
Stanford Department of Political Science
Encina Hall West, 616 Jane Stanford Way
Stanford, CA 94305
jhain@stanford.edu

PRIOR EDUCATION

Koc University
Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Bachelor of Science in Mathematics — 2017
Master of Arts in Economics — 2019

CITIZENSHIP Turkish **GENDER:** Male

LANGUAGES Turkish (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate)

FIELDS

Primary: Labor Economics (Immigration, Gender, Minimum Wage, Inequality)
Secondary: Development Economics (Informality), International Trade (Production Networks, Spatial), Causal Inference

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

14.662 Labor Economics 2 (graduate) 2025
Teaching Assistant to Professors David Autor and Nina Roussille
14.41 Public Finance & Public Policy (undergraduate) 2024
Teaching Assistant to Professor Jon Gruber
14.01 Principles of Microeconomics (undergraduate) 2023
Head Teaching Assistant to Professor Sara Ellison
14.01 Principles of Microeconomics (undergraduate) 2021
Teaching Assistant to Professor Jon Gruber
14.64 / 14.661 Labor Economics (undergraduate/graduate) 2021
Teaching Assistant to Professors Joshua Angrist and Heather Sarsons

RELEVANT POSITIONS

Postdoctoral Fellow, Stanford Immigration Policy Lab 2025-present
Supervisors: Ran Abramitzky and Jens Hainmueller
Affiliate, RFBerlin
Guest Researcher, ifo Institute 2026-2028
Research Assistant to Professor Joshua Angrist 2022-2024

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

LSE Remote and Distributed Work Research Initiative Grant ($15,000) 2026
Institute for Humane Studies (ten awards, $33,350 total) 2022-2026
International Association for Applied Econometrics Conference 2024
Best Paper Presented by a Graduate Student Award
for Synthetic IV estimation in panels (joint with Jaume Vives-i-Bastida)
MIT Shultz Fund (five awards, $20,100 total) 2021-2024
MIT Hausman Dissertation Fellowship 2023
MIT Global Seed Fund ($26,600) 2024
MIT Center for International Studies Fellowship ($7,500) 2022-2023
UniCredit Foundation Crivelli Europe Scholarship (€65,000) 2019-2021

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee: American Economic Review: Insights, Journal of Development Economics, European Economic Review, The Economic Journal, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Journal of Health Economics

Conferences and Presentations:
2027: AEA/ASSA (session organizer and presenter), UC Riverside (Economics Department Seminar, planned)
2026: AEA/ASSA, Global Development Research Symposium (poster), Society of Labor Economists (poster), UC Davis (Global Migration Center Seminar), Nottingham GEP Workshop, 3rd European Workshop on the Macroeconomic Implications of Migration (Rome), European Economic Association (Dublin), European Meeting of the Econometric Society (Dublin), NBER Economics of Talent Conference, 5th Workshop on the

Macroeconomic Implications of Migration (Dallas Fed), LSE Remote and Distributed Work Research Initiative Workshop
2025: Barcelona Summer Forum Migration, CEPR-Rockwool Annual Labor Symposium, Society of Labor Economists World Meeting, Econometric Society World Congress, Lindau Nobel Meeting, 18th AFD-World Bank Migration and Development Conference
2023-2024: 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

Service: Organizer, AEA/ASSA 2027 session; Organizer, MIT Labor Lunch (2021-2022); Founder & Captain, MIT Economics basketball team (2019-2025)

PUBLICATIONS

"Driving While Hungry: The Effect of Fasting on Traffic Accidents"
Journal of Development Economics, May 2024.

I study the impact of hunger on traffic accidents by exploiting the fasting that is religiously mandated during the month of Ramadan. Identification comes from working hours not being adjusted during Ramadan in Turkey. I find that driving while fasting at rush hour is associated with a significant increase in road traffic accidents. Using existing survey evidence on fasting rates in Turkey, I conclude that hunger induced by fasting increases the probability of an accident by 25%, which is smaller than the effect of driving while intoxicated, but larger than the effect of mild sleep deprivation.

"Formal Effects of Informal Labor and Work Permits: Evidence from Venezuelan Refugees in Colombia" *(with Dany Bahar and Isabel Di Tella)*
Journal of Labor Economics, forthcoming.

We analyze the Venezuelan refugee crisis in Colombia to separate the labor market effects of informal immigration and work permits. Using Synthetic Instrumental Variables, we find informal immigration displaced natives from both informal and formal sectors, implying high substitutability between worker types (elasticity ≈ 10). A triple difference-in-differences shows work permits reduced competition in the informal sector and raised it in the formal sector. Our model implies this created 22,830 formal jobs and roughly $40 million in annual tax revenue. Results suggest work permits generate productivity spillovers by reducing skill mismatch, providing economic rationale for immigrant integration policies.

"Where Should Refugees Go? Production Networks and the Welfare Gains from Immigrant Placement" ***AEA Papers and Proceedings, in preparation (May 2027).*** Short paper based on the job market paper.

RESEARCH PAPERS

"Effects of Immigrants on Non-host Regions: Evidence from Syrian Refugees in Turkey" (Job Market Paper 1) *Submitted*

I study how local immigration shocks impact labor markets and firms across the economy through production networks. Using Turkey's Syrian refugee crisis and firm-to-firm VAT data, I show that firms buying from host regions demand more labor, while those selling to host regions increase sales. Estimates imply an elasticity of substitution between labor and intermediates of 0.79 and across intermediates of 1.06. Spillover magnitudes depend critically on network centrality and immigrants' skills. A 1% labor supply increase in Istanbul decreases local real wages by 0.56% while increasing non-host wages by 0.38%. For non-central regions, identical shocks reduce local wages by 1% with negligible spillovers. Similarly, high-skill immigrants create larger spillovers and, therefore, larger welfare gains than low-skill immigrants because high-skill-intensive industries are more central than low-skill-intensive industries. Network position and immigrants' skills determine the extent to which immigration only lowers local wages or also generates substantial economy-wide gains.

"Long-Run Effects of H-1B Immigration on the U.S. Economy" (Job Market Paper 2)
(with Ran Abramitzky, Leah Boustan, and Jens Hainmueller) Submitted

We study the effects of H-1B immigration on U.S. industries that employ H-1B workers and their trading partners. Using a novel cross-industry design and the 1999–2003 expansion of the H-1B visa cap for identification, we find that H-1B exposure raised incomes for natives and pre-existing immigrants, with gains concentrated in non-STEM occupations. Income gains propagate forward through supply chains to downstream industries but not backward to upstream industries, consistent with a productivity shock rather than a labor supply shock. We find no direct effect on patenting, suggesting that productivity gains arise from better task execution rather than patentable invention.

"Formal Effects of Informal Labor: Evidence from Syrian Refugees in Turkey"
Revise and resubmit at the *Journal of Human Resources*

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)*

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.

"Occupational Heterogeneity of Child Penalty in the United States"
Submitted

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 40% of the income penalty for women, most of the income penalty for men, and most of the wage penalty for both genders.

"Effect of Remote Work on the Child Penalty: Evidence from the United States" *(with Christina Langer) Submitted*

We study the effect of the post-COVID expansion of remote work on the child penalty. Our empirical design proceeds in three steps: using pseudo-panels to estimate child penalties across occupations, exploiting cross-occupational variation in remote work adoption, and using synthetic controls to adjust for differential pre-COVID trajectories. Remote work reduces the hours penalty for mothers: each percentage point increase in an occupation's remote work share raises mothers' hours worked by 0.19%, eliminating one-seventh of the baseline hours penalty for the average remote occupation. We find no effects on employment, income, or wages for mothers, and no average effects on men.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

"Production Network Propagation of Minimum Wage Shocks: Evidence from Turkey" (draft coming soon)

"Immigration, Housing, and Voting: Evidence from Canada's Post-2015 Immigration Surge" *(with Jeremy Ferwerda and Jens Hainmueller)*

Canada's permanent resident admissions rose from about 270,000 in 2015 to over 480,000 in 2024, following the introduction of the Express Entry system. We study how this surge affected local rents and voting behavior, and how much of the effect on voting runs through the housing market. To identify the effect on rents, we build on the standard past-settlement instrument in two ways: we exploit the policy-induced surge in admissions, and we relax the share-exogeneity assumption embedded in the instrument using Synthetic IV. We find that immigration raises rents in regions with tight labor markets and in regions where geographic constraints make housing supply inelastic. We are currently extending the analysis to house prices, vacancies, and new construction. We will then estimate the effects on voting and use variation in housing supply elasticity to isolate the role of rents in shaping political responses to immigration.

"No Way Back? Reallocation Frictions and Asymmetric Adjustment to Refugee Arrivals and Returns" *(with Sarah Winton)*
data acquisition in progress

The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 triggered a large, unanticipated return of Syrian refugees from Jordan, reversing the labor supply shock their arrival created a decade earlier. Using novel returns data matched to Syrian refugees' individual work experience, skills, and credentials, we study whether host-country labor markets adjust symmetrically to refugee arrivals and departures, or whether downward wage rigidity, irreversible investments, and sectoral reallocation frictions make adjustment to departures slow and incomplete.

"Remote Work and Fathers' Long Hours: Evidence from the United Kingdom" (draft coming soon)

I study how the post-pandemic expansion of remote work changed the child penalty in the United Kingdom. I estimate child penalties by occupation from the Labour Force Survey and correct for differences in pre-pandemic trends using synthetic controls. Remote work reduced the probability that fathers work long hours relative to childless men. The effect is concentrated between 38 and 49 hours a week and appears nowhere else in the hours distribution. I find no effect on mothers. This reverses the pattern in the United States, where remote work raised mothers' hours and left men unaffected.

"Remote Work, Gender Norms, and the Child Penalty"
(with Natalie Irmert and Christina Langer)

We test whether gender norms and family institutions shape how remote work changes the child penalty. Comparisons across countries mix up norms and institutions, so we pair them with a design inside one country that holds

institutions fixed. Across roughly twenty countries, we estimate child penalties by occupation from labor force surveys and administrative data, correct for differences in pre-pandemic trends using synthetic controls, and relate the effect of remote work to pre-pandemic norms and institutions. Within Sweden, we use population registers to compare children of immigrants whose parents come from countries with different gender norms, but who share the same labor market, family policies, and employers. The registers also record parental leave and days caring for a sick child, taken by each parent. Funded by an LSE Remote and Distributed Work Research Initiative grant.