

RAMI ZALFOU

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Education	Lund University , Lund, Sweden <i>Ph.D. student</i> , Department of Economic History	Since 2021
	Birkbeck College , University of London, UK <i>M.Sc. in Economics</i>	2018
	Damascus University , Damascus, Syria <i>B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering</i>	2014

Working papers & Publications

The Historical State and Economic Development: Evidence from Ottoman Syria's
Nomadic Frontier.
Job market paper

This paper investigates the long-term impacts of statelessness in Ottoman Syria, focusing on the regions demarcated by the 'desert line' - a boundary that separated areas under Ottoman state control from those subject to tribal raids until the middle of the 19th century. Using geocoded census data alongside historical data on Ottoman state control in the 19th century, I estimate the effect of historical statelessness on economic outcomes using a spatial regression discontinuity design. The results indicate that a history of statelessness is associated with lower incomes in the present, less developed infrastructure, a higher share of workers in the primary sector, as well as lower levels of human capital. The effect is partly driven by higher population density and urbanization rates in areas of historical state control. The effect is not driven by ethnic or religious differences and is robust to geographic controls.

Ethnic and Religious Differences in Female Labor Force Participation: Evidence from
Syrian Census Data.
Under review at the Journal of Demographic Economics

This paper investigates the extent and causes of differences in Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP) across ethnic and religious groups in Syria. Using census data and the Gelbach decomposition method, the paper reveals substantial gaps in FLFP across groups, with differences reaching up to 18 percentage points. To understand the factors underlying these gaps, the analysis exploits the heterogeneity in economic development, demographic profiles, and educational attainment across towns and villages. The study finds that the main correlates of gaps in FLFP are the age distribution of the population, income, education, and the public sector employment share. The contribution of social norms is examined through the use of gender parity indices for educational enrolment and attainment to proxy for social restrictions on women but are not found to contribute significantly to ethnic and religious gaps in FLFP.

Premium or Penalty? Occupations and Earnings of Ottoman Immigrants and their
Offspring in the United States, 1900–1940. (with Martin Dribe)
R&R at the European Review of Economic History

We study the economic integration of immigrants from Ottoman Syria and Turkey and their offspring in the United States using full count census data for the period 1900 to 1940. Using occupational scores, we find significant premiums for men on arrival in the US, but significant penalties when using actual earnings data collected in 1940. These penalties grow with time since arrival, suggesting low levels of assimilation. However, the second generation closes most of the gap to native Whites. This contrasts with the experience of Northern European immigrants who matched natives more closely in terms of occupations and earnings.

Leaving the Parental Home Among Middle Eastern Immigrants and their Offspring in
Sweden, 1998 to 2022 (with Anna Tegunimataka)
Work-in-progress

Skills	Languages: Arabic (native), English (fluent), Turkish and French (intermediate). Software: R, Stata, ArcGIS, Earth Engine, Power BI, EPPI-reviewer, Office Suite.
Teaching Experience	<i>Department of Economic History, Lund University</i> Lecturer, Skill Training I - Statistics and Data, Spring 2023 and 2024. Lecturer, Econometrics Lab, Spring 2023 and 2024. Teaching Assistant, Econometrics I, Autumn 2023 and 2024. Prof. Jonas Helgertz. Teaching Assistant, Economic History: Family and Work - Scandinavia in an International Perspective, Autumn 2023. Prof. Maria Stanfors. <i>Graduate School at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University</i> Lecturer, Methods in Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies, Autumn 2023.
Professional Experience	Higher Statistical Officer, Department for Transport. United Kingdom. Oct 2020 – Sep 2021 Research Coordinator, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie). United Kingdom. Oct 2019 - Sep 2020 English Language Tutor, Small Projects Istanbul and Addar Community Centre. Turkey. Aug 2016 – Feb 2017 Intern / Monitoring and Evaluation Team, Tamkeen Project. Istanbul, Turkey. July 2016 – Dec 2016 Maintenance Engineer, Hakim Brothers Trading & Contracting Company. Damascus, Syria. June 2013 – Nov 2014
Conferences & Seminars	<i>2024</i> The Third Annual Swedish Middle East and North Africa Network Conference. Early-Stage Researcher Meeting at the Centre for Economic Demography, Lund. Economic History Workshop of Developing Regions. Carlos III Madrid. <i>2023</i> 12th Annual Workshop on “Growth, History and Development”, SDU Denmark. 21st Nordic Conference in Development Economics, Gothenburg University. Seminar at the Department of Economic History, Lund University. <i>2022</i> European Historical Economics Society Conference, Groningen. IUSSP Seminar on Migration in the Past (Online). Seminar at the Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University. Swedish Development Research Network conference, Gothenburg.
Affiliations	Department of Economic History, Lund University. Centre for Economic Demography, Lund University. Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University.
References	Martin Dribe Professor, Department of Economic History, Lund University martin.dribe@ekh.lu.se Anna Tegunimataka Associate Professor, Department of Economic History, Lund University anna.tegunimataka@ekh.lu.se Karin Aggestam Director, Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University karin.agggestam@svet.lu.se