

Regional Income Inequalities in Turkey since 1880

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We examine the evolution of regional income inequalities within present day borders of Turkey since 1880 by constructing indices for value added per capita for agriculture, industry and services as well as GDP per capita for each of the 58 provinces (and 26 NUTS 2 regions) for about one dozen benchmark years. We find there were already large regional inequalities, including West-East inequalities, in Turkey in the decades before World War I. Ethnic conflict and industrialization increased the regional inequalities further in the first half of the twentieth century. Regional disparities for the country as a whole declined in the second half of the twentieth century. However, the East continued to lag well behind and did not begin to converge until the end of the century. We also discuss the proximate causes of this pattern including geography and history, uneven spatial distribution of industry and ethnic conflict.