

Chapter 5. Long term regional dynamics of industrialization, from the late Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey in the twentieth century, 1850-2000

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Turkey is not an industrial country. The Ottoman Empire was not an industrial country either. It had an agrarian economy with low urbanisation rates. The nineteenth century state initiated industrialisation attempts in the Ottoman Empire were too late and too little to vitalise the economy and to generate modern economic growth. Political, military and social calamities starting from the mid-nineteenth century resulted in a continuous decline of the economic activity from the 1850s until the end of the Ottoman Empire. The Republic of Turkey inherited an agrarian, sparsely populated, underdeveloped economy. The Great Depression did not result in a collapse but in a closed economy, which retarded trade and development until the 1950s. Only after liberalisation of the economy and consequent wave of privatisations in the 1980s economy, started to reach higher levels of economic growth.

The lines above are an over-simplified version of generally accepted, and uncritically re-produced narrative of the last 160 years of Ottoman/Turkish economic history. This book piece aims to question, revisit, geographically differentiate, and revise this narrative. The Ottoman decline paradigm has been rightfully rejected quite a while ago. Quataert's work also convincingly argued that the history of manufacturing in the late Ottoman Empire was not solely a story of de-industrialisation and decline. Nevertheless we still lack a detailed survey of regional economic activity in the late Ottoman Empire and in the Republic of Turkey within a long-term perspective. In this paper we will focus on long-run shifts in occupational structures and urbanisation dynamics of two regions centred around cities of Ankara and Bursa in a three-tier case study design. First, for the 1850s, we will extract, code, and analyse sectoral distribution of individual occupational descriptors of all male dwellers in the cities of Ankara and Bursa, then in three small-towns surrounding these two cities, and lastly in around ten villages for each town and city (a: villages surrounding in total six small-towns in the hinterlands of two cities; b: villages surrounding two cities of Ankara and Bursa). For this first step we will extract and analyse occupational data on micro level from an empire-wide Ottoman tax survey from 1845. As the second step using the mid-nineteenth century population registers we will calculate and compare urbanisation rates for chosen two regions using the same three-tier system for data sampling. After building our observation and data base for occupational structure and population geography for the mid-nineteenth century, we will use occupational and demographic data, on matching sub-district levels, obtained from in total 14 national population censuses conducted in Turkey in the twentieth century for these two regions.

In our examination we will use sub-provinces, which are smaller than regions, as a spatial unit of analysis. This unprecedented spatial disaggregation will allow us to reach a higher spatial resolution than regions yet will also allow us to scale our results up to regional units. In our regional analysis we will use two proxies to assess the magnitude, timing, and geography of industrialization: shifts in occupational structures away from agriculture to industry and services; and changes in population geography in general and urbanisation in particular. Lastly, although we will focus on two regions for the period 1850 to 2000, we will also compare and contrast industrialization dynamics of these two regions with other regions of Turkey for the period 1927 to 2000.