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Why Has Eastern Europe Lagged Behind The West For (At Least) Two Centuries? Long-Term Patterns of Economic Growth and Development in Central, East and South-East Europe Since 1800

This paper presents empirical evidence showing that Eastern Europe has lagged consistently behind the Western European economies for at least 200 years. There are differences within Eastern Europe across regions and over time, yet on balance Eastern European economies typically achieved only 30-50% of Western European income levels. We discuss the various schools of thought on this topic and provide a broad synthesis. The paper I wish to present is similar to the key note lecture I will give at a conference at the University of Helsinki on 22nd March on “Baltic Connections: Conference in Social Science History”.