Ethnic Diversity in Turkey: An Empirical Reassessment
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The costs of ethnic diversity for economic growth, public goods provision, and inter-personal trust may be some of the few established “laws” of political economics. But our ability to correctly estimate the impact of fractionalization depends on the quality of our data, and measures of group-size tend to suffer from bias, if they exist at all. In the case of Turkey, where ethnicity has political and economic significance but is not formally recognized by the state, research on diversity and identity has suffered from severe data limitations. As a remedy, I propose a survey-based approach to measuring ethnic fractionalization that has both theoretical and empirical advantages over existing methods. Using data from nearly 150,000 respondents, I calculate fractionalization for 590 districts across 66 Turkish provinces and find a strong correlation between ethnic diversity and a number of political-economic outcomes.