

Emerging Geographies of Within-country Regional Inequalities: What Lessons Can We Learn from Canada?

Over the last 40 years, several OECD countries have experienced rising levels of inequality. Within these countries, concerns have been mounting over emerging patterns of spatial inequalities relating to growing disparities in (i) incomes between regions and (ii) how incomes themselves within regions are distributed. Using new regional datasets developed from Census microdata files, this paper presents an overview of recent trends in spatial inequality across Canada. It highlights the transition from a period of broad convergence to one of episodic divergence from the 1990s onwards, when differences in regional trajectories of inequality are increasingly observed along an east-west axis and across urban and rural regions. The paper explores some of the social, demographic and economic characteristics associated with these emerging regional trajectories. It also presents new estimates of the potential impacts of automation on regional labour markets and discusses some of the wider implications and policy challenges of dealing with growing spatial inequalities in Canada.