

2023 DINA UPDATE FOR ASIA

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Technical Note for Update of East Asia - 2023

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1 South Korea

1.1 Fiscal Income Series Update

Previously, [Kim \(2018\)](#) provides the fiscal income inequality series in South Korea from 1933 to 2018. This year, we extend this fiscal income inequality series to 2022¹. Using the generalized pareto interpolation from [Blanchet, Fournier, and Piketty \(2022\)](#), we also provide not only top 10% or top 1% income shares but also bottom and middle income shares since 1933, which was not available in the previous series.

Additionally, there has been an update on National Accounts from the Bank of Korea. With an updated average national income per adult, there have been slight changes in top income shares before 2019, compared to the previous series available at the World Inequality Database.

1.2 Distributional National Accounts (DINA) Update

For South Korea this year, we are able to provide a very detailed DINA update from 1982 to 2022. Previously, WID provides Korea DINA series from 1980 to 2021, though the actual data points were only for the years of 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016. With the updated National Accounts and fiscal income series, the estimates have been updated for these years. Our new Korea DINA series' data points are for the years of 1982, 1991, 1996, and every year from 2006 to 2020. We linearly interpolated missing years and extrapolated our series to 2022 as we did for Korea fiscal income series.

For more details, please refer to [Hong et al. \(2023\)](#) published in this year's the World Inequality Lab Working Paper Series.

¹We linearly interpolate the estimates in missing years, from 1943 to 1975. We expect the top income shares to drop more drastically around Korean war (1950-1953) than our linearly interpolated graph shows. Along with this interpolation, we extrapolate our series to 2022, assuming that the income shares are consistent with the previous data point.

2 Thailand

The Distributional National Accounts (DINA) series in Thailand is updated to provide insights into income distribution trends in recent years. From 2017 to 2021, an update was conducted, building upon the 2001-2016 series introduced in [Jenmana \(2018\)](#). The DINA estimates rely on survey micro-data, income tax tabulations, and Thailand's official national accounts. To address underrepresentation and underreporting issues at the highest income levels, information from tax data is used to correct survey distributions using the non-parametric reweighing method pioneered by [Blanchet, Flores, and Morgan \(2022\)](#).

In years where income modules are unavailable between 2017 and 2021, income distributions for generalized percentiles are interpolated from adjacent years. To allow for regional-level computations, the national income distribution in 2022 is assumed to be identical to 2021, given the availability of income data in both household surveys and tax tabulations. This will be corrected when survey and tax data for 2023 is finally available at the end of 2024.

The updated DINA series reveals a concerning trend of increasing income concentration at the top since the onset of COVID-19, reversing the previous trend of decreasing income inequality since 2001. Debates are ongoing regarding whether Thai income inequality has truly declined since 2007 or earlier, as suggested by [Jenmana \(2021\)](#) and [Muthitachoen and Burong \(2023\)](#). Looking ahead, Thanasak Jenmana plans to update the DINA series again, covering the period from 1988 to 2021. This updated series, along with an accompanying working paper on Thai economic inequality, is expected to be available at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024.

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