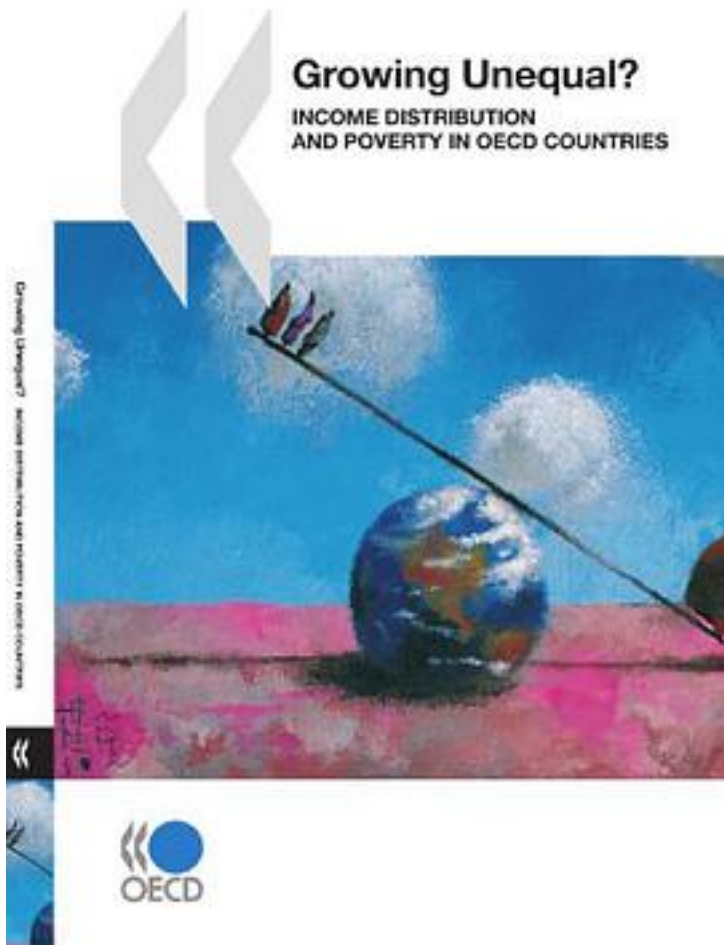


Growing Unequal?



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Has income inequality increased over time? Who has gained and who has lost in this

process? Has this process affected all OECD countries uniformly? To what extent are wider income inequalities the consequence of greater differences in personal earnings among workers, and how much are they affected by other factors? Finally, how does government redistribution through the tax-benefit system affect these trends? These are some of the questions addressed in this report -- and the answers will surprise many readers. This report provides evidence of a fairly generalised increase in income inequality over the past two decades across the OECD, but the timing, intensity and causes of the increase differ from what is typically suggested in the media. Growing Unequal? brings together a range of analyses on the distribution of economic resources in OECD countries. The evidence on income distribution and poverty covers, for the first time, all 30 OECD countries in the mid-2000s, while information on trends extending back to the mid-1980s is provided for around two-thirds of the countries. The report also describes inequalities in a range of domains (such as household wealth, consumption patterns, in-kind public services) that are typically excluded from conventional discussion about the distribution of economic resources among individuals and households. Precisely how much inequality there is in a society is not determined randomly, nor is it beyond the power of governments to change, so long as they take note of the sort of up-to-date evidence included in this report.

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