

# Inequality Increasing Everywhere? Conflicting Evidence from an Updated Global Database of Household Surveys

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## Abstract

This paper presents the most up-to-date evidence on national inequality in income or consumption from as many countries as possible. We find that the Gini index for the average country began to fall in the early 2000s, but remains higher in 2013 than 25 years earlier. In a sample of countries with strictly comparable household surveys between 2008 and 2013, for every country where the Gini index increased by more than 1 point, there are two countries where it fell by more than 1 point. These findings are robust to a number of factors, including the use of alternative databases of inequality indicators. While we have used the best available evidence from household surveys, a number of measurement issues, such as missing top incomes and the use of expenditure instead of income surveys, remain unresolved.

JEL Codes: D31, D63

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