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Jongchul Lee

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A Provincial Perspective on Income Inequality in Urban China and the Role of Property and Business Income¹

Jongchul Lee²

Abstract

This paper tries to investigate the role of non-wage income in explaining the income inequality in urban China. Our findings show that the contribution of income sources to inequality is different between the provinces with different extent of inequality. We find that in the coastal provinces, the contribution of wage income to inequality is decreasing, while the contribution of business and property income is increasing and getting more important; in contrast, in the western provinces, the role of wage income is larger than the other provinces, while the role of business and property income is smaller and remains unchanged. Our empirical results also suggest that the provinces with higher share of business and property income have high income inequality.

Keywords: urban income inequality; decomposition of income sources; role of property and business income

JEL Classifications: O56, O18

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² Department of Economics, Chung-Ang University, Ansung, Kyunggi-Do, 456-756, South Korea Tel. +82-31-670-3253; Fax. +82-31-675-1384.

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