Gavin Iddings

Research Summary:

The main purpose of this study is to determine whether or not U.S. income inequality has a significant impact on heart disease, infant mortality, and high school graduation rates. Income inequality has become a divisive and political issue which has transformed itself into a mainstream topic. As a result, researching the societal costs of income inequality would be beneficial, since it could generate conclusive evidence on how it impacts society.

Three separate regression models will be used to measure this impact by using heart disease, infant mortality, and high school graduation rates as separate dependent variables with income inequality as an independent variable for each model. Data will be collected for all fifty U.S. states over a period of ten years. Each model will include control variables appropriate for modeling the dependent variables, using the Gini index as the measurement for income inequality. The Gini index helps describe the gap between the rich and the poor. It is based on the net income made by a country’s citizens, and the number ranges from zero to one with one being perfect inequality and zero representing perfect equality. Infant mortality rates and prevalence of heart disease are expected to be higher in states with greater income inequality, and high school graduation rates are expected to be lower in states with greater income inequality after controlling for other related factors.