

CSAI – Escalating Inequality

Session #2 – Consequences of the Problem

UUCF – June 15, 2015

Session Leader: Martha Ades/Terry Steichen

What is a CSAI?

- “Congregational Study/Action Issue”
- Bi-annual selection by UU General Assembly
- Usually leads to “Statement of Conscience”
- Four year duration (3 plus SOC)
- Recent CSAIs:
 - Escalating Inequality (2014)
 - Reproductive Justice (2012)
 - Immigration as a Moral Issue (2010; 2013 SOC)
 - Ethical Eating (2008; 2011 SOC)
 - Creating Peace (2006; 2010 SOC)



Not everything that is faced can be changed, but
nothing can be changed until it is faced.

(James Baldwin)

Seminar Session Overview

- Scope of Escalating Inequality (EI)
- Economic and non-Economic Consequences of EI
- (Inadequate) Conventional Explanations of EI
- Hints of More Likely Causes of EI
- Details and Evidence of Likely Causes of EI
- Past Reform Attempts and Results
- Lessons Learned (what doesn't work)
- Identifying Parameters of Possible Solution(s)
- Identifying and Zeroing in on Solution(s)
- Advocating for Chosen Solution(s)
 - External (good governance) groups
 - Grassroots - UUCF->UU->Faith

Seminar 1 Session Overview

- CSAI Discussion
- Escalating Inequality Project Discussion
- Impact of public policies on rich vs. non-rich
- Divergence of income captured by the uber-wealthy
- Collapse of income captured by workers
- Introduction to the Gini Index
- The extreme income/wealth concentration
- The Phony rationale for austerity
- Wrap-up Questions

Reflections

Is this issue a moral as well as economic, social one?

Is this issue non-partisan, trans-partisan?

Is this issue at the core of many other issues?

Is the CSAI nature of this issue, a unique opportunity?

Does it make sense to study it before deciding on action so that we have informed action?

Session 2: Consequences of Escalating Inequality



Wealthy-Favoring Policy Consequences on Non-Rich

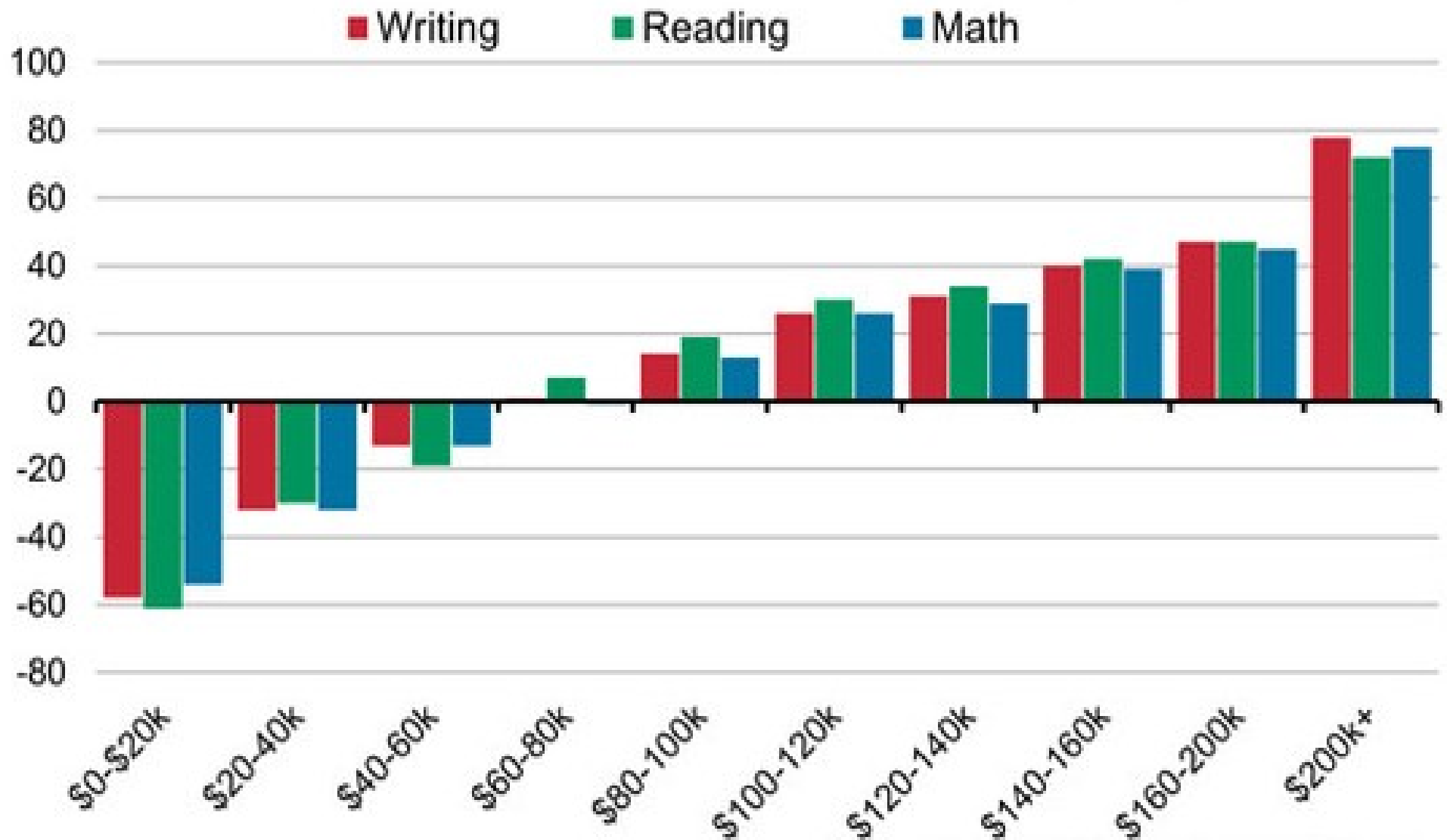
- Biased prosecutorial discretion (Wall Street, Petraeus vs Teachers)
- Healthcare (high deductible, Medicare/Medicaid cuts, etc.)
- Food and drug safety (afford branded versions)
- Climate Change (able to afford adaption)
- Education (all public, college, student loans)
- Jobs (any, decent pay, full time, two-wage families)
- Affordable housing (gentrification)
- Bypass waiting lines
- Polarization (fragments opposition)
- Food, water (food stamps, farmland, water resources)

Social Consequences of Inequality

- Family dysfunction (divorce, teen pregnancy)
- Parenting support (tutors, nannies, transporters, etc)
- Marriage gap
- Lack of mobility
- Poor educational performance and opportunities
- Power distance, authoritarianism
- Feed feelings of humiliation and status anxiety
- Fewer role models for achievement
- Limitations based on location (housing, transportation, quality food)

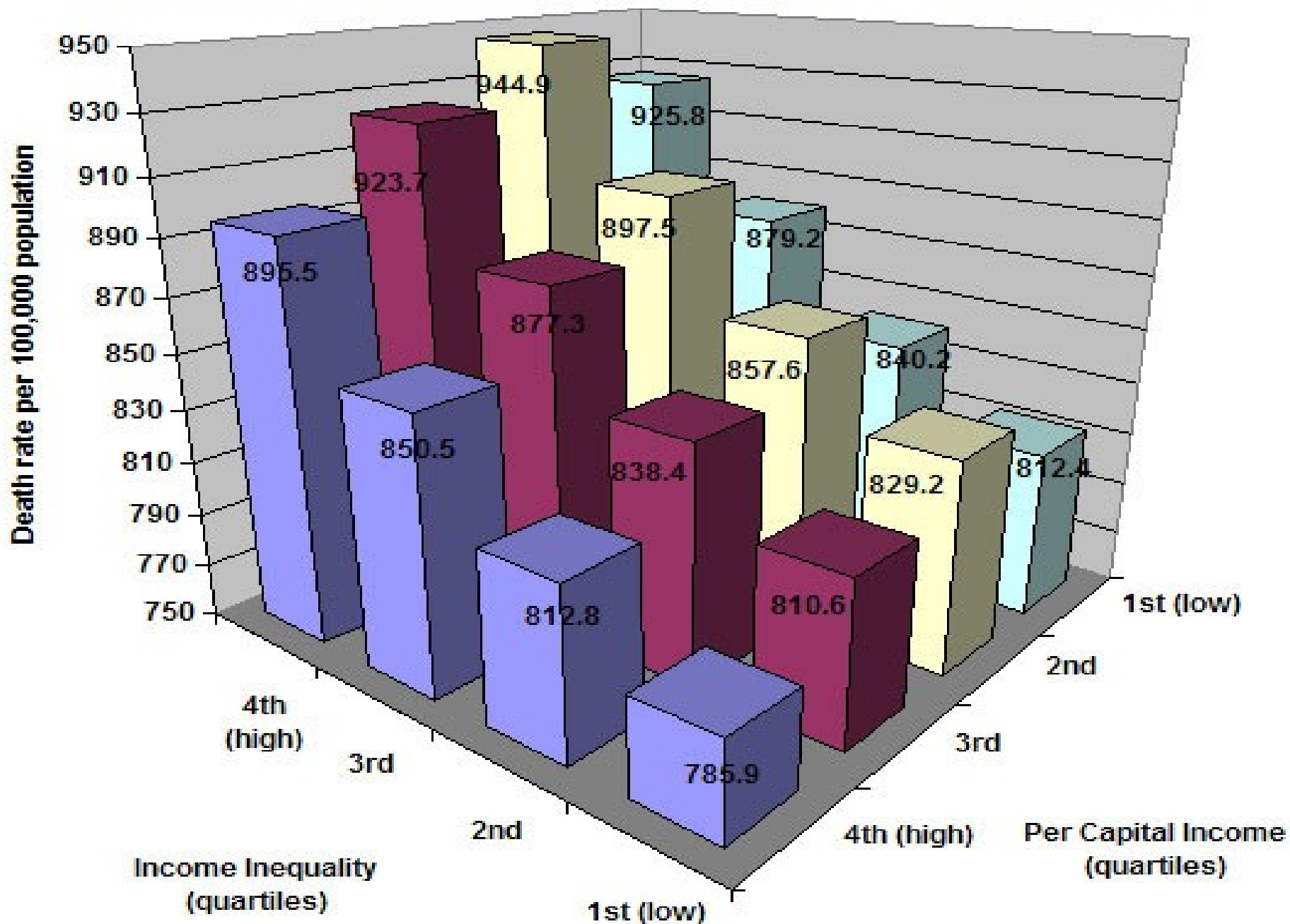
Affluence Gaps

How much students score above or below the national average, by family income

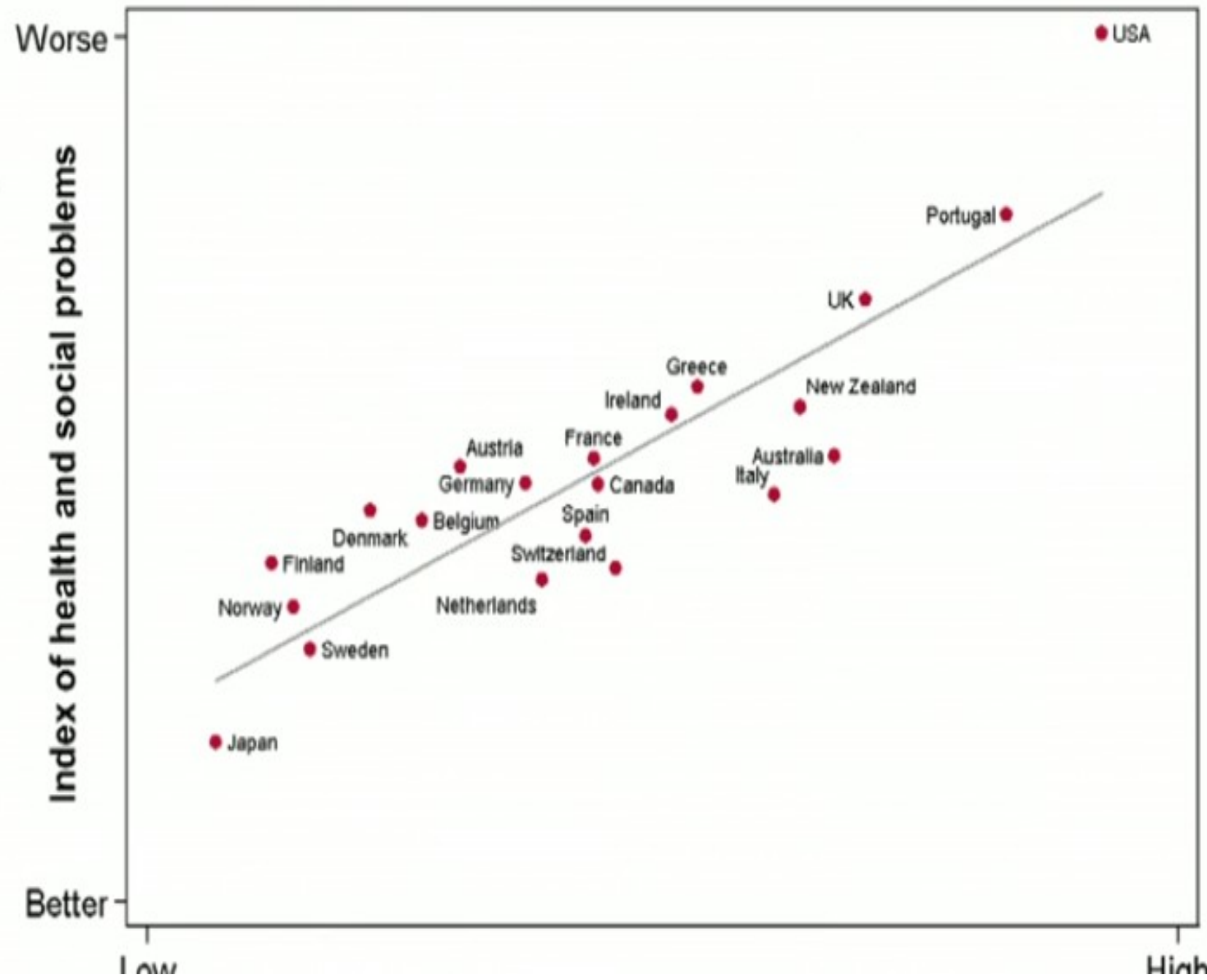


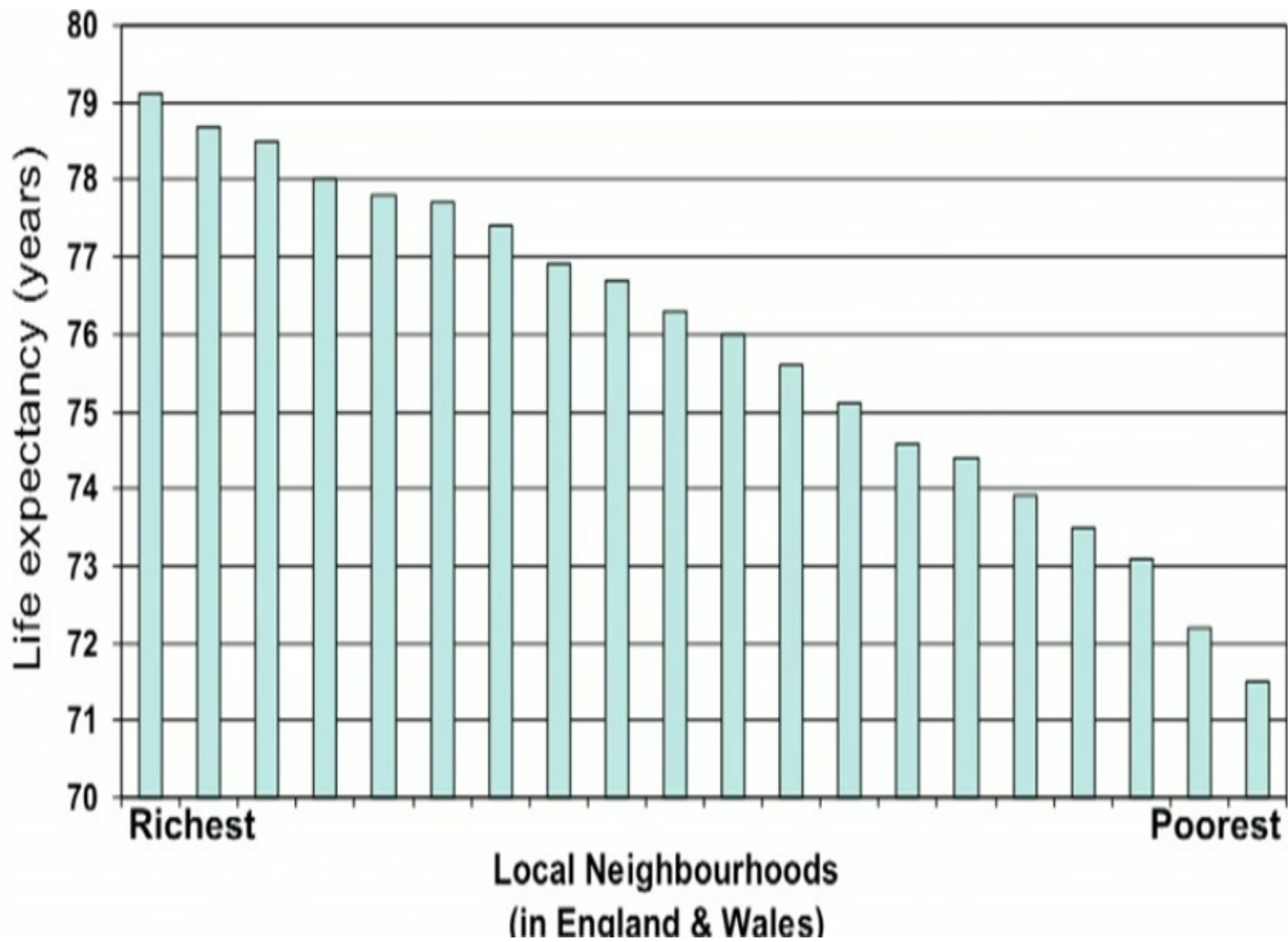
Source: FairTest, College Board | WSJ.com

Income Inequality and mortality in 282 metropolitan areas of the United States

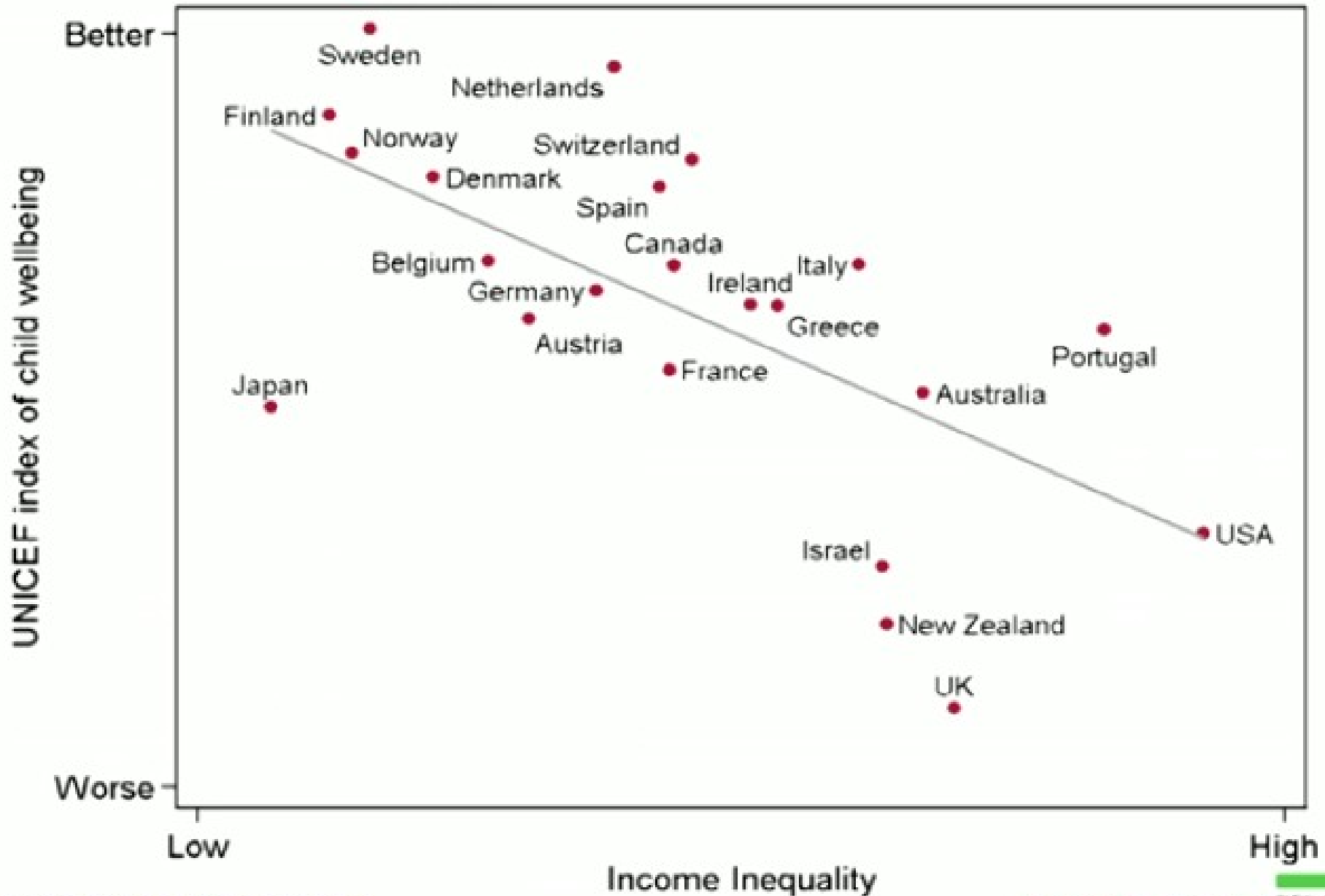


- Index of:
- Life expectancy
 - Math & Literacy
 - Infant mortality
 - Homicides
 - Imprisonment
 - Teenage births
 - Trust
 - Obesity
 - Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
 - Social mobility

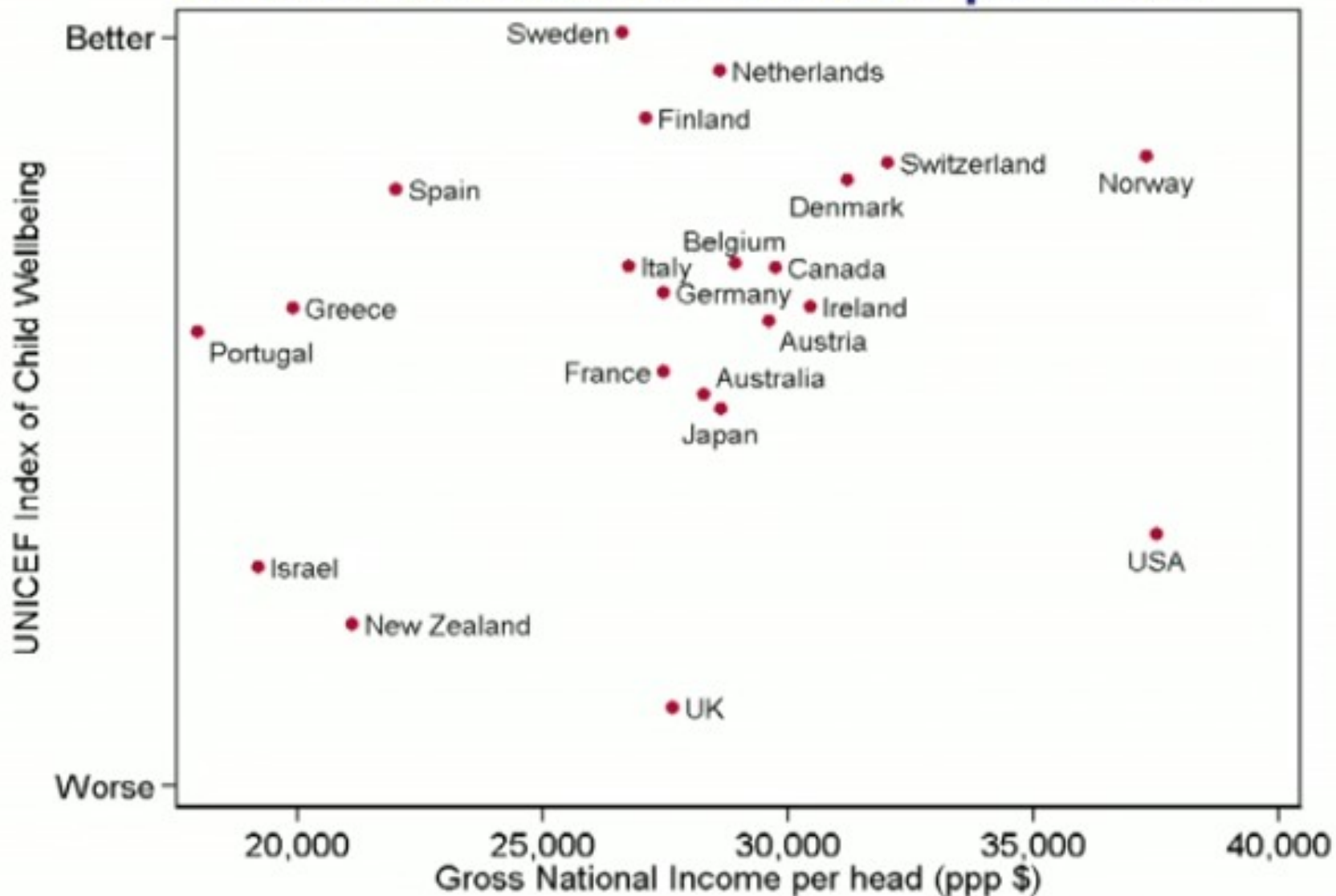




Child well-being is better in more equal countries



The UNICEF Index of Child Wellbeing is not related to National Income per head



Richard Wilkinson - "The Spirit Level"



Richard Wilkinson - “The Spirit Level”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWpMr82jnf8>

Published on Sep 19, 2013

Listen to British social epidemiologist, author and advocate Richard Wilkinson as he gives a TED talk on how societies with huge income gaps are somehow going wrong. Richard presents the hard data on economic inequality, and shows what gets worse when rich and poor are too far apart.

Discussion

- Correlation versus causation – which?
- How does this fit with the Gini Index?
- Does this address rising vs static inequality?
- What are the implications for healthcare policy?

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Next Seminar Monday, July 20th

Next Steering Team meeting,
Monday, July 6

