

The Gini index is a simple measure of the relative degree of equality or inequality in the distribution of something— income, wealth, land, or anything else that is distributed across a population.

It is a measure of the total area between a 45 degree line representing perfect equality of distribution (ie each percentile of the population receives an equal share of the income or wealth) and the curve representing the actual inequality of distribution. A bigger bulge under the line indicates a greater total level of inequality.

The curve is called the Lorenz curve. The Gini index is a number between 0 and 1 (or 0 and 100). A Gini index of 0 would be perfect equality. An index of 1 (or 100) would mean that 1 person receives 100% of the total.

