170113 – Reinhart-Rogoff Affair Summary

The Reinhart-Rogoff affair refers to the questionable data analysis used in highly-cited paper published in 2010 that concluded that there is a negative correlation between GDP growth and gross government dept. The authors admit that they accidently excluded 5 rows of data from their calculations, changing the rate of growth from -0.1% to +0.2% (a very small margin). Economists at UMass performed their own calculations, using a different counting method than the original authors, and got a completely different value (+2.2%). This ordeal highlights the lack of continuity in statistical analysis between different groups, with the same data being processed in different manners to get completely different results. From what I can tell, none of these analyses are reproducible and there is no consistent method used to perform them, leading to situations just like this where results may be misleading.