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Correlations & Causes

PHIL 203

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**Critical Thinking
Distance Delivery**

Critical Thinking

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Explaining the Numbers

e_1 . Of the 771 men in the 40-49 year age group, 29% showed some signs of coronary heart disease.

e_2 . Of the 954 women in the 40-49 year age group, only 14% showed signs of coronary heart disease.

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t_0 . Coronary heart disease appears much more often in men.

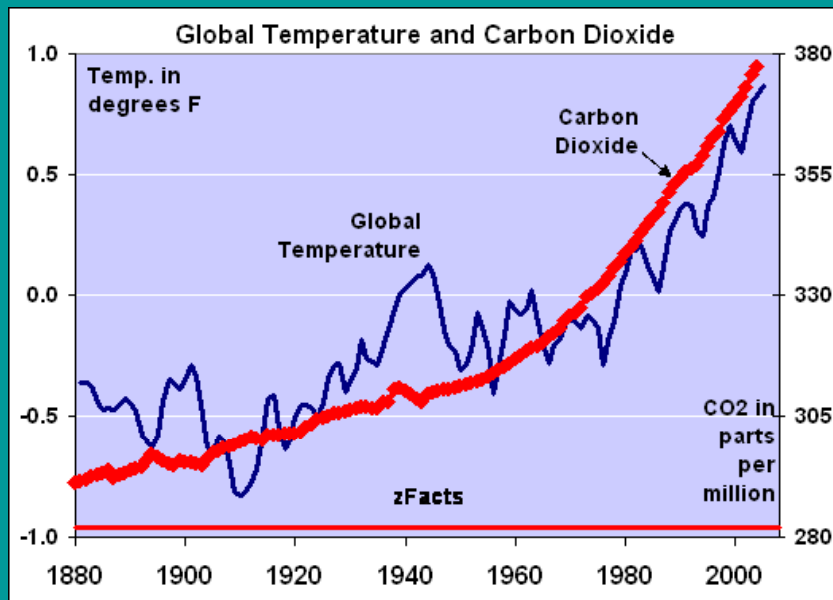
Critical Thinking

Explaining the Numbers

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- Rival explanations
 - t₁. It's just a coincidence that there was the gender disparity in the Framingham study
- A casual relationship between gender and coronary heart disease?

Critical Thinking



Explaining Correlations

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e_1 . There is a strong correlation between CO₂ levels and the Earth's average temperature.

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t_0 . CO₂ concentrations cause global temperature variations.

Critical Thinking

Explaining Correlations

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t_1 . Global temperature variations cause varying CO₂ concentrations.

t_2 . Increased CO₂ concentrations cause increased temperatures, while, increased temperatures cause increases in CO₂ concentrations.

Critical Thinking

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Jeff's Suggested Reading of the Constitutionality of Capital Punishment

t₀. The death penalty must be imposed fairly, and with reasonable consistency, or not at all.

Critical Thinking

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McCleskey v. Kemp

- The crime
- New Georgia homicide statute
- Jury
- Conviction
- Appeal
- Makeup of the Court -- 1987

Self, World, & God

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The Baldus Study

Race Killer/Victim	Death Sentence	Percentage
Black/White	50 of 223	22%
White/White	58 of 748	8%
Black/Black	18 of 1443	1%
White/Black	2 of 60	3%
Total by Victim		
White	108 of 981	11%
Black	20 of 1503	1%

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Evidence that Capital Punishment is Unconstitutional

- e₁- When controlled for over two hundred non-racial variables such as the defendant's record and the severity of the crime, the Baldus study concluded that murderers of white victims were 4.3 times as likely to receive the death penalty.
- e₂- District attorneys ask for a capital sentence in seventy percent of the cases involving a black defendant and a white victim. When the victim is black and the defendant is white, however, a mere nineteen percent are even prosecuted as capital cases.

Critical Thinking

What Explains the Correlation?

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- t_0 . The race of the murder victim causally influences the decision whether to seek the death penalty.
- t_1 . The decision to seek the death penalty causes the race of the victim.
- t_2 . It's just a coincidence that victims' race "correlated" with capital sentences in Georgia.
- t_3 . Some unidentified non-racial factor is responsible for the correlation of victim race and death sentences.

Critical Thinking

Ruling in *McCleskey v. Kemp*

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- 5-4 decision
- Justice Powell's opinion
- Equal Protection ruling
- Particularized discrimination
- Slippery-slope
- Implications for other sorts of discrimination

Critical Thinking