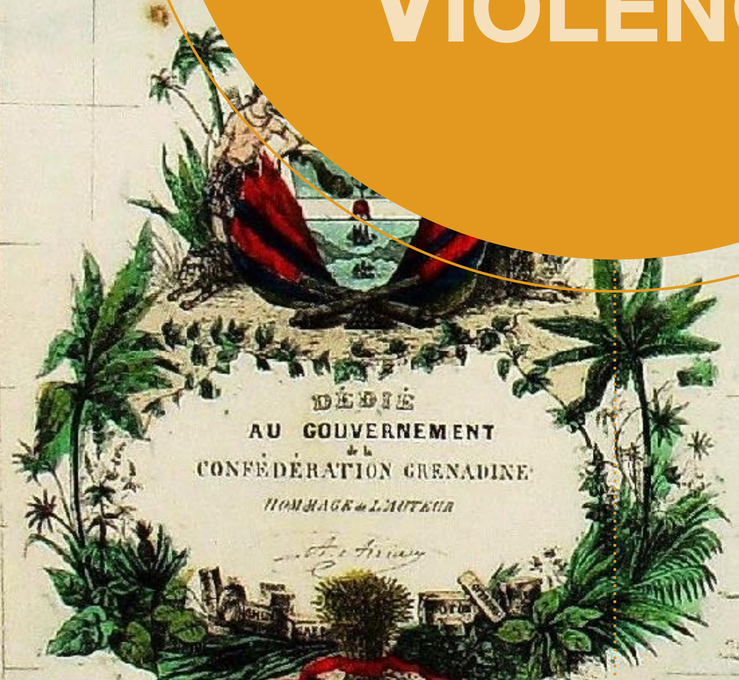
Poli-416:

Revolution & Political Violence



PLAN FOR TODAY

1. What's going on in the world of conflict?
2. How to read: quant
3. How to read: game theory
4. How to read: exercise

What did you see on Global Conflict Tracker?

How to Read

Papers come in 3 flavors

Quantitative

Formal (Game) Theory

Historical/Qualitative/Argumentative

How to Read: Quant

What's the point of a quant paper?

- Quantitative papers use data to try to answer whether one thing **causes** another
- Data (*maybe)* gives us the opportunity to **control** for systematic differences
- Lots of data makes us more **certain** that what we're observing is not just a one-off

Does School Suspension Cause Crime?

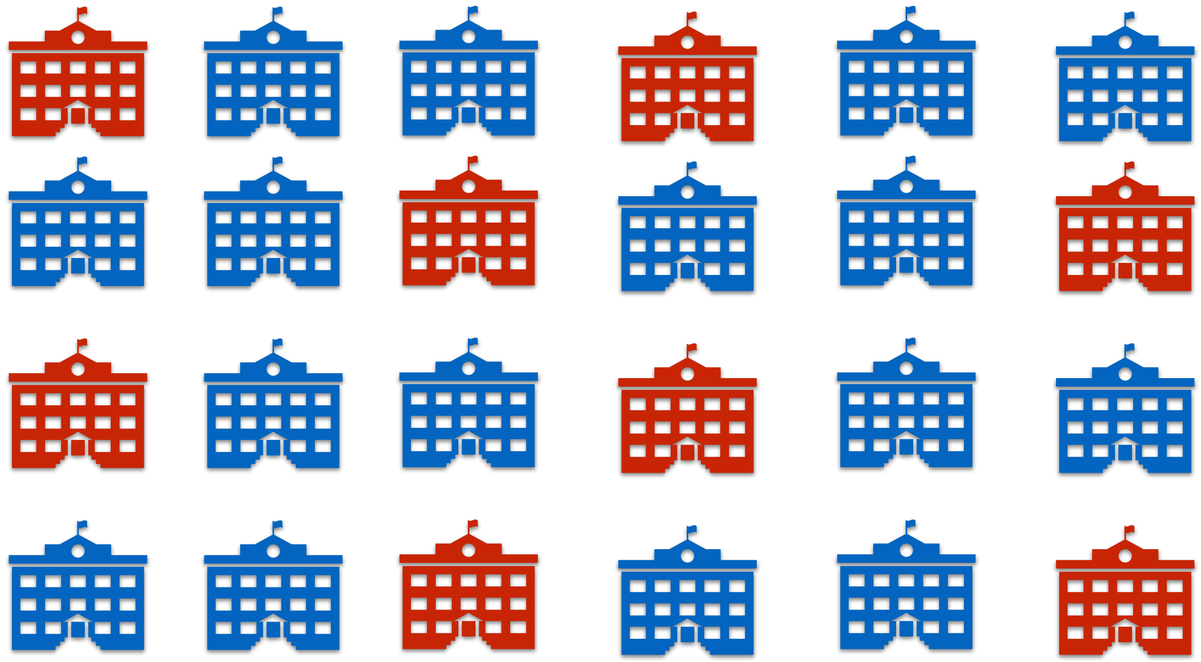
Between 2013-2014, 2.6 million public school students received at least one suspension

Suspension used to punish bad behavior, but might exacerbate the problem

The Study

Collect data on criminal records of people who went to school in Columbia

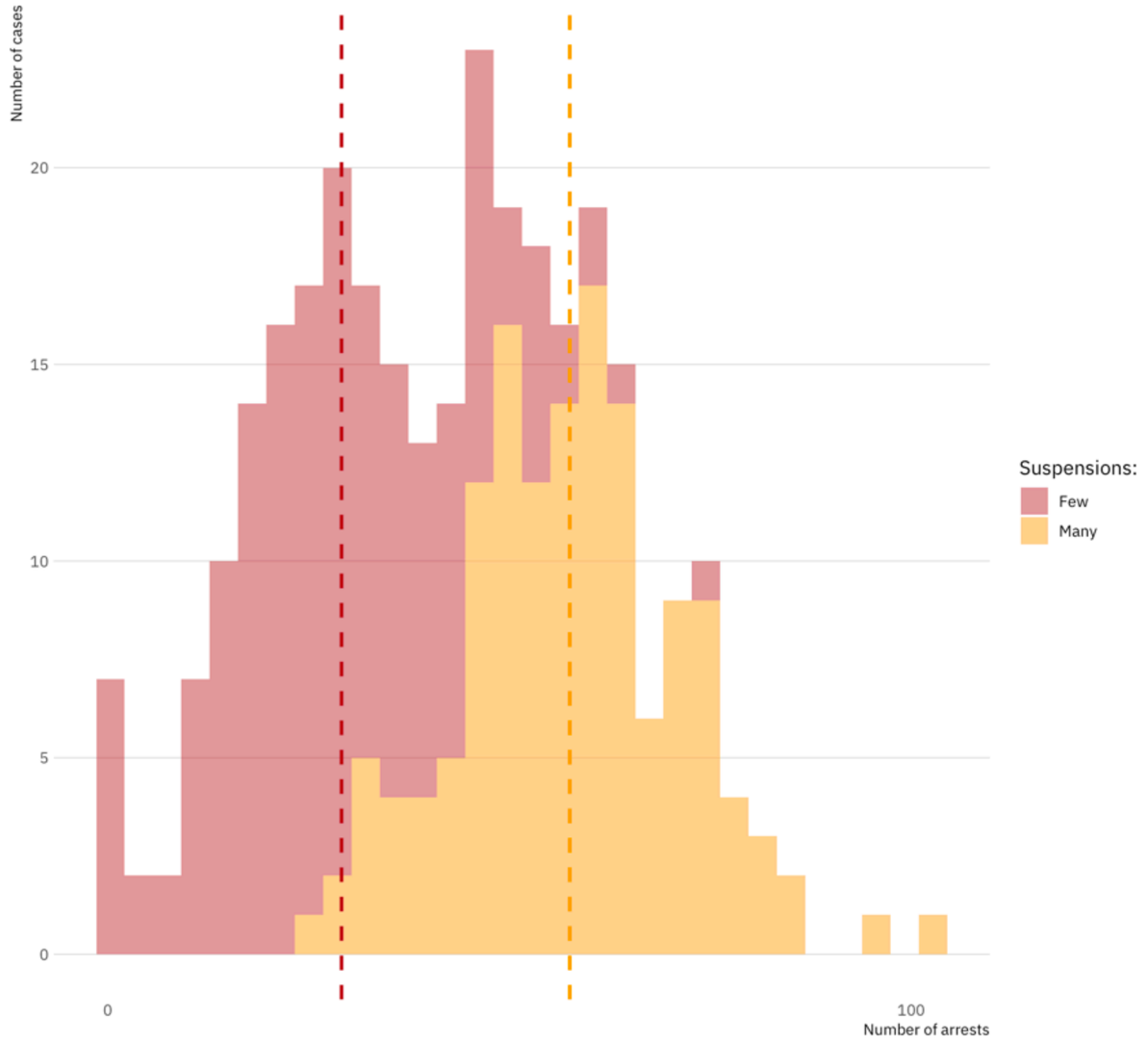
Compare criminal records of people who went to schools with **lots of suspension** vs. school with **little suspension**



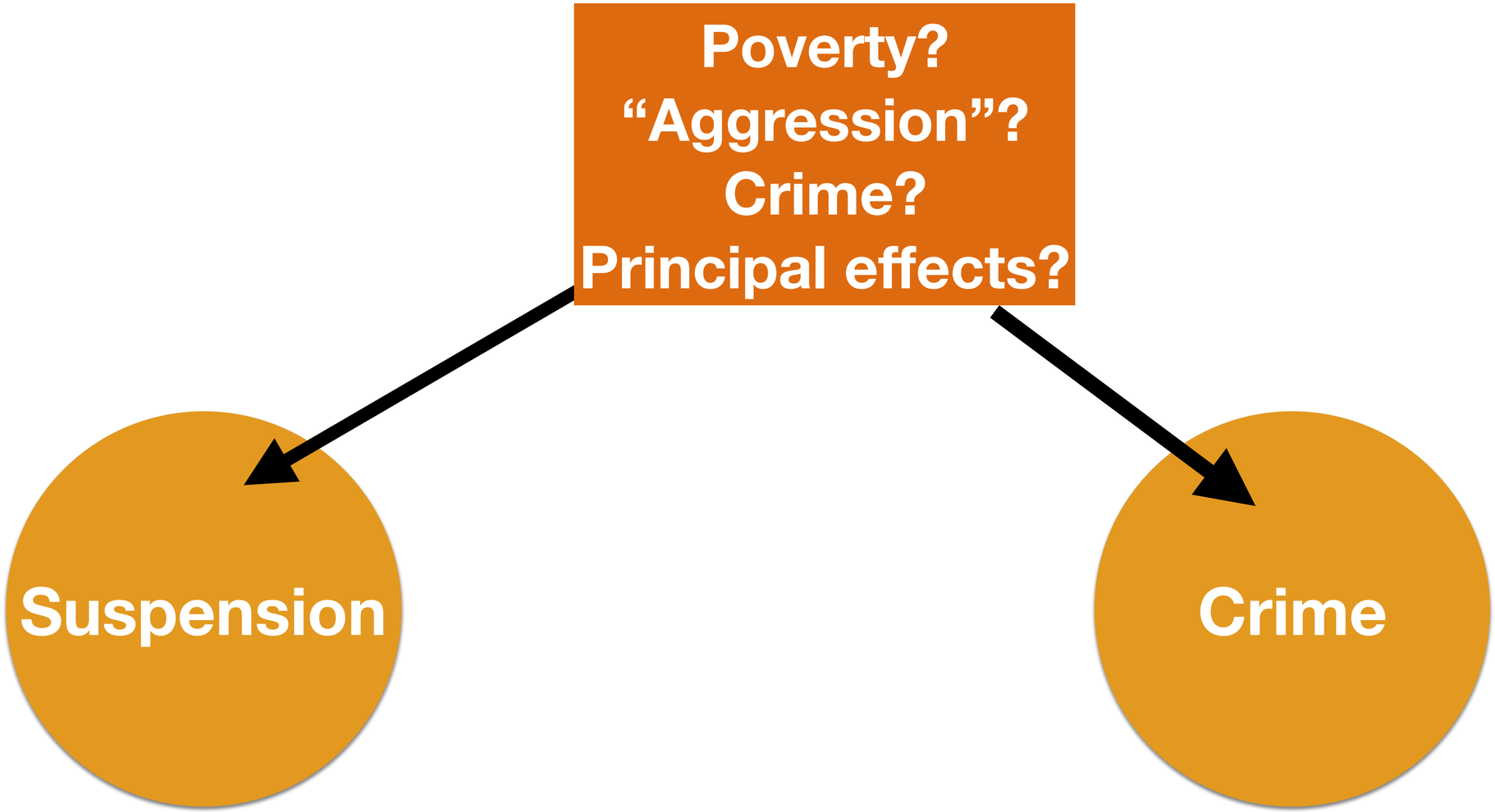
Results

Find that people who went to schools with **high** suspension rates were more likely to be arrested later in life than people who went to school with **low** suspension rates

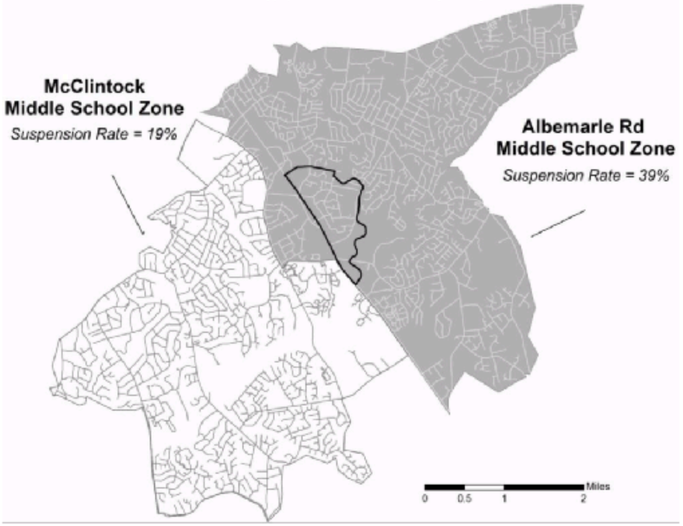
Does this mean suspensions **cause** crime?



What Could go Wrong?



Panel A. Before redistricting (2001-02 school year):



Panel B. After redistricting (2002-03 school year):

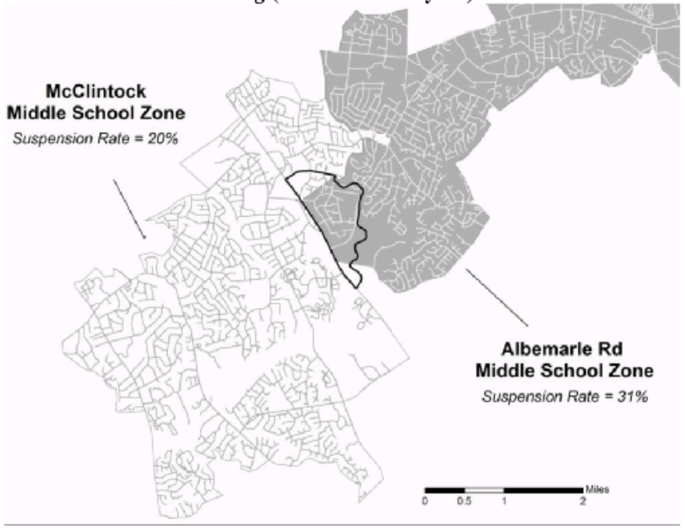


Figure 1. Redistricting for Two Middle Schools

The School to Prison Pipeline:

Long-Run Impacts of School Suspensions on Adult Crime

Abstract

Schools face important policy tradeoffs in monitoring and managing student behavior. Schools with strict disciplinary policies may stigmatize suspended students and expose them to the criminal justice system at a young age. On the other hand, school discipline is also designed to address the negative spillover impacts of misbehavior on the learning of other students. In this paper we estimate the impact of school discipline practices on student achievement, educational attainment and adult criminal activity. We show that there is wide and persistent variation in suspension rates across schools. Using exogenous variation in school assignment caused by a large and sudden school zone boundary change and a supplementary design based on principal switches, we find that schools with stricter discipline practices have substantial negative long-run impacts. Students who attend a school with a 10 percent higher number of suspensions are 10 percent more likely to be arrested and 12 percent more likely to be incarcerated as adults. We also find negative impacts of school suspension on high school graduation and four-year college attendance. The impacts are largest for males and minorities. Our findings highlight the large social cost and limited incapacitation impact of harsh school suspension policies.

Reading regression tables

Explaining Registered Voters in 2000 (Arkansas, South Carolina)

	Dependent variable:
	Is Respondent a Voter?
Age	0.016***
	(0.004)
Female	0.310**
	(0.151)
Education	0.225**
	(0.090)
Income	0.094***
	(0.022)
Constant	-0.878**
	(0.376)
Observations	1,500
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Outcome: what we are trying to explain

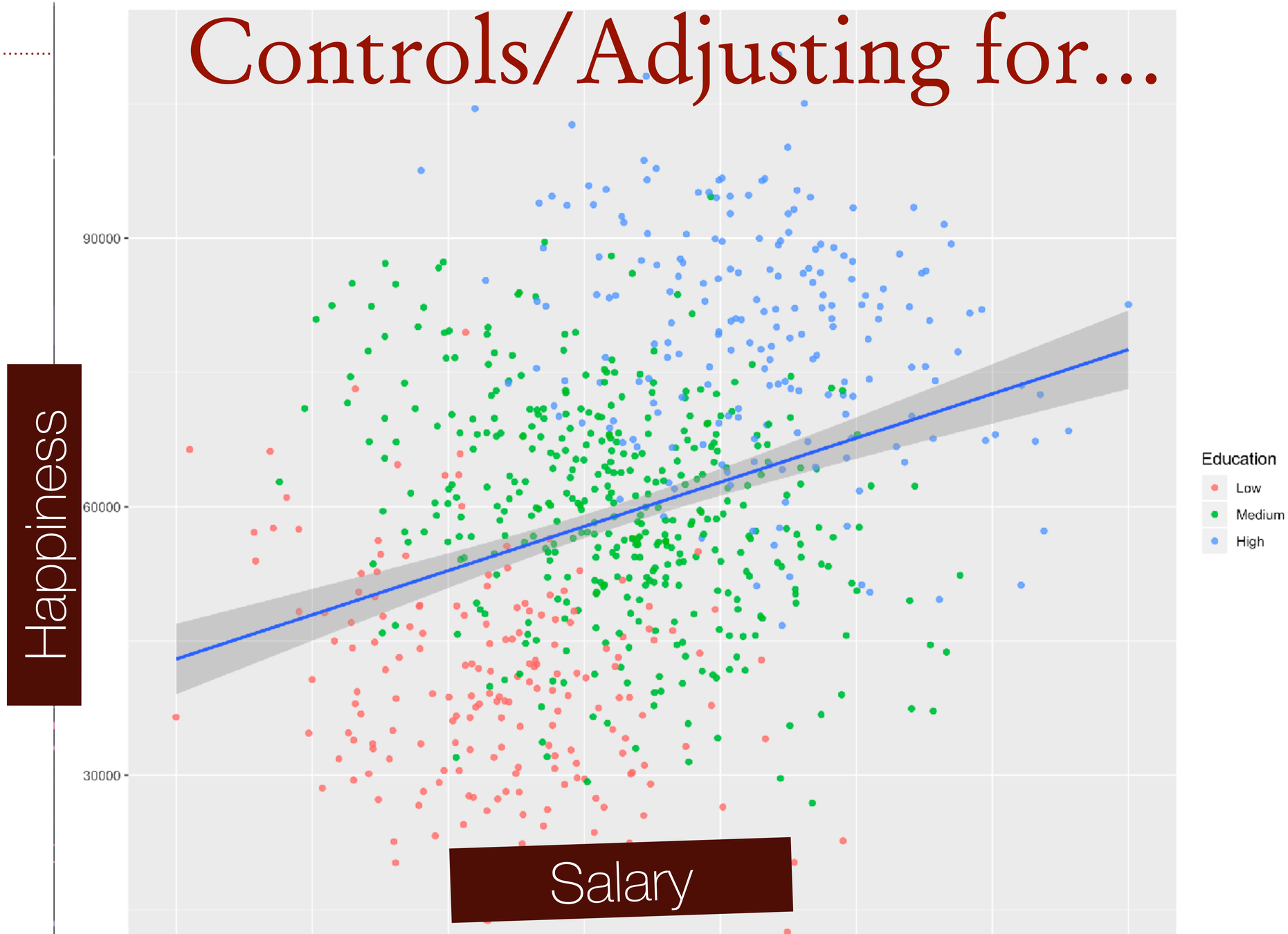
variable

coefficient: how variable and DV move together positive, negative?

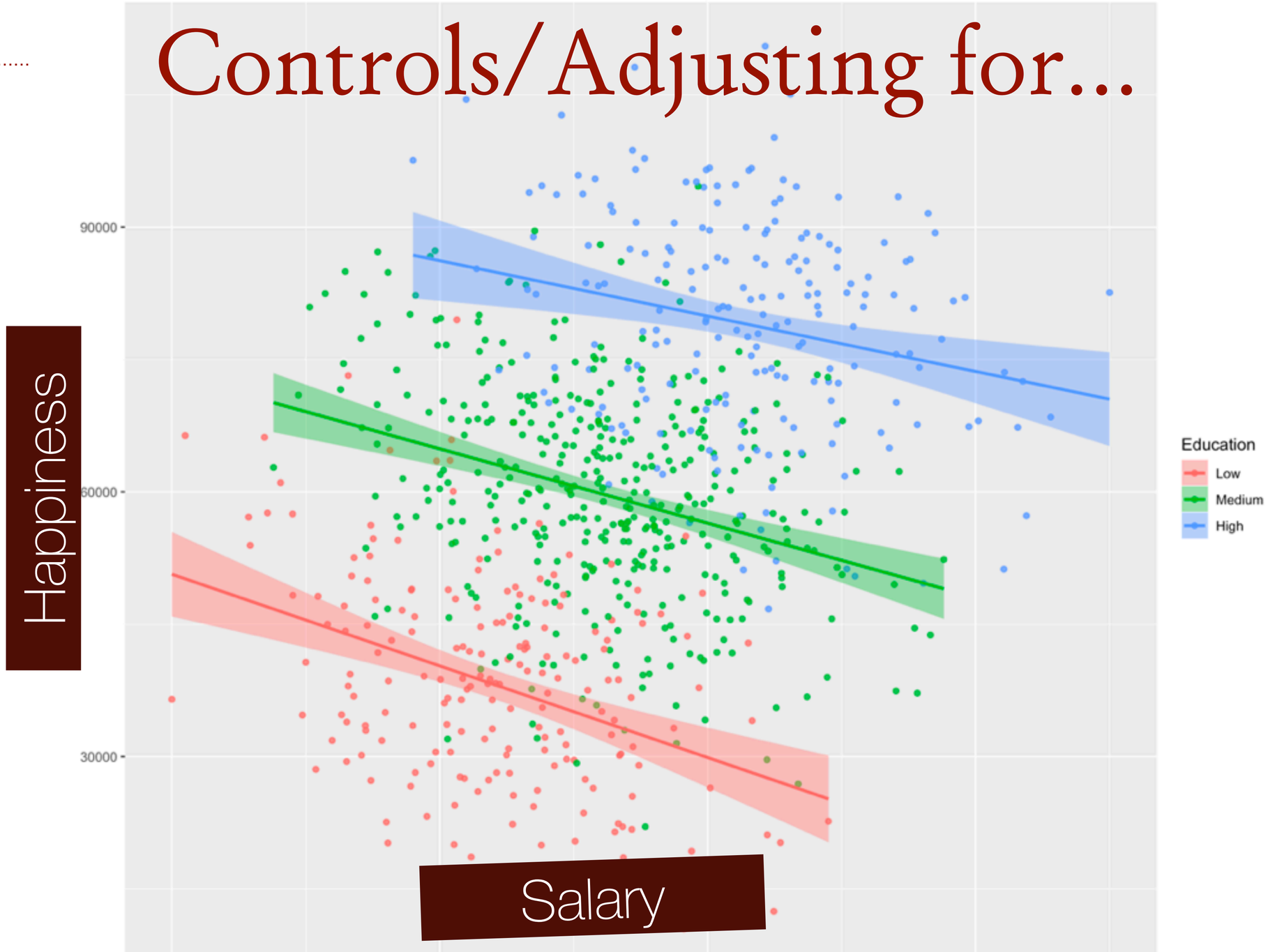
Standard error: used to calculate significance

stars(careful): tell you if coef. significantly different from zero

Controls/Adjusting for...



Controls/Adjusting for...



Take POLI-301 with me!

Things to think about: What could go wrong?

Measurement is the author measuring what they intend? Could they be capturing something else?

Threats to inference could there be some factor that explains both X and Y?

Missing-ness: are there cases missing from the data? Could that mess up their results? How?

Conclusions do the authors' conclusions actually follow from the results?

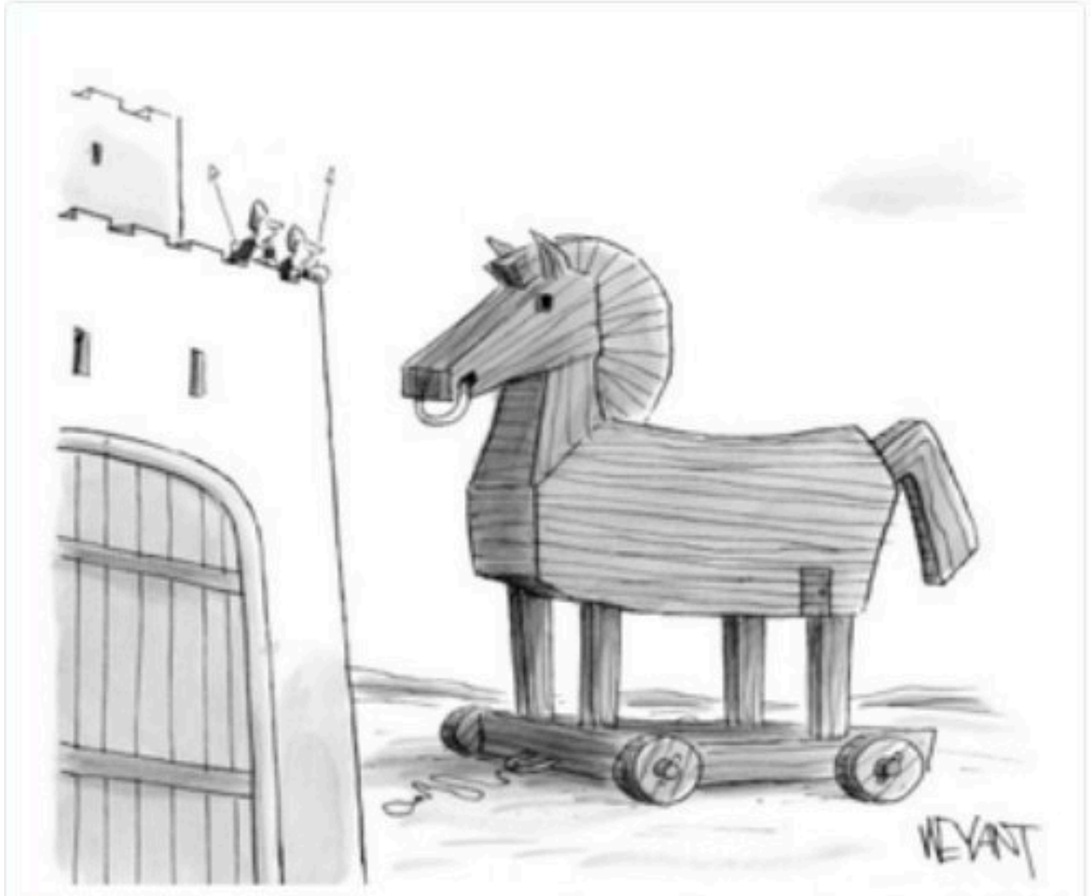
Don't worry about the math-y parts; read around them

How to read: models

What are games?

Game theory **models** are arguments about how **actors** will **behave** in **strategic** environments

They rely heavily on math because functions *f(x, y, z)* are useful for describing behavior (i.e., inputs and outputs)



"Guys, it's time for some game theory"

Making arguments explicit

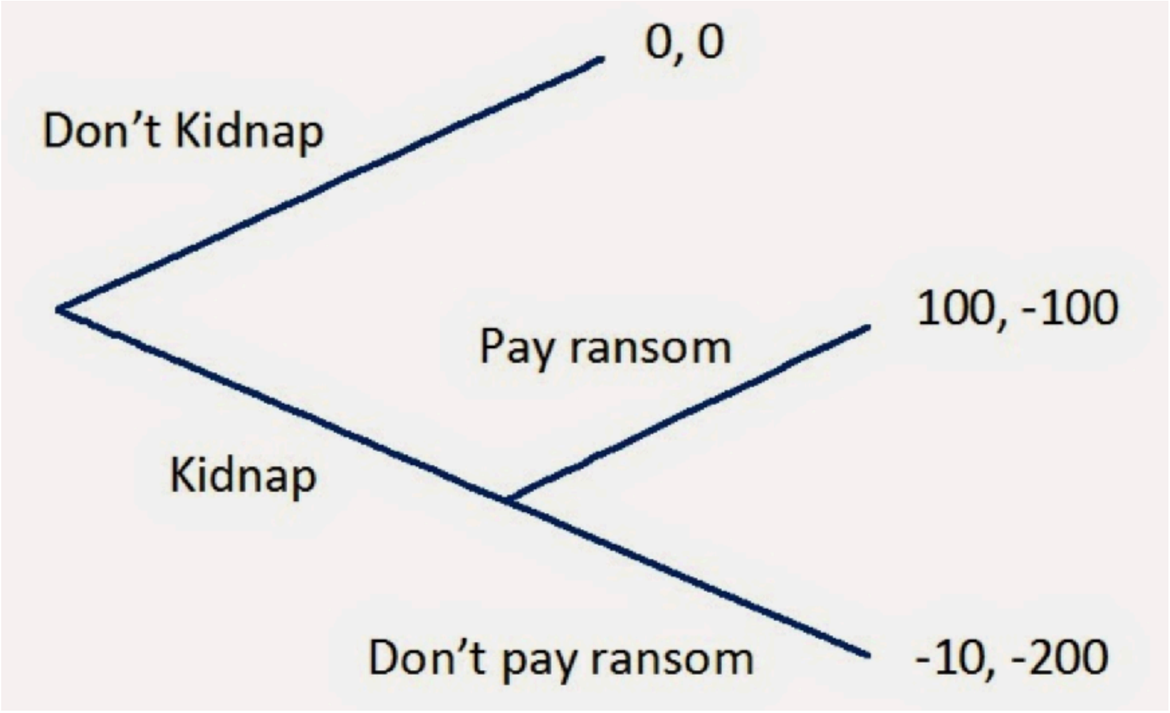
We often make claims about **what will happen** without considering the **assumptions** we've baked in

Example: Biden's performance in the debates is going to cost him the election
Assumptions: **???**

Models make these assumptions explicit

"We begin in world where voters care about X, Y, Z… candidates can choose between A and B…"

Hostage situation



“We can do this the easy way or the hard way.”

Things to think about: What could go wrong?

Assumptions is the author making assumptions that are excessively unrealistic? How would different assumptions change the game?

Implications what do the results suggest we should see in the world? Do we actually see that?

Conclusions do the authors' conclusions actually follow from the results?

Don't worry about the math-y parts; read around them

How to read: tutorial

Look for sections

Abstract: short. motivation of study, argument, data, results, almost the Tweet-able version

Introduction: basically an extended version of the abstract

Lit Review: Who else has written about X? What have they said? How is this different?

Theory: argument for why X causes Y, or the model

Data: Description of data sources; where does it come from? Limitations?

Results: What did they find? Does the theory/argument bear out?

Conclusions: Implications of research for future work, summary

Caveat

Sadly, section headers don't always use these names!

BUT, they are almost always in this rough order

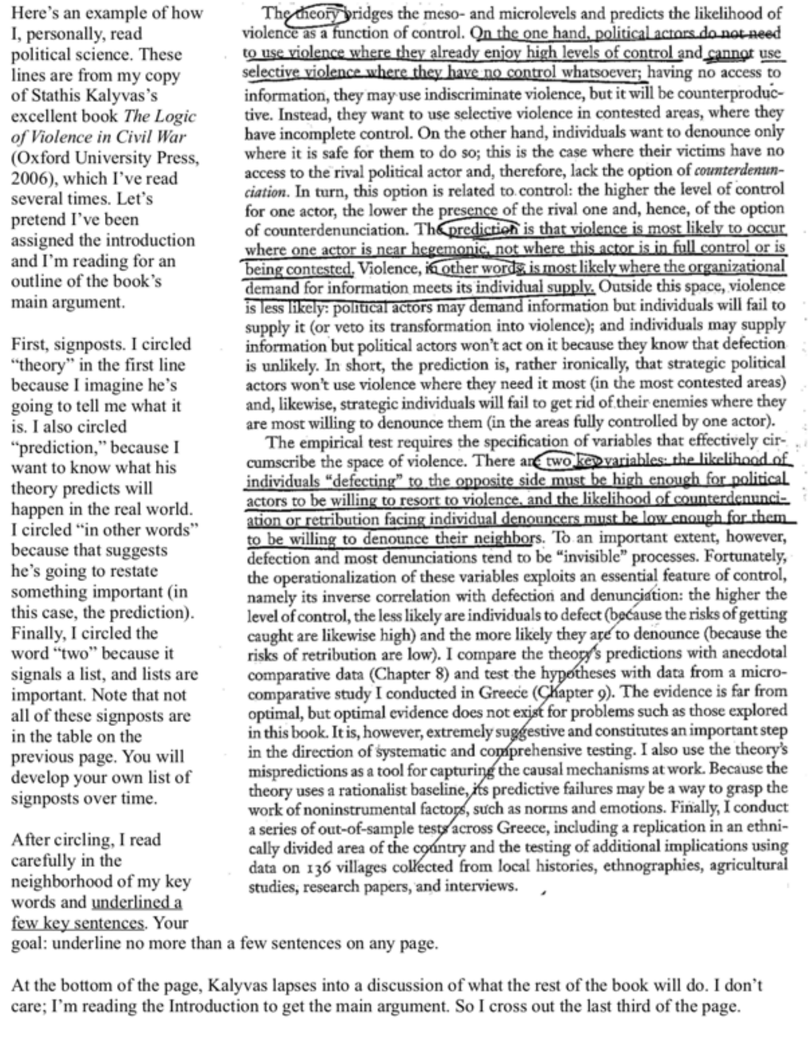
Think about what section you are in + what it's purpose is

In-class Exercise

We're going to follow Amelia Greene's tutorial for taking notes and skimming for sign-posts

We're going to apply it to Nicholas Sambanis, "*What is Civil War?*"

Break up into groups of 4-5



Here's an example of how I, personally, read political science. These lines are from my copy of Stathis Kalyvas's excellent book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Oxford University Press, 2006), which I've read several times. Let's pretend I've been assigned the introduction and I'm reading for an outline of the book's main argument.

First, signposts. I circled "theory" in the first line because I imagine he's going to tell me what it is. I also circled "prediction," because I want to know what his theory predicts will happen in the real world. I circled "in other words" because that suggests he's going to restate something important (in this case, the prediction). Finally, I circled the word "two" because it signals a list, and lists are important. Note that not all of these signposts are in the table on the previous page. You will develop your own list of signposts over time.

After circling, I read carefully in the neighborhood of my key words and underlined a few key sentences. Your goal: underline no more than a few sentences on any page.

At the bottom of the page, Kalyvas lapses into a discussion of what the rest of the book will do. I don't care; I'm reading the Introduction to get the main argument. So I cross out the last third of the page.

The theory bridges the meso- and microlevels and predicts the likelihood of violence as a function of control. On the one hand, political actors do not need to use violence where they already enjoy high levels of control and cannot use selective violence where they have no control whatsoever; having no access to information, they may use indiscriminate violence, but it will be counterproductive. Instead, they want to use selective violence in contested areas, where they have incomplete control. On the other hand, individuals want to denounce only where it is safe for them to do so; this is the case where their victims have no access to the rival political actor and, therefore, lack the option of *counterdenunciation*. In turn, this option is related to control: the higher the level of control for one actor, the lower the presence of the rival one and, hence, of the option of counterdenunciation. The prediction is that violence is most likely to occur where one actor is near hegemonic, not where this actor is in full control or is being contested. Violence, in other words, is most likely where the organizational demand for information meets its individual supply. Outside this space, violence is less likely: political actors may demand information but individuals will fail to supply it (or veto its transformation into violence); and individuals may supply information but political actors won't act on it because they know that defection is unlikely. In short, the prediction is, rather ironically, that strategic political actors won't use violence where they need it most (in the most contested areas) and, likewise, strategic individuals will fail to get rid of their enemies where they are most willing to denounce them (in the areas fully controlled by one actor).

The empirical test requires the specification of variables that effectively circumscribe the space of violence. There are two key variables: the likelihood of individuals "defecting" to the opposite side must be high enough for political actors to be willing to resort to violence, and the likelihood of counterdenunciation or retribution facing individual denouncers must be low enough for them to be willing to denounce their neighbors. To an important extent, however, defection and most denunciations tend to be "invisible" processes. Fortunately, the operationalization of these variables exploits an essential feature of control, namely its inverse correlation with defection and denunciation: the higher the level of control, the less likely are individuals to defect (because the risks of getting caught are likewise high) and the more likely they are to denounce (because the risks of retribution are low). I compare the theory's predictions with anecdotal comparative data (Chapter 8) and test the hypotheses with data from a micro-comparative study I conducted in Greece (Chapter 9). The evidence is far from optimal, but optimal evidence does not exist for problems such as those explored in this book. It is, however, extremely suggestive and constitutes an important step in the direction of systematic and comprehensive testing. I also use the theory's mispredictions as a tool for capturing the causal mechanisms at work. Because the theory uses a rationalist baseline, its predictive failures may be a way to grasp the work of noninstrumental factors, such as norms and emotions. Finally, I conduct a series of out-of-sample tests across Greece, including a replication in an ethnically divided area of the country and the testing of additional implications using data on 136 villages collected from local histories, ethnographies, agricultural studies, research papers, and interviews.

Next Week

What is political violence?

No class Thursday