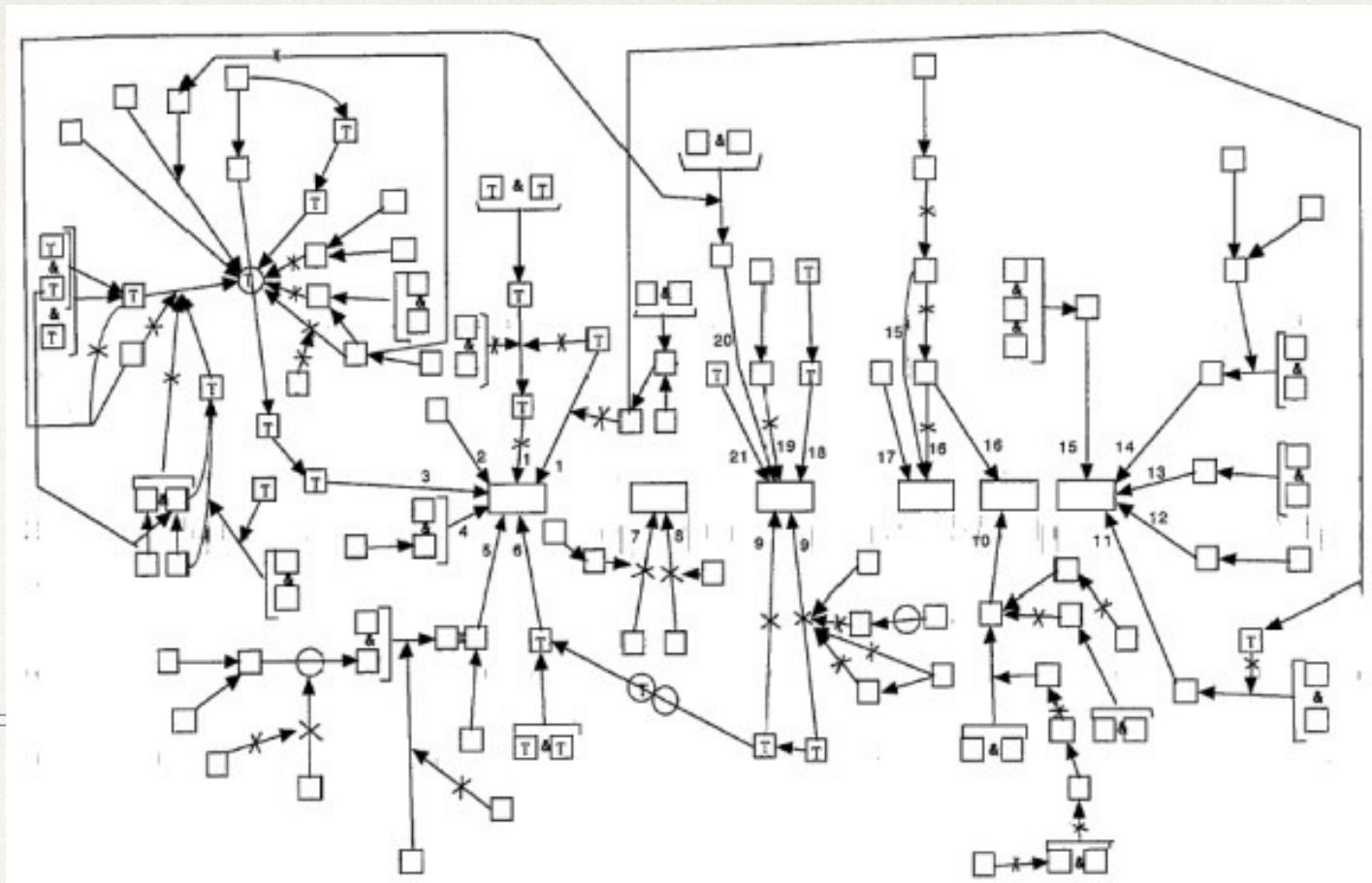


Premises and Conclusion

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*Deductive versus
Inductive Arguments*

What is
Beccaria's
argument?

?
the death penalty is
not necessary

?
the death penalty is
not useful

?
the death penalty
is not just

Conclusion: the
death penalty is **not**
necessary, nor useful,
nor just in a well-
ordered society

Reminder:

Part of Beccaria's Argument in Brief

The death penalty is not useful **because** it does not deter or prevent crime.

The death penalty does not deter or prevent crime **because** (1) it only produces a short feeling of horror in our minds, but to prevent crime we need to expose the public to continuous fear. Life imprisonment, in fact, works better than the death penalty in deterring or preventing crime because it exposes the public to a continuous fear.

The death penalty does not deter or prevent crime **because** (2) one's fear of being put to death is surpassed by one's hope of benefitting greatly from a crime, especially if the criminal is poor (which is often the case). By contrast, one's fear of spending a life in slavery cannot be surpassed by one's hope of benefitting greatly from a crime.

Can You now Better Assess These conflicting Arguments About the Death Penalty?

I don t think you should support the death penalty to seek revenge. I don t think that s right. I think the reason to support the death penalty is because it saves other people s lives.

(George W. Bush)

izquotes.com

It's racist

Blacks who kill whites are much more likely to be executed than whites who kill blacks. Forty percent of death row inmates are black.

It targets the poor

More than 90 percent of those charged with capital crimes are too poor to hire an experienced lawyer.

It kills the innocent

Since 1900, more than 400 innocent people have been given a death sentence. At least 23 of the innocent were executed.

It doesn't stop crime

States without the death penalty have lower murder rates. As Texas outraged the nation in executions from 1982-91, violent crime in the state grew nearly 46 percent — much faster than the national rate.

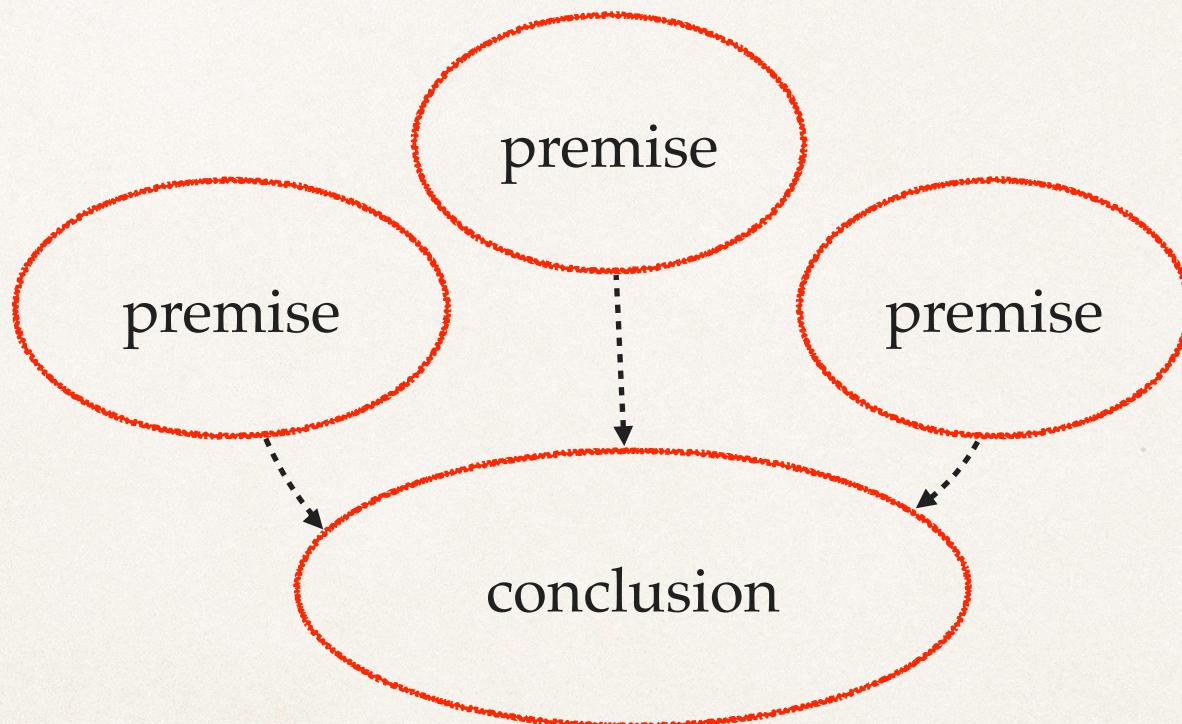
It's barbaric

At least 10 of the people executed since 1976 were under 18 at the time of the crime. Even more "cruel and unusual" were the 3 executions of mentally retarded convicts in 1995. Executions can be torture; one electrocution required 3 jolts delivered over 14 minutes.

Campaign to End the Death Penalty
P.O. Box 25730, Chicago, IL 60625

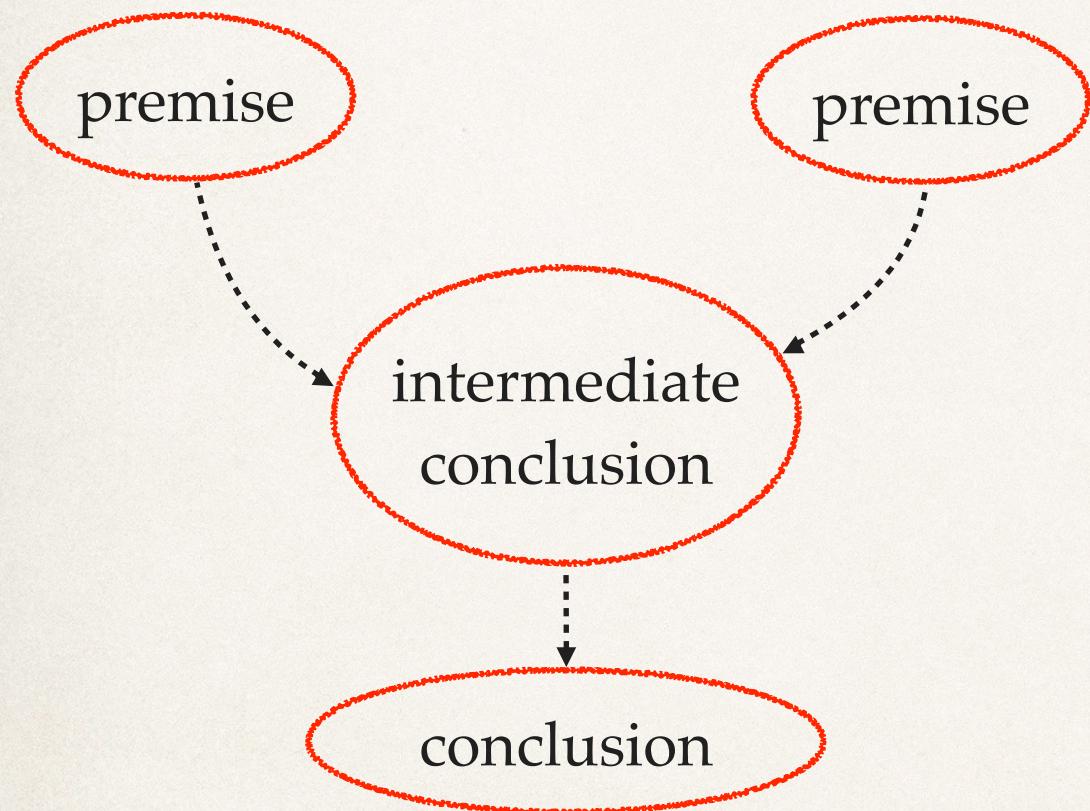
Let us Think of Arguments More Abstractly

Any Argument Consists of a Set of Premises That Are Meant to Establish a Conclusion

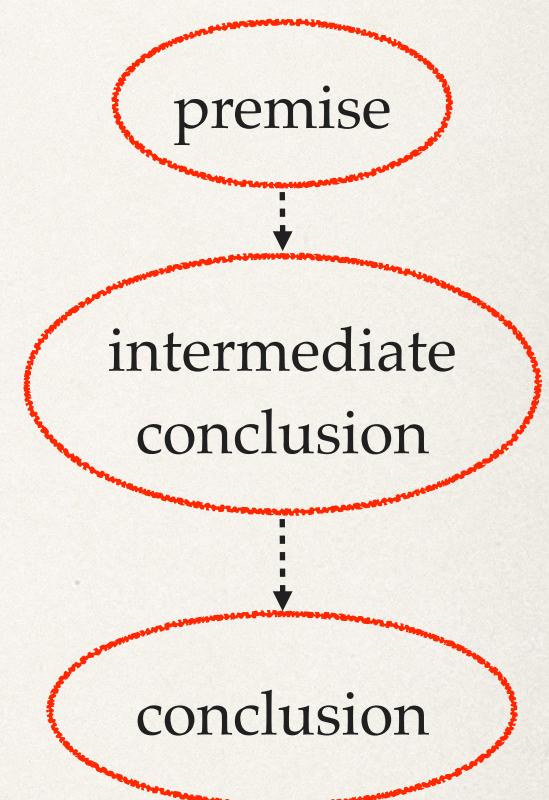


NB: The directed arrow means that the premise offers some support for the conclusion

Different Argument Structures



*Structure with
converging premises*



Linear structure

What Types of Premises Are There?

Empirical Assumptions

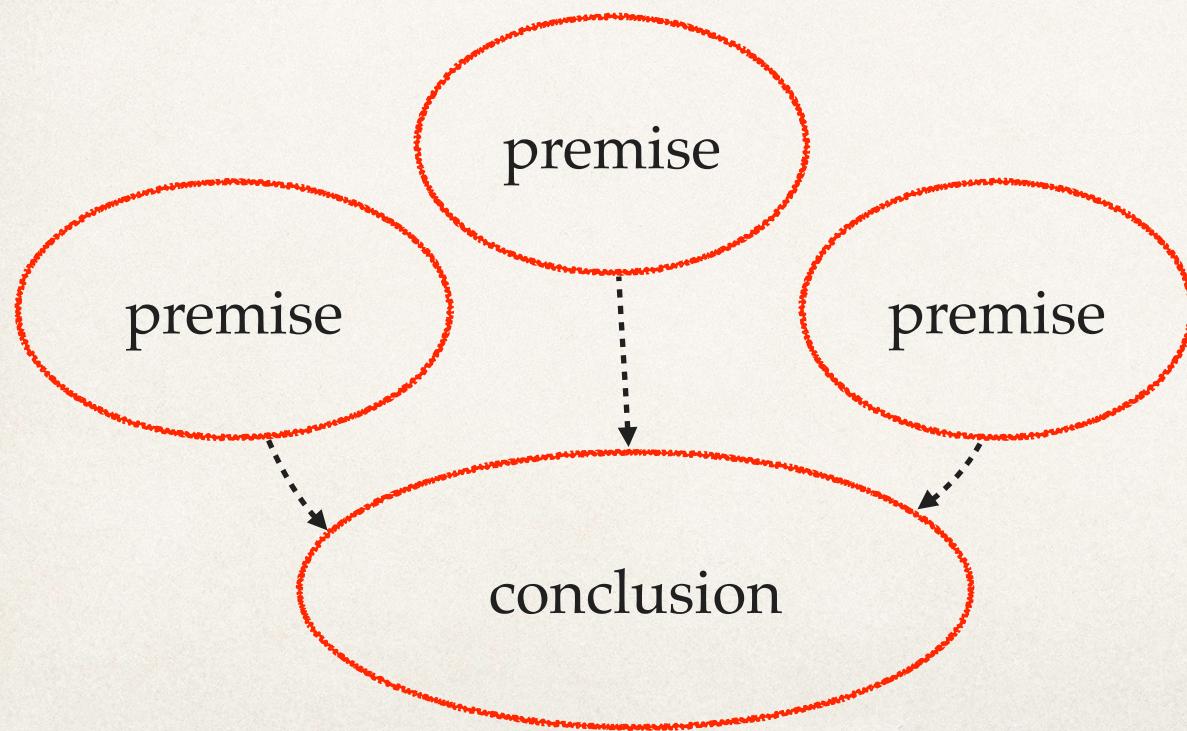
Implicit Assumptions

Philosophical Assumptions

Facts

Intermediate conclusions

possibly more...



Examples of Premises in Beccaria's Argument

Empirical Assumption:

Our minds are more affected by weak and repeated impressions, rather than by one intense and brief impression

Philosophical Assumption:

"A punishment, to be just, should have only that degree of severity which is sufficient to deter others."

Fact:

The death penalty triggers an intense but brief feeling of horror in our minds

Intermediate conclusion (B):

The death penalty is not an effective way to deter or prevent future crimes

What We Have Learned About Critical Reasoning So Far

- ❖ An argument consists of **premises** and a **conclusion**
- ❖ Premises can be of *different types* (assumptions, facts, intermediate conclusions, etc.)

What Makes an Argument Good?

- ❖ **Reality Check:**

the *premises* are *true*

- ❖ **Formal Validity:**

the conclusion *follows from* the premises

Is Beccaria's Argument Good?

- ❖ **Reality Check:**

are the *premises true*?

- ❖ **Formal Validity:**

does the conclusion *follow from* the premises?

Is This Premise True?

Empirical Assumption:

Our minds are more affected by weak and repeated impressions, rather than by one intense and brief impression

Maybe
psychologists who have studied people's reaction to pain and stimuli can tell us?

Is This Premise True?

*Philosophical
Assumption:*

"A punishment, to be just, should have only that degree of severity which is sufficient to deter others."

We need to decide on the **purpose or function** of punishment. Is the purpose of punishment deterring others from committing future crimes, as Beccaria implicitly assumes?

What if We Cannot Assess Whether the Premises are True?

Suppose we are unable to check whether all of Beccaria's premises are true. We are unable to find evidence and arguments in support of all of Beccaria's premises.

What shall we do?

OPTION 1:

Keep believing Beccaria's conclusion because
(a) assumptions are plausible; and
(b) we haven't heard any counter argument

OPTION 2:

Suspending judgment about Beccaria's conclusion until we acquire arguments in support of all of its premises

OPTION 3:

Adjusting Beccaria's argument by
(a) slightly reformulating its conclusion or
(b) changing the premises

The Choice Between the Three Options in the Previous Slide Is Not Obvious...

Keep in mind, however, that an argument can hardly have all of its premises supported by compelling evidence. Some premises need to be taken for granted. *Demanding justification for every premise is a sensible thing to do, but it might also lead us not to believe anything at all.*

Can we afford not to have an opinion about
the death penalty?

The Buddhist Parable of the Arrow

It's just as if a man were wounded with an arrow thickly smeared with poison. His friends and companions, kinsmen & relatives would provide him with a surgeon, and the man would say, "I won't have this arrow removed until I know whether the man who wounded me was a noble warrior, a priest, a merchant, or a worker." He would say, "I won't have this arrow removed until I know the given name and clan name of the man who wounded me... until I know whether he was tall, medium, or short... until I know whether he was dark, ruddy-brown, or golden-colored... until I know his home village, town, or city... until I know whether the bow with which I was wounded was a long bow or a crossbow... until I know whether the feathers of the shaft with which I was wounded were those of a vulture, a stork, a hawk, a peacock, or another bird... etc."

The man would die and those things would still remain unknown to him.

Is Beccaria's Argument Good?

- ✿ **Reality Check:**

are the *premises true*?

- ✿ **Formal Validity:**

does the conclusion *follow from* the premises?

What does it Mean for a Conclusion to Follow From the Premises?

- ❖ Whenever the premises are true, the conclusion is **always** and **invariably** true. This means that the argument is **deductive**.
- ❖ Whenever the premises are true, the conclusion is **most likely** or **most probably** true. This means that the argument is **inductive**.

An Example of a Deductive Argument in Geometry from Euclid's *Elements*

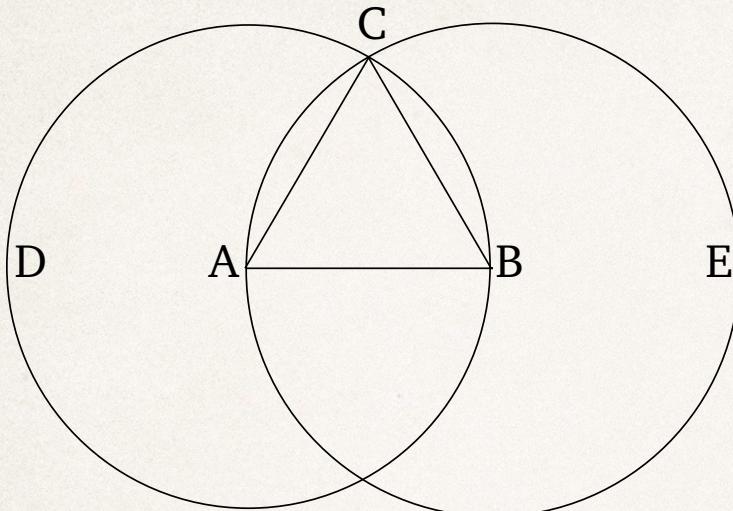
Euclid's *Elements*

(circa 300 BC)



Proposition 1

To construct an equilateral triangle on a given finite straight-line.



Let AB be the given finite straight-line.

So it is required to construct an equilateral triangle on the straight-line AB .

Let the circle BCD with center A and radius AB have been drawn [Post. 3], and again let the circle ACE with center B and radius BA have been drawn [Post. 3]. And let the straight-lines CA and CB have been joined from the point C , where the circles cut one another,[†] to the points A and B (respectively) [Post. 1].

And since the point A is the center of the circle CDB , AC is equal to AB [Def. 1.15]. Again, since the point B is the center of the circle CAE , BC is equal to BA [Def. 1.15]. But CA was also shown (to be) equal to AB . Thus, CA and CB are each equal to AB . But things equal to the same thing are also equal to one another [C.N. 1]. Thus, CA is also equal to CB . Thus, the three (straight-lines) CA , AB , and BC are equal to one another.

Def. 15

$AC=AB$

$BC=BA$

Common Notion 1

$CA=BC$

$CA=AB=BC$

Def. 15: A circle is such that all of the straight-lines radiating towards the circumference from one point amongst those lying inside the figure are equal to one another.

Common Notion 1: Things equal to the same thing are also equal to one another.

An Example of an Inductive Argument from Every Day Life

The B train broke down at least once a month in the past ten years

Nothing will change in the maintenance procedures for the B train in the next year

The B train will break down at least once a month during the next year

Is Beccaria's Argument Deductive or Inductive?

Some parts of Beccaria's argument are **deductive** because *if* the premises are true — *if they are true*, though they might not be true — the conclusion **always** follow.

But some other parts of Beccaria's Argument are **inductive** because if the premises are true— *if they are true*, though they might not be true — the conclusion **most probably** follow.

A Deductive Part of Beccaria's Argument ...With Some Missing Premises!

Fact: "There is **no man**, who, upon the least reflection, would put in competition the total and perpetual loss of his liberty, with the greatest advantages he could possibly obtain in consequence of a crime"

Philosophical Assumption:

"A punishment, to be just, should have only that degree of severity which is sufficient to deter others."

Intermediate conclusion: "Perpetual slavery [=life imprisonment] has in it all that is necessary to deter the most hardened and determined, as much as the punishment of death. I say, It has more"

The death penalty
is **not just**

The Inductive Part of Beccaria's Argument — Why Inductive?

Let us, for a moment, attend to the reasoning of a robber or assassin, who is deterred from violating the laws by the gibbet or the wheel. ...He reasons thus:

"What are these laws that I am bound to respect, which make so great a difference between me and the rich man? ... Who made these laws? The rich and the great, who never deigned to visit the miserable hut of the poor; who have never seen him dividing a piece of mouldy bread, amidst the cries of his famished children, and the tears of his wife. Let us break those ties, fatal to the greatest part of mankind, and only useful to a few indolent tyrants. ...

I shall live free and happy on the fruits of my courage and industry. A day of pain [=death penalty] and repentance may come, but it will be short; and for an hour of grief, I shall enjoy years of pleasure and liberty. "

It is only a matter of probability that other robbers are just like the **one** robber Beccaria describes. Beccaria's conclusion—i.e. that crime will not be deterred—applies to **everybody** in society, not just to one individual. *The argument is inductive because it is a generalization from one case.*

What We Have Learned About Critical Reasoning So Far

- ✿ An argument consists of **premises** and a **conclusion**
- ✿ Premises can be of *different types* (assumptions, facts, intermediate conclusions, etc.)
- ✿ Good arguments are **formally valid** and have **true premises**
- ✿ Not all true premises can be supported by compelling evidence.
(Sometimes we might have to content ourselves with *plausible* premises or premises that have *not yet been refuted*)
- ✿ Validity can be **inductive** or **deductive**