

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 1

Classifying Studies: Features and Benefits

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Fall, 2016
Slides at www.StatLit.org/pdf/2016-Schield-Studies-Slides.pdf

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 2

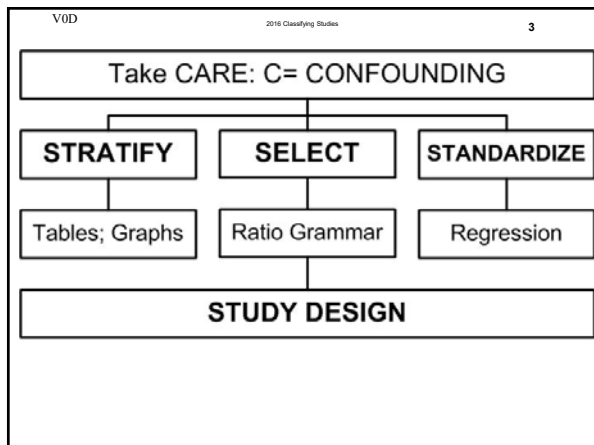
Influences on Statistics

Typically, statistics are used as evidence for causal connections.

Statistics are numbers in context they can be influenced – if not determined – by their context.

Their influences have been grouped into four categories: Confounding, Assembly, Randomness and Error (Bias).

The following slide reviews confounding:



V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 4

Classifying Studies

Experiment: Requires manipulation by researcher

- Scientific: Homogeneous subjects; manipulation is repeatable
- Randomized controlled trials (RCT): Subjects are heterogeneous; one-time manipulation

Quasi-experiment: Manipulation by researcher or intervention (current or past) by nature.

Observational study: Researcher is passive.

- Longitudinal: Measurement before & after exposure
- Cross-sectional: All measurements for same time.

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 5

Study Design Benefits: Resists Confounders

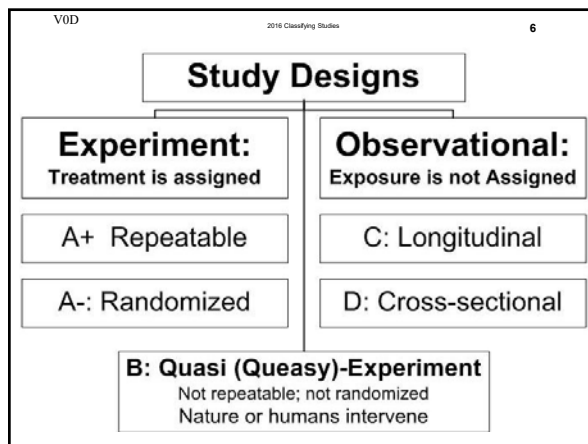
Experiment:

- Scientific: Can resist all confounders.
- Randomized controlled trials (RCT): Statistically controls for all pre-existing confounders.

Quasi-experiment: Researcher or nature initiates. Controls for time-dependent & constant confounders

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- Longitudinal: Controls for constant confounders
- Cross-sectional: Controls for time-dependent CF.



V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 7

Famous Science Experiments

Galileo: Falling velocity \sim time-squared
 Harvey: Heart drives blood circulation
 Newton: White light is a combination of colors
 Lavoisier: Discovery of oxygen
 Faraday: Showed light was electro-magnetic
 Joule: Showed that heat was really motion
 Source: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/3341042/Top-ten-greatest-experiments.html

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 8

More Science Experiments: Repeatable

Approximate boiling point of water, by elevation

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 9

More Science Experiments: Density of Water vs. Temp

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 10

Randomized (Clinical) Trial: 1946: Salk Polio Vaccine

Randomly assigned to second-graders.

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 11

Observational Studies: 1948: Framingham Study

MI =myocardial infarction (aka heart attack).
 Systolic/diastolic: 130/90

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 12

Famous Quasi-Experiments: 1799: Bloodletting:

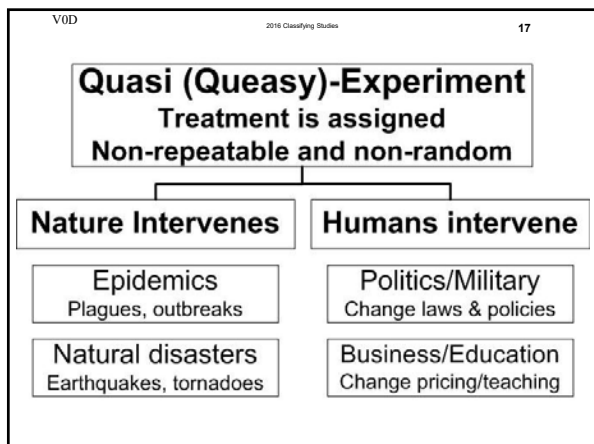
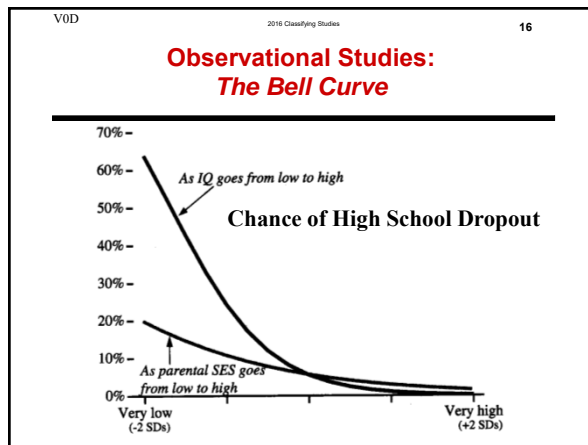
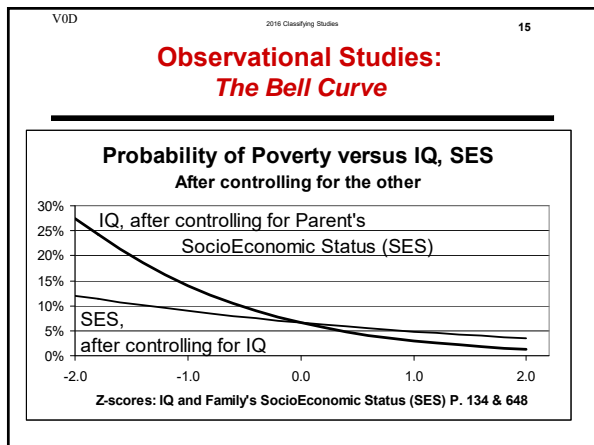
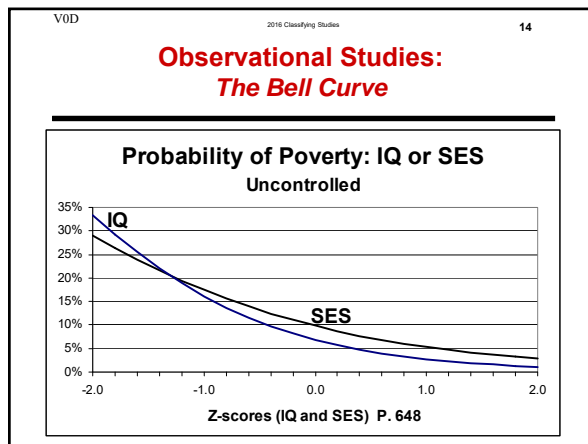
Dec. 13, 1799: George Washington awoke with a bad sore throat and began to decline rapidly. He asked to be bled. Physicians drained an estimated 5 to 7 pints in less than 16 hours. Normal blood volume per adult is 8 to 12 pints. Despite their best efforts, Washington died on December 17, leading to speculation that excessive blood loss contributed to his demise.

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 13

**Observational Studies:
1979: National Longitudinal Study of Youth**

Followed youth (ages 14-22) for 26 years.
Tracked employment status and other social outcomes (prison, marriage, divorce, etc.)
<http://www.bls.gov/nls/NLS-50th-Anniversary-Conference-Horrigan.pdf>

Most controversial result was “The Bell Curve.”
That book claimed that intelligence was real, hereditary and had high explanatory value.



V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 18

**Quasi-Experiments:
Examples**

Longitudinal:
Auto fatalities before+after change in speed limits.
City gun sales before+after sensationalized killing.
Student activism before+after awareness campaign.

Cross-sectional:
College drinking levels at two similar colleges:
one with alcohol orientation; other without.

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 19

**Quasi-Experiment:
Changing Concealed Carry Laws**

In “More Guns; Less Crime”, John Lott used multivariate analysis to argue that passing concealed-carry laws for handguns reduced crime.

Crime Vs. Guns
Serious violent crimes vs. gun ownership

Crime, left scale, in millions

Guns, right scale, per 1000 persons

Source: Dept. of Justice

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 20

California Handguns and Violence

Violent Crime Rate

Handgun Sales

2013, 2014 extrapolated from FBI gun ownership reports

Violent Crime rate Handguns

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 21

**Quasi-Experiment:
Policing by Helicopter**

burglaries

A - Car patrol only
B - Helicopter + car patrol

days

V0D 2016 Classifying Studies 22

Conclusion

Quasi-experiments are better than observational studies because the researcher or nature controls the assignment or the timing.

Essential for studying those natural interventions or disasters that are one-time only: floods, typhoons, hurricanes, plagues, etc.

Essential for those human interventions that are one-time only: surgery, training programs, changing advertising, changing price/discounts/specials, etc.

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Take CARE: C= CONFOUNDING

STRATIFY

Tables; Graphs

SELECT

Ratio Grammar

STANDARDIZE

Regression

STUDY DESIGN

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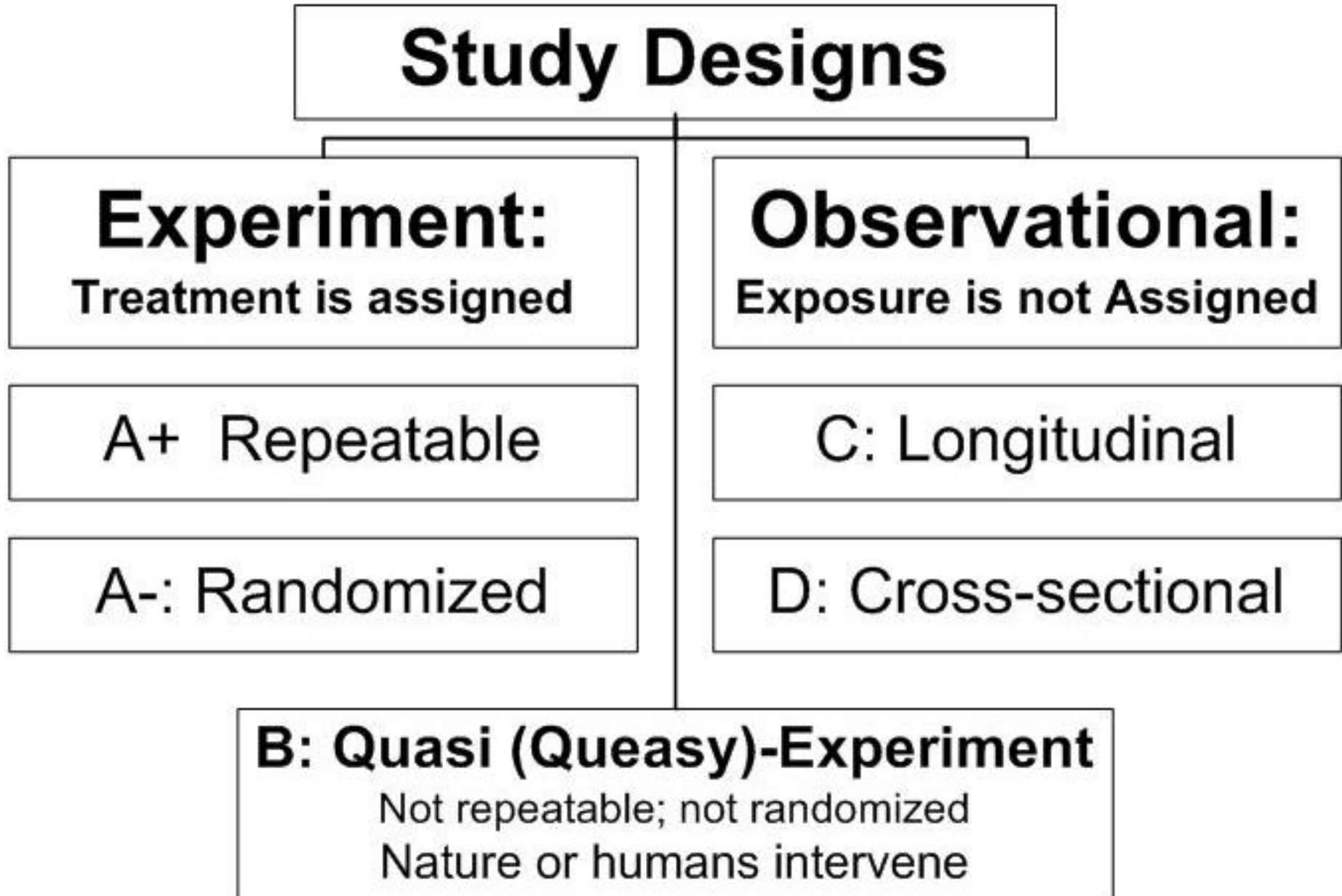
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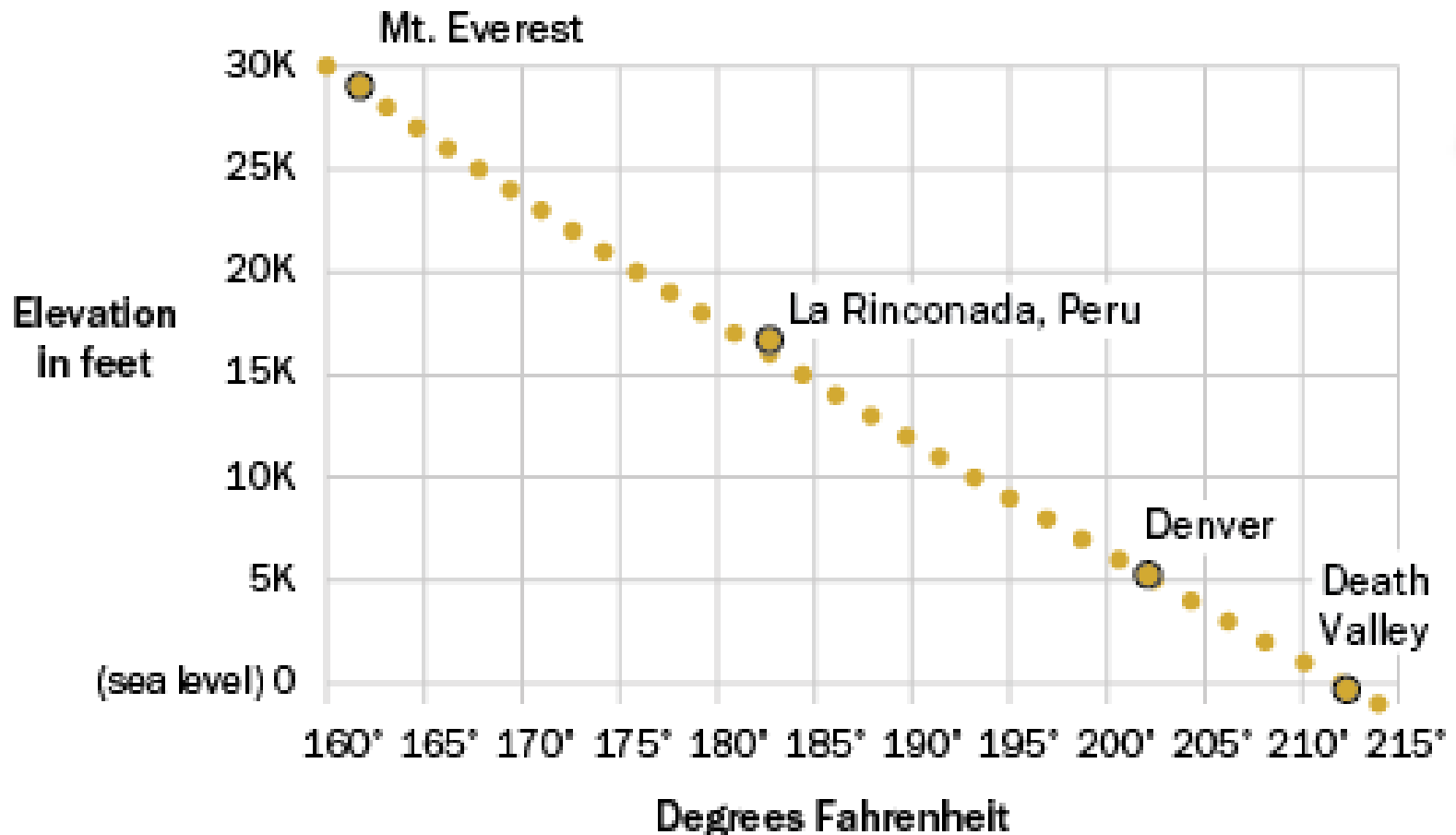
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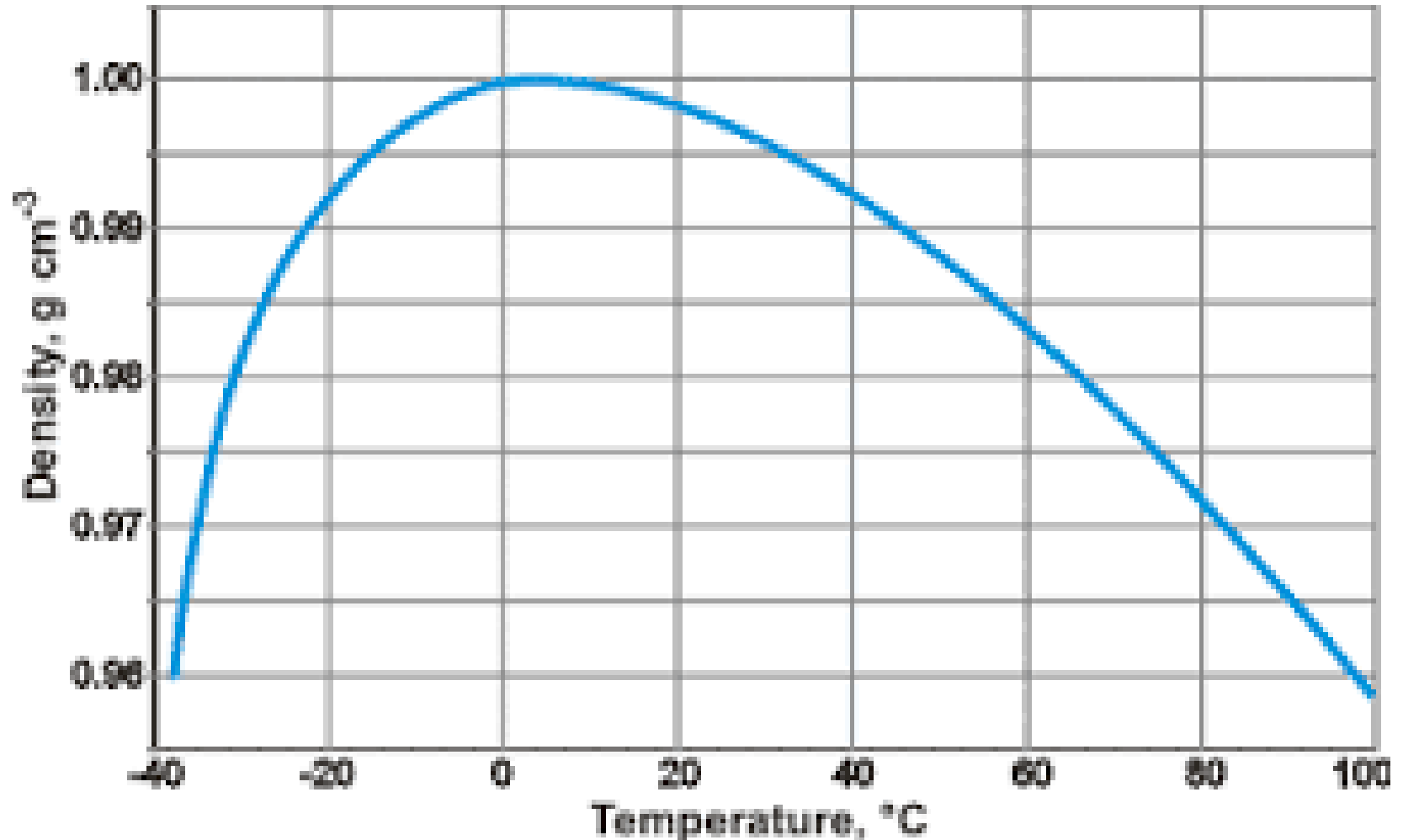
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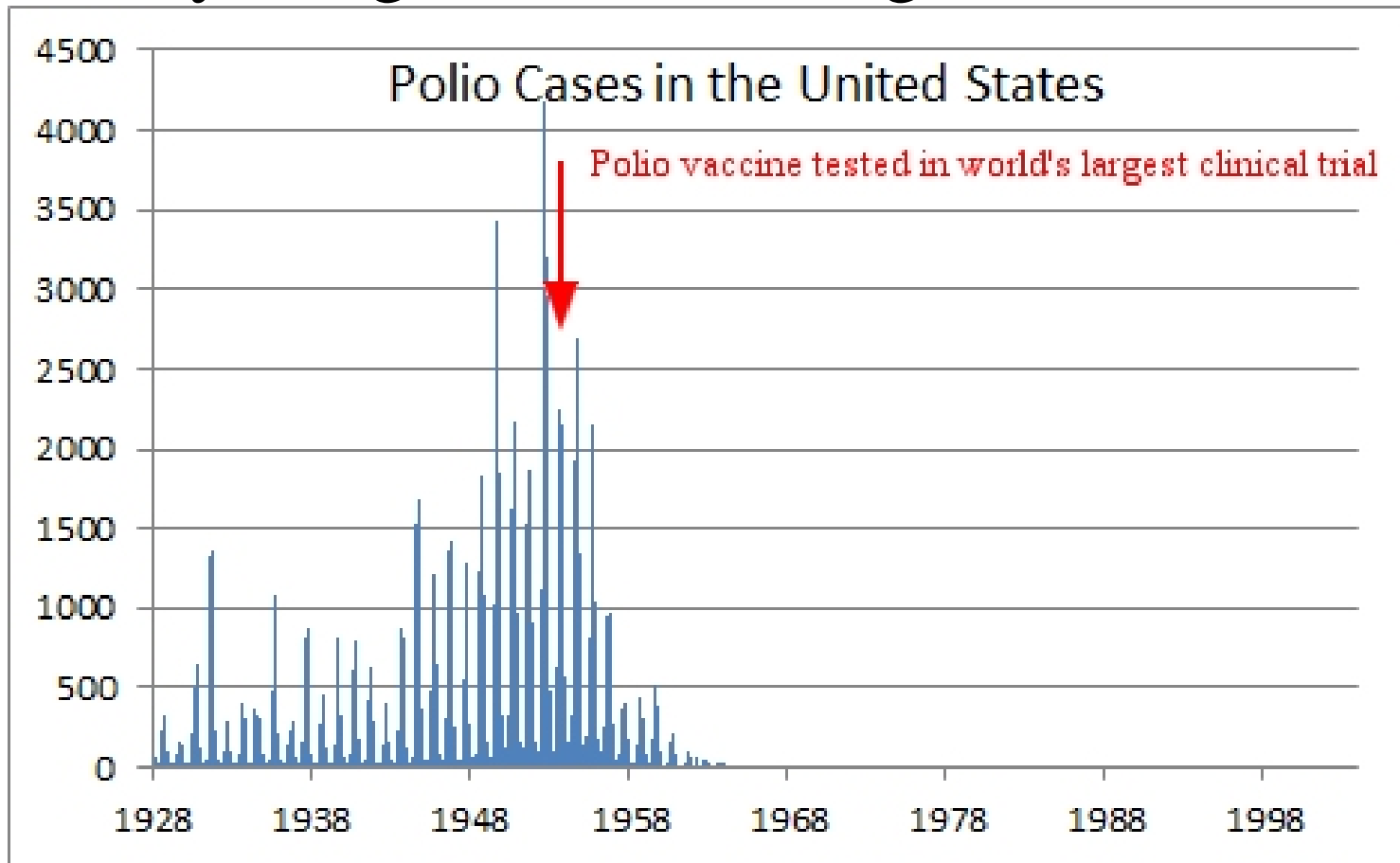


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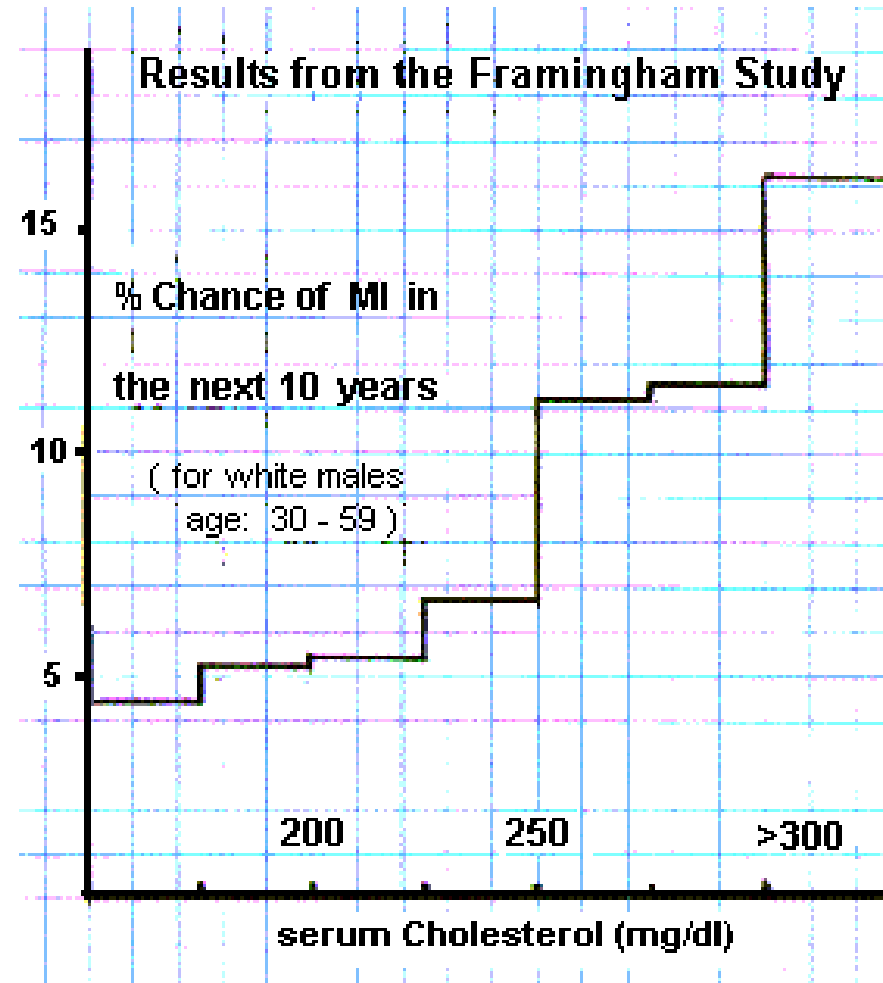
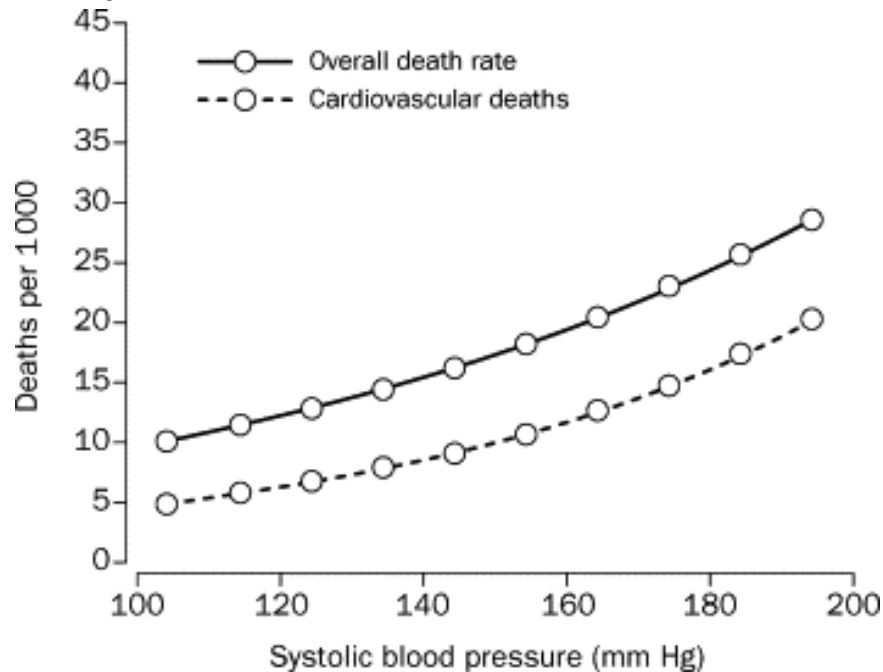
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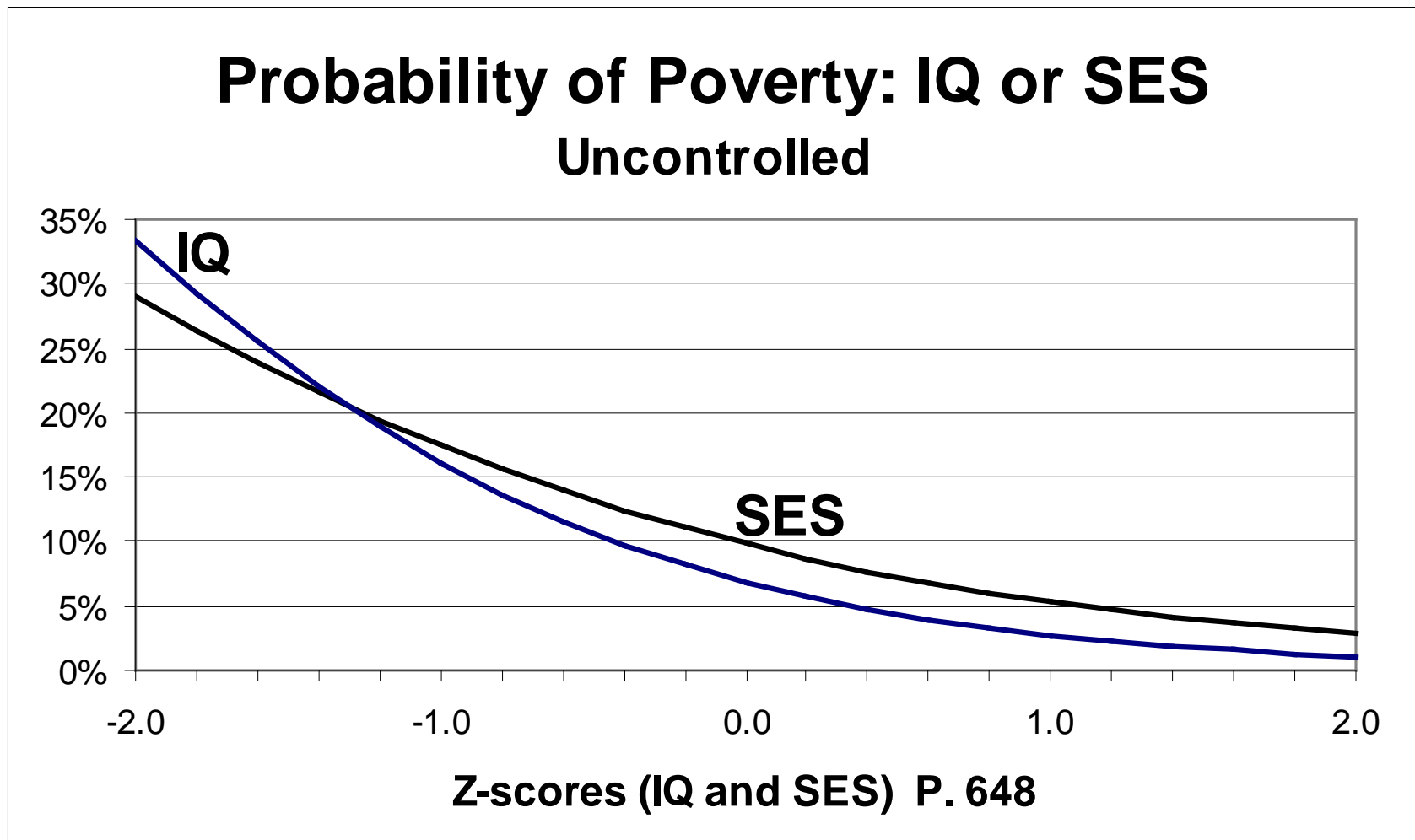
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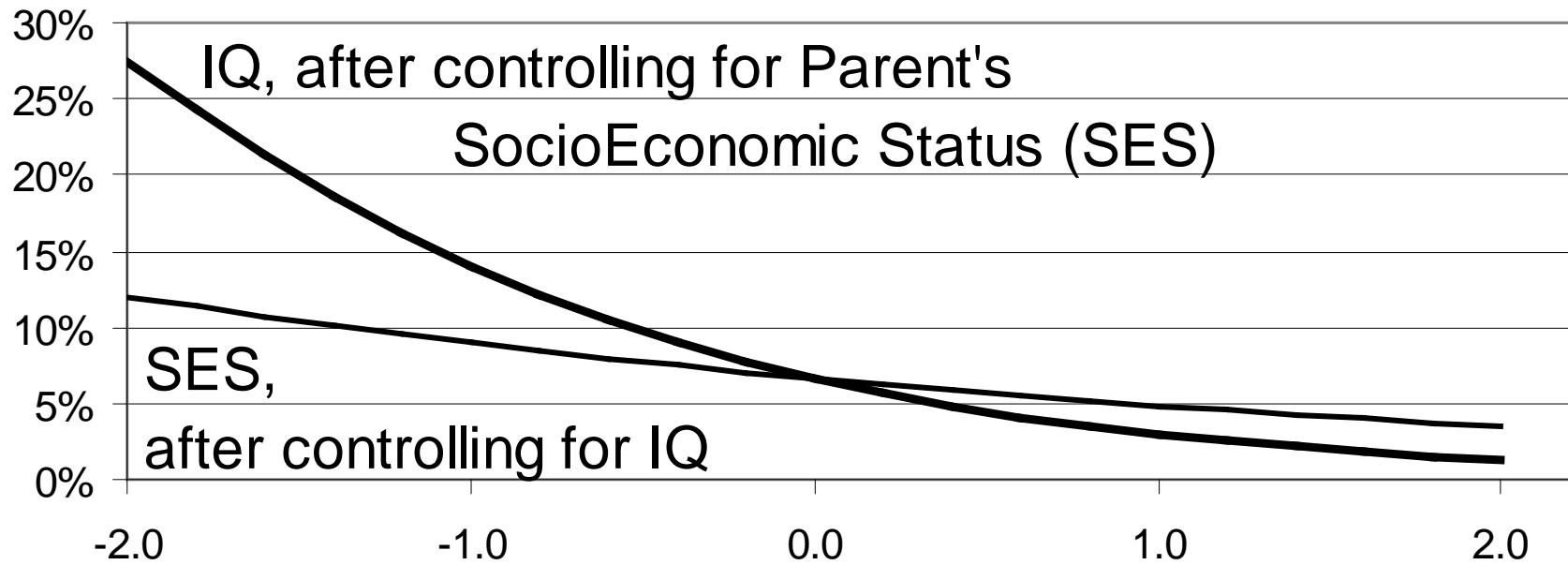
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Observational Studies: *The Bell Curve*



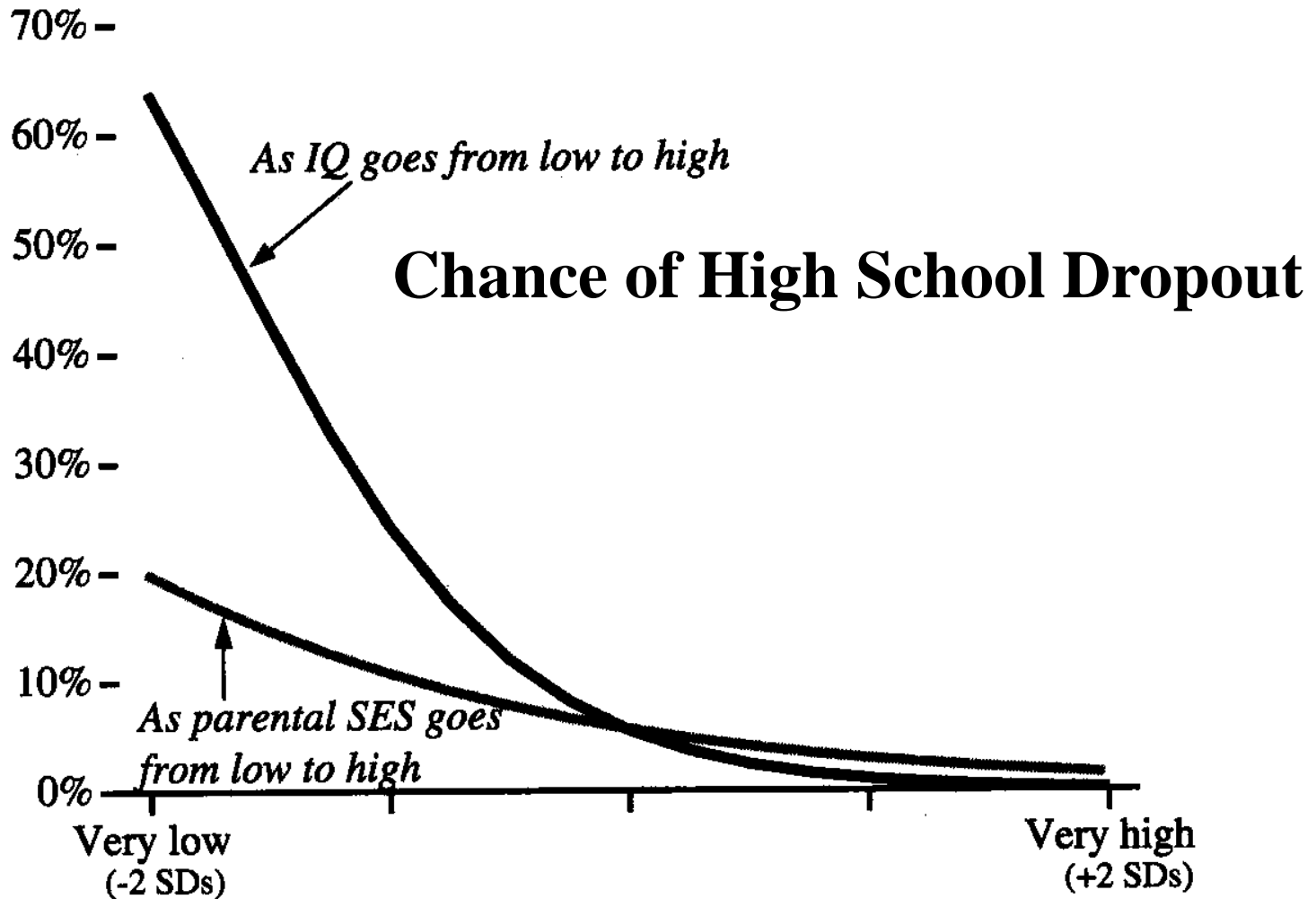
Observational Studies: *The Bell Curve*

Probability of Poverty versus IQ, SES After controlling for the other



Z-scores: IQ and Family's SocioEconomic Status (SES) P. 134 & 648

Observational Studies: *The Bell Curve*



Quasi (Queasy)-Experiment

Treatment is assigned
Non-repeatable and non-random

Nature Intervenes

Epidemics

Plagues, outbreaks

Natural disasters

Earthquakes, tornadoes

Humans intervene

Politics/Military

Change laws & policies

Business/Education

Change pricing/teaching

Quasi-Experiments: Examples

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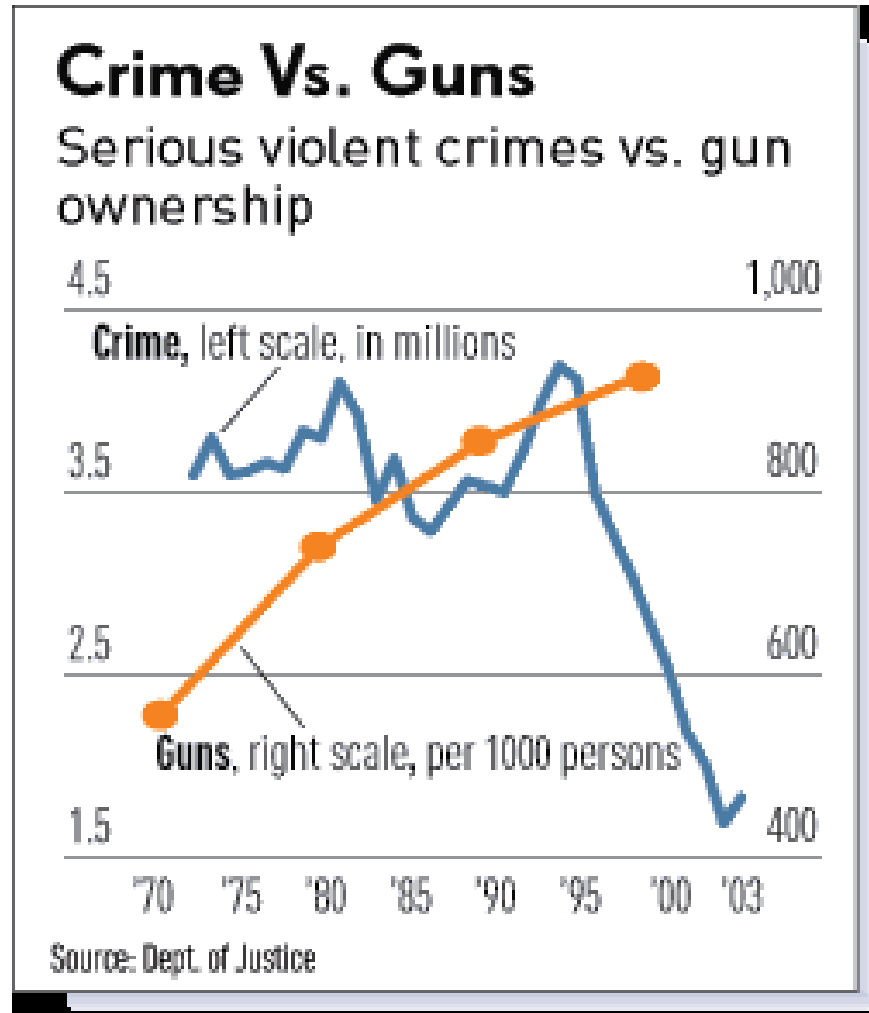
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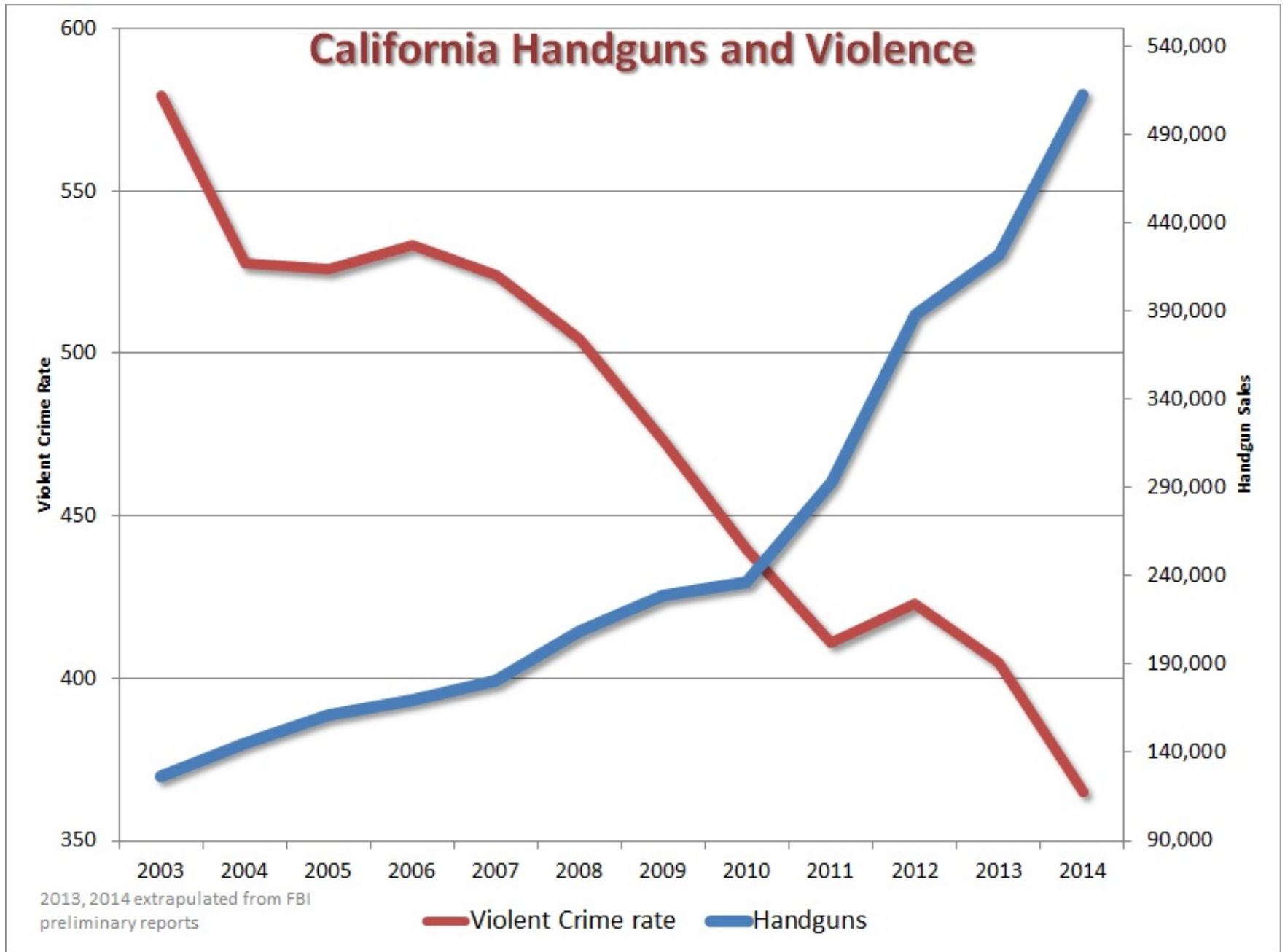
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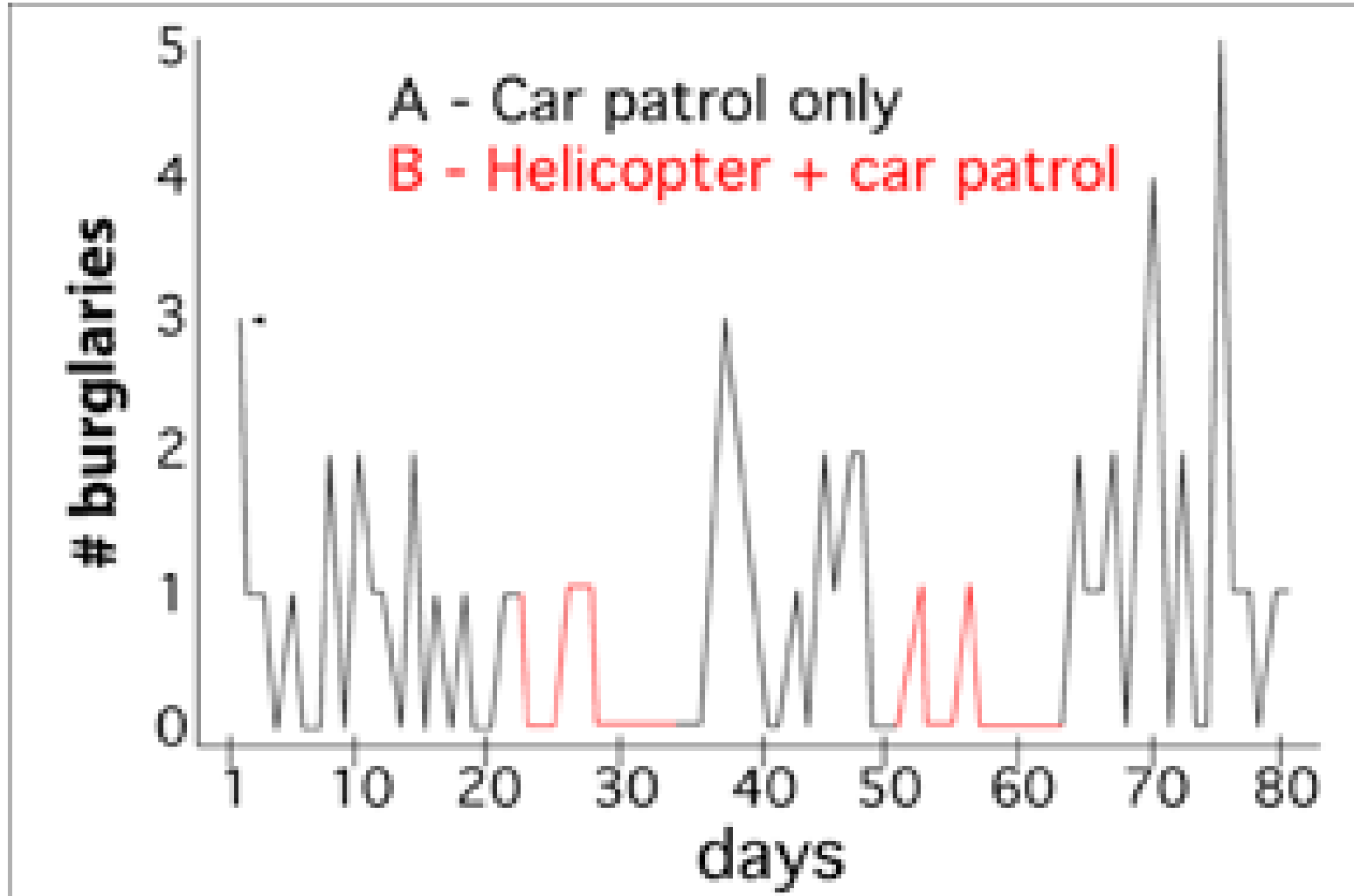
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Quasi-Experiment: Policing by Helicopter



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