

Introduction to World Politics

Causal Hypotheses from the Atlas
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The press is free to write just about anything it so desires (libel is illegal). To some, this is both a blessing and a curse. This results in both a free, investigative press and a hodgepodge of misinformation based on the flimsiest of logical threads. This assignment will give you the opportunity to parse through (online) newspaper stories and really think about their causal statements.

Recall that a causal statement is of the form:

As X increases (or decreases), Y will increase (or decrease).

Or of the form:

Increasing (or Decreasing) X causes Y to increase (or decrease).

Here, X and Y are two variables that are causally connected. This statement is a good causal hypothesis because it is both a hypothesis (empirical, falsifiable, and general) and it makes a causal statement (A causes B). Of course you will use only one direction for each variable.

Showing causality requires three things: high correlation, theoretic feasibility, and temporal precedence. In this assignment, you are not required to show causality; you are only required to write causal hypotheses.

Peruse through the atlas for the course. Compare maps. Ruminant on similarities across maps. Contemplate if there may be causal connections between the variables measured on one map with those measured on another. Find the connections. Write five causal hypotheses using the maps in the atlas.

For this assignment, you just need to provide the names of the two maps you used. Thus, you would write the following:

1. Increasing the amount of food air received by a state (Map 18) causes the state's death rate (Map 12b) to increase.

Do five of these for 10 points.