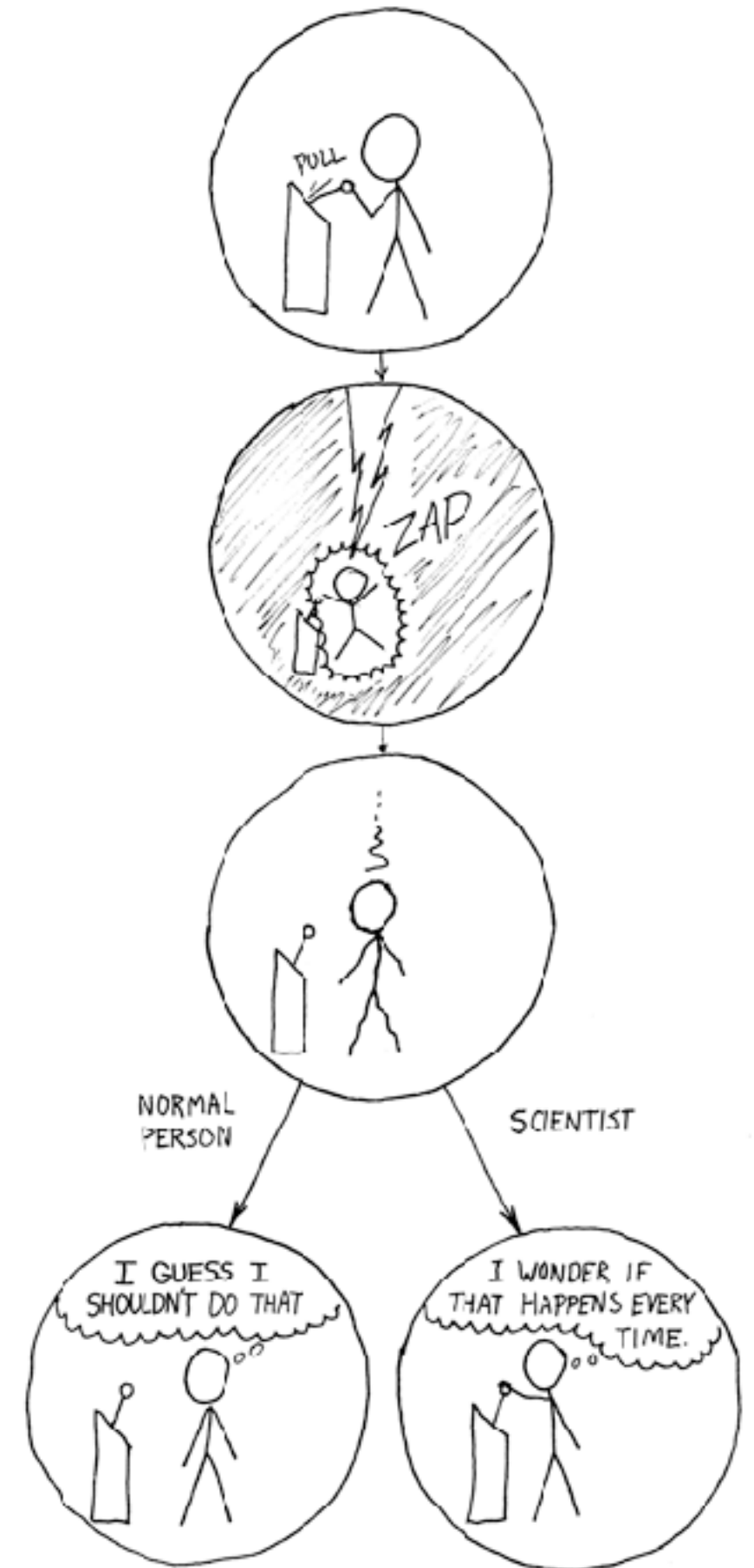


Questions

“The best scientists and explorers have the attributes of kids! They ask questions and have a sense of wonder. They have curiosity. ‘Who, what, where, why, when, and how!’ They never stop asking questions, and I never stop asking questions, just like a five year old.”

—Sylvia Earle, marine biologist



Three Questions

About Income Inequality

- Should the government redistribute wealth?
- Is income inequality higher or lower in the U.S. than France?
- What are the consequences of income inequality?

Three Answers

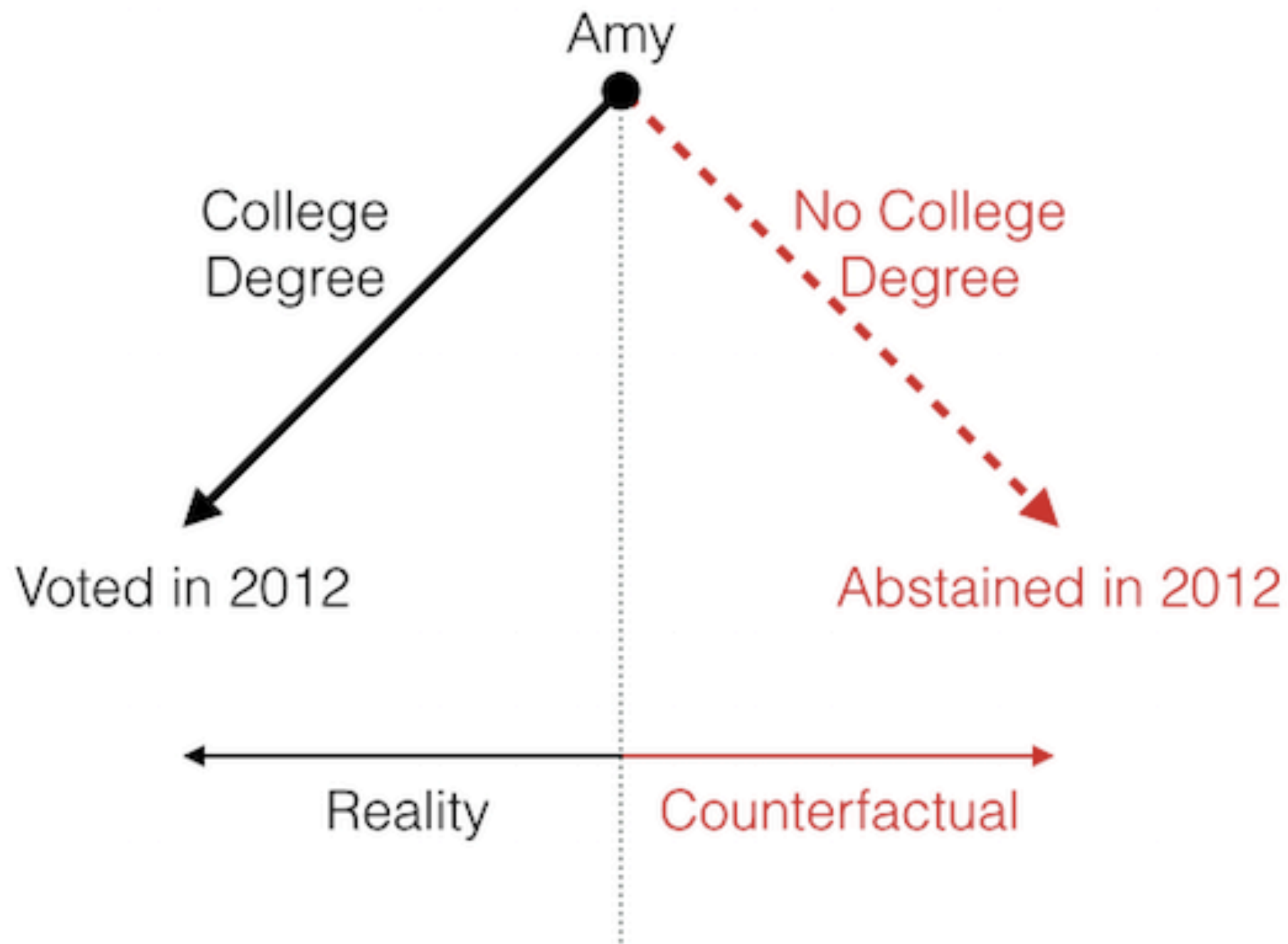
About Income Inequality

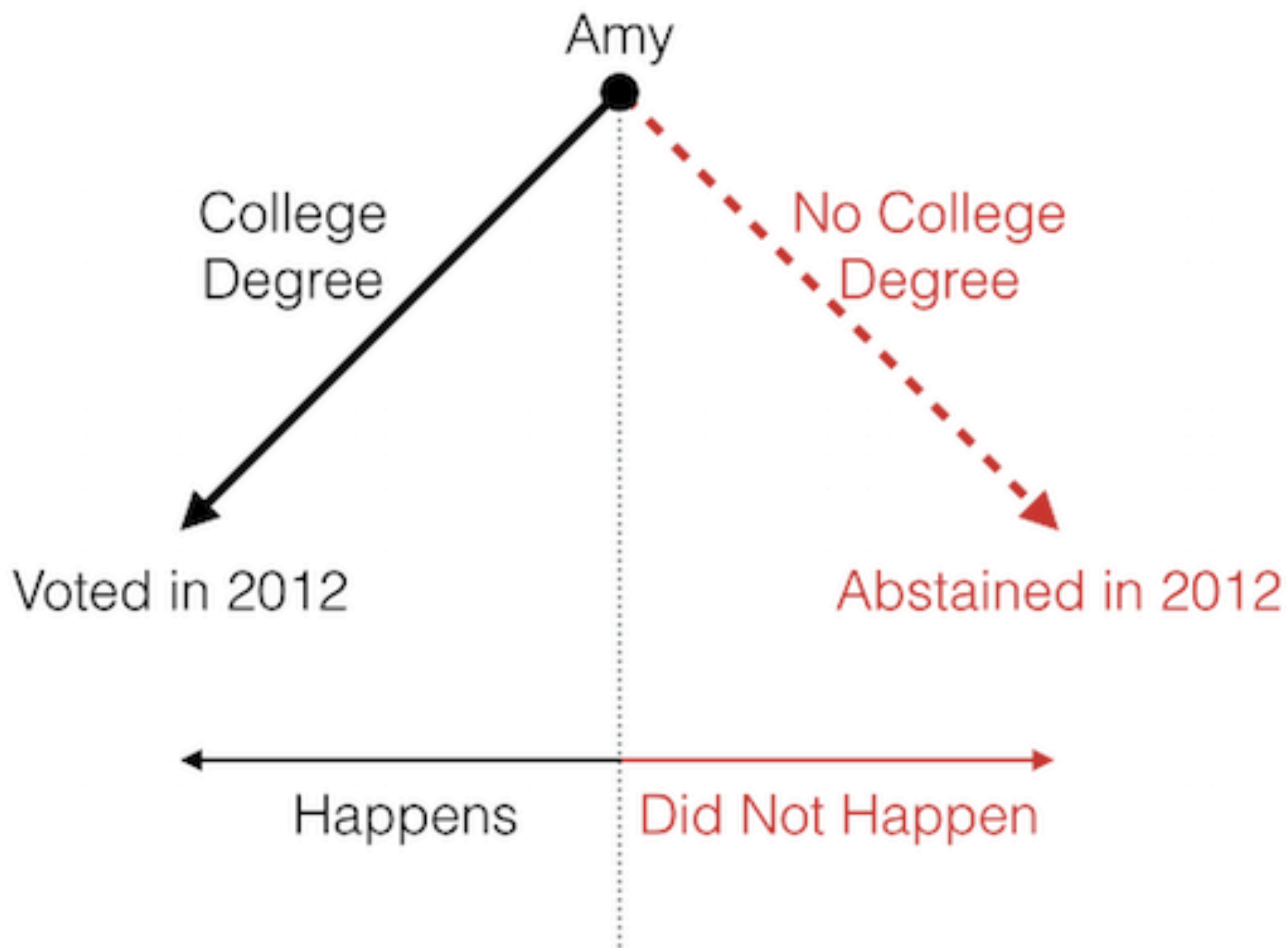
- The government should not redistribute wealth.
- Income inequality is higher in the U.S. than France.
- Income inequality causes a slower growth rate.

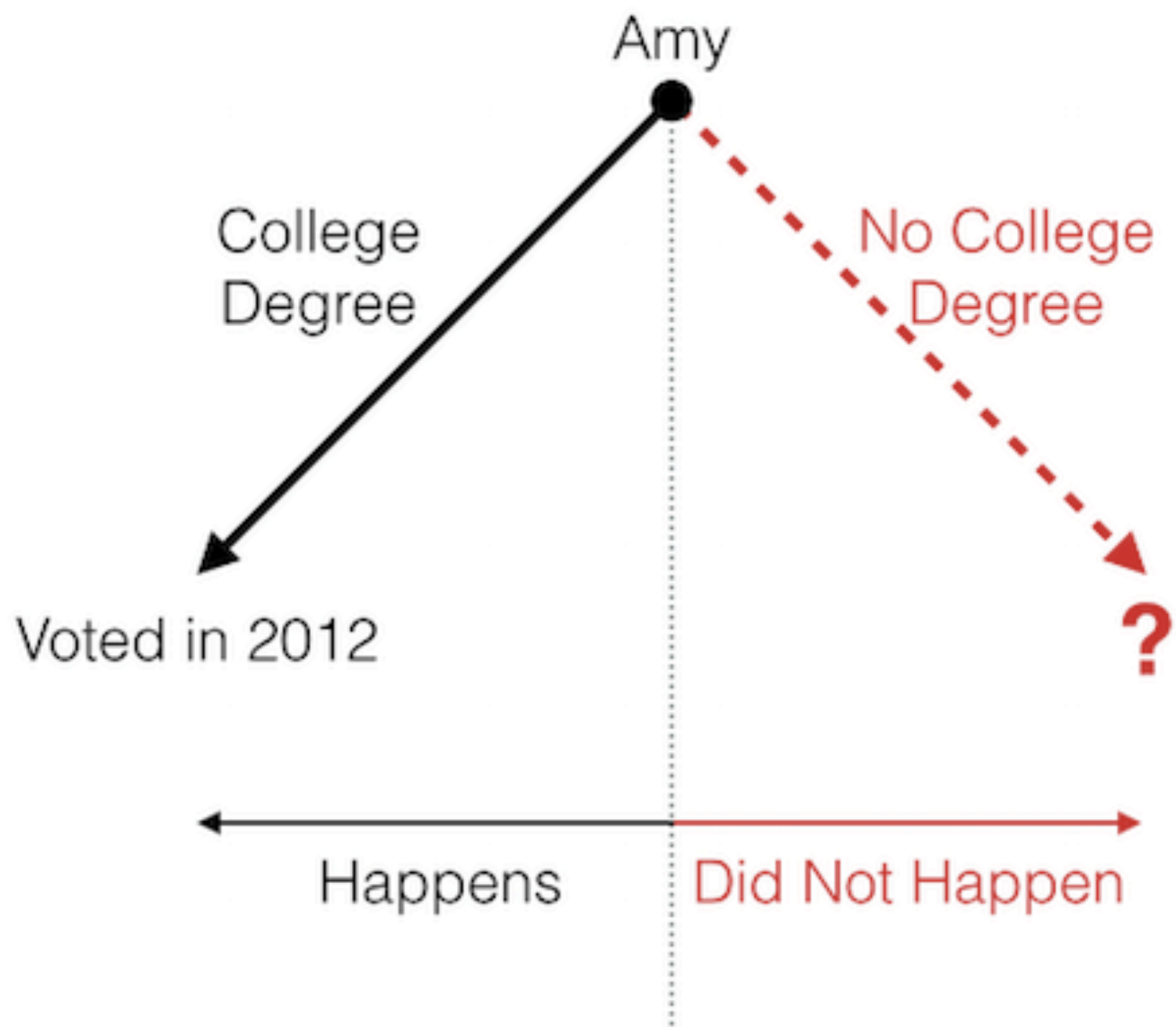
Three Types of Questions

Type	Description	Marriage Example	Inequality Example	Approach
normative	How <i>should</i> the world look? Asks for a moral judgement.	Should gay and lesbian couples have the same right to marry as heterosexual couples?	Should the government redistribute wealth?	logic and reasoning
descriptive	How <i>does</i> the world look? Asks for an empirical observation.	What percent of the public supports marriage equality for gays and lesbians?	Is income inequality higher or lower in the U.S. than France?	observation and measurement
causal	Why does the world look the way it does? What <i>influences</i> X? Asks for a <i>cause-and-effect</i> relationship or an <i>explanation</i> .	What explains the recent increase in support for marriage equality?	What are the consequences of income inequality?	observation and measurement, plus clever design

What does it mean for something
to “**cause**” something else?







Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference

In order to establish causation, we must observe the factual and counterfactual world. We cannot observe the counterfactual world. Thus, we cannot establish causation.