

Selecting Cases

Political Science

The design error that quietly invalidates many comparisons.

The error and its remedies.

The error

Studying only successful revolutions

Only democracies that consolidated

Only firms that survived

Concluding causes from the survivors alone

Remedies

Include cases without the outcome

Sample on the explanatory variable instead

Random or systematic case selection

State explicitly how cases were chosen

Educational reference. Without the negative cases you cannot tell whether the supposed cause is also present where the outcome is