

Political Science 501, Baumgartner
Short paper topics/discussion points
Week 5: Quasi-experimental designs

Readings: Nachmias, ch. 5,6; KKV Ch. 4-6, Campbell and Stanley

Read the first 10 pages of C&S first; then read the other readings; then read C&S start to finish.

Note that the threats to validity that C&S describe are *generic* threats that may affect *any* research project. There are *additional* threats to validity specific to any particular theoretical question. C&S simply catalogue a range of issues that one should be aware of. There are also issues specific to any particular study.

Paper topics:

Using C&S as a guide, specifically their list of threats to validity, choose a piece of literature from another class, from your previous readings, or from your incipient term paper project. Discuss a potential threat to validity that may affect this study. Show how the author has dealt with the issue, or note how they have ignored it. Discuss how they could have done better. What would be a design that would allow for this issue to be controlled? Has this been done? Is it feasible? Be specific in showing how a given threat to validity was a serious problem; how the author handled it; and how it could have been done differently.