SAMPLING BIAS

Drawing conclusions from a set of data that isn't representative of the population you're trying to understand.

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A classic problem in election polling where people taking part in a poll aren't representative of the total population, either due to self-selection or bias from the analysts. One famous example occurred in 1948 when The Chicago Tribune mistakenly predicted, based on a phone survey, that Harry S Truman would become the next US president. They hadn't considered that only a certain demographic could afford telephones, excluding entire segments of the population from their survey. Make sure to consider whether your research participants are truly representative and not subject to some sampling bias.

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