

An Interpretation of Per Selle's Comment in SPS 2/1984

Because Selle's comment is so long, I want to be short and try to present an interpretation of why we have different views although both of us have done ecological research.

It seems to me that according to Selle the prime objective in this kind of research is to demonstrate 'associations'. Selle also writes about individual characteristics. He seems to be close to the position according to which the demonstration of individual correlations is the main objective of ecological studies. To me the main objective is causal explanation, but in a non-experimental study it is possible to make causal interpretations only.

Since we hold different main objectives, we also have different views on many other questions and problems.

To me the Communist defeat in 1948 is an important and interesting topic of research. Before making causal interpretations I have studied both theoretical and empirical material and tried to figure out the intervening processes and mechanism between different variables. The change which I study is not one of absolute numbers, it is one of percentage differences.

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