The Questionable Death of Jim Crow: How Systemic Racism Impacts Voting Accessibility by Ways of Wait Times

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Introduction

• Utilizing the Cooperative Election Study dataset from the 2020 survey waves, I worked to analyze the effects of race and income on the experienced wait time of participants at the polls.

• This study focuses on the heightened wait times experienced by non-white voters displayed in former studies but goes beyond common current research as it focuses on systemic factors such as intergenerational wealth and redlining.

• Increased wait times in these scenarios decrease voting accessibility.

Primary Literature


Hypothesis and Analysis

Hypothesis 1: Non-white respondents will have an increased chance of experiencing wait times of more than ten minutes at the polling booth. Chi = 294.190, P < .001. Cramer’s V = .056

Hypothesis 2: Non-white respondents will be more likely to report an income under the 2020 United States’ median income of $67,521 (round: $70,000) than white respondents. Chi = 1695.285, P < .001. Cramer’s V = .089

Hypothesis 3: Those who report an income under the 2020 United States’ median income of $67,521 (round: $70,000) will be more likely to experience wait times of more than ten minutes at the polling booth. Chi = 261.810, P < .001. Cramer’s V = .049

Results and Implications

• The results indicate a statistically significant connection between non-whiteness, lower economic status, and increased wait times experienced at the voting booth.

• These increased wait times create unnecessary barriers to one’s right to vote, with the displayed data indicating a connection between these barriers and race, putting an undue burden on already marginalized groups of people, perpetuating systemic issues connected to voter participation.