

# *How Does Political Engagement by Classes of People Affect the Policies Made by Politicians?*

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**Abstract:** This research revolves around the impact of political activity on policymakers' decisions. First, this work discusses some well-known methods of restricting political participation for certain categories of people, such as vote suppression in various forms. Then, the work shows how several additional factors influence political engagement and how such changes affect policies such as tax rates. Later, the work presents model that would allow testing the hypothesis that politicians' behavior is intimately tied to their interests, assuming that they respond to varying levels of political participation each time. Lastly, the work provides theoretical analyses using economic principals to reach reasonable and logical conclusions.

**Keywords:** classes of people, tax rates, political economics

## 1. Introduction

In the current society, voter suppression is often seen when electoral voting is taking place. In specific terms, voter suppression is defined as “any legal or extralegal measure or strategy whose purpose or practical effect is to reduce voting, or registering to vote, by members of a targeted racial group, political party, or religious community [1].” Put it more simply, politicians or the wealthy put restrictions on access to voting for a specific group of people, discouraging or preventing that group of people from accessing their voting right. As of 2022, there are up to 72 different forms of voter suppressions, such a number likely to continue to spike in the future [2]. Some forms of commonly seen voter suppression include: Requirement of proof of Citizenship Laws, a rule that requires people intending to vote to show their identification of being a United States citizen, being unfriendly to groups that are immigrants or of similar situations of not having identification; Lack of language-accessible materials, by meaning is the restriction put on translated materials for voters, limiting either illiterate groups of workers or Mexican/European immigrants; Employers not providing time off or enough time for employees is also a major contributor to voter suppression, in this case many unskilled workers and skilled workers have to work full shift 24/7, thus not being able to obtain the chance to contribute their part of the vote; Inadequate or poorly trained staffing at polls, providing insufficient guidance and assistance to groups being targeted who are unfamiliar with voting operations; Partisan Gerrymandering and Racial gerrymandering, the former meaning drawing or redistributing a voting district in order to favor/disfavor one political party over another, the latter meaning

splitting a voting district so that a particular race group is of minority, therefore directly affecting the voting results [3].

Voter suppression is in many ways linked to inequality, both politically and health speaking. From a political stand view, as politicians, the wealthy and the powerful can influence and determine the outcome of voting that best suits their interest, it is politically unfair for other competitors but also for voters [4]. Usage of methods in this case would be voter suppression, unrightfully affecting the poll results. Health inequality is also a major facet of voter suppression. Given unskilled workers' social rank and resource accessibility, they have poorer access to health care. This is because health care in the United States is private, with an annual cost of \$7739 per individual as of 2021 [5]. Such limited access to health care would mean that unskilled workers are more easily infected with diseases or generally possess bad health overall. In 2021, due to Covid-19, citizens attempting to vote faced situations such as long queue and crowdedness, both of which being unfriendly conditions for unskilled workers [6]. Therefore, they are less likely to vote because they are more distraught with personal health care, with no space in their minds for voting. If Covid-19 continues to show undiminishing trends in the near future, it is highly likely that groups of unskilled workers will show a linear drop in voting rates, because of the disincentives both directly and indirectly affecting their lives. Under normal conditions, the indirect cost of lining up for vote during Covid-19 along with poor health care could have unskilled workers lose their jobs, because often the long queues can last for days, and the direct consequence, put under the worst-case, could easily be death threaten.

In this paper, the goal is to discuss how political engagement by different classes can affect the policies made by politicians. Voter suppression is thus tightly linked to our topic because it can cause a decrease in voting rate amongst the unskilled workers, and this work analyzes how such behaviors can further infringe the policies made but also enlarge the inequality caused by such unbalanced political engagement. The broad explanation for this phenomenon can be explained as voter suppression disenfranchises millions of Americans that are in the unskilled workers group. Due to unskilled workers' job's specialty, they are easily replaceable by other human labors or machines, which results in these unskilled workers receiving lower income in general compared to skilled workers, whose jobs cannot be replaced because specific skills are required. This work also defines unskilled workers as working-class and skilled workers as middle-income class as this will be a more straight-forward way of measuring how this relates to inequality in the paper. The middle-income class, which is the skilled workers group, have more tendency to participate in voting compared to their counterparts, the unskilled workers in the working class. Such disparity in voting rates have been ever-increasing in the United States, being exacerbated by unfair treatments received by the unskilled workers. Examples of such include less payment for time-off from work, regularly changing residence, higher incarceration rates, unstable transportation, insecure education for children, and much more. Of the examples provided, the most major contributor may be the frequency of changing residence. Being in the working class, it is naturally impossible to have enough income to have a stabilized residence and being worried about where to live naturally impedes the working class from thinking about voting [7].

## 2. Literature Review

The work intends to explore how different classes' political engagement affects the policies made by politicians in our research. This study will concentrate on a certain country and a specific type of policy in order to avoid some of the interfering problems that come with researching across borders. In this study, a research question about the effects of different classes of people's political activity on the tax rate determined in the United States will be posed. As a result, the existing literatures summarized will be about taxation in the United States. Following an examination of prior publications, the hypothesis is arrived that the greater the number of unskilled voters, the higher the taxation rate, and vice versa.

Some may believe that class engagement has no effect on tax rates because tax rates are not established by weighted vote like other types of policy. The Treasury Offices in the United States are divided into divisions led by Assistant Secretaries and Under Secretaries. Tax policy is developed and implemented at these offices; it reviews laws and rulings to administer the Internal Revenue Code, negotiates tax treaties, and provides economic and legal policy analyses for domestic and foreign tax policy choices [8]. Although the tax rate in the United States is determined and decided by certain organizations and officers, we nevertheless believe that political activity of different classes of people results in changes in tax rate. This point is supported by other essays.

The first question is whether and how varied voter engagement can have economic and political consequences. According to Solt, economic disparity can influence citizens' political participation [9]. The author verifies the theory that rising inequality increases the relative power of the wealthy to alter politics in their favor versus other interests by evaluating data from various countries. As a result, it is realistic to anticipate that citizen inequality will worsen. Because of the increased disparity, the affluent's political influence will grow, and the rich will use their position to seek additional benefits for themselves. This is a cycle. A statement can be concluded from this paper that the participation of various groups of individuals can have a genuine impact on policies such as tax rates and transfers.

Second, in order to go deeper into the relationship between taxes and voter involvement, more about the kind of factors that can influence tax rates are needed. Tanzi stated that in the United States, the tax rate can be influenced by a variety of factors [10]. This author thought that what society expects is intimately related to the function of government in the economy, as well as the extent to which that position necessitates a specific level and structure of taxation. This statement demonstrates that, to some extent, people's thoughts can influence the tax rate. The study cannot, however, simply assume that legislators will set the tax rate based on what the majority of people want. This study presumes that every politician wants to win the next election, thus numerous criteria must be considered. Conflicts may arise if they make decisions only based on what the majority of people expect. So, this is a hard subject, and an experiment plan is presented in this research proposal to address it.

The final question is whether the increased participation of lower-income persons changes the final tax rate. The extent of taxation and redistribution policy is often decided as a political-economic equilibrium by a balance between those who gain and those who lose. Governments, as stated by Jain and Mukand, have the capacity to tax economic winners in order to compensate economic losers [11]. This means that the country modifies income distribution through taxation and transfers. Persons with low incomes hope for higher tax rates because they want redistribution and to obtain money from people with high incomes. If low-income voters vote in large numbers, officials' decisions may be influenced. Because they will undoubtedly try to find the best way to gain support in the next election, and it is assumed that governments are unable to pre-commit tax rates and transfers [12], it can be speculated that the tax rates determined will be higher as political participation by people from lower classes increases.

To summarize, the theory of the study is that the greater the number of unskilled voters, the higher the taxation rate, and vice versa. Unlike other research studies, this work will use the terms "skilled employees" and "unskilled workers" to denote persons from distinct classes in our research.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Experiment Design**

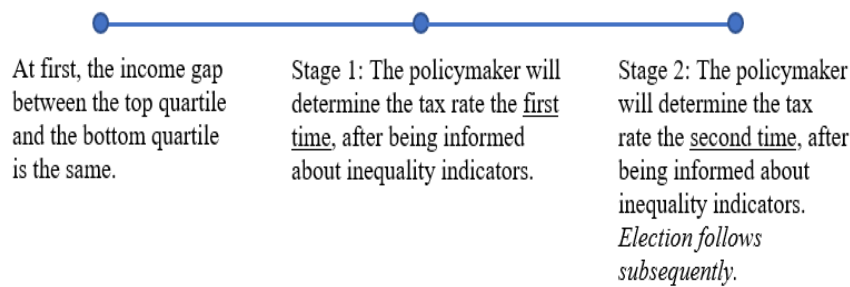


Figure 1: The short-term model.

This study will measure how political engagement of various classes of people can affect the policies made by politicians. There will be two treatment groups and one control group. In contrast to the control group, which has a 1:1 ratio of skilled to unskilled workers, the treatment groups have different ratios of skilled to unskilled workers: the first group has a 2:1 ratio of skilled to unskilled workers, and the second group has a 1:2 ratio. That is, in a population of 1000 people, 667 people are considered in one class, while the remaining 333 people are considered in a different class. By using this strategy, the possibility of getting arbitrary outcomes decreases because 667 peoples' influence can easily outweigh 333 peoples', as compared to 501 to 499 peoples' – the outcome will be more representative of our research. Fig 1 illustrates the general experimental setting of our investigation into how political engagement has a quantitative influence on the political leaders' decisions. The basis of Figure 1 is that it happens on a short time scale in order to more closely examine how decision-makers maximize their chances by appealing to their voters. After stage 2, if the difference between the tax rate determined by the policymakers in the treatment group and the controlled group is more than 3 percent, then the policymakers will be considered biased. It is assumed that the policymakers are unbiased if the difference falls below 3 percent. The threshold is set specifically set at 3 percent because in the United States, different states usually tax their own residents an addition tax rate below or around 10 percent in addition to the standard amount imposed by the federal government. For example, during the first quarter of the current fiscal year 2022, the New York state collected more than \$34.4 billion in tax revenues: a 3% difference can be approximately 1 billion dollars. Such a balance can either be transferred to the lower quartile or provide more public goods (schools, law enforcement, access to health care) in more disadvantaged locations, alleviating the extreme inequality in the world's most affluent city [13].

In this research, it is assumed that the policymakers will make the best choice that can help them to win the next election. However, in this economic model, it is not as simple as to simply set the taxation rate that favors the majority of the group. By altering the taxation rate, the policymaker inadvertently affects the inequality of his assigned district. From a macroeconomic perspective, wealth inequalities will result in unequal opportunities, which will cause an inadequate distribution of resources and the waste of potential among each constituent of the economy. Additionally, income inequality would ultimately impair social cohesiveness because poor people usually face discrimination, stigma, and negative social stereotypes from the more fortunate groups. These factors would not only create difficulties for them when seeking employment opportunities but also reduce their political support from the government [14]. As a result, increased inequality would spark protests against unfair policies, and in some situations, the crime rate would soar as people's frustration and anger increase proportionally to the growing inequality. Therefore, if the policymakers blatantly favor the higher-income group – in any democratic society – those who were severely targeted have the incentive to fight for their rights even through radical medium like violence.

Overall, the first model only seeks to examine how politicians behave in two distinct contexts in order to draw generalizations about how differing ratios of skilled or unskilled laborers will influence

politicians' actions differently. Will the policymaker's political stance have an impact on the result? Will being politically outspoken and engaged produce unexpected results? Will policymakers empathize with the poorer groups or care solely about themselves winning the next election? In short, the result section will expand on how different variables can affect the outcomes in the two varied contexts.

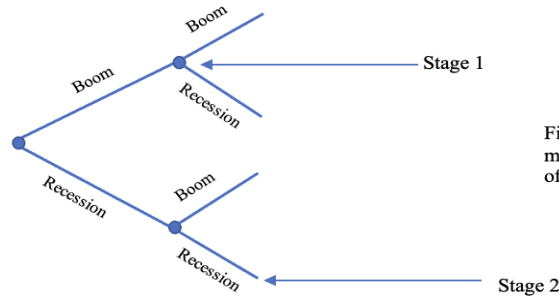


Figure 3.2: The long-term model that accounts the effects of recessions and expansions.

Figure 2: The long term model.

Figure 2 introduces the second model, which will look at the political engagement by classes from the federal perspective, and no longer restrained to the set experimental groups mentioned in the first model. In this case, the work was able to investigate the effects of macroeconomic conditions on the behaviors of the two classes (unskilled and skilled, or low-income and high in-come). This model also wants to discuss how politicians utilize the median voter theorem to gain them an edge in election, and how this can affect their strategies in setting taxation rate that aligns with the median voter theorem. At stage 1, the government official will have a chance to change the taxation rate to influence voters. At stage 2, the government official will have its final change to change the taxation rate before election.

### 3.2. Key Variables

In this research, the independent variable is the number of voters adjusted to ratio. In each set of experiments, there will only be a total number of 1000 units. All units are randomly drawn from the populace of the United States, regardless of ethnicity, political standpoint, origin of state, gender, etc. In fact, the more diverse the populace the better, so the outcomes will be independent from the variables that are not to be tested in this research. The dependent variable is the taxation rate determined by the policymakers at each designated stage. Lastly, the controlled variables will be that in each setting, the Gini coefficient, the purchasing power, the beginning tax rate, the proportion of tax revenue redistributed to the lower-income population will be similar across the three groups: 1:2, 2:1, and 1:1 ratio of skilled to unskilled laborers.

### 3.3. Data Explanations

It is hoped to use a population sample of 1000 people in each of the experimental (both treatment and controlled) groups because it is easier to monitor and is also more comparable to the sizes of most American towns. However, if the population is less than this number, such as 500 people or 100 people, then the margin of error will be larger, thus undermining the validity of this research. The population is anticipated to be randomly selected across the United States in order to provide a more adequate representation of our topic: the association between political science and inequality in the United States. The study is generalized around the context of United States because it is not only one of the world's most unequal developed and democratic country, but it is also one of the world's largest

economies, which makes it an iconic and essential issue to explore. But more importantly, the gap between skilled laborers and unskilled laborers has increased significantly since trade opened up in the 1980s. As the United States started to trade with developing countries seeing their lower labor cost, domestic investment had primarily switch from consumption goods to investment goods, which is its comparative advantage. As the economy started to rely more on skilled laborers, while “pure” labor assembly lines started to disappear from the economy, the income disparity between the skilled laborers and the less skilled laborers have increased steadily over time [15].

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Short Term Model

Because unskilled laborers in group 1 are the overwhelming majority, either the unemployment rate is going to increase when firms start to experience negative returns, or the lower the wage it will get when more less skilled laborers are skilled. See Fig 3, this mainly has to do with the fact that the demand for unskilled laborers is relatively inelastic, meaning that the more workers the firm hires, the greater the decrease the wage will be. On the other hand, as shown in Fig 4, the demand for skilled labor is relatively elastic, given that fewer portion of an entire population received higher-education. So even if the firm is going to hire more individuals, the change in wage for skilled labor will be subtle compared to that experienced by the less skilled individuals. Because there are more unskilled individuals seeking employment in group 1 than in group 2, the average compensation for unskilled laborers in group 1 will be lower than that of group 2, see Fig 5. In contrast, because there are fewer skilled laborers in group 1 than in group 2, the average income of skilled laborers in group 1 will be higher than that of skilled laborers in group 2, see Fig 6. Hence, the inequality in group 1 is the largest, given the 1 to 2 ratio of skilled to unskilled laborers.

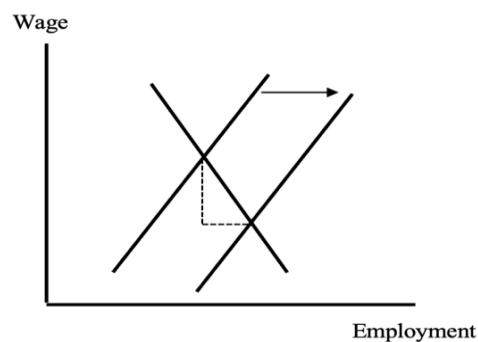


Figure 3: The general wage change for unskilled laborers.

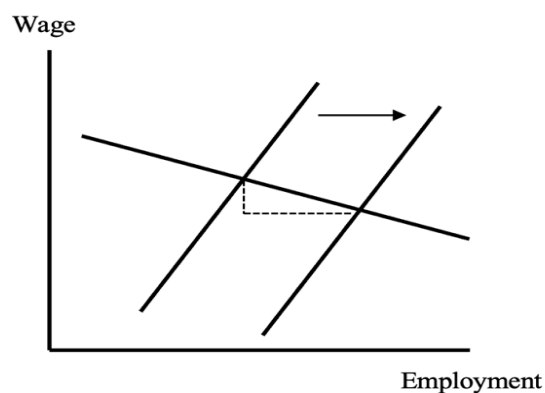


Figure 4: The general wage change for skilled laborers.



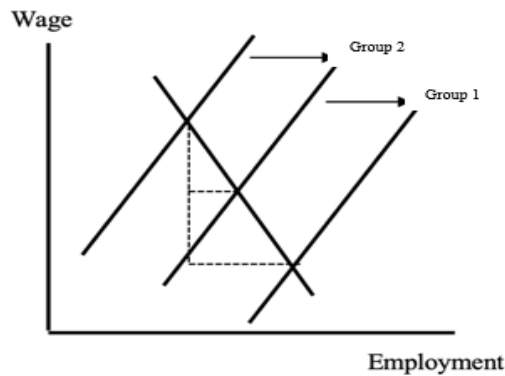


Figure 5: The graph compares the wage change of unskilled laborers between group 1 and group 2.

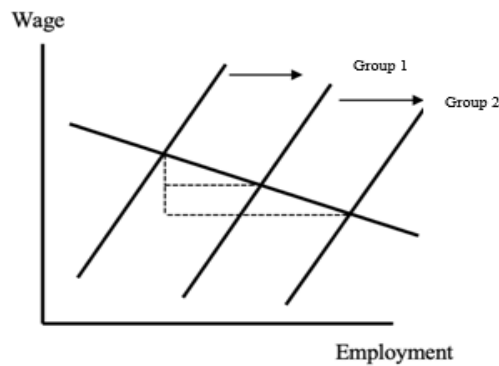


Figure 6: The graph compares the wage change of skilled laborers between group 1 and group 2.

Moving to stage 1, the policymaker determines a specific tax rate. For group 1, as policymaker will take the following factors into consideration – the unskilled laborers are indeed the majority, and the inequality is high – he would reasonably tax the top quartile heavier to redistribute wealth. Specifically, the policymaker can allocate some of these additional tax revenues to firms that plan to employ more unskilled laborers as either subsidies or offer them tax breaks. Still, it would be expected that the policymaker increases the taxation rate only slightly, most likely to be less or equal to 3%, since over taxation will discourage skilled workers from working hard. In this best-case scenario, the policymaker not only alleviated inequality, but also maintained the productivity among all workers and fell in the 3% difference as compared to controlled group to be considered as unbiased.

However, if the policymaker is funded by the top 5 quartile of this group, his taxation rate may diverge significantly from the controlled group, which is believed to be fully unbiased, excluding the possibility that the richest people have the intentions to cheat. For example, if the controlled group has a progressive tax system that taxes the bottom quartile 6% and the top quartile 10%, then group 1 under a corrupted politician would experience a 1% to 4% progressive tax scale. Nonetheless, because the majority of this group consists of unskilled laborers suffering from wealth disparities, policymakers would have an incentive to implement voter suppression measures in order to indirectly lessen the voting power of this specific demographic in order to gain a better winning odd for the election shortly after stage 2. Unskilled workers who experience considerable inequality may react to this situation by participating in active protests like strikes. By adding this negative externality, the incumbent officer's prospects of winning the future election will be decreased because more qualified voters who did not bribe the policymaker will be aware of his unreliability.

According to Fig 5 and Fig 6, the inequality moving to stage 1 for group 2 is moderate: the supply of skilled labor is shifted to the farthest right, while the supply of unskilled labor is shifted to the inner right. It is important to note that a rise in the supply of a given labor class indicates that more people in this class are looking for work. Undoubtedly, the best strategy for the policymaker to win the next election is to lobby highly skilled workers, such as advocating and implementing a lower tax rate for them. Although this might seemingly to be an unfair situation, the unskilled laborers won't actually be the "losers" here as much since a 6% instead of 10% tax revenues from the top quartile can still be equivalent to a substantial amount of transfer payments. Therefore, in a society with the majority being a high-income group, the fewer income individuals can actually enjoy a larger share of transfer payment, which leads to a scenario where everyone can be the "winner." Moving on to stage 2, let's assume that he maintains both the overall level of stability and inequality. In this case, his chances of winning reelection are high because his taxation policy not only benefited those with higher incomes, but it also increased the level of satisfaction among unskilled workers as they enjoy the positive externalities produced by the public goods that were paid for by the tax revenues that primarily came from the wealthier group.

#### 4.2. Long Term Model

There are four combinations in this model: an expansion follows with another expansion; an expansion follows with a recession; a recession follows with an expansion; and a recession follows with a recession. In the first case, everyone will undoubtedly become the "winners," although the wage gap still exists. That is, as consumer demand increases during recession, the firms are likely to earn more revenues, and they will in turn recruit more people to keep up with the rising demand. In this case, the living standards of both the skilled laborers and unskilled laborers will increase as firms will also consider increasing their wages due to the increase in demand of labor. The positive effects of economic boom easily offset the attentions of unskilled laborers paid to inequality. Under this circumstance, the median voter is closer to the higher-end of the frequency income distribution graph than the lower-end. Therefore, the best strategy for the federal government is to decrease the taxation rate on the progressive tax scale. Going to stage 2, as more people become "winners" earning more income under the favorable economic environment, the policy maker will likely further decrease the taxation rate. In the second case, the economic trend changes to recession following the expansion prior to the first stage, the median voter is going to shift to the lower end as the frequency income distribution is skewed to the right (closer to the vertical axis). In this case, the incumbent office would levy a progressive tax rate that is considered as a higher percentage of skilled laborers' incomes than that of unskilled laborers' incomes.

In the third case, the federal reserve increases the interest rate to respond the increasing inflation, which caused the declines in both consumptions and capital investment. To withstand the recession, businesses started laying off employees. Unskilled laborers will be impacted the most as the demand of labor for unskilled workers is typically inelastic as there are many viable alternatives, meaning that even if there is a big decline in wage there will still be many individuals vying for the job. Skilled laborers, on the other hand, would not experience such volatility in wage change. Therefore, the incumbent office would choose to increase tax rate to the top quartile to redistribute wealth in the form of government spending: transfer payments, subsidies, etc. However, if the economy started to expand moving to stage 2 when election occurs, government officials will start to lower taxation rate as median voter shift to the higher end. Lowering taxation rate can further boost economic activities as consumption and investment increase. The incumbent office will be more likely to win the election if the populace all benefits from the expansion. In the last case, however, the government would have to continue to levy tax from the higher income group after stage 1 and increase government spendings



to continue to help unskilled laborers or unemployed individuals; otherwise, the rising inequality would lead to instability (protests, crime rate) should the government not intervene.

## 5. Conclusion

The average salaries for unskilled workers in the first group are lower than those in the second group, resulting in significant disparity. As a result, redistribution via higher tax rates is required. Furthermore, because a tax rate that is too high may reduce talented workers' motivation to work, it is anticipated that the tax rate in this circumstance will only increase by less than 3% and will still be considered unbiased. However, if the policymaker receives funding from the top 5 percentile of this group, the tax rate selected may be skewed. Then the unemployed may protest, causing the politicians may lose the next election. In the second category, where the majority are skilled workers, it is anticipated that decision makers will try to impose a lower rate for skilled workers in order to win the next election. In this scenario, both skilled workers and unskilled workers can be economic winners because people from lower classes can still receive much transfer payment from the large number of skilled workers while enjoying the lower tax rate.

This study is focused on the relationship between taxation and political participation among different socioeconomic groups. The tax rate is not determined by popular vote. Because specific organizations and officers respond to it, it is usually assumed that the tax rate is mostly impacted by the officers' own traits, such as his political party and religious religion. However, this work believes that differing political activity by different kinds of individuals can be a critical influence element. Studies to uncover the answer and examine the economic principles underlying the results are created, and samples at random to prevent interfering factors such as people's religious beliefs and political party affiliation are selected. The work discusses inequality and taxation, which fills in the gaps in earlier taxation research. People can learn more about the causes for various changes in tax rates as a result of this research, as well as how different classes' political activity affects the tax rate determined.

However, there are still certain areas of the research that can be improved. In reality, the relationship between political engagement and tax rate is complicated since there are too many variables in the actual world: war, social paradigm shifts, economic patterns, international ties, and so on. Any one of these has the potential to significantly alter the final results and lead to an incorrect conclusion. So, if appropriate time and resources are available, performing a year-long experiment in a relatively stable period is preferable to ensuring the truth and authenticity of our findings. The study's social setting cannot be overlooked. A time limit should be set in order to perform the investigation to arrive at a correct and precise conclusion.

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