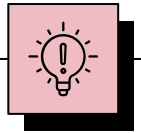
Machine Learning & Abolitionism

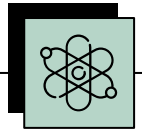
By Elliot Richardson

Today’s presentation:

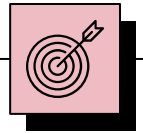
What & why?



How?



Results



Q&A

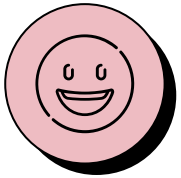
Targeting 101: Partisan scores

Partisan score

Noun ▪ [pahr-tuh-zuhn, -suhn] [skawr, skohr]

A prediction of someone's support for a particular political party in the form of a score between 1-100 that is generated by applying machine learning to both voter file and consumer data.

Targeting 101: Partisan scores



Your base

High scores (~70+)

Reliable supporters, potential volunteers

Toss-up

Medium scores (40-70)

Potentially persuadable, **majority of outreach**

Opponents

Low scores (< 40)

Opposed to mission, keep it low-key

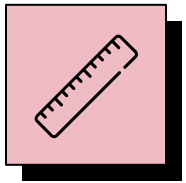
What am I doing?

- Utilizing information a campaign might realistically have
  - Age, gender, race, location, voter registration, etc
- Predicting support for defunding police as proxy for abolitionism
  - i.e. Generating an “abolition score”

Why am I doing it?

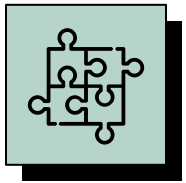
- Abolition doesn’t line up perfectly with partisan ideology
  - i.e. GOP-leaning libertarians might be more supportive than moderate Democrats with relatives on the force

My approach: Throw stuff at the wall



See what sticks

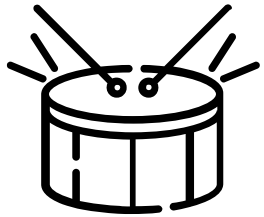
Tried 10+ different types of models, evaluated, and then tuned the top four



Combine stickiness

Ensembled the best tuned models to utilize their collective wisdom

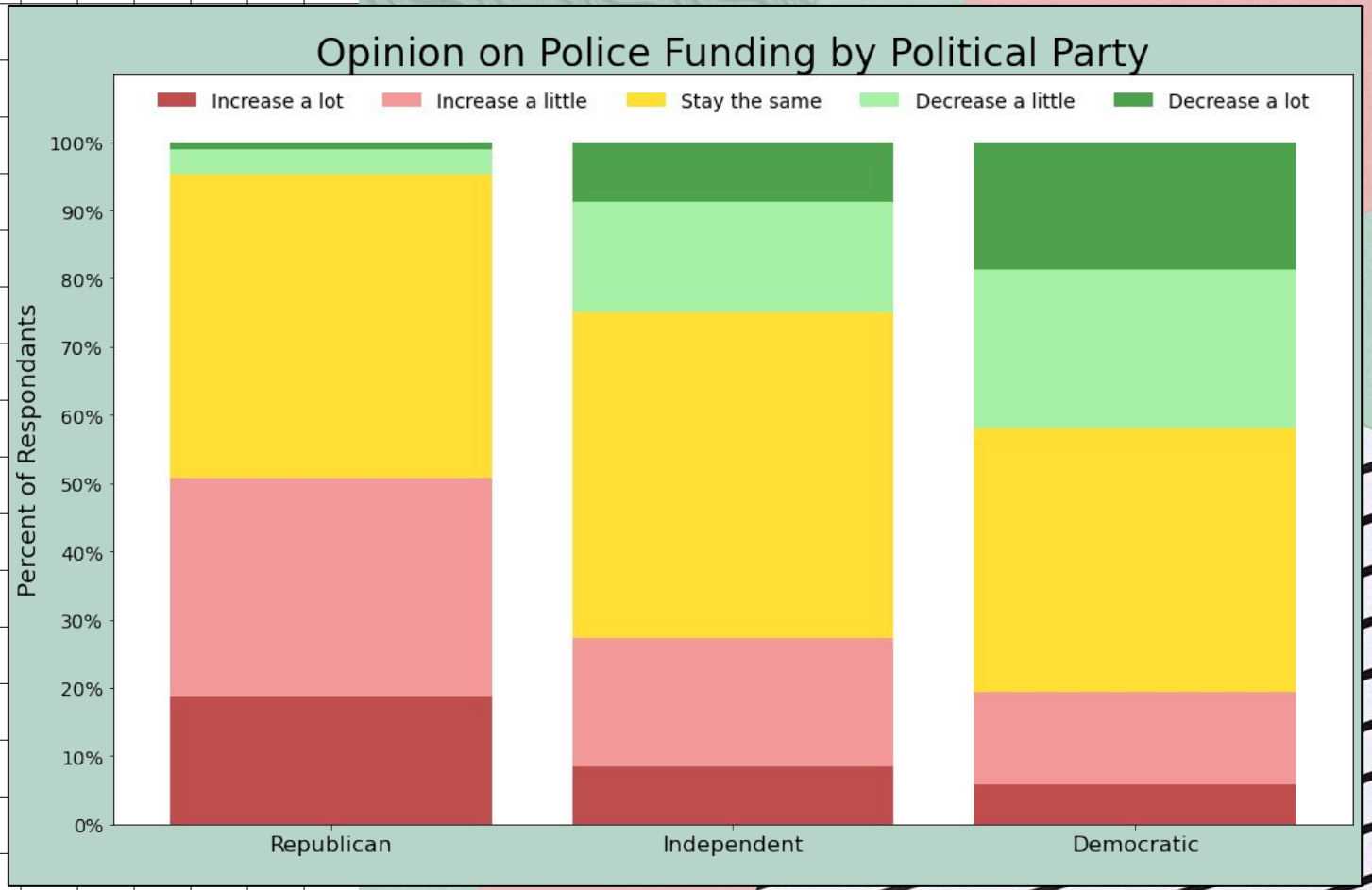
Model performance



- Not great on either dataset
  - Favorability: Average error of ±30 (R^2 = .2672)
  - Defund support: Average error of ±24 (R^2 = .2325)
- Things to note:
  - Targeting firms have consumer data
  - Continuous / discrete & ordinal
  - Very low R^2 scores are normal in social sciences

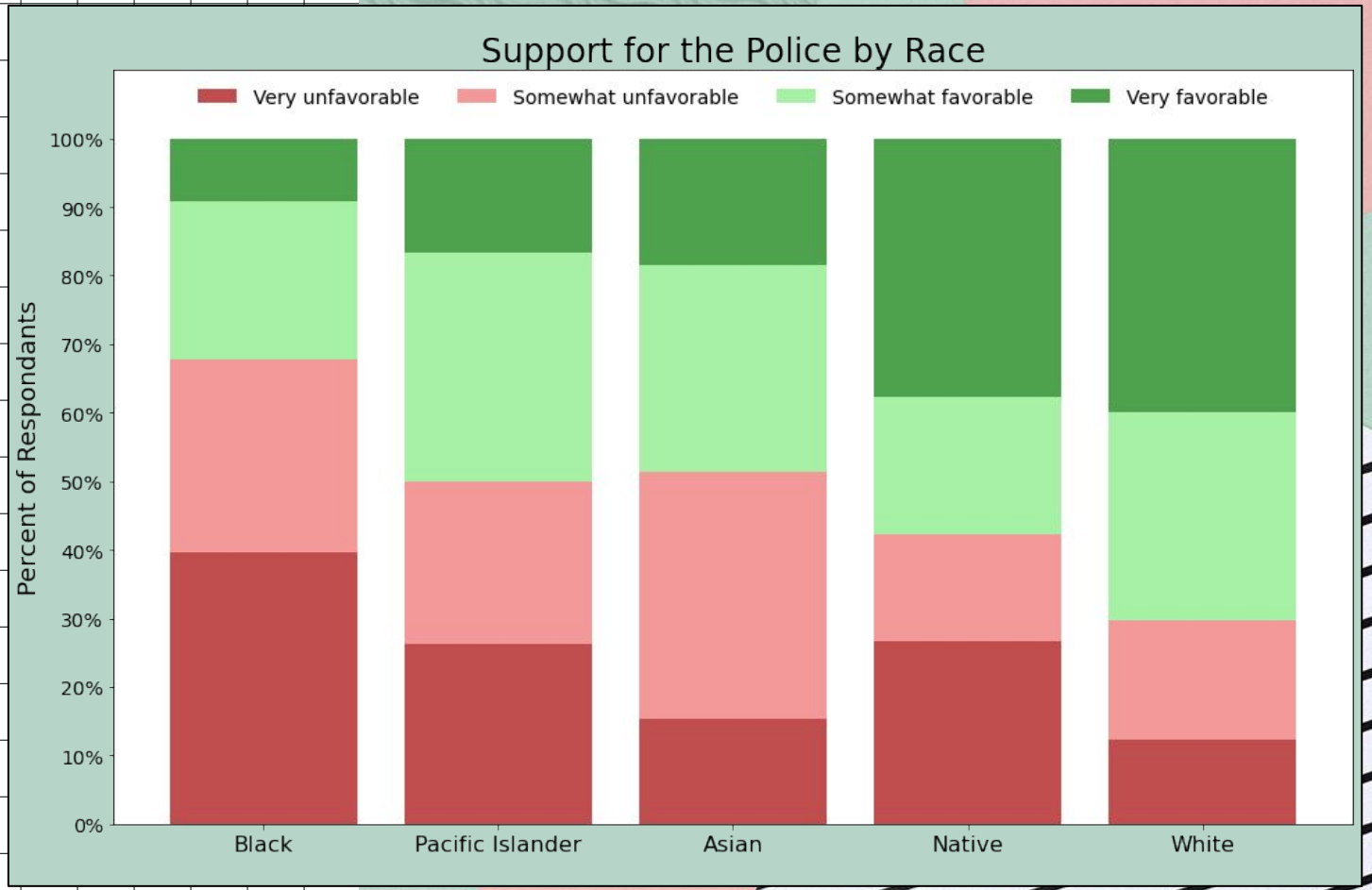
Findings:

As expected, Dems support at highest rate, but still a minority



Findings:

Marginalized folks have less favorable opinions of the police



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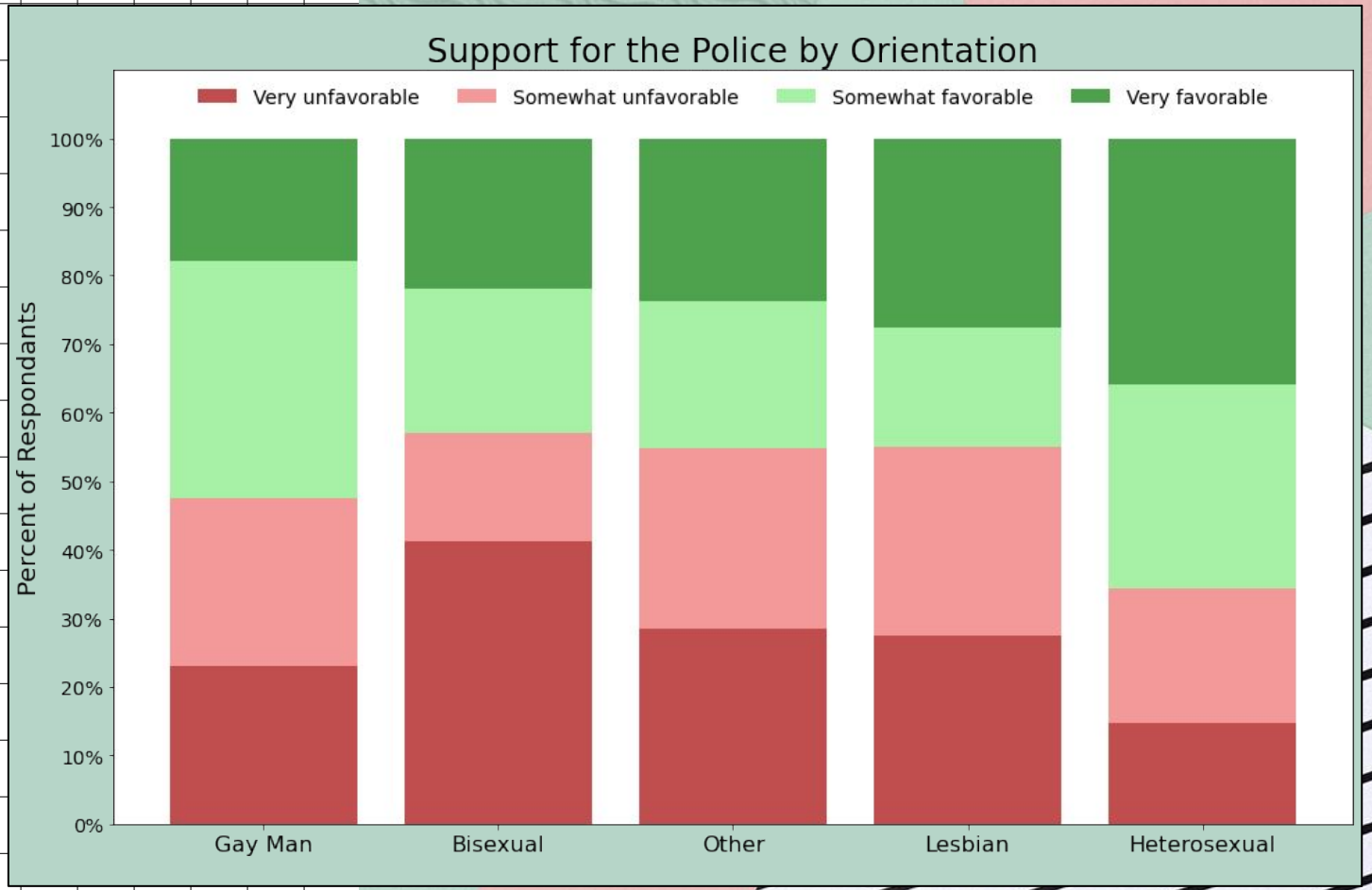

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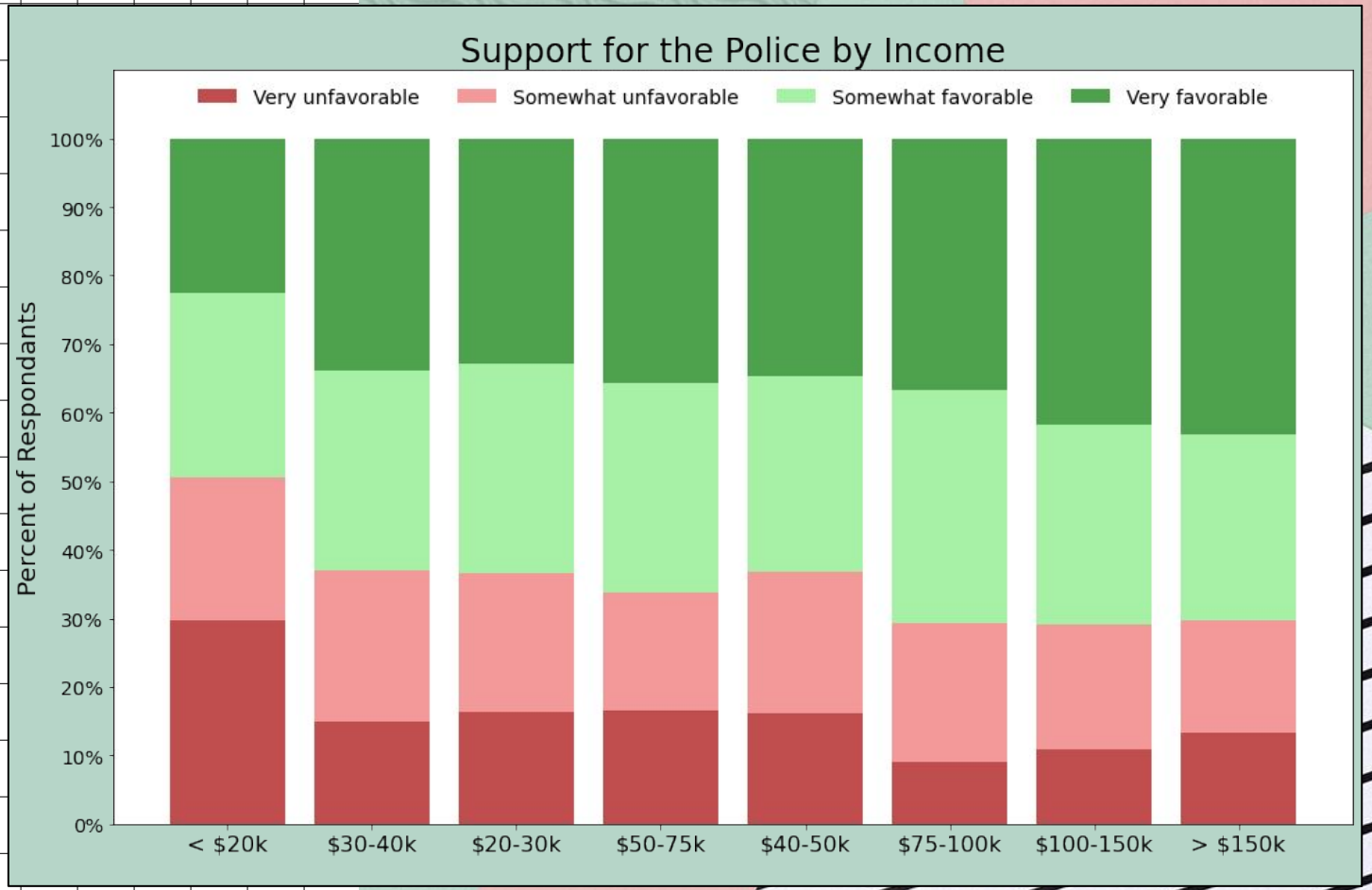
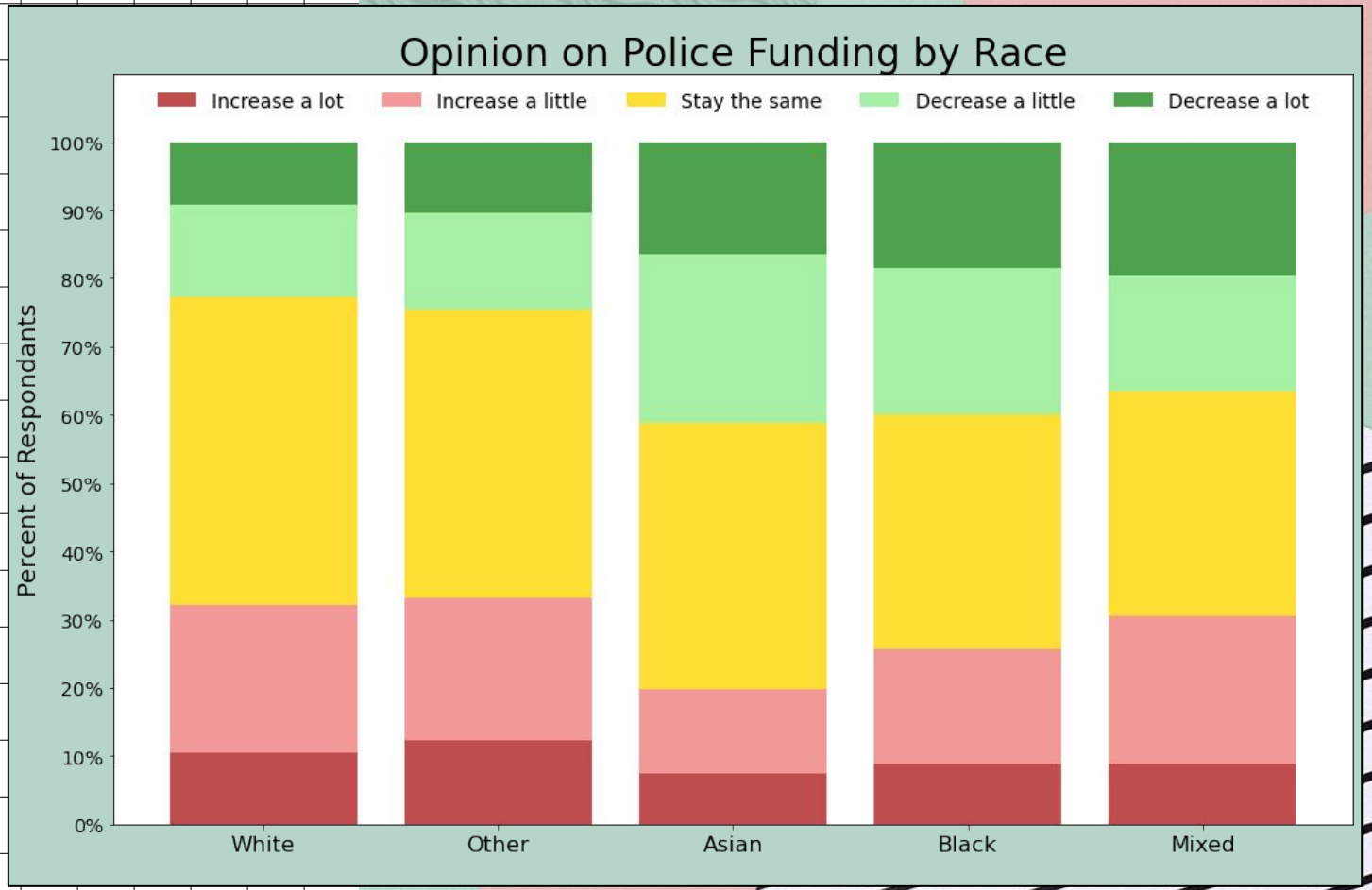


Findings:
However, unfavorable opinion ≠ support for defunding



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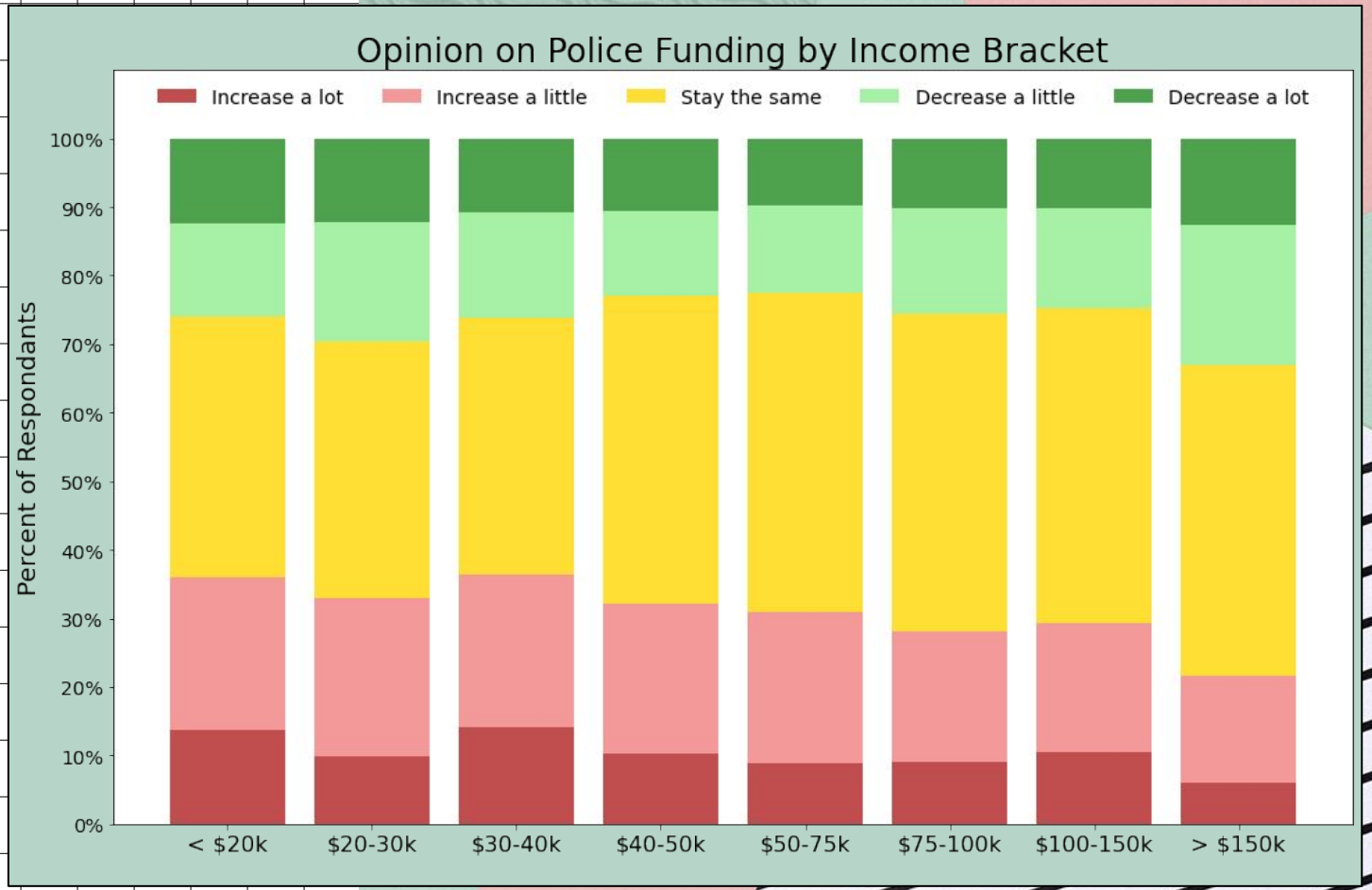
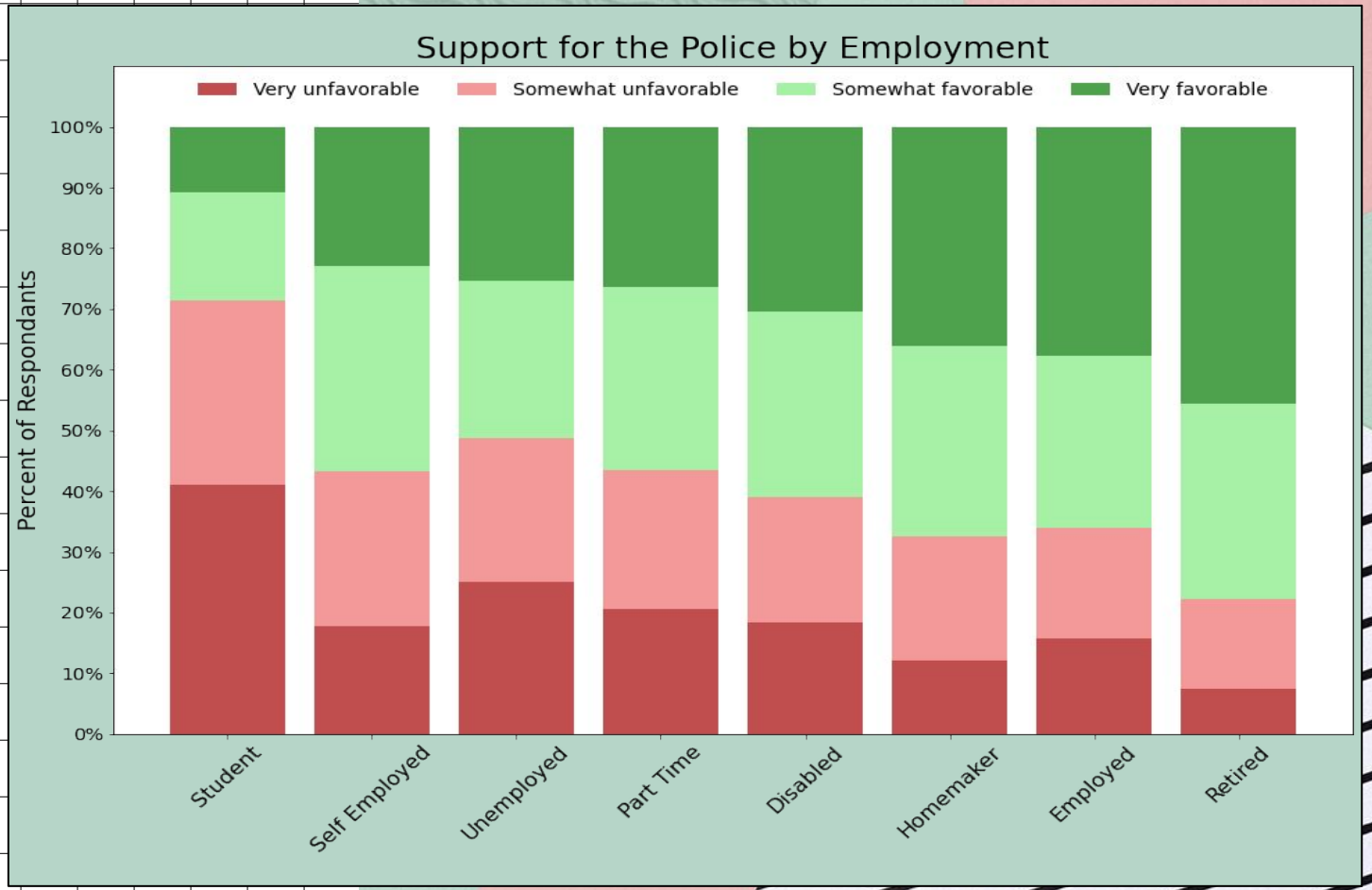


Findings:

Youth and students will be the driving force of this movement



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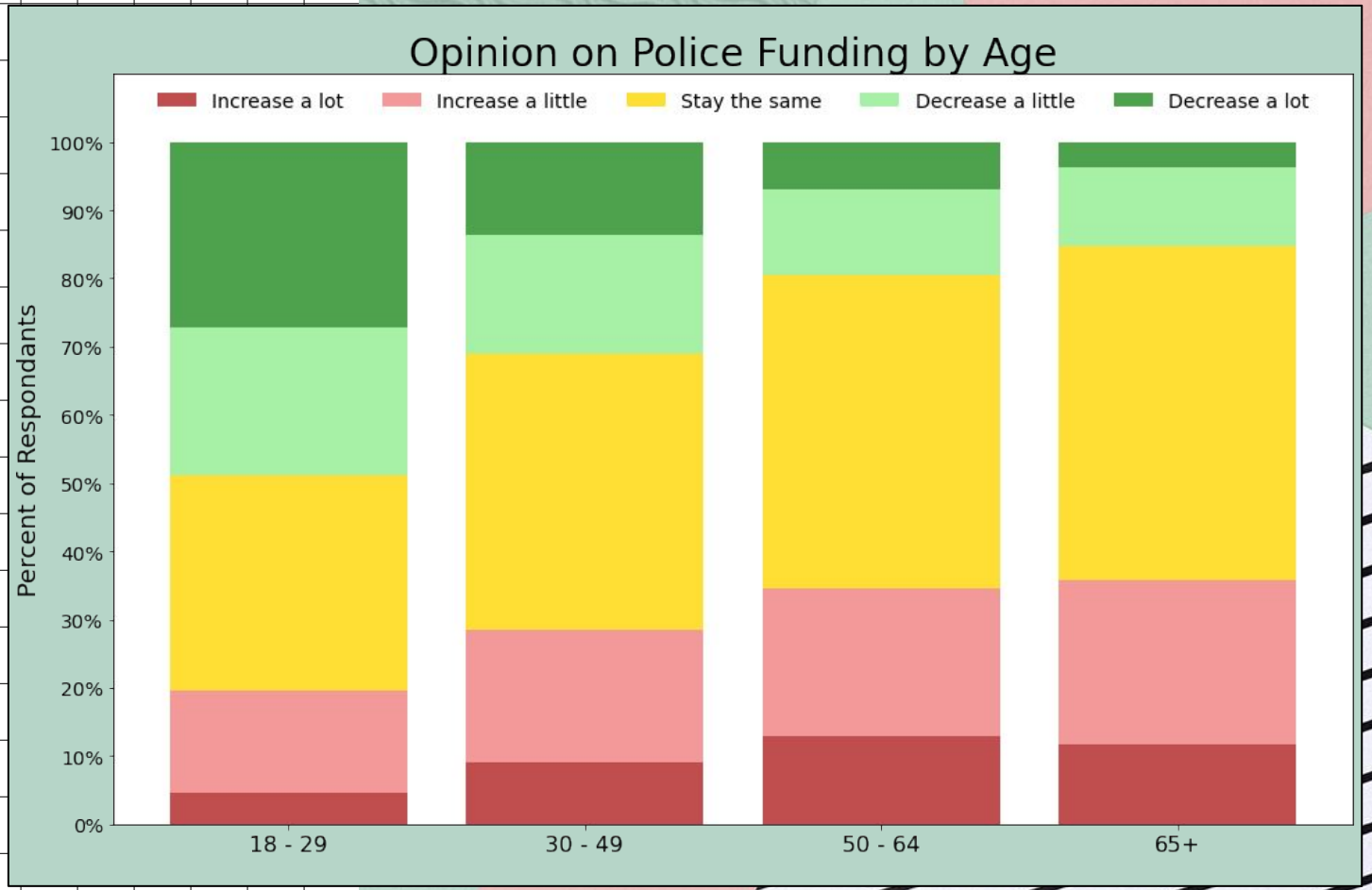
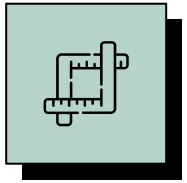


Conclusion:

There are strong enough patterns to create relatively useful abolition scores, especially if you have consumer data.

Abolitionists

- Young
- People of color
- Non-religious



Non-abolitionists

- Older
- White
- Evangelical

Thank you!

Any questions?