

# Supporting the Victim but Not the Movement: Why some individuals may be supportive of Black individuals but not Black Lives Matter

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## Abstract

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has been at the forefront of advocating for policy changes that are related to equality for Blacks. Although BLM is a movement made in support of Black individuals, not all individuals who favor Black individuals and their interests are in support of this movement. This study seeks to explore the reasons for which an individual might support Black individuals, but not support BLM. Those who have high levels of support for Black individuals identify with different political parties, identify with various racial backgrounds, hold differing beliefs regarding discrimination, and exhibit varying degrees of support for the police. These factors may influence their level of support for the BLM. This study evaluates party identity, race, beliefs regarding discrimination, and favorability of the police's influence on the varying levels of support for BLM amongst those who support Black individuals.

## Dataset

This study has employed the *Nationscape* dataset to investigate the factors influencing the lack of support for the Black Lives Matter movement among those individuals who support Black individuals. This public opinion survey was conducted across the United States leading up to the 2020 election. The survey was facilitated online in three different waves with roughly 6,250 interviews each week.

## Survey Questions Used

**Support for Black Individuals:** How favorable is your impression of each group or haven't you heard enough to say? (Blacks)

**Support for Black Lives Matter (Dependent Variable):** How favorable is your impression of each group or haven't you heard enough to say? (Black Lives Matter)

**Party Identity:** Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat or Republican?

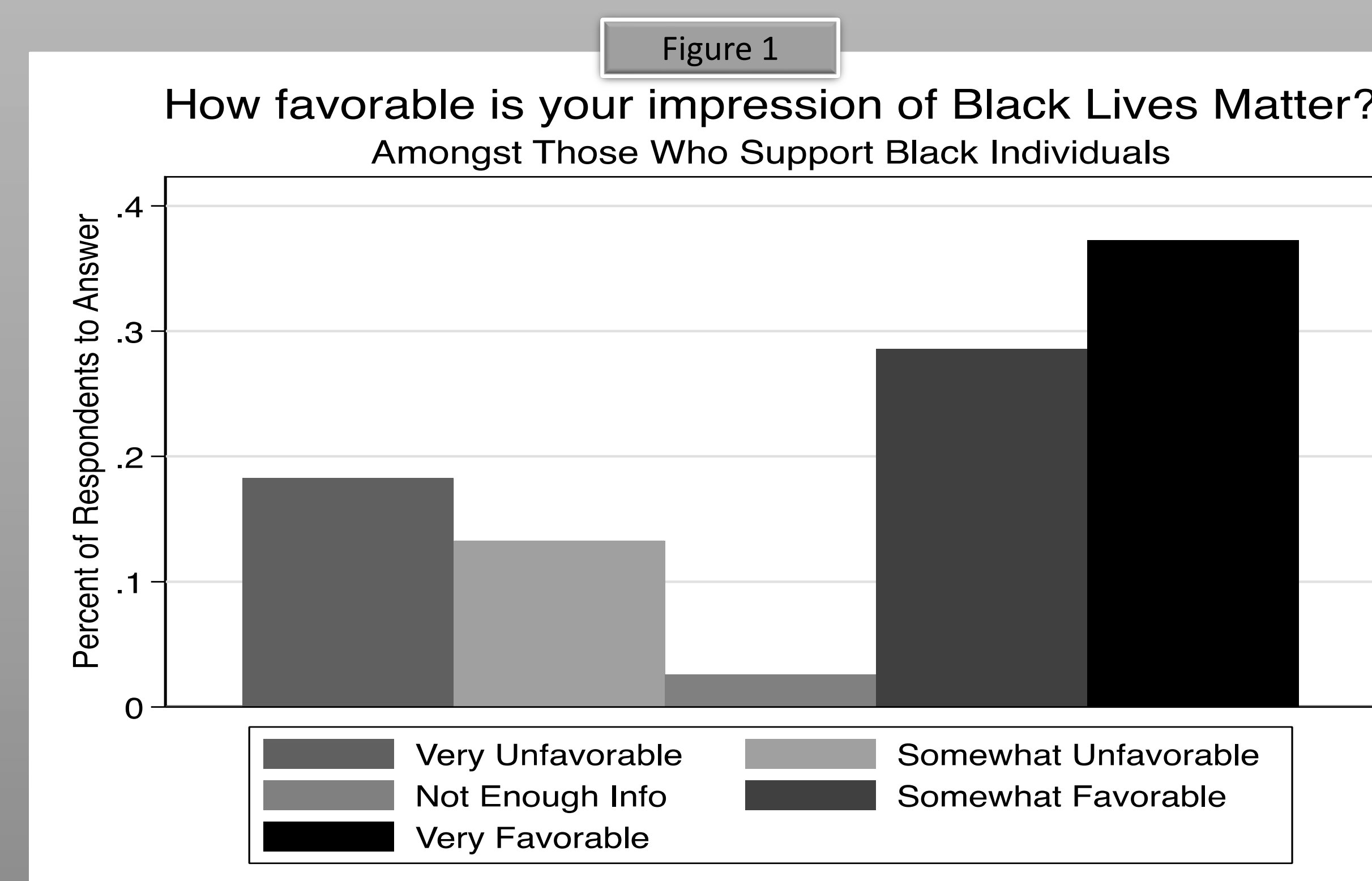
**Race:** What is your race?

**Beliefs Regarding Discrimination:** How much discrimination is there in the United States today against each of the following groups? (Blacks)

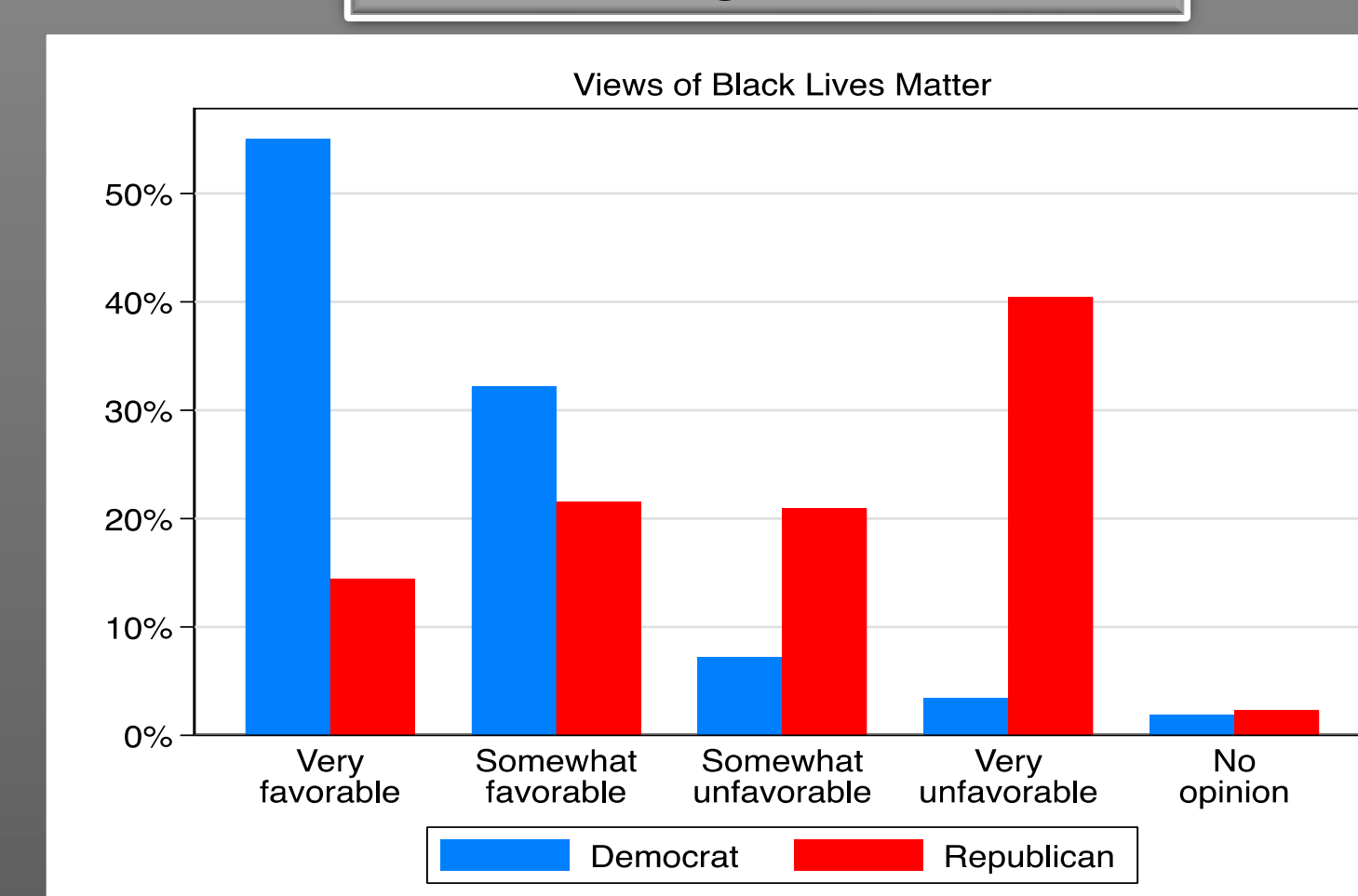
**Police Favorability:** How favorable is your impression of each group or haven't you heard enough to say? (The Police)

## Objectives

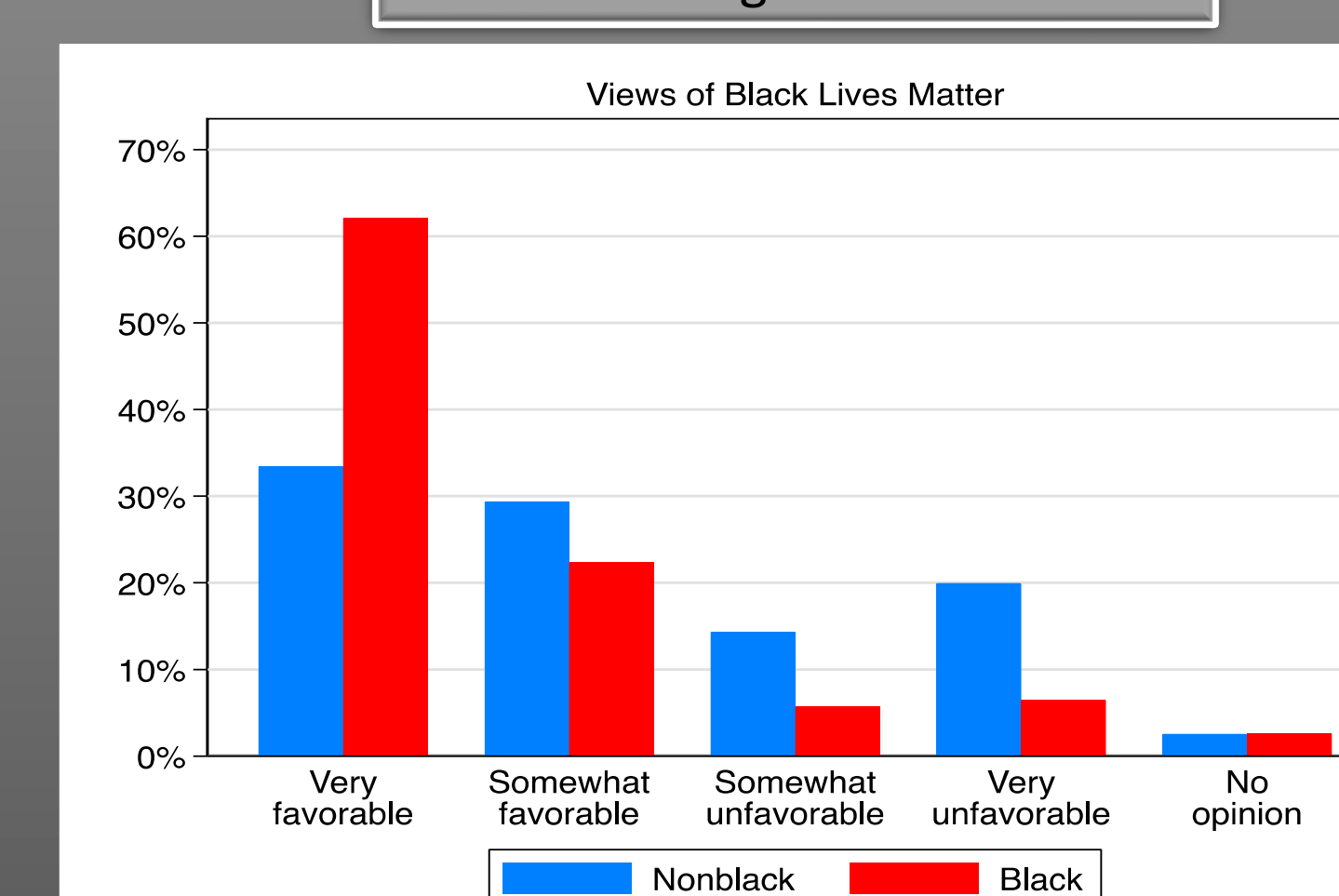
To understand the reasons that an individual that supports Black individuals may not support a movement that advocates for the advancement of Black individuals.



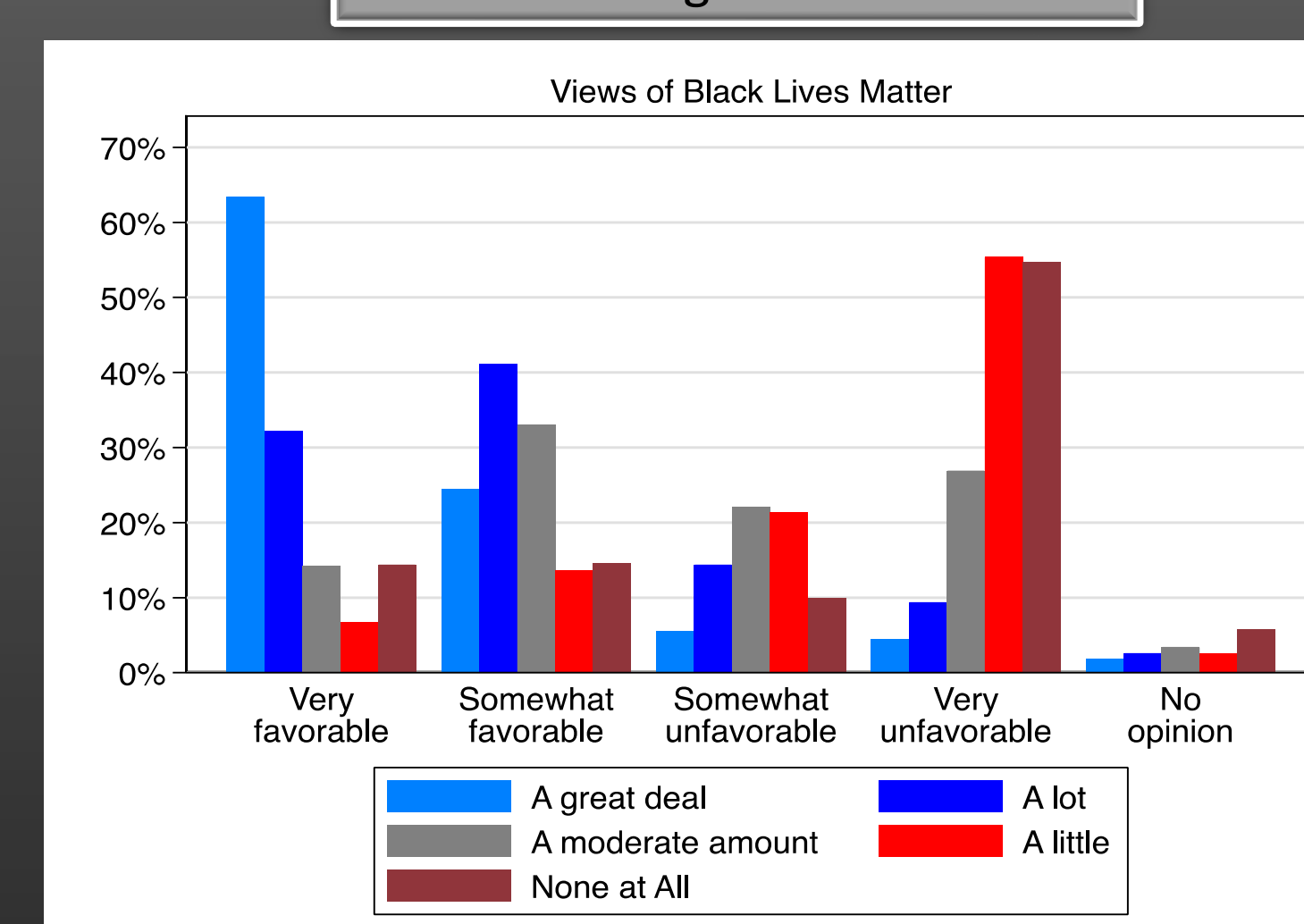
Party Identification  
Figure 2



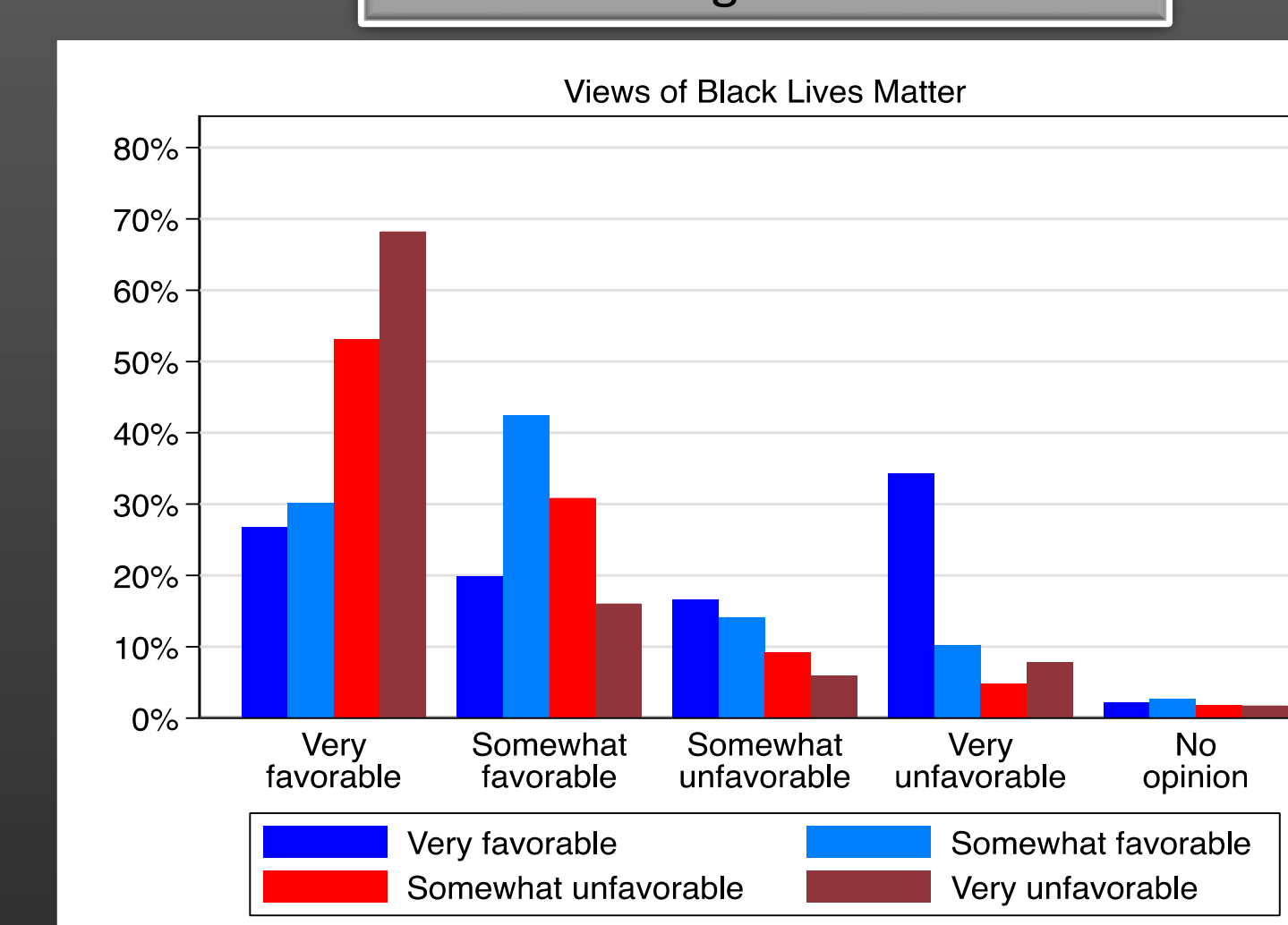
Race  
Figure 3



Beliefs Regarding Discrimination  
Figure 4



Police Favorability  
Figure 5



## Results

- The *Nationscape* survey data indicates that 73% of respondents view Black individuals favorably. Among these individuals, 66% support Black Lives Matter (see Figure 1).
- Democrats show the highest support for BLM at 88%, compared to Republicans at 39% (see Figure 2).
- Black individuals show more support for BLM compared to Non-Black individuals, with 67% of Blacks having a very favorable view of BLM compared to 35% of Non-Blacks (see Figure 3).
- There is a correlation between perceived discrimination against Blacks and support for BLM. 65% of those perceiving more discrimination have a very favorable view of BLM, while 54-55% of those perceiving less discrimination have very unfavorable views (see Figure 4).
- The data shows an inverse relationship between support for police and support for BLM. 71% of those finding the police very unfavorable view BLM very favorably, while those with high police support (finding them very favorable) largely view BLM unfavorably (52% unfavorable) (see Figure 5).
- When subjected to regression analysis, these variables are statistically significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level.

## Implications

Overall, this research highlights the complexity of opinions regarding the Black Lives Matter movement among those who support Black individuals. It underscores the intricate factors that contribute to the varying levels of support amongst this group. The findings of this research have important implications for understanding public opinion and engagement with social movements. This insight can help to foster greater understanding and bridge the divide among individuals who may share support for Black individuals and their rights but differ in their support for the Black Lives Matter movement. As the dynamics of social movements are studied further, research will continue to help emphasize common ground. The insight gained from this study contributes to the ongoing conversation about social activism and promotes progress towards a more inclusive society.

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