

White Supremacy and the Sociotechnical System of Child Welfare

The background is a dark, textured composition of overlapping organic shapes in shades of blue and purple. Scattered throughout are numerous small white dots, some forming faint patterns or trails. The overall effect is a complex, layered visual field.

Christina Viera

How foster care affected me
and my outlooks

Wednesday

Time	Main Event	Note		
10:00	Attendance for ML+Soc students	In O'Brian 209		
10:05	Teams 1 + 2 walk over to Norton 210			
10:10	Team 1 presents	Team 3 walks over to Norton 210		
10:12	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:14	Team 2 presents	Team 4 walks over to Norton 210		
10:16	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:18	Team 3 presents	Team 5 walks over to Norton 210		
10:20	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:22	Team 4 presents	Team 6 walks over to Norton 210		
10:24	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:26	Team 5 presents	Team 7 walks over to Norton 210		
10:28	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:30	Team 6 presents	Team 8 walks over to Norton 210		
10:32	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:34	Team 7 presents	Team 9 walks over to Norton 210		
10:36	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:38	Team 8 presents	Team 10 walks over to Norton 210		
10:40	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:42	Team 9 presents			
10:44	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:46	Team 10 presents			
10:48	Dr. Muller gives feedback			
10:50	Break			
10:55	In class working session for everyone	In O'Brian 209		

Slides components

The slides for both the mid and final presentation should have the following (in **exactly the same order as listed below**):

- **Problem** You should present the following three things in order:
 1. Briefly, tell us at the highest level possible, how does your group visualize **a world without white supremacy**.
 2. Tell us about your problem, at a high level (the **zoom out**). How does your problem represent a (hopefully major) impediment to reaching that vision of the world articulated in point 1. above.
 3. Tell us about your problem, at a narrow level (the **zoom in**). What chunk of 2. above did you choose to bite off, and why?
- **Solution** You should present the following two things in order:
 1. Tell us about your solution to the narrow problem. What are you going to measure/build etc?
 2. Tell us about your understanding of how your solution to that narrow problem helps you move towards the world without white supremacy that your group has envisioned. You have to move out to consider the whole picture (i.e., the **zoom out** and the **world without white supremacy**).
 - We're hopeful that the exercise in class on Wednesday, April 12 starts to get you here, but this is the really hard part, so give us something and we can help you start to move on this.
- **Plan** for next steps:
 - For the mid presentation, tell us how you're going to get from where you are now to something you can present to three expert judges for the chance to win \$5,000 in RA funding for your team over the summer to continue this project.
 - For the final presentation, tell us how if you win \$5,000 in RA funding for your team over the summer, will actually build something to continue this project.
- **Project Management** How are you planning to manage your project? This should **at least** have the following three sub-components:
 1. Breakup for various tasks for the rest of semester (for the middle presentation) or the proposed work in summer (for the final presentation).
 2. Which group member is responsible for which task?
 3. What if your deadline for various tasks? For simplicity, just use the progress updates and presentation dates as potential deadline dates.
- **Domain Expert** Tell us about your collaboration with Rage Against the Machine domain expert. This should **at least** have the following sub-components:
 1. Slightly different questions for the mid and final presentations:
 - *(For mid presentation)* When did your group meet with the domain expert?
 - *(For final presentation)* Over the entire semester how many times did your group meet with the domain expert?
 2. Slightly different questions for the mid and final presentations:
 - *(For mid presentation)* What suggestions did the domain expert give you?
 - *(For final presentation)* Over the entire semester what tools (from Rage) did the domain expert share with your group?
 3. Slightly different questions for the mid and final presentations:
 - *(For mid presentation)* Were those suggestions taken into account? If so, how? If not, why not?
 - *(For final presentation)* Over the entire semester which suggestions/Rage tools from domain expert were used in your project?
 4. *(For both presentations)* What new idea(s) came out of the meeting that could not have happened if the ML and Society part of the group had not worked with the domain expert?

Friday and Sunday

In class final presentation pitch

Your in class pitch should consist of the following (in the exact same order):

1. Cast **big vision**: What does a world without white supremacy look like?
2. Your **specific entry point**: If you were to end white supremacy where would you start?
3. **The link/ The why**: Why would you start there? Employ your zoom lens and show us how we get from your starting point to the end goal. This will require an act of critical imagining as you extrapolate from your starting point.

Note that the above is contained within the **Problem**, **Solution** and **Plan** parts of your final presentation video. Also the class on Wednesday, May 3 will be rehearsal for the groups for the pitch. Dr. Muller, Kenny and Atri will give your groups feedback and suggestions in this class.

Each group should choose **one presenter**. We recommend that y'all pick the strongest presenter in the group (note:

Monday

tomhiddleeston anotherlalabiblio... Source: babygirleady



iiiarclight:

give em the ol razzle dazzle

114,565 notes



What is child welfare?

Child welfare is a continuum of services designed to ensure that children are safe and that families have the necessary support to care for their children successfully. Child welfare agencies typically:

- Support or coordinate services to prevent child abuse and neglect
- Provide services to families that need help protecting and caring for their children
- Receive and investigate reports of possible child abuse and neglect; assess child and family needs, strengths, and resources
- Arrange for children to live with kin (i.e., relatives) or with foster families when safety cannot be ensured at home
- Support the well-being of children living with relatives or foster families, including ensuring that their educational needs are addressed
- Work with the children, youth, and families to achieve family reunification, adoption, or other permanent family connections for children and youth leaving foster care

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/cw_educators.pdf

Figure 1. The Child Maltreatment Pyramid, 2015



402,000 received services
(61%)

148,000 out-of-home placements
(23%)

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, "Child Maltreatment 2015," 2017

What is it like to be
in the child welfare
system?

Questions/discussion/break

Where's the white supremacy part?

Racial disparities in Illinois' child welfare system

Black children are removed from their homes at rates that far exceed their proportion of the population.

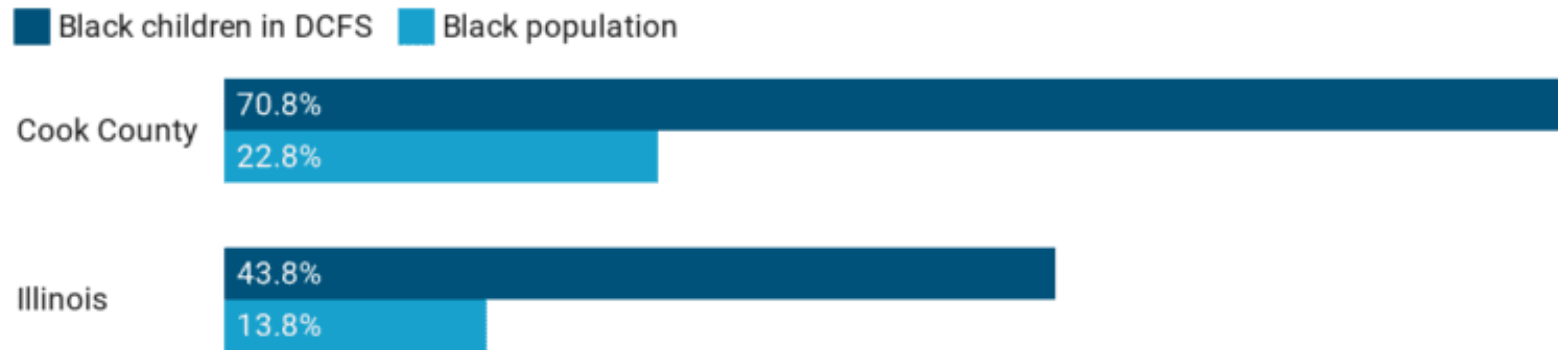
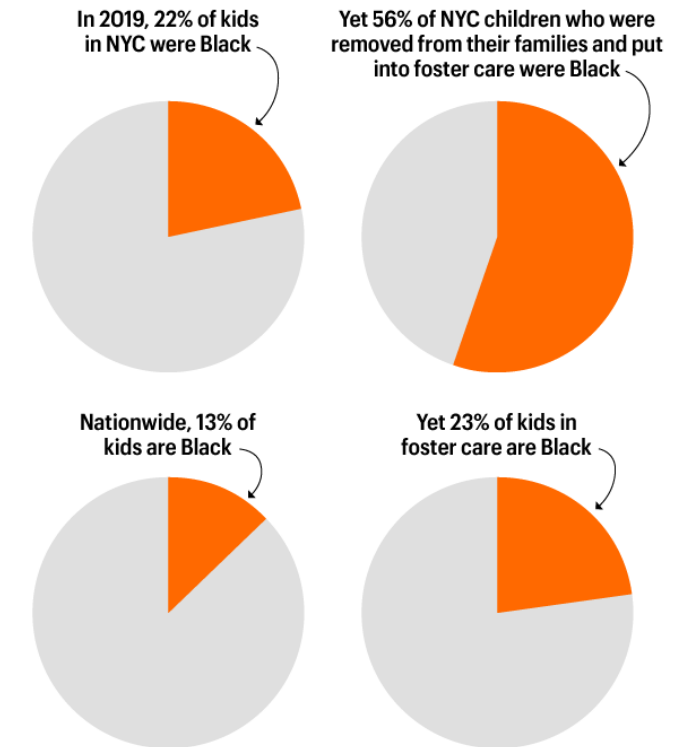


Chart: John Seasley, Injustice Watch • Source: Illinois DCFS data as of May 31, 2020; American Community Survey 2018 • Created with Datawrapper

Sucked Into the System



Sources: Citizens' Committee for Children, New York City Administration for Children's Services, Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, US Department of Health and Human Services

Why are Black families over-represented?

Two possible reasons

1. Need/Risk (Black parents have less money to support children)
2. Discrimination/Bias (Black families are over-policed within Child Welfare)

Why are Black youth over-represented?

Two possible reasons

1. Need/Risk (Black parents have less money to support children)
2. **Discrimination/Bias** (Black families are over-policed within Child Welfare)

Disentangling substantiation: The influence of race, income, and risk on the substantiation decision in child welfare

“when also controlling for caseworker perceptions of risk, race emerges as the stronger explanatory factor.”



Child Abuse & Neglect
Volume 73, November 2017, Pages 89-105



Full length article

Factors associated with racial differences in child welfare investigative decision-making in Ontario, Canada

child welfare agencies, with children of certain racial minority backgrounds more likely to be referred for suspected maltreatment, to be substantiated as victims, to be placed into out-of-home care, and to remain in care for longer periods of time than White children (Fluke, Harden, Jenkins, & Ruehrdanz, 2010; Putnam-Hornstein, Needell, King, & Johnson-Motoyama, 2013; Sinha, Trocmé, Fallon, & MacLaurin, 2013; Trocmé, Knoke, & Blackstock, 2004; Wulczyn, Gibbons, Snowden, & Lery, 2013).



Becoming Wards of the State: Race, Crime, and Childhood in the Struggle for Foster Care Integration, 1920s to 1960s

Michaela Christy Simmons 

“Wiltwyck School did not accept the boy . . . [Brace Farms] cannot accept Lonnie¹ for placement . . . Berkshire Ind[ustrial] Farm rejected Lonnie. . . . Should Children’s Village reject the application on Lonnie, the only alternative left, regrettably as it may seem, is to send this boy to the N.Y. State Training School at Warwick [for delinquents].” ~1944 court action for a 13-year-old neglected African American boy ([Polier Manuscripts 1944a](#))

Why are Black families over-represented?

Two possible reasons

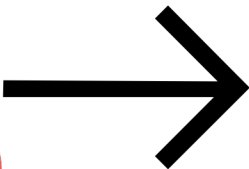
- 1. Need/Risk** (Black parents have less money to support children)
- 2. Discrimination/Bias** (Black families are over-policed within Child Welfare)

What might we do?

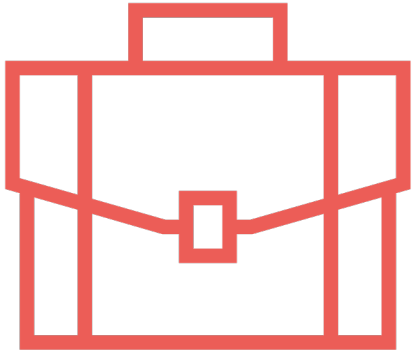
If substantiated, the youth is **taken into care**



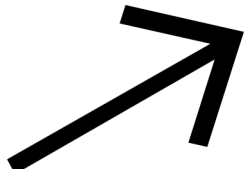
Youth are reported to CPS



The call is **screen in** (or not)



If screened in, the call is investigated. The investigation can result in **substantiation** (or not)



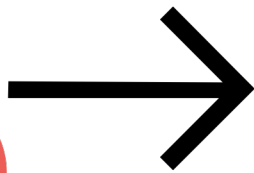
The youth's case is then periodically reinvestigated

What might we do?

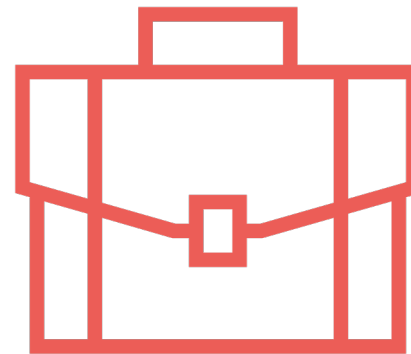
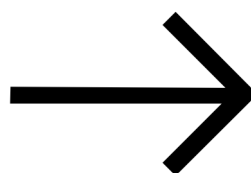
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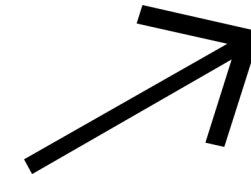
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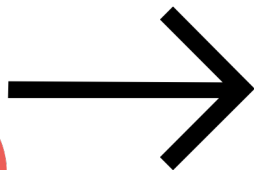
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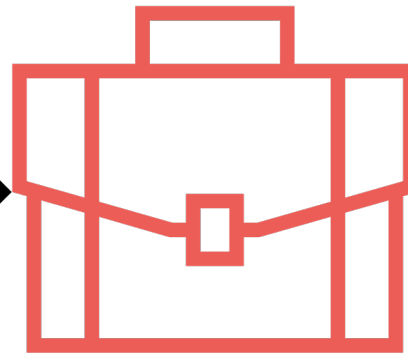
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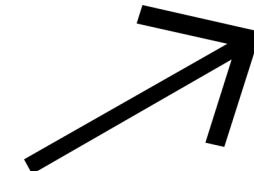
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The youth's case is then periodically reinvestigated

General idea

- Try to predict outcomes from **substantiation phase**, not **screening phase**
 - Idea: Probably more accurate, less biased
- What is our target variable in this case?

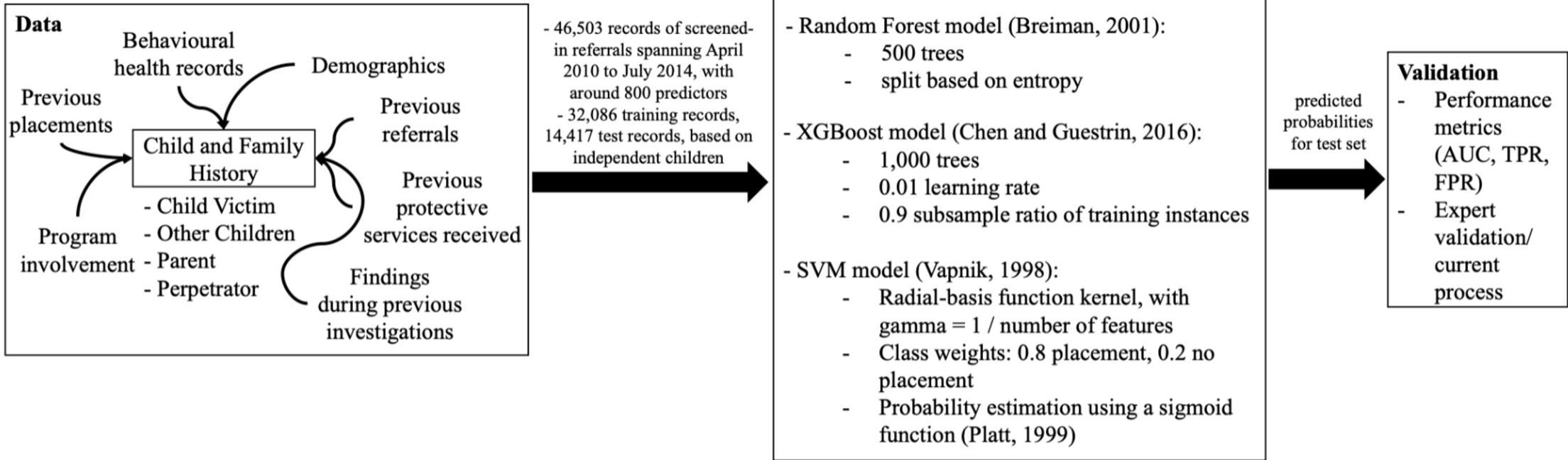
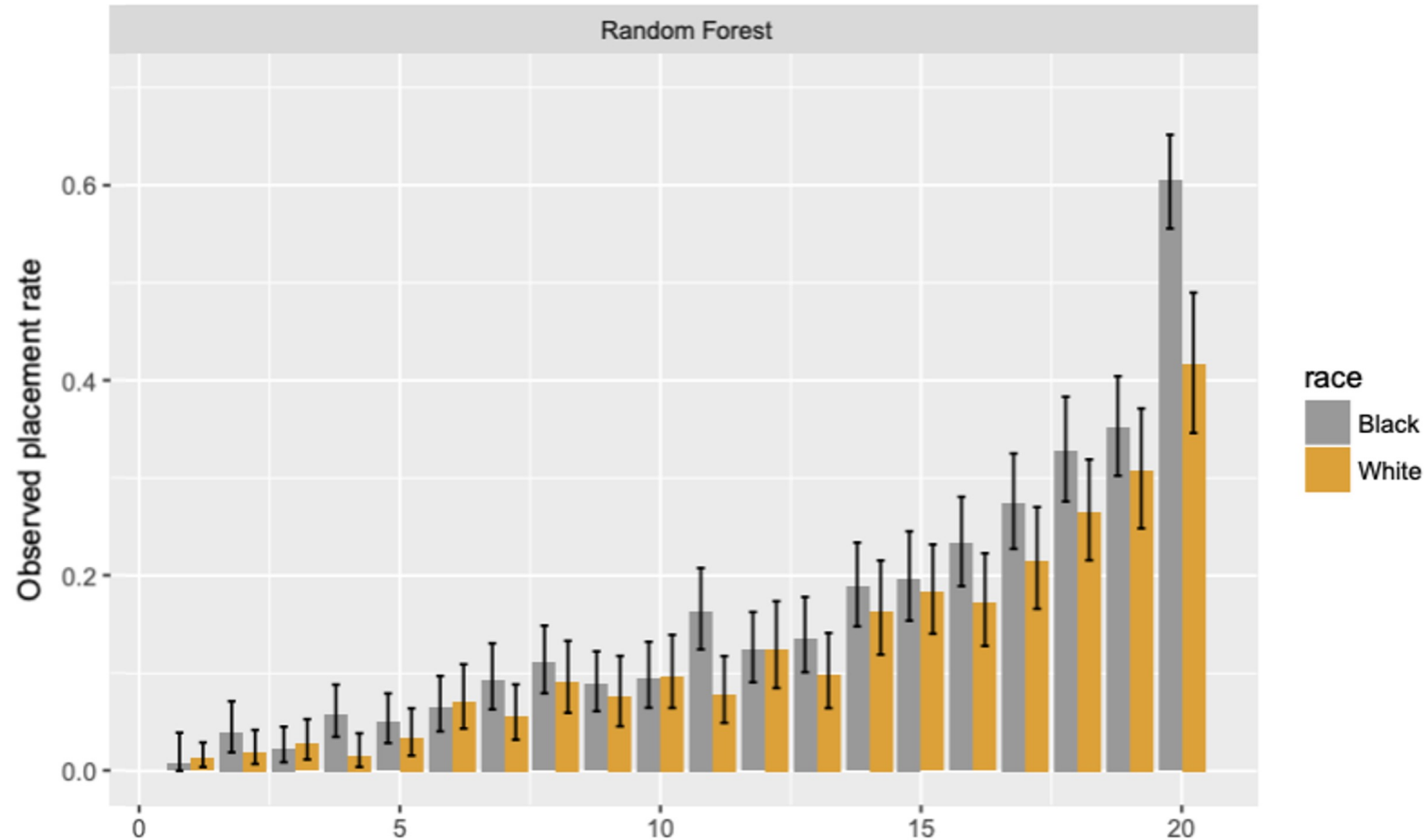


Figure 1: An overview of the modeling process.

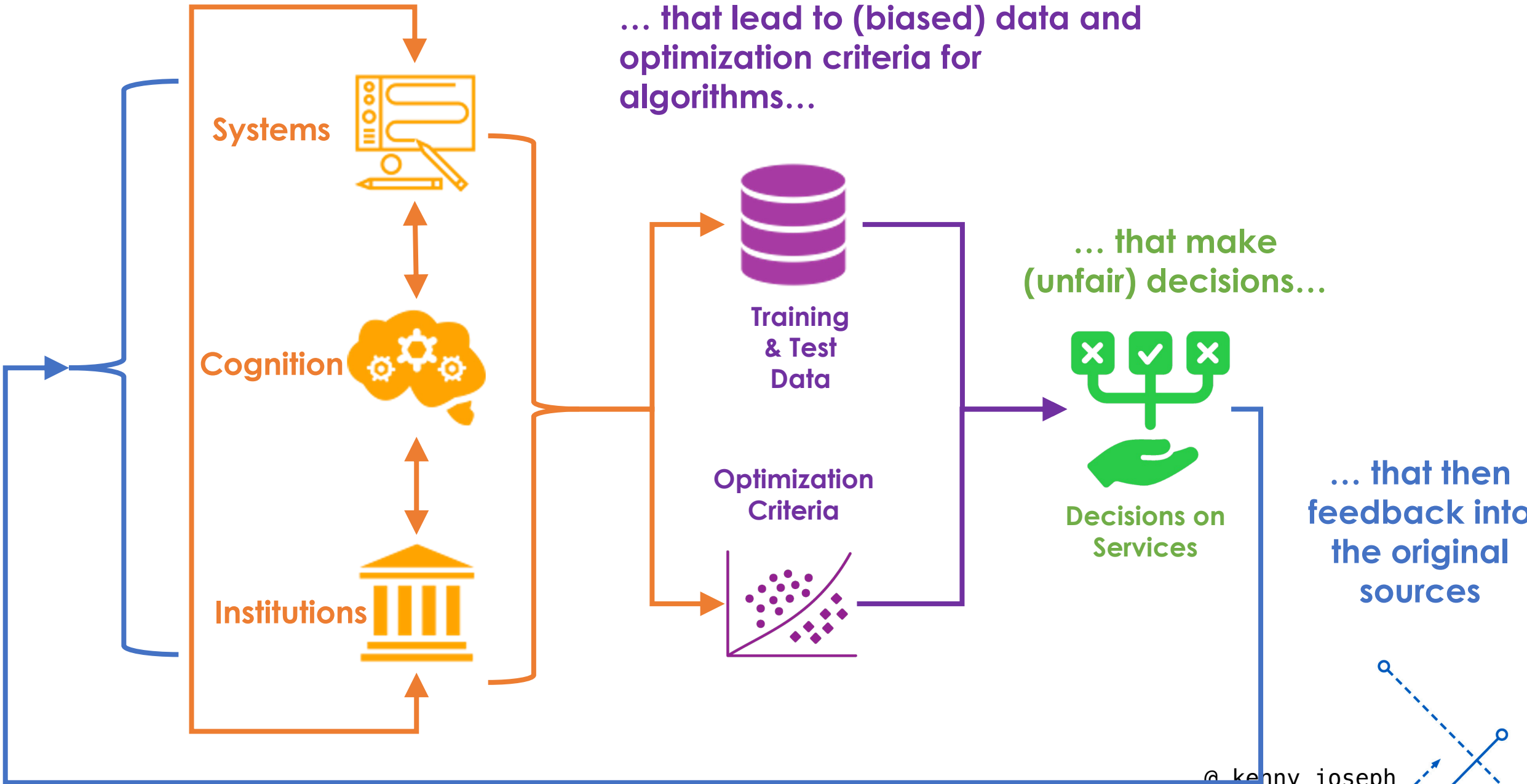
What Percentage of these youth were taken into care?



What “risk score” did the algorithm give these youth?

**Erm, what else
might we do?**

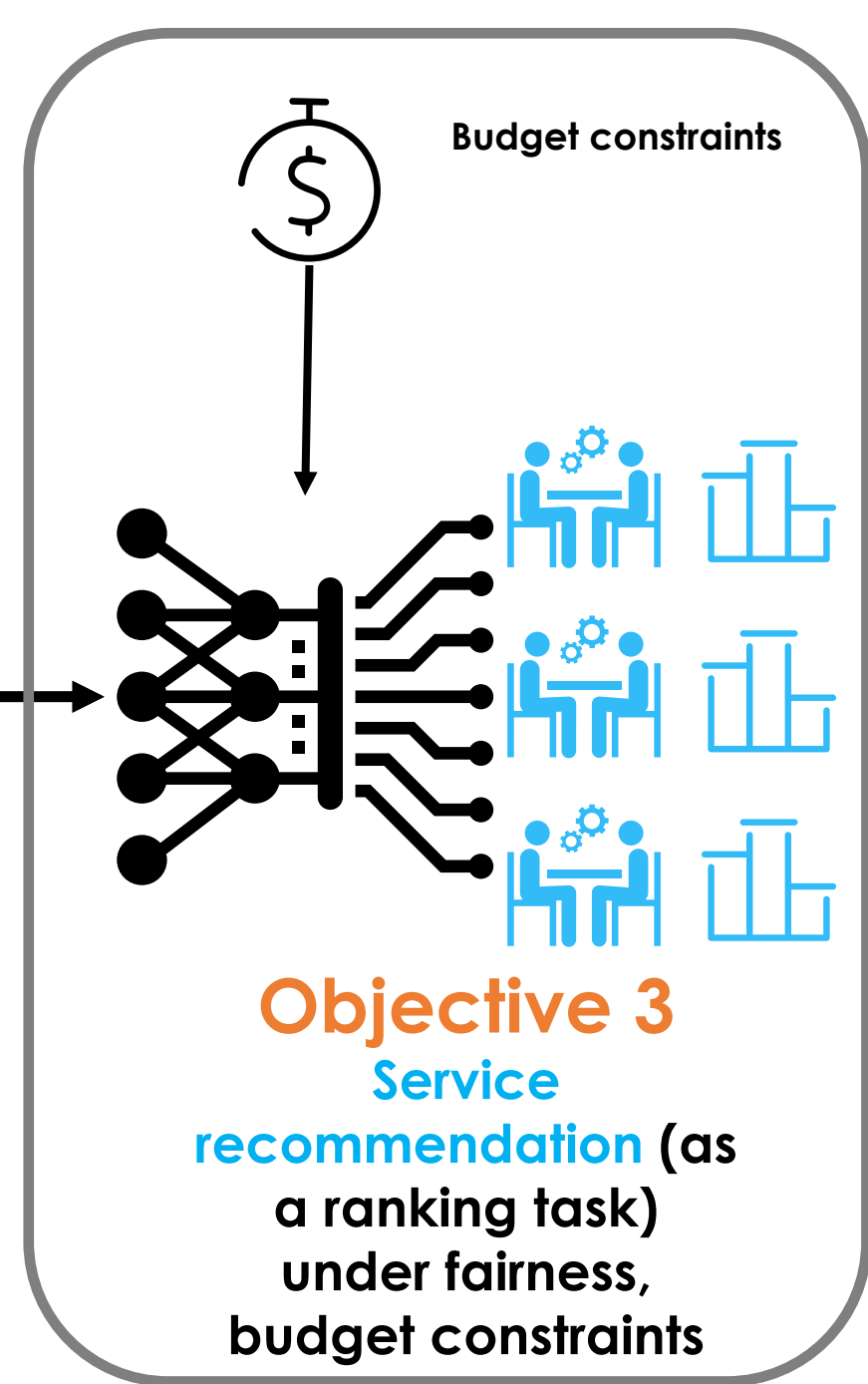
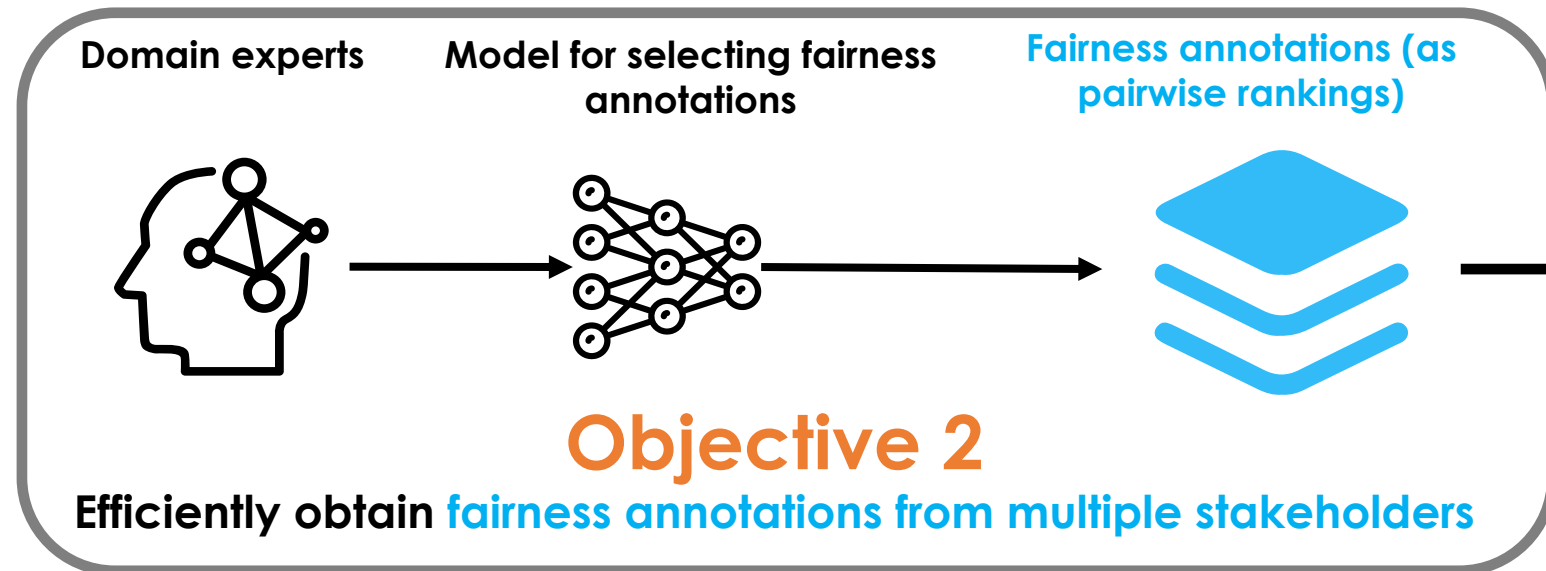
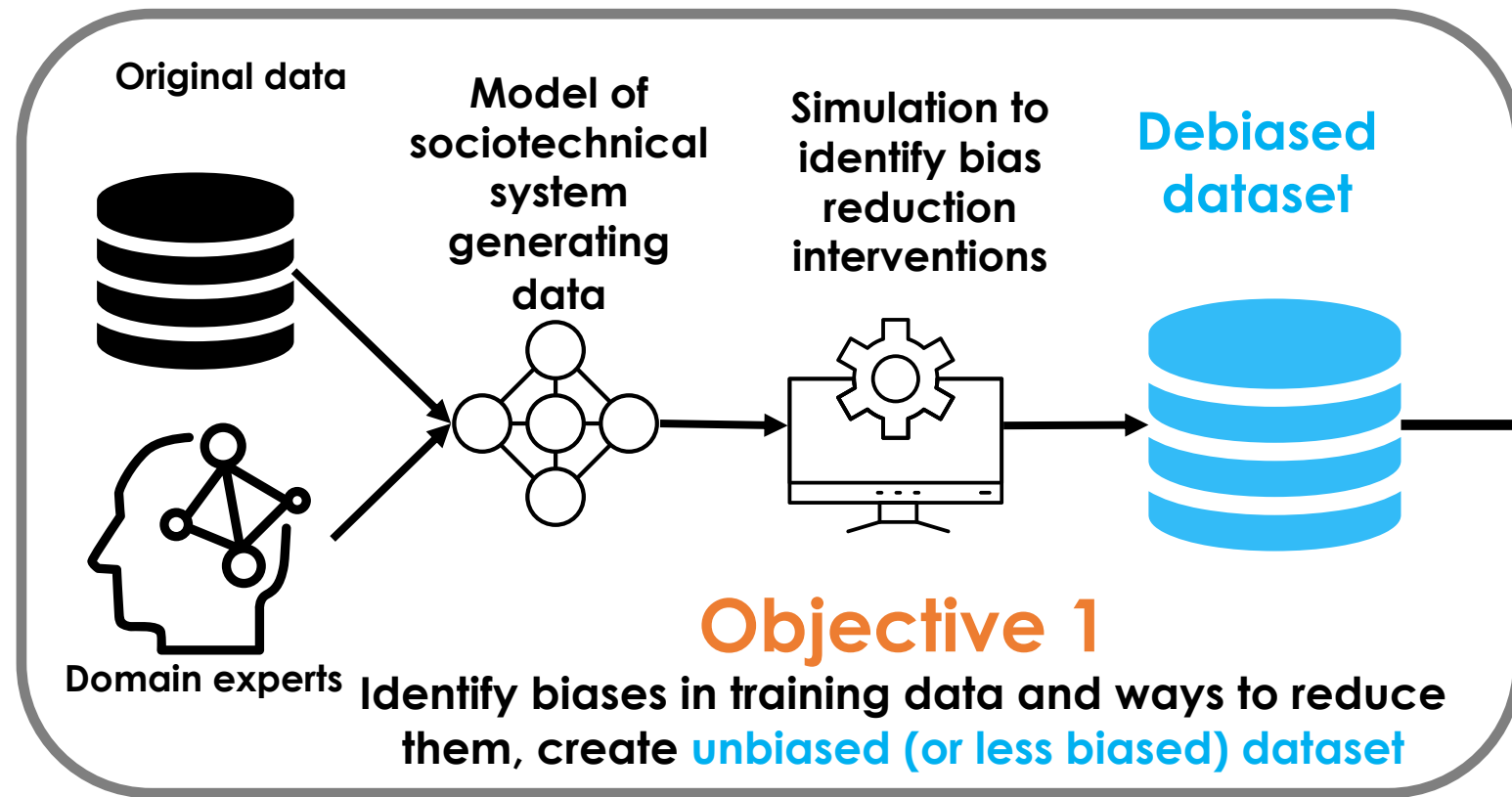
Entities within sociotechnical systems store, produce and transmit biases...



... that lead to (biased) data and optimization criteria for algorithms...

... that make (unfair) decisions...

... that then feedback into the original sources



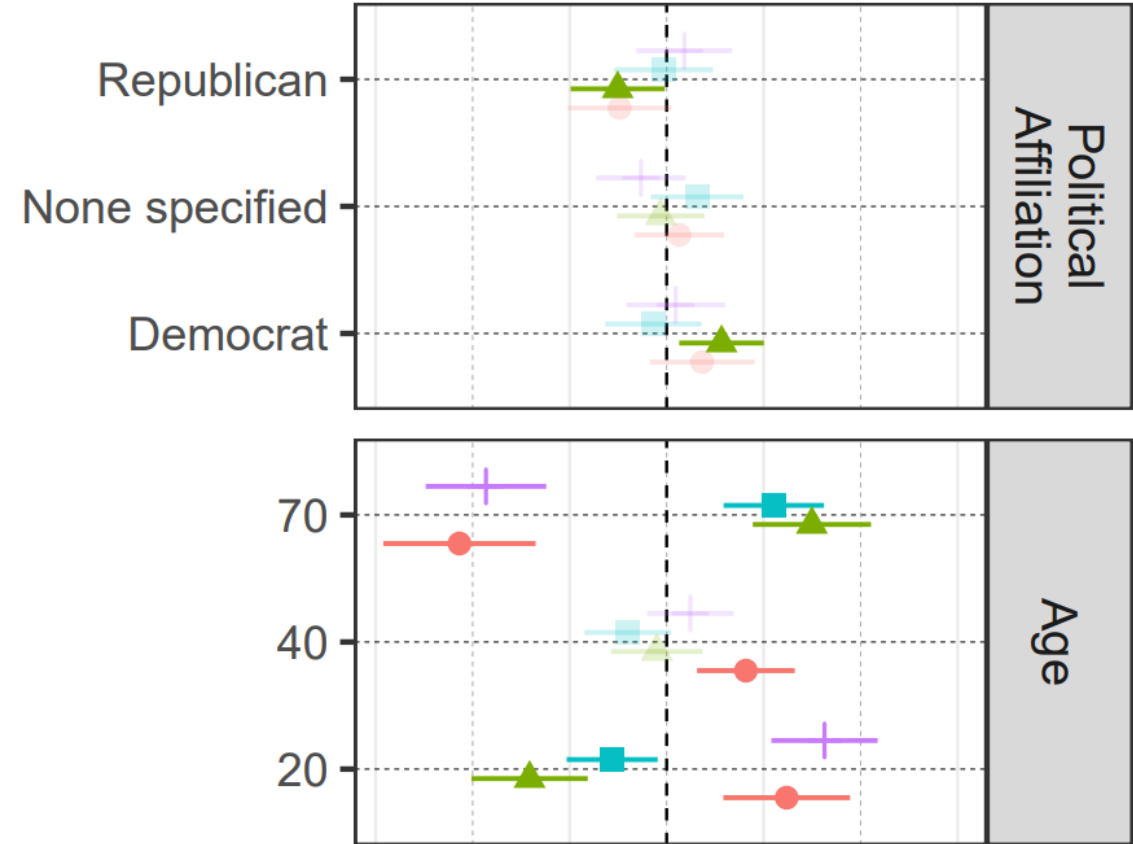
You are a social worker that provides a small tuition stipend to individuals who want to take courses at the local community college.

If you had to choose, which of the two individuals would you say it is most fair to provide the stipend to?

Attribute	Person A	Person B
Age	20	70
Children	Two kids	Two kids
Occupation	doctor	nurse
Criminal History	Prior history of non-violent crime	Prior history of violent crime
Race	Hispanic	Hispanic
Upbringing	Grew up poor	Grew up middle class
Political Affiliation	Democrat	None specified
Health Issues	Generally Healthy	Mental health issues

Person A

Person B

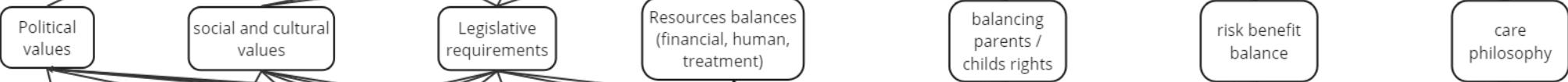


Youth

Functional Purpose
(system objectives)



Abstract Function
(values, constraints, and balances)



General Function
(processes necessary to achieve objectives)

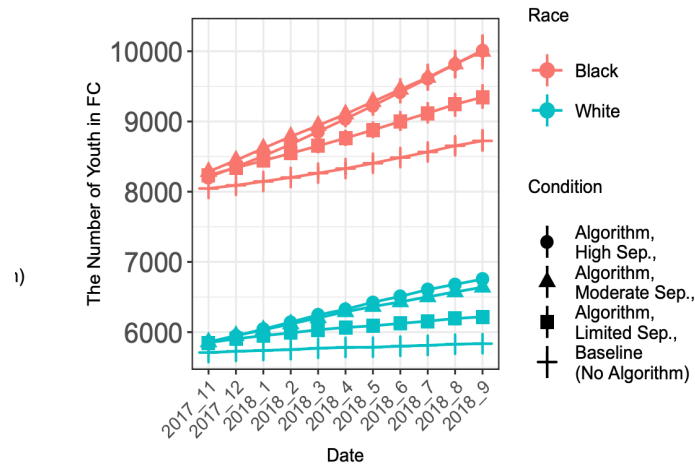
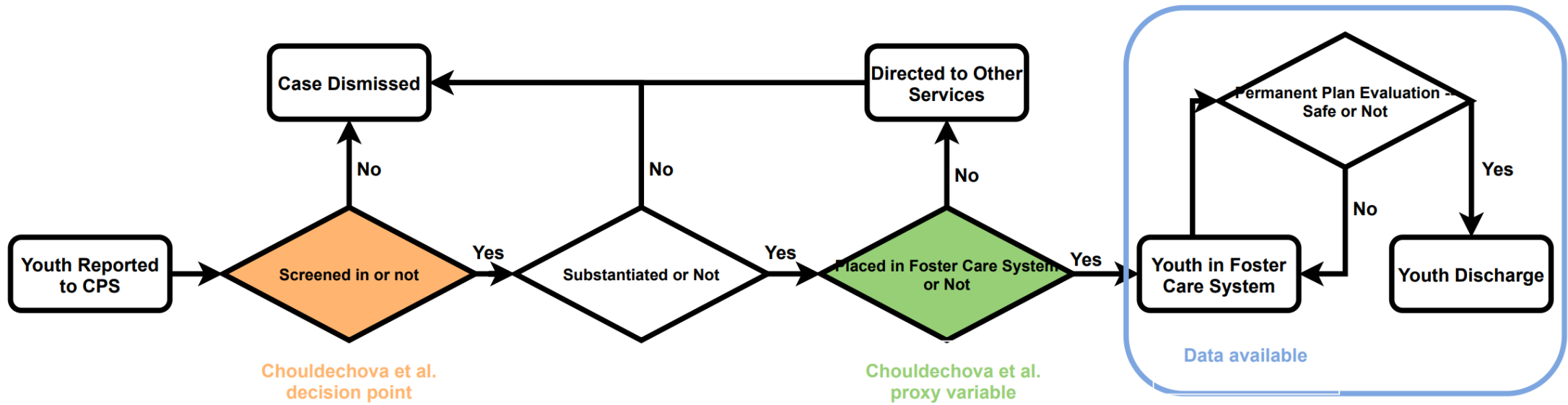


Physical function
(concrete functions used to support processes)



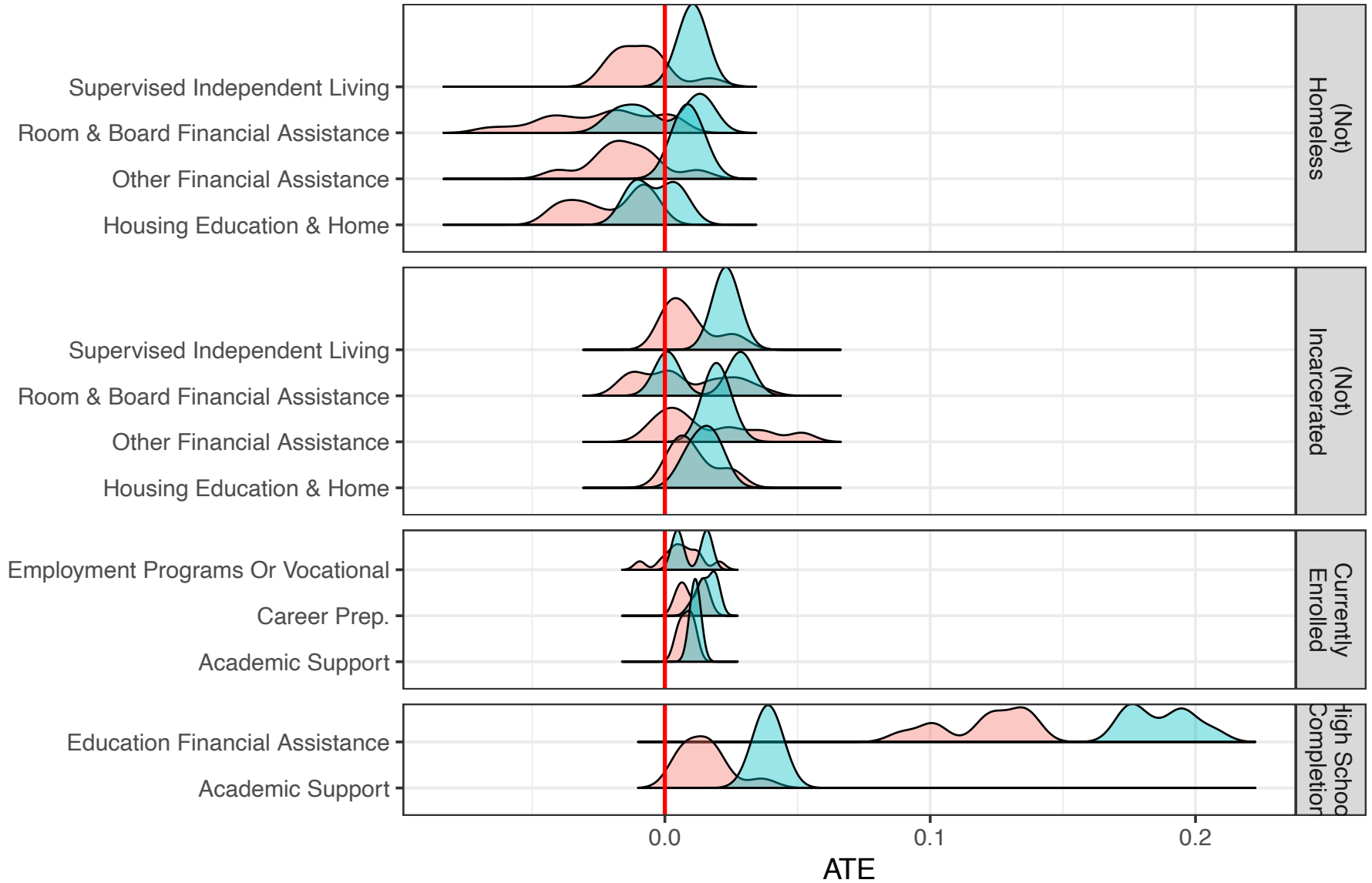
Physical form
(tools and resources used to conduct functions)





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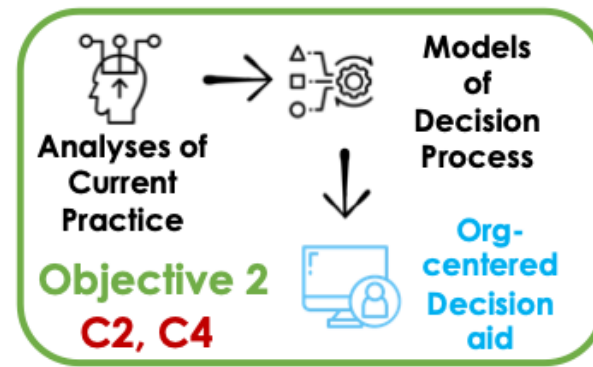
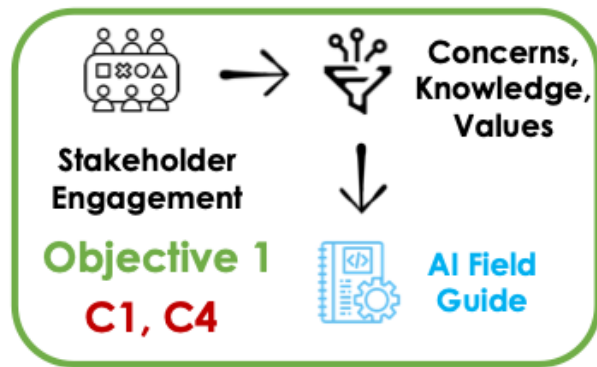
Fig. 5. The simulated number of Black and white youth in foster care by month for different screen-in procedures: without an algorithm and with an algorithm but different levels of separability between short-term and long-term youth profiles.



Hand-Selected Controls

- No
- Yes



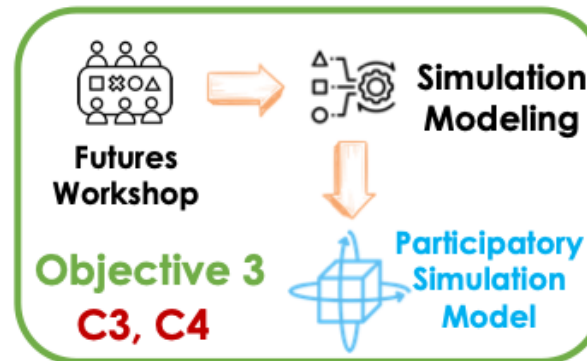


Future Tech:
Better calibrated trust in AI

Future Tech:
Better decisions

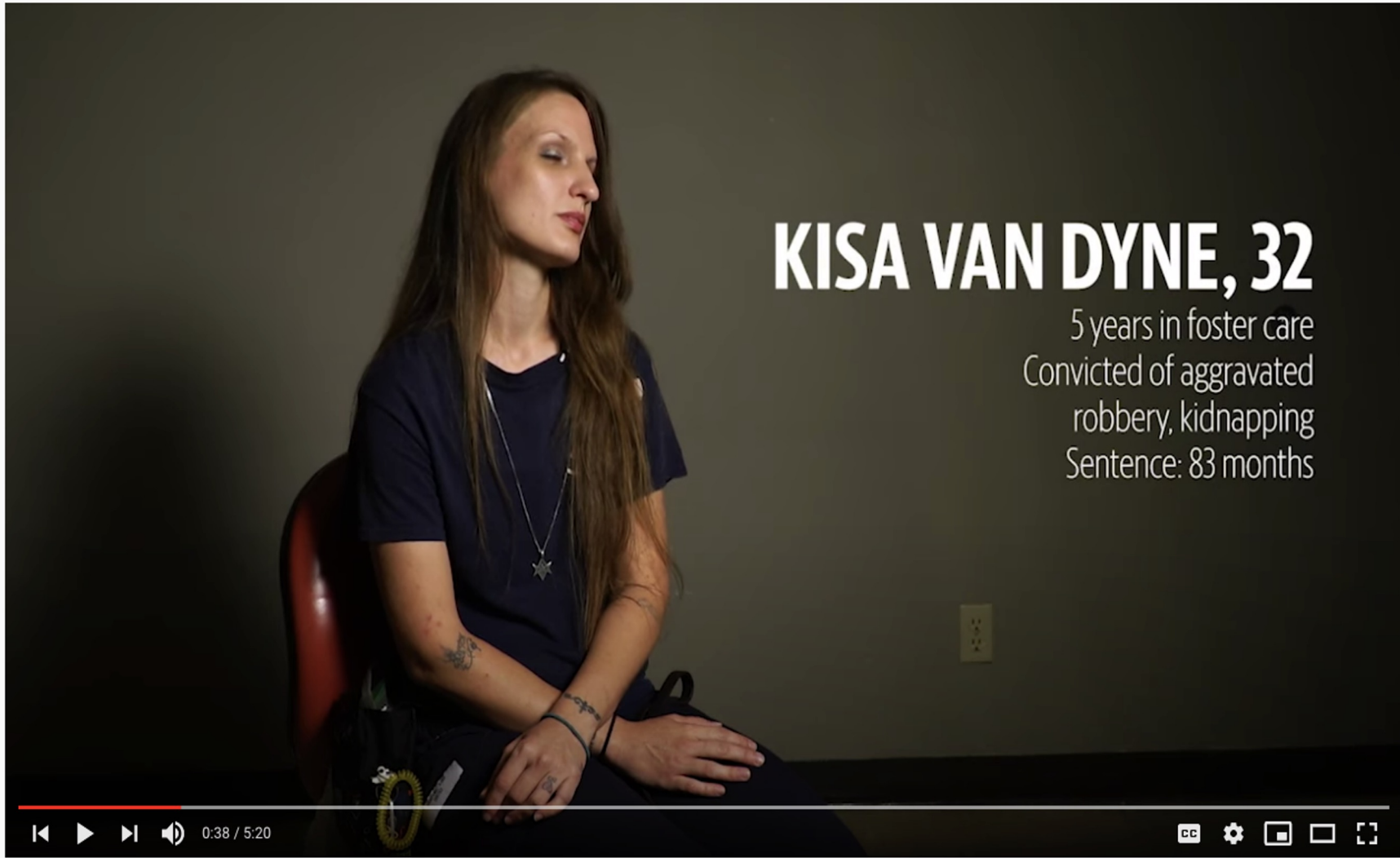
Inform, Empower, Enable
Future Workers for a more equitable **future of work**

Future Tech:
Help imagine alternative futures



Challenges Facing Workers and Work

- C1** Tech Not Responsive to Workers
- C2** Complex, Problematic Decisions
- C3** Policy/Tech Shifts
- C4** Stress, Burnout, Turnover



Do you blame these
people? Why (not)?



Who do you blame? Why?

- The girl?
- The dad?
- The uncle?
- The case worker?
- The county supervisor?
- The state supervisor?
- The drug companies?
- The state budget committee?
- The US government?
- ...