

Trust, Facts, Democracy

How libraries fit into the biggest issues of the day

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Study: 90% Of Americans Strongly Opposed To Each Other

“The vast majority of respondents signaled they were dead set against the U.S. populace, condemning in forceful terms the way others have handled things over the past year...,” said Pew Research Center polling analyst Babette Randolph, noting that the rate of opposition remained consistent across all 50 states and virtually every demographic regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or political identification.



“Wow, I can’t believe I’m included in Pew findings!”

RORY TAGGART • CRADLE SANDER



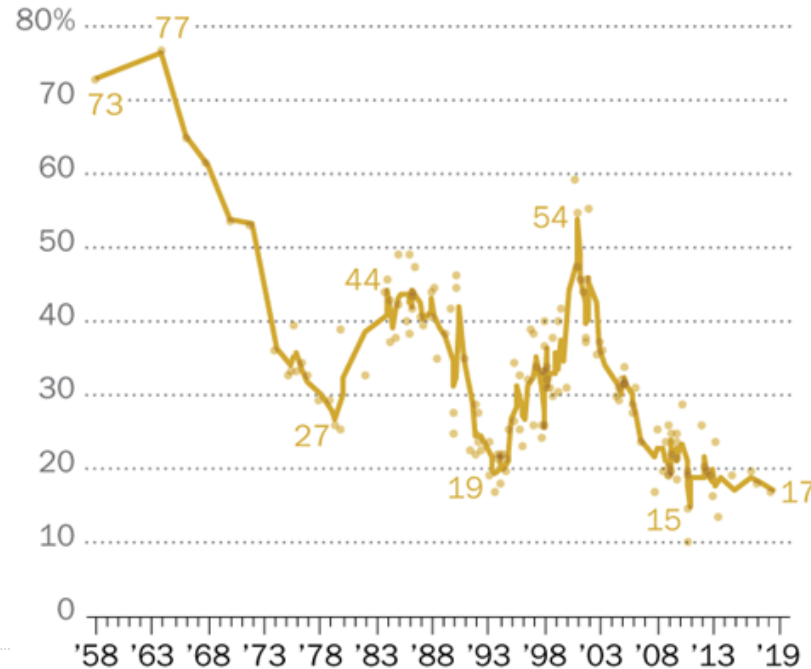
“Yeah, but Pew’s a bunch of stoners.”

PEGGY GONNEAU • FOOD TRUCK OPERATOR

Trust

Public trust in the federal government remains at historic low

% who say they trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time



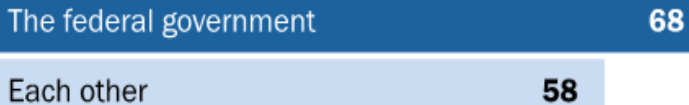
Americans think their distrust of the federal government and each other is a problem that gets in the way of solving issues

% of U.S. adults who believe ...

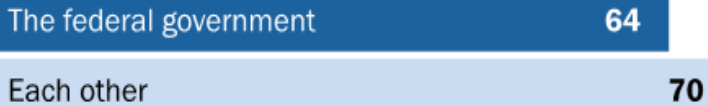
... Americans' trust in ____
has been shrinking



... it is very important that
the U.S. improve the level of
confidence Americans have in ____



... low trust in ____
makes it harder to solve problems



Personal trust ranges across a spectrum – differences tied to race/ethnicity, education, household income

% of U.S. adults who say

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or most people can't be trusted?

52% Most can be trusted **Most can't be trusted 47%**

Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would try to be fair no matter what?

41% Try to be fair **Try to take advantage 58%**

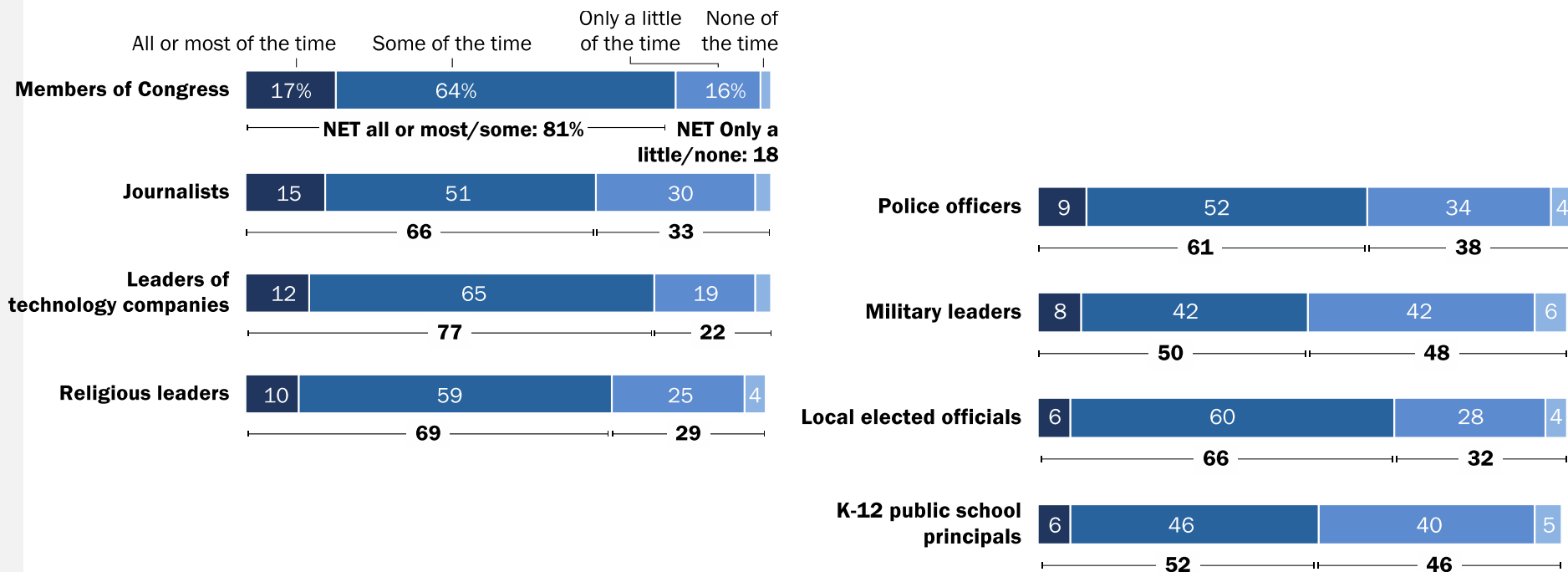
Would you say that most of the time people try to help others or just look out for themselves?

37% Try to help others **Just look out for themselves 62%**

	Low trusters	Medium trusters	High trusters
All adults	35%	41%	22%
White	31	41	27
Black	44	41	13
Hispanic	46	40	12
Ages 18-29	46	42	11
30-49	39	41	18
50-64	31	41	25
65+	19	40	37
High school or less	43	40	15
Some college	37	39	22
Bachelor's degree	24	46	29
Postgraduate	20	44	33
Under \$30K	45	40	13
\$30K-\$74,999	36	40	22
\$75K or more	25	44	30

Most think key institutional actors behave unethically at least a little of the time

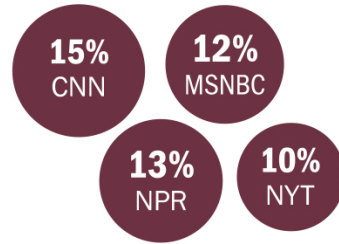
% of U.S. adults who think _____ act unethically ...



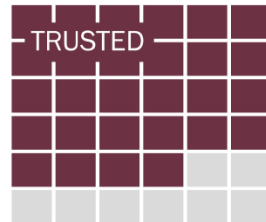
Consistent Liberals & Conservatives Often Live in Different Media Worlds

Consistent liberals...

...name an array of main news sources

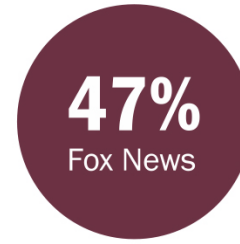


...trust more than distrust 28 of the 36 news sources surveyed

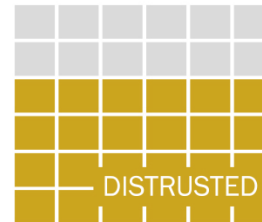


Consistent conservatives...

...are tightly clustered around one main news source

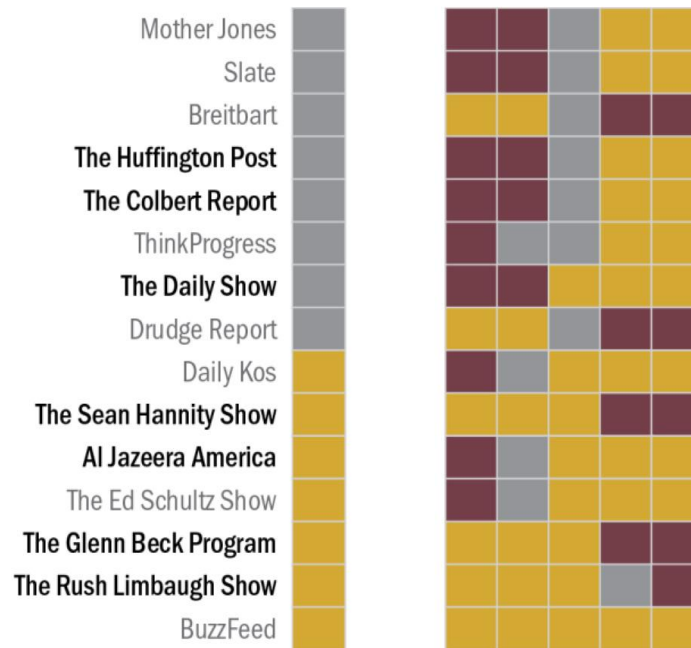
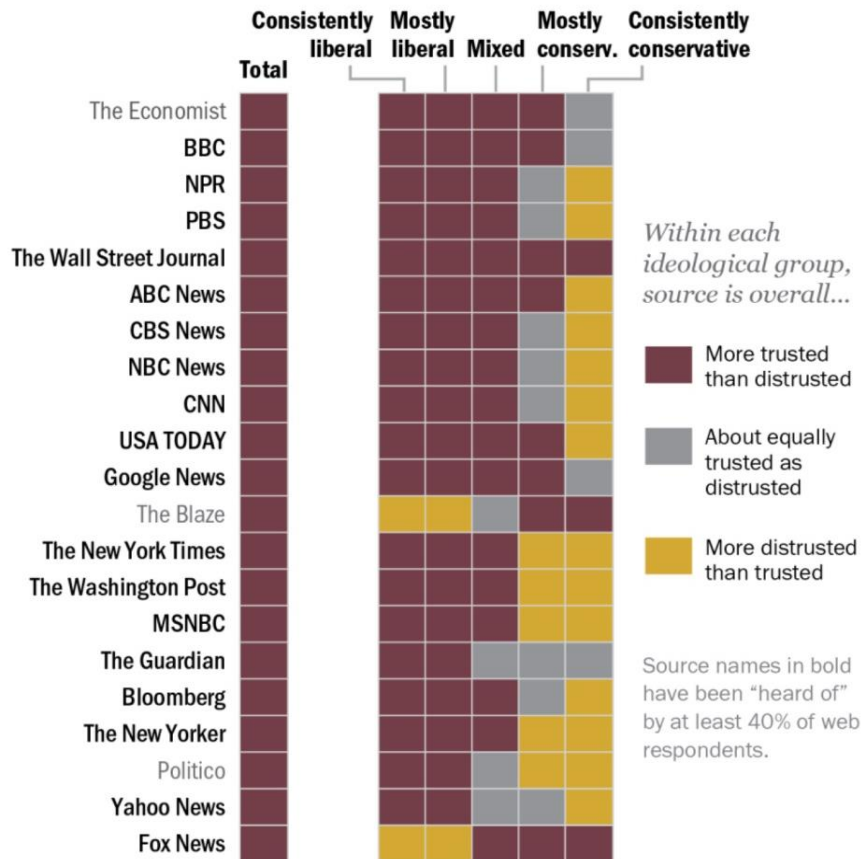


...distrust more than trust 24 of the 36 news sources



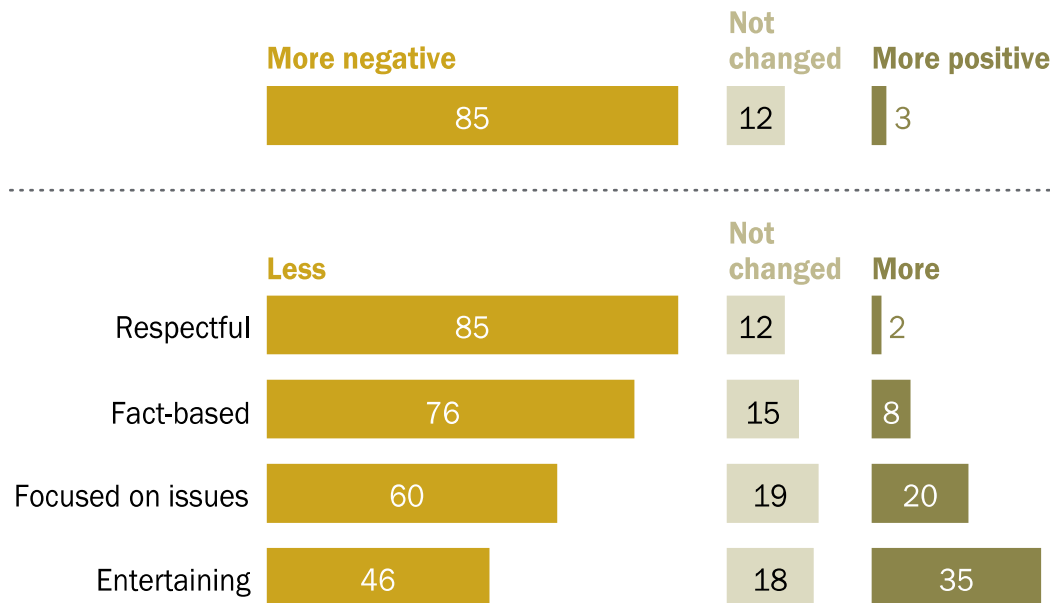
Little Overlap in the Sources Trusted for Political News

Trust Levels of News Sources by Ideological Group

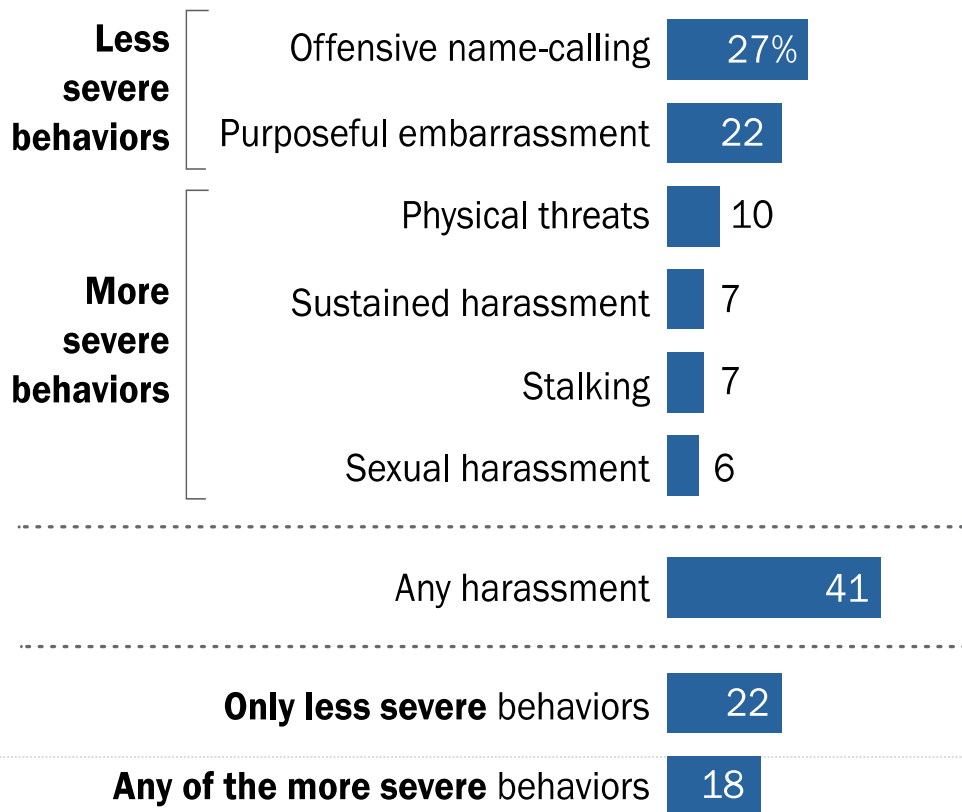


Most Americans say political debate has become less respectful, fact-based, substantive

% of U.S. adults who say over the last several years the tone and nature of political debate in this country has become...

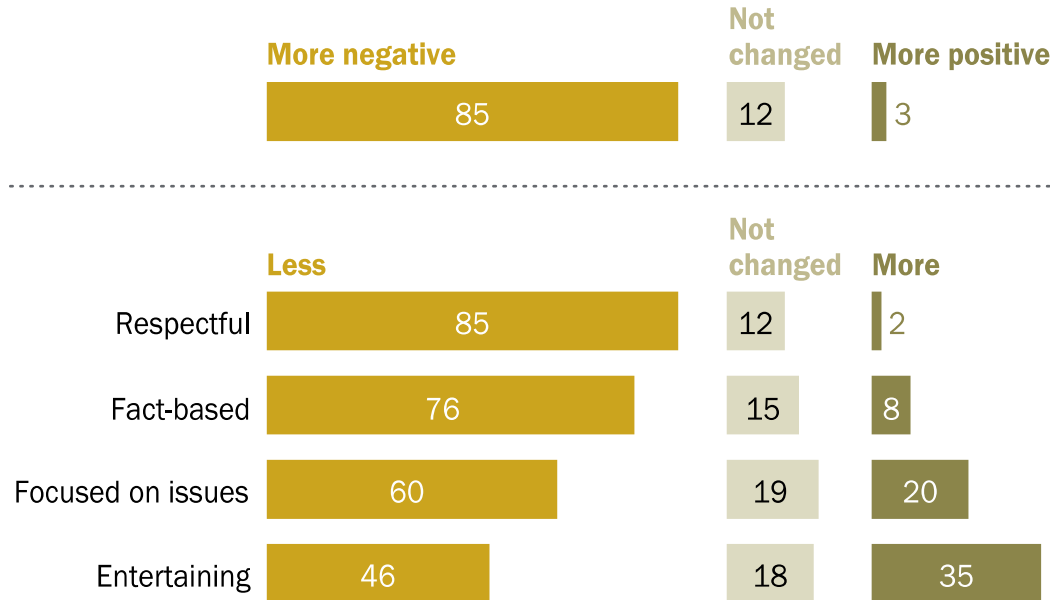


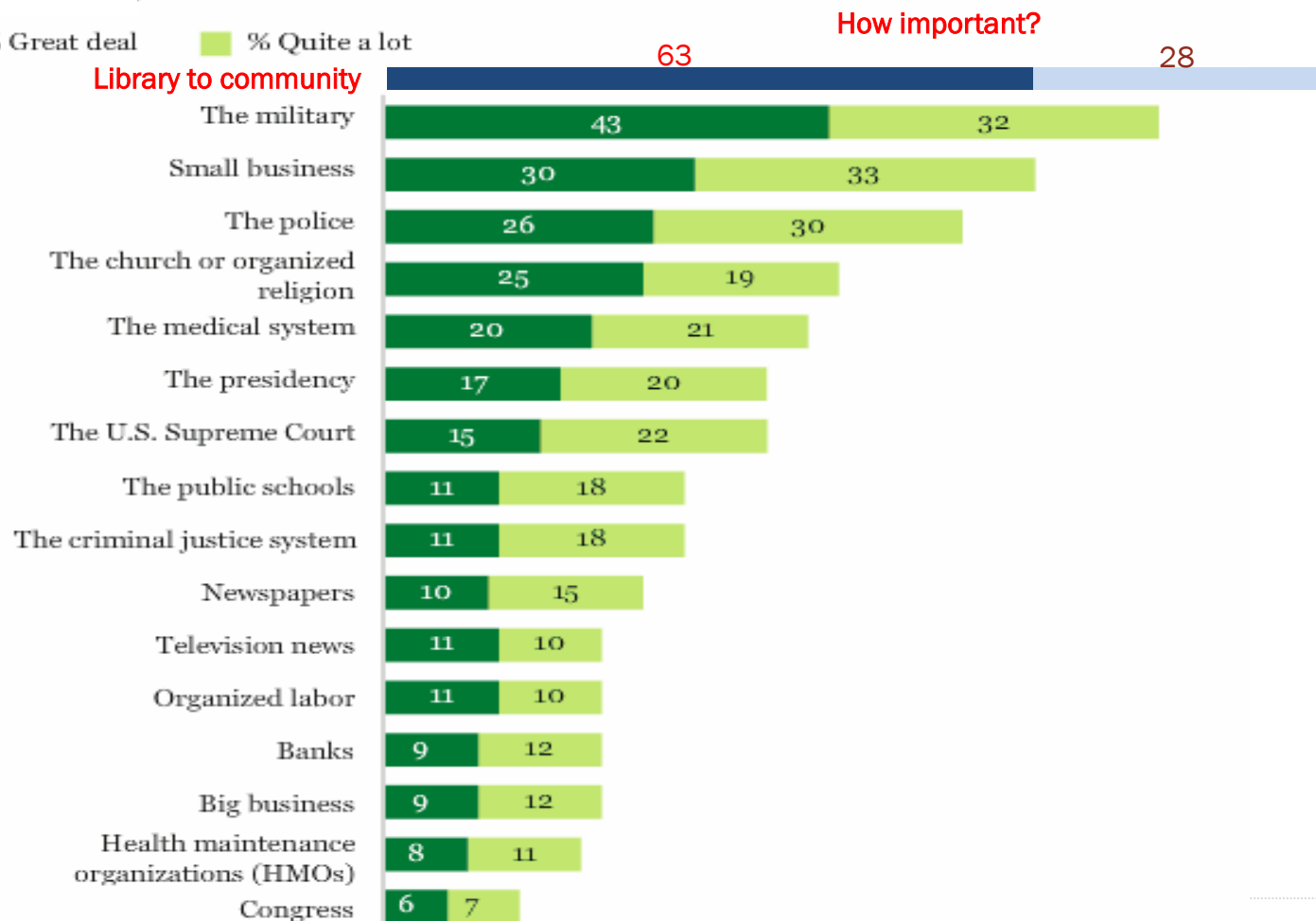
41% have personally experience online harassment (66% have witnessed it)



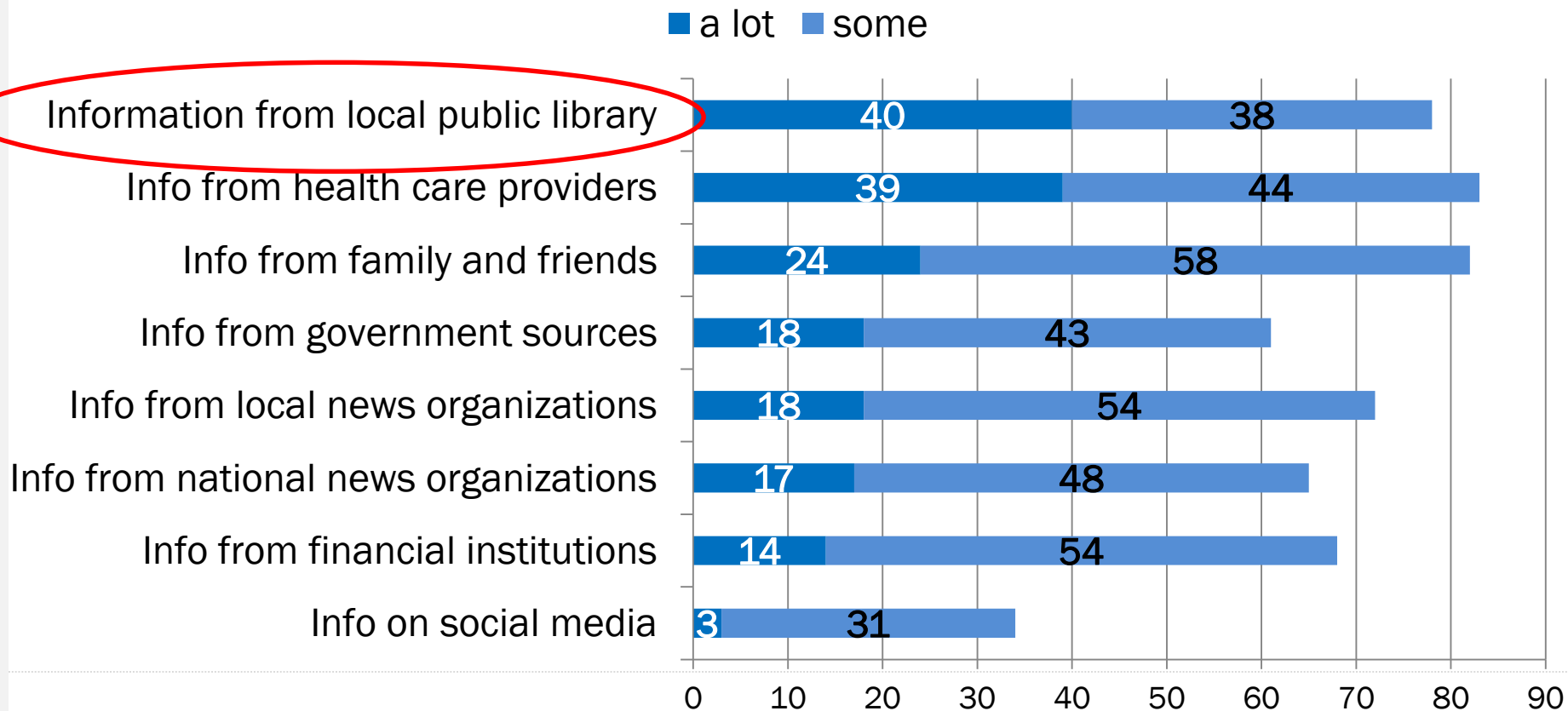
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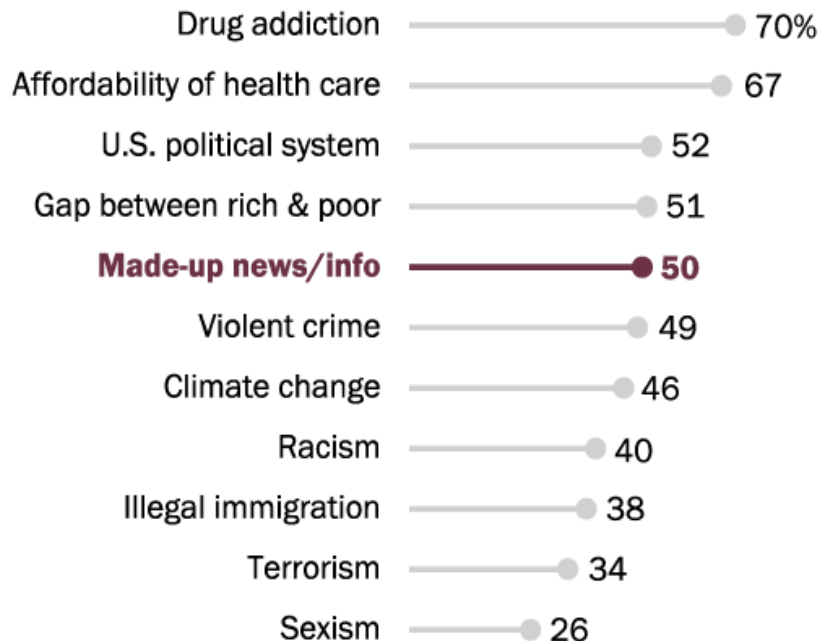
People's trust in various sources of information



Facts

Americans see made-up news as a bigger problem than other key issues

*% of U.S. adults who say ___ is a **very big problem** in the country today*



Americans see made up news as detrimental to the country's democratic system

*% of U.S. adults who say made-up news and information has a **big impact** on ...*

68% Americans' confidence in government

54% Americans' confidence in each other

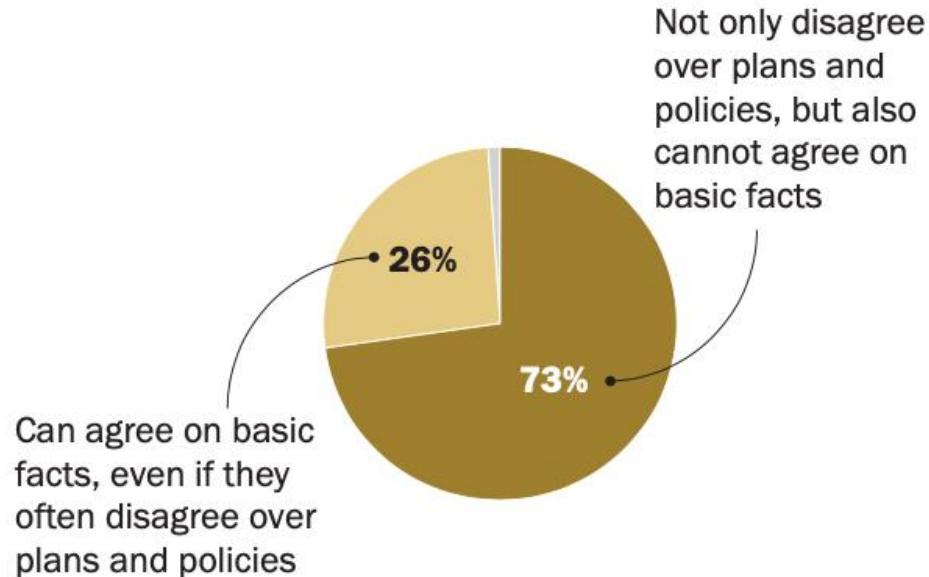
51% Political leaders' ability to get work done

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 19-March 4, 2019.

"Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to be Fixed"

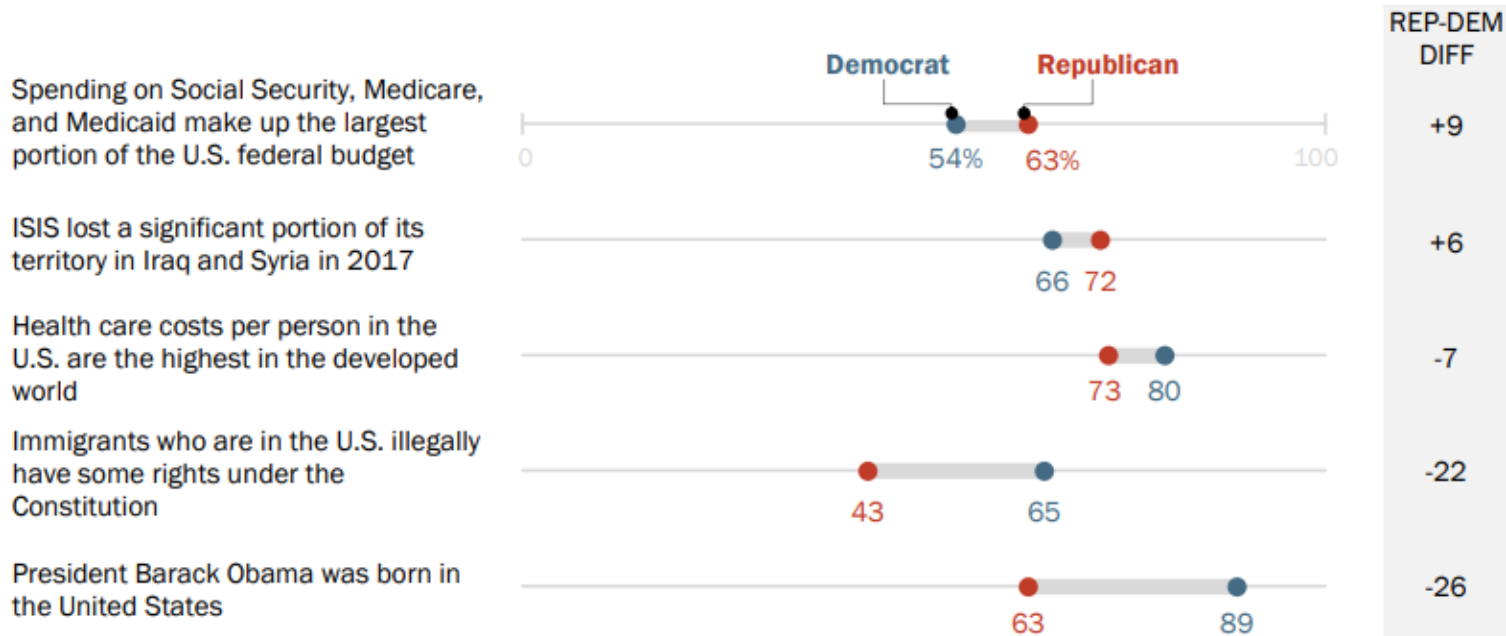
Republicans and Democrats say they can't agree on 'basic facts'

On important issues facing the country, most Republican and Democratic voters ... (%)



Republicans and Democrats more likely to see opinion statements as factual when they favor their side

% who classified each factual statement as factual



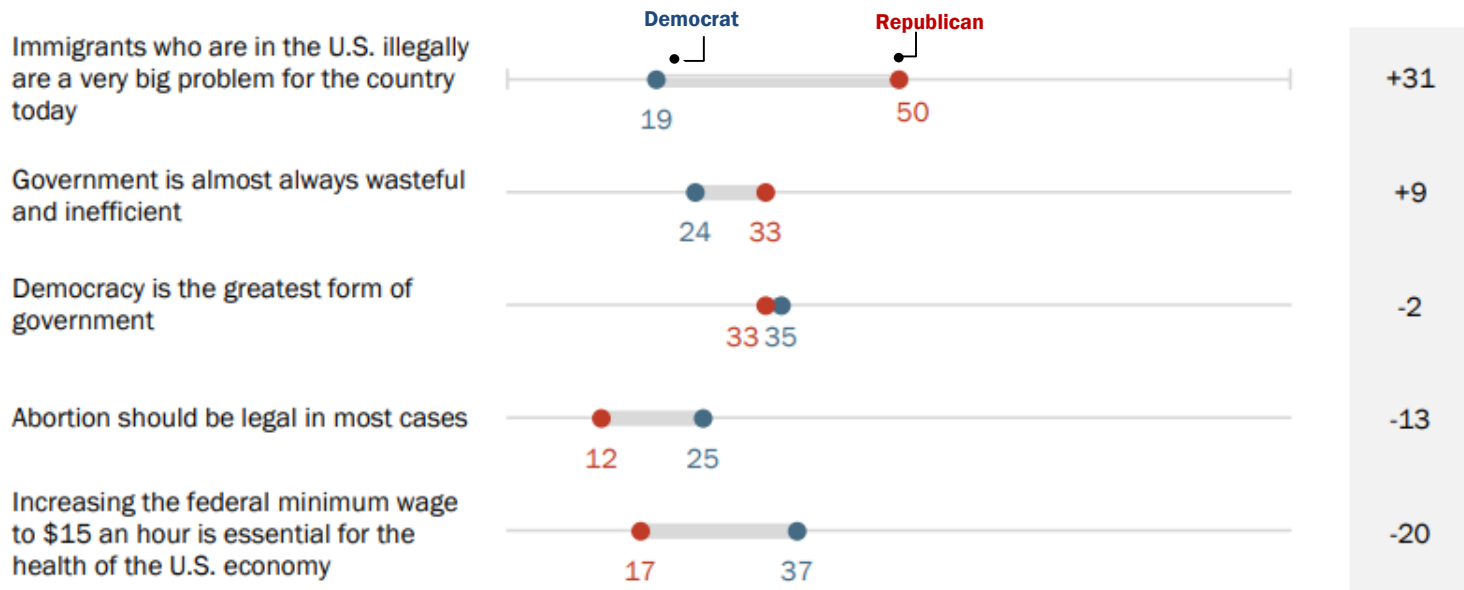
Note: Independents not shown. Republicans and Democrats significantly differ on all statements.

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 22-March 4, 2018.

"Distinguishing Between Factual and Opinion Statements in the News"

Republicans and Democrats more likely to see opinion statements as factual when they favor their side

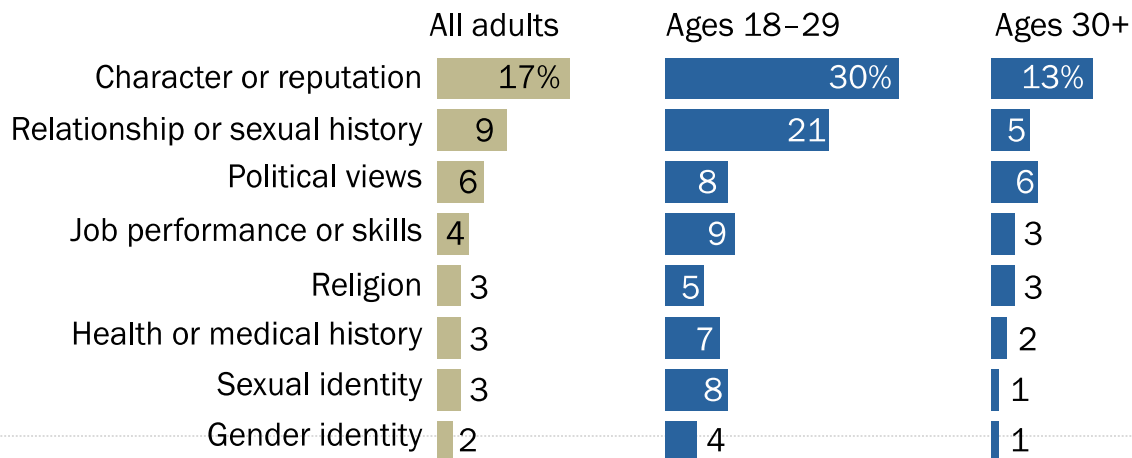
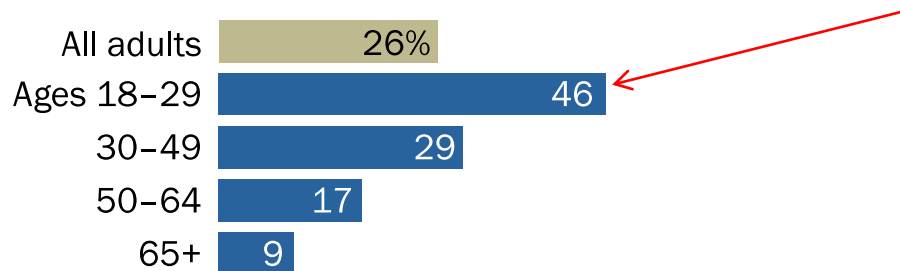
% who classified each *opinion statement as factual*



Note: Independents not shown. Republicans and Democrats significantly differ on all statements except for "Democracy is the greatest form of government."
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 22-March 4, 2018.
"Distinguishing Between Factual and Opinion Statements in the News"

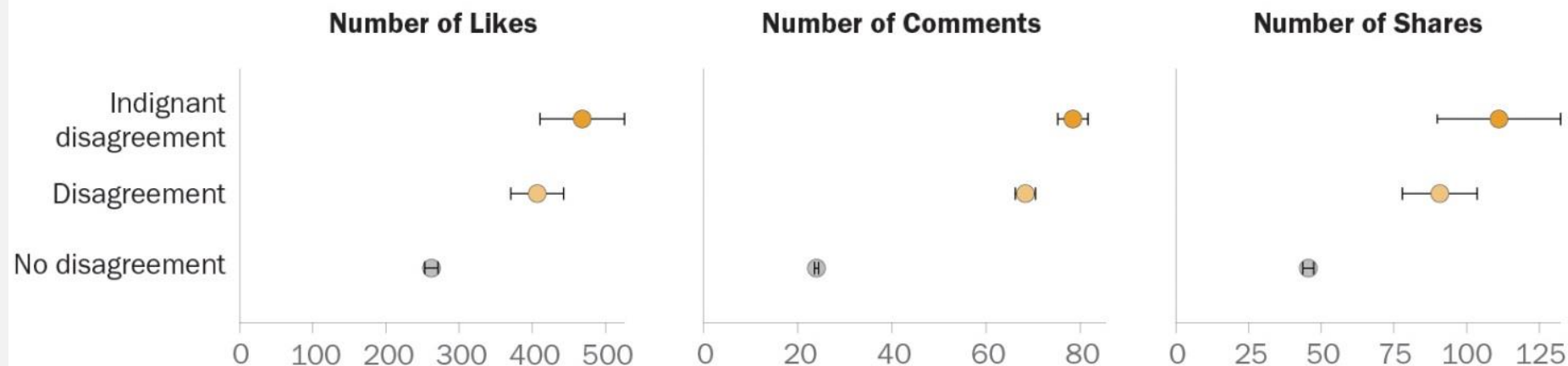
26% of Americans have had false information posted about them

% of U.S. adults who have had untrue information about them posted online



Critical posts get more likes, comments, and shares than other posts

Average number of likes, comments, and shares per Facebook post containing ...



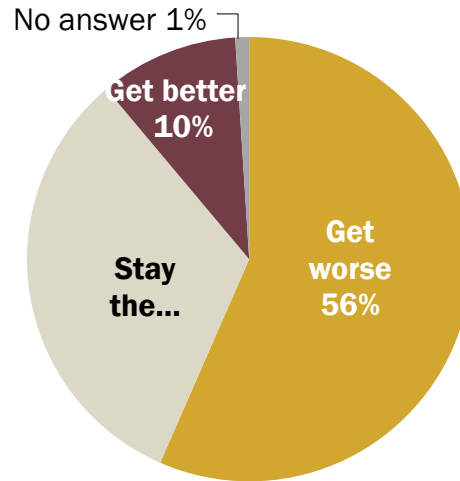
Note: Lines indicate the standard error, an attempt to quantify the uncertainty surrounding each estimate. The “disagreement” and “indignant disagreement” categories are not mutually exclusive: statements that contain indignant disagreement are a subset of those that contain disagreement more broadly.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of data from Facebook OpenGraph API. See Methodology section for details.

“Partisan Conflict and Congressional Outreach”

Most say the issue of made-up news will get worse

% of U.S. adults who say the issue of made-up news and information will ____ in the next five years

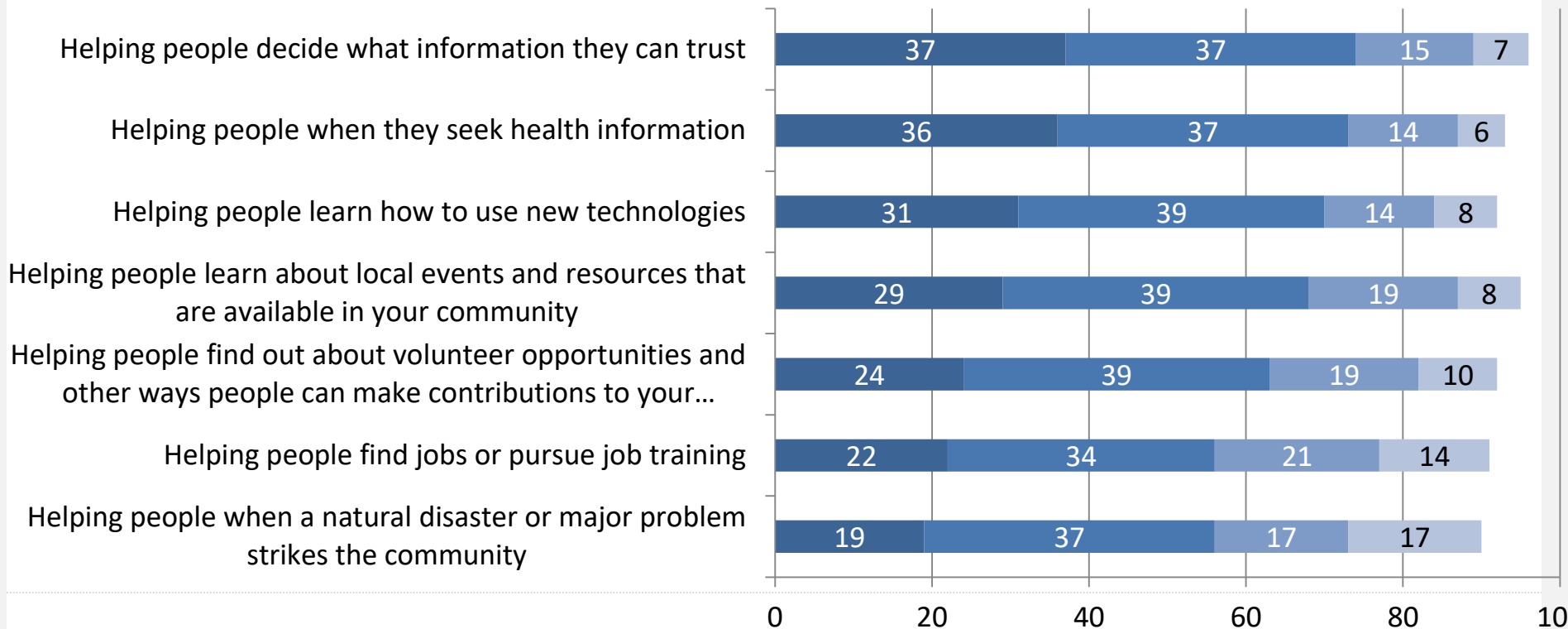


Source: Survey conducted Feb. 19-March 4, 2019.
"Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to be Fixed"

How much have libraries contributed to their communities?

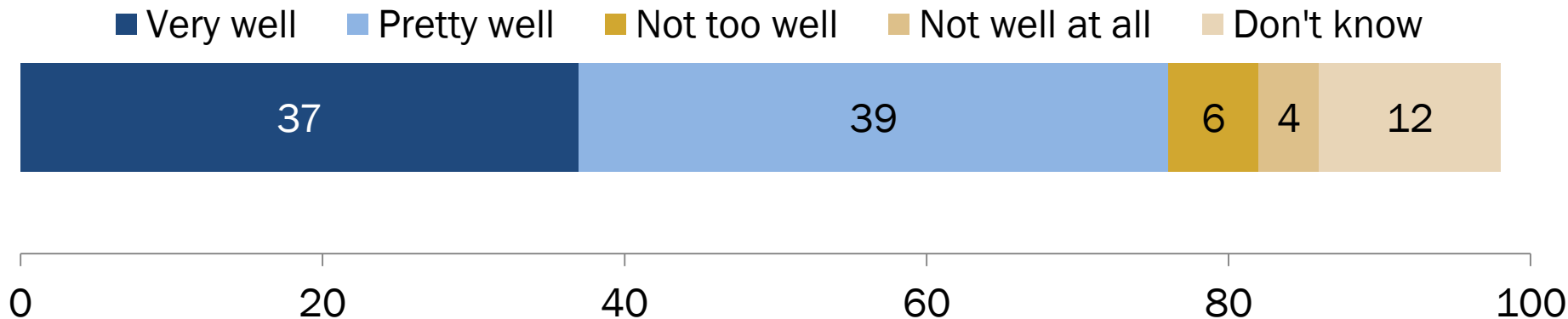
% of those ages 16+

■ A lot ■ Somewhat ■ A little ■ Not at all



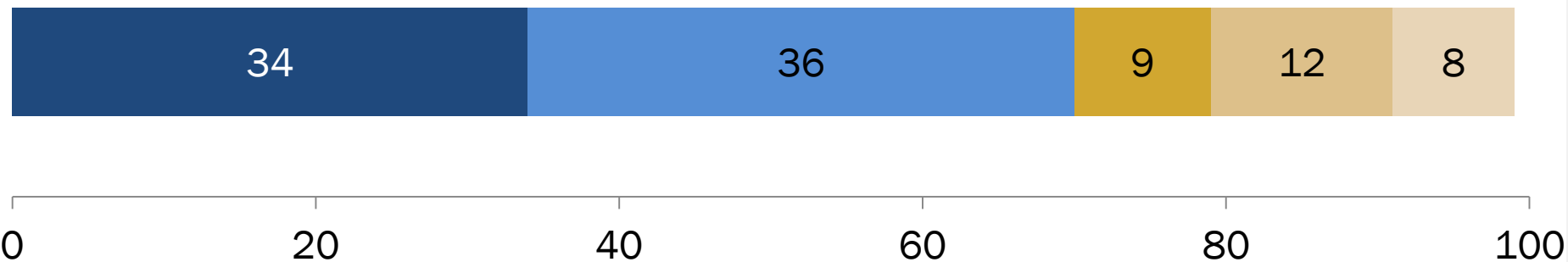
How well, if at all, do your local public libraries **serve the learning and educational needs of your local community – not just children at schools, but all those of any age who want to learn?**

% of those ages 18+



How well, if at all, do your local public libraries **serve the learning and educational needs of you and your family? (% of those ages 18+)**

■ Very well ■ Pretty well ■ Not too well ■ Not well at all ■ Don't know

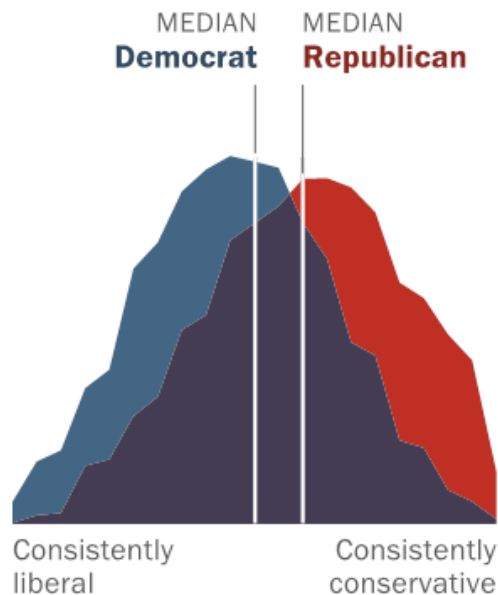


Democracy

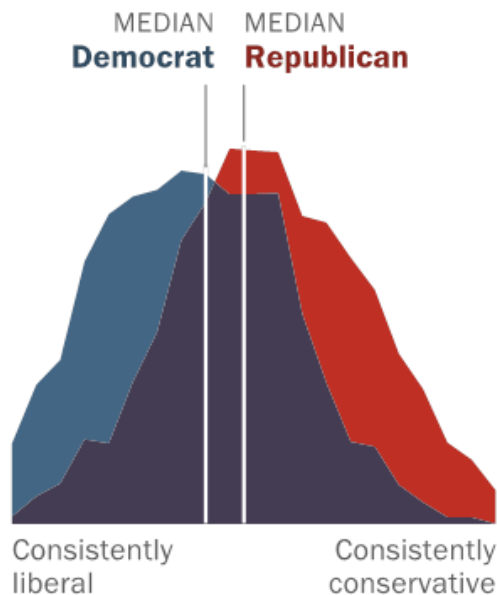
Democrats and Republicans more ideologically divided than in the past

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values

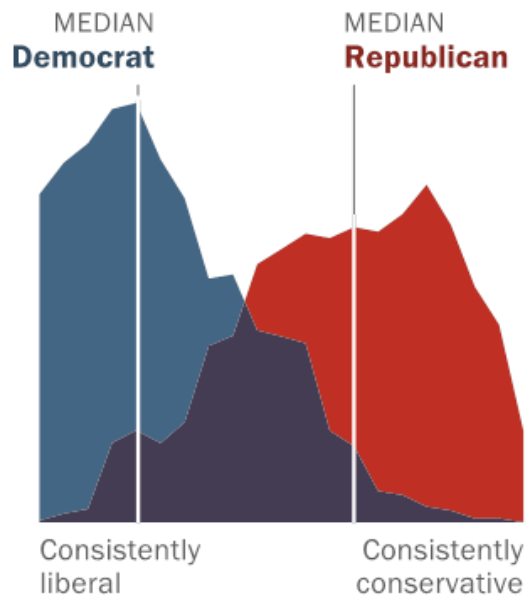
1994



2004

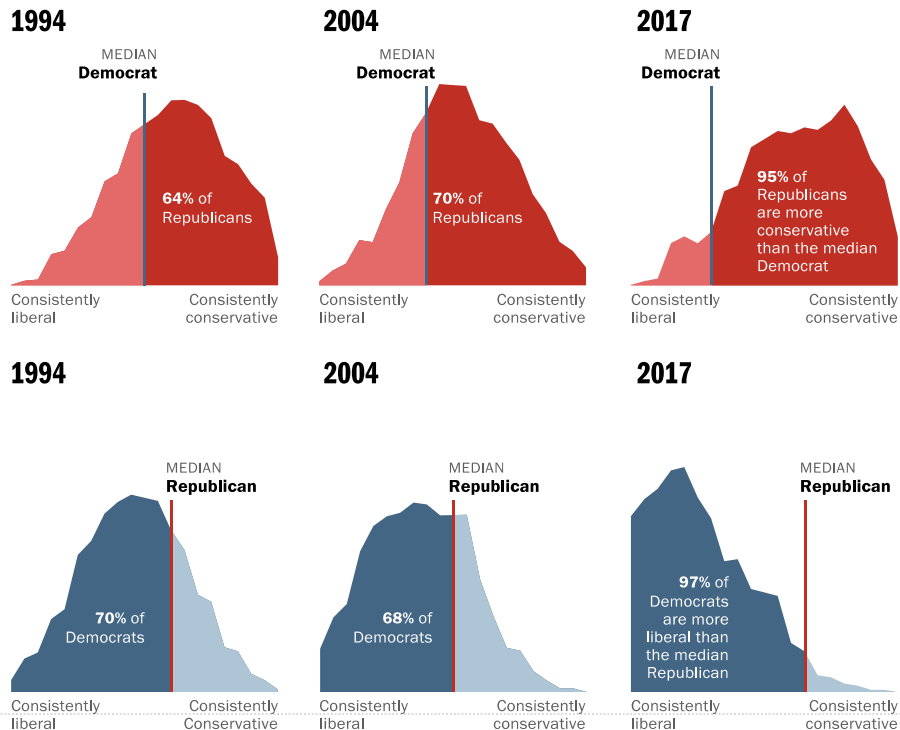


2017



Less overlap in the political values of Republicans and Democrats than in the past

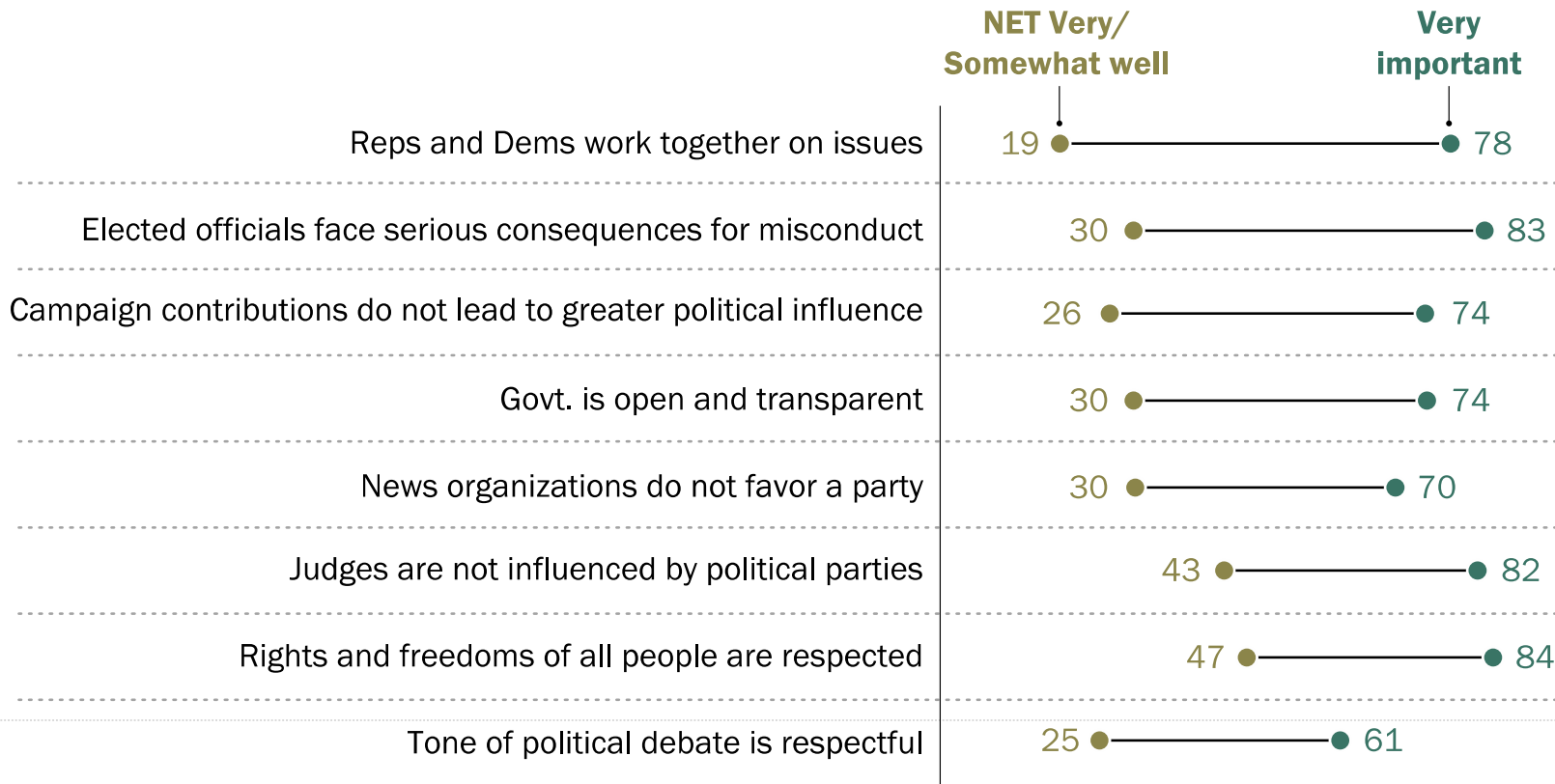
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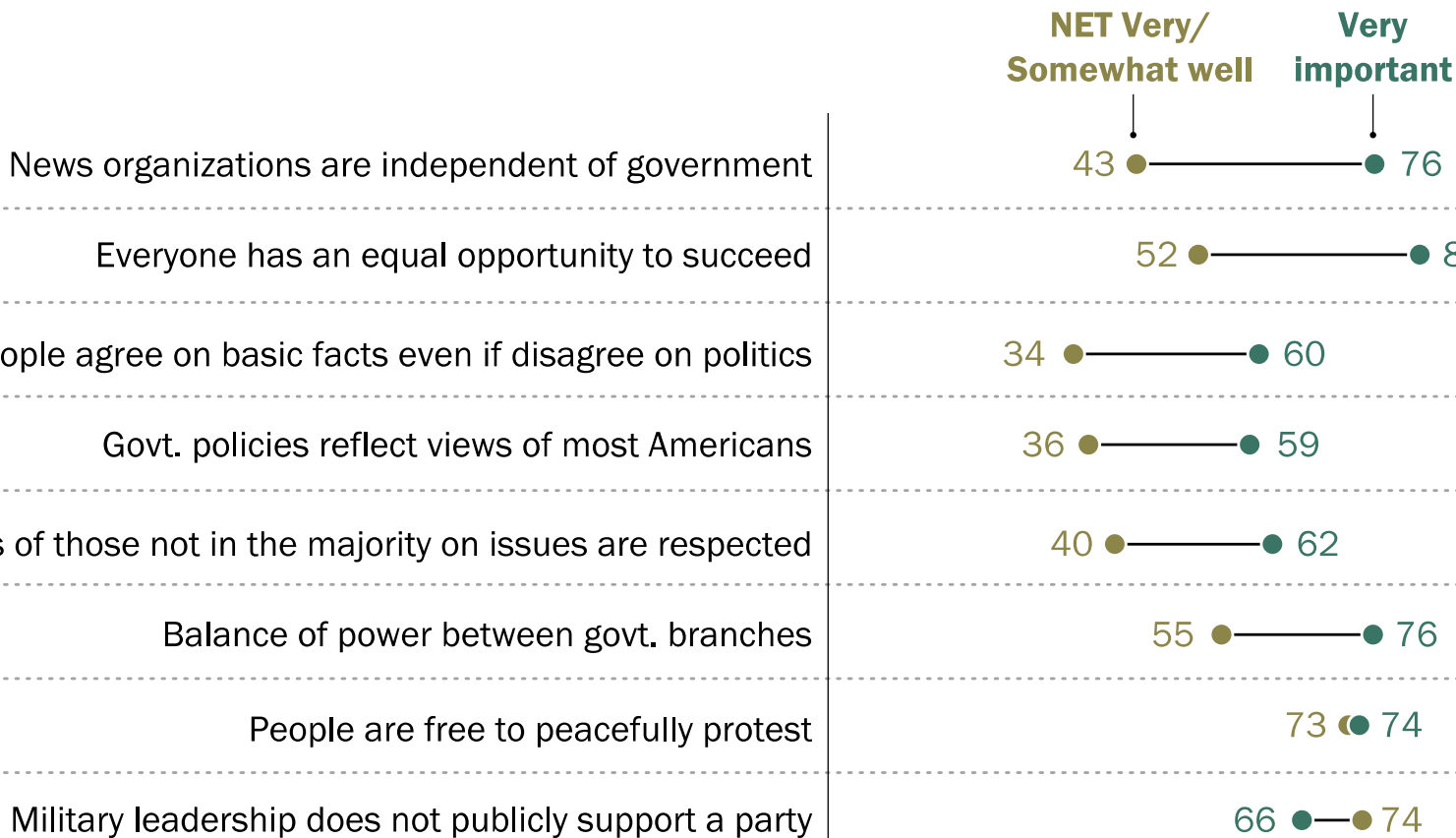


Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

Country viewed as falling short on a range of widely supported democratic values

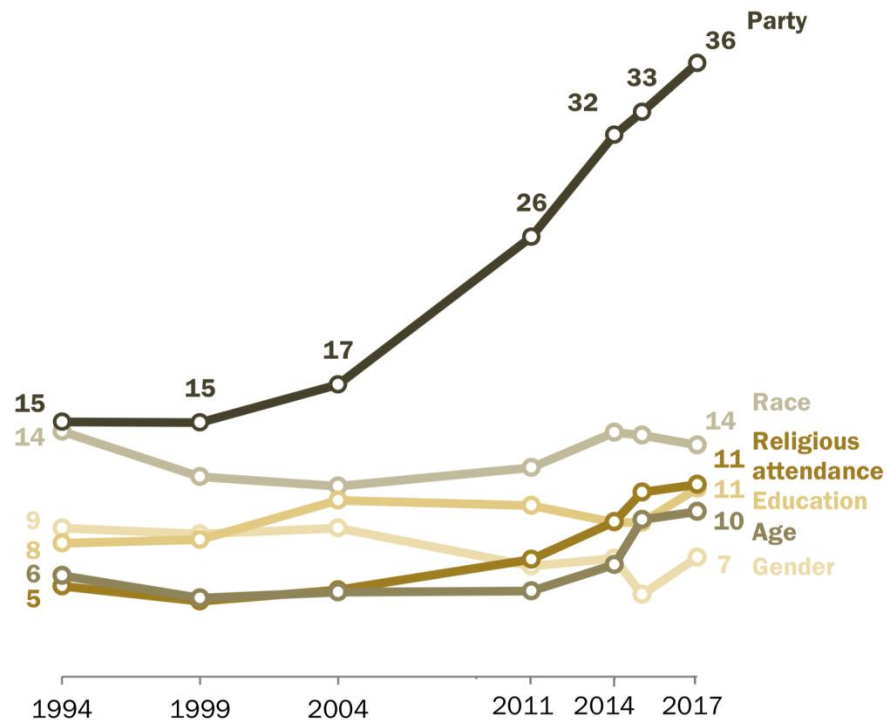
% who say each is very important for the U.S. and describes the country very/somewhat well ...





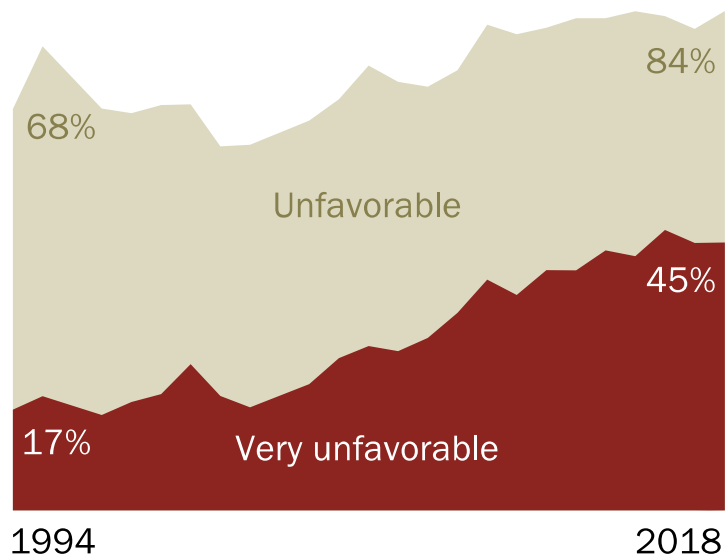
Party now far exceeds other social divisions

Average divide across 10 political values, by key demographics

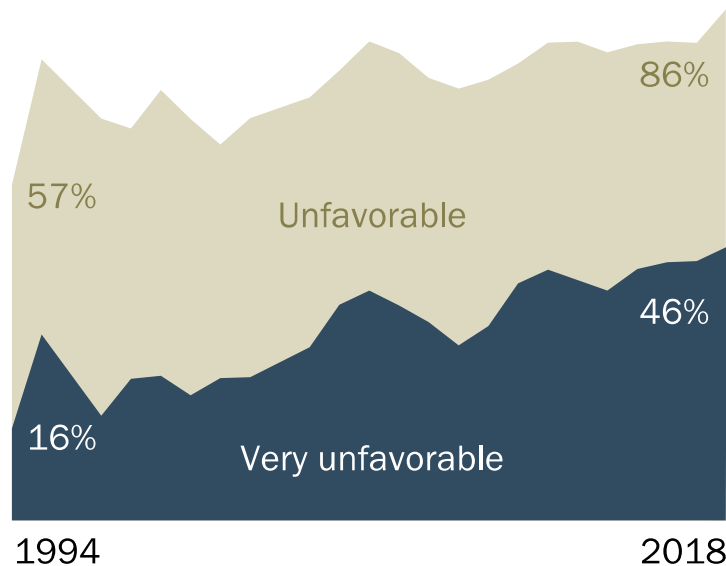


Rising 'antipathy' toward other political side

Republican attitudes
about the **Democratic** party



Democratic attitudes
about the **Republican** party

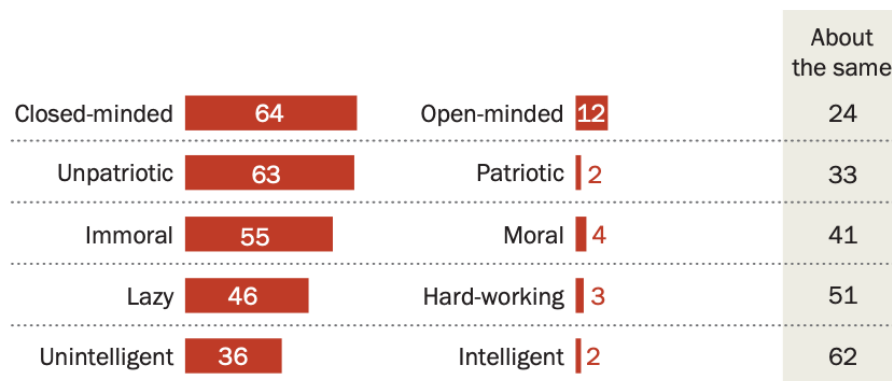


Source: Yearly averages

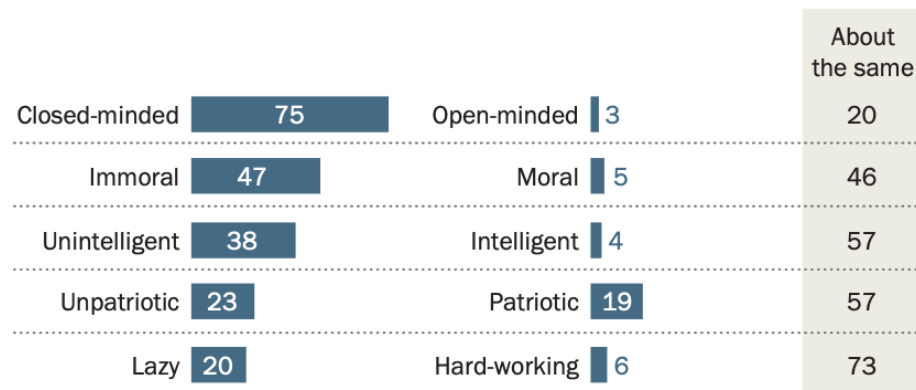
February 2017

Most partisans view the other side as closed minded

% of Republicans who say Democrats are more ____ than other Americans

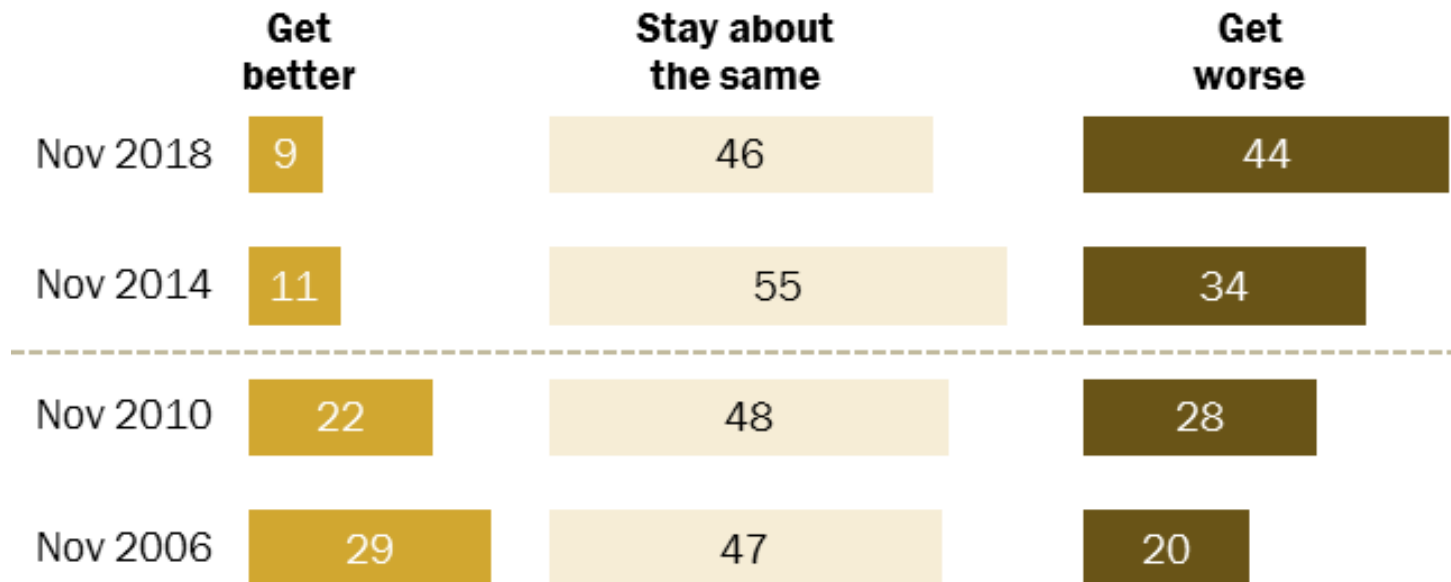


% of Democrats who say Republicans are more ____ than other Americans



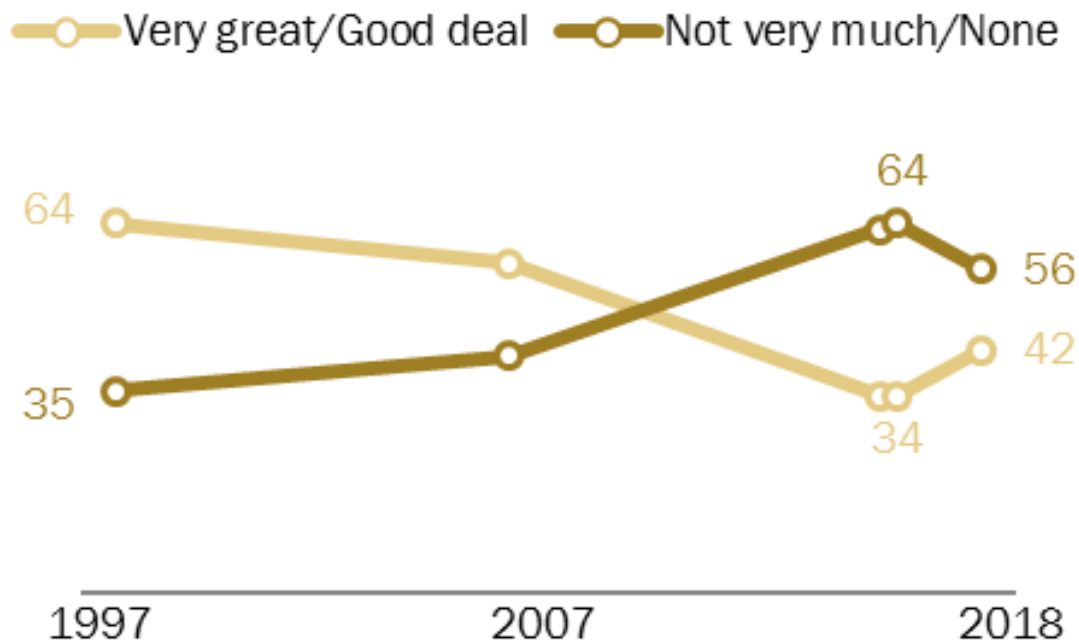
More Americans expect partisan relations to get worse than did so after three prior midterms

% who say relations between Republicans and Democrats in Washington will ____ in the coming year



Most have little or no confidence in political wisdom of the American people

% saying they have ____ of trust and confidence in the wisdom of American people in making political decisions



Public is broadly pessimistic about the future of America



When the public looks to the future of the U.S. over the next 30 years, they see ...

A country declining in stature on the world stage

The U.S. will be **LESS** important in the world

60%

The U.S. will be **MORE** important in the world

31%

A widening gap between the haves and the have-nots

Gap between rich and poor will **GROW**

73

Gap between rich and poor will **GET SMALLER**

19

Growing political polarization

Country will be **MORE** politically divided

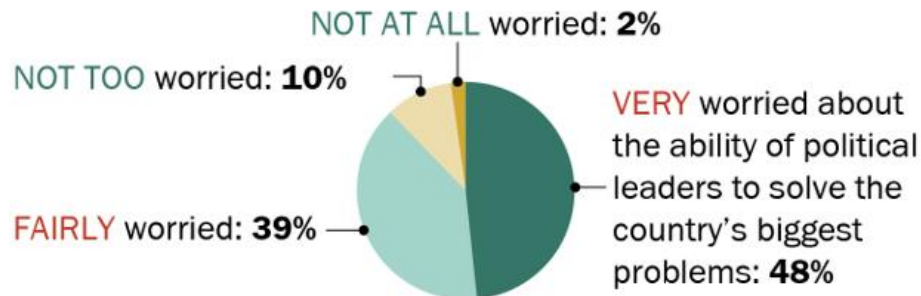
65

Country will be **LESS** politically divided

26



And they are worried that the country's political leaders are not up to the challenge



What people say they want/need

Smart allies (diversity really helps)

Improved curators

Proof of authenticity

Transparency

**More confidence they can
learn and grow**

**Just-in-time help in
decision making**

**More training on tech use and
information literacy**

**Organizations that will help
and protect them**



Thank you!

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