



RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND RISING RELIGIOUS POLARIZATION IN THE U.S.

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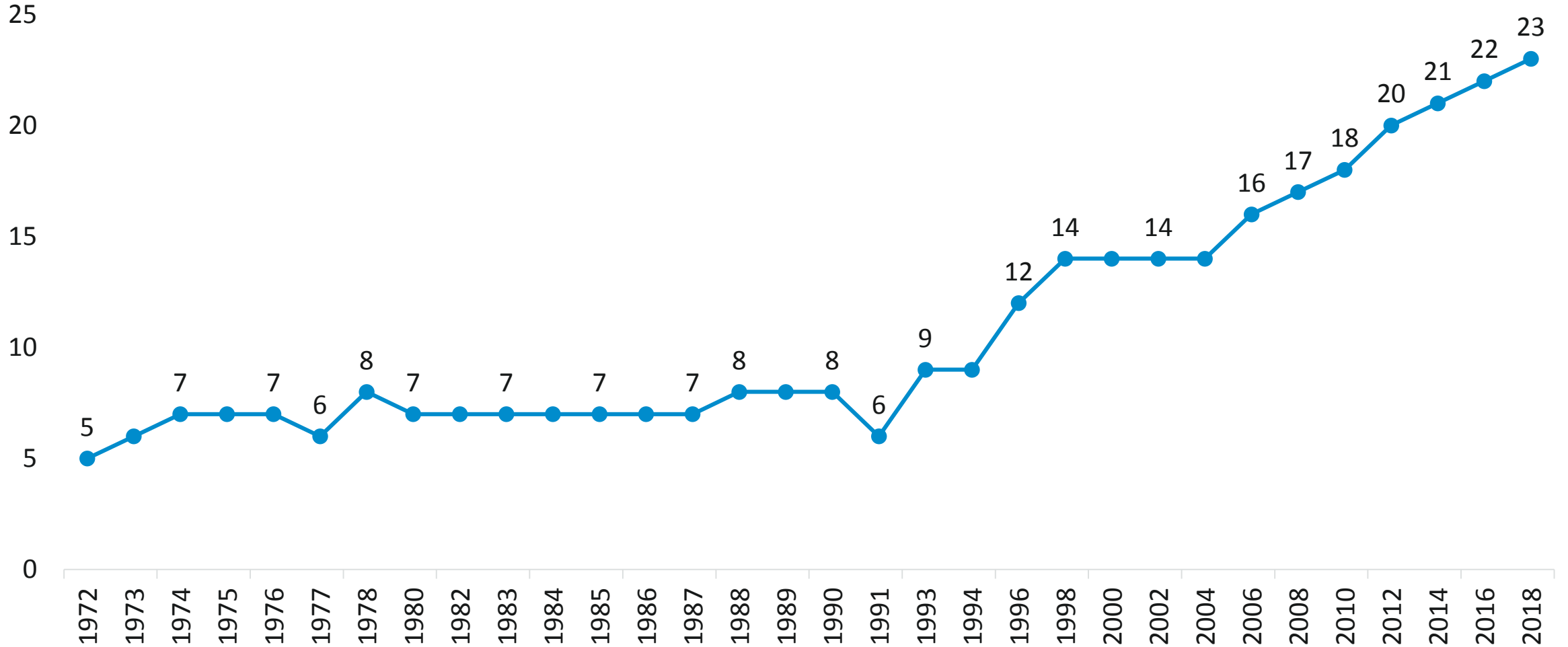
September 12, 2019

PART I

The Growth of Non-Religion

Accelerating growth of the unaffiliated, 1972-2016

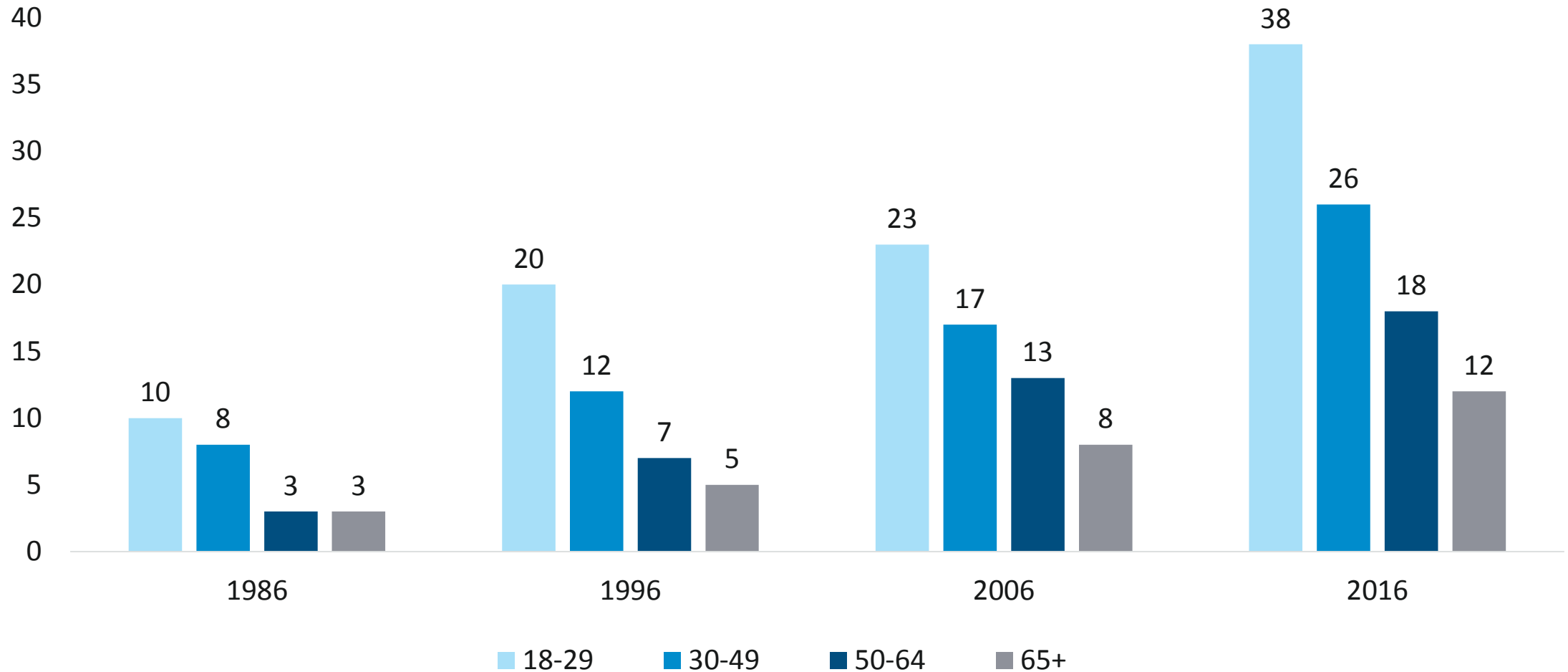
Percent of the U.S. Population



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2018

More young adults are unaffiliated than in the past

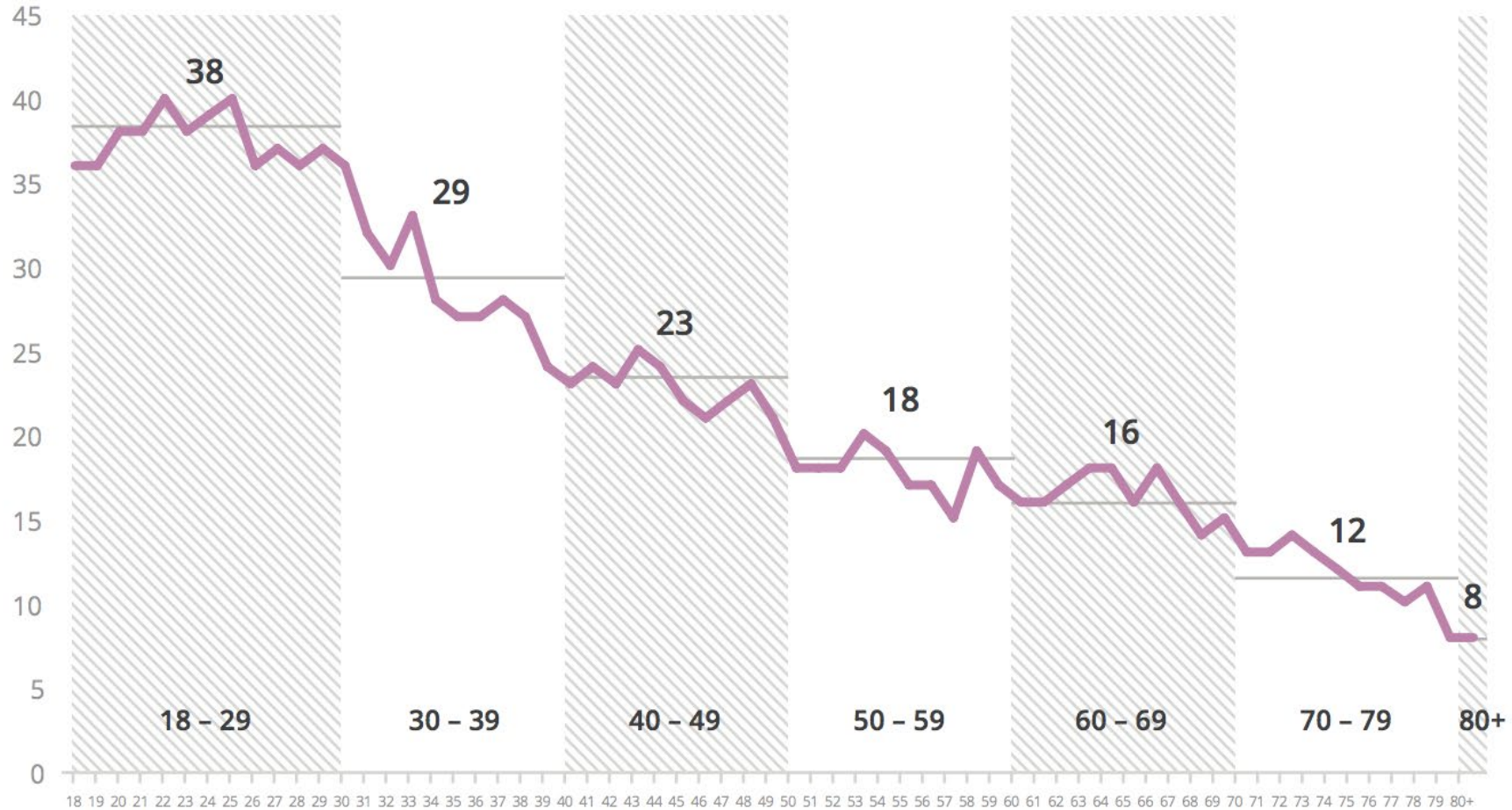
Percent of each age group who are religiously unaffiliated, 1986-2016



Sources: General Social Survey, 1986, 1996, 2006; PRRI 2016 American Values Atlas.

More young people are religiously unaffiliated

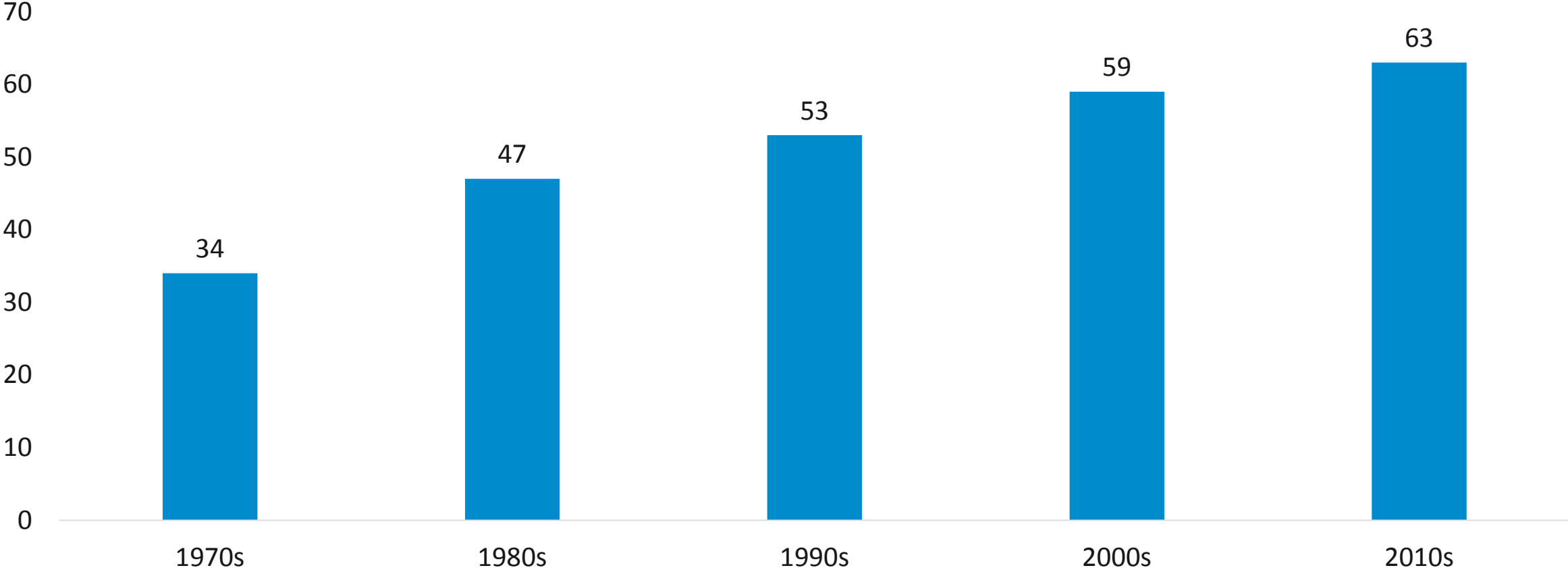
Percent Unaffiliated by Age



Source: PRRI 2016 American Values Atlas.

Americans raised without a religion more likely to remain unaffiliated than in the past

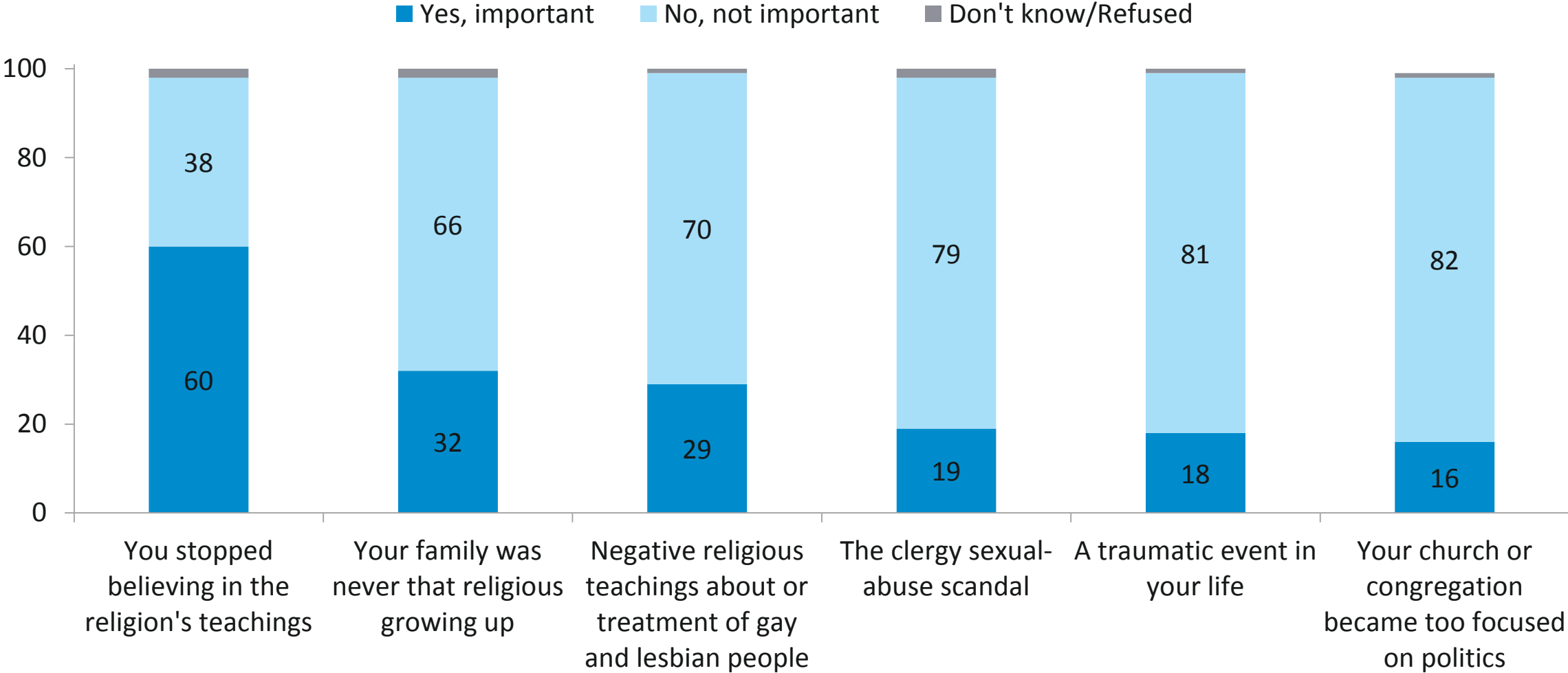
Percent of American adults who were raised unaffiliated and are still unaffiliated as adults



Source: General Social Survey, 1973-2018

Reasons for leaving religion

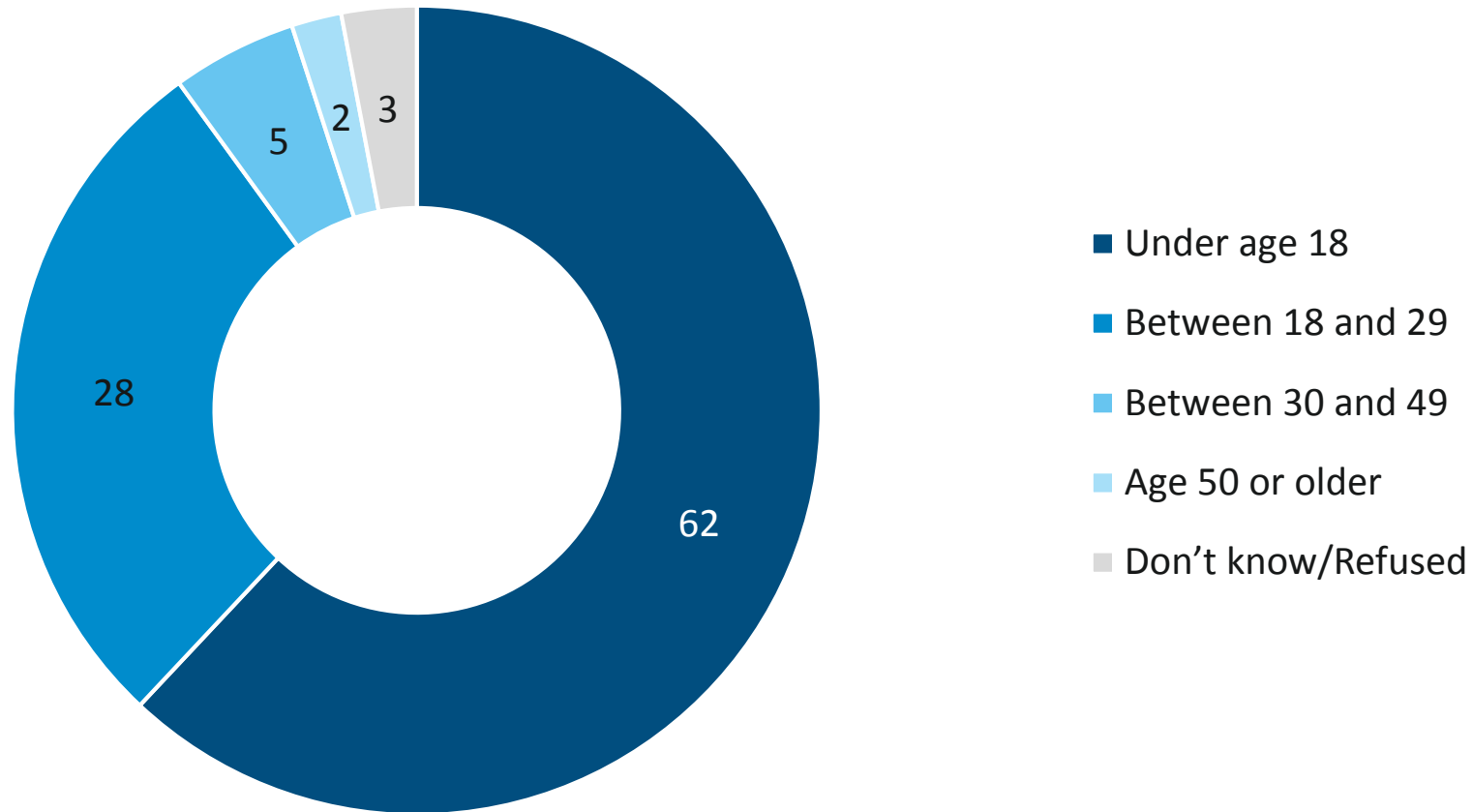
Would you say any of the following were important reasons why you no longer identify with your childhood religion?



Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.

How old were you when you no longer identified with your childhood religion?

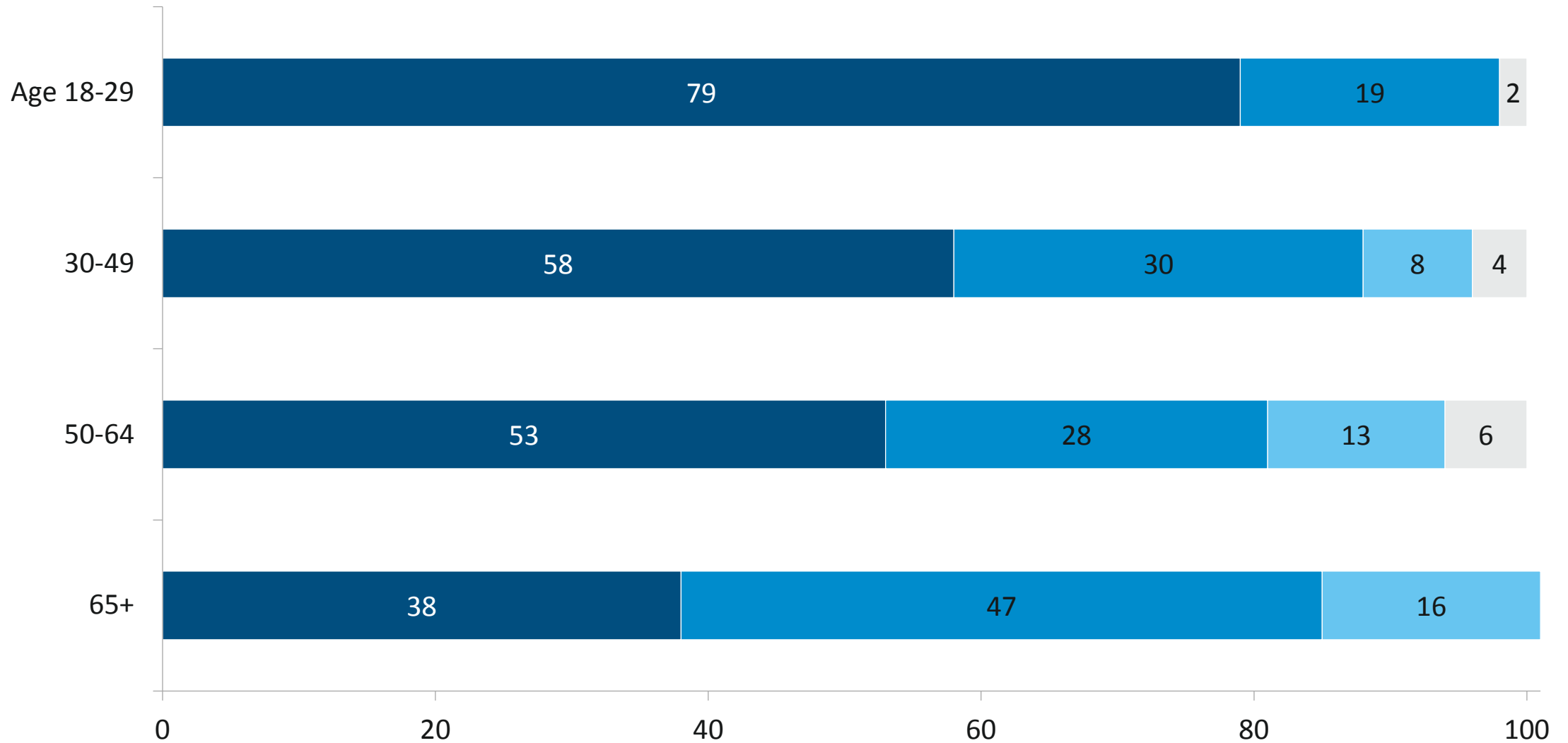
Among those raised in a religious household but currently unaffiliated



Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.

Most young adults disaffiliate during childhood

■ Under age 18 ■ Between ages 18-29 ■ Age 30+ ■ DK/Ref.

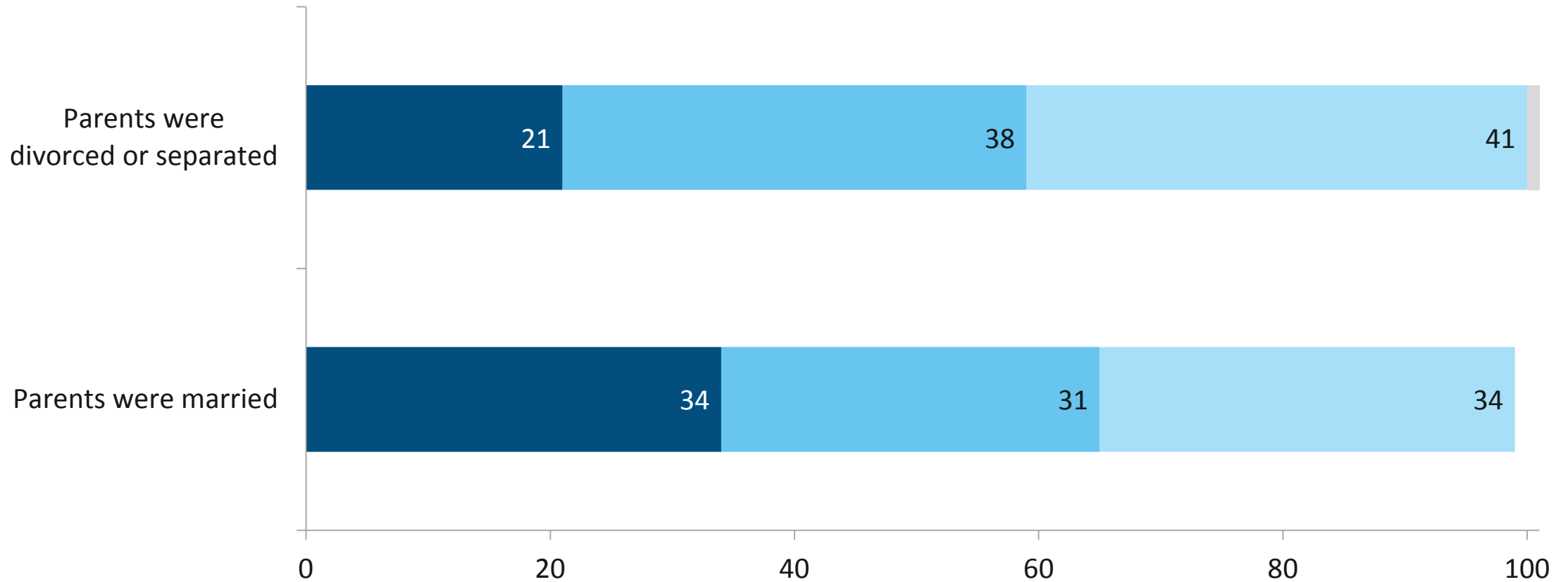


Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.

Americans raised by divorced parents attend religious services less often as adults

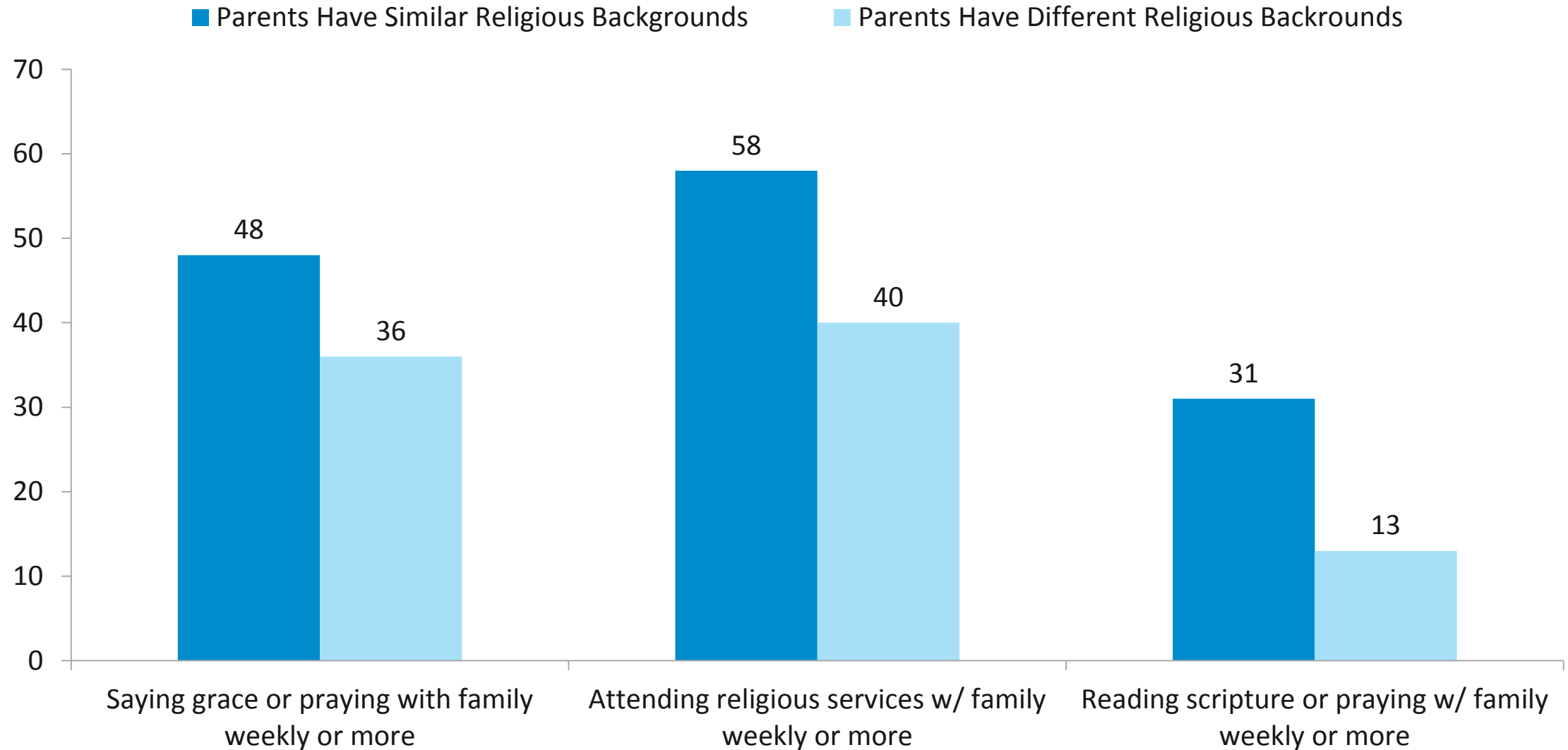
Currently attend religious services...

■ Weekly or more ■ Monthly or yearly ■ Seldom or never ■ Don't know/Refused



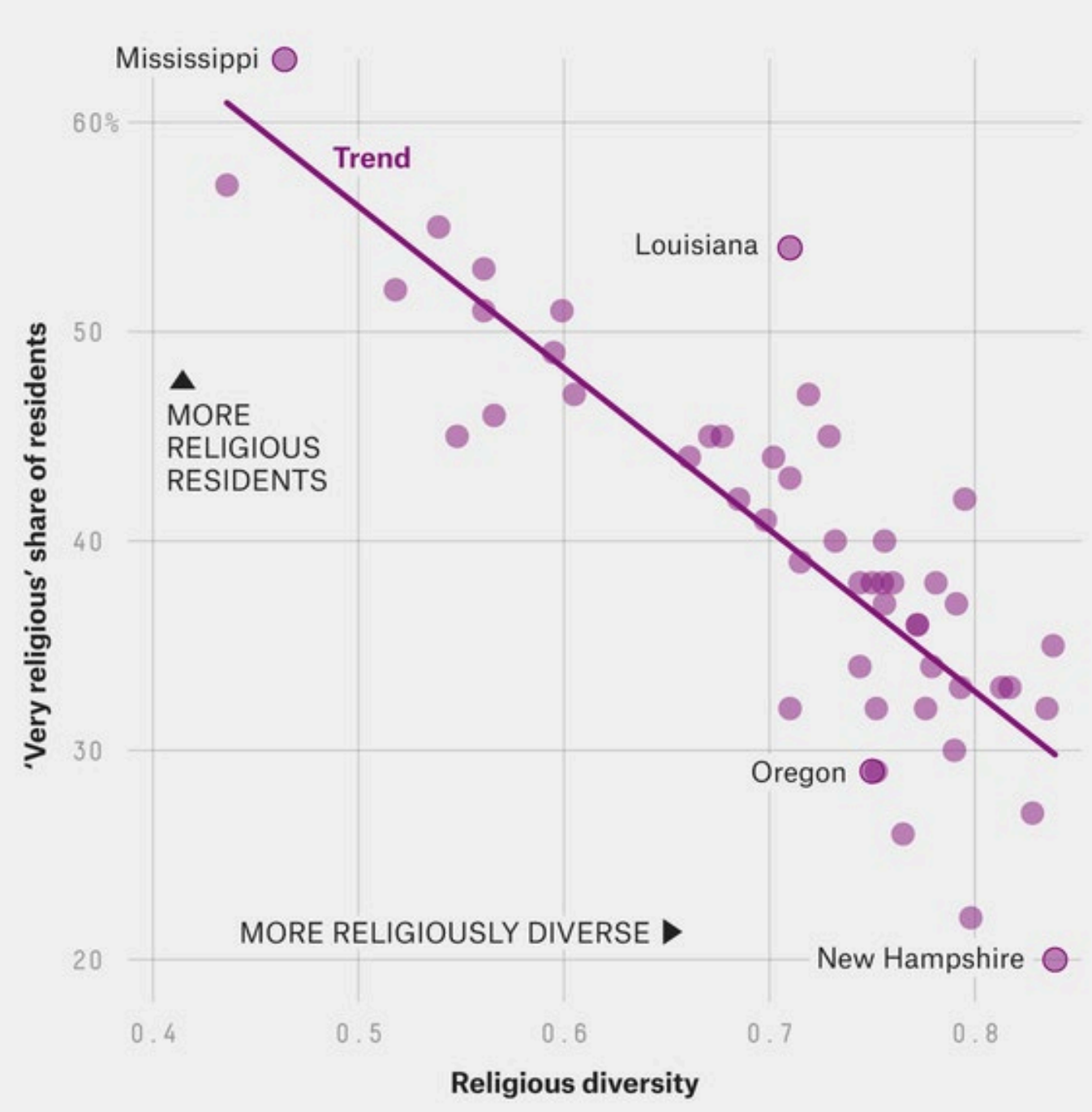
Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.

Americans raised in religiously-mixed households participate less in religious activities in childhood



Source: PRRI/RNS August 2016 Survey.

Greater religious diversity is associated with lower levels of religious commitment

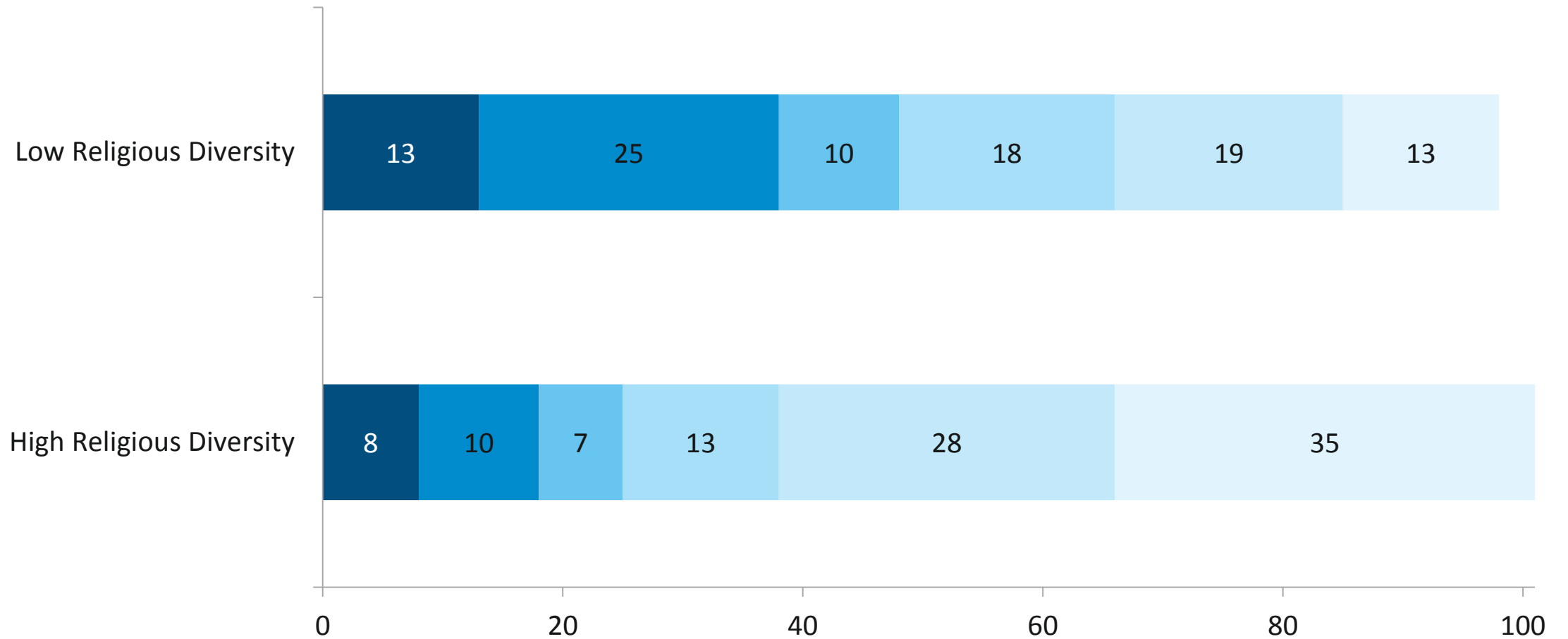


Source: Gallup 2016 and PRRI American Values 2016

Americans with diverse religious networks attend religious services less often

Percent who attend religious services...

More than once a week Once a week Once or twice a month A few times a year Seldom Never

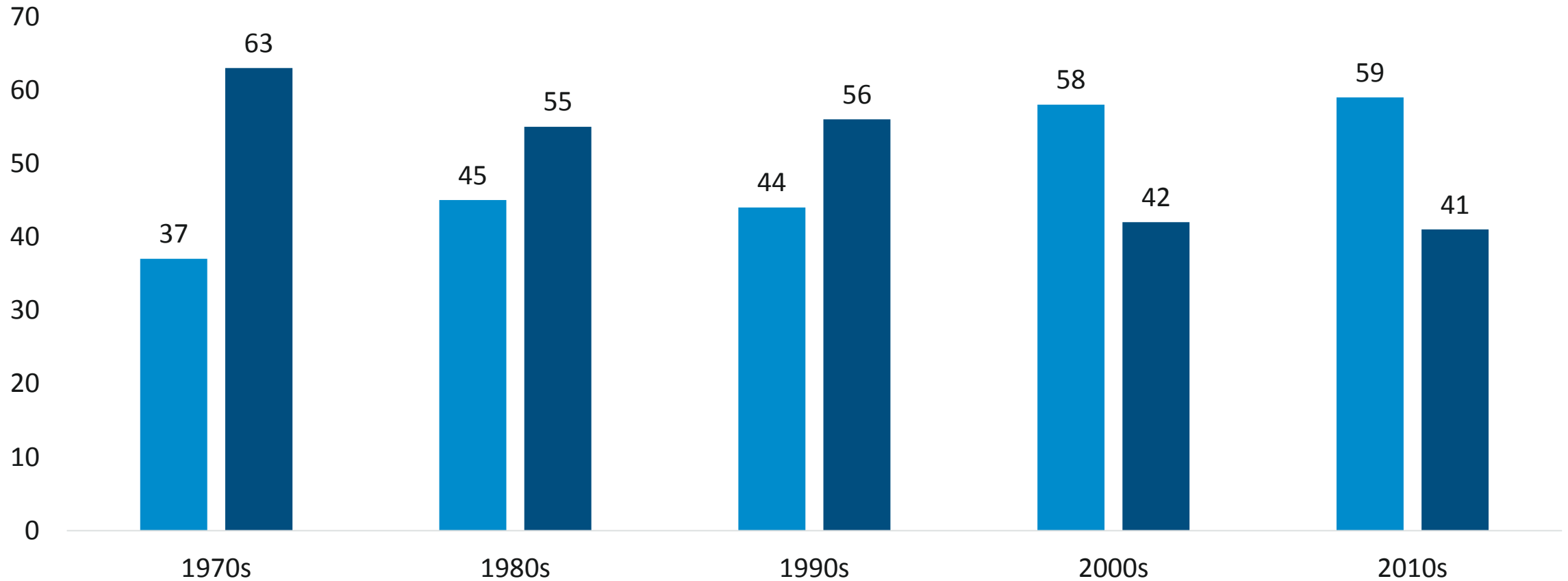


Source: PRRI 2013 American Values Atlas.

Secular Couples Are Now More Common

Percent of religiously unaffiliated who have...

■ Unaffiliated Spouse ■ Religious Spouse



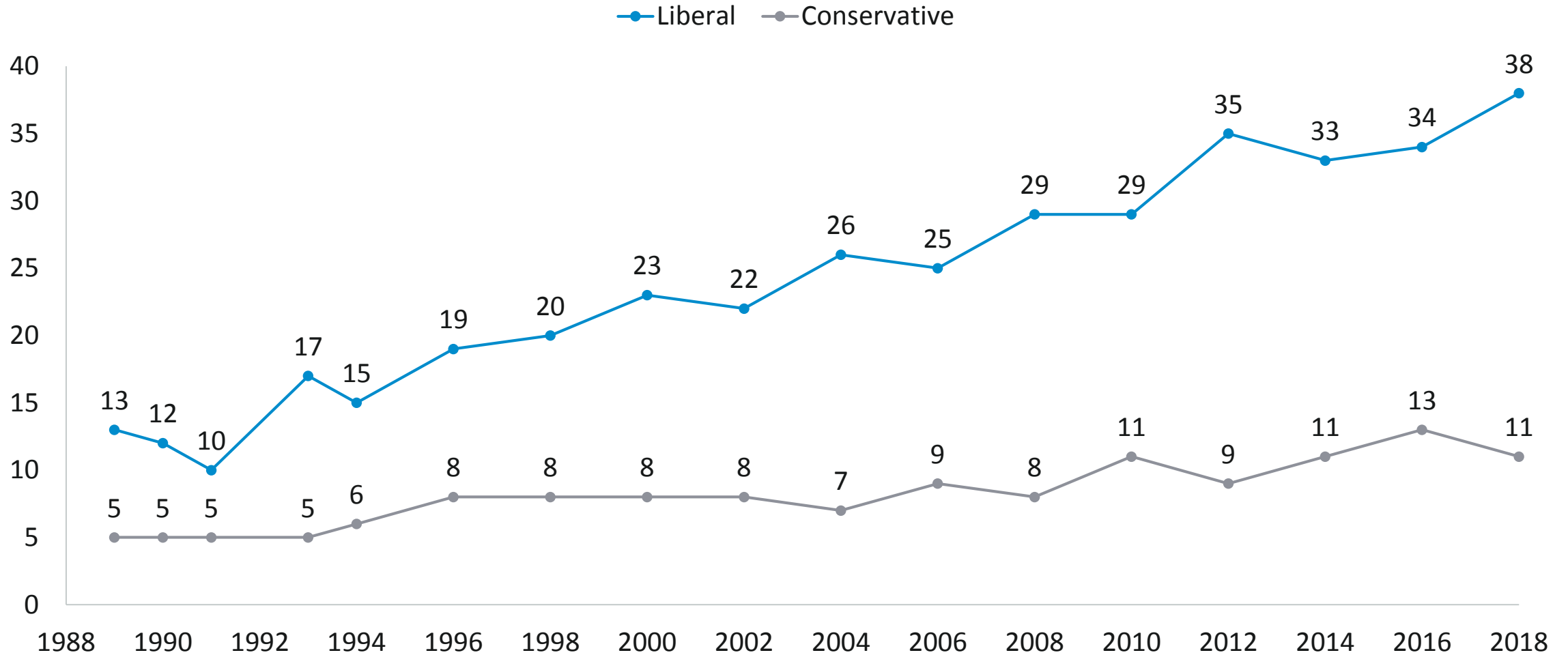
Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2018.

PART II

GROWING RELIGIOUS DIVIDE BETWEEN LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES

Religious Realignment among Liberals

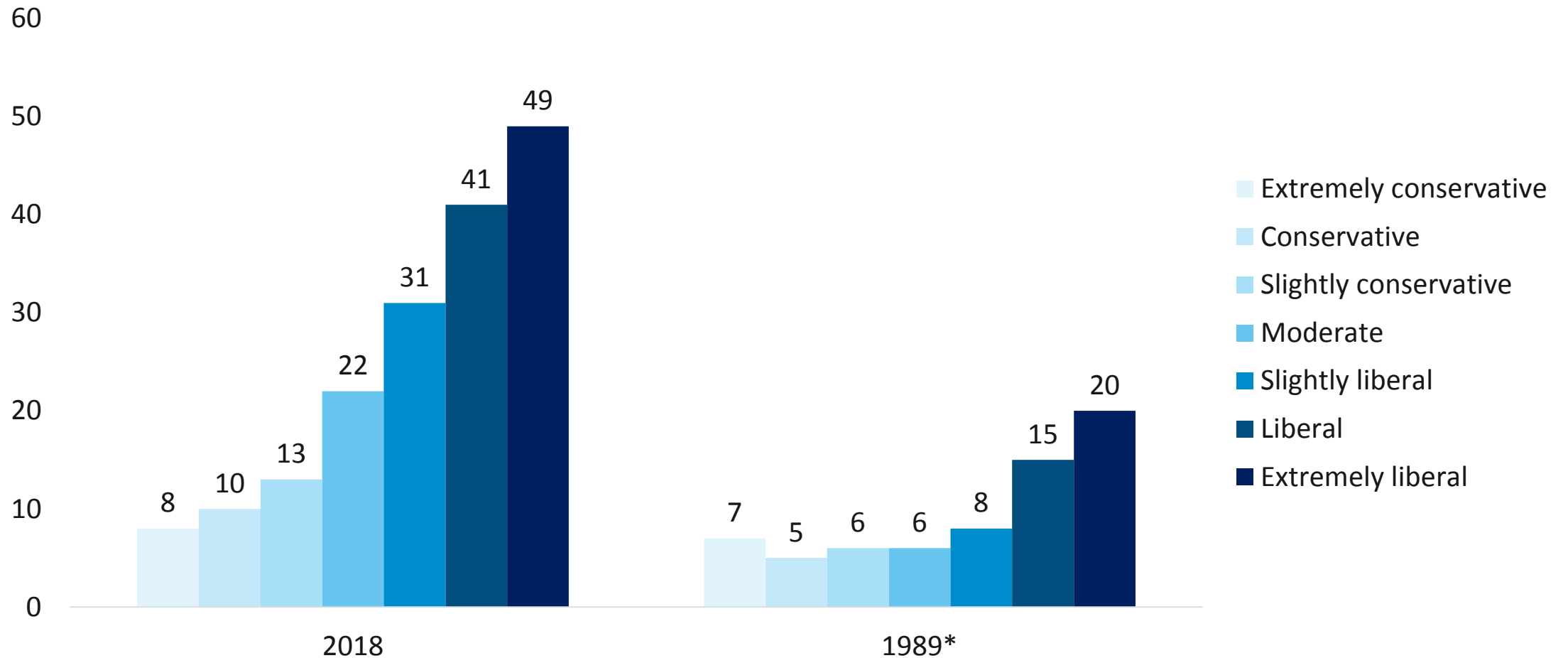
Growing Secularization Gap between Liberals and Conservatives
Percent who identify as religiously unaffiliated



Source: General Social Survey 1989-2018

Political Ideology and Religious Identity Are Becoming More Closely Aligned

Percent who identify as religiously unaffiliated

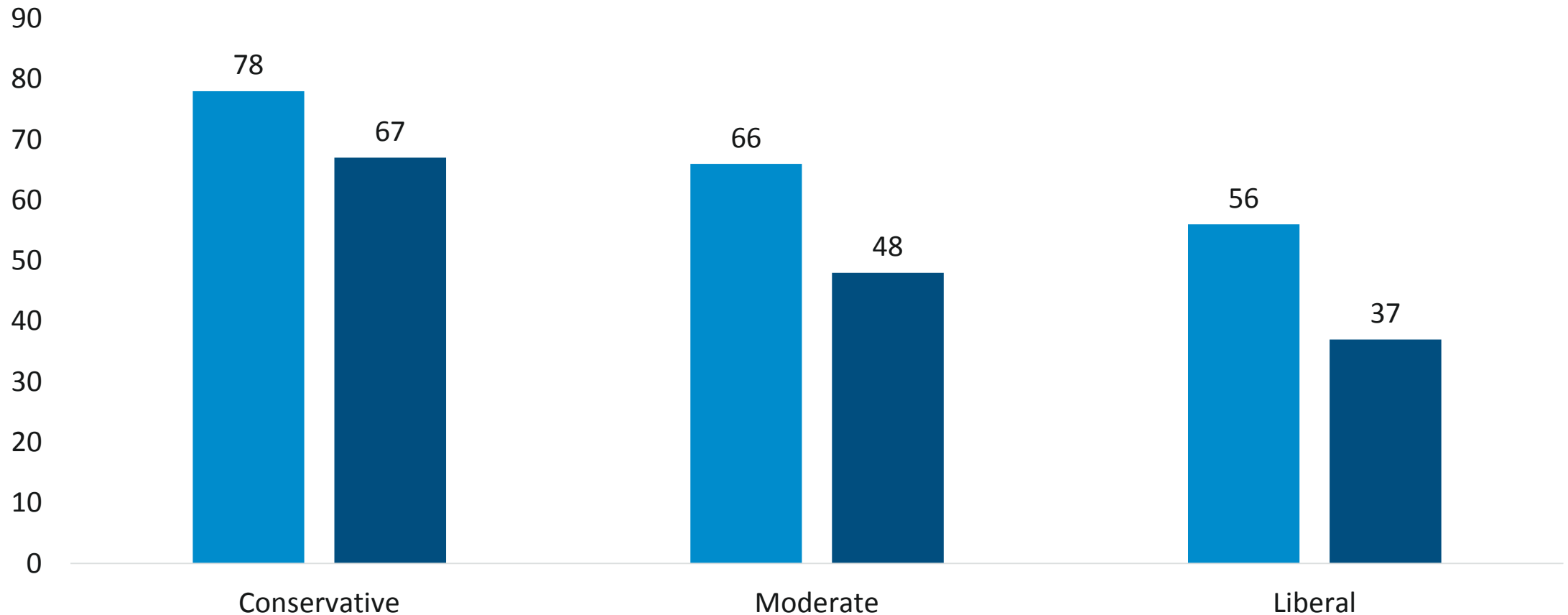


Source: General Social Survey 1989-2018. *Combined 1988, 1989, and 1990

Declining Membership in Religious Congregations

Percent who report that they are members of a church or religious congregation

■ 2000 ■ 2018

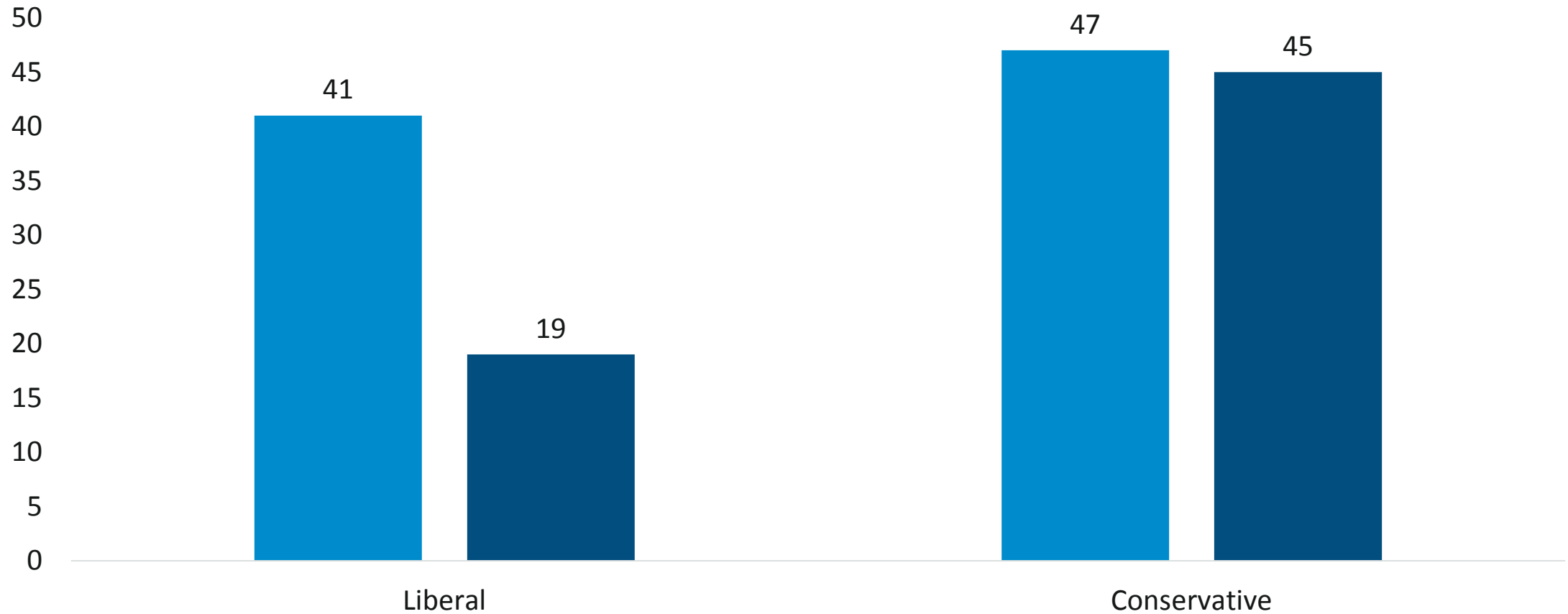


Source: General Social Survey 1989-2018

Confidence in Institutional Religion Plummetts among Liberals

Percent who report "complete" or "a great deal of" confidence in churches and religious organizations

■ 1991 ■ 2018

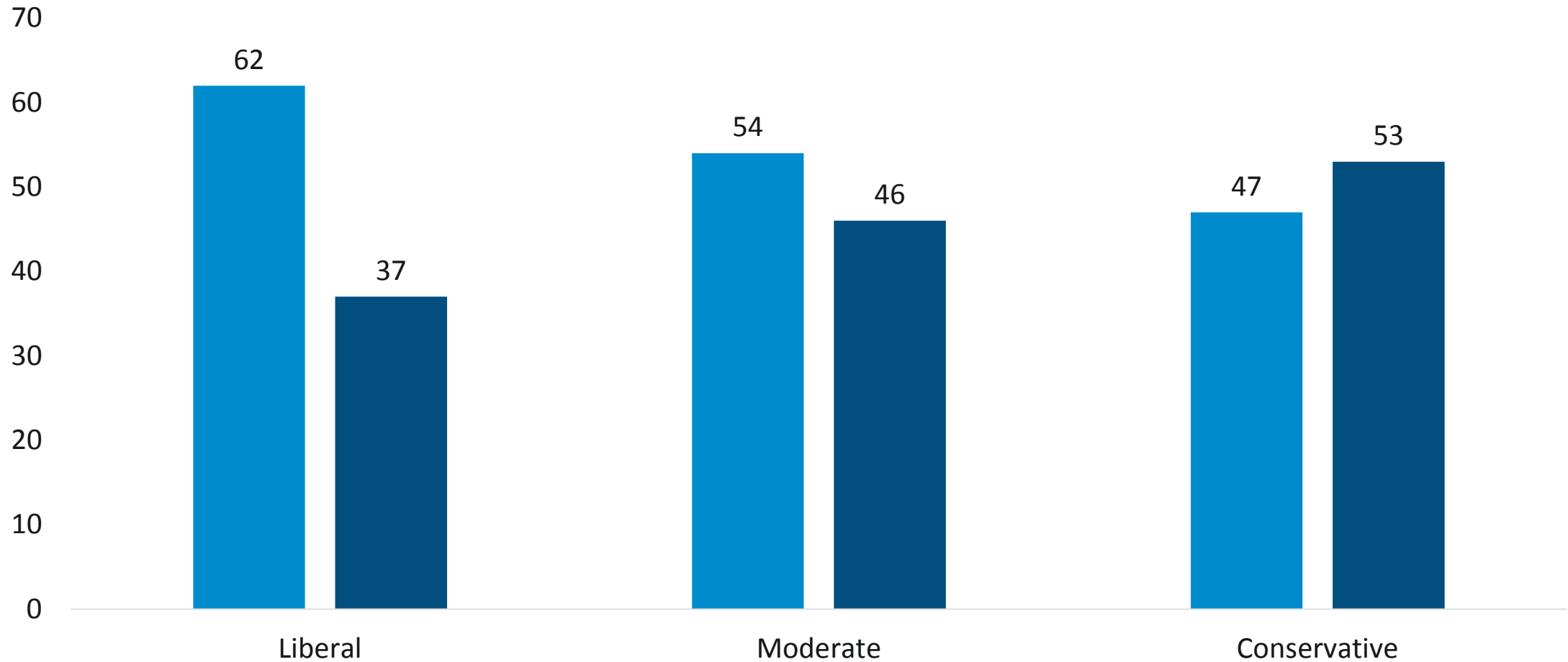


Source: General Social Survey 1989-2018

Secular Homogamy More Common among Liberals

Percent of nonreligious Americans who have nonreligious partners and spouses

■ Have nonreligious spouse or partner ■ Have religious spouse/partner

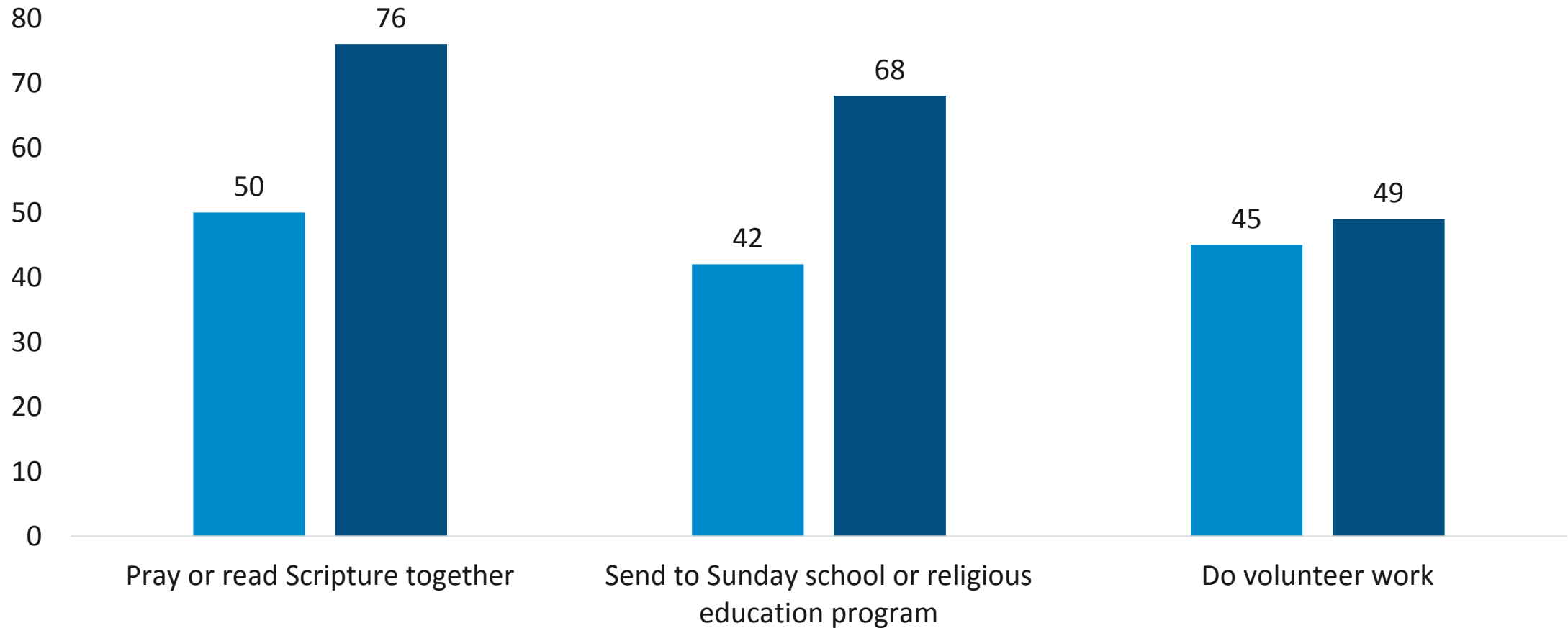


Source: Pew Research Center, 2014 Religious Landscape Survey

Liberal Parents Less Likely to Raise their Children in Religion

Percent of parents who ever do the following with their children

■ Liberal parent ■ Conservative parent



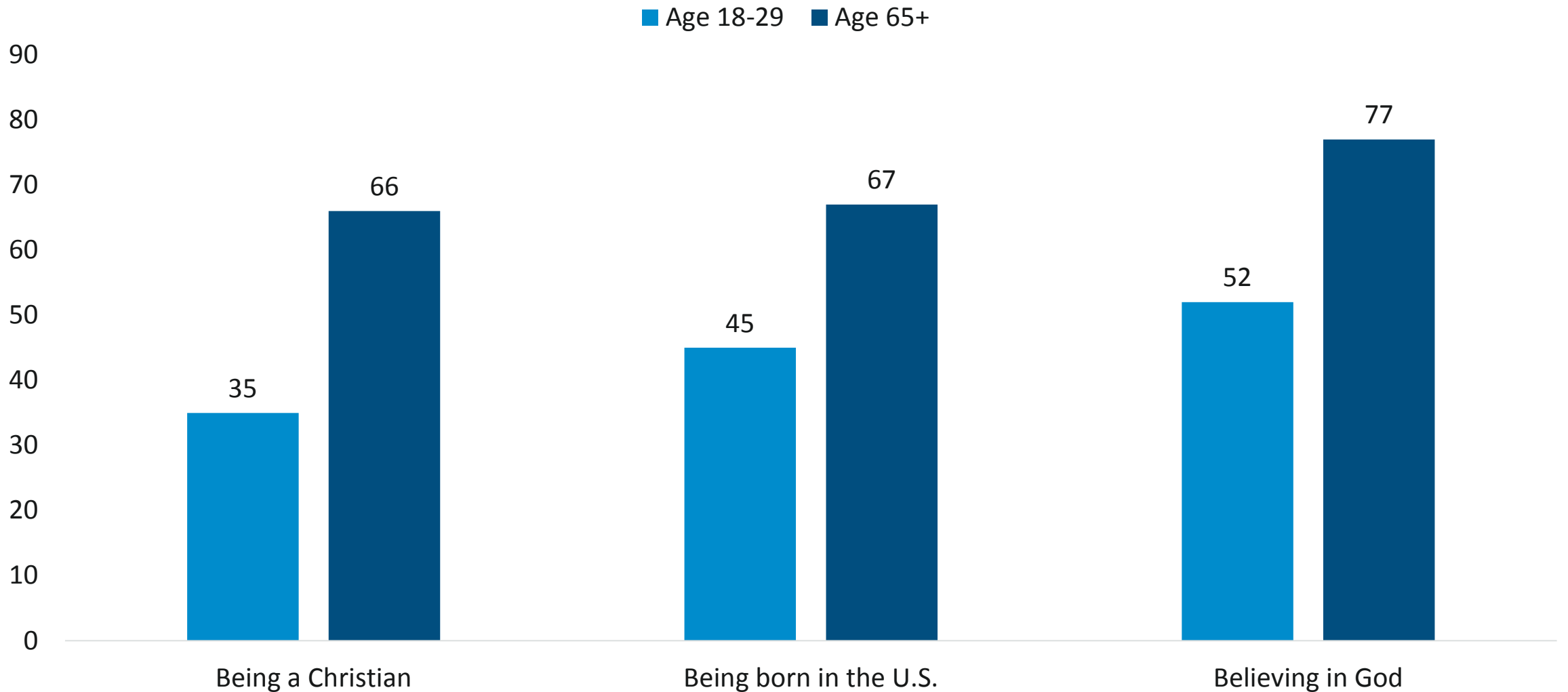
Source: Pew Research Center, 2014 Religious Landscape Survey

PART III

The Changing Cultural & Religious Context

Young adults reimagining what it means to be American

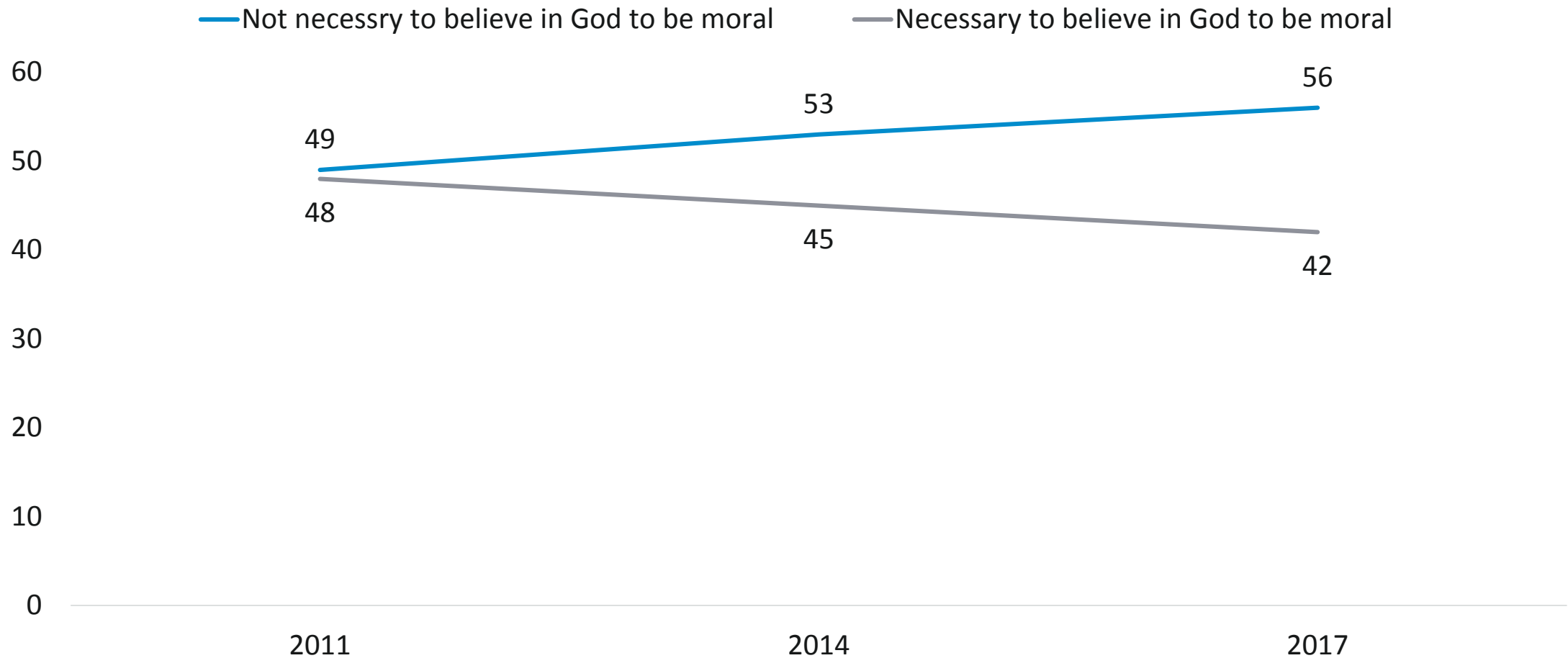
Percent who say the following are important to be "truly American"



Source: PRRI/RNS June 2015 Survey

More Americans say belief in God is not necessary to be moral

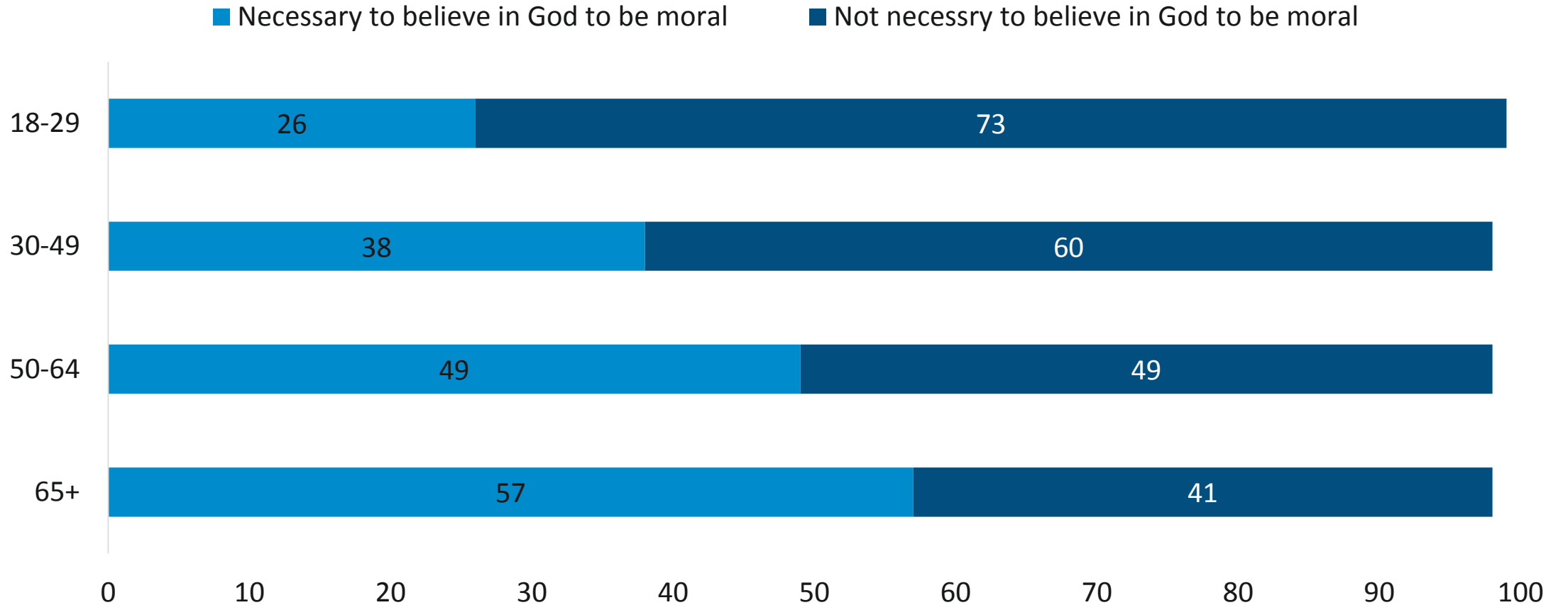
Percent who think it is...



Source: Pew Research Center, 2017

Few young adults say a belief in God is necessary to be moral

Percent who think it is...

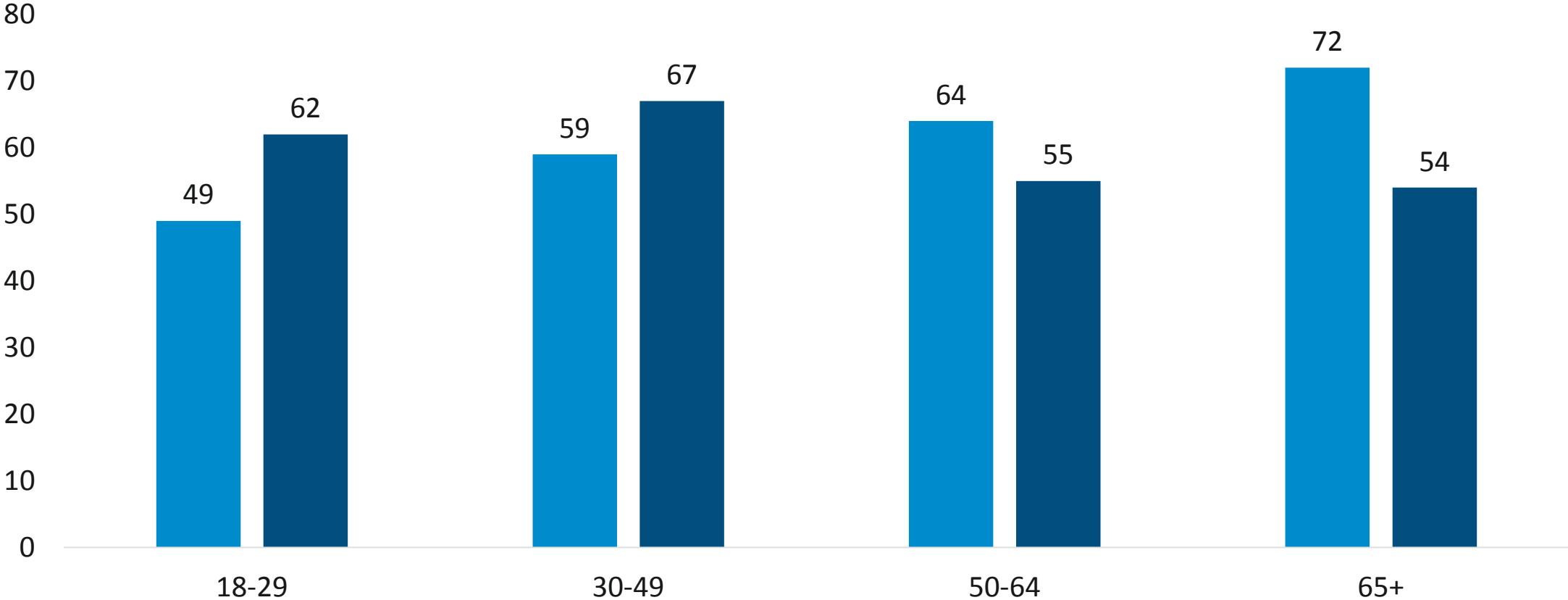


Source: Pew Research Center, 2017

Young adults are more likely to know an atheist than an evangelical Christian

Percent who know...

■ Evangelical Christian ■ Atheist



Source: Pew Research Center, 2017



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