

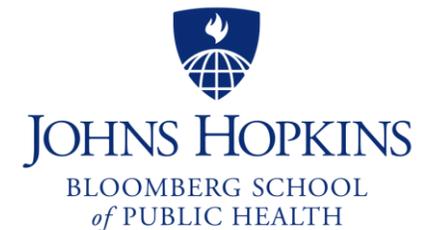
Social trust in America: an asset for well-being

Catherine K. Ettman, PhD

Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Innovia Leadership Summit, Spokane, WA

March 16, 2026



- I. Trust in the U.S.
- II. Assets and well-being
- III. Policy solutions and personal actions







<https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-holding-a-keychain-with-key-7578984/>



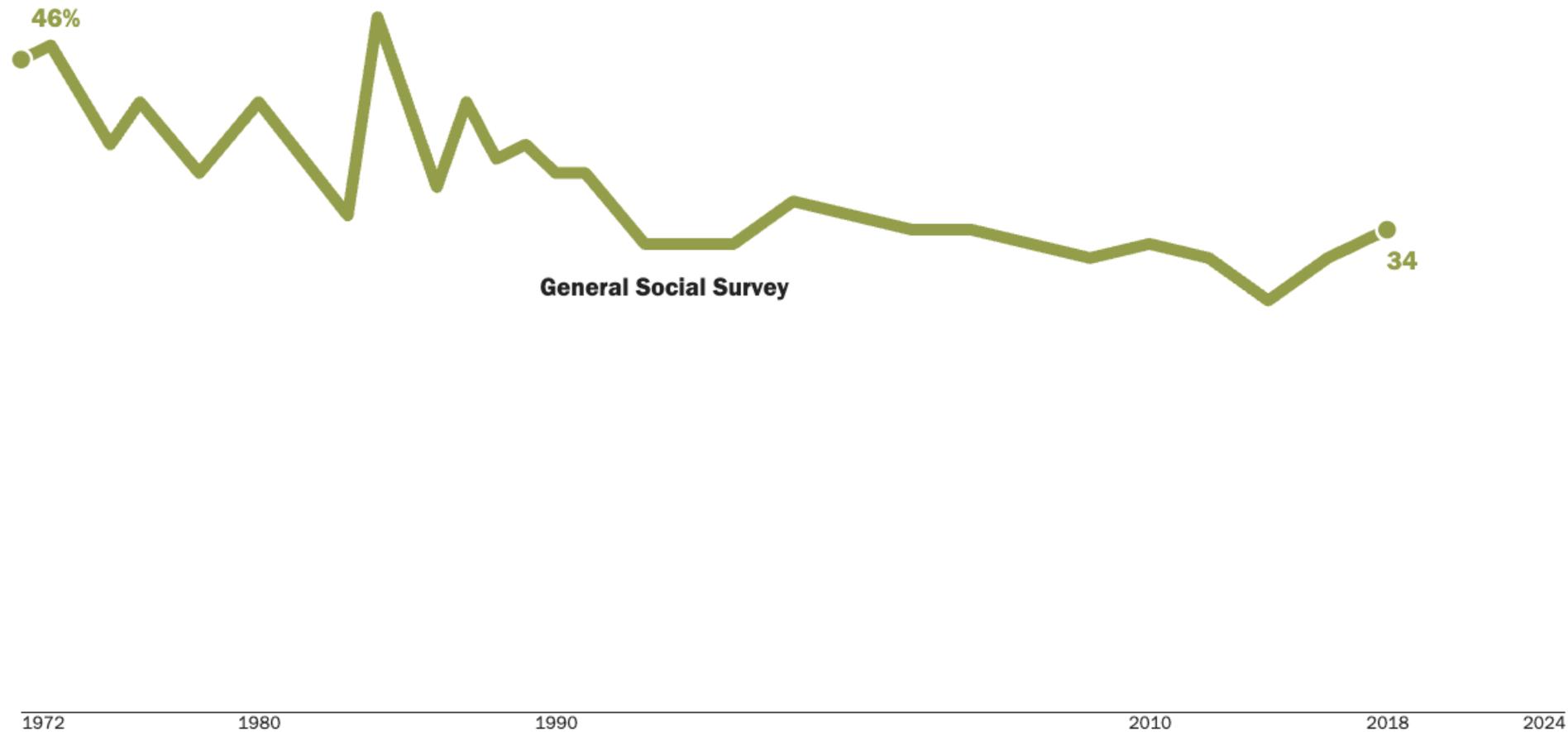
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/distributing-a-bag-of-food-aid-to-a-beneficiary-6591162/>



<https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-boy-sitting-on-a-porch-holding-parcels-6994109/>

How is trust in America changing over time?





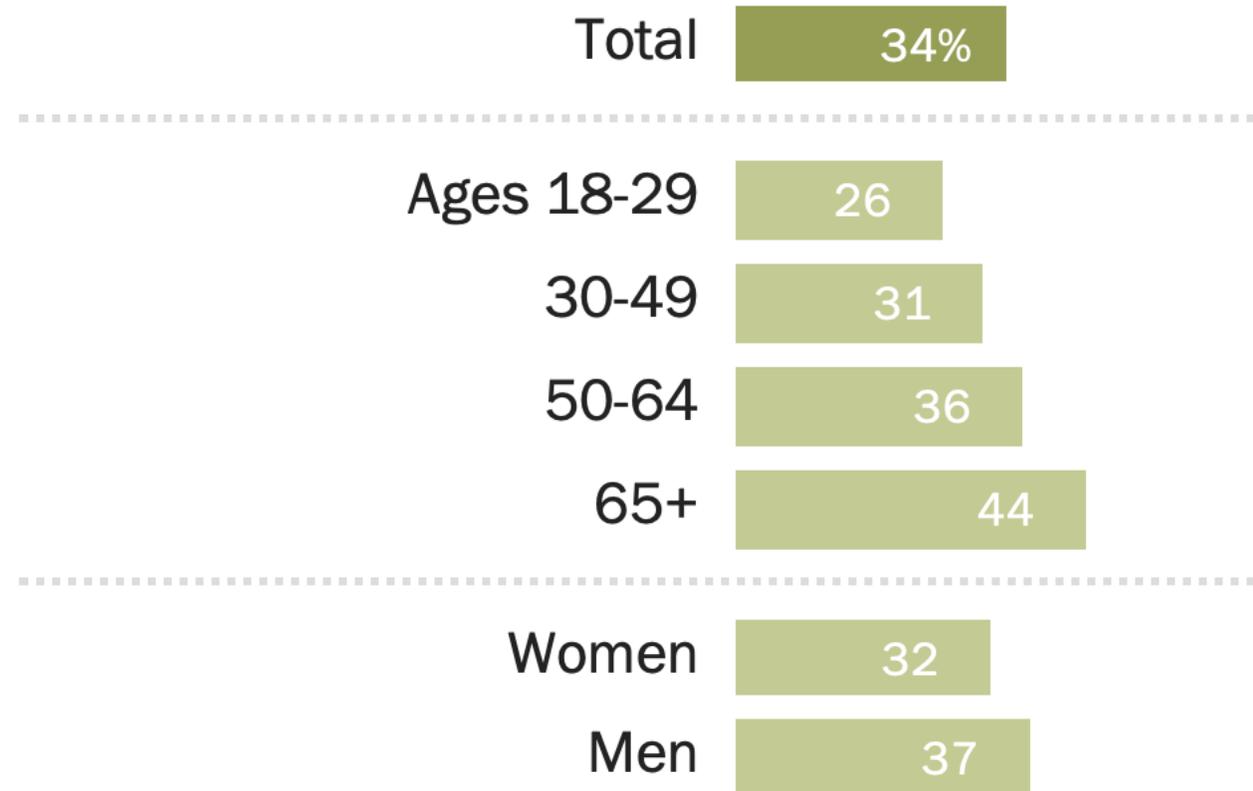
Note: Those who said "you can't be too careful in dealing with people" or who did not answer are not shown. For more on different ways to measure trust, refer to [the Methodology](#).
 Source: General Social Survey, Pew Research Center Religious Landscape Study of U.S. adults conducted July 17, 2023-March 4, 2024.

Chavda LS Scott Keeter, Stephanie Kramer, Jordan Lippert, Sofia Hernandez Ramones, Alan Cooperman, Chris Baronavski, Bill Webster, Reem Nadeem and Janakee. Americans' Trust in One Another. Pew Research Center. 2025; published online May 8. <https://www.pewresearch.org/2025/05/08/americans-trust-in-one-another/> (accessed March 3, 2026).

Who trusts others in America?

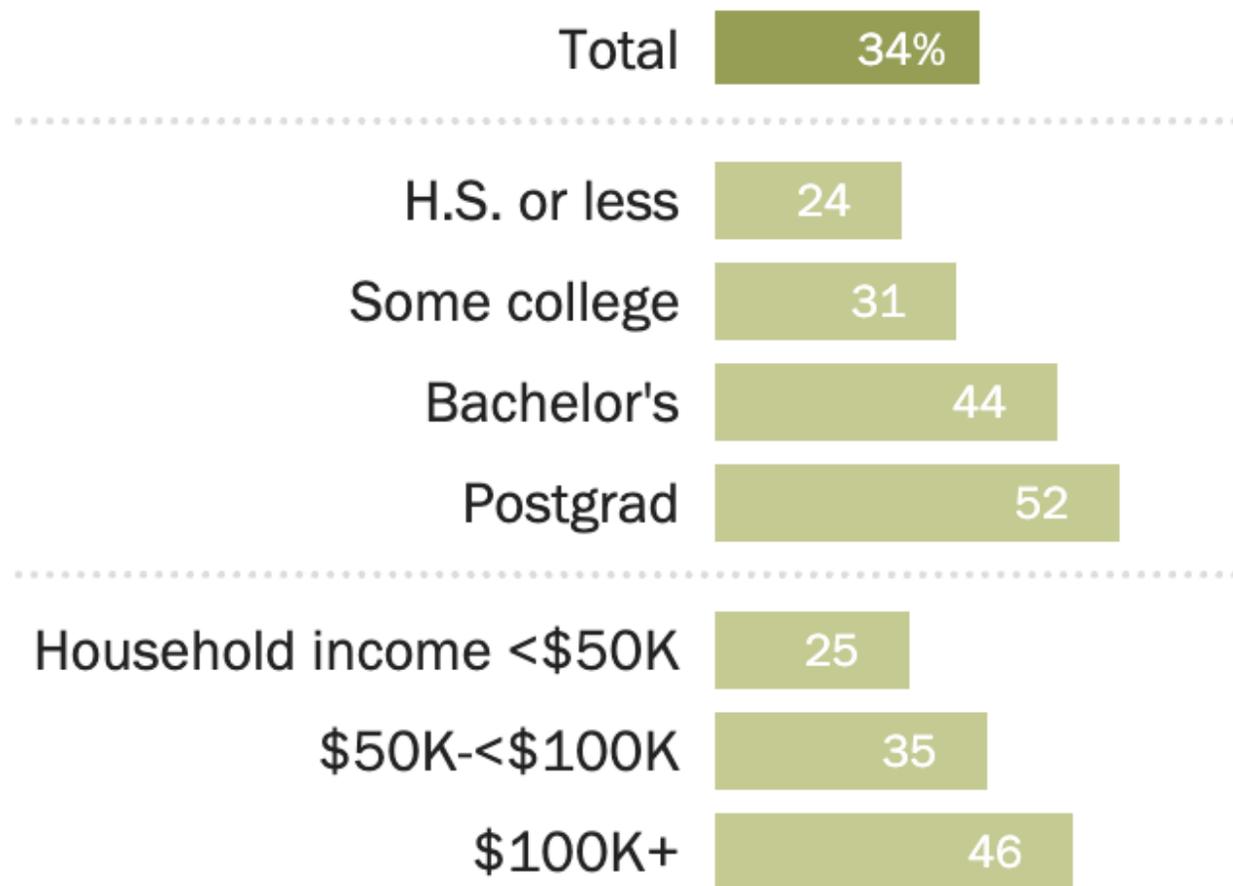
There are differences in trust along demographic lines

*% who say that **most people can be trusted***



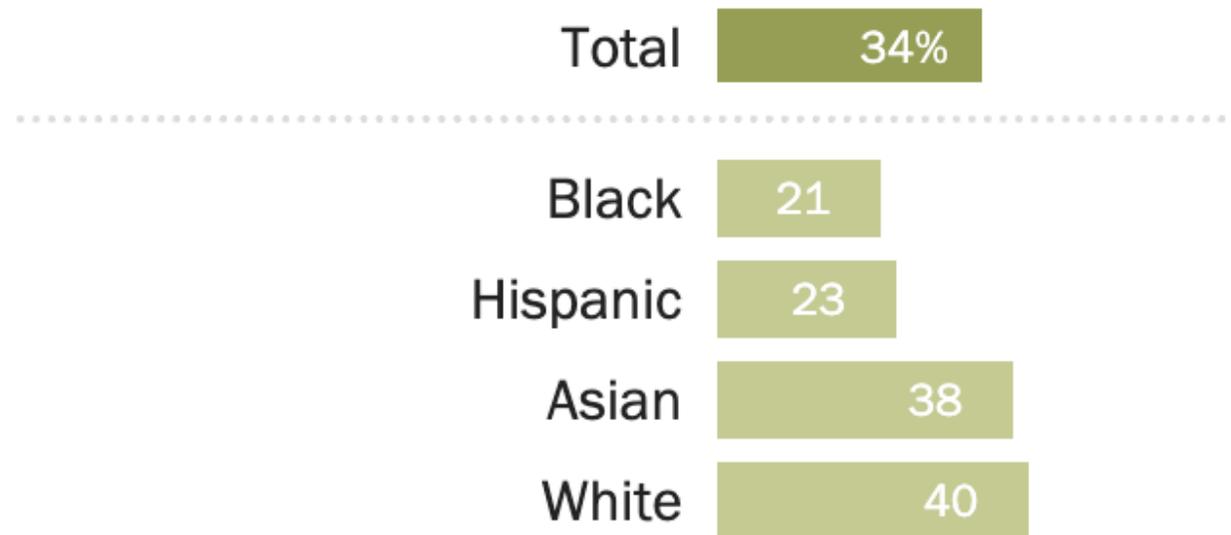
Source: Religious Landscape Study of U.S. adults conducted July 17, 2023-March 4, 2024.

*% who say that **most people can be trusted***



Source: Religious Landscape Study of U.S. adults conducted July 17, 2023-March 4, 2024.

% who say that most people can be trusted

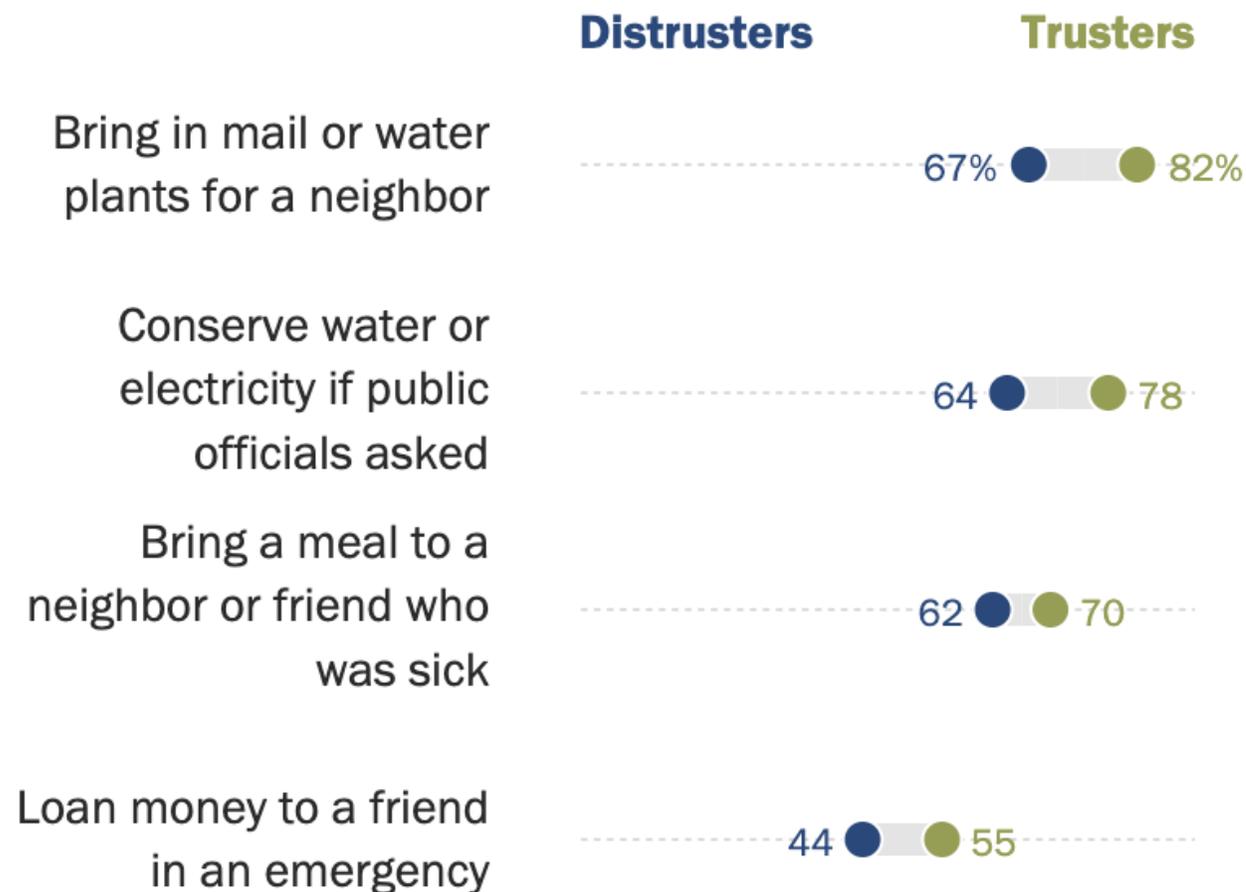


Note: White, Black and Asian respondents include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Estimates for Asian respondents are representative of English speakers only.

Source: Religious Landscape Study of U.S. adults conducted July 17, 2023-March 4, 2024.

Trust changes actions

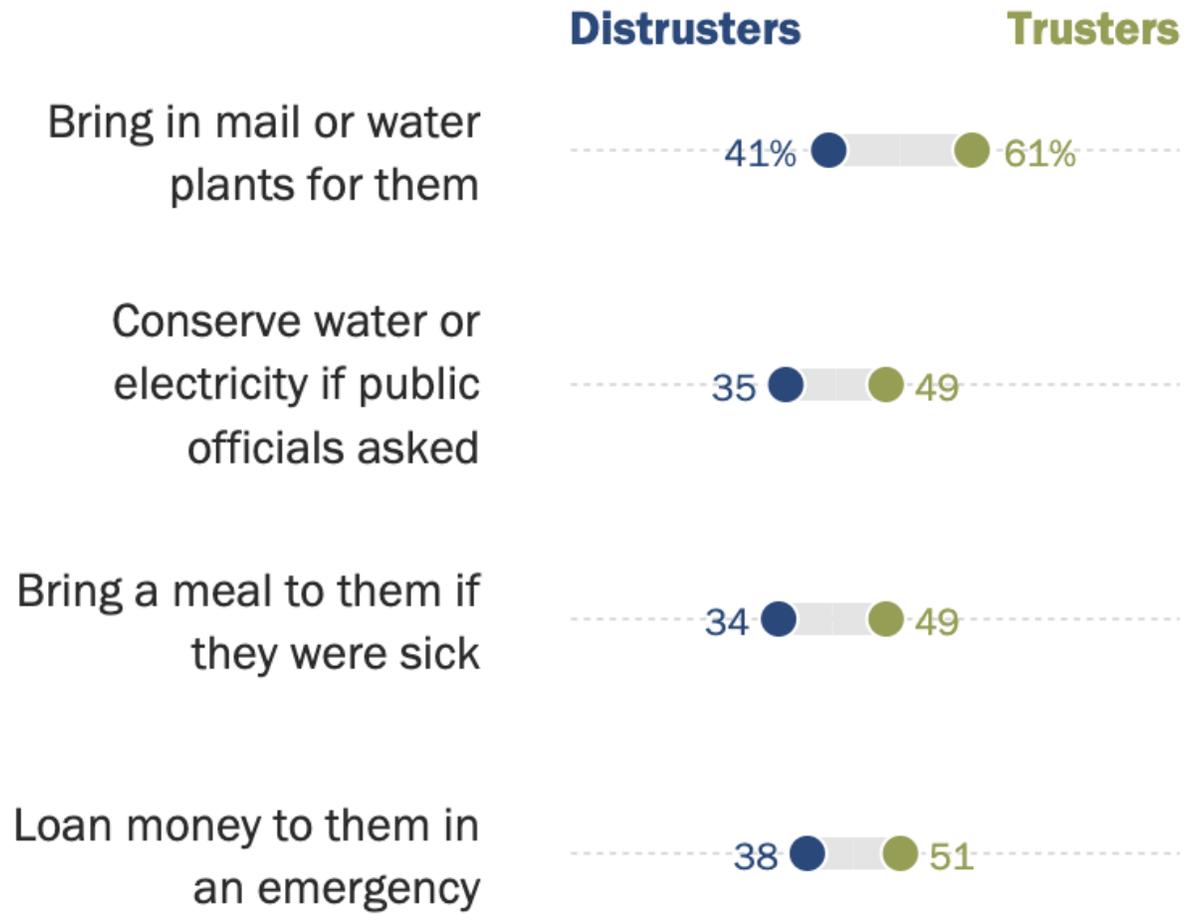
*% who say they would be **extremely/very likely** to ...*



Note: “Trusters” are those who said “most people can be trusted.” “Distrusters” are those who said “most people cannot be trusted.” See Topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 10-16, 2025.

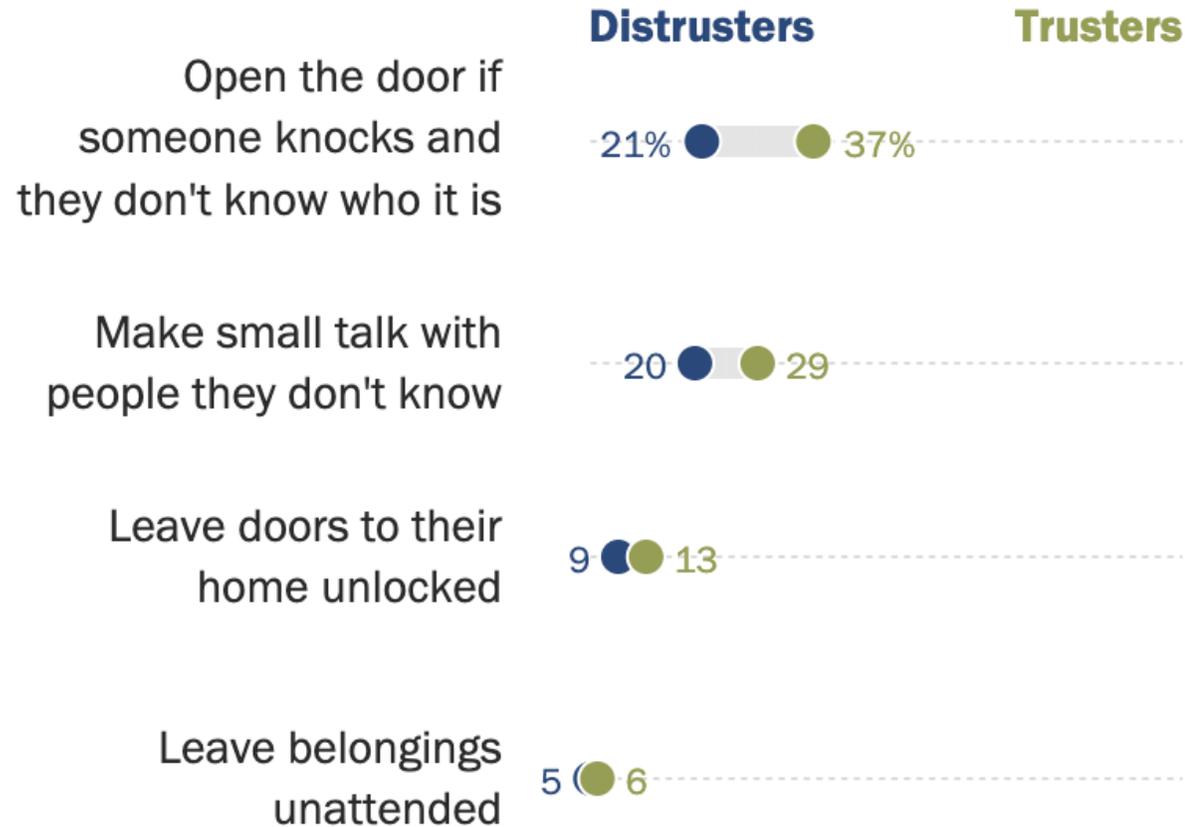
*% who say **others** would be **extremely/very likely** to ...*



Note: “Trusters” are those who said “most people can be trusted.” “Distrusters” are those who said “most people cannot be trusted.” See Topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 10-16, 2025.

*% who say they **always/most of the time** ...*



Note: “Trusters” are those who said “most people can be trusted.” “Distrusters” are those who said “most people cannot be trusted.” See Topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 10-16, 2025.

% who say they have ___ in the past 12 months

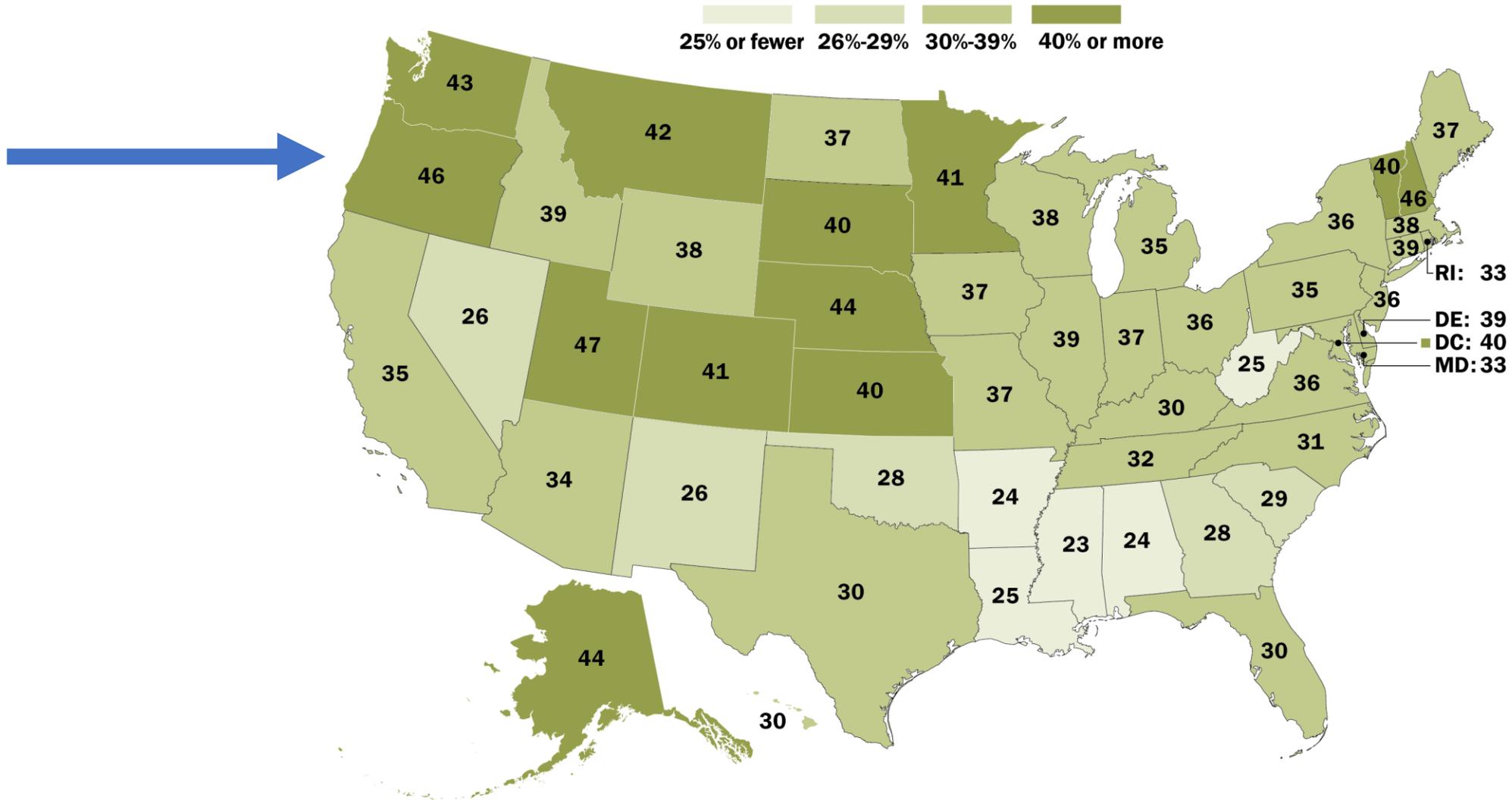


Note: “Trusters” are those who said “most people can be trusted.”
“Distrusters” are those who said “most people cannot be trusted.” See
Topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 10-16, 2025.

Regionally, trust is lowest in the South, but trust levels nationwide vary by state

% who say that most people can be trusted, by state



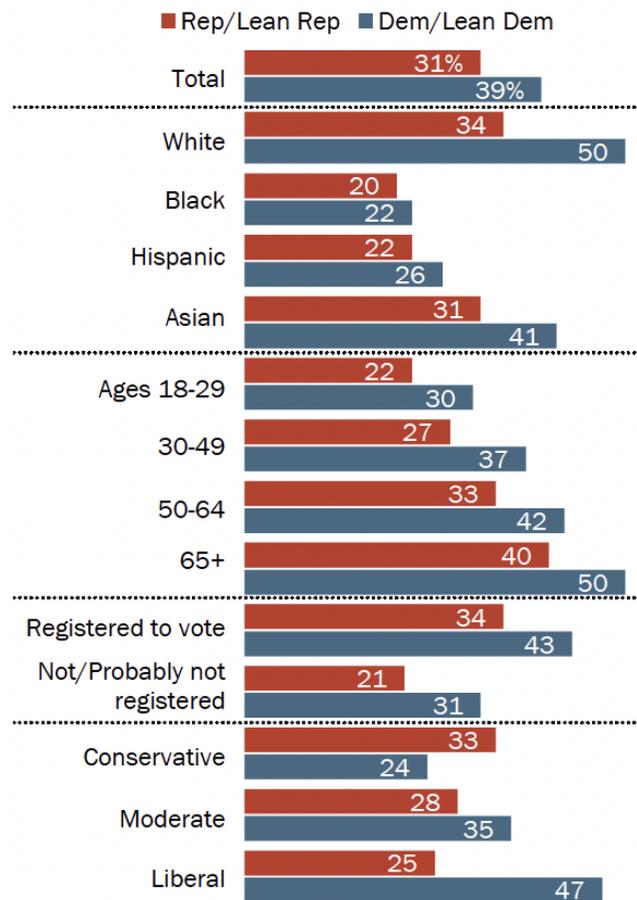
Source: Religious Landscape Study of U.S. adults conducted July 17, 2023-March 4, 2024.

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Trust varies across political affiliation

Democrats are more trusting than Republicans

% who say that *most people can be trusted*, by partisanship



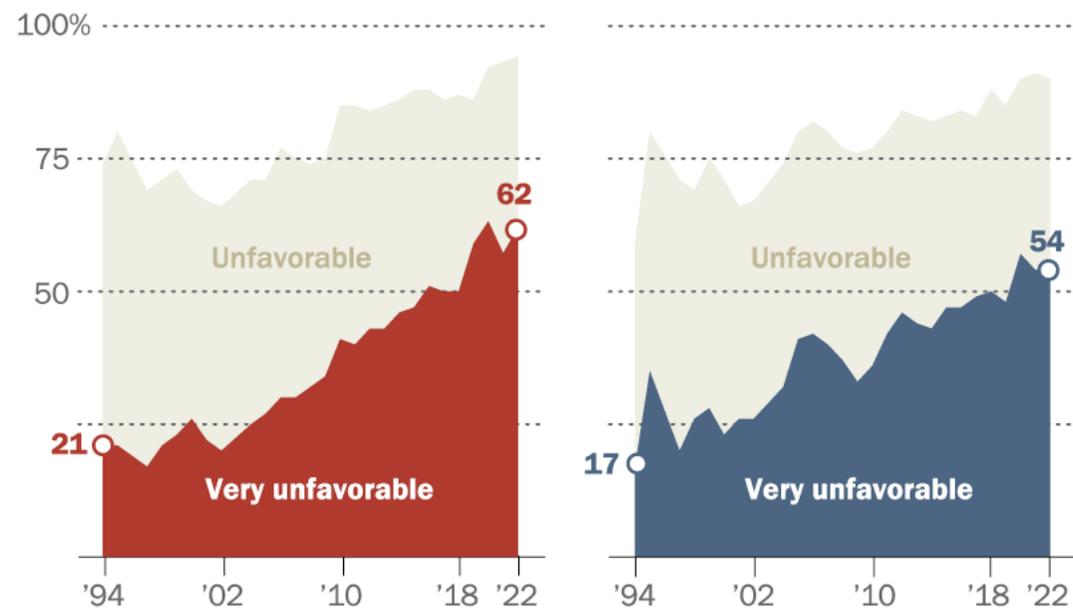
Note: White, Black and Asian respondents include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Estimates for Asian respondents are representative of English speakers only.

Source: Religious Landscape Study of U.S. adults conducted July 17, 2023-March 4, 2024.

Two decades of rising partisan antipathy

% of *Republicans* with a(n) ____ view
of the *Democratic Party*

% of *Democrats* with a(n) ____
view of the *Republican Party*

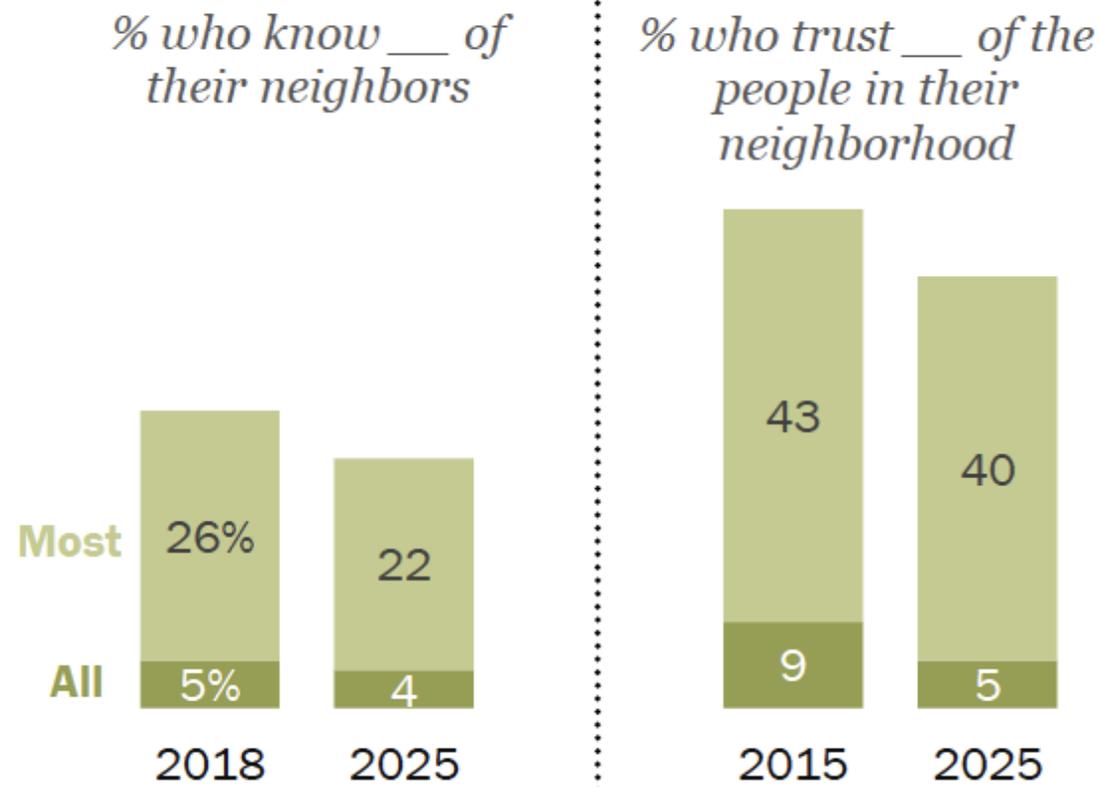


Note: Based on partisans and does not include those who lean to each party.

Source: Yearly averages of survey data from Pew Research Center American Trends Panel (2020-2022) and Pew Research Center phone surveys (1994-2019).

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Fewer Americans now know and trust most or all of their neighbors



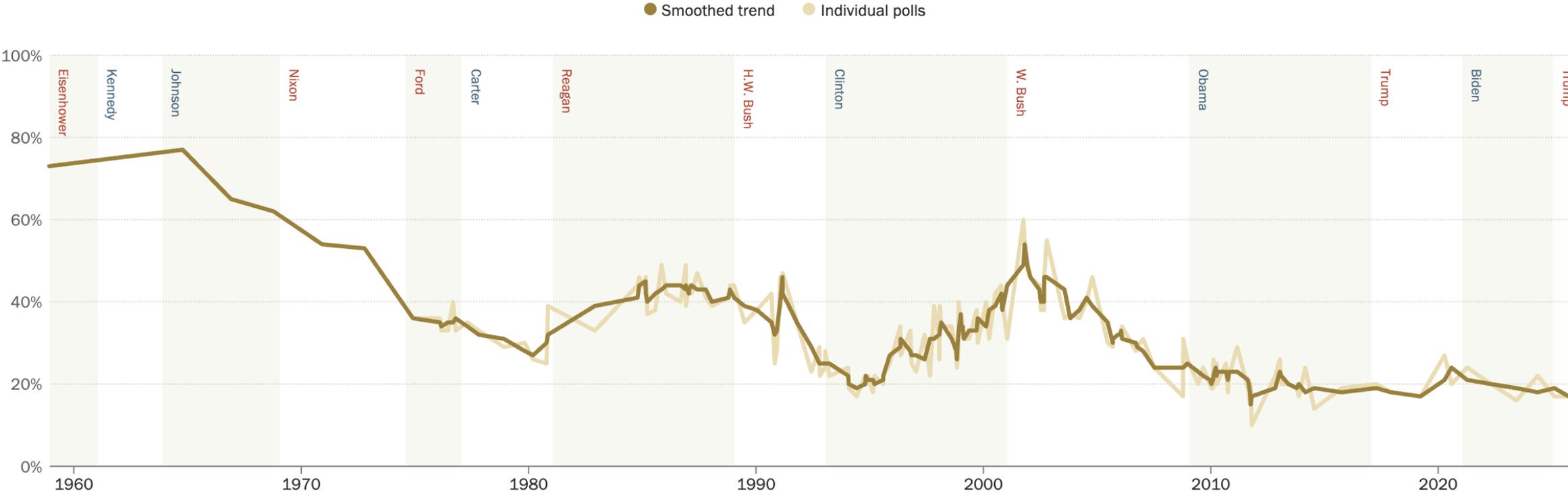
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 10-16, 2025.

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Trust in institutions is declining

Public trust in government near historic lows

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

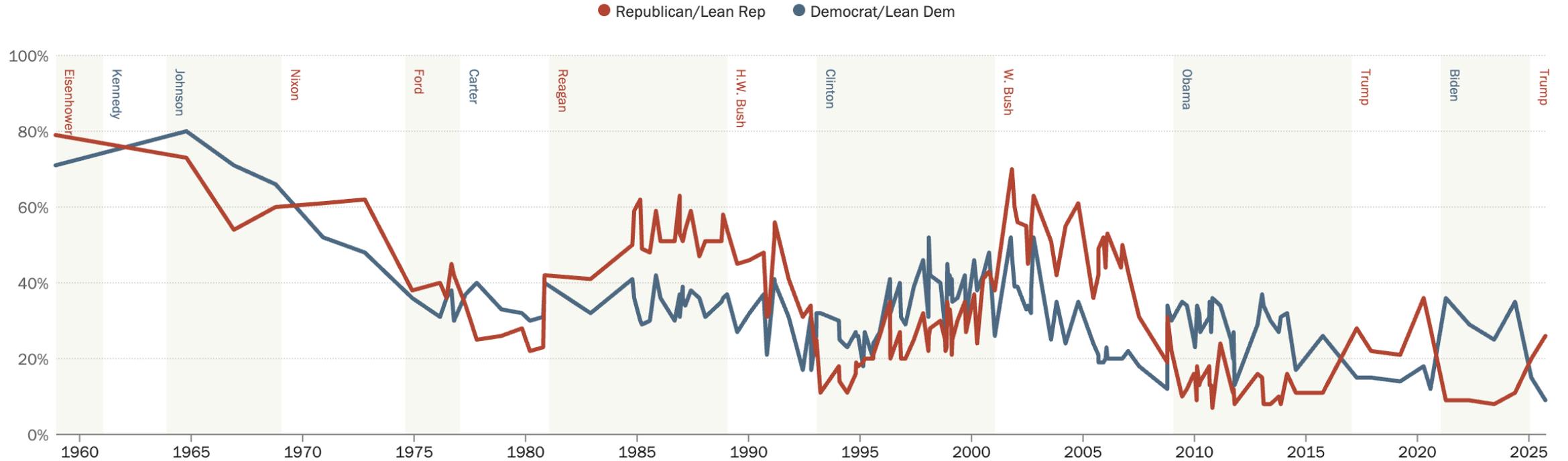


Note: From 1976-February 2025, the smoothed trend line represents a three-survey moving average. Data prior to 1976, and the most recent number (September 2025), are from individual polls. Sources: Pew Research Center, National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN surveys.

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Trust in government higher among members of party that controls presidency

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

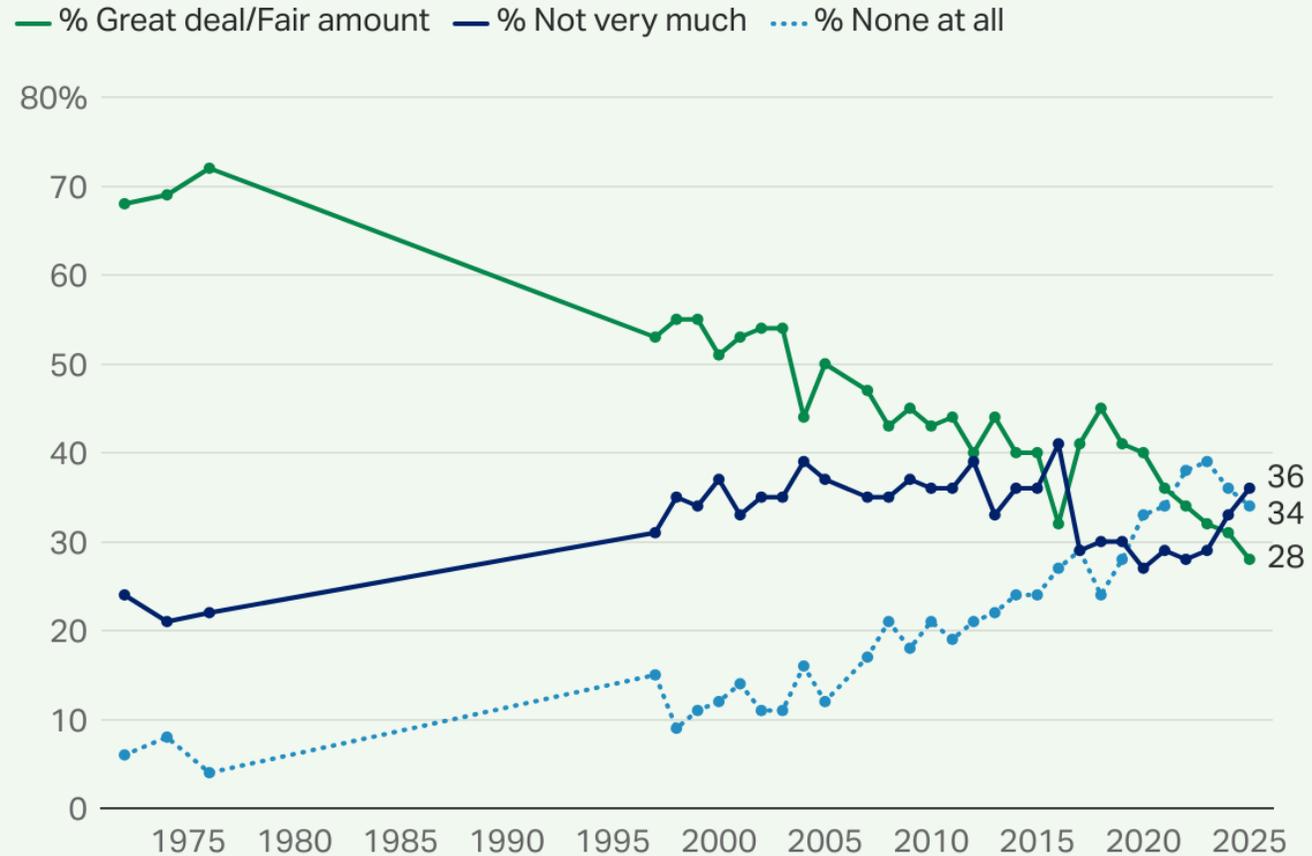


Sources: Pew Research Center, National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN surveys.

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Americans' Trust in Mass Media, 1972-2025

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media — such as newspapers, TV and radio — when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately and fairly — a great deal, a fair amount, not very much or none at all?

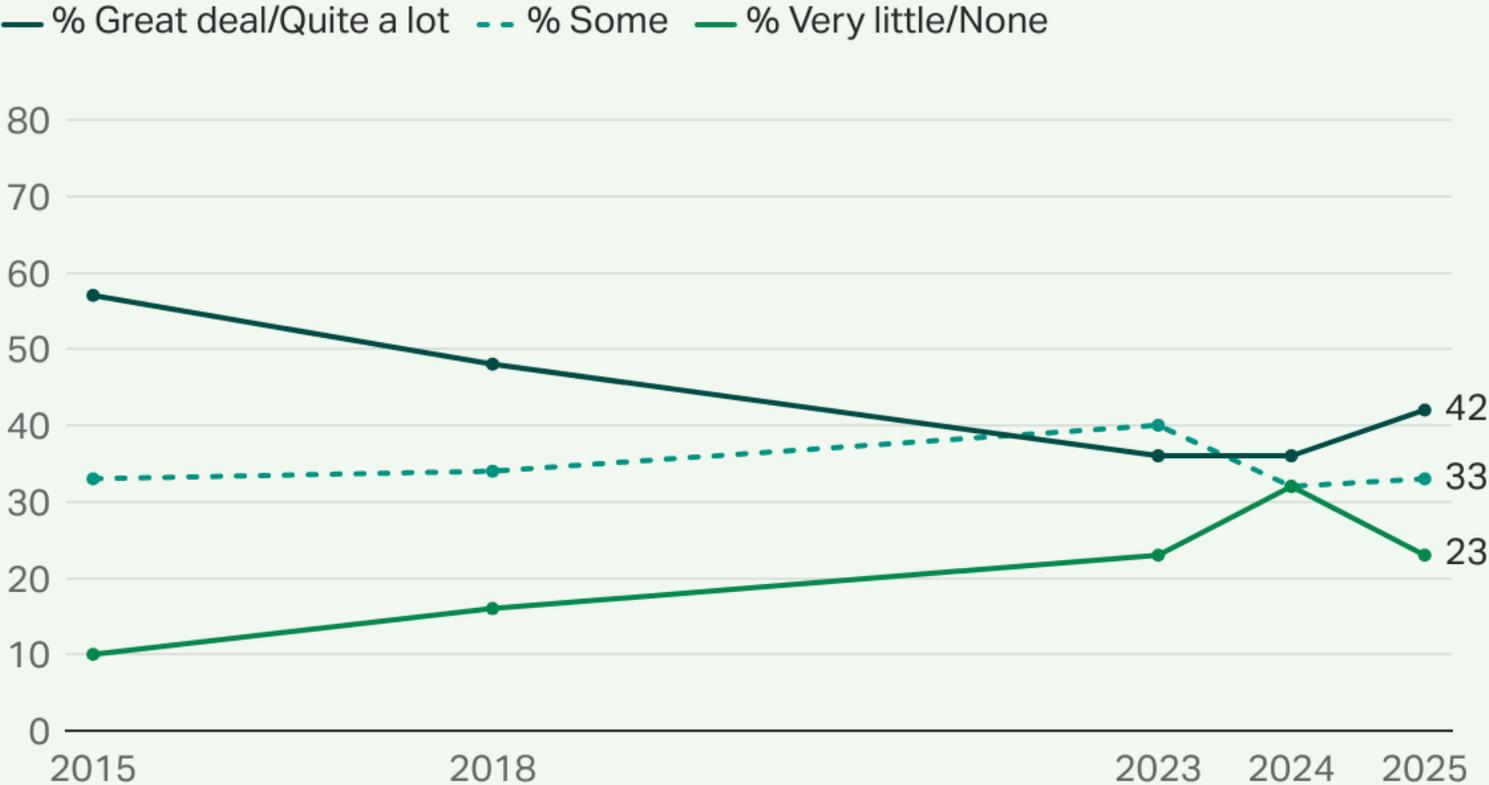


GALLUP®

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/695762/trust-media-new-low.aspx>

Confidence in U.S. Higher Education

Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in higher education — a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little?



"None" is a volunteered response. No opinion percentages are not shown.

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“

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community... Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders.

”

- World Health Organization

Cumulative inequality theory

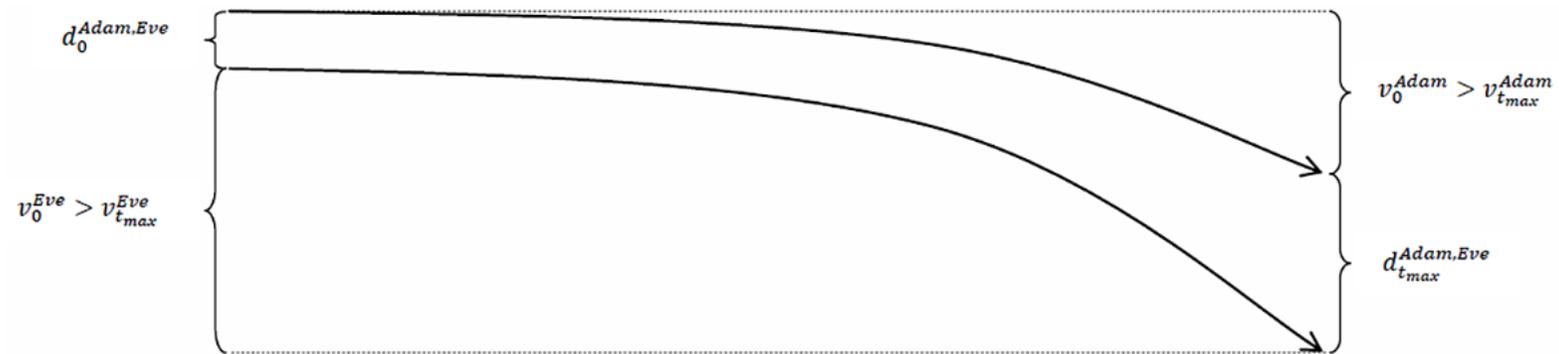


Fig 5. The distance between Adam's and Eve's socio-economic statuses increases over time even when both Adam and Eve experience a cumulative disadvantage.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0142447.g005

“[f]or unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance:
but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath”

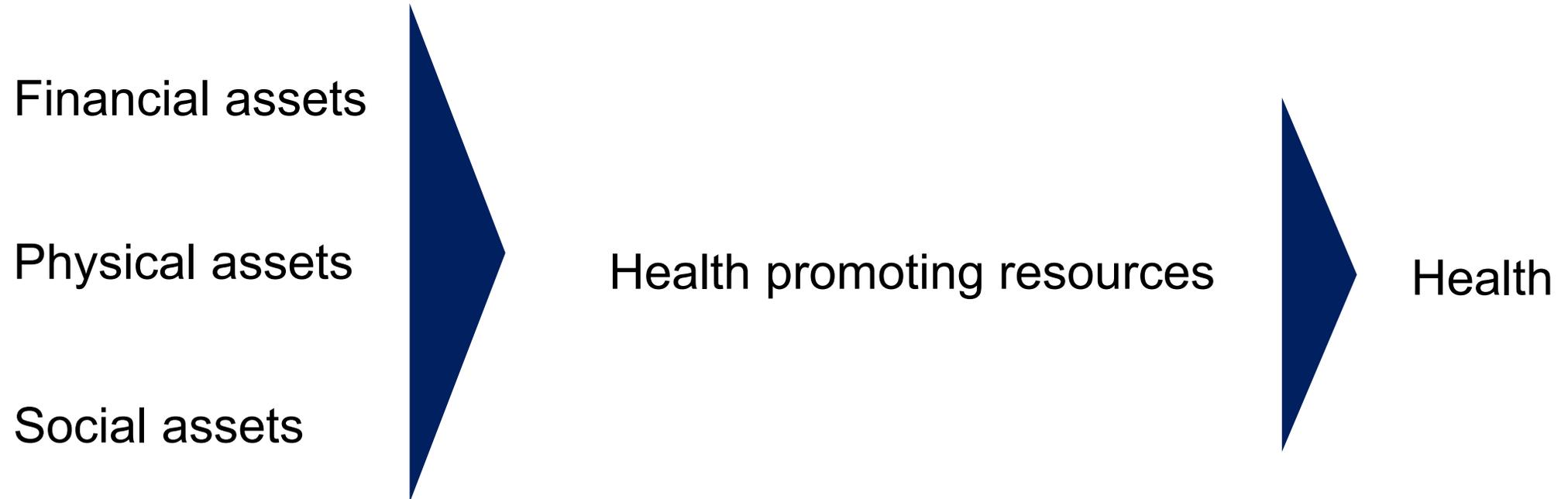
- Matthew 25:29

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer

Assets framework for population health



Assets framework for population health



Assets framework for population health

Financial assets: Income, savings, consumer credit scores, insurance

Physical assets: Home ownership, auto ownership, devices, WiFi

Social assets: Marital status, educational attainment, religious attendance, social support



Assets framework for population health

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social support



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During Covid-19, assets were associated with lower persistent depressive symptoms

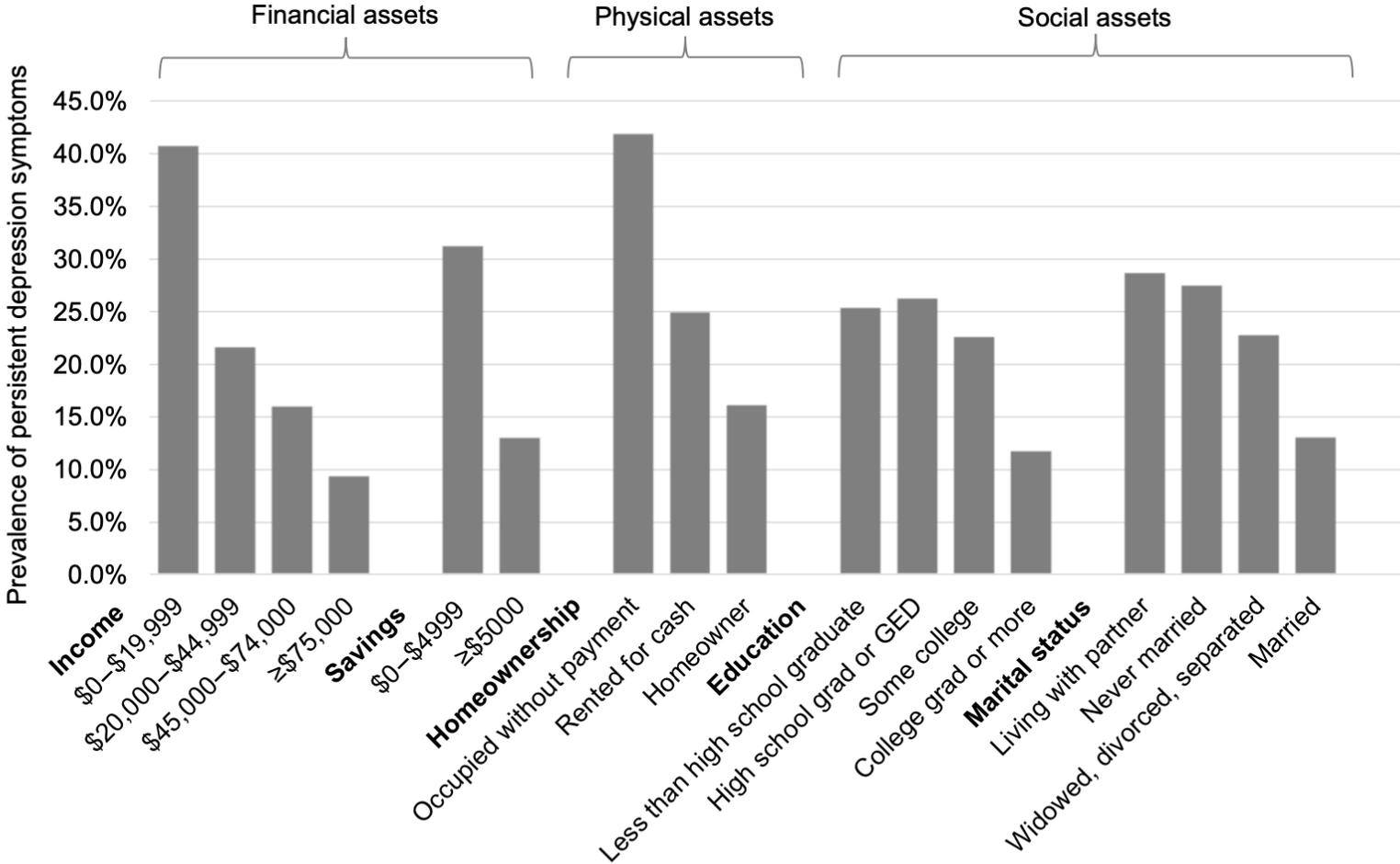


Fig. 1. Prevalence of symptoms of persistent depression in March and April 2021 (T2) by financial assets, physical assets, and social assets in March and April 2020 (T1). Note: T1 assets reported. Symptoms of persistent depression defined as presence of PHQ-9 score of 10 or greater at T1 and T2. GED, graduate equivalency degree/ general educational diploma. Percentages weighted using T2 survey weights.

Ettman CK, Cohen GH, Abdalla SM, et al. Assets, stressors, and symptoms of persistent depression over the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Science Advances*. 2022;8(9):eabm9737. doi:10.1126/sciadv.abm9737

BY THE NUMBERS

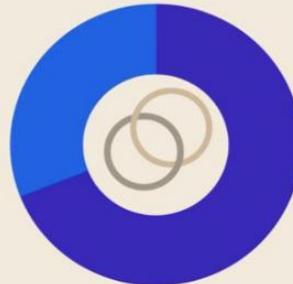
ASSETS + DEPRESSION

Relative to persons with lower assets



88.2%
30 out of
34 articles
report

**HIGHER
INCOME**



72.2%
13 out of 18
articles
report

MARRIAGE



100%
5 out of 5
of articles
report

**HOME
OWNERSHIP**

are associated with lower depressive symptoms in a systematic review of the literature during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Policies



Assets

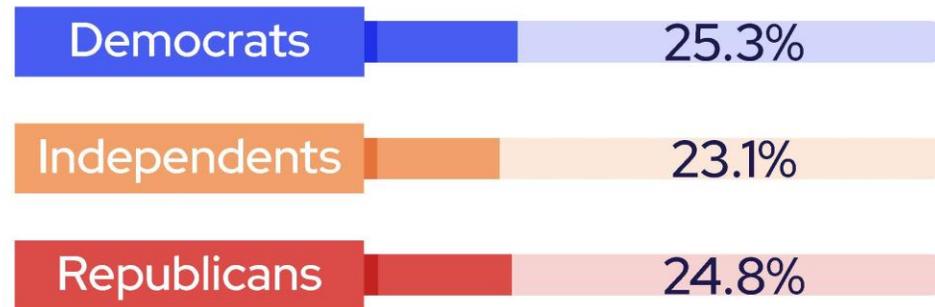


Well-being

de Beaumont



1 in 4 U.S. adults screen positive for depression



The impact of depression:

Affected over 22.5 million U.S. adults in 2022¹

Costs the U.S. more than \$326B each year²
(2020 dollars)

¹ SAMHSA ² Greenberg PE et al, 2021



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Center for Mental Health
and Addiction Policy

1 in 3

The number of people who
know someone who has
died of drug overdose.

*Kennedy-Hendricks A, et al.
Experience of Personal Loss Due to Drug Overdose
Among U.S. Adults. JAMA Health Forum, 2024.*

de Beaumont
BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.



The reported rate of overdose loss was
not statistically different across self-described
Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

*Kennedy-Hendricks A, et al. Experience of Personal Loss Due to Drug Overdose Among U.S. Adults.
JAMA Health Forum, 2024.*

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Resilience greater among those who tended to...

get outside more often

exercise more

perceive more social support from family, friends, and significant others

sleep better

pray more often

Life satisfaction is higher after

having conversations with strangers

greeting weak ties

thanking weak ties

Cumulative inequality theory

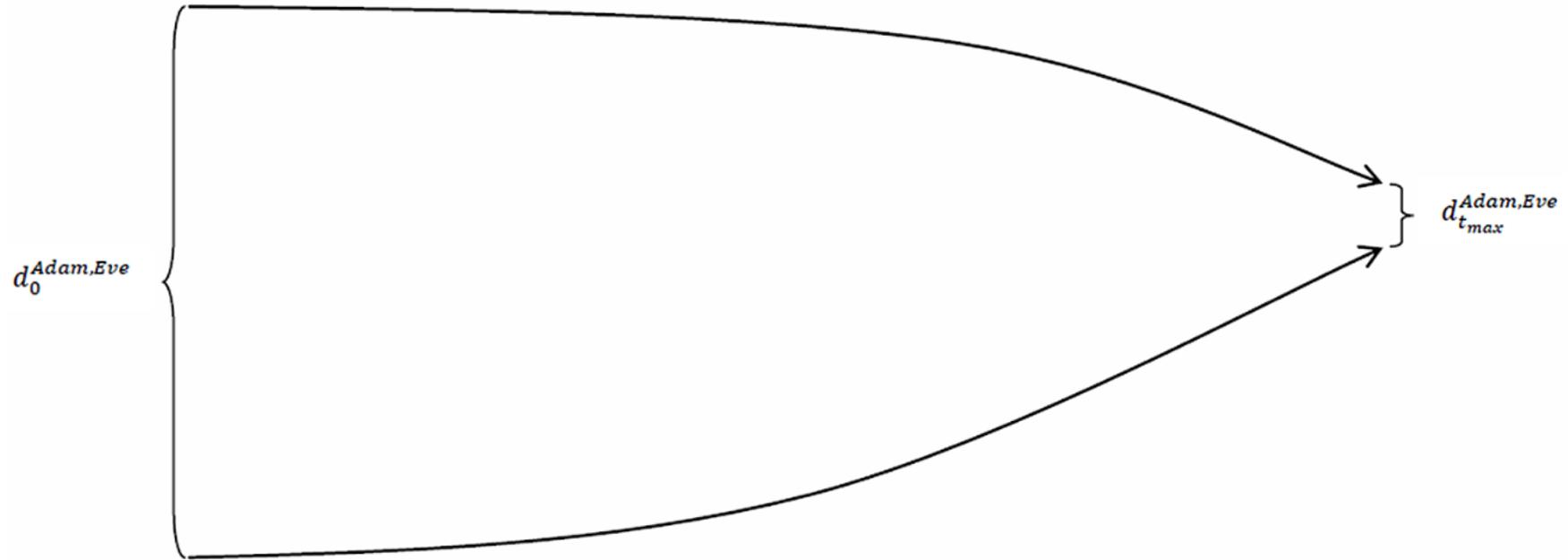


Fig 2. The distance between Adam's and Eve's socio-economic statuses decreases over time.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0142447.g002

Policies that may strengthen trust

Reliability: following through on commitments

Responsiveness: being quick to respond and adapt to needs

Competence: having skills to perform tasks

Fairness: equitably distributing resources



<https://www.pexels.com/photo/grayscale-photography-of-chain-220237/>



With gratitude

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- National Institutes of Health [1F31 MD017133-01]
- National Institutes of Health [T32 AG 23482–15]
- Boston University-Rockefeller 3-D Commission
- deBeaumont Foundation
- Meta
- Hopkins Business of Health Initiative
- Hopkins Center for Health Disparities and Solutions
- The Center for Mental Health and Addiction Policy (CMAP) through the Bloomberg American Health Initiative

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Thank you!

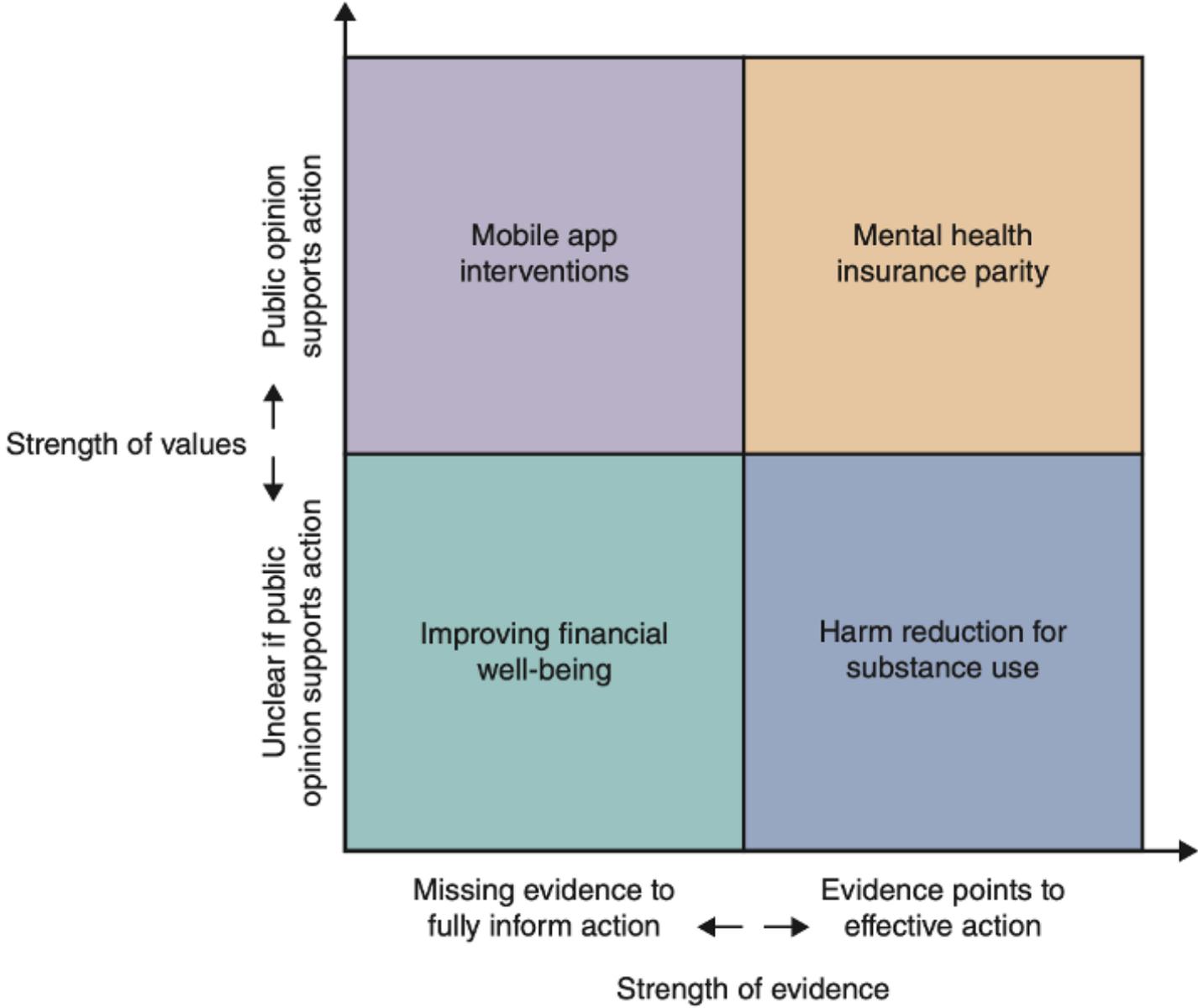
Catherine K. Ettman, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

cettman1@jhu.edu

The Policy Evidence and Values Framework for Mental Health



Ettman CK. Conceptual approaches to addressing the political determinants of mental health. In Mental Health Equity. Dawes D, Dunlap N, Martinez O, eds. Springer Publishing. 2025.