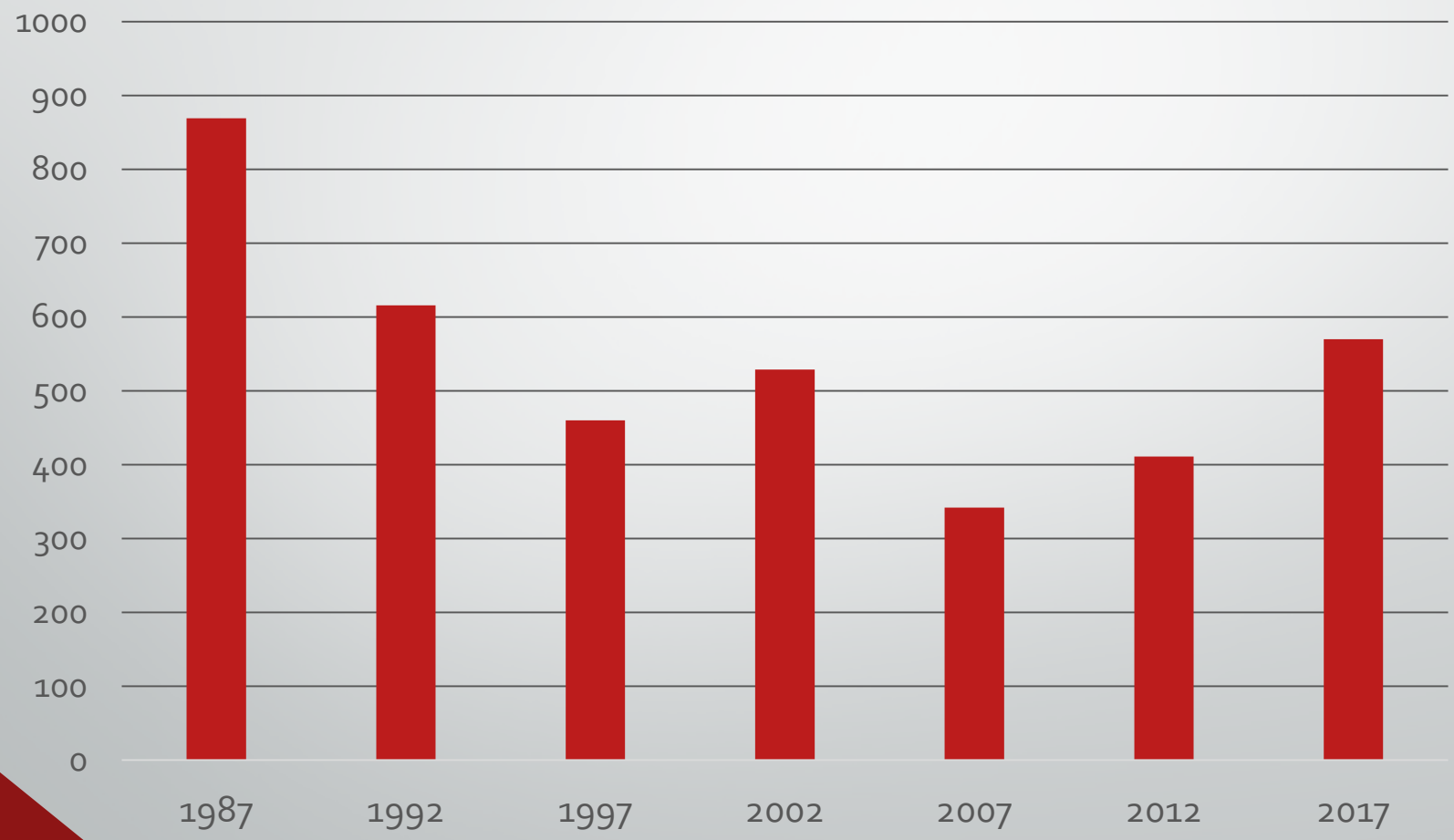
Harvard / Radcliffe Class of 1977 Longitudinal Study

40th Reunion Report

Jason Weeden, JD, PhD

How many participate?



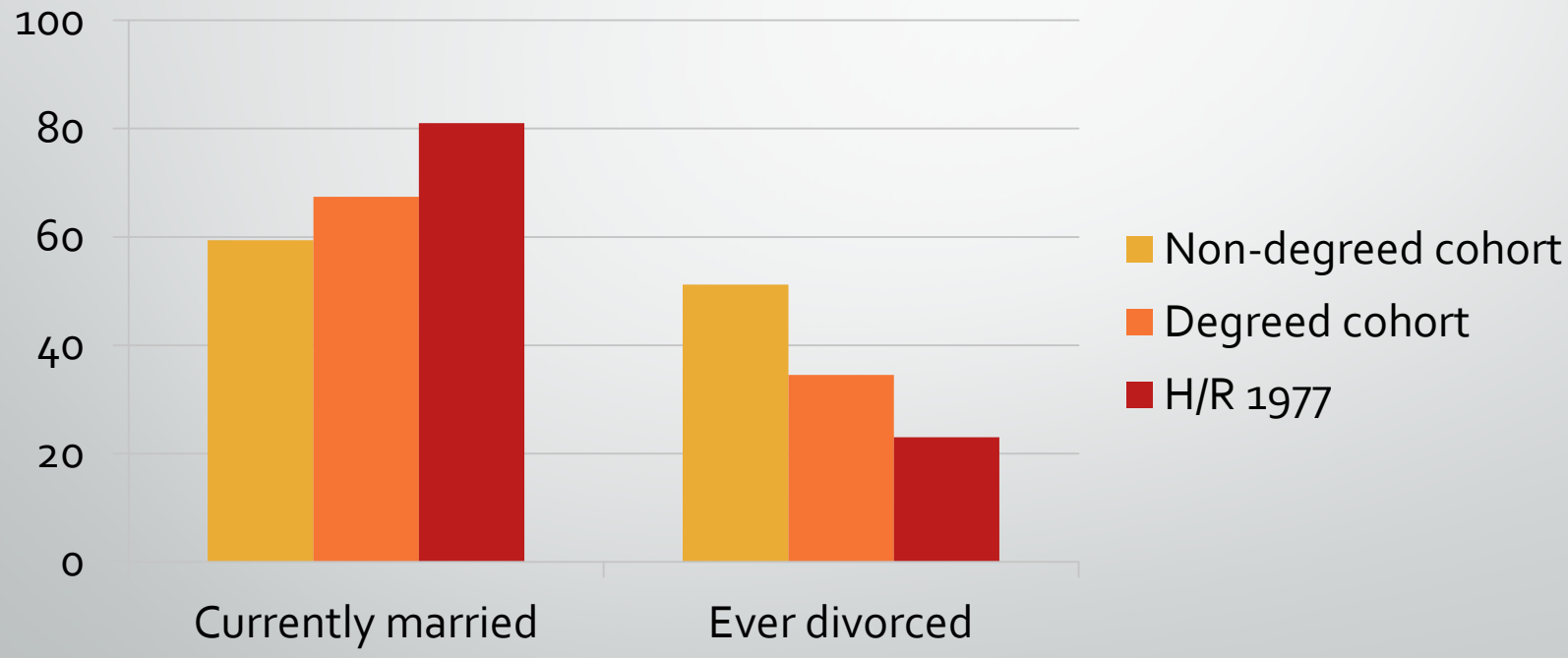
Demographics of the 2017 sample

- 66% men; 34% women
- 90% non-Hispanic White; 4% Black; 3% Asian; 1% Hispanic; 2% other
  - Degreed U.S. cohort:
    - 80% white; 11% black; 4% Asian; 3% Hispanic; 2% other
  - Non-degreed U.S. cohort:
    - 69% white; 16% black; 1% Asian; 12% Hispanic; 2% other
- 95% heterosexual; 2% bisexual; 3% gay/lesbian
- 0% transgender

Family background

	Non-degreed U.S. cohort	Degreed U.S. cohort	H/R Class of 1977
Lived with both biological parents in teen years	70%	83%	88%
Three or more siblings	71%	53%	38%
Degreed father	7%	32%	78%
Degreed mother	4%	22%	63%

Marriage and divorce



Near-divorce experiences

- For people currently married, did you ever go through a situation in which you or your spouse seriously considered ending the marriage (or a situation in which you think many people would have seriously considered it)?
  - 36% of those currently married say “yes”
- Full sample
  - 8% never married
  - 23% divorced at some point
  - 27% married and had a near-divorce experience
  - 42% married and no near-divorce experience

Near-divorce experiences

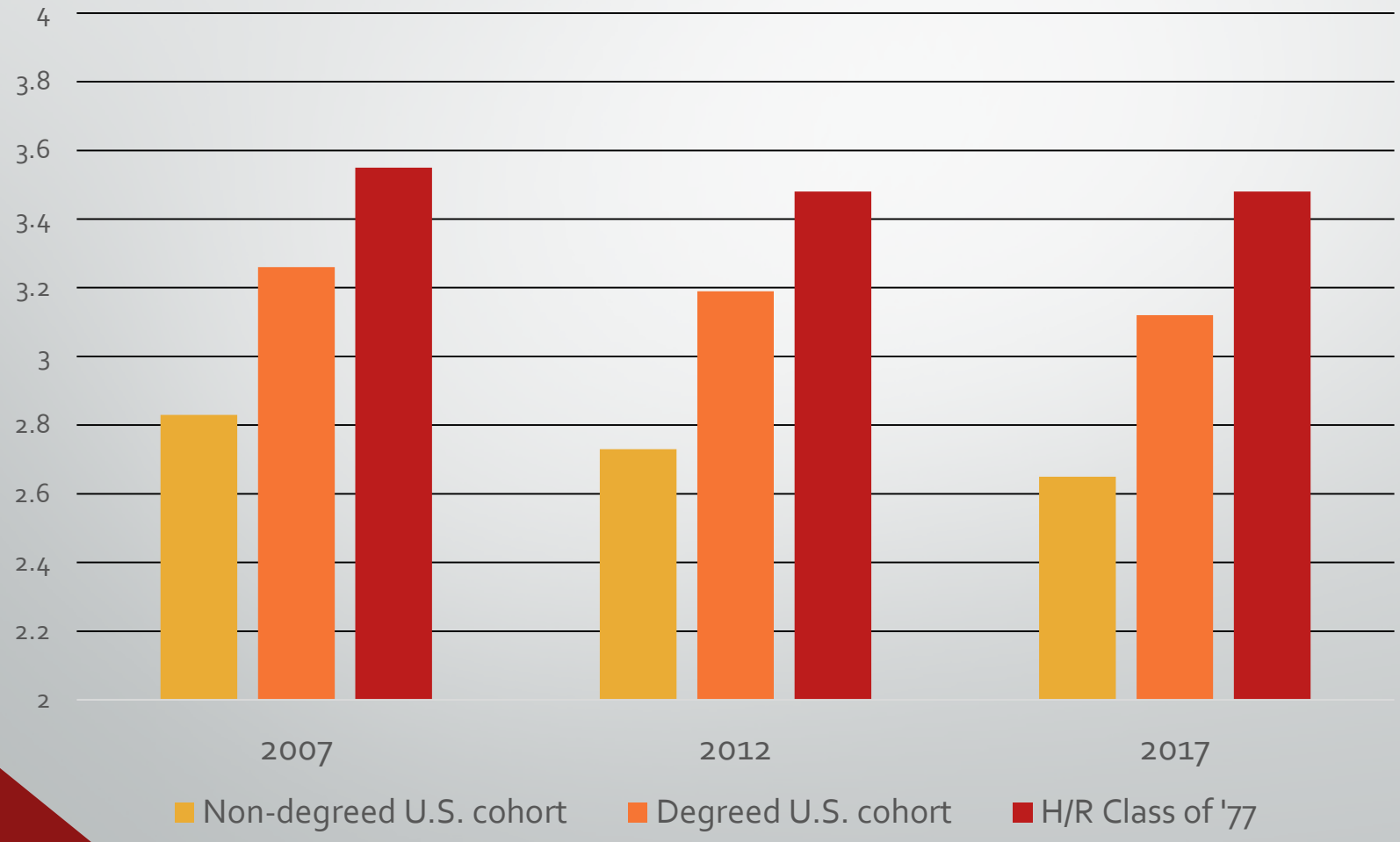
- How did it get resolved?
  - Books 17%
  - Friends 18%
  - On own 46%
  - Counseling 54%
  - Currently unresolved 17%
- How did it affect your marriage?
  - We'll probably end the marriage in the near future 1%
  - It left residual negative effects on the marriage 19%
  - The marriage is about the same as before 27%
  - It strengthened the marriage 53%

Health

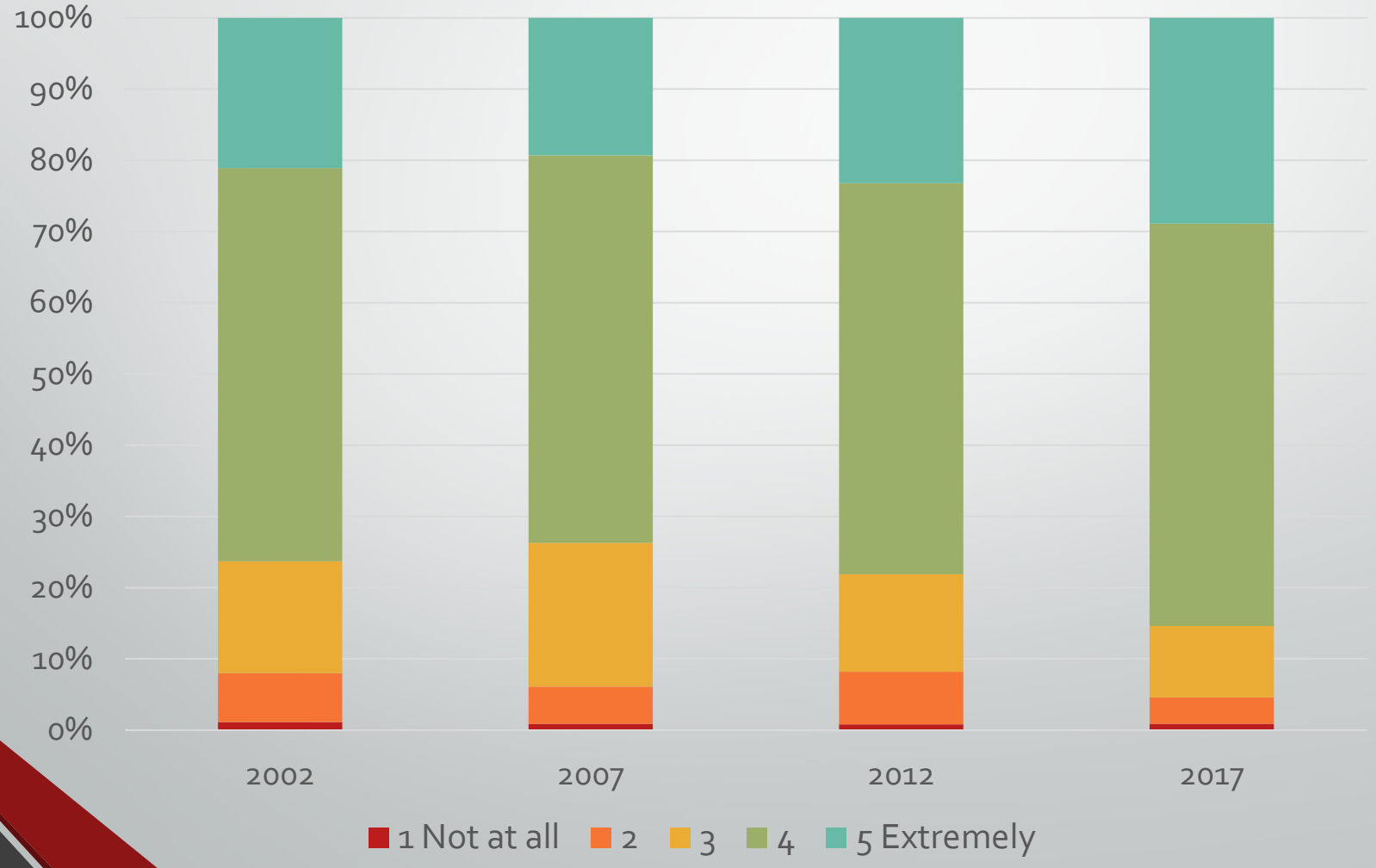
- Relatively stable subjective health from 2007 to 2012 to 2017
  - Poor/fair: 4% to 6% to 6%
- Relatively stable incidence of serious or chronic illness
  - ~20% in each 5-year period
- More individuals managing medical conditions
  - 42% to 51% to 55%
  - E.g.: cholesterol, blood pressure, depression

Subjective health comparison

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = good 4 = excellent

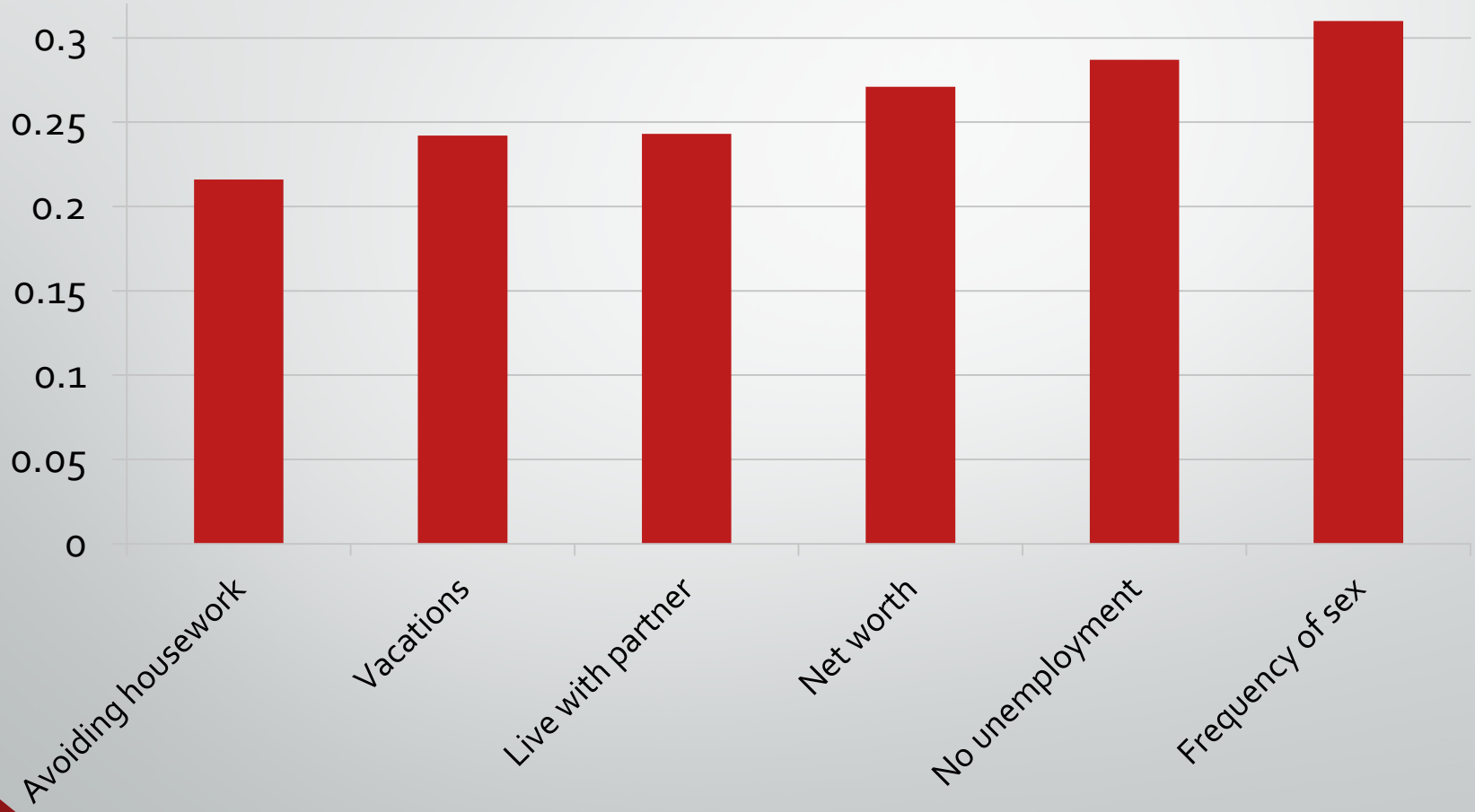


In general, how satisfied are you with your life at present?

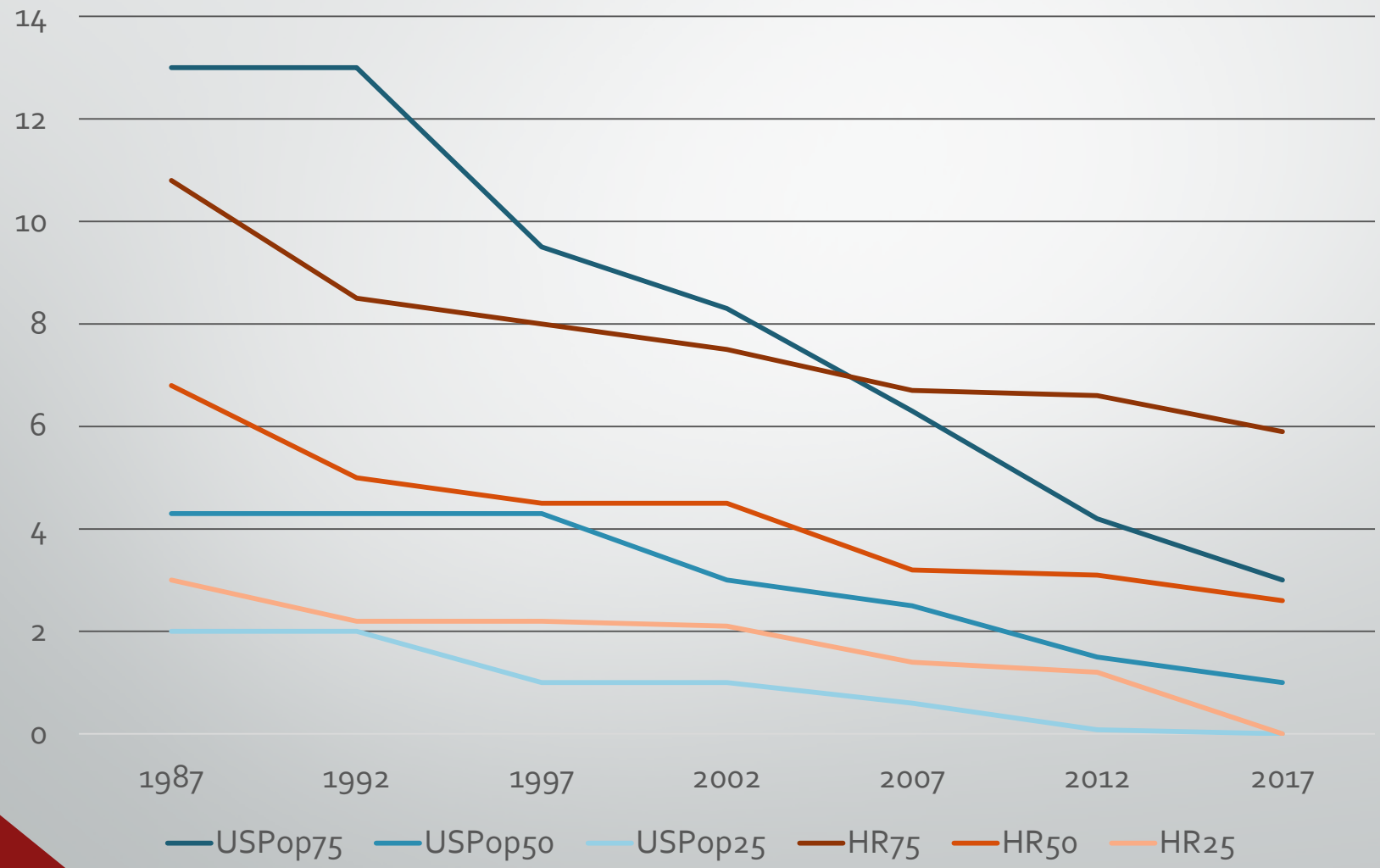


Life Satisfaction:

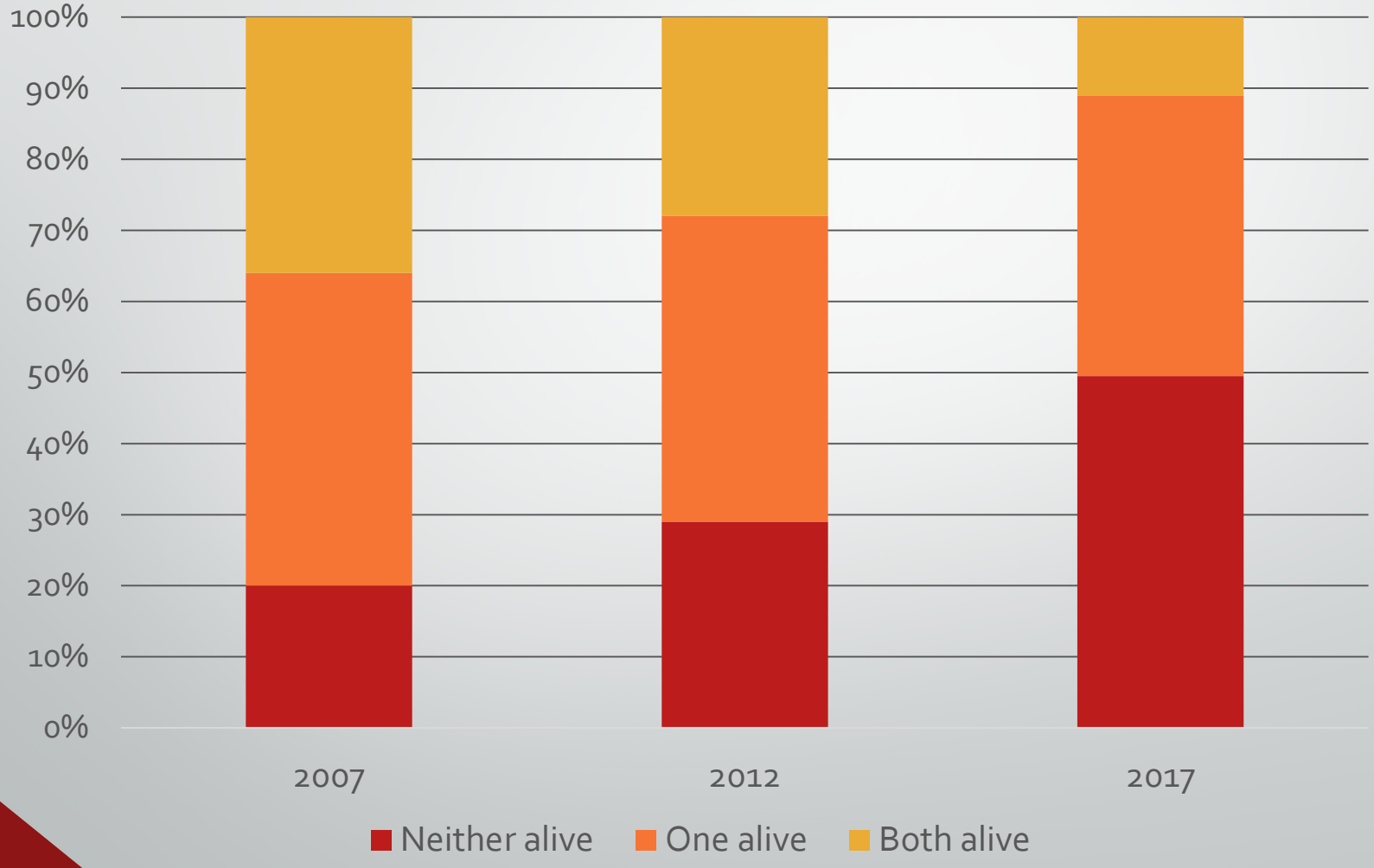
Some big correlations from last time



Times per month



Parents


100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
2007
2012
2017
Neither alive
One alive
Both alive

Parents' living situation

	Mothers	Fathers
2007		
Own home	86%	90%
You or a sibling	6%	2%
Facility	8%	8%
2012		
Own home	79%	86%
You or a sibling	6%	3%
Facility	14%	11%
2017		
Own home	61%	82%
You or a sibling	11%	4%
Facility	28%	14%

Your involvement

- Your involvement (from 1 to 7)
  - Mothers: 2.9 in 2007; 3.4 in 2012; **3.7 in 2017**
  - Fathers: 2.3 in 2007; 2.6 in 2012; **3.0 in 2017**
- More than 5 hours a week
  - Mothers: 9% in 2007; 17% in 2012; **14% in 2017**
  - Fathers: 7% in 2007; 7% in 2012; **14% in 2017**
- More than $4,000 a year
  - Mothers: 12% in 2007; 15% in 2012; **21% in 2017**
  - Fathers: 8% in 2007; 15% in 2012; **13% in 2017**

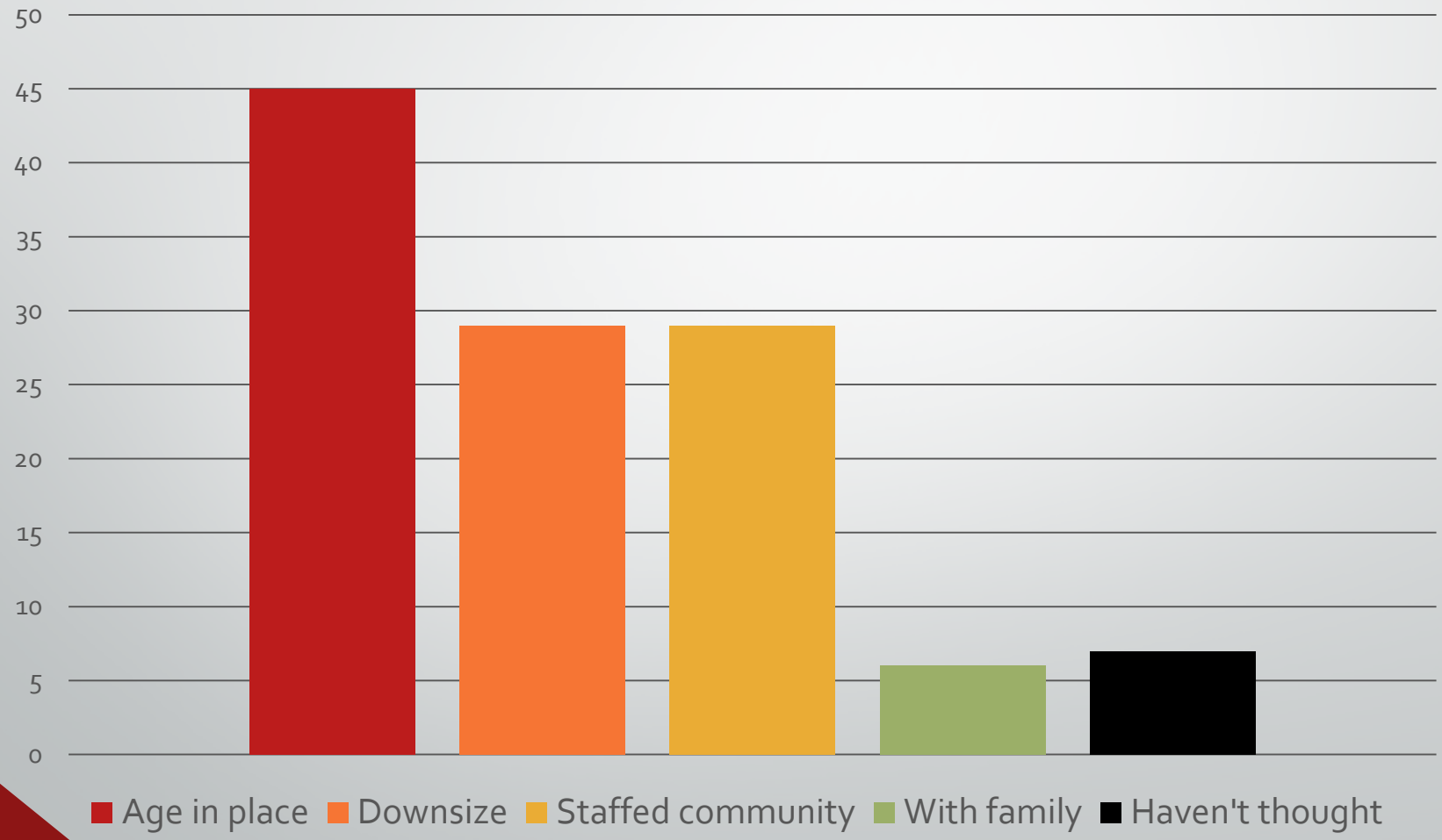
Enjoyment and stress

- Enjoyment (from 1 to 7)
  - Mothers: 4.7 in 2007; 4.9 in 2012; **4.8 in 2017**
  - Fathers: 4.7 in 2007; 5.0 in 2012; **5.0 in 2017**
- Stress (from 1 to 7)
  - Mothers: 3.1 in 2007; 3.4 in 2012; **3.6 in 2017**
  - Fathers: 2.8 in 2007; 3.2 in 2012; **3.3 in 2017**

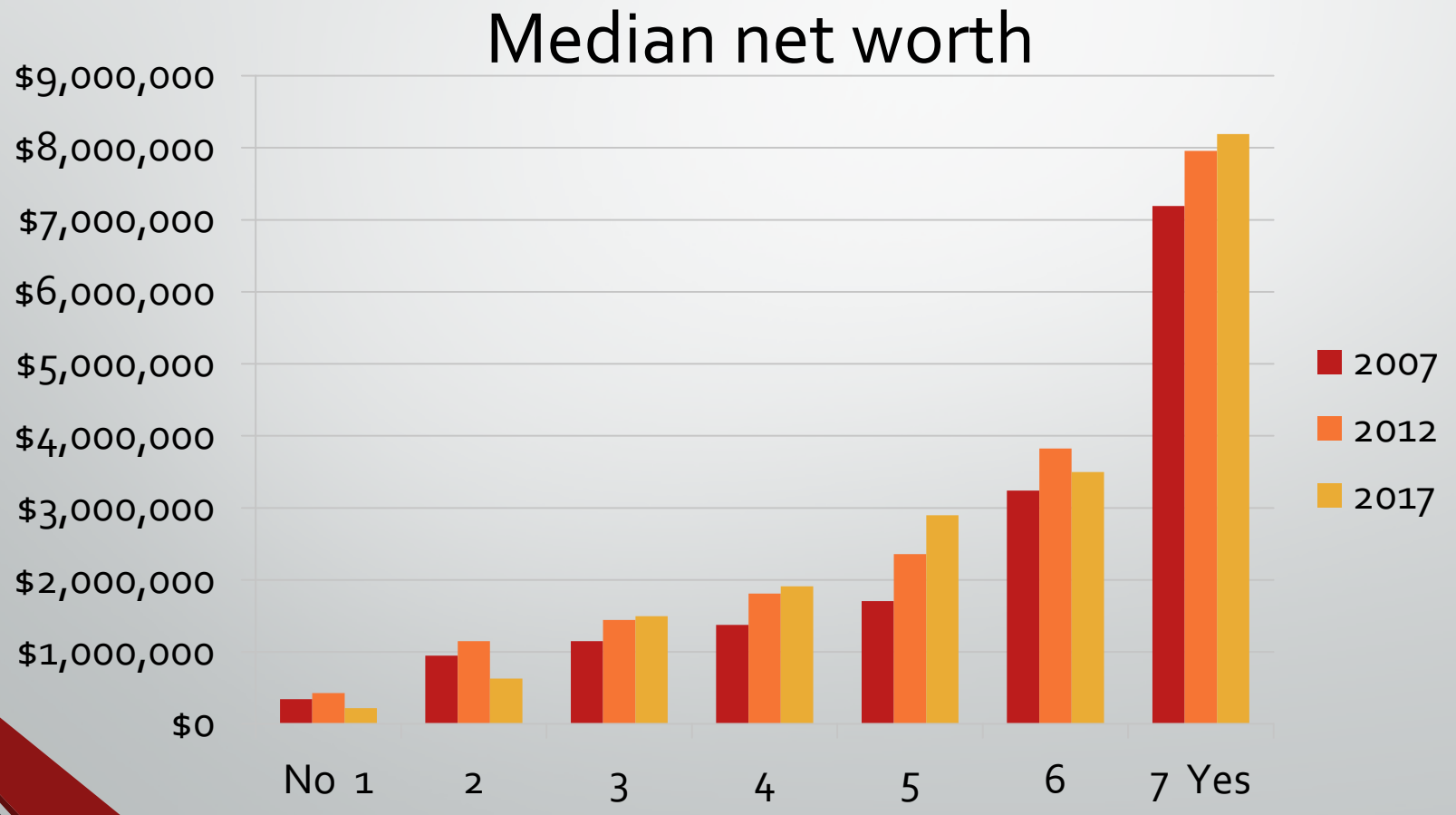
Getting older

- Living will, advanced directives, etc.
  - 65% have them in place
  - 30% thought about it but haven't fully set them up
  - 5% haven't thought much about it

Getting older



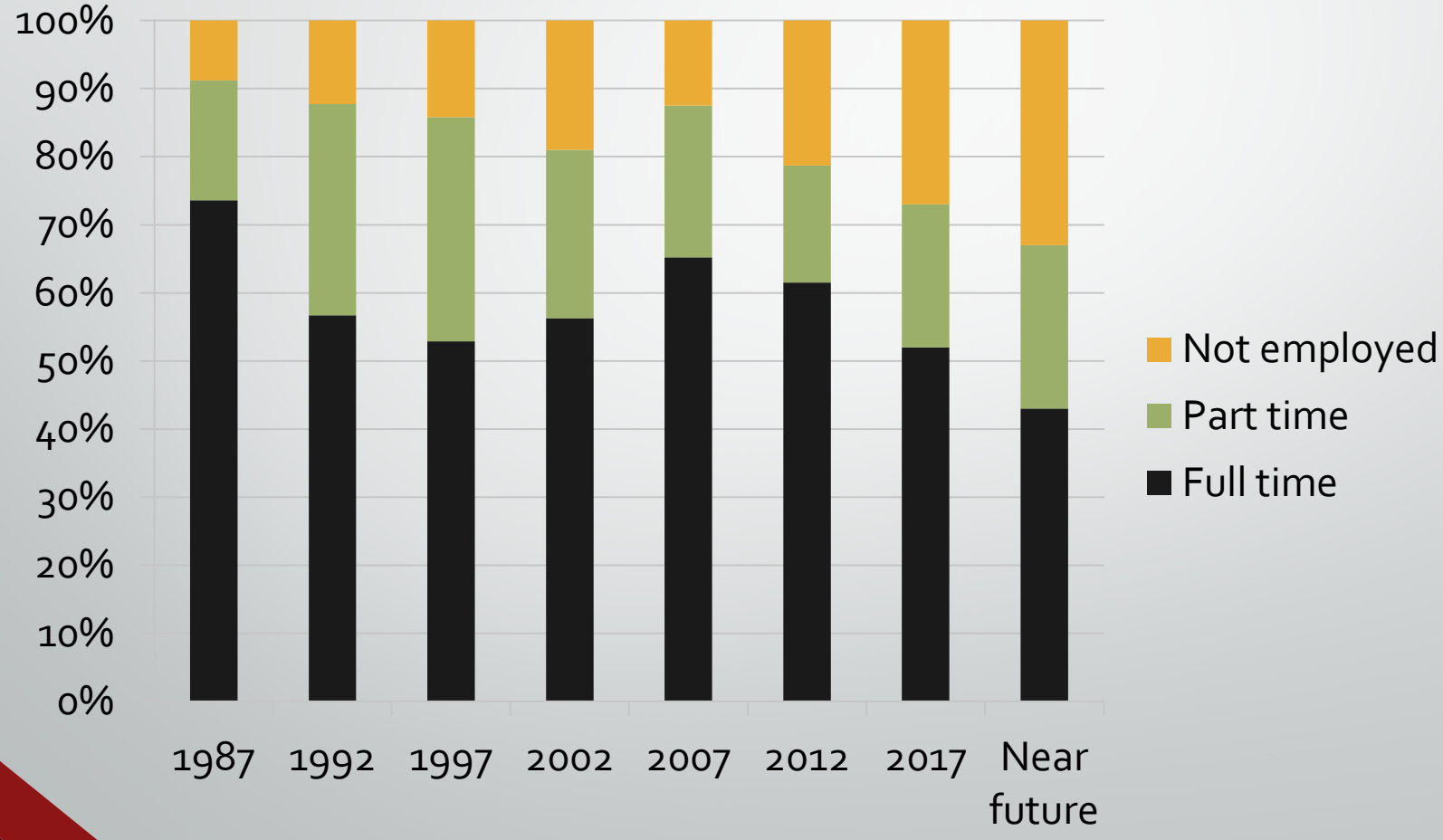
Are you saving enough for retirement?



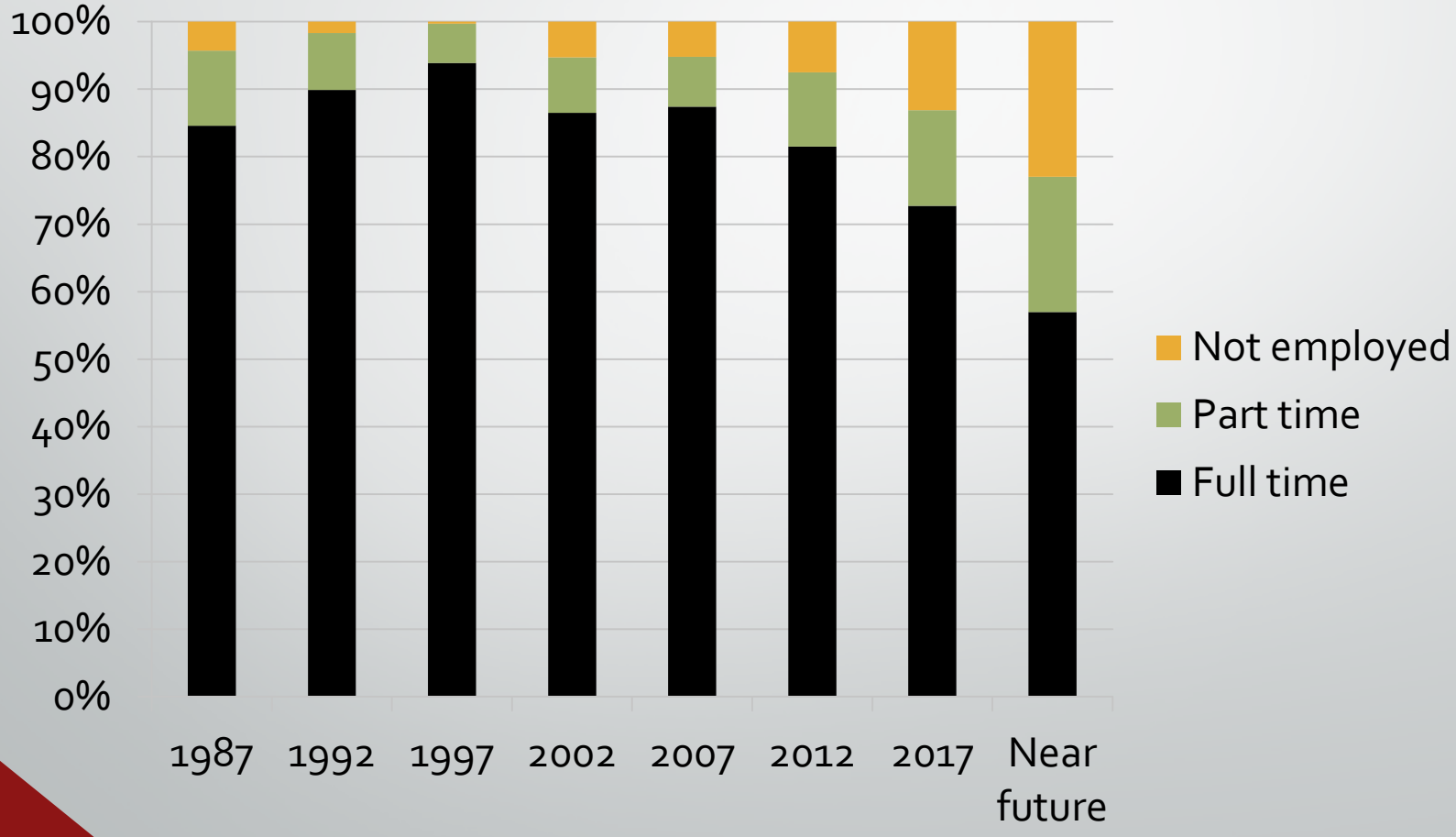
Categories of charitable donations

- Educational institutions: $8,970
  - $2,860 to Harvard/Radcliffe
  - $6,110 to others
- Social wellbeing: $3,410
- Religious groups: $3,030
- Health: $2,670
- Politics: $1,910
- Art: $1,870
- Environment: $1,770
- Other: $5,470

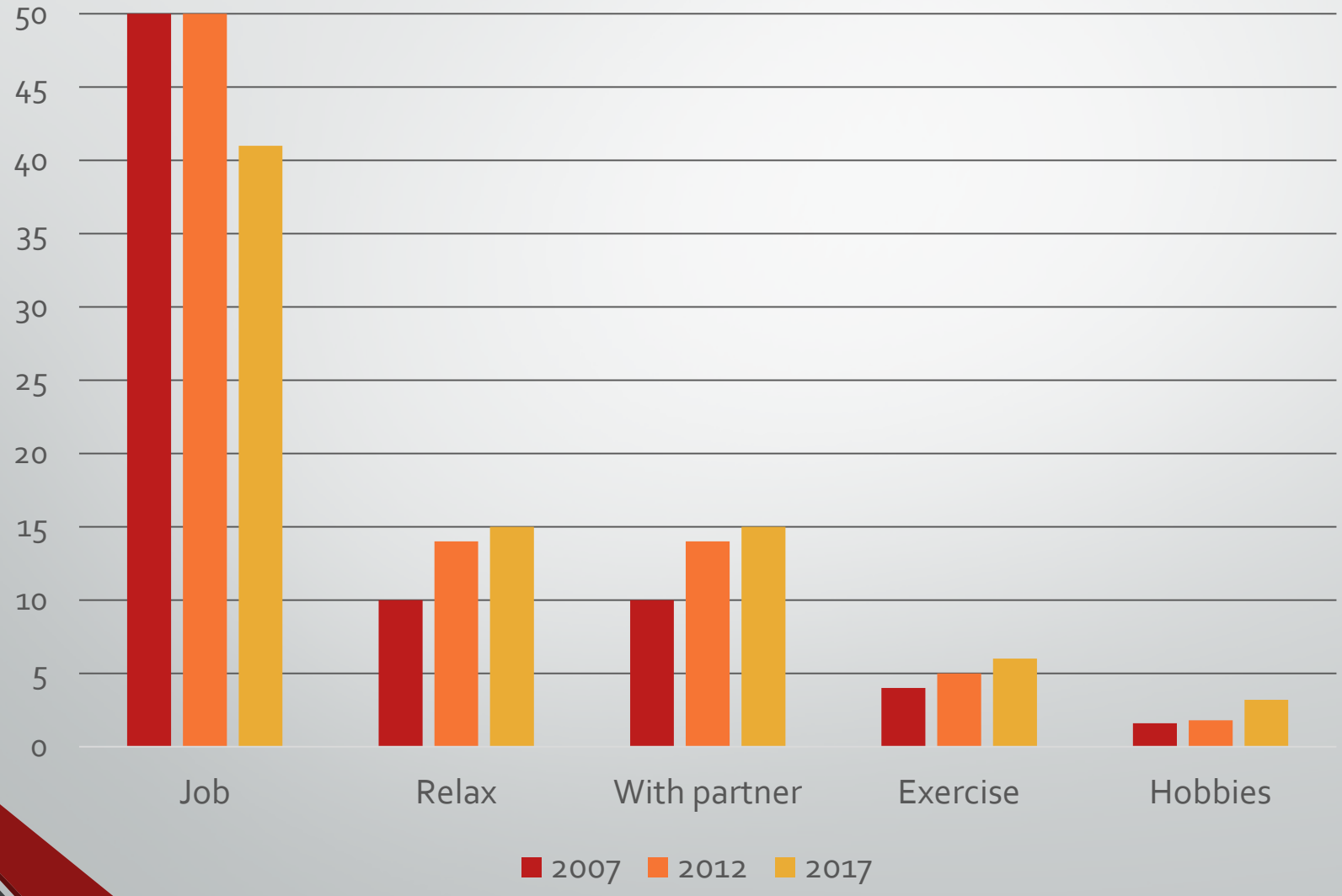
Employed outside the home: Women



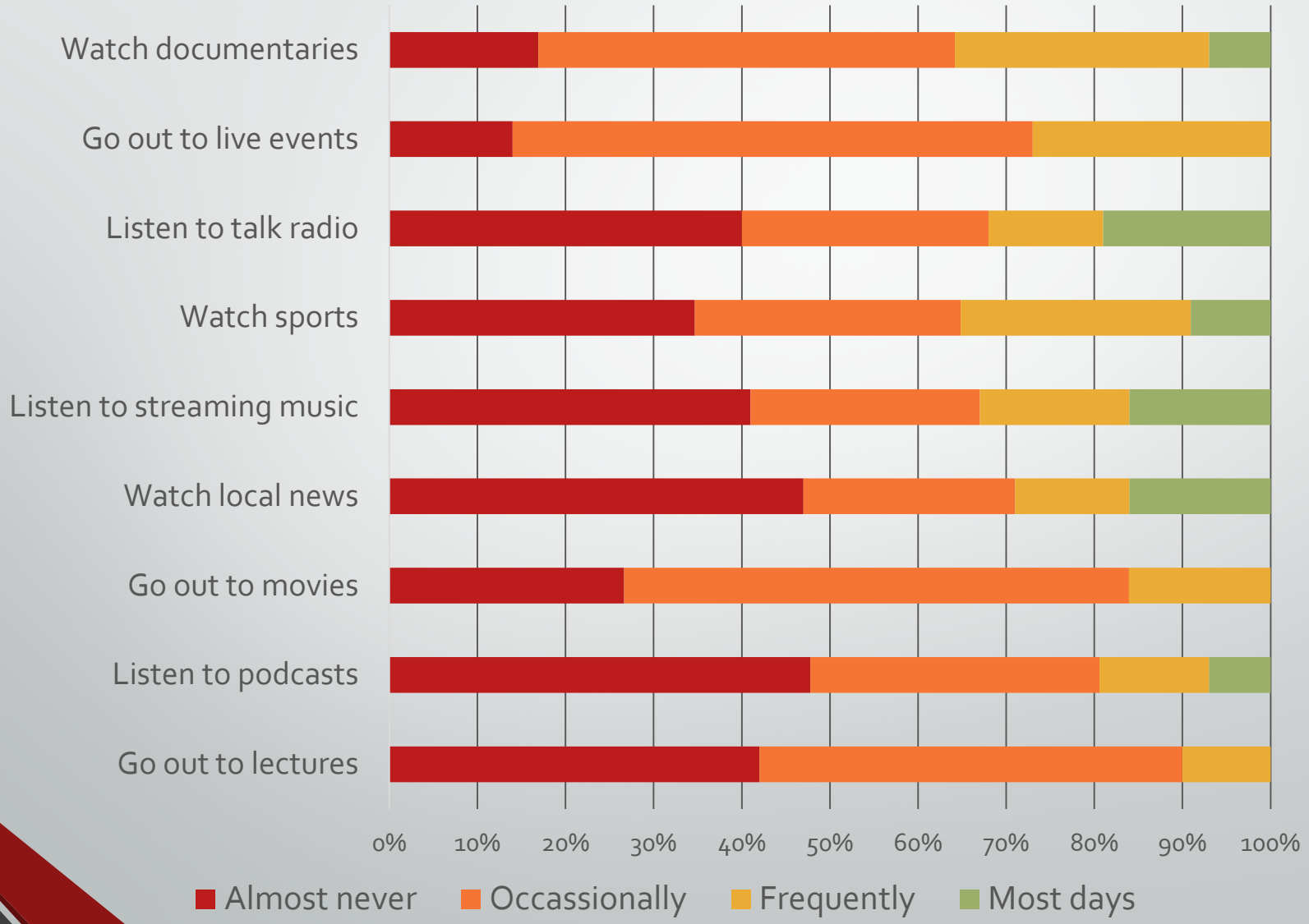
Employed outside the home: Men



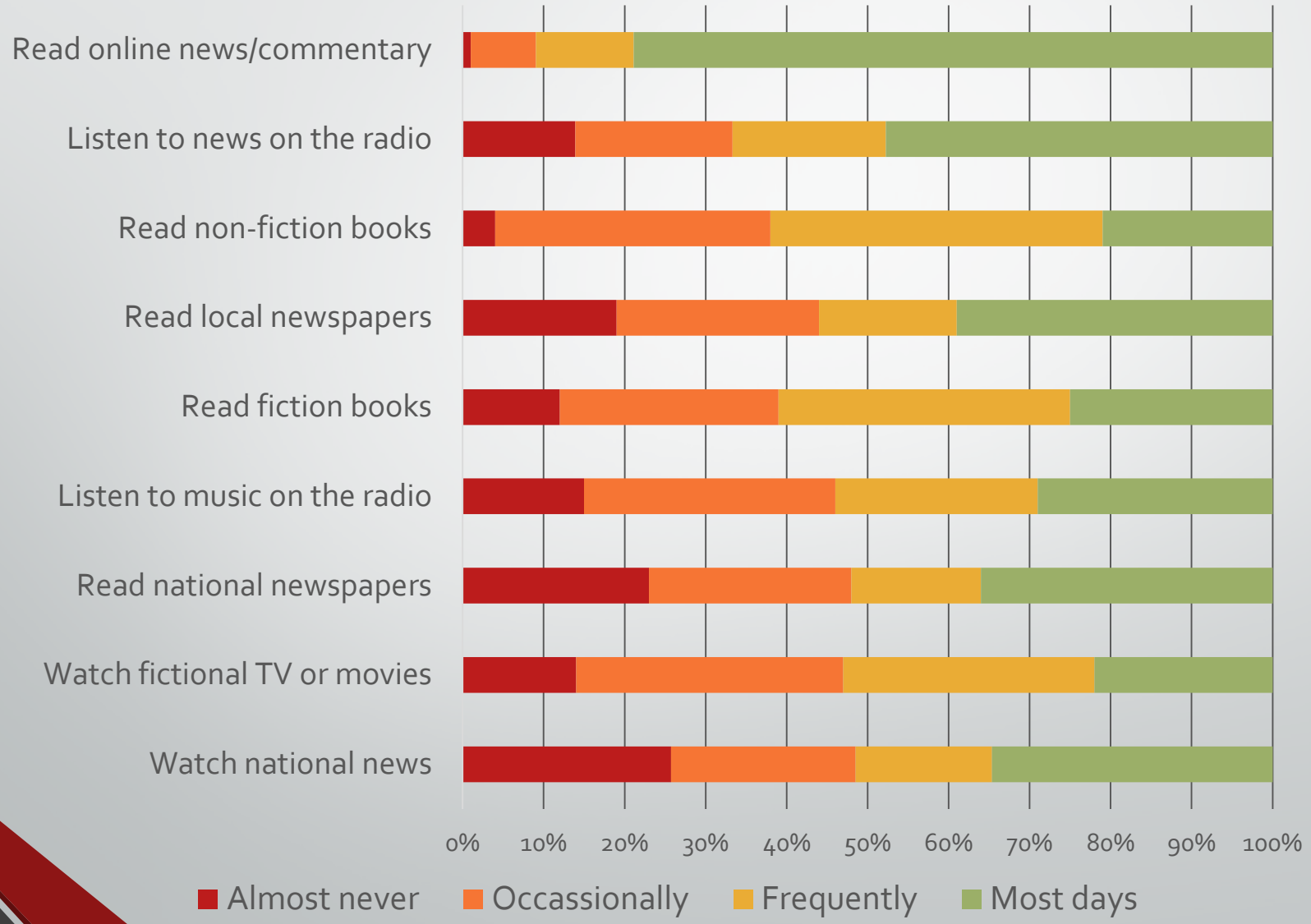
Median hours per week



Media/culture consumption



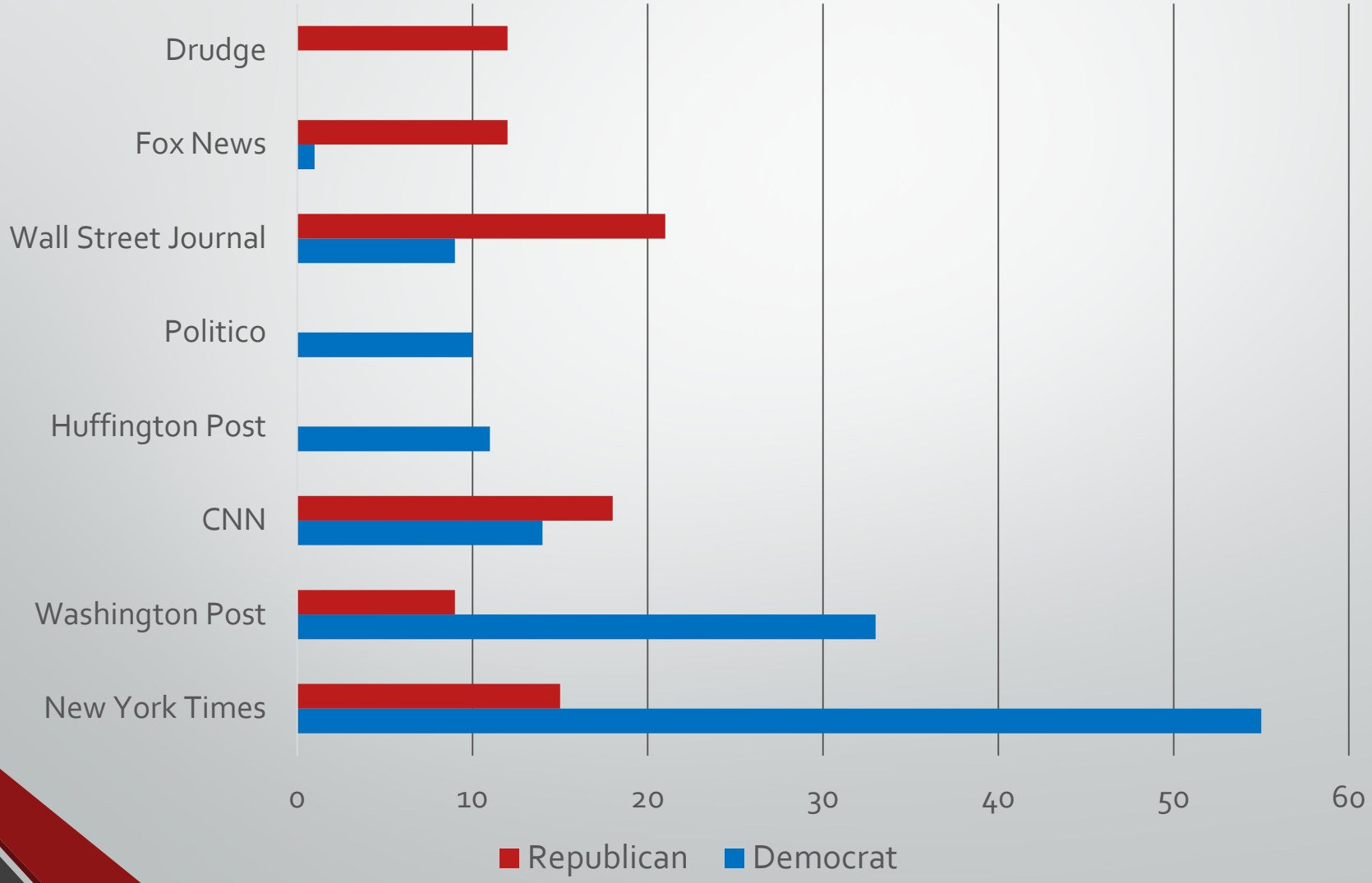
Media/culture consumption



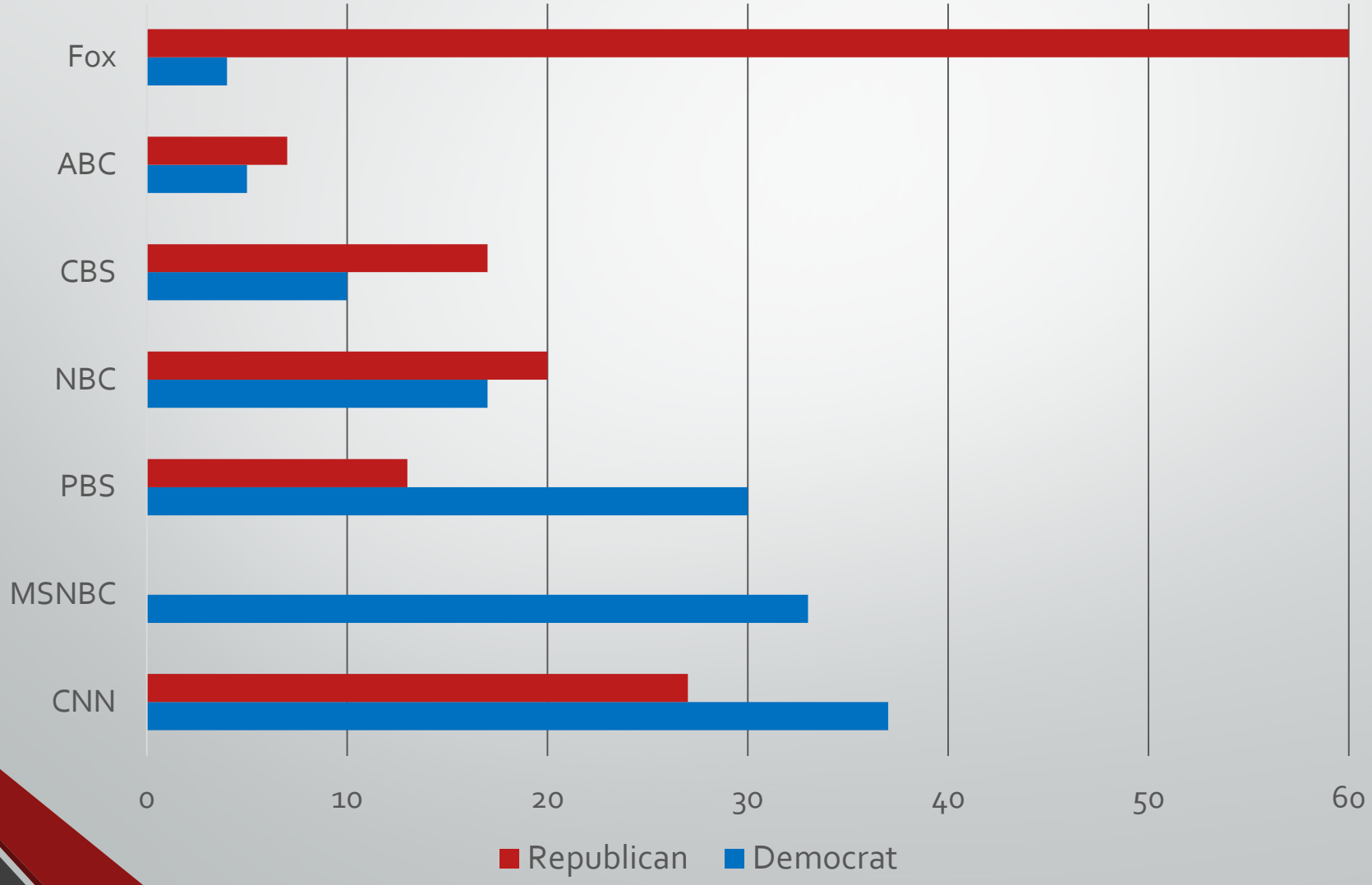
Media/culture consumption

- Some common examples
  - Types of non-fiction books
    - 49% history, 27% biography, 15% science, 8% politics
  - Types of fiction books
    - 18% mystery, 17% historical, 16% sci fi, 9% literary, 6% classics
  - TV shows
    - 11% Game of Thrones
    - 5% House of Cards, Homeland, Law & Order or NCIS, The Americans
  - Live performances
    - 43% theater or plays
    - 24% concerts or music, 23% symphony or orchestra or classical
    - 13% musicals, 10% opera, 8% jazz

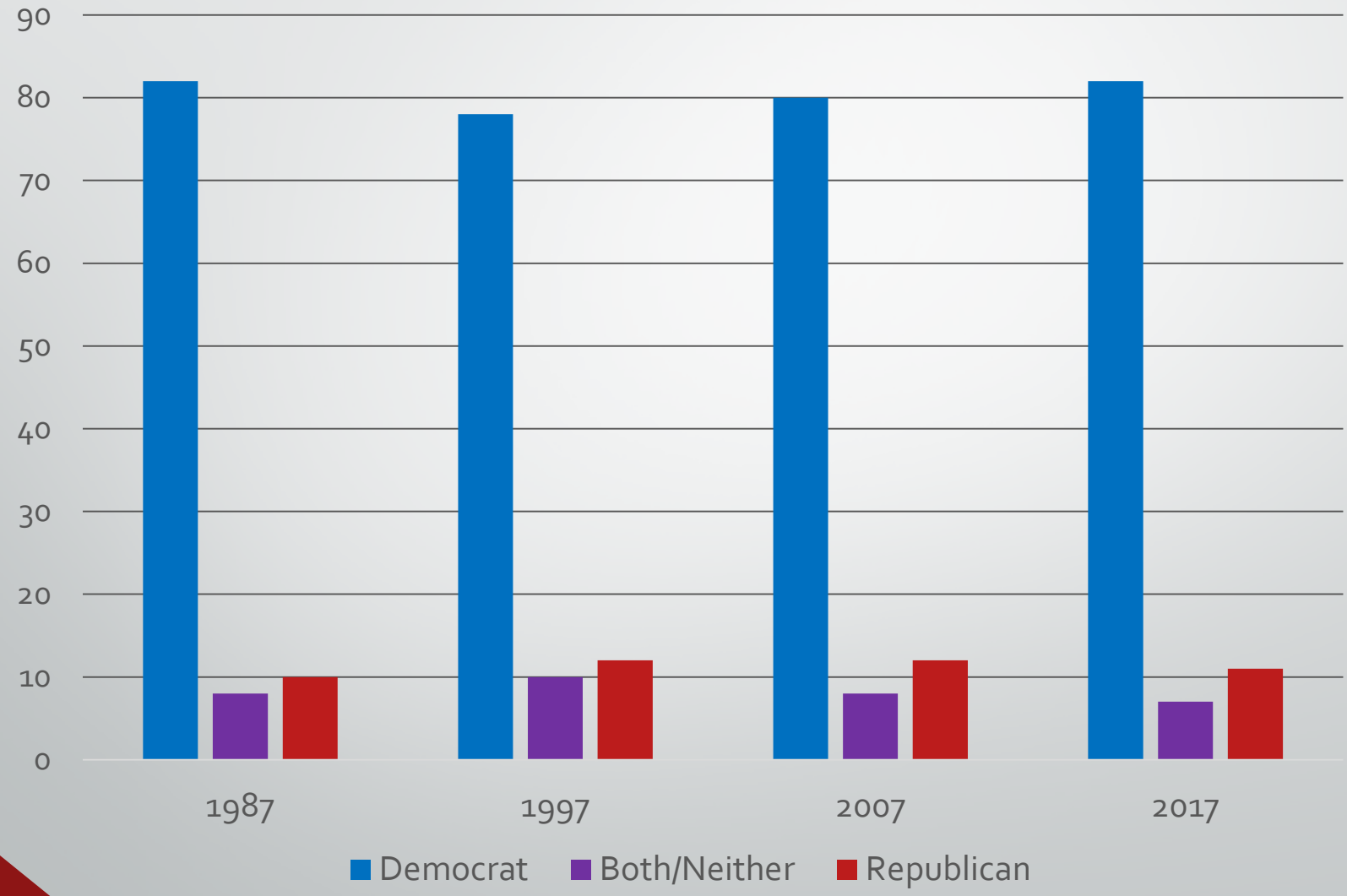
Online news


Drudge
Fox News
Wall Street Journal
Politico
Huffington Post
CNN
Washington Post
New York Times
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
Republican
Democrat

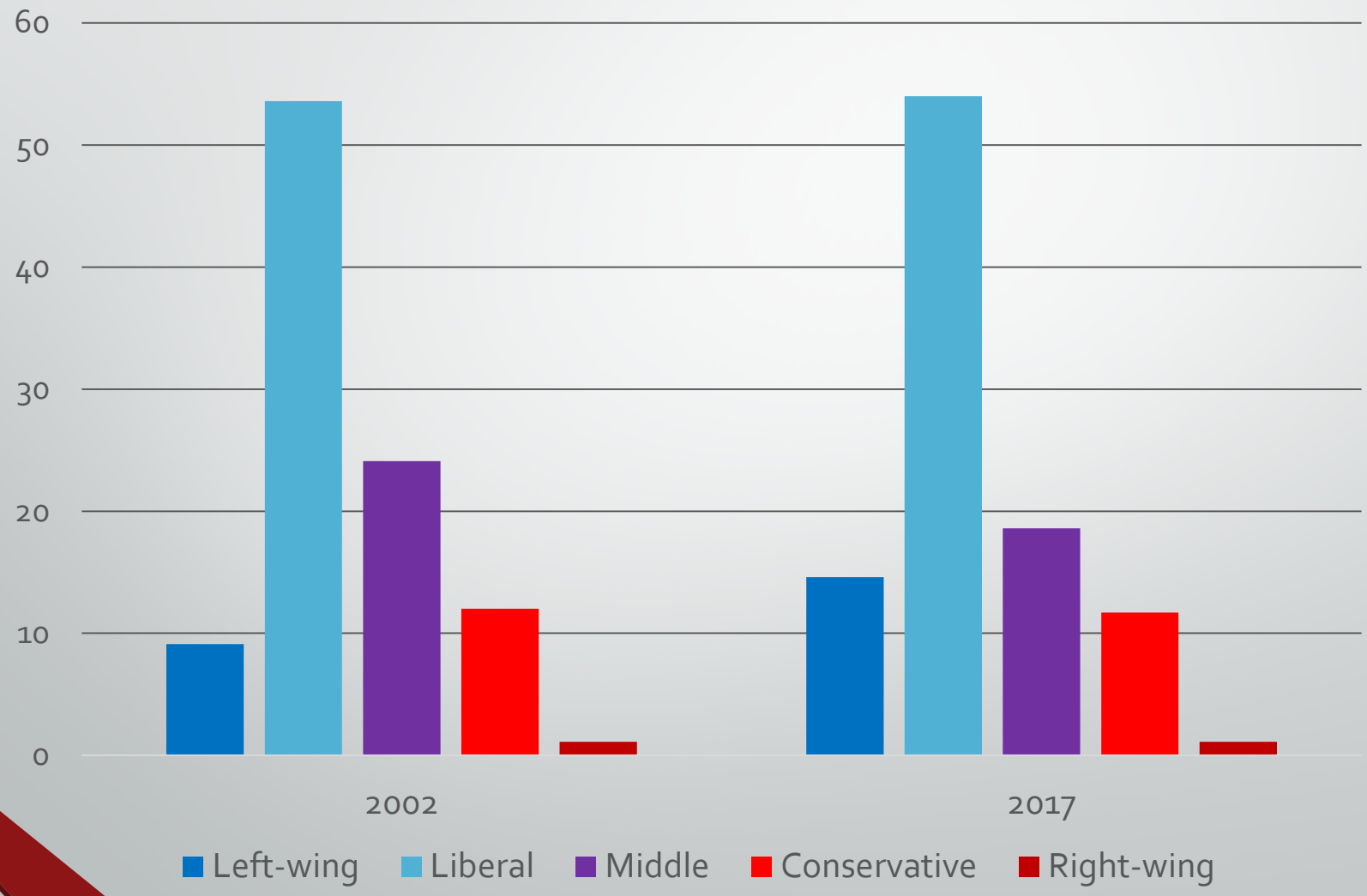
National TV news



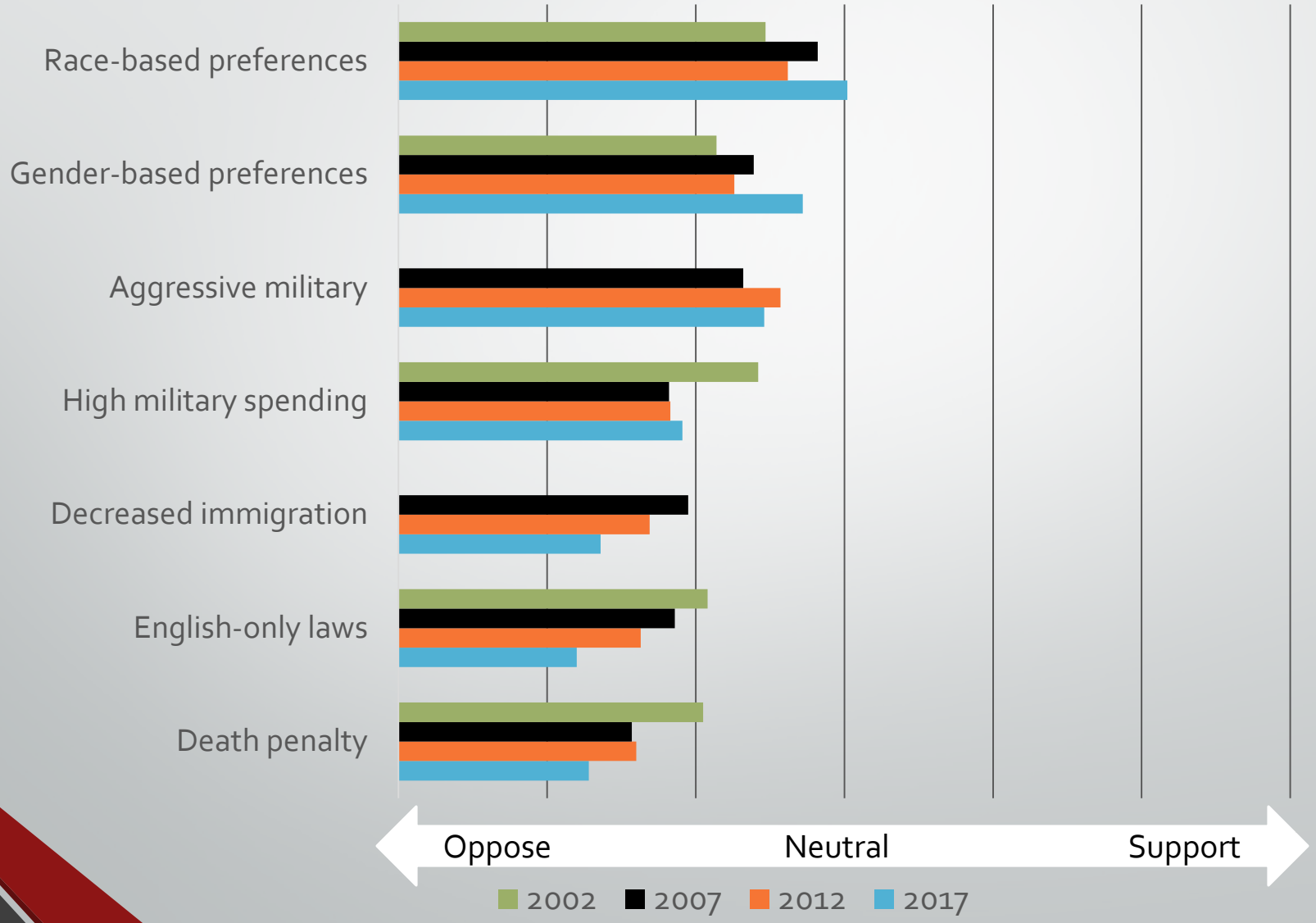
Party voting



Liberal shift in self-placement



Political issues



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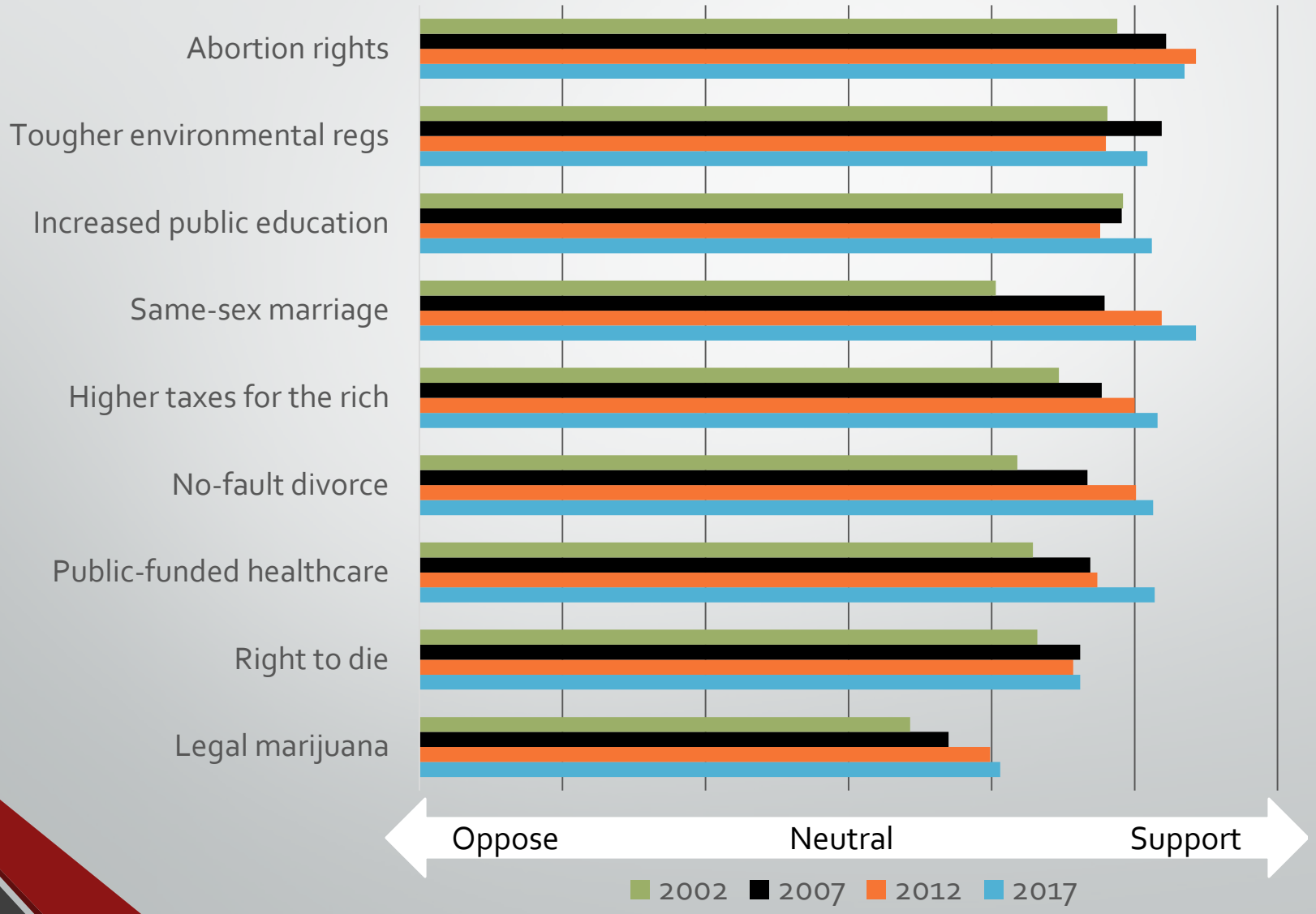
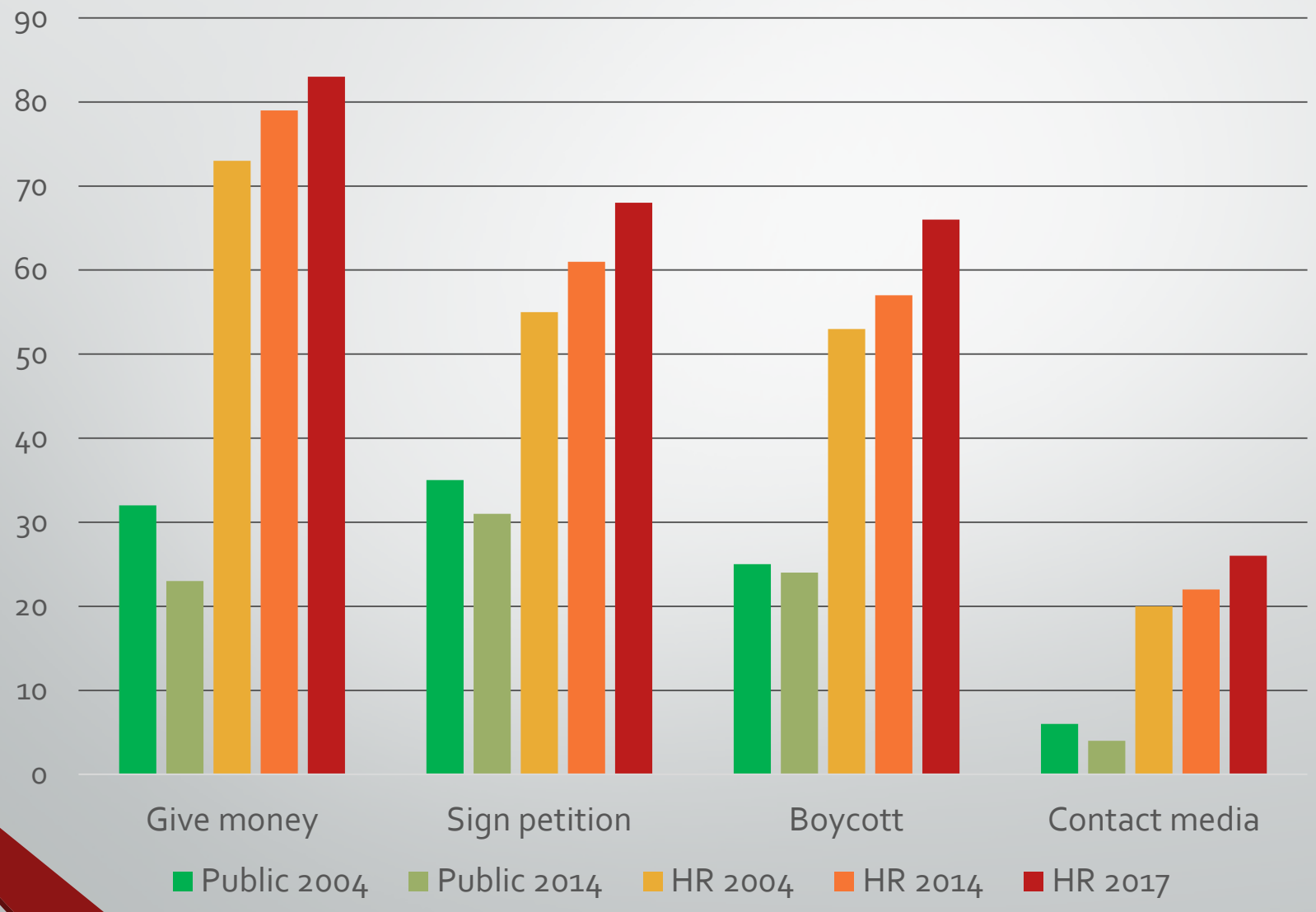


Political activities



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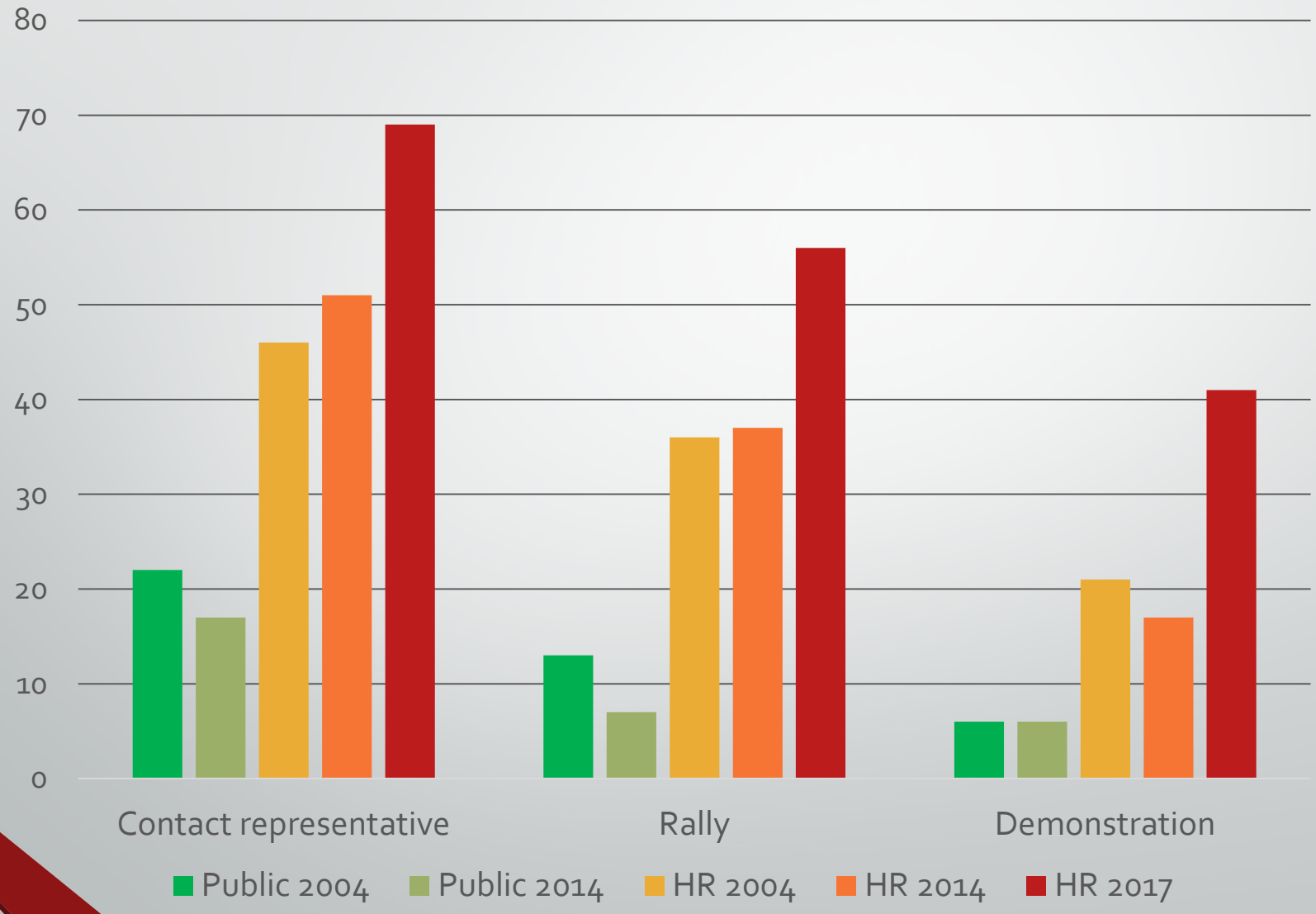


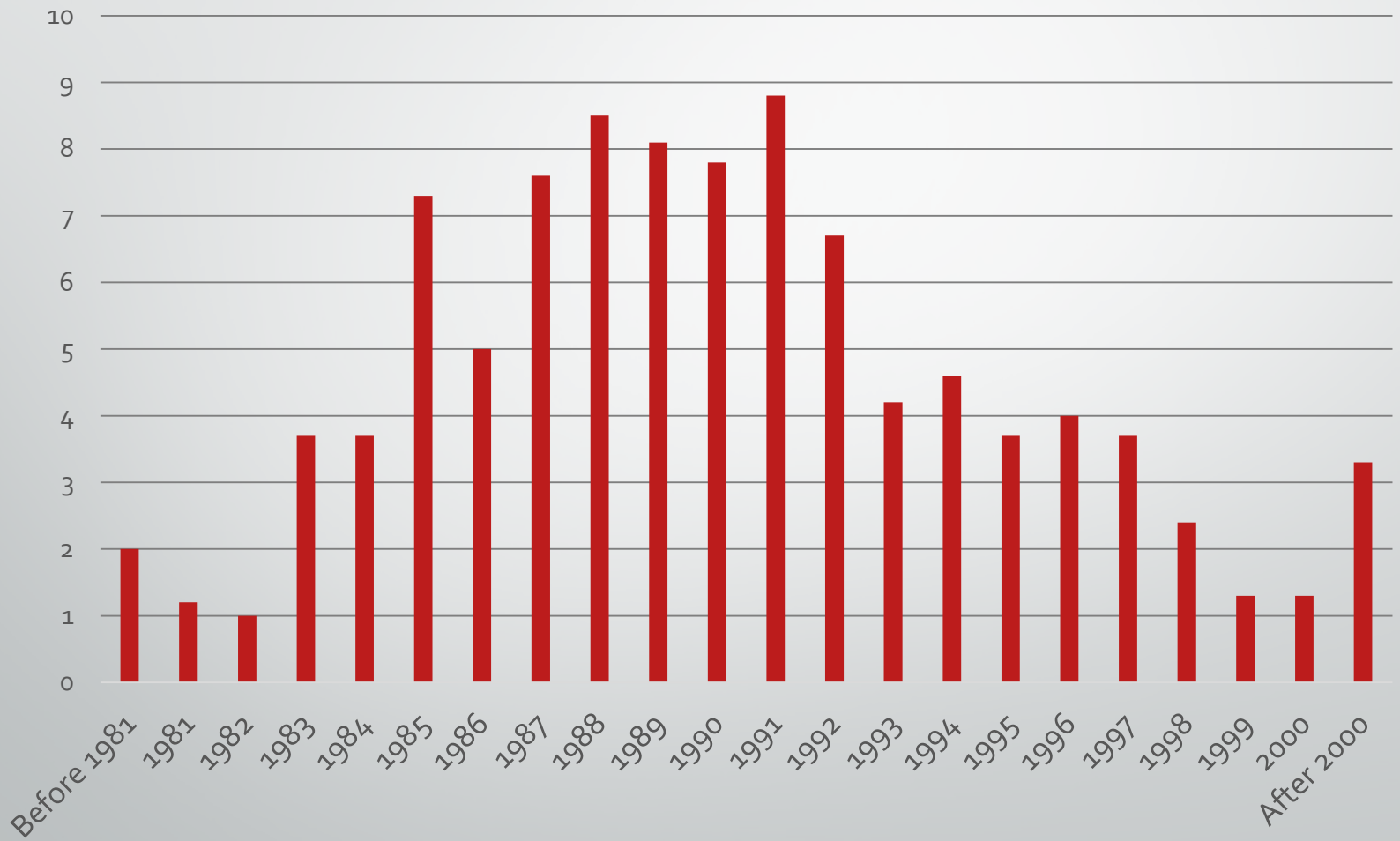
Grandchildren

- Percent with grandchildren
  - 2007: 2%
  - 2012: 6%
  - 2017: 18%
- 2017
  - 17% No kids
  - 65% Kids but no grandkids
  - 18% Kids + grandkids

Grandchildren

- Trust or educational fund for grandchildren?
  - 28% a little; 13% a lot
- Pay current educational expenses?
  - Oldest is 5 or younger
    - 11% a little; 4% a lot
  - Oldest is 6 or older
    - 38% a little; 14% a lot
- Other financial assistance?
  - 21% a little; 5% a lot
- Taken guardianship?
  - None

When your kids were born



Last time:

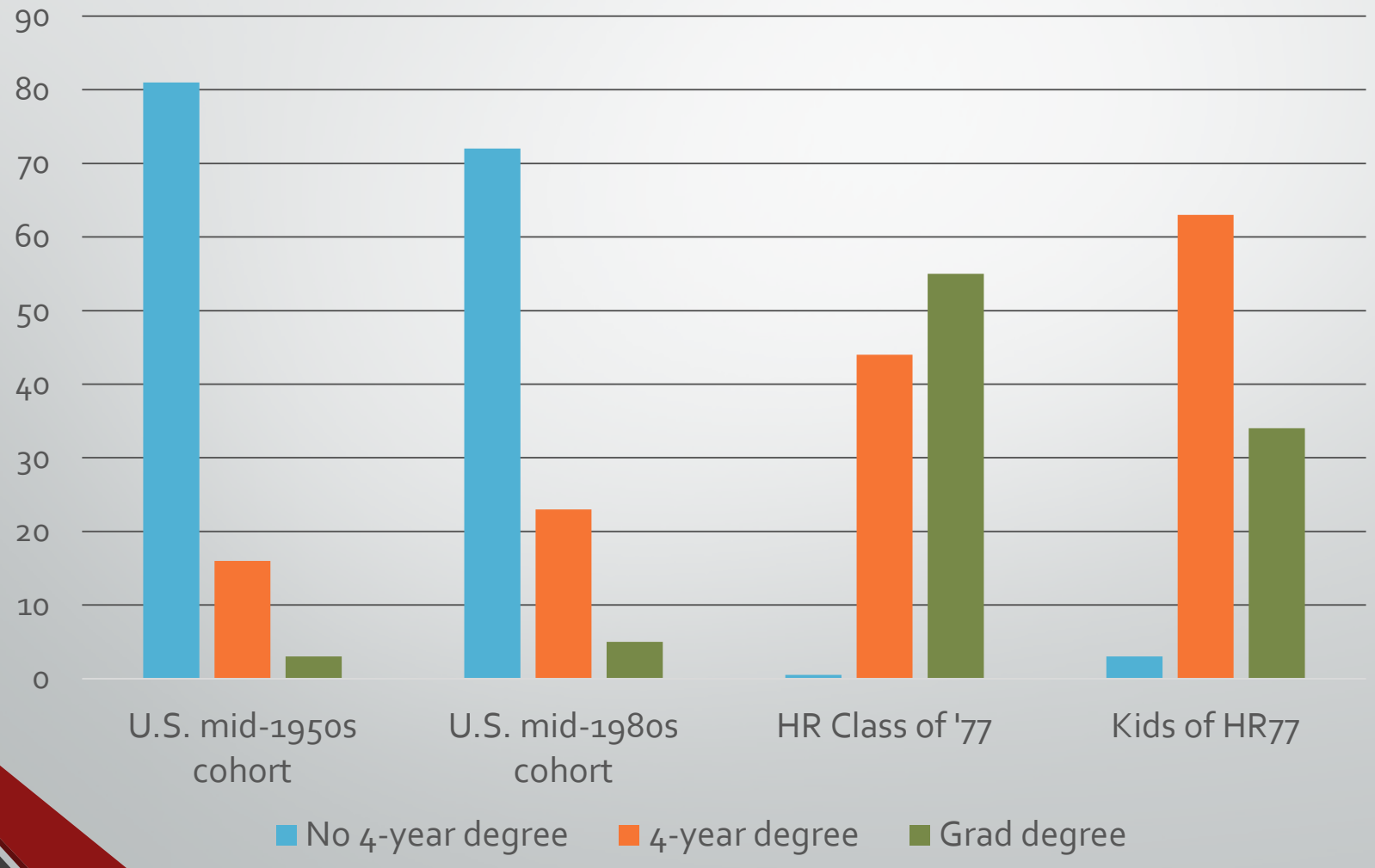
What kinds of factors predict college admittance?

- The Big Four
  - Spouse went to highly ranked school
  - Regular family meals in middle school
  - Academic clubs in high school
  - Standardized test prep
- Median outcomes
  - 0 or 1 factor
    - National universities ranked in 40s and 50s
    - E.g.: U Wisconsin; U Texas; Boston U; U Maryland
  - 2 factors
    - National universities ranked from teens to low 30s
    - E.g.: Cornell; Emory; Boston C; Brandeis
  - 3 or 4 factors
    - National universities ranked in top 20
    - E.g.: U Chicago; U Penn; Duke; Dartmouth

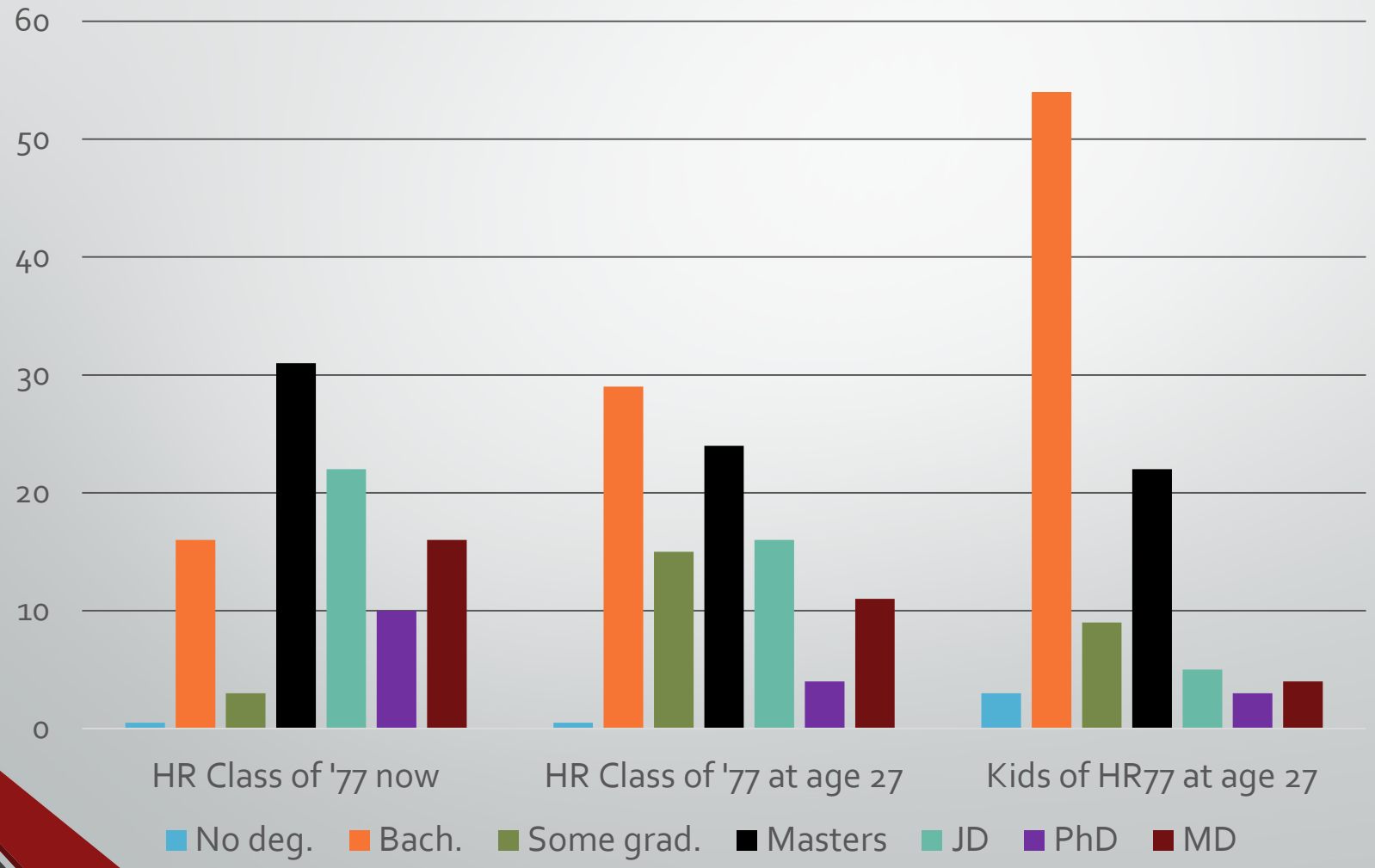
This time:

- How does their transition to adulthood compare to yours?
- How does it compare to their own cohort?
- Question areas
  - Education
  - Marriage
  - Living with parents
  - Financial support from parents
  - Work

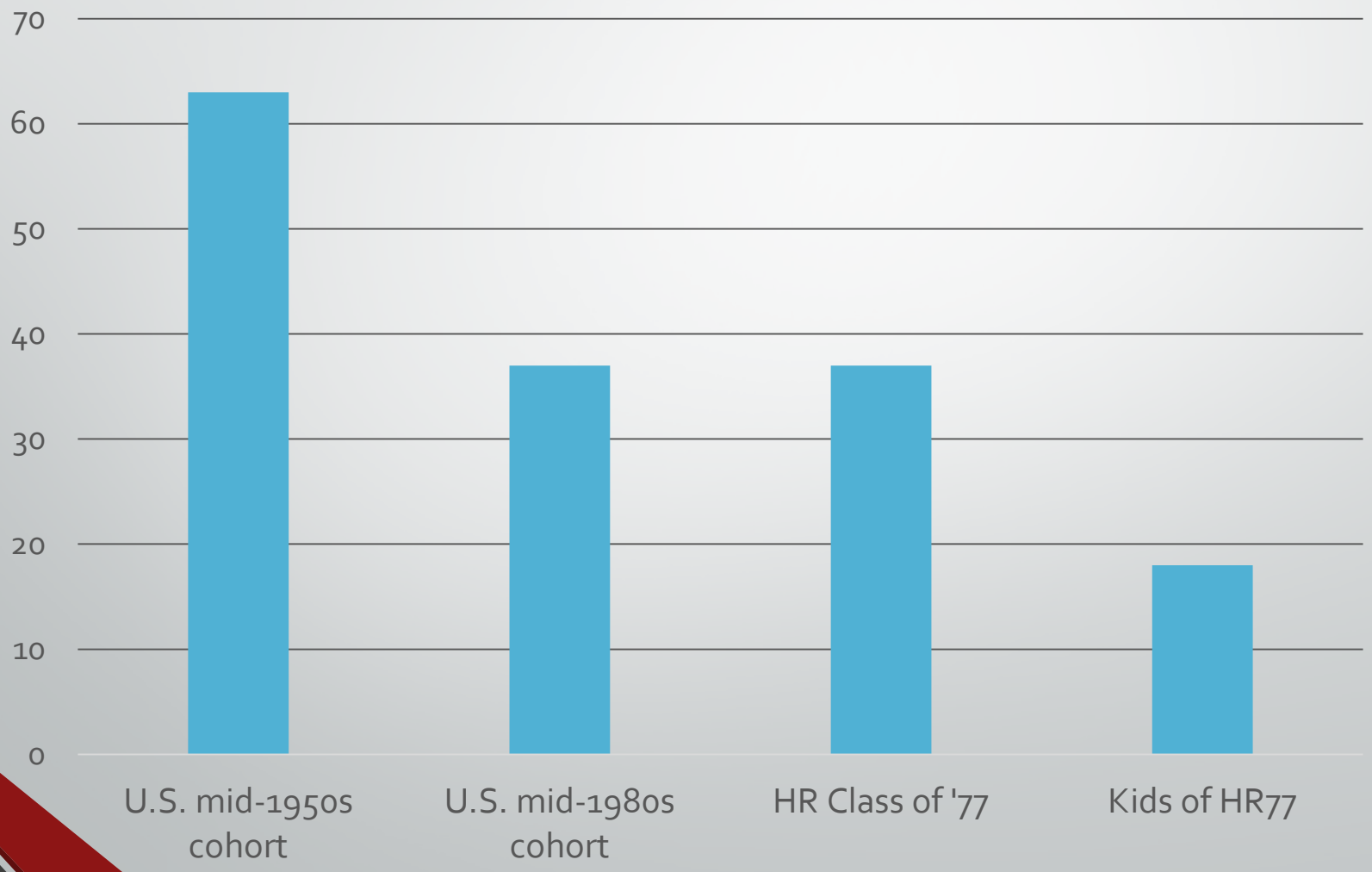
Education level at age 27



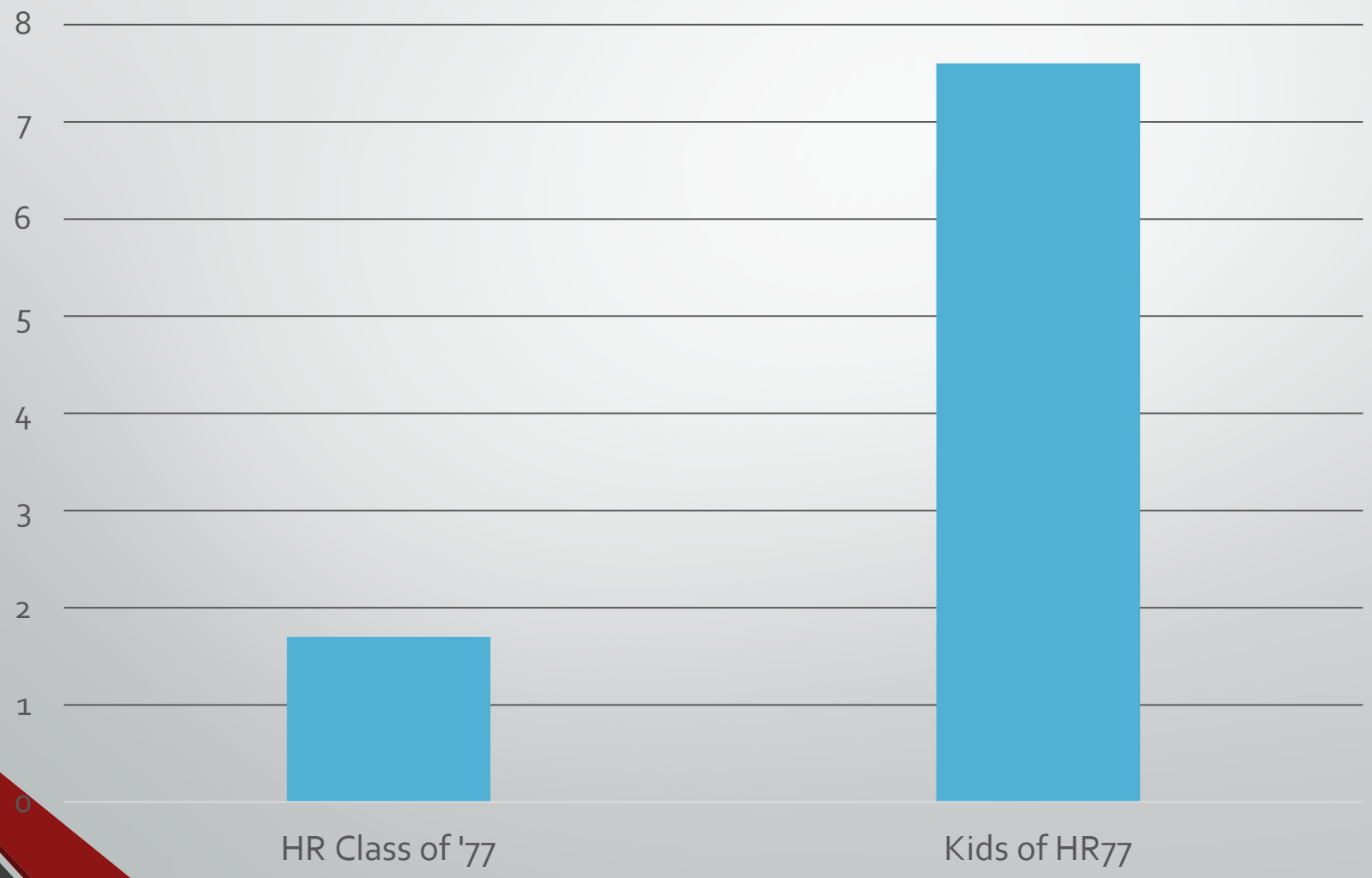
Highest degree



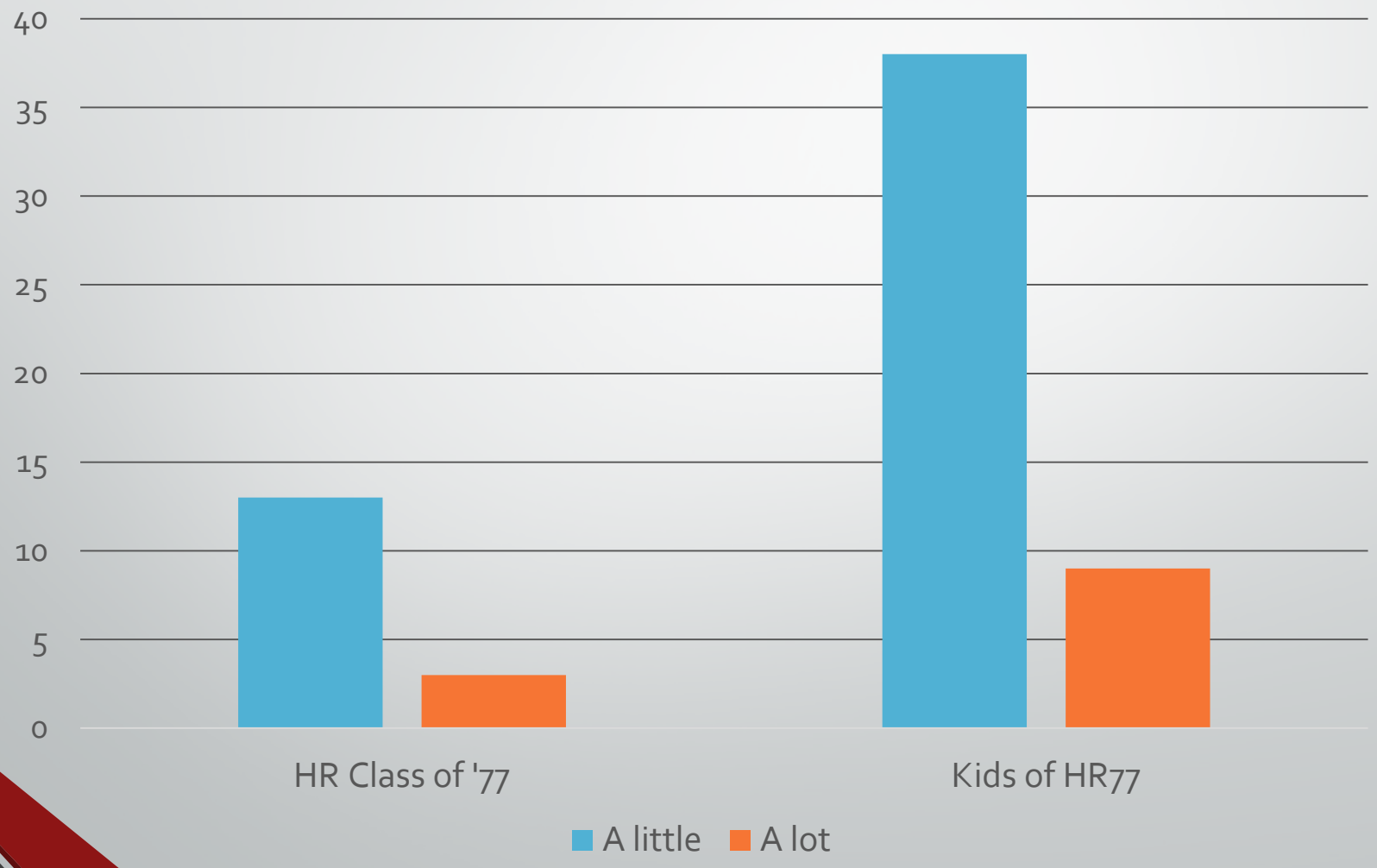
Married at age 27



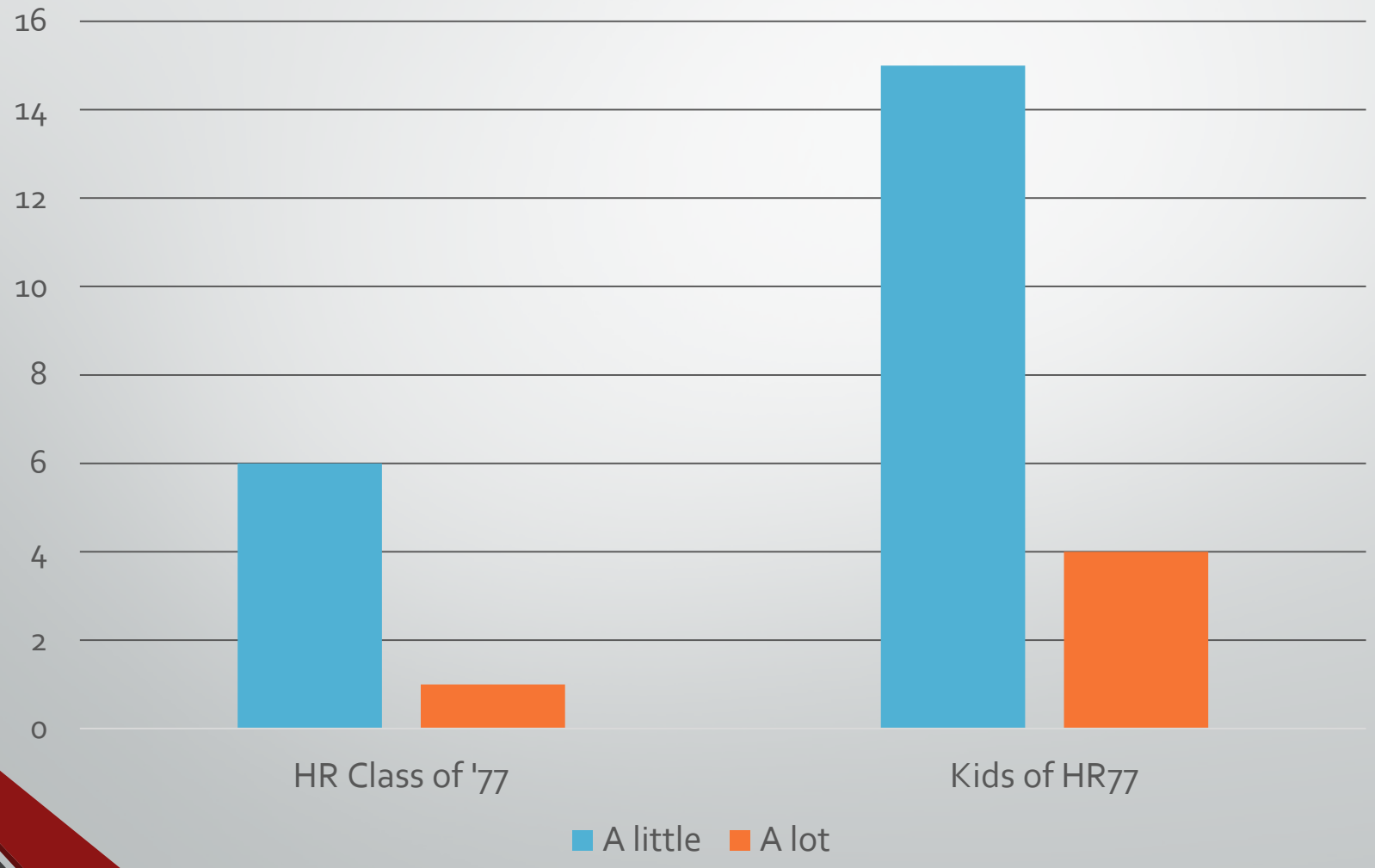
Living with parent(s) at age 27



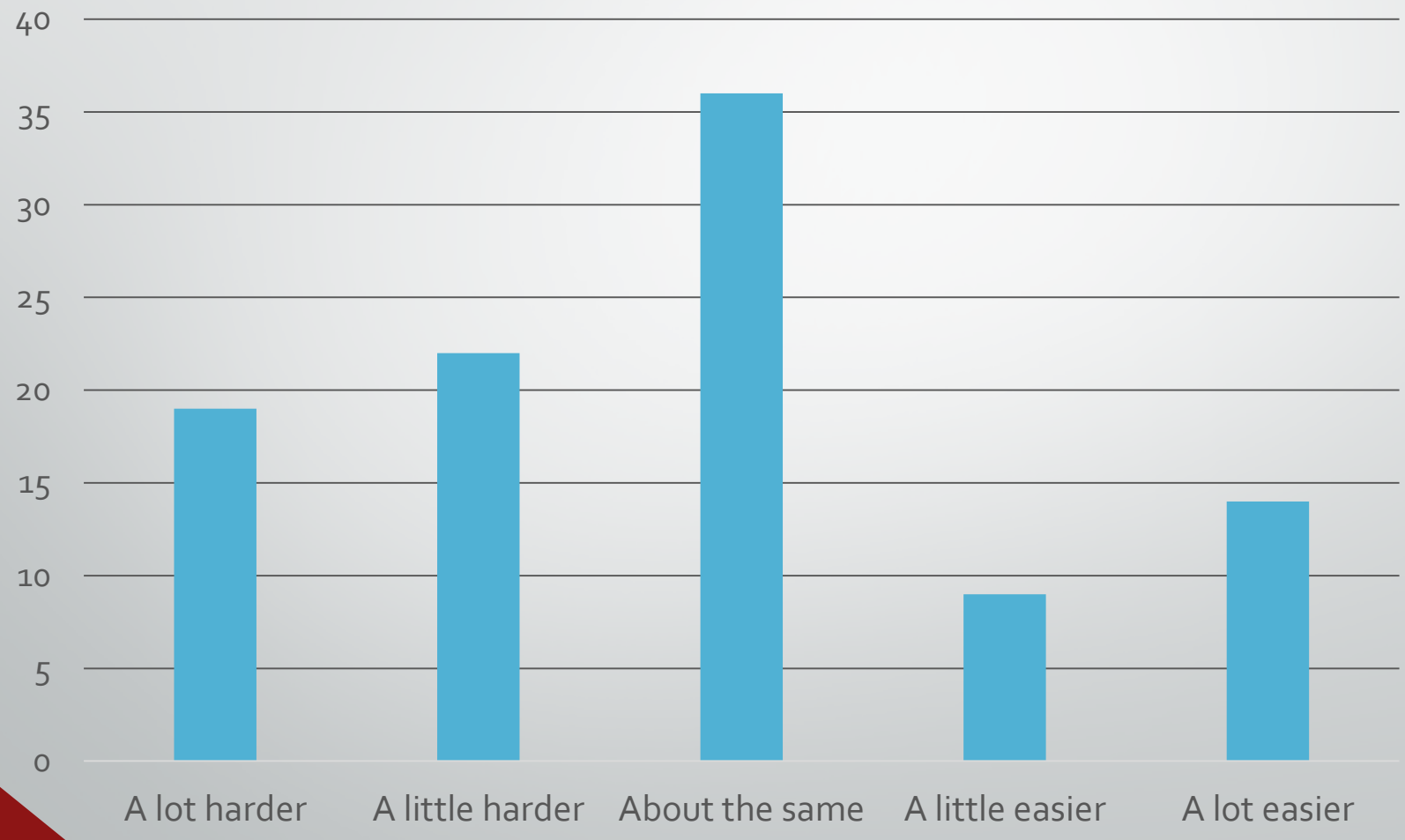
Assistance from parents at age 27



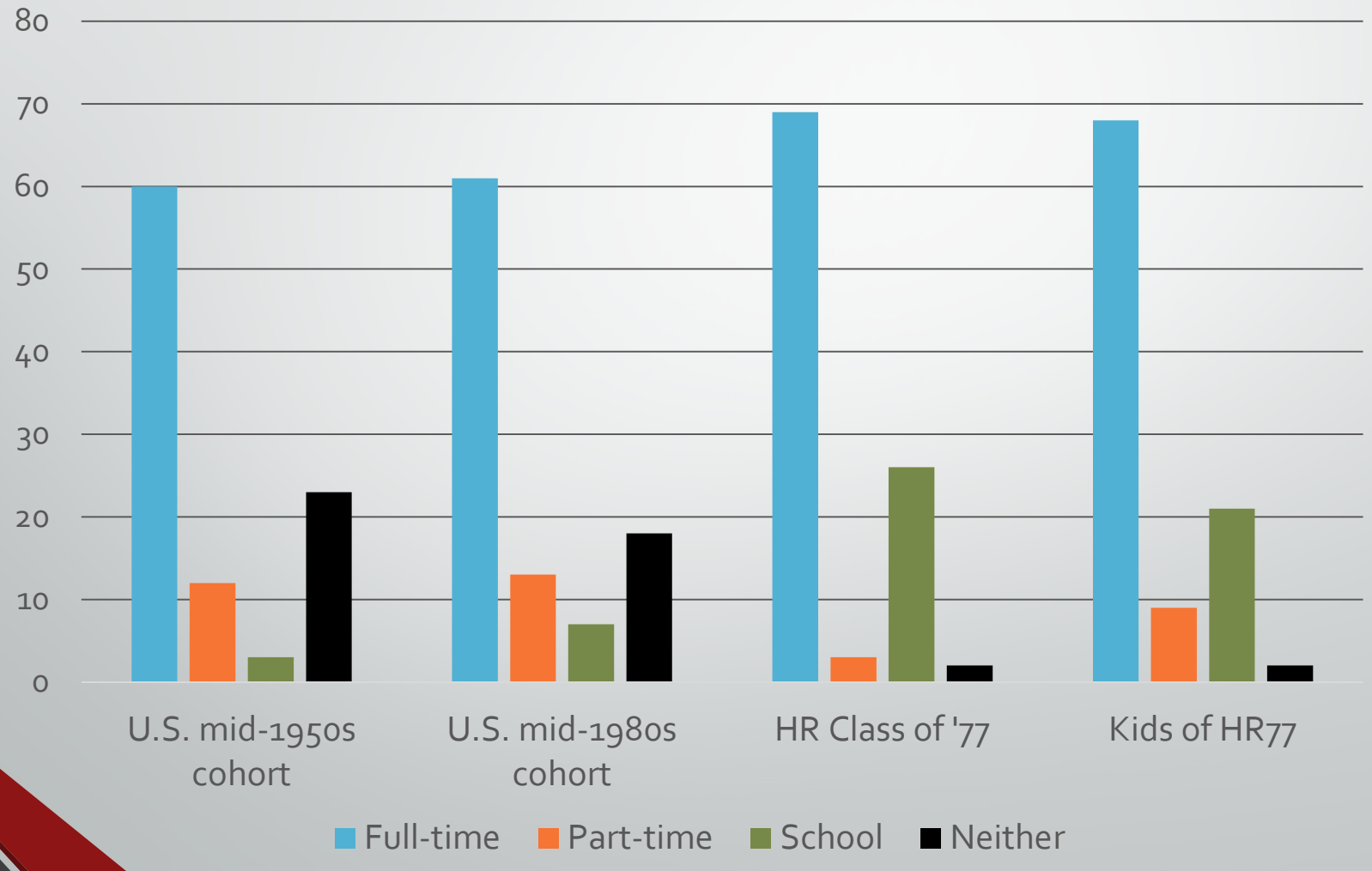
Inheritance or family trust at age 27



Kids' career prospects compared to yours



Work at age 27



The kids are alright?

- The big themes nationally
  - Lengthened educations delay adult markers
    - Work, marriage, children
  - Plus a general decline in marriage
  - Plus some reduction in gender differentiation
  - Plus the Great Recession
- You can pick out themes that look troubling
    - Video-gamer living in mom's basement!
- Or you can pick out themes that look positive
    - Increased education; reduced teen childbearing; etc.
- Your kids, specifically
  - They're mostly among the high-education wing of their generation

The recurring theme

- It's a complex group with lots of stories
- But, on average, education is associated with really positive outcomes
  - Wealth
  - Relationships
  - Health
  - Civic engagement
  - Charity
  - Resources to help parents, children, and grandchildren

Special Thanks

- Our indefatigable leader: Alison Clarkson
- The Longitudinal Study Committee: Michelle Holmes, Bethamie Horowitz, Michael Payne, Sandy Steingard, and Debra Vilinsky
- Support from: Will Gravenslund's family and estate