

**THE
TEN
TODAY**

ADULTERY

IN THE DIGITAL AGE IN THE U.S.

A nationally-representative study of Americans' views and behavior on relationships and cheating, including an oversample of Mormon Americans.

RESEARCH COMMISSIONED BY



Deseret News

METHODOLOGY

n = 1000 U.S. interviews via the YouGov nationally representative panel with a questionnaire designed by Y² Analytics in consultation with the Deseret News.

An additional n = 250 interviews for Mormon respondents to allow for comparisons between Mormons and the rest of the US population.

Complete question wording and responses can be found in the topline report.

The general population margin of error is an estimated +- 3.1 percentage points, while the margin of error of the oversamples is +- 5.9 percentage points. Subgroup margins of error are larger.



- 1 Large majorities of Americans believe that behaviors involving physical sexual contact with someone else, such as [one-night stands or romantic kissing, always count as cheating](#). However, there is [more disagreement as to what is acceptable for many behaviors involving the internet](#), including following an ex on social media.
- 2 Religious Americans are more likely to consider actions such as [going to a strip club or viewing pornography without your partner](#) to be cheating.
- 3 Mormons consistently [take a stricter view than any other religious group](#) as to what constitutes cheating.
- 4 Over the past year, [Republicans have become much more accepting of affairs among presidential candidates](#), and Democrats much less so. This is likely due to partisan associations with Republican President Donald Trump.
- 5 Younger couples are the [most likely to have sex on a regular basis](#), but a majority of couples of all ages consistently do small acts of kindness for one another.

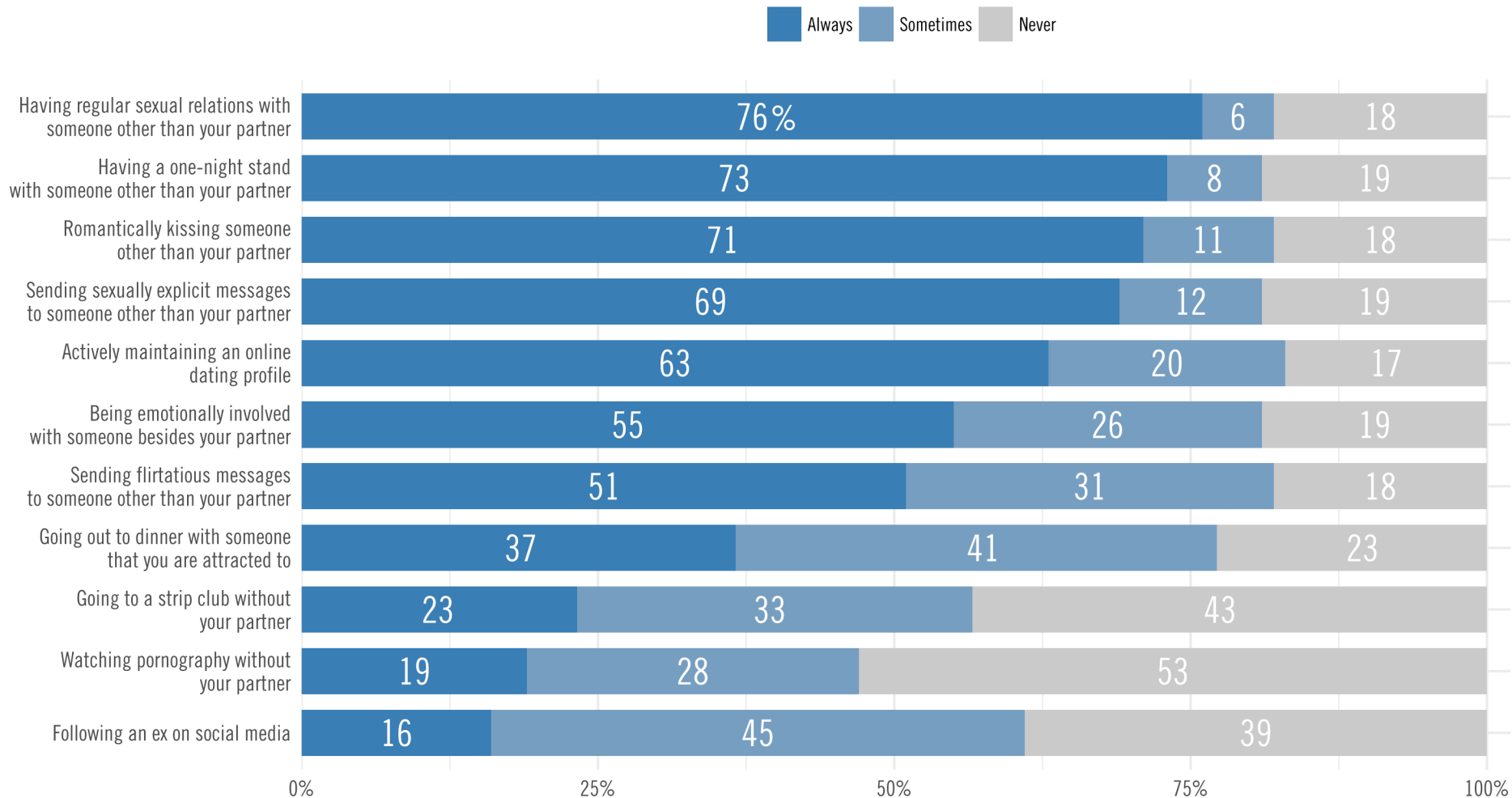
FINDINGS TO REMEMBER

DIGITAL CHEATING

NATIONAL ATTITUDES ON ADULTERY

Three-quarters of Americans believe that having regular sexual relations with someone other than your partner is always cheating. Following an ex on social media is considered always cheating by only 16% of Americans.

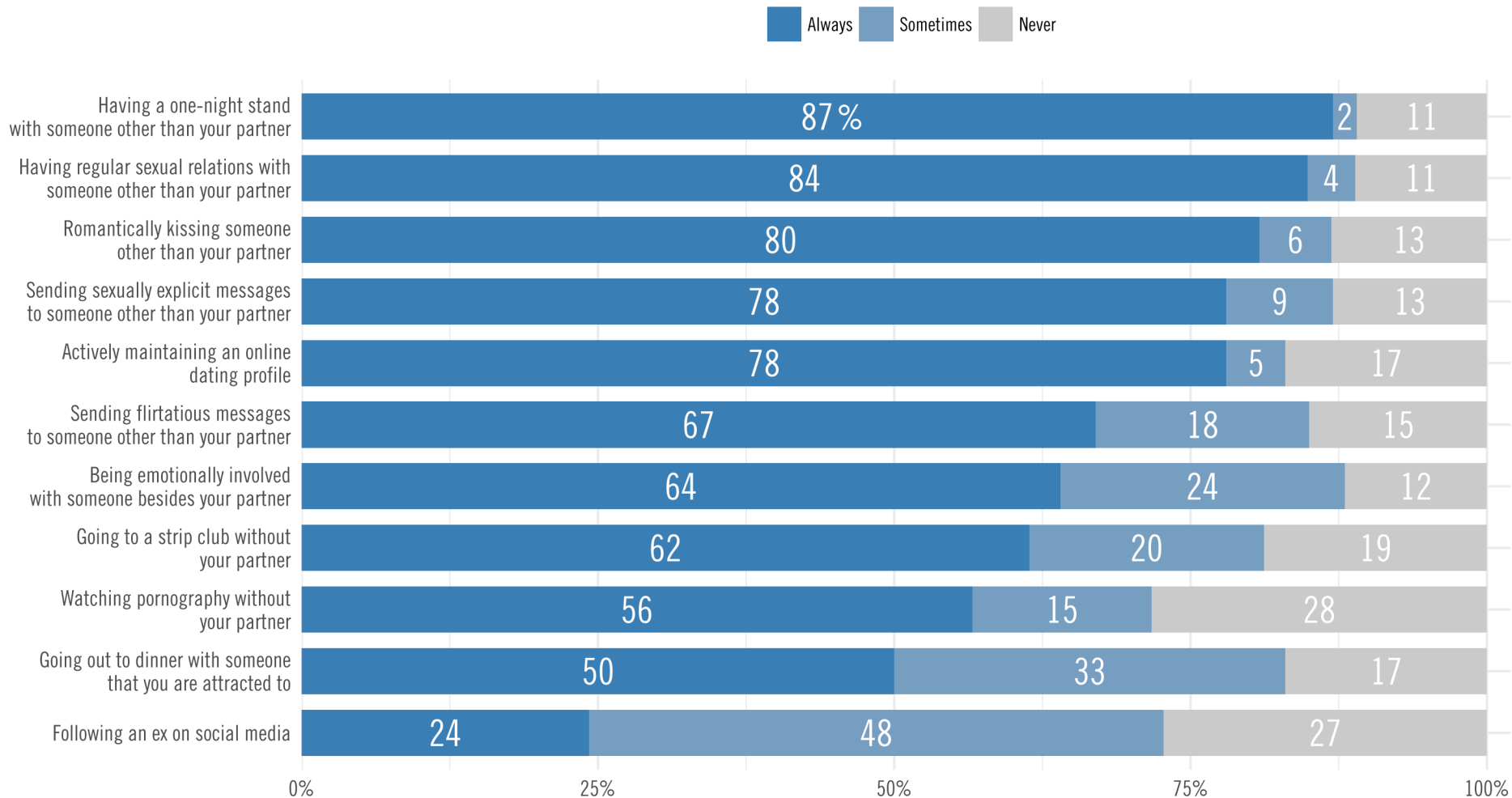
Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?



ATTITUDES AMONG MORMONS

For all of the behaviors asked about, Mormons are more likely to claim that they would be cheating. Their views differ the most from the overall population when it comes to visiting strip clubs and watching pornography.

Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?

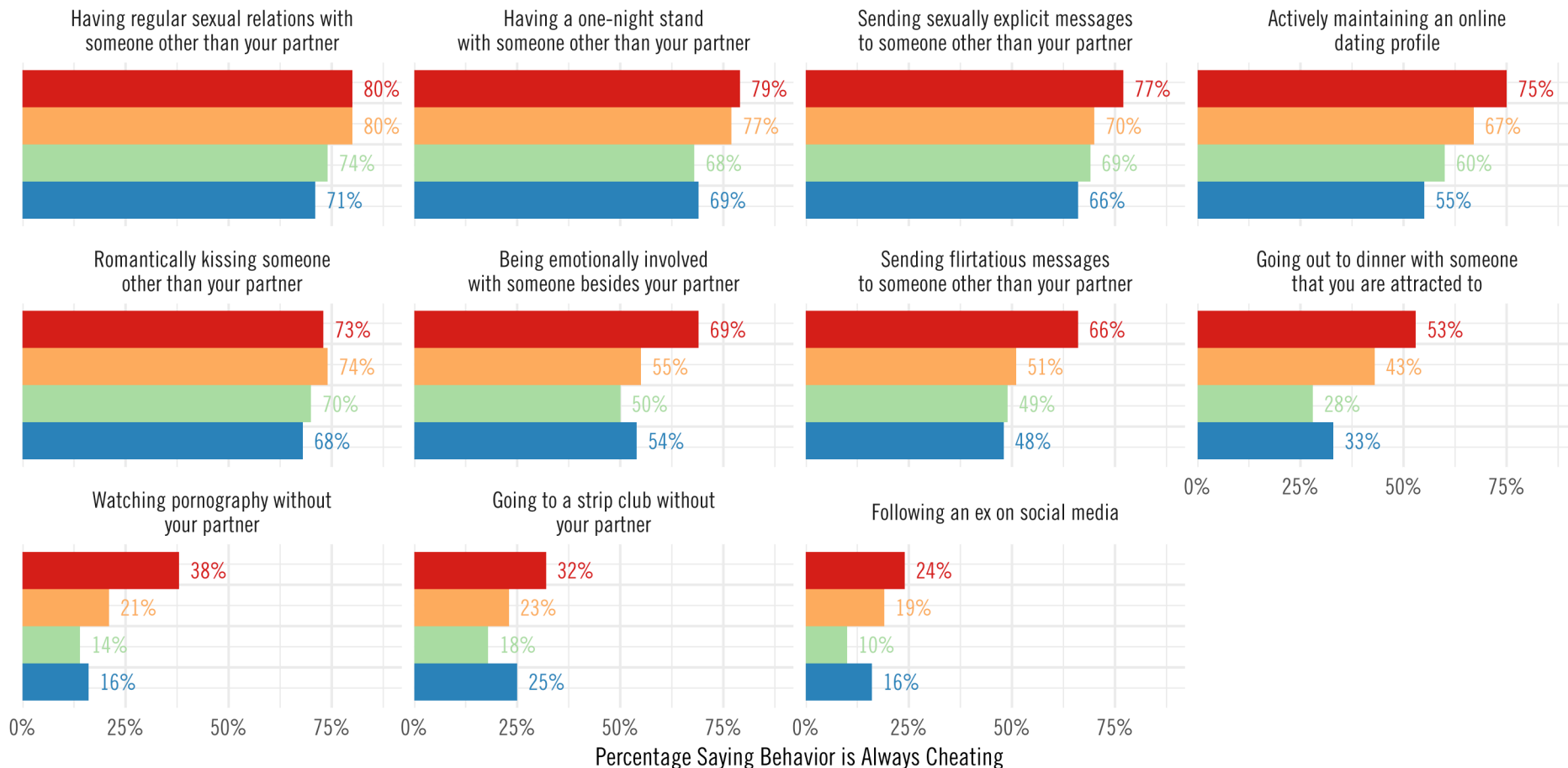


ATTITUDES BY GENERATION

Contrary to popular belief, Millennials are not universally more permissive than prior generations. They are generally more accepting of maintaining online dating profiles, but they have stricter views than Generation X on going out to dinner with someone you are attracted to, going to strip clubs, and following exes on social media.

Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?

■ Silent Generation ■ Baby Boomers ■ Generation X ■ Millennials



ATTITUDES BY GENERATION – MORMONS

Mormon Millennials differ significantly from older generations on certain issues. They are the most conservative generation when it comes to one-night stands, going to strip clubs, and watching pornography. However they are vastly less likely to take issue with following an ex on social media.

Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?

■ Silent Generation ■ Baby Boomers ■ Generation X ■ Millennials

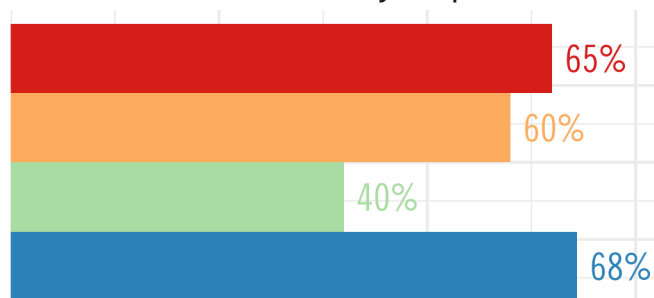
Having a one-night stand with someone other than your partner



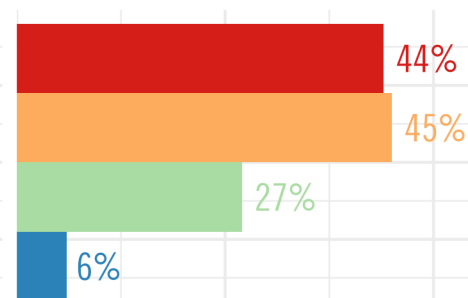
Going to a strip club without your partner



Watching pornography without your partner



Following an ex on social media



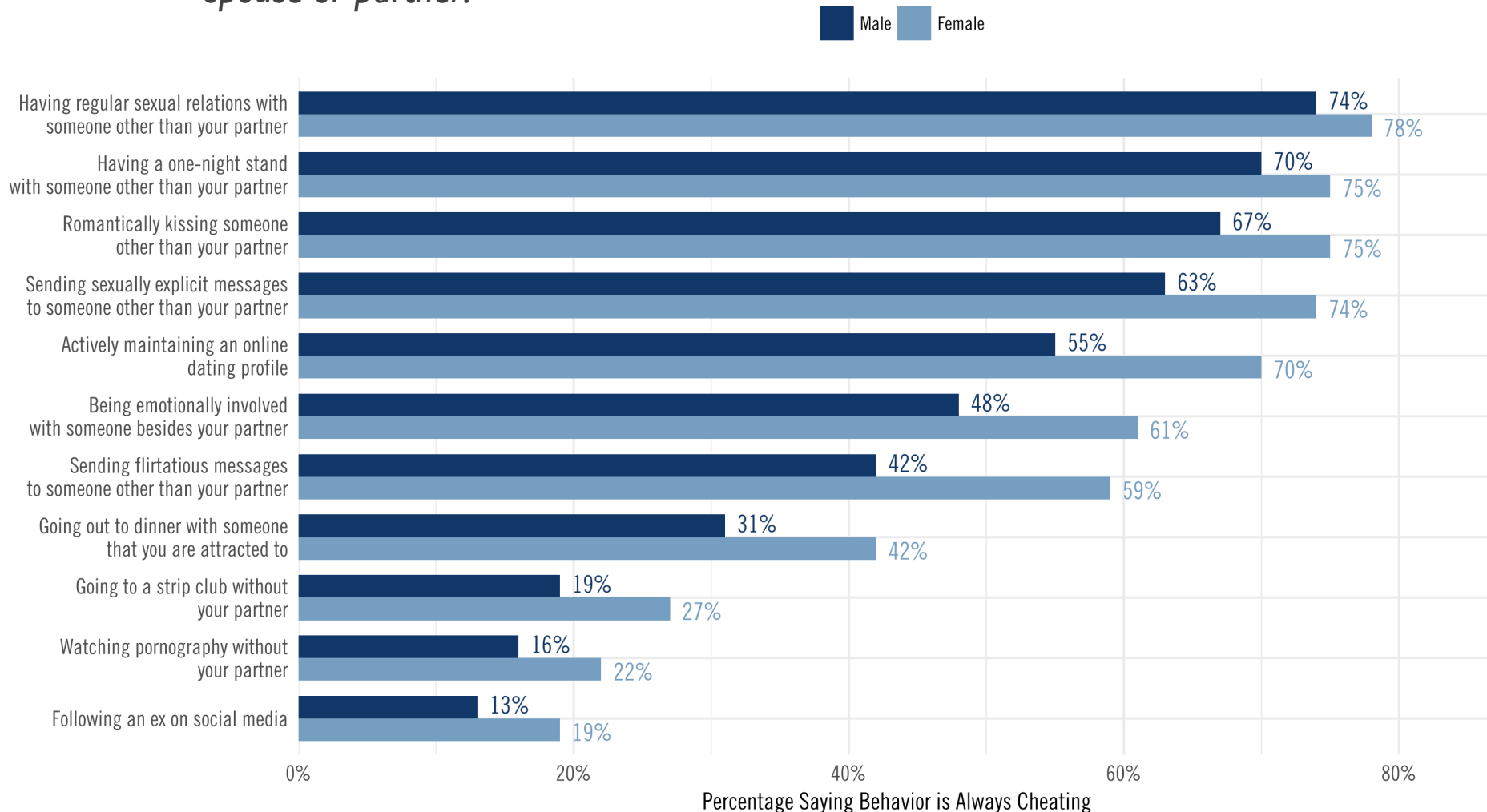
0% 25% 50% 75% 100% 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Percentage Saying Behavior is Always Cheating

ATTITUDES BY GENDER

For all of the behaviors asked about, women were more likely than men to say that they always constitute cheating. The largest gap between the sexes exists for sending flirtatious texts, actively maintaining an online dating profile, and being emotionally involved with someone else.

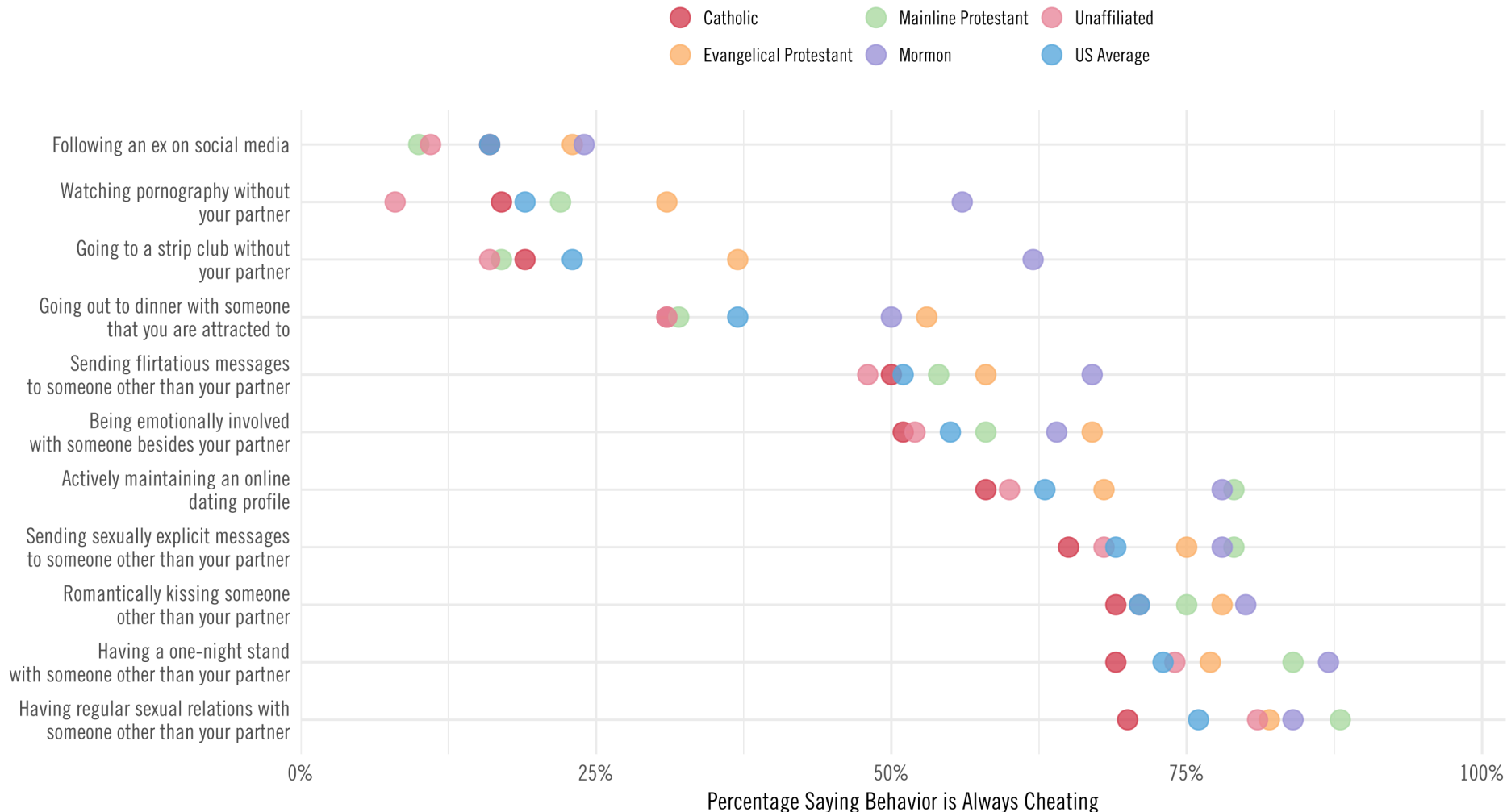
Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?



ATTITUDES BY RELIGION

Views on the acceptability of different behaviors vary significantly by religious tradition.

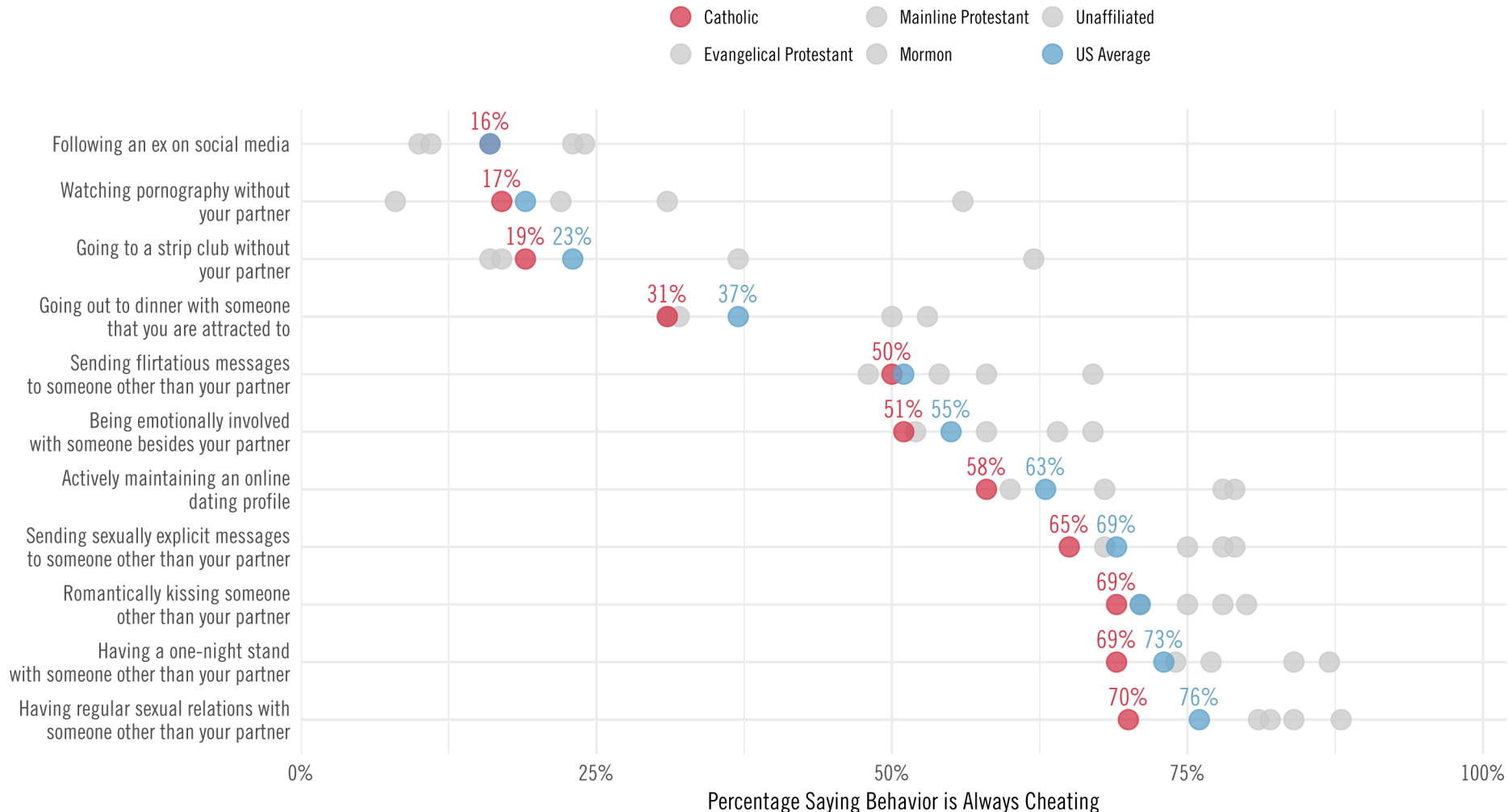
Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?



ATTITUDES BY RELIGION – CATHOLICS

Catholics are slightly more permissive than the national average on most issues, especially in regards to regular sexual relations outside of marriage and going out to dinner with someone you are attracted to.

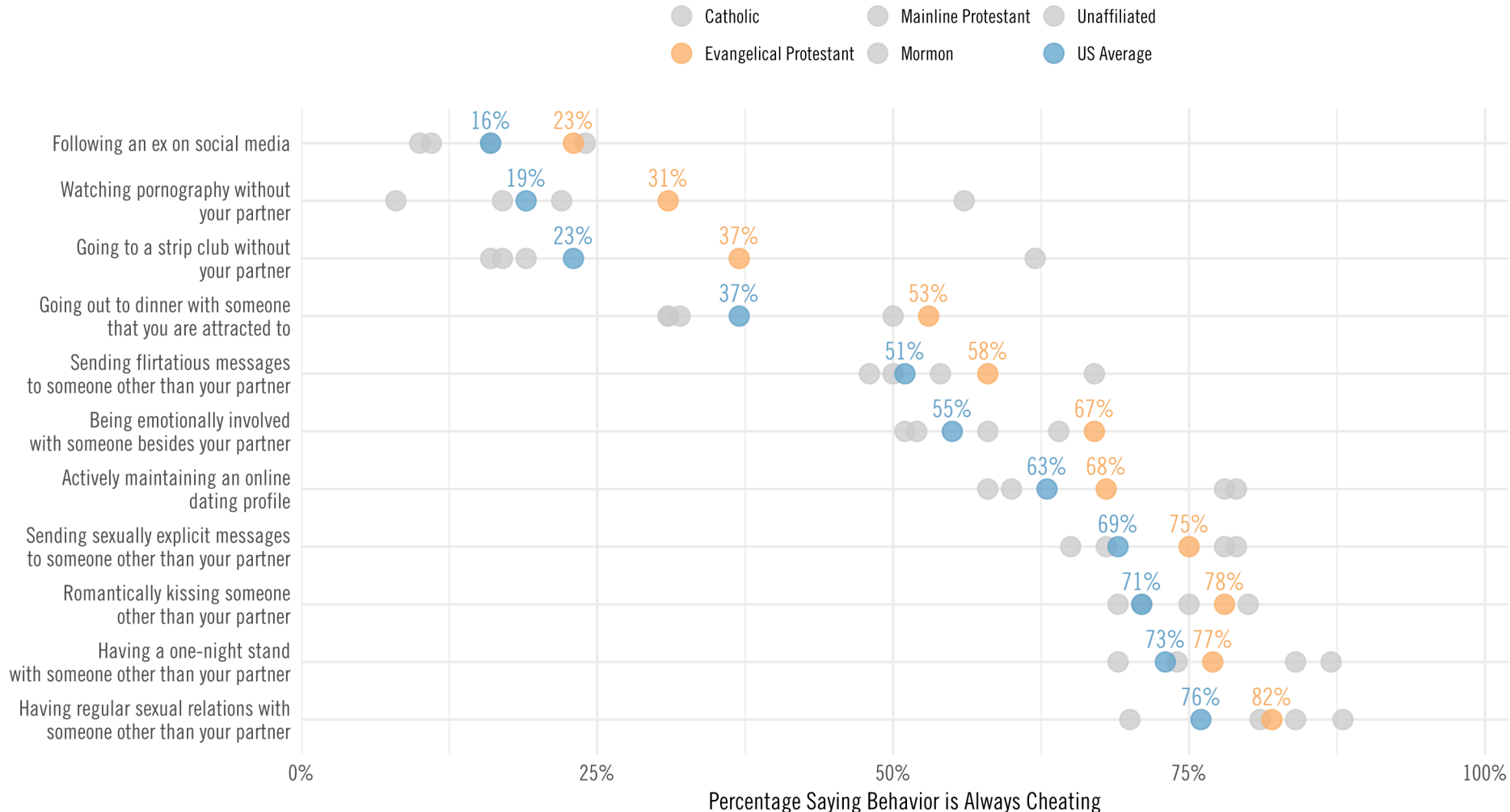
Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?



ATTITUDES BY RELIGION – EVANGELICALS

Evangelicals are more conservative than the national average on all of the behaviors asked about. They are the group most likely to consider going out to dinner with someone that you are attracted to as cheating.

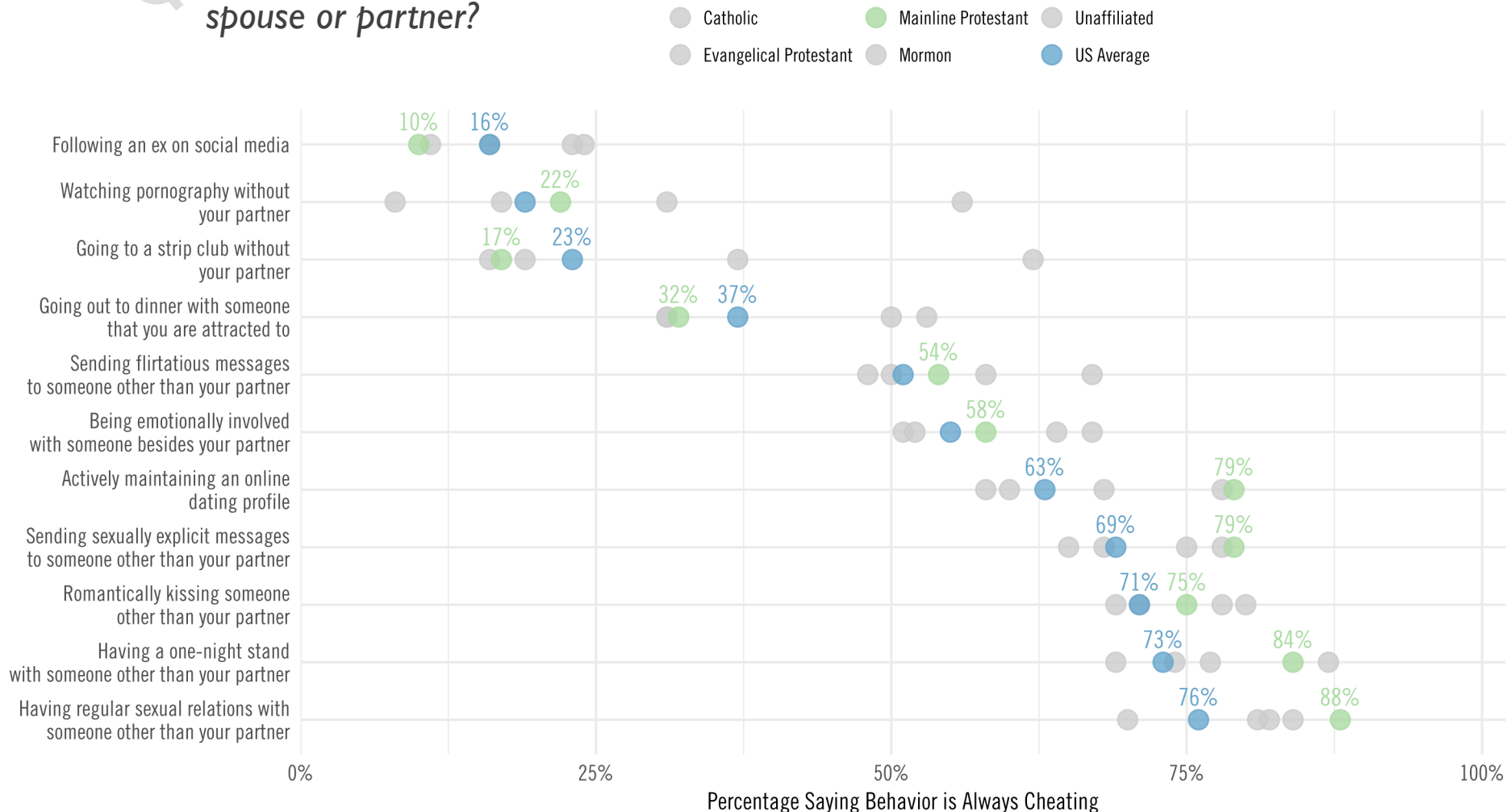
Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?



ATTITUDES BY RELIGION – MAINLINE PROTESTANTS

Mainline Protestants are unique in that they are fairly permissive towards certain behaviors, but quite conservative on others. They are generally opposed to sexual relations outside of a relationship and maintaining online dating profiles. But they are more accepting than average of going to strip clubs and following exes on social media.

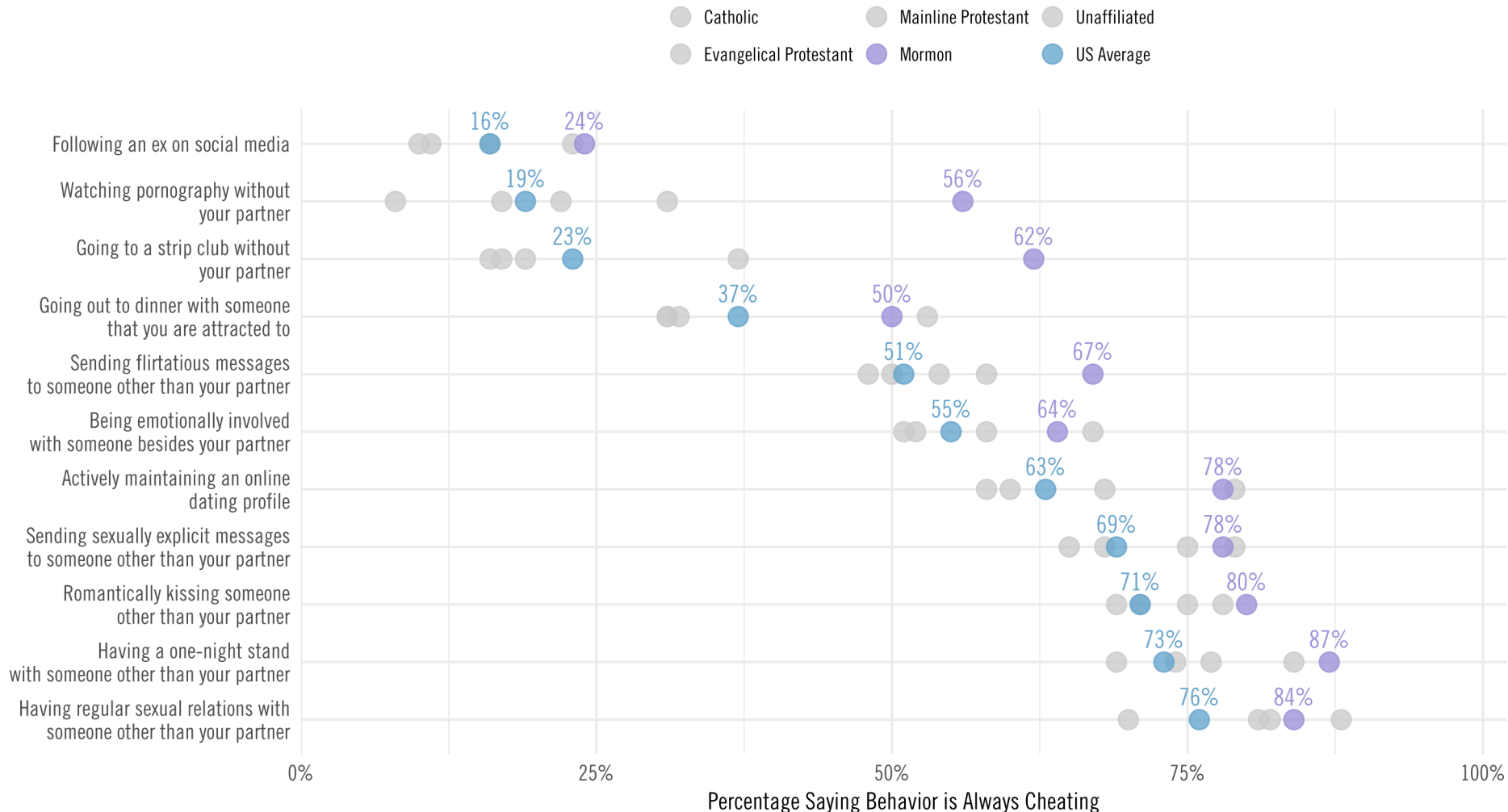
Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating on a spouse or partner?*



ATTITUDES BY RELIGION – MORMONS

Mormons are the most conservative religion on a majority of behaviors, including following an ex on social media, watching pornography, going to a strip club, sending flirtatious messages, romantic kissing, and one-night stands.

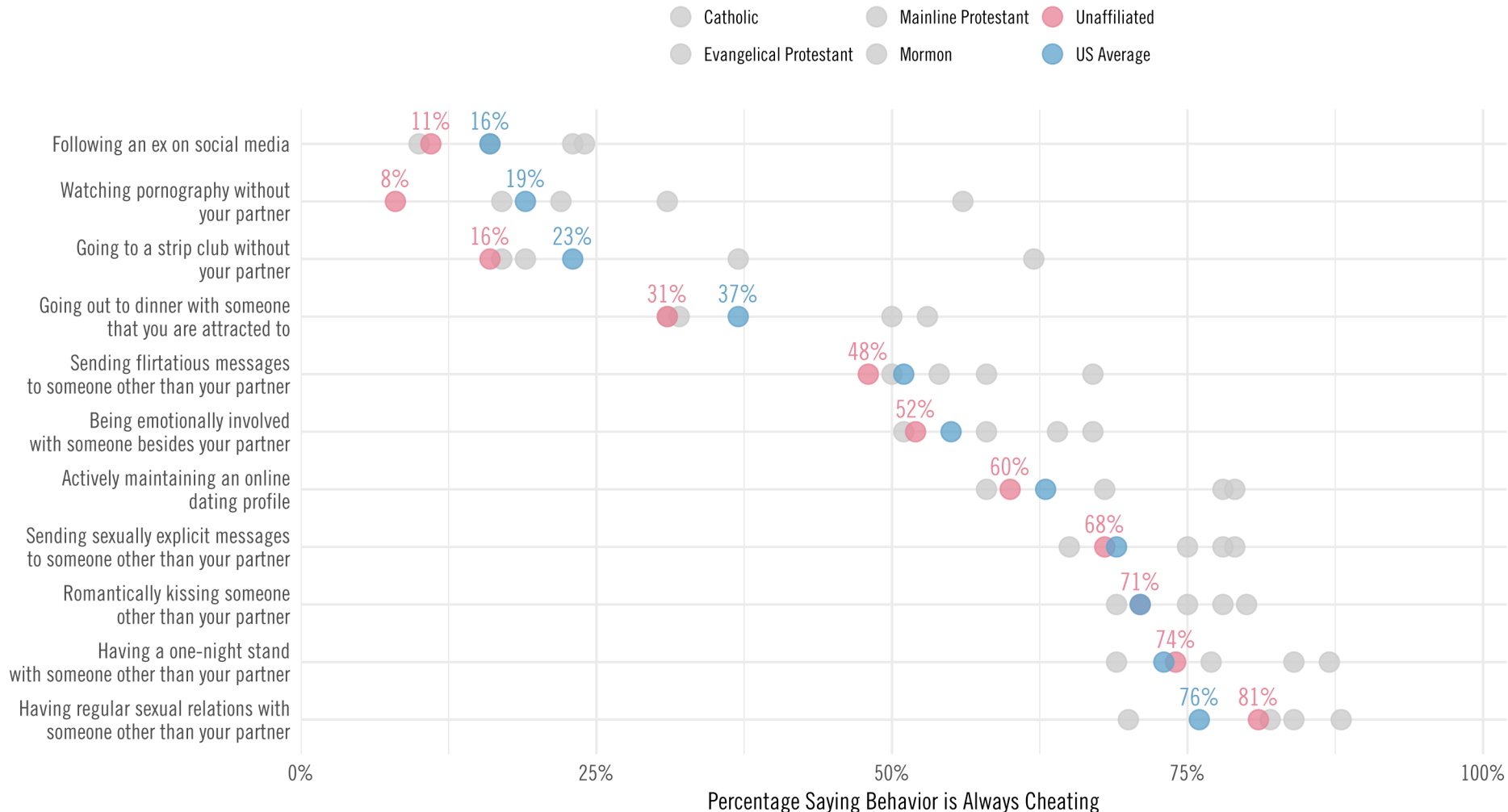
Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?



ATTITUDES BY RELIGION – UNAFFILIATED

Unaffiliated Americans are the most permissive group for many behaviors. However, they are more conservative than average when it comes to regular sexual relations outside of marriage.

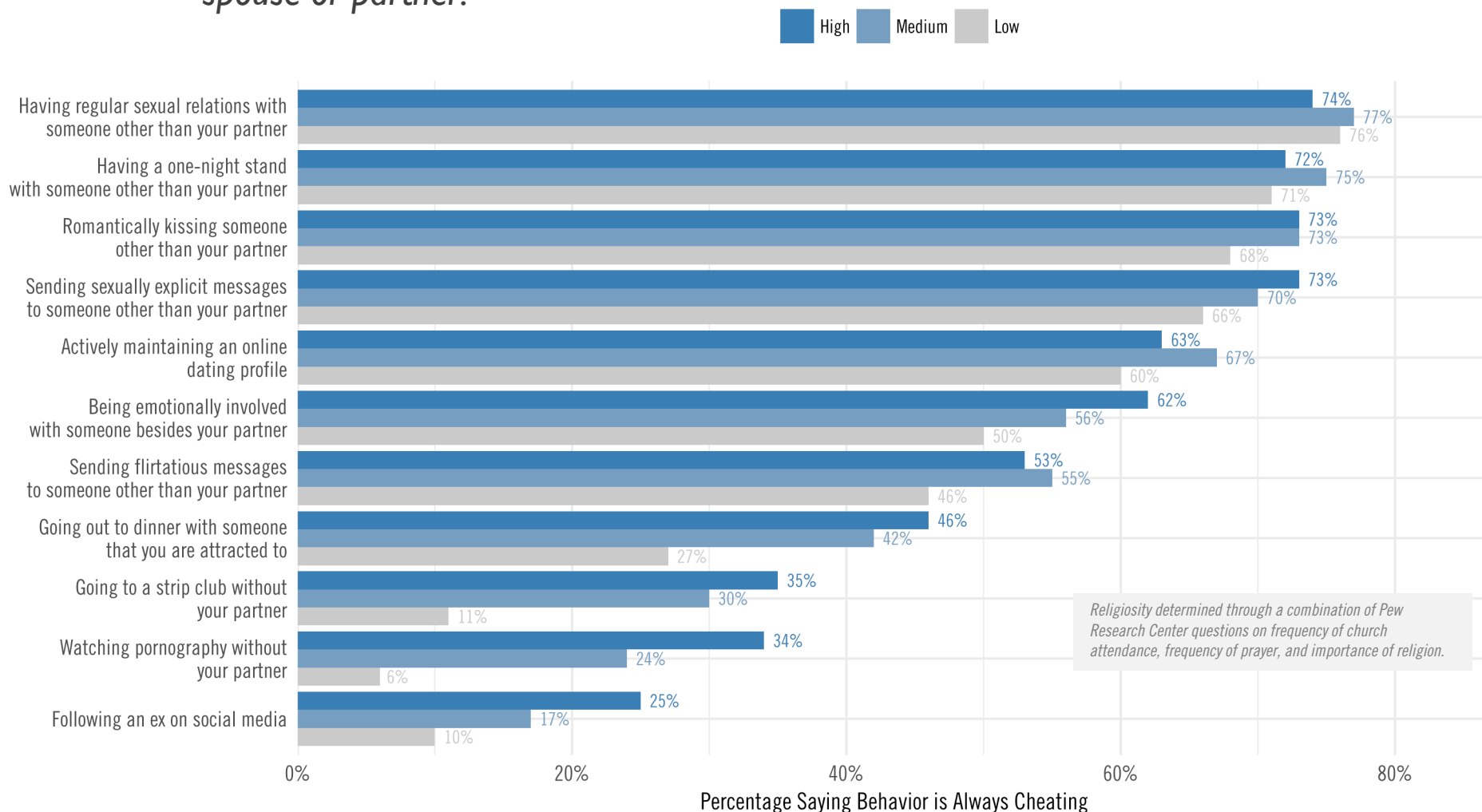
Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?



ATTITUDES BY RELIGIOSITY

For many of the acts most commonly considered cheating, such as regular sexual relations outside of marriage and one-night stands, there is no meaningful difference due to religiosity. But highly religious individuals are more conservative on issues like viewing pornography, going to strip clubs, and following exes on social media.

Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?

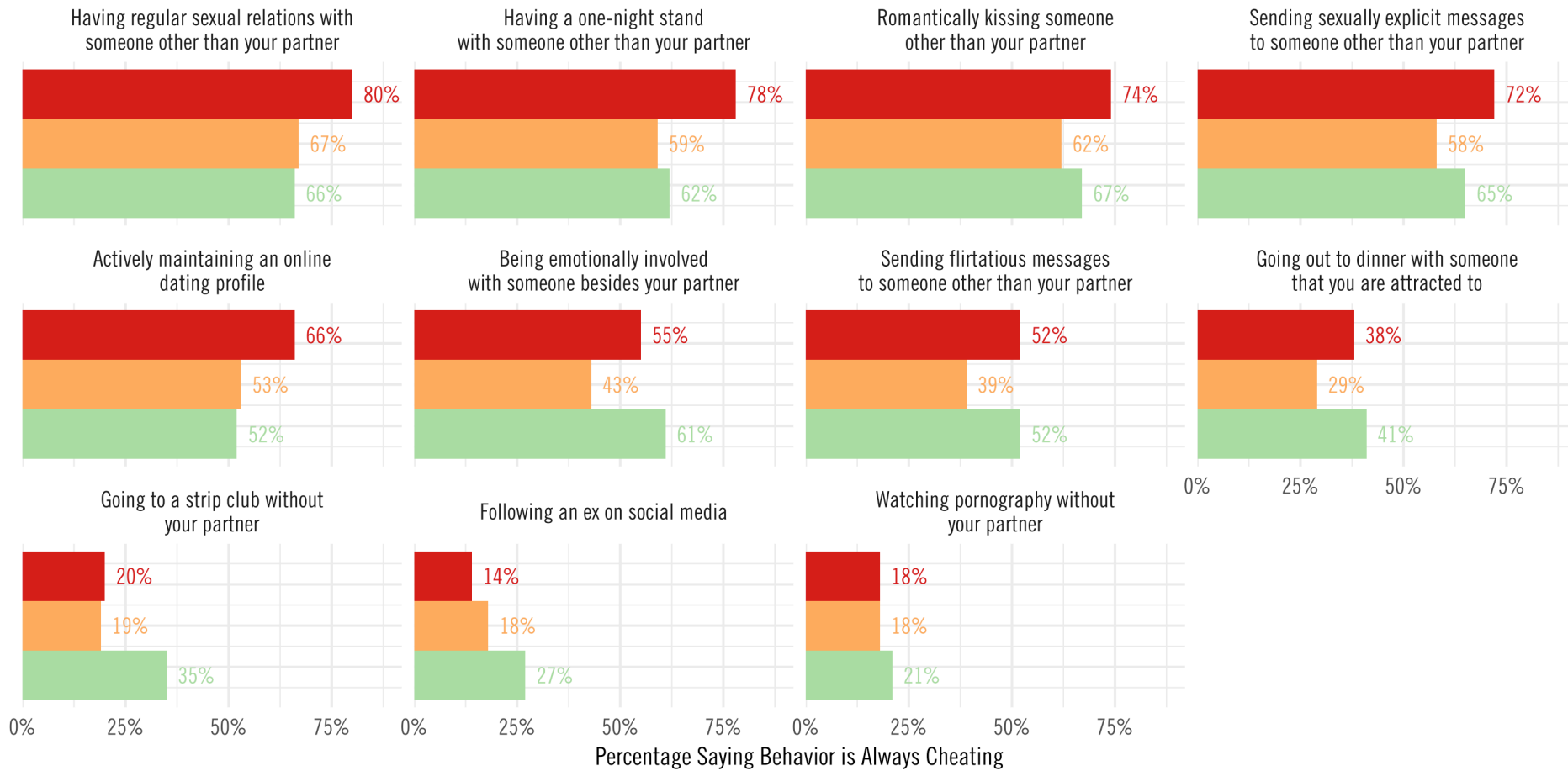


ATTITUDES BY RACE

White respondents take the most conservative view towards most sexual acts and maintaining an online dating profile while in a relationship. Black respondents generally indicate a stricter view of going to strip clubs and following exes on social media. Hispanics tend to take a more permissive view of all of these behaviors overall.

Q How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?

White Hispanic Black



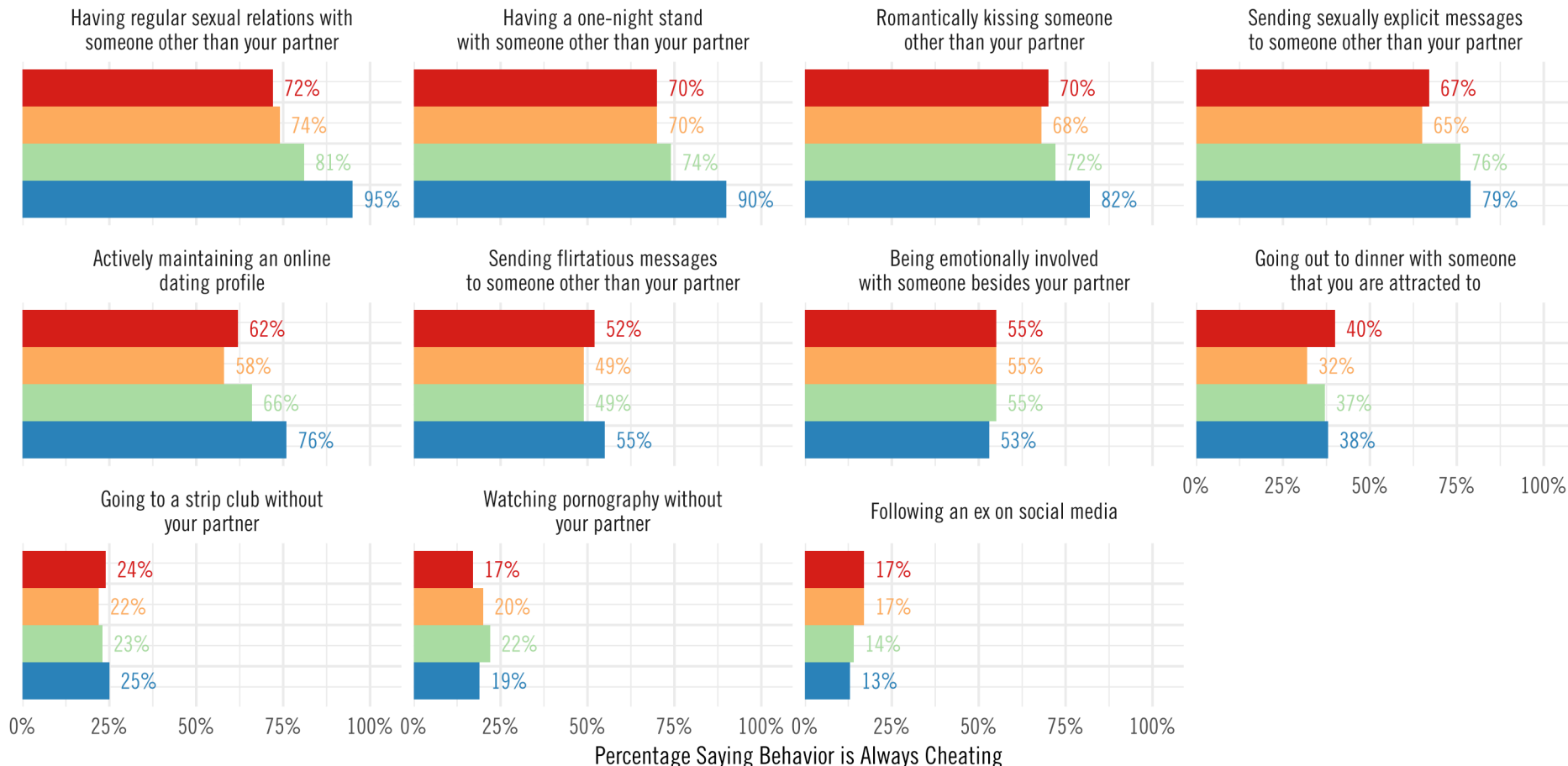
ATTITUDES BY EDUCATION

Highly educated respondents are the most likely to be consistently critical of behaviors like sustained sexual affairs outside of marriage, one-night stands, and romantically kissing someone other than your partner.



How often, if ever, would you say the following activities *would be cheating* on a spouse or partner?

High School or Less Some college College Graduate Post-Graduate

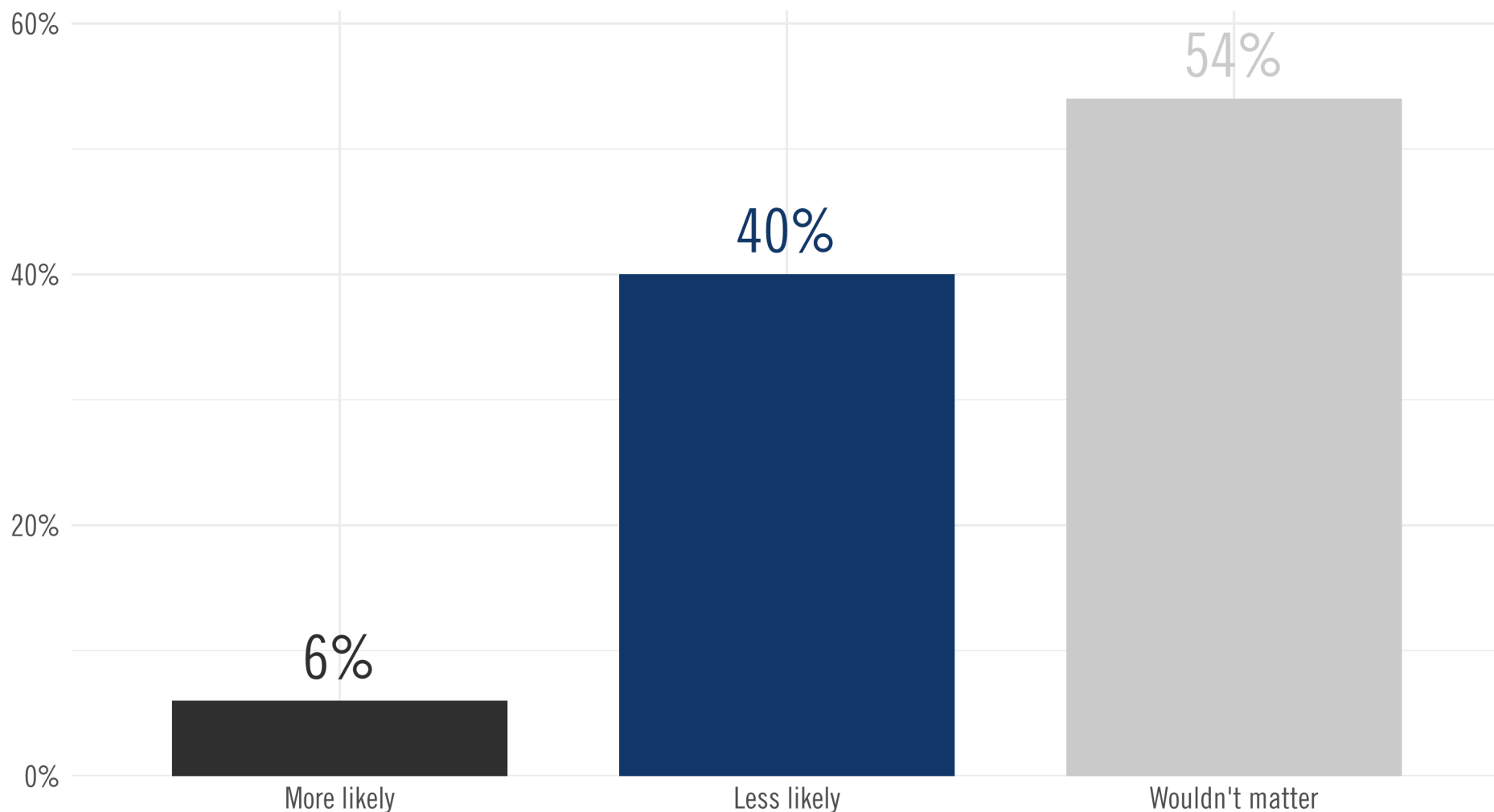


PUBLIC FIGURES

NATIONAL ATTITUDES

A majority of respondents nationwide say that finding out a presidential candidate had an extramarital affair would not change their likelihood of voting for them.

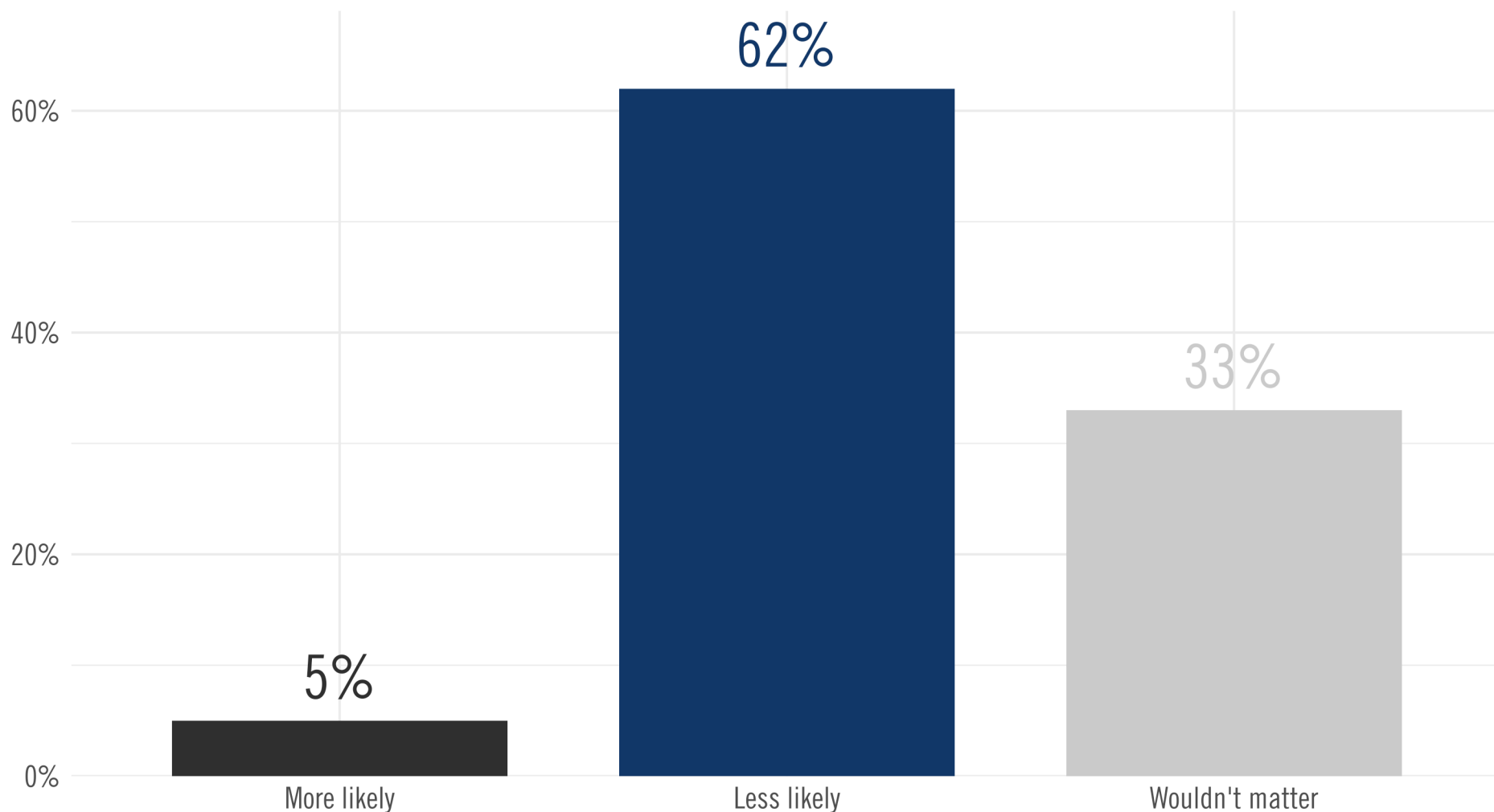
Q *Would you be more likely or less likely to **support a candidate for president** who had an extramarital affair **in the past**, or wouldn't this matter to you?*



ATTITUDES AMONG MORMONS

However among Mormons, over 60% said knowledge of an affair would make them less supportive of a candidate.

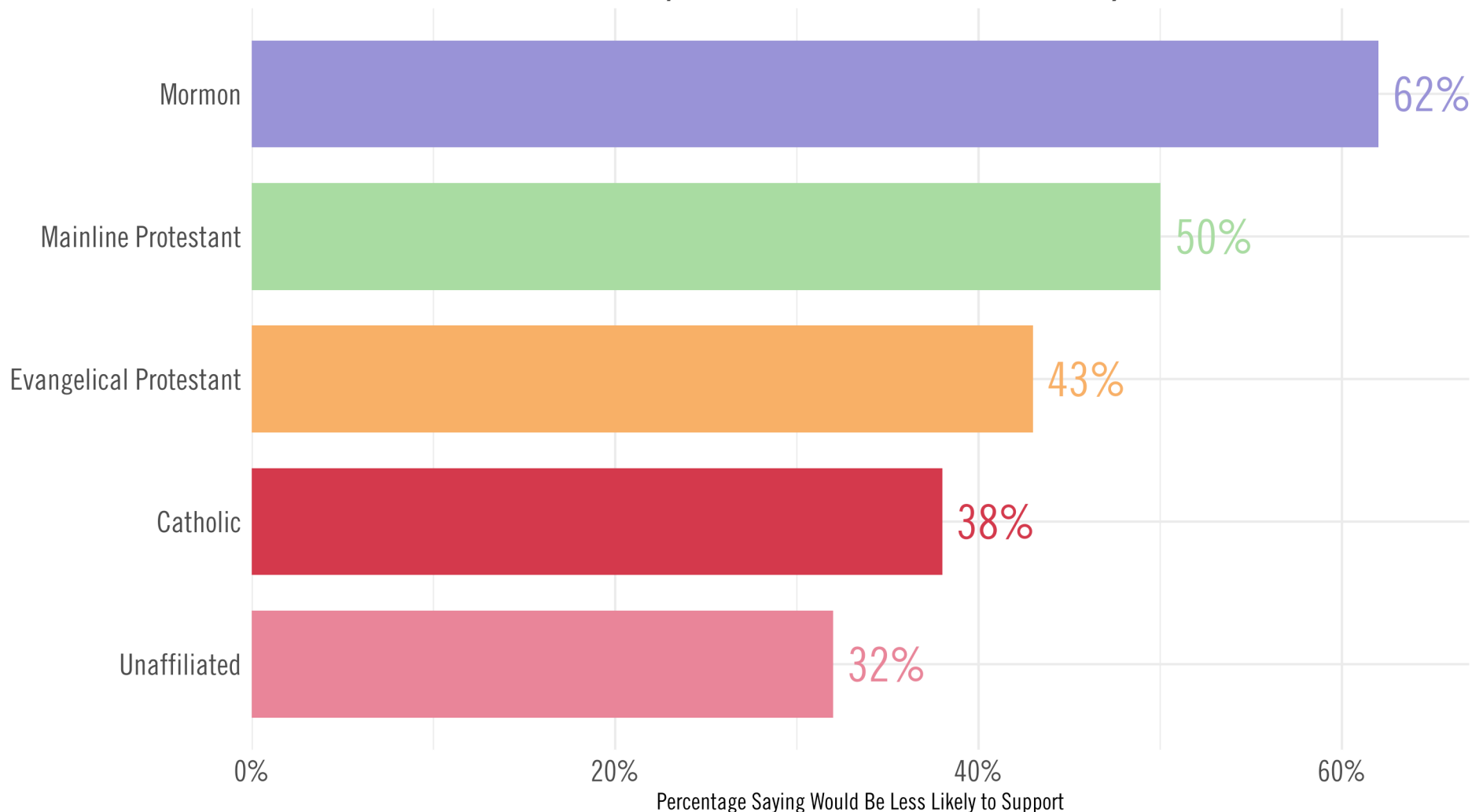
Q *Would you be more likely or less likely to **support a candidate for president** who had an extramarital affair **in the past**, or wouldn't this matter to you?*



ATTITUDES BY RELIGION

Compared to all other religious groups, Mormons view affairs among public figures most negatively. Unaffiliated Americans are the least likely to say that an affair would negatively impact their vote.

Q Would you be more likely or less likely to *support a candidate for president* who had an extramarital affair *in the past*, or wouldn't this matter to you?

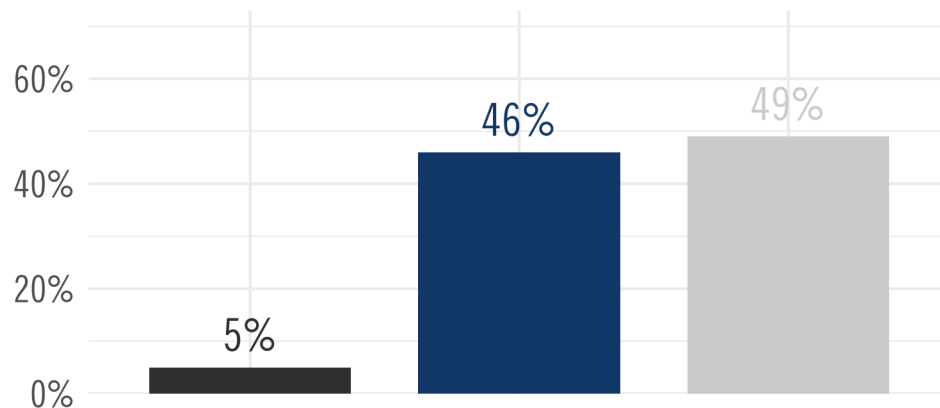


ATTITUDES BY GENERATION

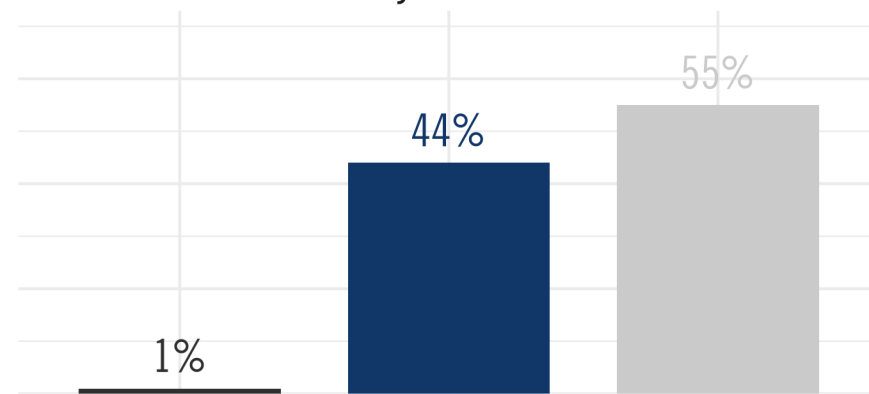
Extramarital affairs among politicians matter the least to members of Generation X.

Q Would you be more likely or less likely to *support a candidate for president* who had an extramarital affair *in the past*, or wouldn't this matter to you?

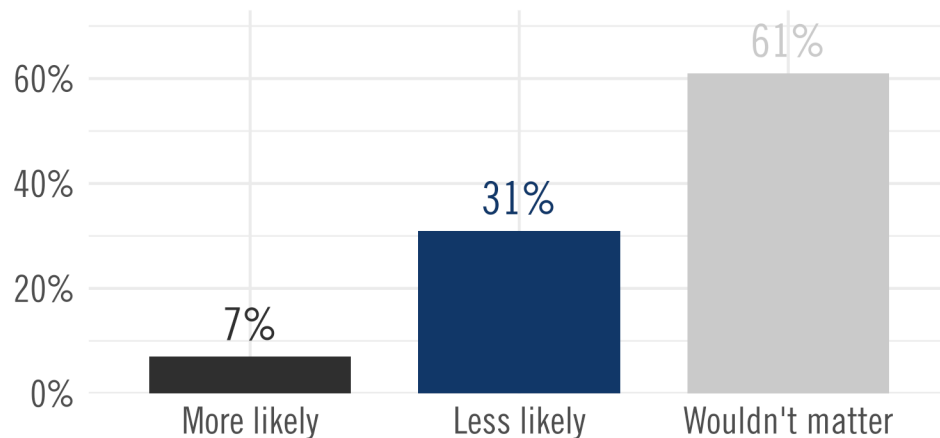
Silent Generation



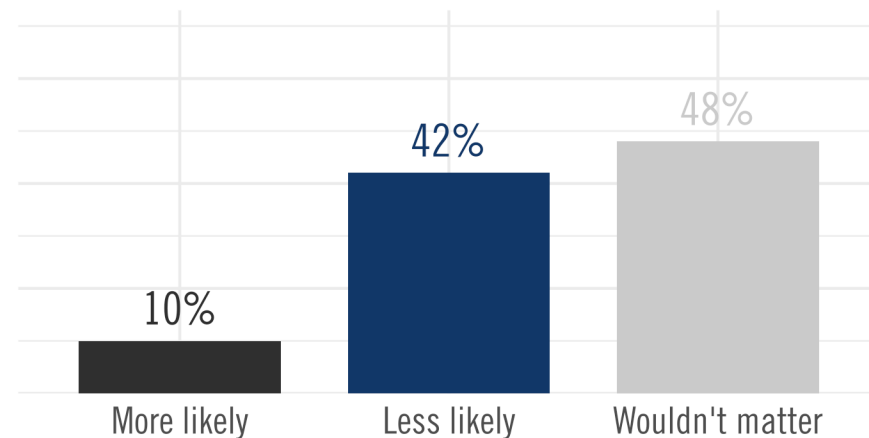
Baby Boomers



Generation X



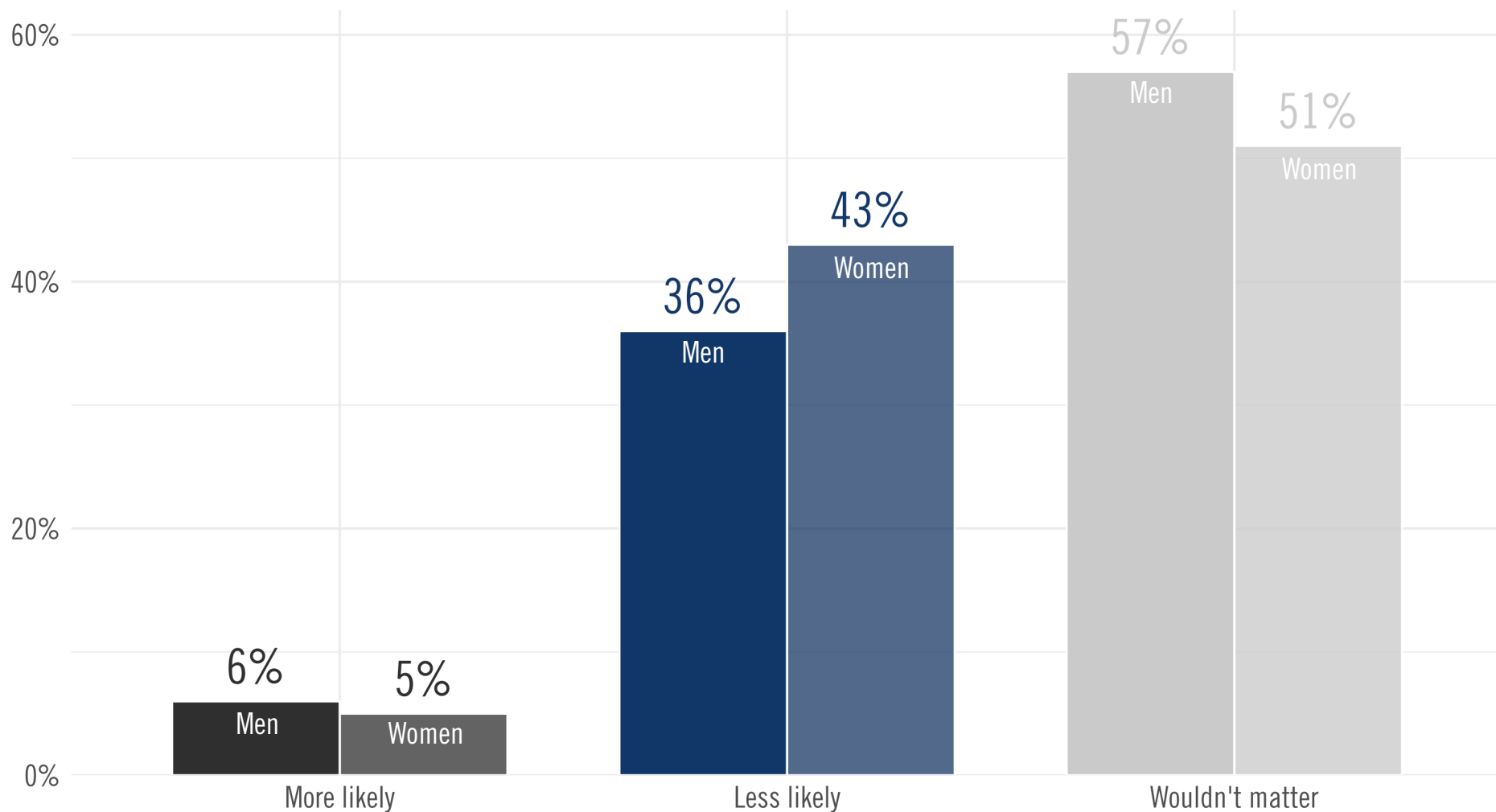
Millennials



ATTITUDES BY GENDER

Women are more likely than men to say that an extramarital affair would negatively impact their vote.

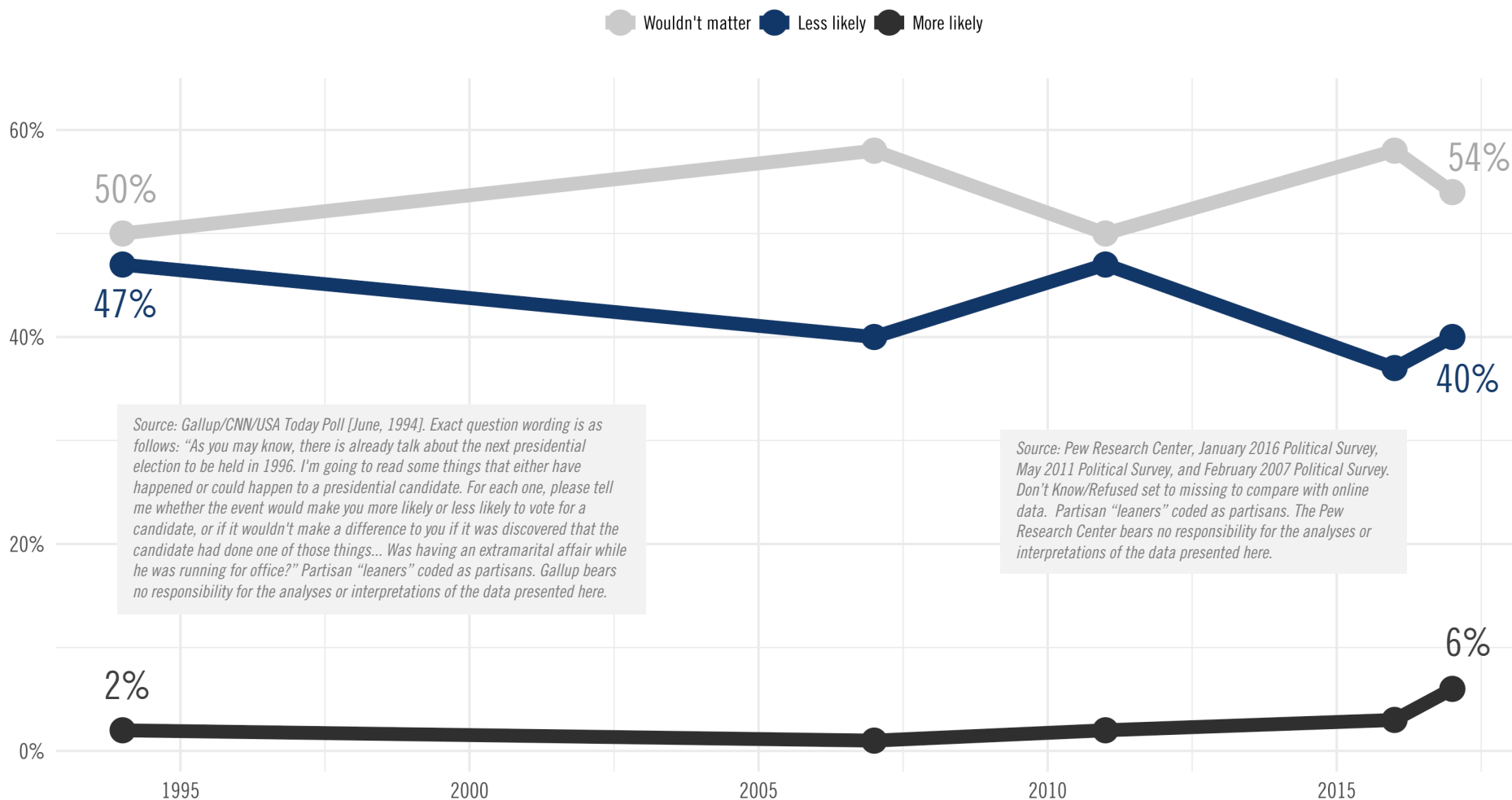
Q Would you be more likely or less likely to *support a candidate for president* who had an extramarital affair *in the past*, or wouldn't this matter to you?



ATTITUDES OVER TIME

Over the past 20 years, there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of Americans who indicate that an extramarital affair by a presidential candidate would negatively impact their support.

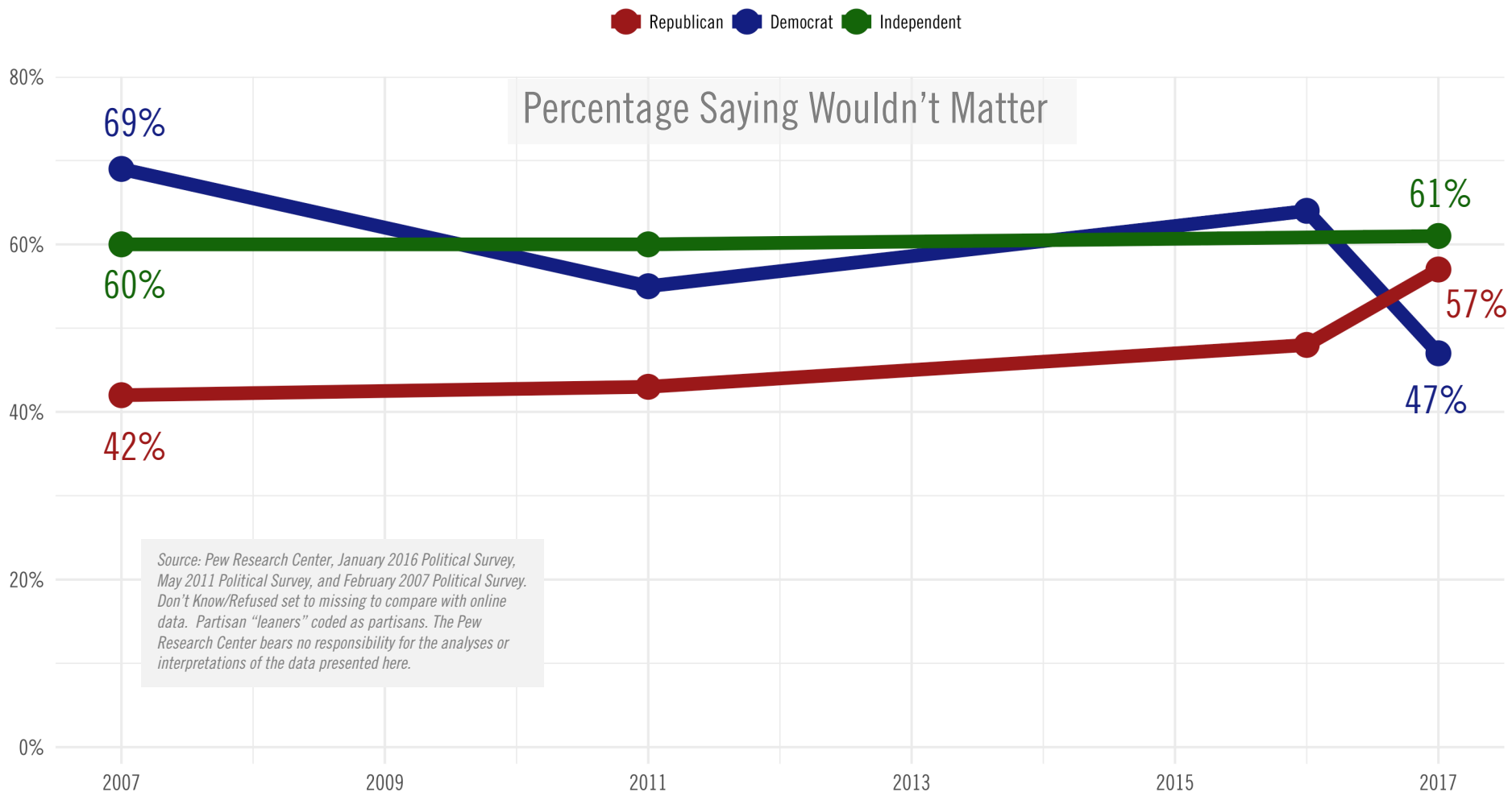
Q Would you be more likely or less likely to *support a candidate for president* who had an extramarital affair *in the past*, or wouldn't this matter to you?



ATTITUDES OVER TIME – PARTY

However, Republicans and Democrats have significantly altered their views on the acceptability of affairs since the 2016 Election. Republicans today are 15 points more likely to say an affair wouldn't matter as compared to 2007.

Q Would you be more likely or less likely to *support a candidate for president* who had an extramarital affair *in the past*, or wouldn't this matter to you?

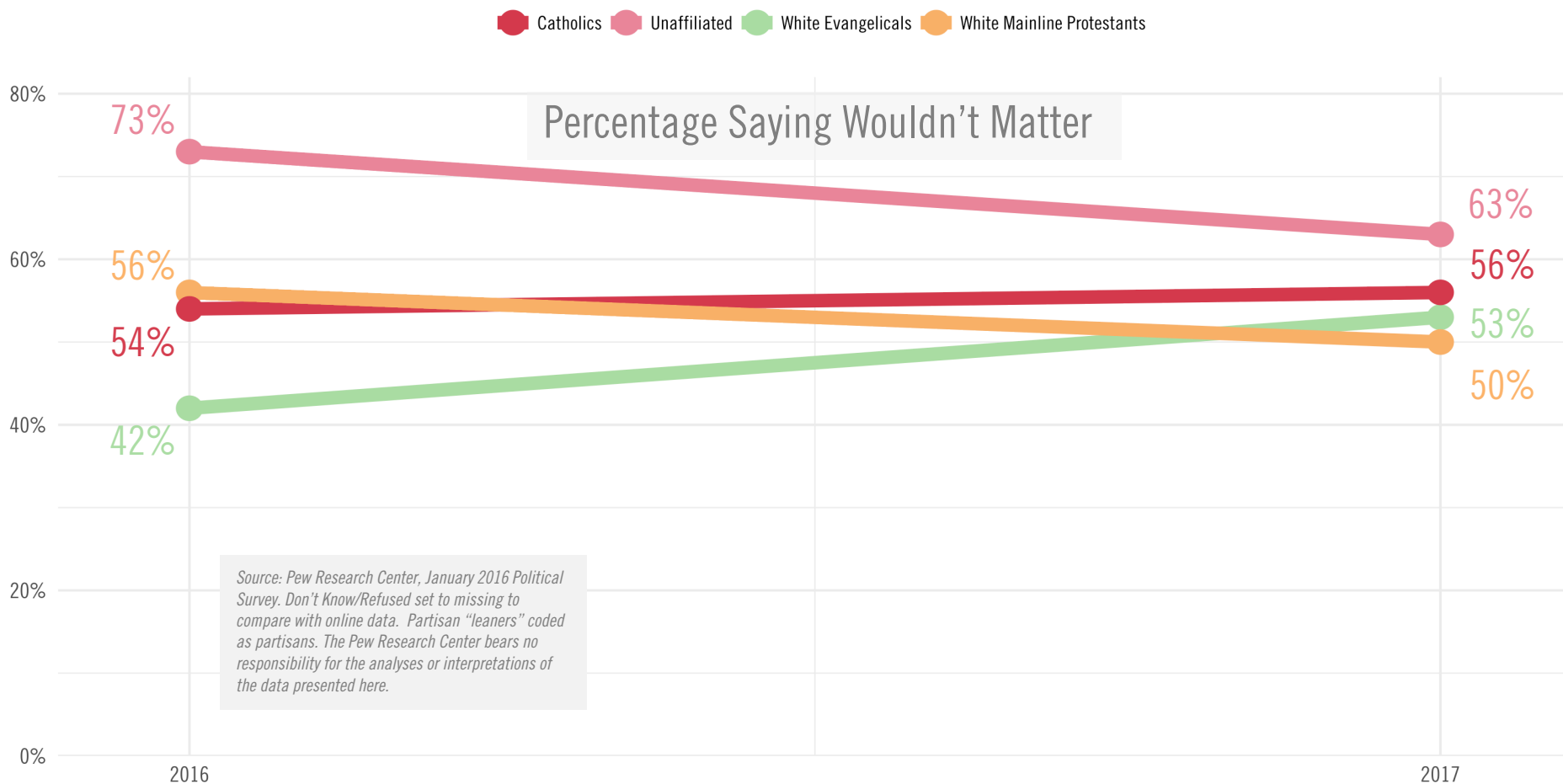


ATTITUDES OVER TIME – RELIGION

Over the past year, attitudes within religious groups on this question have shifted considerably. Compared to 2016, White Evangelicals today are 11 points more likely to say that an affair wouldn't matter to their decision to support a presidential candidate, and unaffiliated Americans are 10 points less likely to say that it wouldn't matter.



Would you be more likely or less likely to *support a candidate for president* who had an extramarital affair *in the past*, or wouldn't this matter to you?

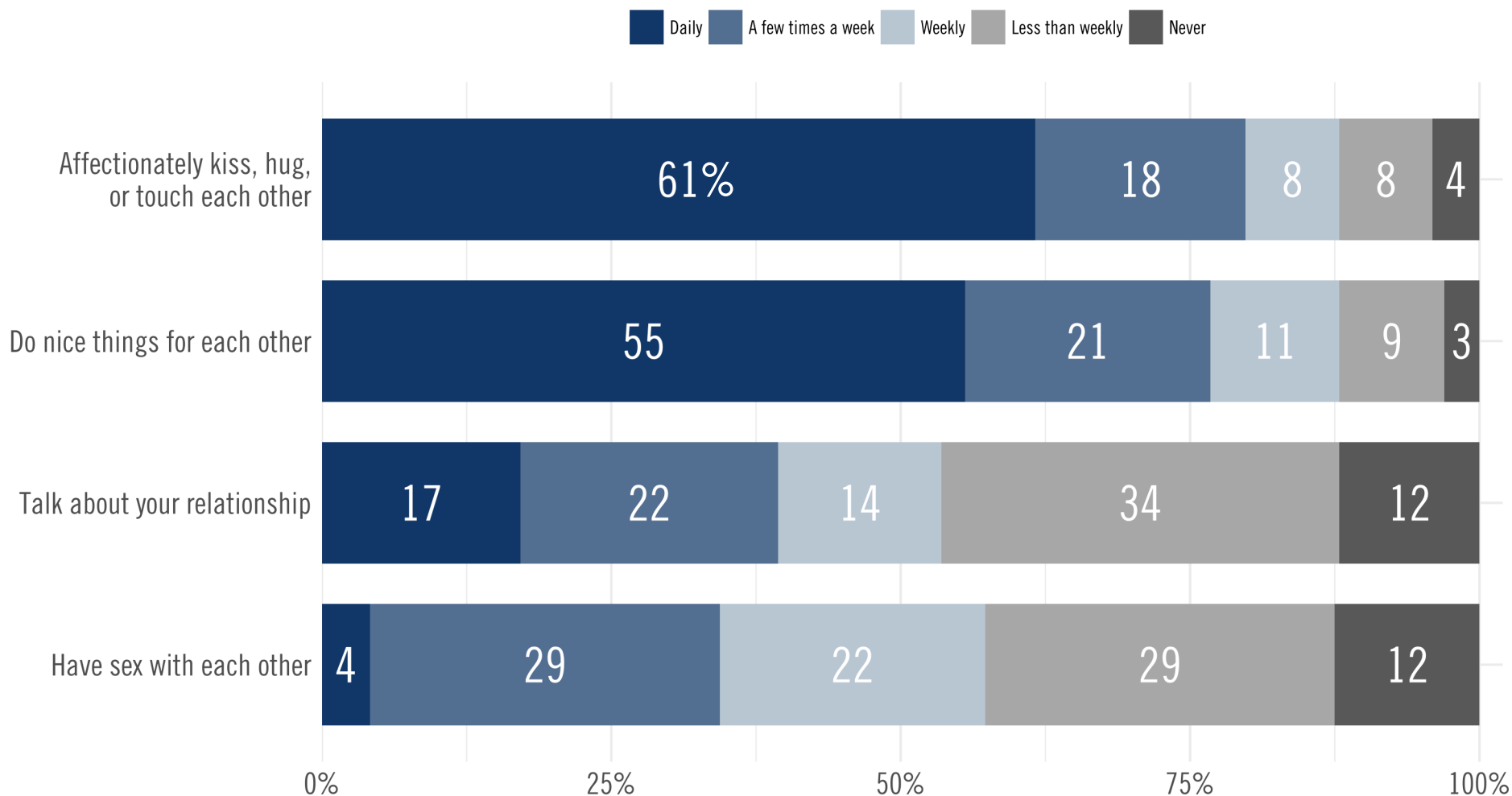


RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS

RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS

A majority of respondents affectionately kiss, hug, or touch each other daily. A third of couples have sex at least a few times a week, with another 22% doing so about once a week.

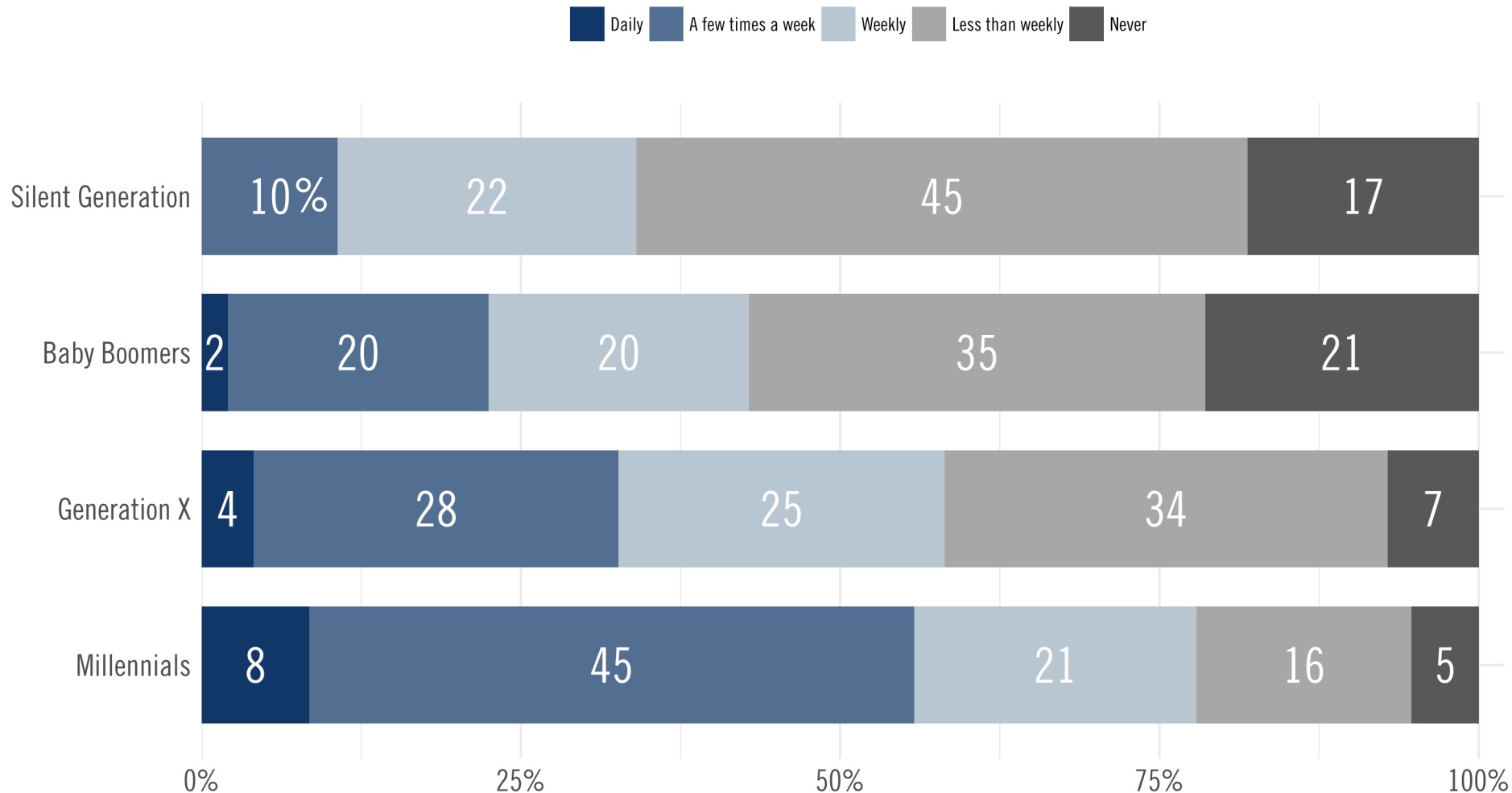
Q How often do you *do each of the following* with your spouse or partner?



RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS – BY GENERATION

Frequency of sex decreases steadily with age. Of all the generations, Millennials have the most sex by far, with over half doing so a few times a week or daily.

Q How often do you *do each of the following* with your spouse or partner?
Have sex with each other.



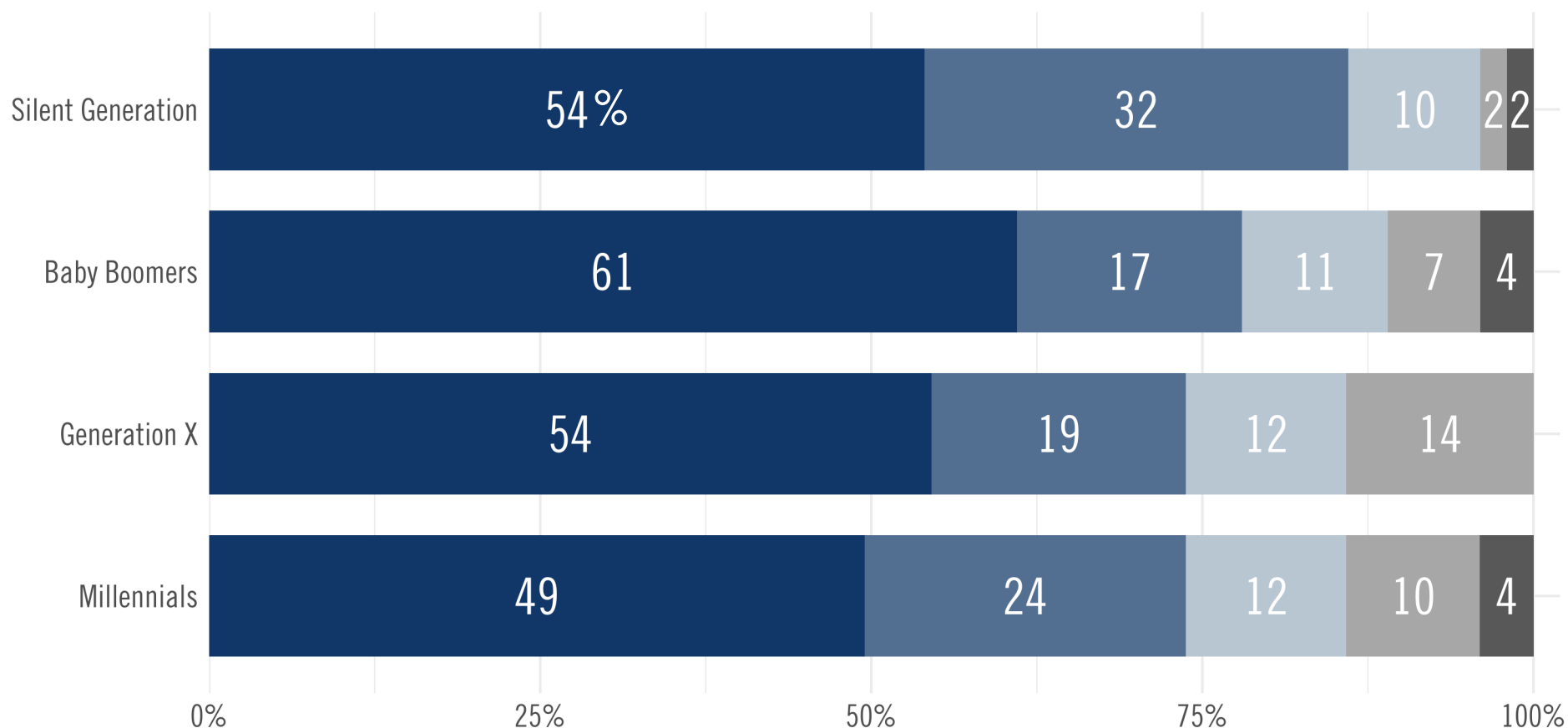
RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS – BY GENERATION

However, couples of all generations still tend to do smaller nice things for each other on a regular basis. In fact, the oldest Americans are the most likely to make these kind gestures at least a few times a week.



*How often do you **do each of the following** with your spouse or partner?
Do nice things for each other, such as making coffee, putting gas in the car, etc.*

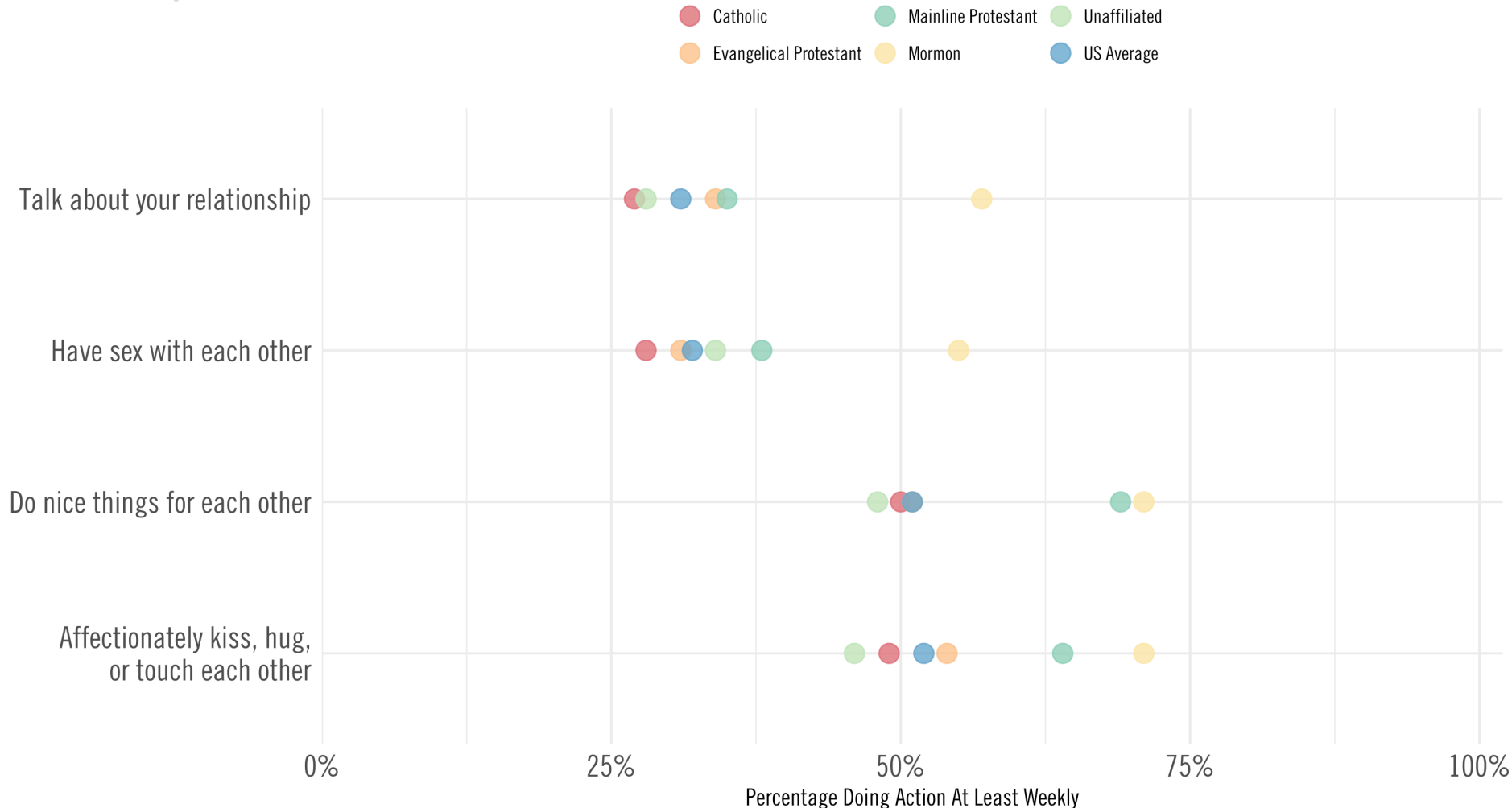
Daily A few times a week Weekly Less than weekly Never



ATTITUDES BY RELIGION – MAINLINE PROTESTANTS

Mormons are the most likely to engage in all of these actions at least weekly. They are the most different from the national average when it comes to talking about their relationship and having sex. Mainline Protestants are also significantly more likely than average to do nice things for each other and show physical affection.

Q How often do you *do each of the following* with your spouse or partner?





Quin Monson Ph.D. & Scott Riding
quin@y2analytics.com