

The Atlantic/Aspen Institute

Imagining 2024

America Looks to 2024: *The Atlantic/Aspen Institute Survey* Key Findings



the Atlantic



- Penn Schoen Berland, working with Burson-Marsteller, conducted 2,001 online interviews with the United States general population from May 28-31, 2014.
- The overall margin of error is $\pm 2.19\%$
- The data presented in this study are reflective of U.S. Census Bureau demographic statistics in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, income and political party.

Two wars overseas. The Great Recession. George W. Bush. Barack Obama. The Tea Party. Obamacare. Gay marriage. NSA surveillance.

Americans have experienced an incredible amount of change over the past 10 years. **What we've learned is that they are bracing for more change in the next 10 years.**

Normally certain about America's economic strength and place in the world but uncertain on social issues, Americans foresee a future in which the country's strength is in doubt but there is unity on social issues.

Americans are highly uncertain about the country's strength in 10 years.

- **The Economy** – We are moving from an “Age of Possibility” to an “Age of Impossibility,” with few saying the U.S. will be the “Land of Opportunity” in 10 years, and many envisioning a country where it is harder to get ahead and harder to get a good education.
- **Our Role in the World** – America as “The Indispensable Nation” will become “A More Dispensable Nation,” predicting China, not the U.S., will lead the world in 10 years.
- **Politics and Government** – The future of our ability to govern ourselves is in doubt, with low optimism about our ability to have effective government with regard to economic issues and key services, such as healthcare and education.

Meanwhile, there is increasing certainty on the shape of society.

- **The Social Fabric** – A new social issue consensus is emerging, with debates around issues like same-sex marriage, legalizing marijuana and climate change on the way toward being resolved.
- **Technology** – The United States of Technology is a bright spot in our future, envisioning technology surrounding us and improving our lives with tech entrepreneurs becoming the country's real leaders.

And Americans have interesting views on The Way We Will Live, envisioning greater connection to religious institutions, fewer Americans entering the institution of marriage and less time spent on the roads.

Imagining 2024: We are moving from an “Age of Possibility” to an “Age of Impossibility”

65 percent of Americans are not convinced the U.S. will be on the right track in 10 years

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AMERICA'S PATH

Do you think the United States will be on the right track or headed in the wrong direction in 10 years?



Two-thirds do not say America will be considered the "land of opportunity" in 10 years

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LAND OF OPPORTUNITY IN 10 YEARS

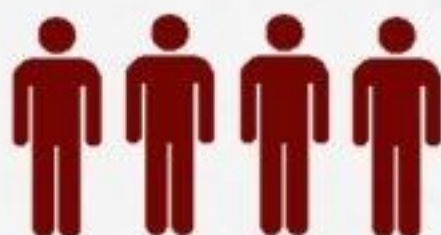
Do you think America will be considered the "land of opportunity" in 10 years?

ALL



33%

YES



42%

NO



24%

DON'T KNOW

7 in 10 Americans are not certain that, in 10 years, working hard and playing by the rules will bring success

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HARD WORK AND PLAYING BY RULES IN 10 YEARS

Ten years ago, do you think that people who worked hard and played by the rules were more or less likely to get ahead?

In 10 years, do you think that people who work hard and play by the rules will be more or less likely to get ahead?

10 YEARS AGO

- More likely to get ahead
- Don't Know
- Less likely to get ahead



IN 10 YEARS

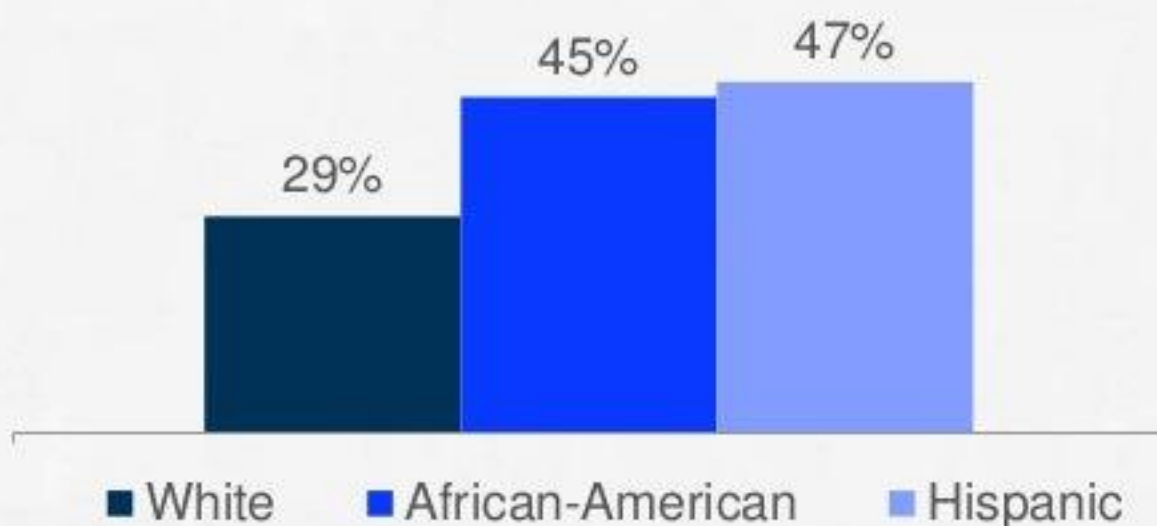


Hispanics, African-Americans are significantly more likely than white Americans to foresee opportunity in 10 years

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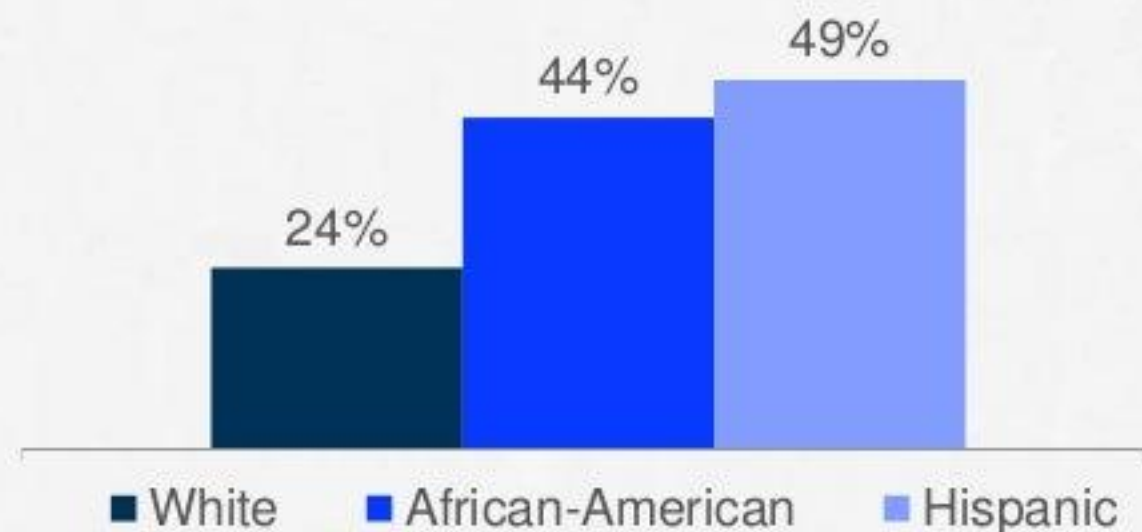
AMERICA WILL BE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY IN 10 YEARS

Do you think America will be considered the "land of opportunity" in 10 years? *Showing "Yes"*



MORE LIKELY TO GET AHEAD WITH HARD WORK/PLAYING BY RULES IN 10 YEARS

In 10 years, do you think that people who work hard and play by the rules will be more or less likely to get ahead? *Showing "More likely"*

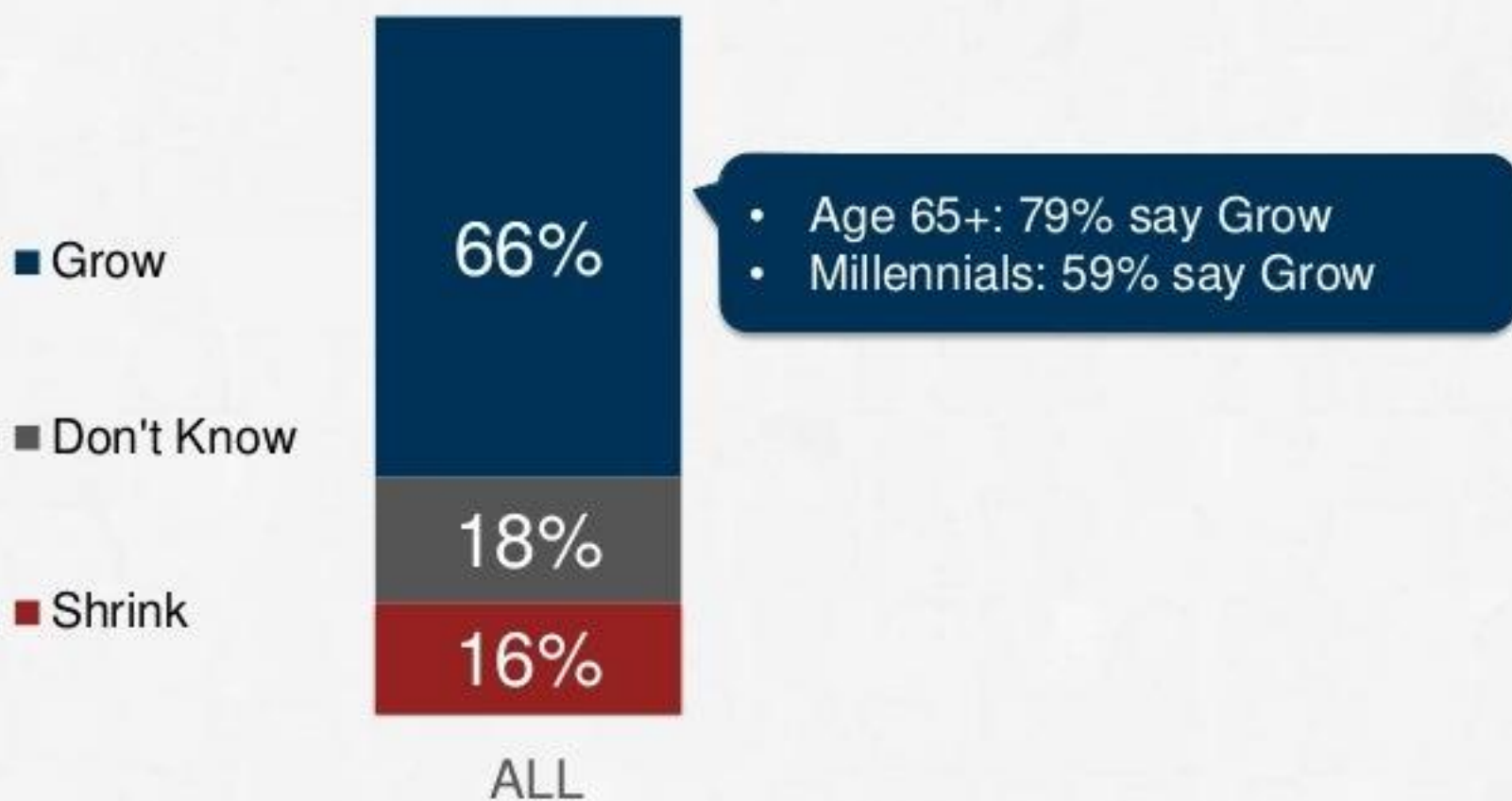


Two-thirds say income inequality will grow over the next 10 years

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WEALTH GAP IN 10 YEARS

Do you think that the gap between the rich and poor will grow or shrink in the United States over the next 10 years?



Most do not say public schools or the performance of American students will get better in 10 years

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MATH AND SCIENCE RANK IN 2024

U.S. students are currently ranked 31st in math and 24th in science when compared to 65 other top industrial countries. Do you expect the U.S. to rank higher or lower in these areas in 10 years?

ALL

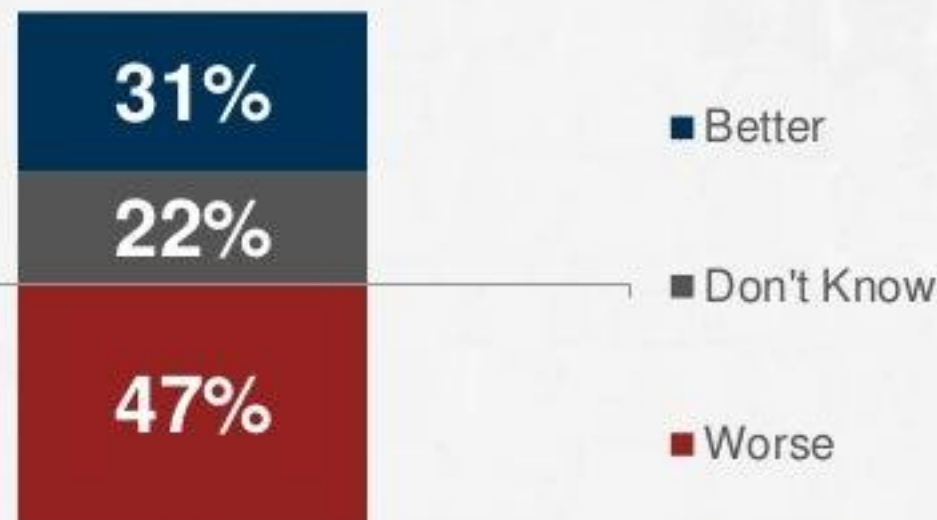


- Millennials: 24% say Higher
- Age 65+: 41% say Higher

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN 2024

Ten years from now, do you expect the American public school system to be better or worse than it is today?

ALL



- African-Americans: 44% say Better

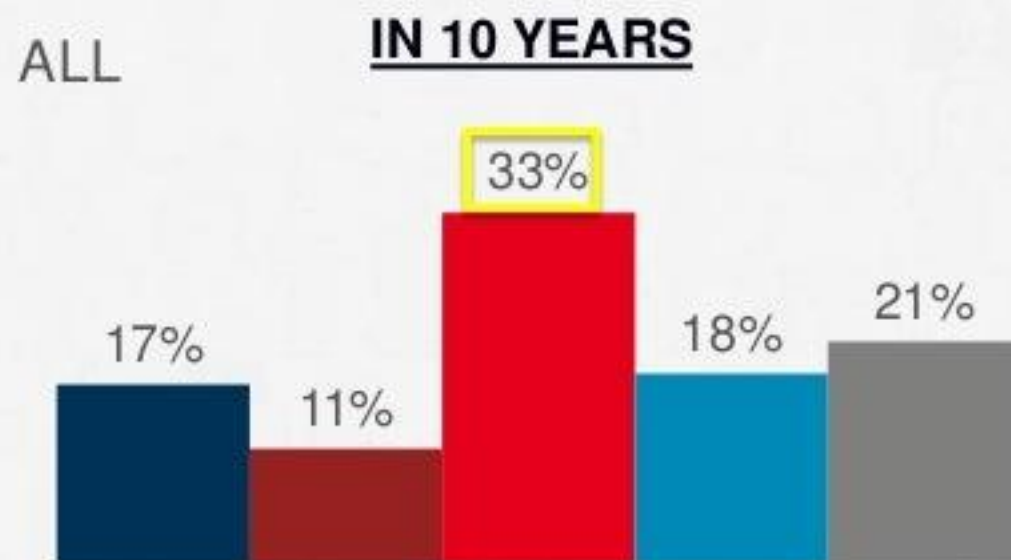
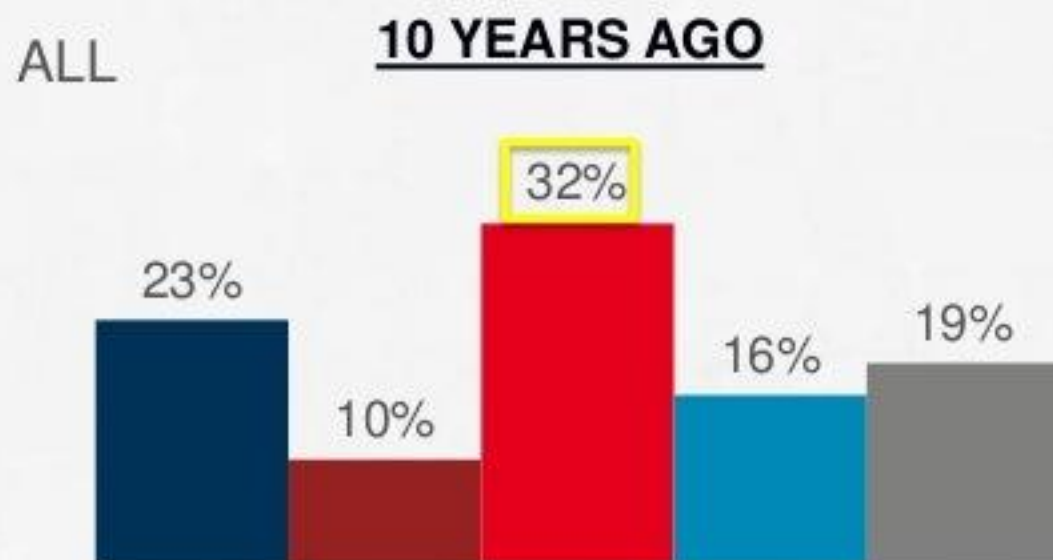
Americans tend to say private schools are the best option for children and will be in 10 years as well

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SCHOOL OPTIONS TODAY AND IN 10 YEARS

In your opinion, what do you think is the best option for school-aged children in America today?
In ten years, what do you think will be the best option for school-aged children in America?

■ Public school ■ Charter school ■ Private school ■ Home schooling ■ Don't know



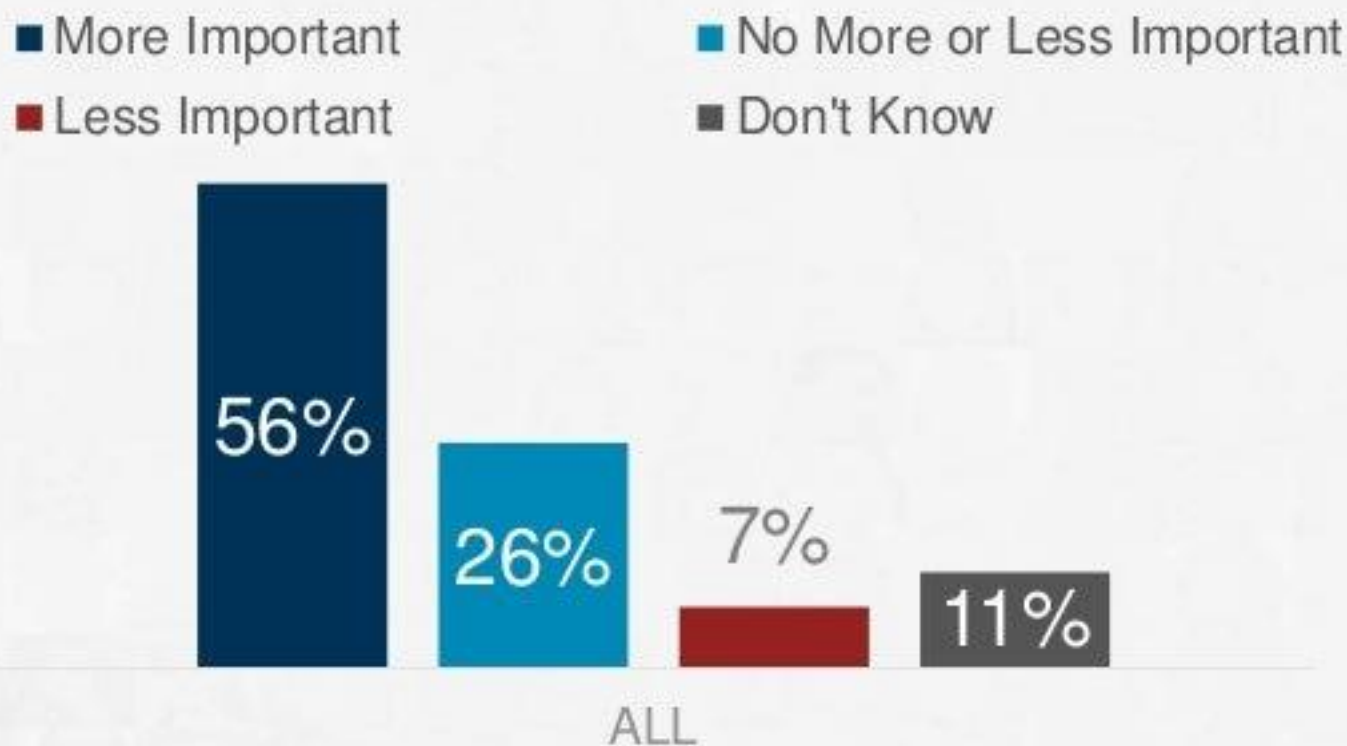
- Income > \$75k: 41% say Private
- Income <\$35k: 31% say Don't know

Most think college will be more important in the future, but only 29 percent of parents say they will be able to afford it

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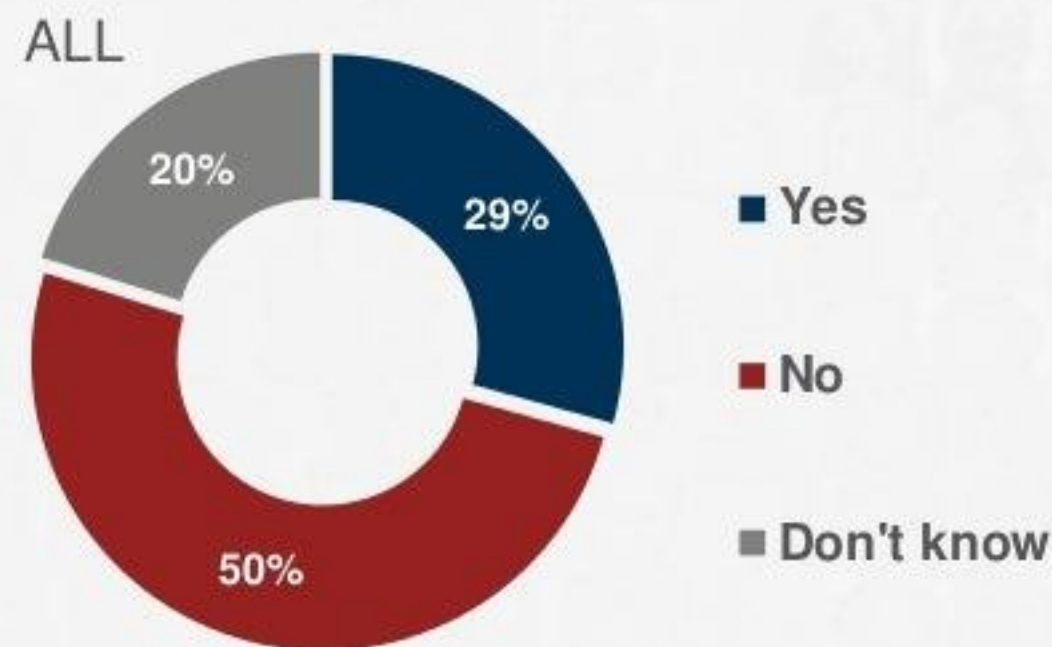
IMPORTANCE OF COLLEGE DEGREE IN 10 YEARS

IF PARENTS: Do you think it will be more important, less important or no more or less important for your children to have a college degree in 10 years than it was for you?



COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY IN 10 YEARS

IF PARENTS: By the time they go to college, do you think you will be able to afford your children's college education?



Most parents foresee a tough job market for their children in 10 years

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EASE OF FINDING JOBS FOR CHILDREN IN 10 YEARS

IF PARENTS: In 10 years, will it be easy or difficult for your children to find good jobs?

■ Very easy ■ Somewhat easy ■ Somewhat difficult ■ Very difficult ■ Don't know

ALL



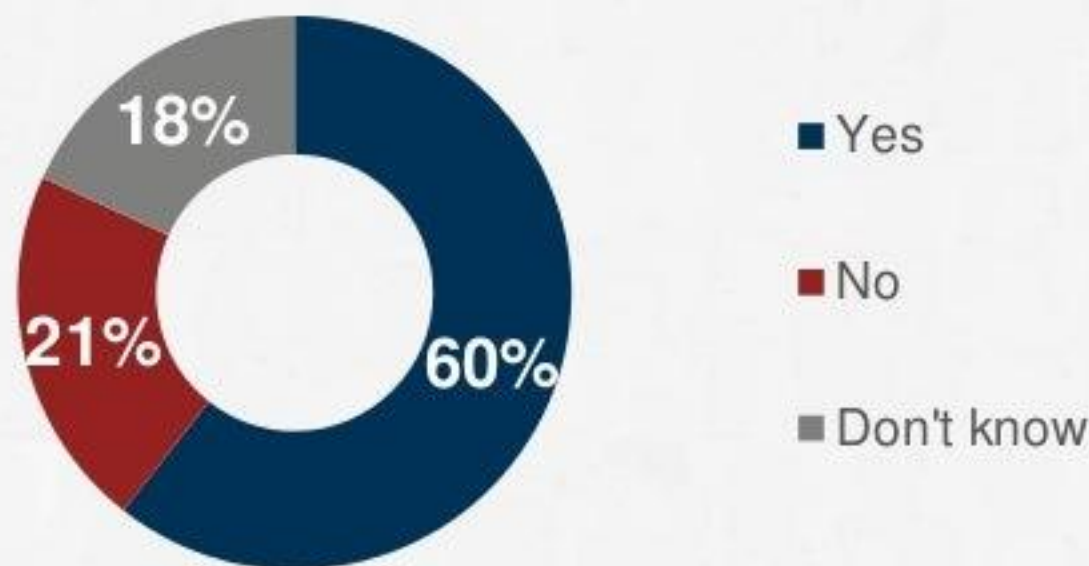
Despite a negative economic outlook, 6 in 10 parents express optimism about their children's well-being

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CHILDREN BETTER OFF IN 10 YEARS THAN PARENTS WERE AT SAME AGE

IF PARENTS: In 10 years, do you think your children will be better off than you were at their age?

ALL



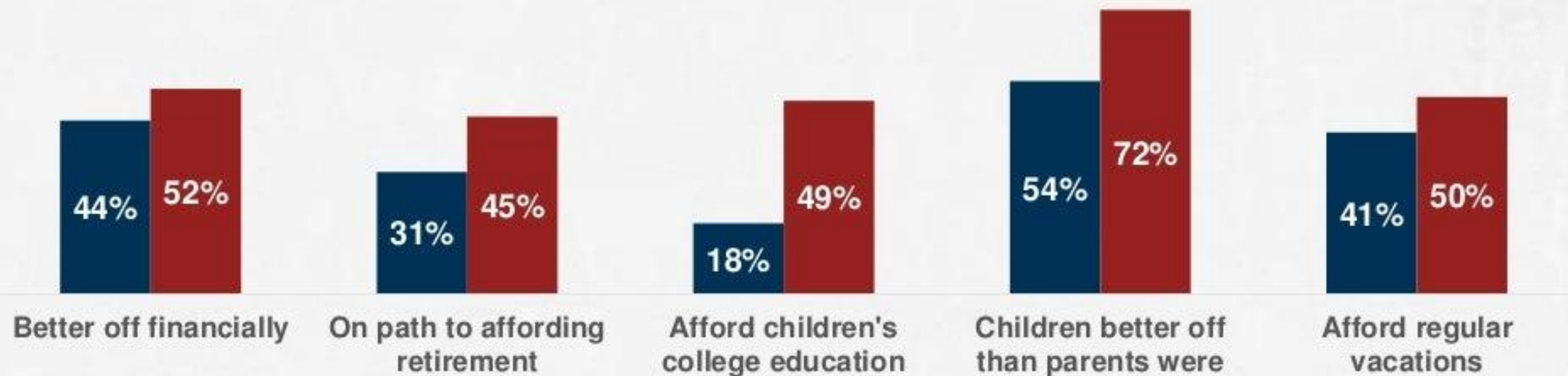
Women have a more pessimistic view of their personal and household finances than men do

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VIEWS BY GENDER: IN 10 YEARS...

■ Women

■ Men



QUESTIONS SHOWN:

- In 10 years, do you expect to be better off or worse off financially than you are today? *Showing "Better off"*
- In 10 years, do you think you will be on a path to affording retirement? *Showing "Yes"*
- By the time they go to college, do you think you will be able to afford your children's college education? *Showing "Yes"*
- IF PARENT: In 10 years, do you think your children will be better off than you were at their age? *Showing "Yes"*
- In 10 years, do you think you will be able to afford to go on regular vacations? *Showing "Yes"*

Imagining 2024: America as “The Indispensable Nation” will become “A More Dispensable Nation”

Only 3 in 10 envision America's global standing being on the rise in 10 years

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AMERICA'S GLOBAL STANDING IN 10 YEARS

Do you think America's global standing will be on the rise or in decline in 10 years?

■ On the Rise

■ In Decline

■ Don't Know

ALL

30%

43%

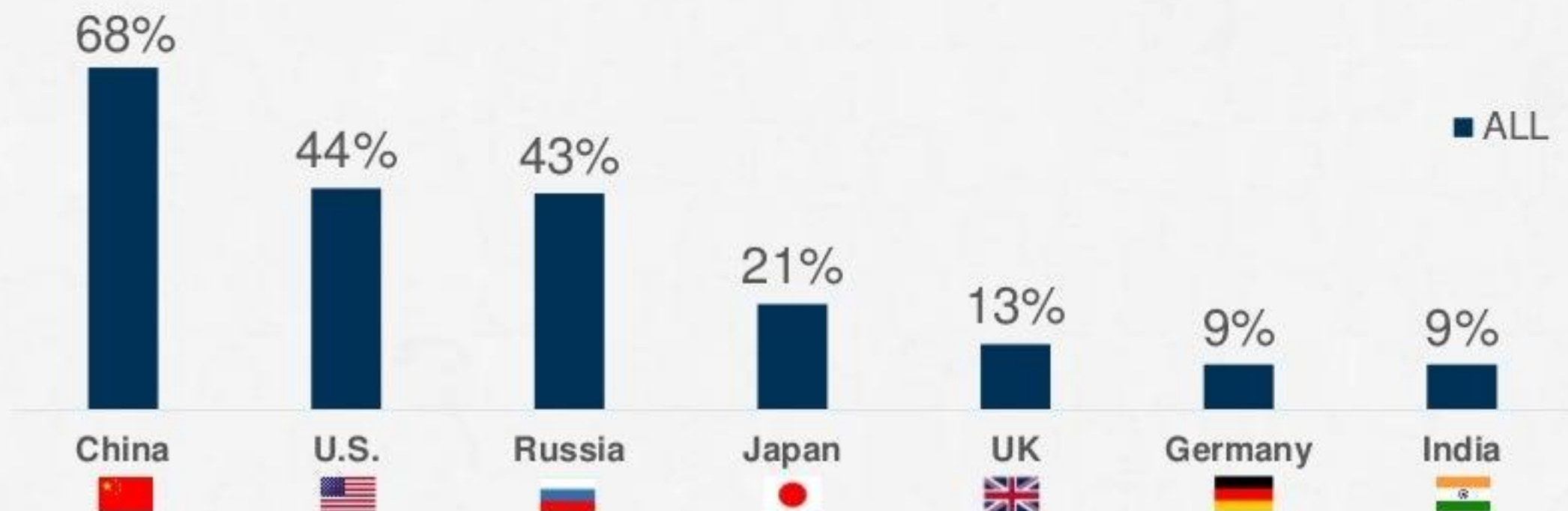
26%

Most think China – not the U.S. – will be a superpower in 10 years

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SUPERPOWERS IN 2024

Which countries do you think will be considered “superpowers” in 10 years? Please name as many countries as you think apply.



- Income of >\$75k: 79% say China

A majority believe China will be the world's biggest economic force in 10 years

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TOP GLOBAL ECONOMIC FORCE IN 10 YEARS

Which country do you think will be the world's biggest economic force in 10 years?



China

53%



U.S.

20%

■ ALL

- Income of >\$75k: 63% say China
- Income of <\$35k: 49% say China