



AMERICAN
COUNCIL ON
GERMANY



ATLANTIK-BRÜCKE

The Alliance in Question?

Current German and American Perceptions Concerning
the Transatlantic Relationship

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Methodology

Methodology



Background & Purpose

The survey was designed to measure public perception of the transatlantic relationship and specific current political issues in the U.S. and Germany.



Methodology

YouGov conducted an online survey in the United States and in Germany, each containing eleven questions on the transatlantic relationship and current political issues. Respondents were recruited from the YouGov panel.



Sample

The U.S. and German samples were recruited and weighted according to the populations' characteristics (nationally representative for the populations aged 18 years and older).

Sample sizes are:

- United States: n=2,229
- Germany: n=2,000



Field Period

Surveys were conducted from April 4th to April 15th, 2018. Average completion time per interview was approximately 5:15 minutes.

In some cases, percentages will not add up to 100% due to rounding procedures.

Survey conducted by

YouGov[®]

Key Findings

- Germans and Americans agree on a shared basis of values, but most believe that basis is eroding.
- There appears to be some consensus that there are common values, with freedom of speech as the top shared value in both countries. But Americans and Germans disagreed over the next most important common values. 67% of Germans and 69% of Americans want the transatlantic relationship to stay as close as it is or become even closer.
- Terrorism (21% for Germans and 19% for Americans) and climate change (19% for Germans and 18% for Americans) top the list of most urgent global challenges.
- Those are closely followed by the threat of weapons of mass destruction for Americans (at 14%), and by poverty (at 15%) and migration (at 14%) for Germans.
- Americans are more optimistic (at 36%) than Germans (at 15%) regarding the likelihood of a free trade agreement between the U.S. and EU during the current administration.
- Germans are slightly more optimistic than Americans about China's rise, specifically regarding economic opportunity.
- One third of respondents in both countries has little or no confidence in democratic institutions.
- Around 70% of all respondents on both sides think that fake news is a threat to some degree.
- Germans and Americans are split regarding the threat of digital transformation on the job market.

Results

The transatlantic relationship at stake

Shared values exist, but they are eroding.

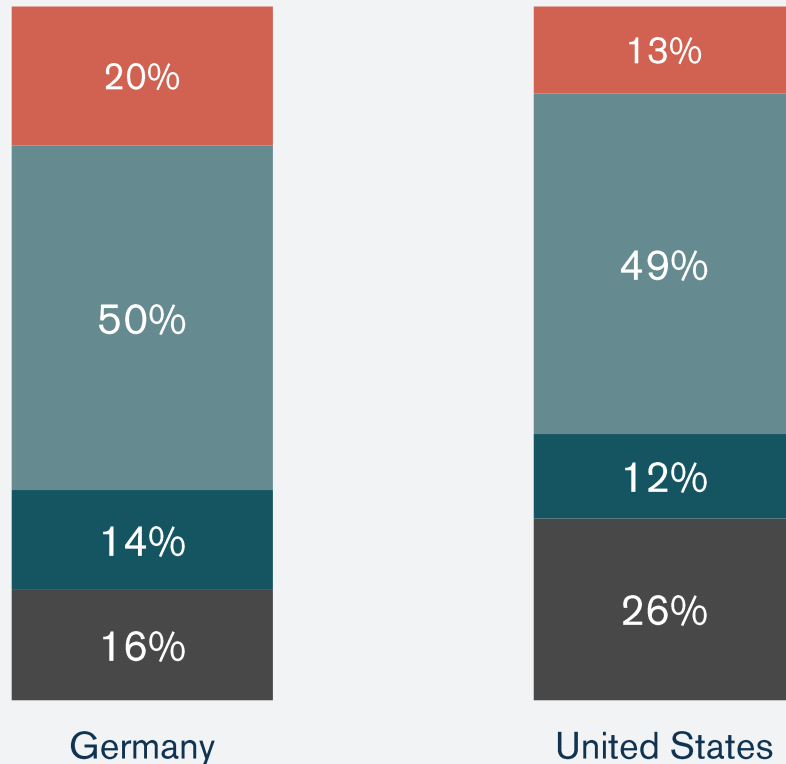
- Only 14% of Germans and 12% of Americans think that a foundation of common values is intact.
- One out of five Germans believes there is no basis of shared values at all.

Our value sets don't fully overlap.

- Freedom of speech is seen as the most crucial value for both Germans (66%) and Americans (55%).
- However, for Germans, this is followed by democracy (56%), privacy (33%), and the rule of law (32%).
- And for Americans, the next most important values are freedom of religion (38%), democracy (36%), and the right to bear arms (30%).

Most still want close transatlantic ties, but with a worrying trend in Germany.

- Americans are much more optimistic when it comes to the relationship, with almost half (45%) wishing for it to be closer.
- In comparison, Germans are less enthusiastic: one third (34%) thinks the relationship should become closer, and another third (33%) prefers it to stay as it is.
- Notably, 17% of Germans believe the relationship should be less close.



- No, there is no common foundation of "Western values."
- Yes, there is a common foundation of "Western values" but it is eroding.
- Yes, there is a common foundation of "Western values" and it is intact.
- Don't know

Shared Western values eroding

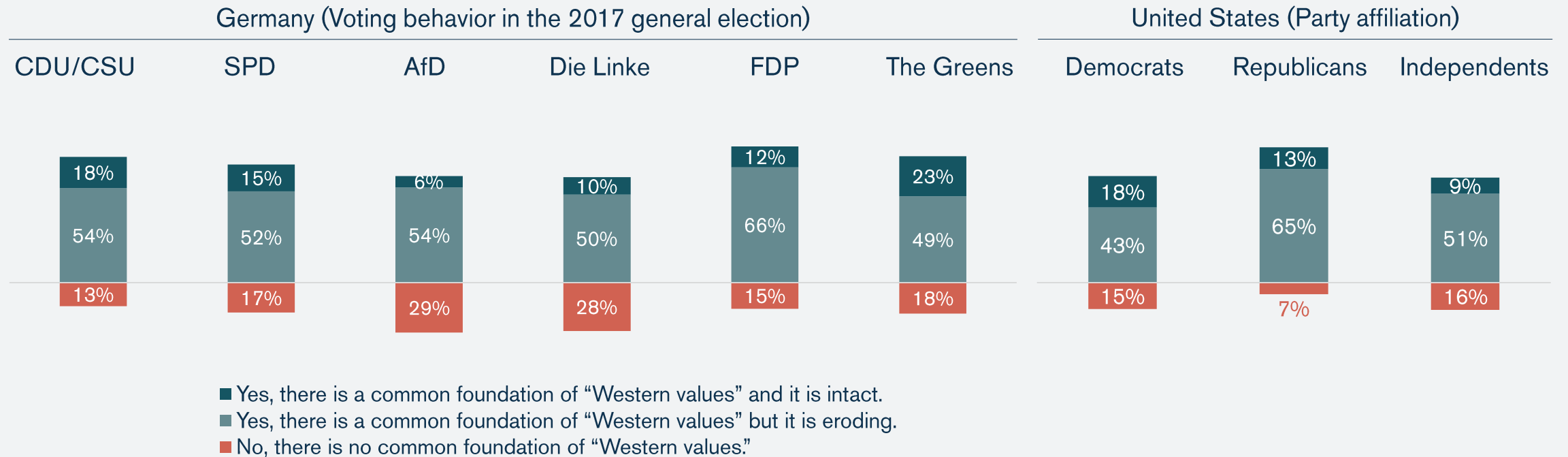
Is there a common foundation of "Western values"?

Germans and Americans are both skeptical regarding values shared by Western nations. One out of every two thinks that this foundation exists, but that it is eroding.

In Germany, 20% of all respondents go so far as to entirely reject the basis of shared values.

FDP voters and Republicans more likely to believe in shared values

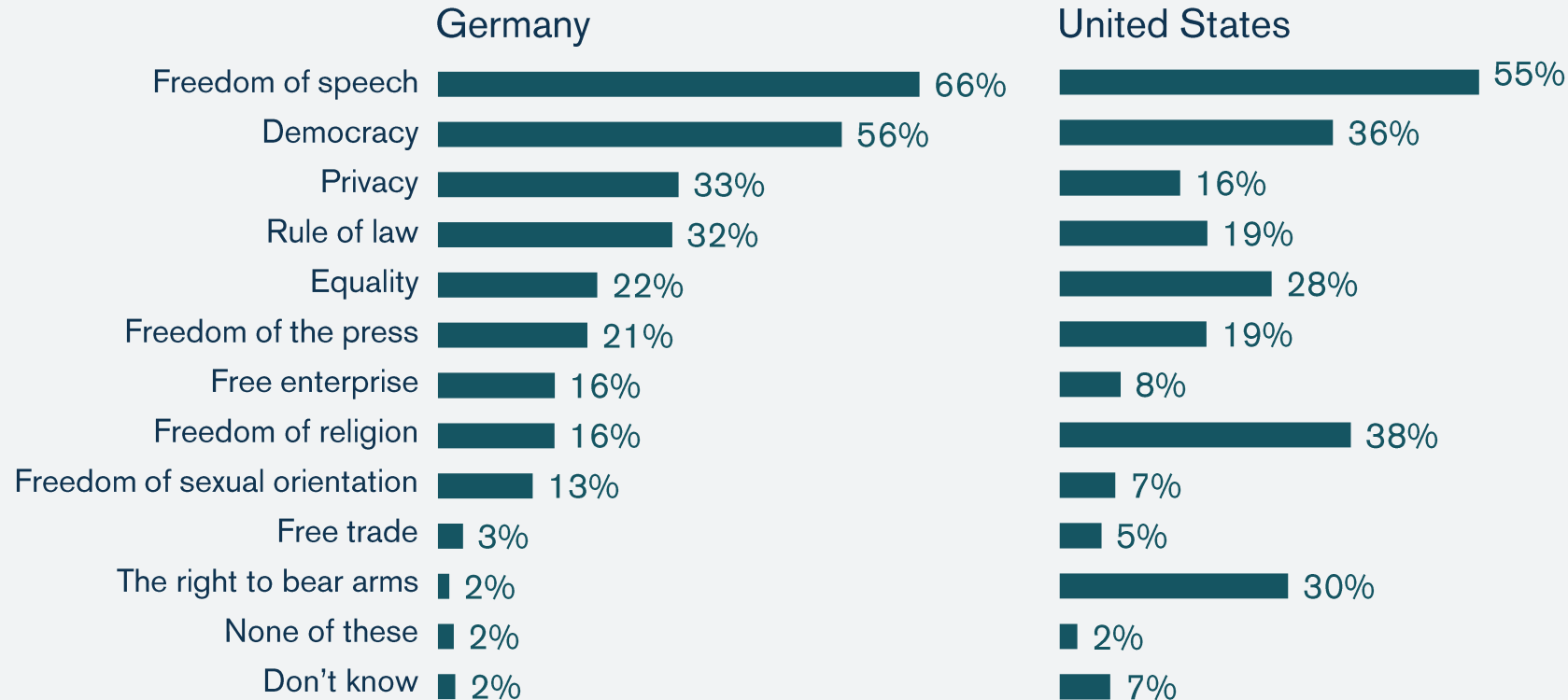
Is there a common foundation of “Western values”?



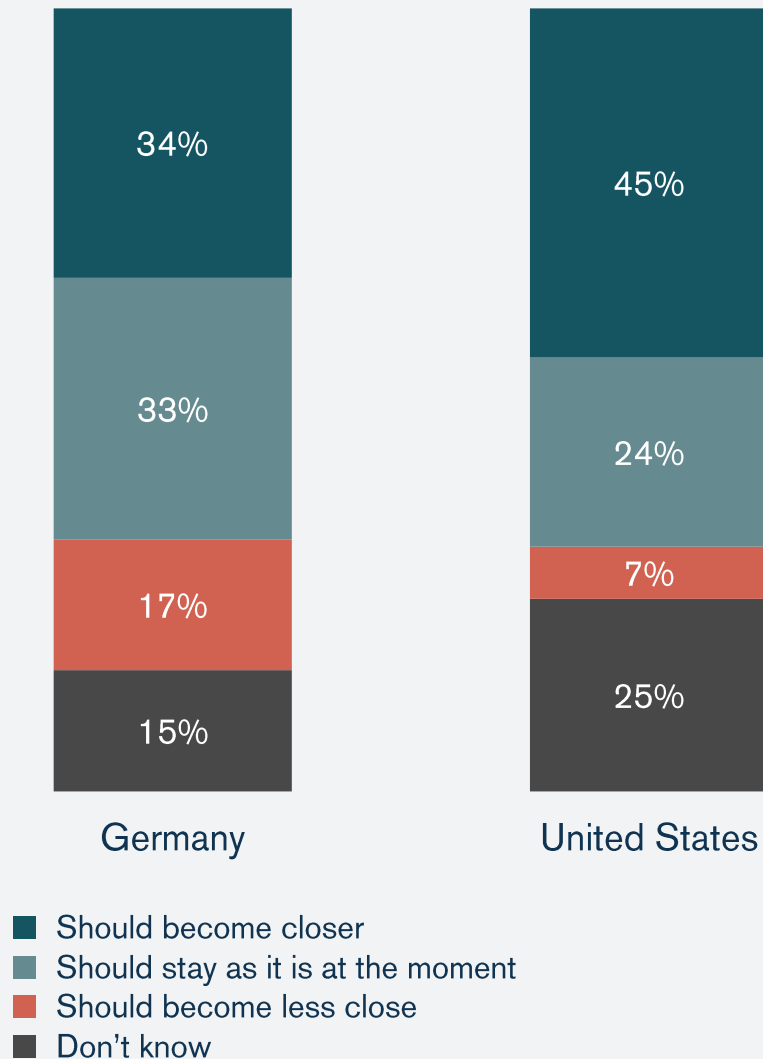
“Don’t know” is not shown.

Freedom of speech most important value for all

Which values are considered to be the most crucial “Western values”?



*Respondents were asked to pick three choices



Germans and Americans agree on a close relationship

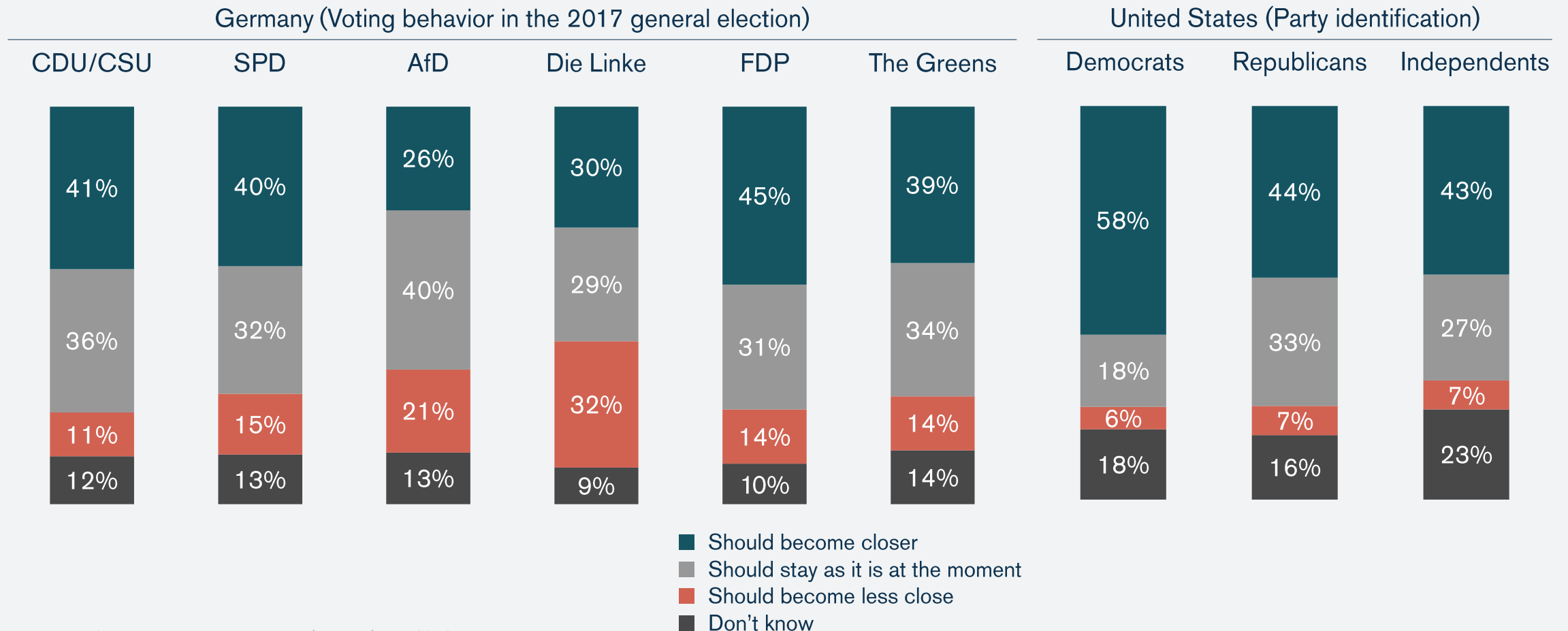
Should the U.S.-European relationship be closer, less close, or stay as close as it is?

67% of Germans and 69% of Americans think the relationship should stay as close as it is or be even closer.

It is important to note, however, that almost one out of every five Germans thinks the relationship with the U.S. should be less close than it is at the moment.

Views on transatlantic partnership differ depending on party affiliation

Should the U.S.-European relationship be closer, less close, or stay as it is?



Terrorism and climate change biggest global challenges

Both Germans and Americans agree that terrorism and climate change are the most urgent challenges the world is facing.

- One out of five Germans and Americans thinks that terrorism is the most important issue, followed by climate change (19% in Germany, 18% in the U.S.)

Other global challenges:

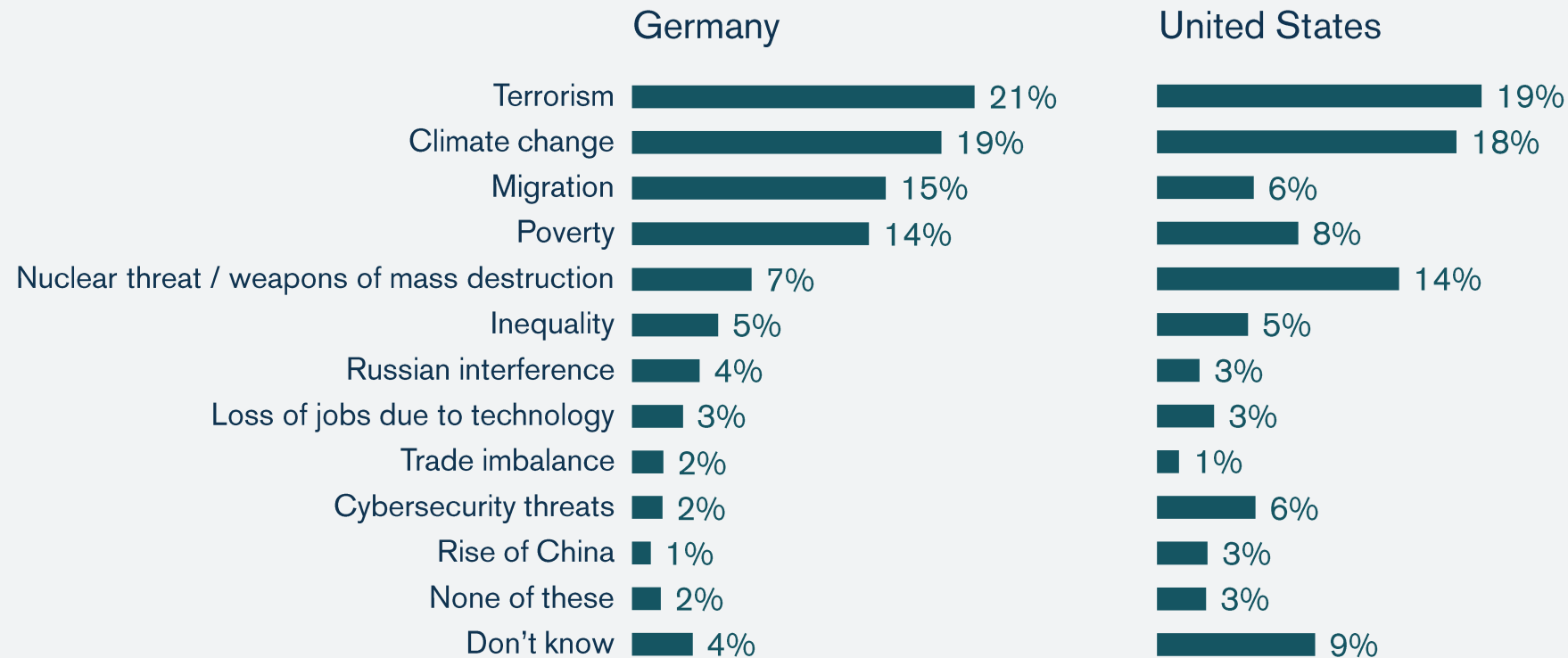
- 14% of American respondents find the threat of weapons of mass destruction urgent.
- For Germans, migration (15%) and poverty (14%) are far more urgent than WMD.

Accordingly, Germans and Americans think cooperation between the U.S. and Europe can make the biggest difference in fighting terrorism.

- American respondents believe climate change is the second common challenge that the U.S. and Europe might handle effectively.
- In Germany, 13% think that the U.S. and Europe should cooperate more on the trade imbalance (although this is not considered an urgent challenge).

Terrorism and climate change most urgent for Germans and Americans

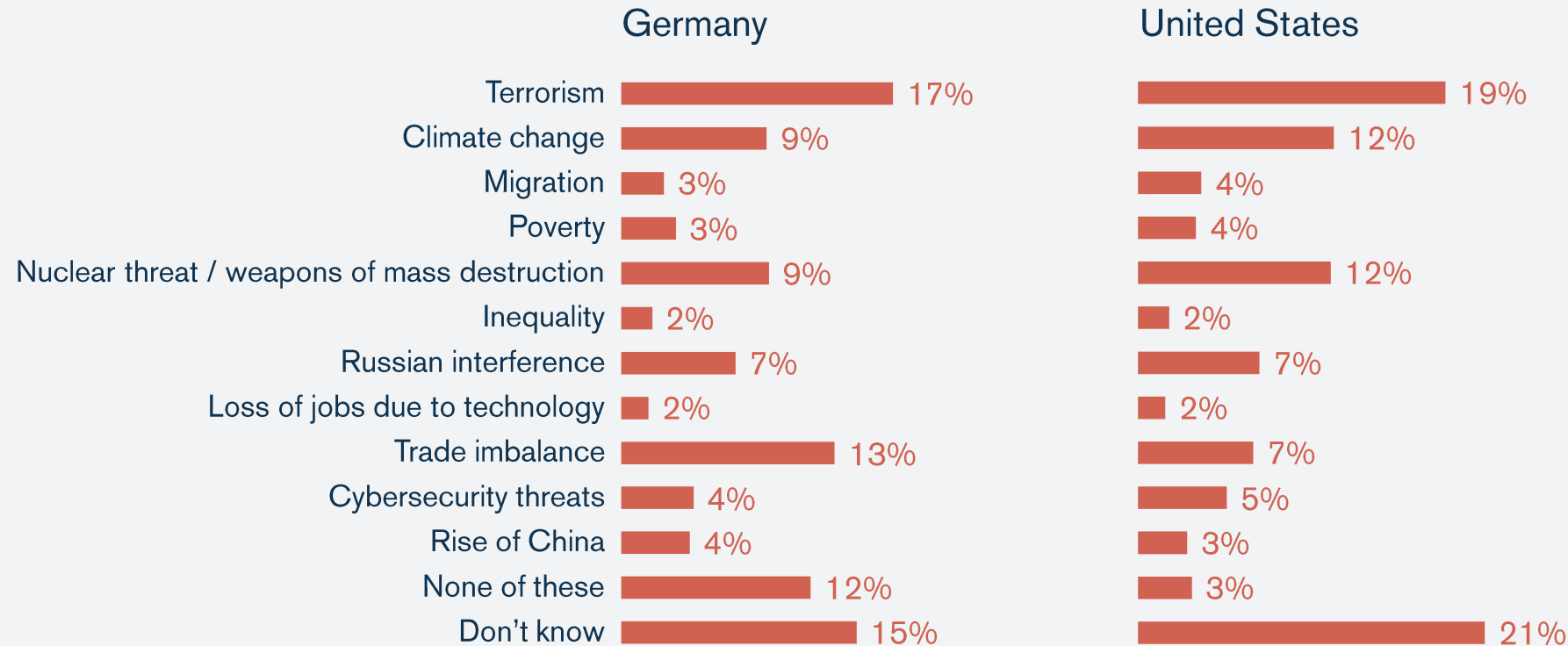
Of the following, which is the most urgent global challenge?



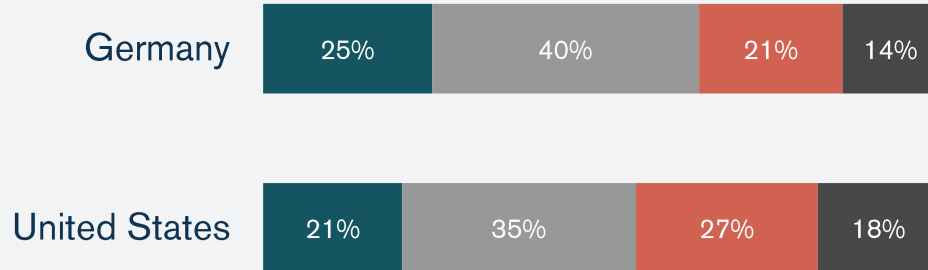
*Respondents were asked to pick three choices

U.S. and Europe considered to be most effective in fighting terrorism

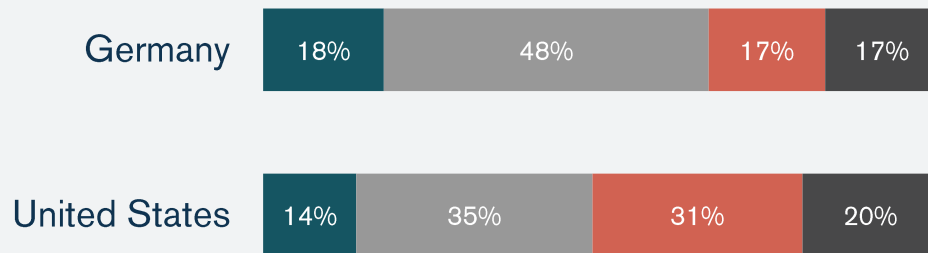
In which areas can cooperation between the U.S. and Europe make the biggest difference?



Economic threat or opportunity



Security threat or opportunity



- High opportunity
- Opportunity as well as a threat
- High threat
- Don't know

Germans view China's rise as opportunity

Does the rise of China pose more of a threat or opportunity regarding security and the economy?

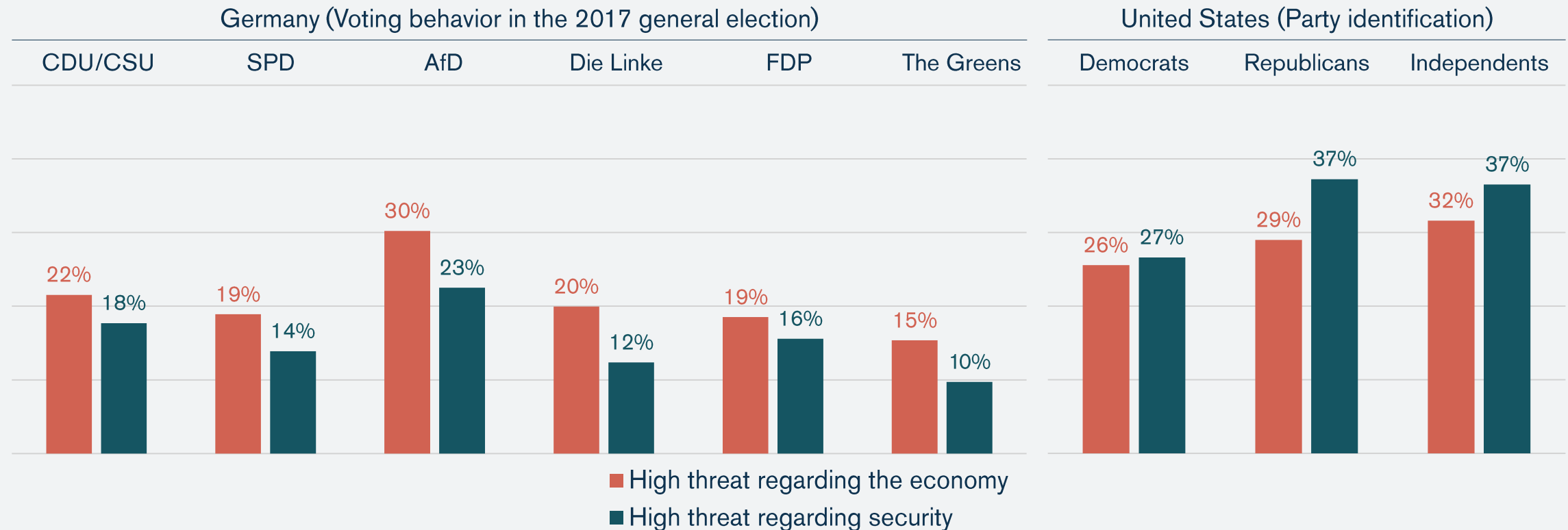
The share of Germans who think China's rise is an economic opportunity exceeds the share of those perceiving it as a threat.

Only 17% of Germans see China's rise as a high security threat.

Americans, on the other hand, are far less optimistic. More than a fourth think China's rise is an economic threat, and almost one third are worried about security.

Republicans and Independents see China as security threat

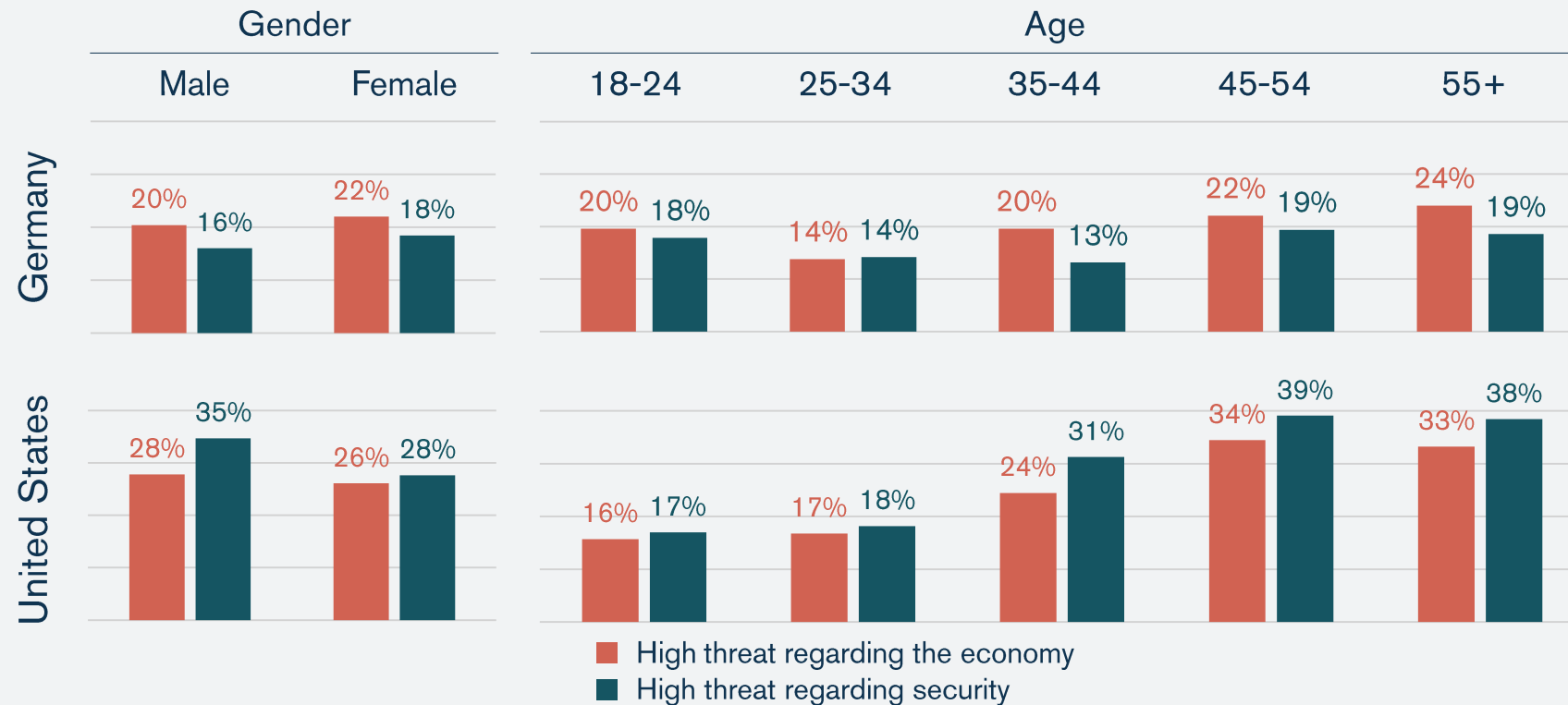
Does the rise of China pose more of a threat or opportunity regarding security and the economy?



“High opportunity,” “Opportunity as well as a threat,” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

In the U.S., age and perception of threat correlated

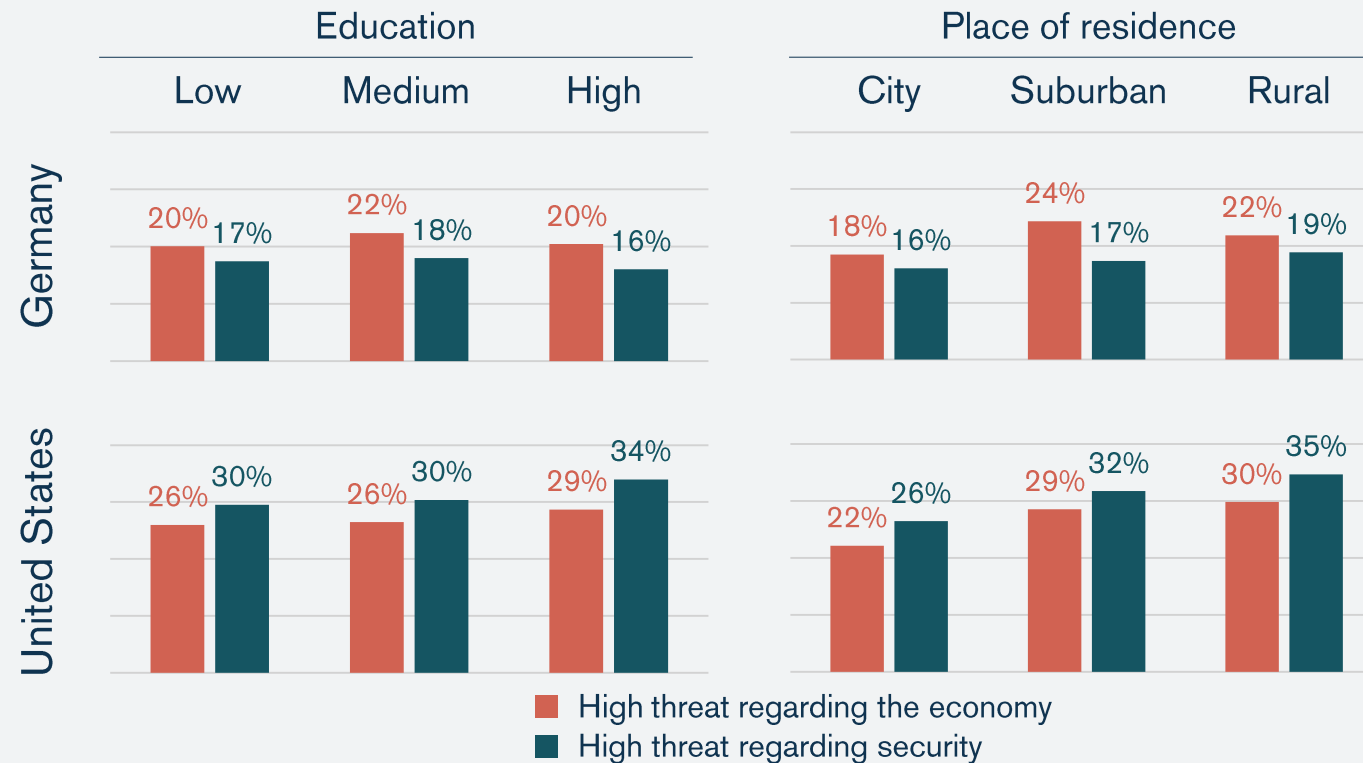
Does the rise of China pose more of a threat or opportunity regarding security and the economy?



“High opportunity,” “Opportunity as well as a threat,” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

In the U.S., perception of threat higher in rural areas

Does the rise of China pose more of a threat or opportunity regarding security and the economy?



“High opportunity,” “Opportunity as well as a threat,” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

Americans more optimistic on free trade agreement than Germans

More than one out of three Americans (36%) think that a free trade agreement is likely.

- In comparison, only 14% of Germans consider an agreement to be likely.
- In the U.S., the higher likelihood may be driven mainly by Republicans: more than half (53%) who identify as Republican think that there will be an agreement during the current administration.

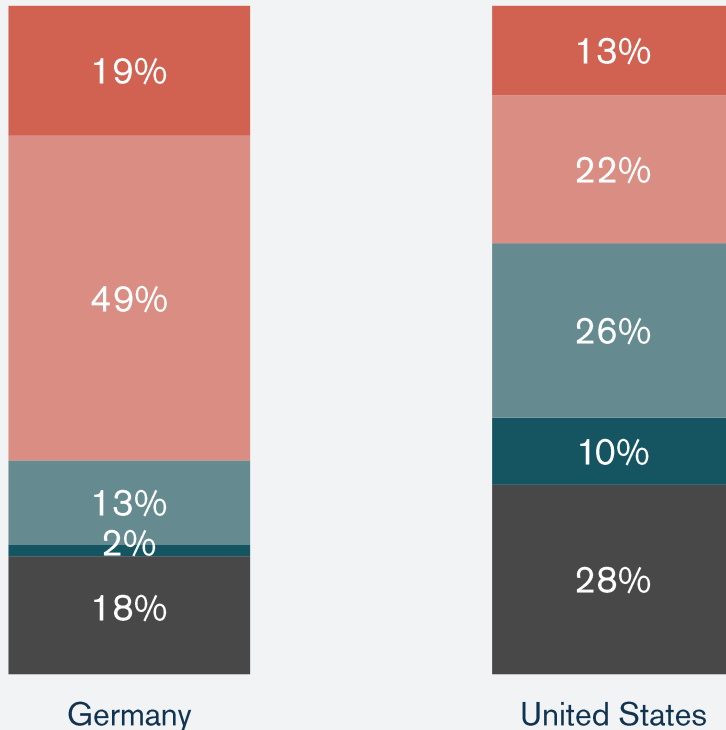
Germans and Americans both assume that the benefits of a potential free trade agreement are reciprocal.

- Half of Germans (48%) and Americans (53%) think that both sides will profit.

- Germans are more skeptical about the nature of an agreement in general: 15% think an agreement would mainly benefit the U.S.
- Voters for the AfD (21%) and the Greens (24%) are particularly skeptical.

Remarkably, more than one out of four Americans (28%) do not have an opinion on which side (if at all) would benefit from an agreement.

- This share is especially high among younger people and those with lower education levels.



- Not likely at all
- Not very likely
- Fairly likely
- Very likely
- Don't know

More than one third of Americans anticipate a free trade agreement

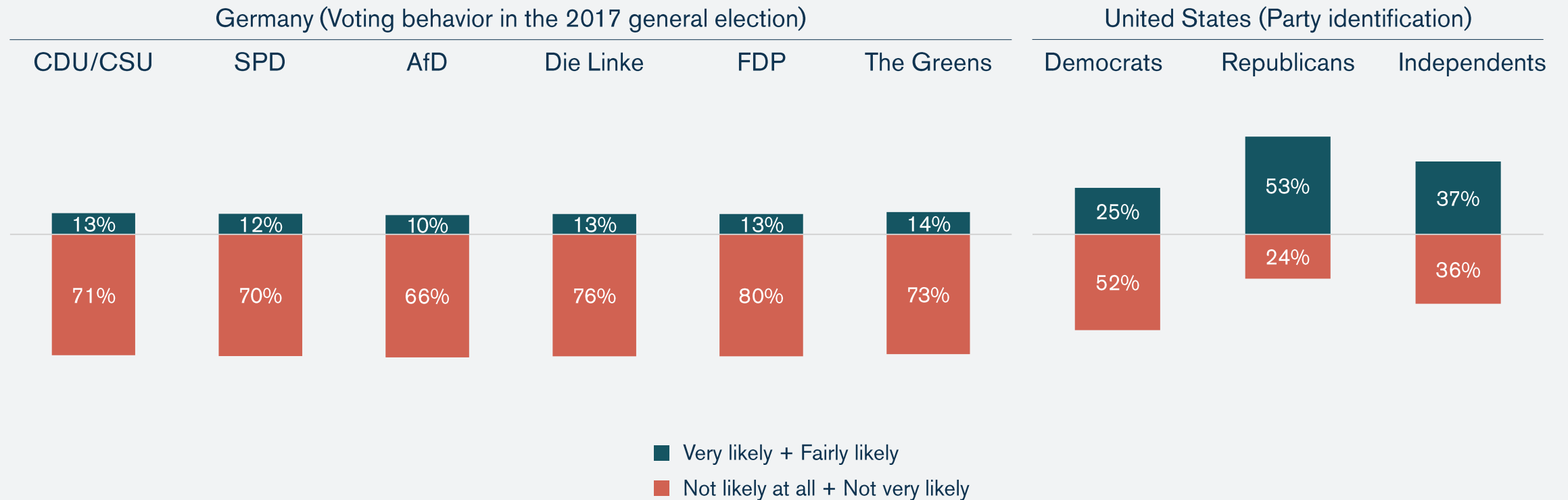
How likely is a free trade agreement between the U.S. and EU during the current U.S. administration?

Americans are more optimistic about a free trade agreement. More than one third think that an agreement is likely.

In comparison, only one out of six Germans is optimistic about this matter – almost two out of three state that an agreement is unlikely.

Republicans most optimistic on free trade agreement

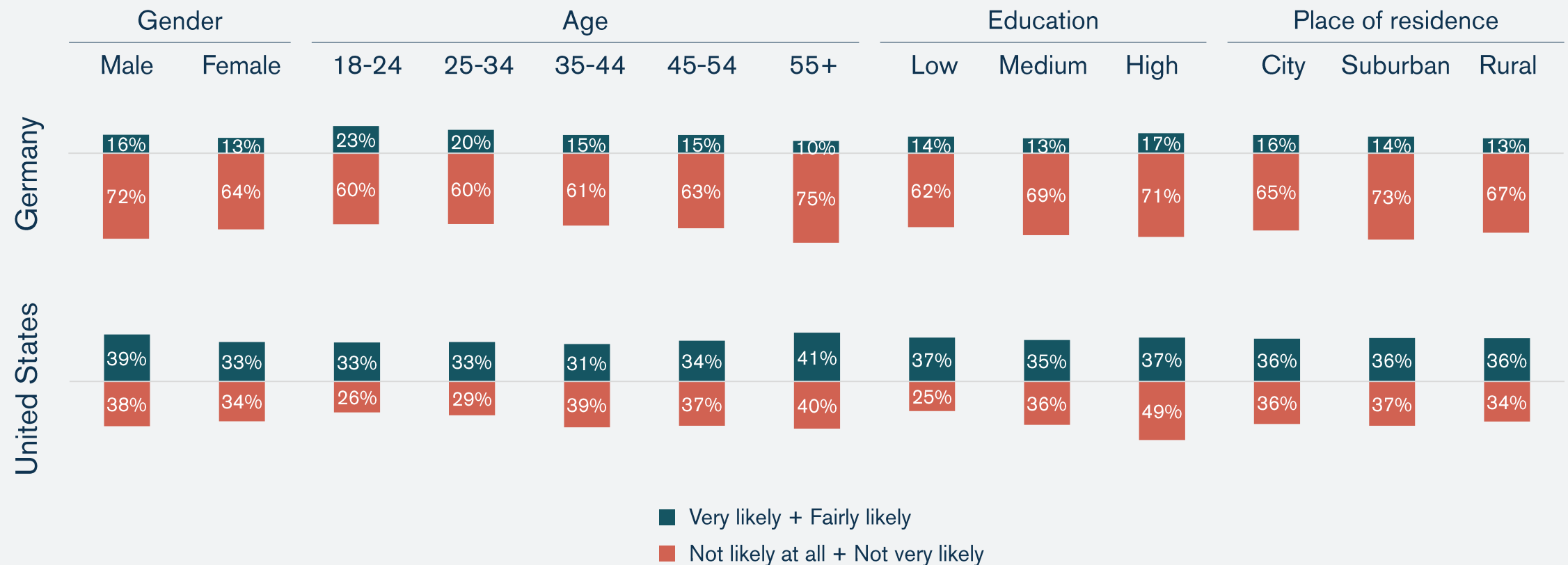
How likely is a free trade agreement between the U.S. and EU during the current U.S. administration?



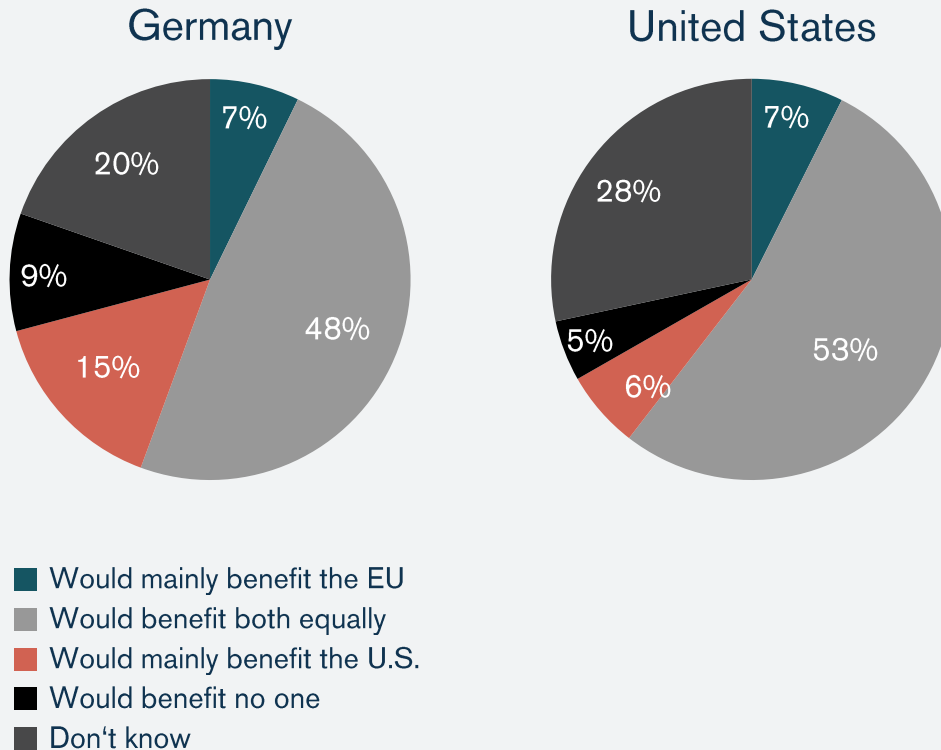
“Don’t know” is not shown.

Germans pessimistic about free trade agreement across the board

How likely is a free trade agreement between the U.S. and EU during the current U.S. administration?



"Don't know" is not shown.



Who is it for?

A free trade agreement between the U.S. and EU would benefit mainly U.S., mainly the EU, both, or no one?

Both Germans and Americans believe that the benefit of a free trade agreement would be reciprocal.

It is important to note, however, that 15% of Germans (mainly voters for the AfD and the Greens) believe it would mainly benefit the United States.

Confidence in democratic institutions low

Both Germans and Americans have low confidence in their democratic institutions.

- In both countries, one third (33% in Germany; 34% in the U.S.) have little confidence.

In Germany as well as in the U.S., confidence in democratic institutions decreases with age, and increases with education.

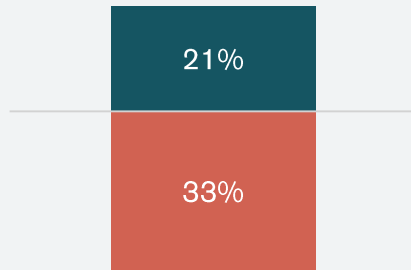
- Older respondents (55+ years) have lower confidence than young people.
- Germans and Americans with high education are more confident in institutions than those with low or medium education.
- In Germany, voters for the far right (AfD) and die Linke have lower confidence than other voters.

- In the U.S., Democrats (25%) are slightly more confident than Republicans (17%).

Fake news could be a contributing factor.

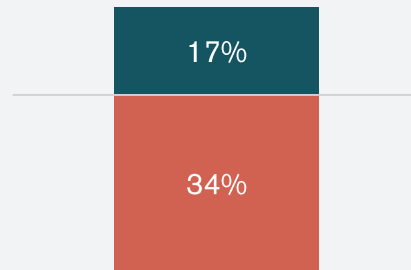
- Americans feel more threatened by fake news than Germans: 44% of Americans think that fake news is a serious threat to democracy; in Germany, this share is 35%.
- In the U.S., Republicans (56%) are more concerned than Democrats (38%).
- In Germany, voters for the AfD are far less concerned than other voters.

Confidence in German democratic institutions



Respondents from
Germany

Confidence in American democratic institutions



Respondents from the
United States

■ Complete confidence + Very much confidence

■ No confidence at all + Very little confidence

“Some confidence” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

Bad news for democratic institutions

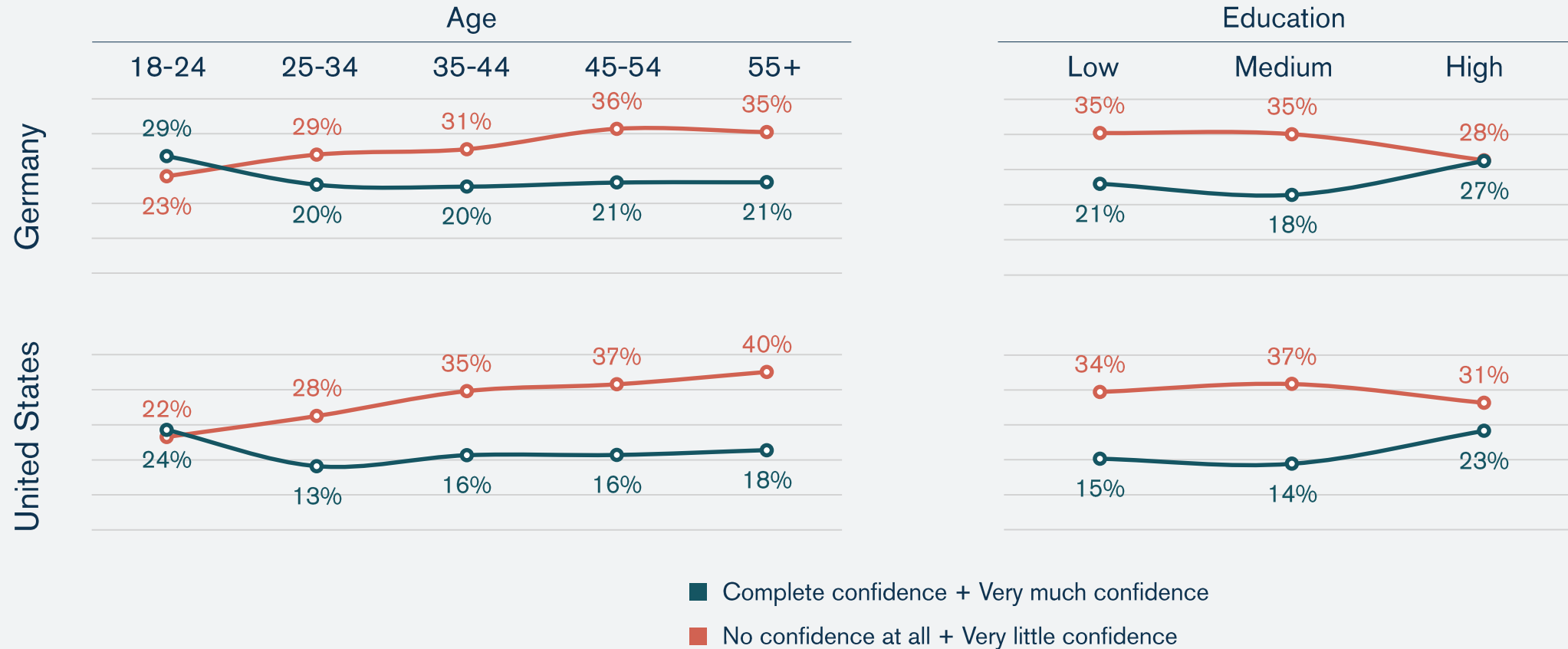
How much confidence, if at all, do you have in the democratic institutions in the U.S./Germany?

Both Germans and Americans have rather low confidence in democratic institutions.

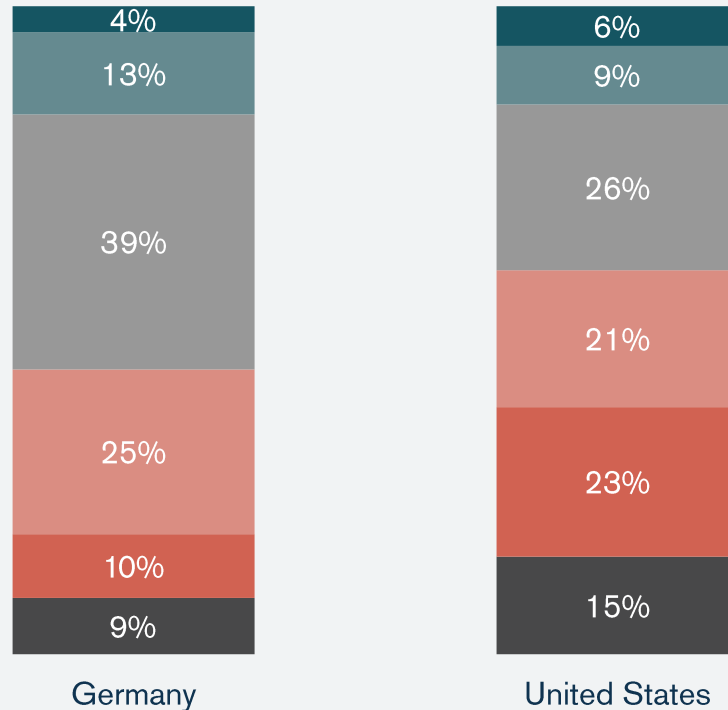
Only one out of five has confidence, while one out of three has little or no confidence.

Confidence decreases with age – and increases with education

How much confidence, if at all, do you have in the democratic institutions in the U.S./Germany?



“Some confidence” and “Don’t know” are not shown.



- Not a threat at all
- Rather not a threat
- Somewhat a threat
- A serious threat
- A very serious threat
- Don't know

Fake news threatens democracy

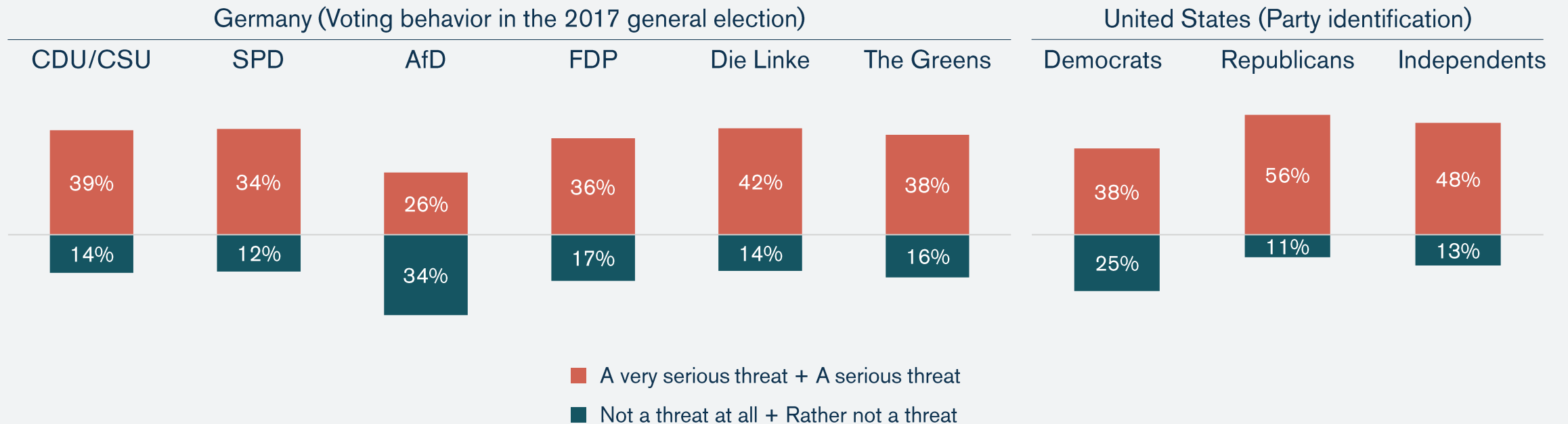
How much of a threat, if at all, do you think fake news is to democracy?

74% of Germans think that fake news is a threat, to varying degrees.

In the U.S., that number is similar, at 70%.

Some concern about fake news across the political spectrum

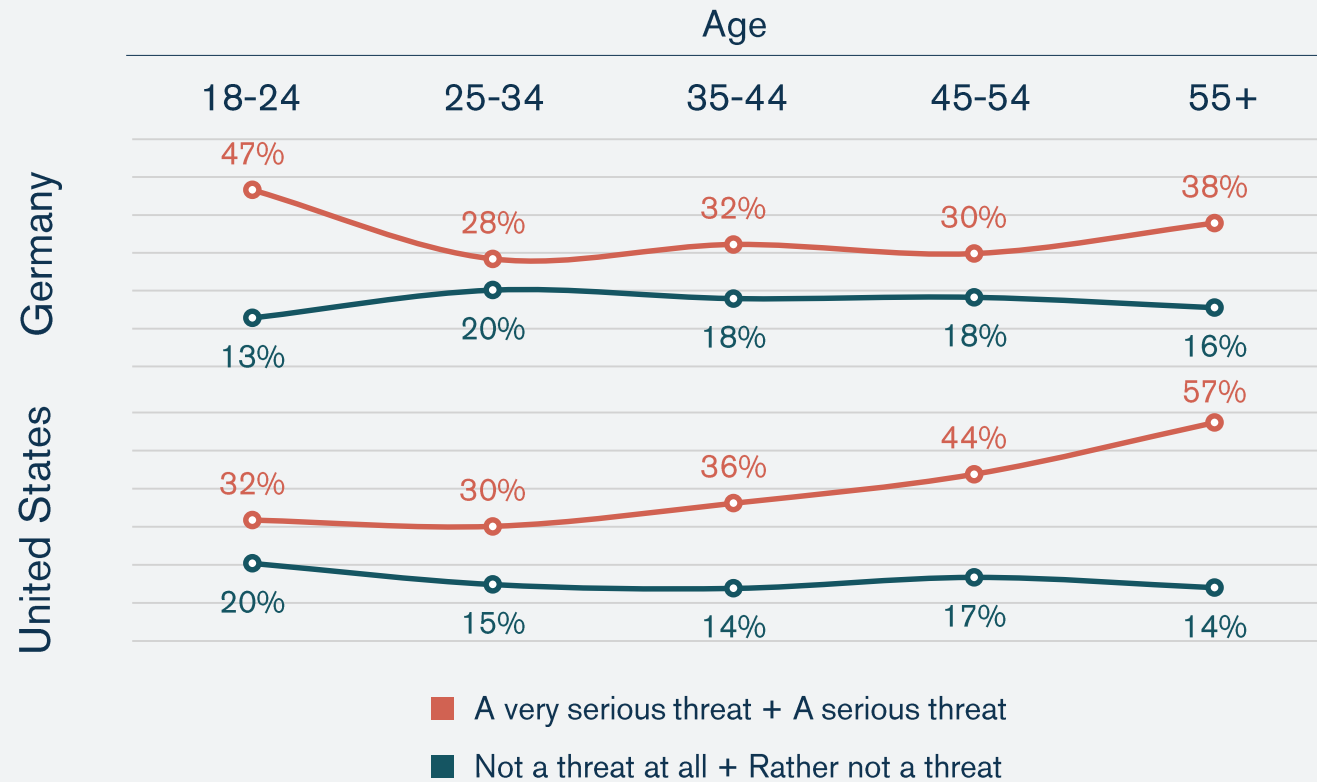
How much of a threat, if at all, do you think fake news is to democracy?



“Somewhat a threat” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

In Germany, youth is concerned – in the U.S., the older respondents

How much of a threat, if at all, do you think fake news is to democracy?



“Somewhat a threat” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

Public split on effects of digital transformation

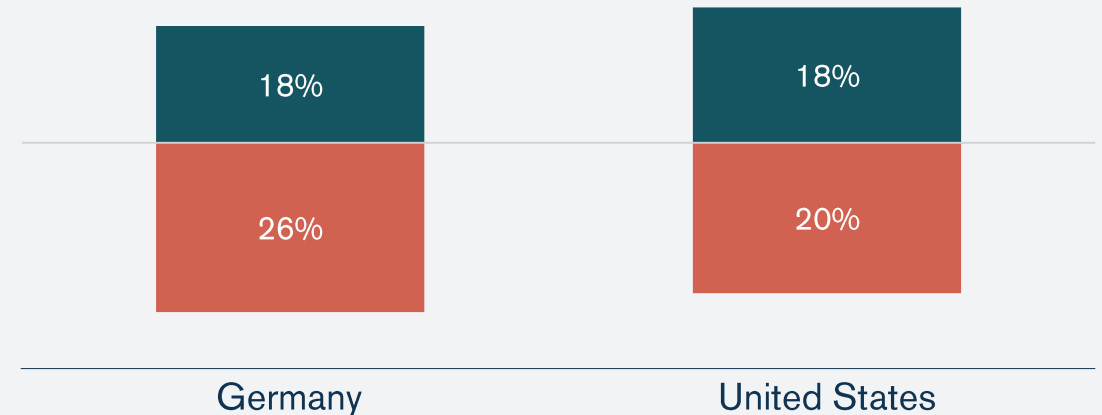
Americans and Germans are split on the impact of digitalization on the job market, with a slight majority perceiving the transformation as a threat.

- One out of four Germans thinks that digitalization is a threat for the job market, and only one out of five thinks it is an opportunity.
- The overall picture is more mixed in the U.S. The numbers are almost evenly split, with 20% perceiving a threat, and 18% an opportunity.

Those with high education levels more frequently think of digitalization as an opportunity.

- Still, a considerable share of those with high education levels see it as a threat for the job market (24% in Germany, 18% in the U.S.).

Is the digital transformation a threat or opportunity for the job market?

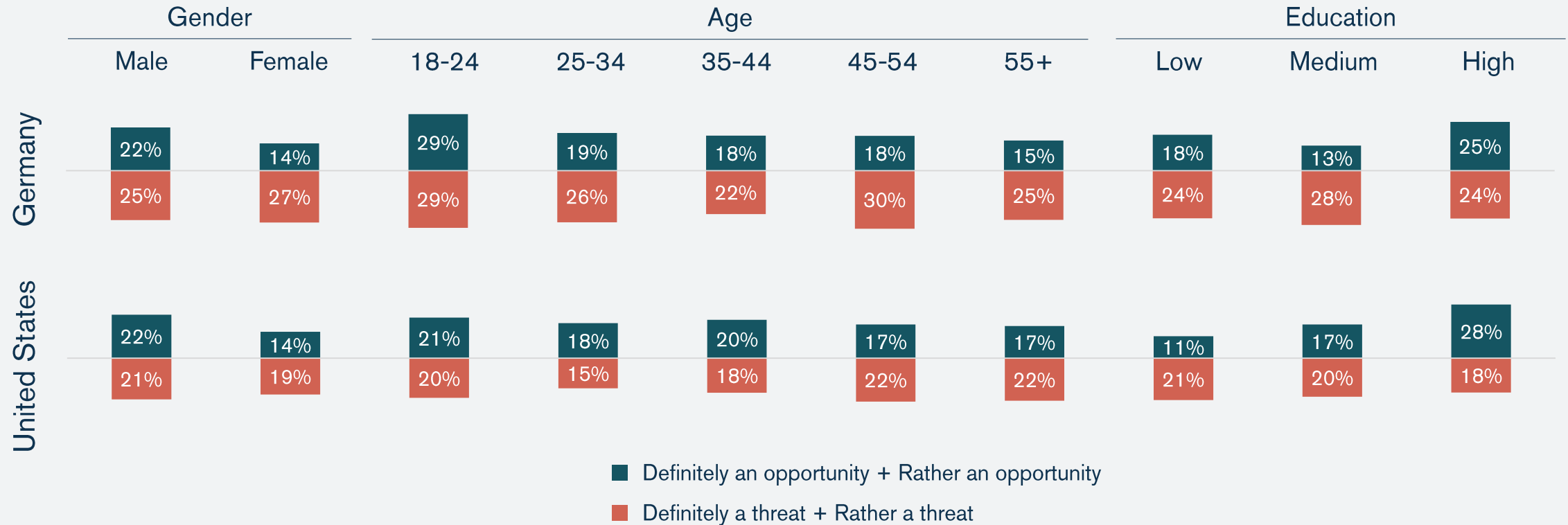


- Definitely an opportunity + Rather an opportunity
- Definitely a threat + Rather a threat

“About as much of a threat as an opportunity” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

Men more optimistic than women regarding effects of digitalization

Is the digital transformation a threat or opportunity for the job market?



“About as much of a threat as an opportunity” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

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