



NATIONAL FOSTER CARE
**ADOPTION
ATTITUDES
SURVEY**

NOVEMBER 2007

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
& DETAILED FINDINGS**



**DAVE THOMAS
FOUNDATION
FOR ADOPTION®**

Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

 **HarrisInteractive**

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE
**ADOPTION
ATTITUDES
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NOVEMBER 2007 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
& DETAILED FINDINGS

Commissioned by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Conducted by Harris Interactive



DAVE THOMAS
FOUNDATION
FOR ADOPTION®

Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

November 1, 2007

Dear Friend,

Fifteen years ago, our founder, Dave Thomas, gave us his name, leveraged his business brand and placed us on the journey to do what's right for children — assuring a safe and loving adoptive home for *every* child in need.

As the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption continues to carry out Dave's promise, we remain committed to raising the national consciousness about the 114,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care, dispelling myths and misperceptions about the foster care adoption process and challenging the very barriers that create unnecessary waiting periods for children in need.

Accomplishing these goals will take a clear understanding of current American attitudes and beliefs about foster care adoption. We are pleased to share with you the enclosed groundbreaking 2007 *National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey*, commissioned through Harris Interactive.

The findings show us that Americans overwhelmingly support the concept of adoption and in particular foster care adoption. And yet, foster care adoptions have not increased significantly over the past five years and 114,000 children, through no fault of their own, wait in temporary care for a permanent family.

The 2007 *National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey* is a clear call to action. We must aggressively disseminate the urgency and the scope of the issue to the American public to elevate foster care adoption as a critical community, state and national priority; educate the public, the media and policymakers about the realities of foster care adoption; advocate for and address the long-term support that families who adopt from foster care deserve; insure results-driven quality customer service for families, from initial phone call to post-adoption support; and promote the need for an elevated commitment to child-focused recruitment of adoptive families for the longest waiting children in the foster care system.

As Dave Thomas said, "These children are not someone else's responsibility. They are our responsibility." There is hope. Three in 10 Americans have considered adoption and of those, 71 percent, or roughly 48 million, have considered foster care adoption. Working together, we will assure that every child has a safe home and a loving family. It is not only our vision— it is our indefatigable responsibility.

Thank you for taking the time to review the 2007 *National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey*. If you need any further information, please contact us at 1-800-ASK-DTFA or www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

All good wishes,

Rita L. Soronen
Executive Director



NATIONAL FOSTER CARE
ADOPTION ATTITUDES SURVEY
NOVEMBER 2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 BACKGROUND

Every day in America, children are abused, neglected and abandoned. Thousands enter the foster care and juvenile justice system through no fault of their own and are subsequently permanently removed from their homes because their birth families are unable or unwilling to provide a safe environment for them.

Today, 114,000 children in the U.S. foster care system are available for adoption.¹ The average wait for a child is nearly four years in continuous care. These children may have moved multiple times and all too frequently grow up in the system (the average age of the waiting child is now 9 years old). More children are made available for adoption from foster care each year than are adopted and most compelling, more than 20,000 youths will turn 18 and exit the system without an adoptive family this year.²

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption views the urgency of this issue through the eyes of a child. We are dedicated to these critical core beliefs:

- Every child deserves a safe, permanent, loving family.
- No child is unadoptable.
- No child should linger in foster care or leave the system without a family.

In order to ensure that every child in foster care finds a forever family the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct a landmark survey to better understand American attitudes toward foster care adoption.

1.1 SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption commissioned Harris Interactive to understand Americans' attitudes about foster care adoption, their beliefs about the children waiting to be adopted, their perceptions of the system caring for these children and their attitudes toward what a healthy living environment is for a child. By highlighting perceptions, or misperceptions in these areas, we can work to more effectively move children from the temporary, yet too often long-term care of the state, into the permanent and nurturing care of a family.

The survey includes a section on the respondents who have participated in the foster care adoption process to find out more about what motivates people to take action and what causes them to complete or drop out of the adoption process.

The survey also includes a section on those who have been foster parents, in recognition of the large number of foster parents (60 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) who go on to adopt.

¹ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children; Interim Estimates for FY 2005

² U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, AFCARS Report (September 2006)

Among the specific objectives of the study were the following:

- Understand why Americans do or do not adopt from foster care.
- Learn about the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that create barriers to foster care adoption.
- Understand what beliefs Americans have about foster care adoption, the children waiting to be adopted and the foster care system.
- Highlight American perceptions about who can, or should be, an adoptive parent.
- Provide research-based information about American perceptions to those charged with action on behalf of children – child advocates, adoption professionals and practitioners, policymakers and the media.

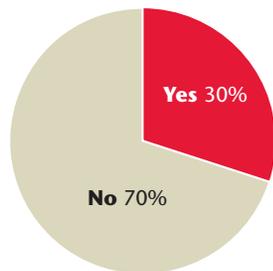
The 2007 *National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey* differs from the 2002 *National Adoption Attitudes Survey*, sponsored by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, in its methodology and focus. With an intensified lens on foster care adoption and the use of a state-of-the-art online survey to capture more detailed information, the 2007 *National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey* provides compelling and provocative information on what Americans think and believe.

Complete detailed findings from the 2007 *National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey* can be found at www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org.

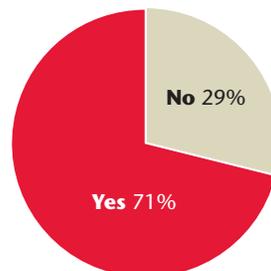
1.2 KEY FINDINGS

- **Three in 10 Americans** have or are considering adoption and **71 percent** of those have considered foster care adoption as their primary method for creating or expanding their family.
- When Americans are considering adoption, they now consider foster care adoption more often than any other type of adoption.

Considered Adoption^{Q445}



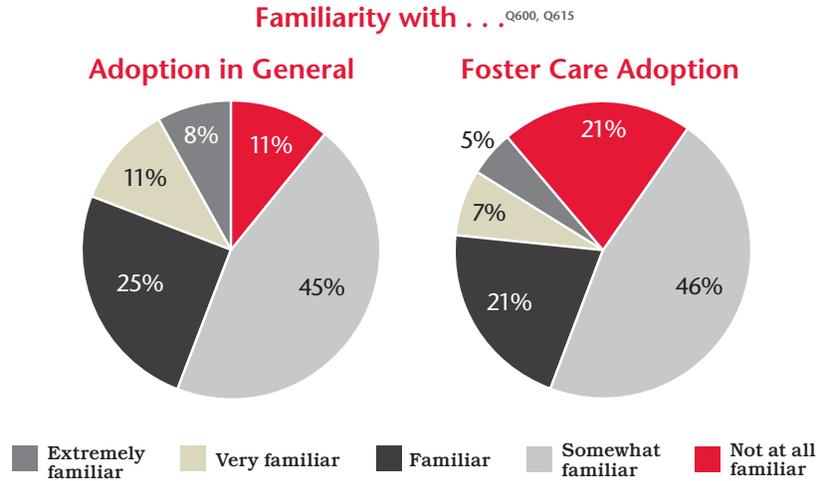
Considered Foster Care Adoption^{Q460}



Q445. Are you or have you ever considered adopting a child? BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

Q460. Are you considering or have you considered adopting a child from the US foster care system? BASE: Respondents that are or have considered adopting (n=549)

- Although **89 percent** of Americans are familiar with adoption in general, **79 percent** of Americans are familiar with foster care adoption.



Q600. In general, how familiar would you say that you are with the topic of adoption?

Q615. In general, how familiar would you say that you are with the topic of foster care adoption?
 BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

- Yet, given this large pool of potential adoptive parents who are both familiar with the issue and considering acting (48 million adults³), **114,000** children still wait to be adopted from the U.S. foster care system.
- Many Americans do not have an accurate understanding of the U.S. foster care system.

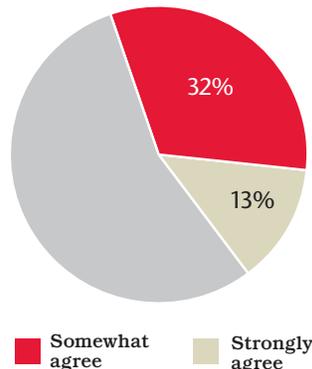
Core misperceptions about Foster Care Adoption:

1. Americans do not have a clear picture of the 114,000 eligible children in the U.S. foster care system waiting for adoption.

FOR EXAMPLE, 45 percent of Americans erroneously believe children enter foster care because of juvenile delinquency.^{Q795}

The Children Were Juvenile Delinquents

Q795. There are a number of reasons why children might be placed in foster care in your community today. Please indicate your level of agreement with each reason. BASE: All respondents (n=1660)



³ The number of Americans considering foster care adoption based upon 71 percent of three in 10 Americans according to U.S. Census Bureau U.S adult, population estimate of 225,662,922 million, July 1, 2006. <http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2006/NC-EST2006-02.xls>

2. Americans underestimate the diversity of individuals who are capable of adopting from foster care.

FOR EXAMPLE, less than half of Americans believe that a single parent raising an adoptive child definitely can provide a healthy environment.^{Q510}

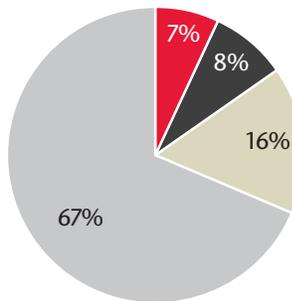
Q510. Do you believe that the following living arrangements can provide a healthy and loving environment for children? BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

3. Americans do not fully understand the U.S. foster care adoption process.

FOR EXAMPLE, two-thirds of those considering adoption fear the biological parent will take the child back.^{Q720}

Being Sure That the Birth Parents Could not Take the Child Back

Q720. There are a number of concerns that people might have when considering adoption of foster children. For each statement listed below, please rate the level of your concern. BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

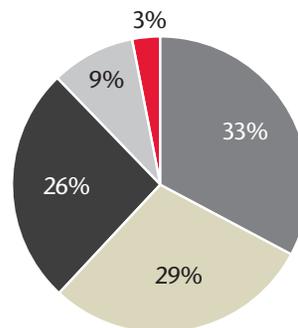


Major concern Minor concern No concern Not sure

While 88 percent of Americans have overwhelmingly positive opinions of foster care adoption in principle, 37 percent have relatively negative opinions about the U.S. foster care system, while 26 percent are confused or unsure about the process and what it entails.^{Q605, Q710}

Opinion of Foster Care Adoption

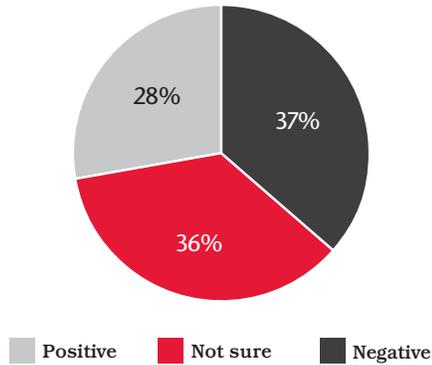
Q605. In general, what is your opinion of US infant adoption, adoption of a child from the foster care system, or international adoption?



Extremely favorable Very favorable Favorable Somewhat favorable Not at all favorable

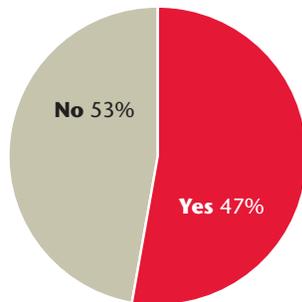
Opinion of U.S Foster Care System

Q710. In general, would you say you have a positive or negative opinion of the foster care system? BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

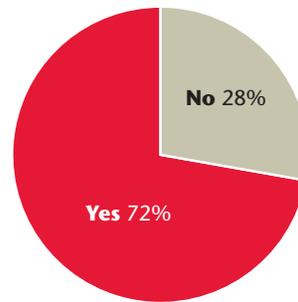


Almost half of Americans are touched by adoption (were adopted, did adopt, have family or friends who were adopted), 72 percent have a very favorable opinion of adoption and two-thirds believe we as a society should be doing more to encourage and support foster care adoption.

Touched by Adoption



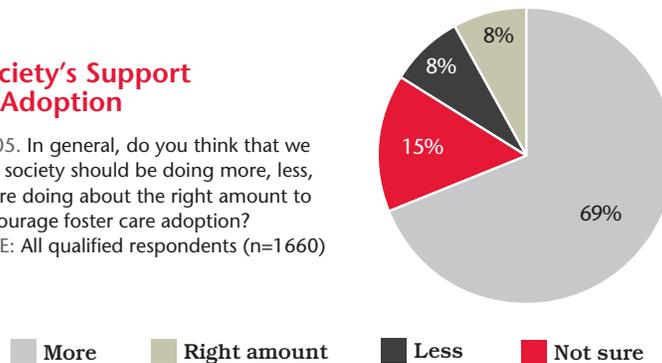
Favorable of Adoption



Q405. Were you adopted as a child? Q425. Have you adopted a child?
 Q485. Has anyone in your family or among your close friends ever been adopted?
 Q605. In general what is your opinion of US infant adoption, adoption of a child from the foster care system, and international adoption? BASE: All qualified respondents (n=1660)

Society's Support of Adoption

Q705. In general, do you think that we as a society should be doing more, less, or are doing about the right amount to encourage foster care adoption? BASE: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



The results of the study highlight what Americans do and do not understand about the waiting children and the foster care adoption process. While Americans do understand the age of waiting children (78 percent of respondents come close to estimating the actual average age of 9), they are clearly unaware of other important facts. The chart below highlights where major misperceptions about the children in foster care exist.

BELIEFS VERSUS REALITY

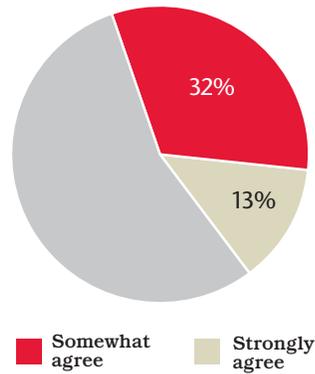
Children waiting in foster care to be adopted

America's Belief: 45 percent of Americans believe children enter foster care because of juvenile delinquency

Reality: Children enter the foster care system through no fault of their own, as victims of neglect, abandonment, or abuse

Believe Children in Foster Care are Juvenile Delinquents

Q795. There are a number of reasons why children might be placed in foster care in your community today. Please indicate your level of agreement with each reason.
BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

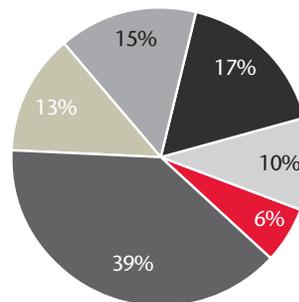


America's Belief: 61 percent of Americans underestimate how many children are waiting for adoptive families

Reality: 114,000 children are available for adoption in U.S. foster care⁴

Belief about Number of Children in US Foster Care Available to be Adopted

Q635. Based on what you know of adoption, please select the answer that you think most closely estimates the number of children in foster care available to be adopted in the United States.
BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

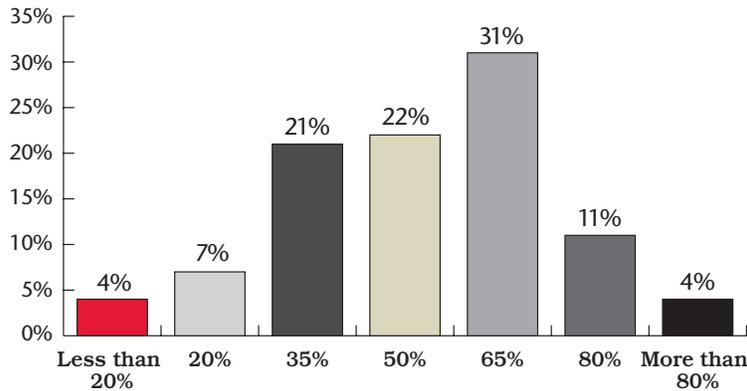


- Over 100,000
- About 100,000
- About 80,000
- About 60,000
- About 40,000
- About 20,000

⁴ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children; Interim Estimates for FY 2005

America's Belief: 68 percent overestimate the percentage of African-American children in the system^{Q645}

Reality: While African-American children are vastly overrepresented in this system, they account for **32 percent** of foster care children available for adoption

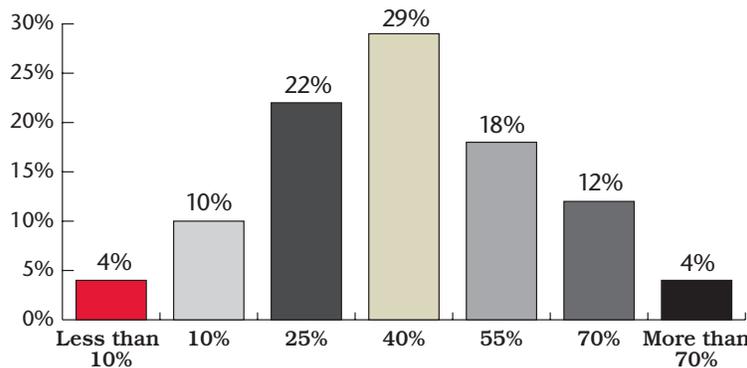


Q645. Based on what you know of adoption, please select the answer that you think most closely estimates the percentage of children in foster care in the United States that are available for adoption that are Black/African-American. BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

America's Belief: 85 percent overestimate the number of children in group or institutional care^{Q655}

Reality: 70 percent of children available for adoption are placed in foster homes

Belief about Percent of Children in Group or Institutional Care

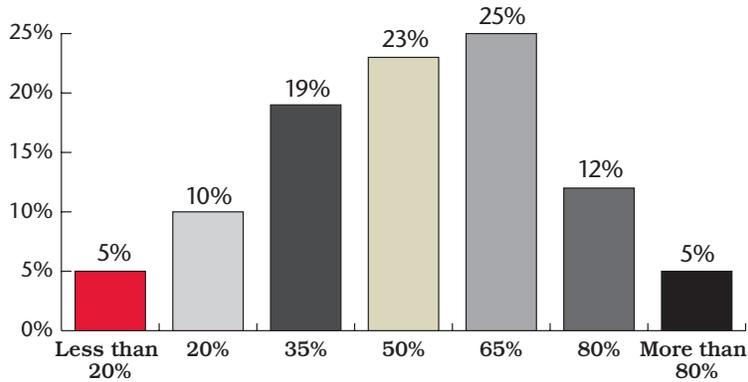


Q655. Based on what you know of adoption, please select the answer that you think most closely estimates the percentage of children in foster care in the United States that are available for adoption that are living in group homes or institutional care. BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

America’s Belief: **85 percent** overestimate the number of children who “age out” of the system^{Q660}

Reality: **21 percent** of children in foster care turn 18 and leave the system without a family each year

Belief about Percent of Children who “Age Out” of System



Q660. What percent of children do you think turn 18 and leave the foster care system in the United States without being adopted? BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

BELIEFS VERSUS REALITY

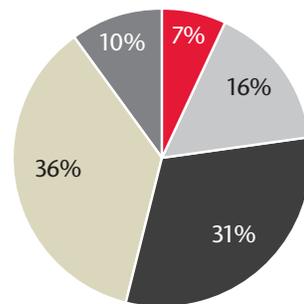
Foster care adoption process

America’s Belief: Most Americans correctly believe foster care adoption costs less than other types of adoption, but **46 percent** still incorrectly believe it is expensive^{Q680}

Reality: Foster care adoption is affordable with little or no cost to adopt

Perception of Expense

Q680. How expensive would you say that each type of adoption is based on what you have read, heard or seen? BASE: All respondents (n=1660)



- Very expensive
- Somewhat expensive
- Neither expensive nor inexpensive
- Somewhat inexpensive
- Very inexpensive

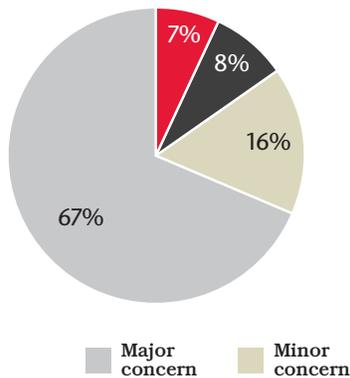
America's Belief: **Two-thirds** of those considering adoption fear the biological parent will take the child back and are not aware of the permanent termination of parental rights^{Q720}

Reality: Once a child is adopted out of foster care, the birth parents cannot return to claim them or fight in court for their return

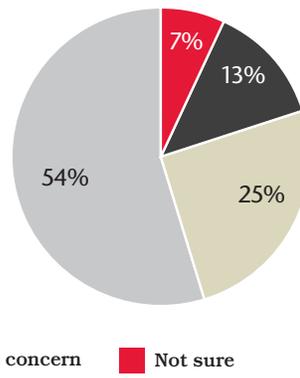
In addition to cost and finality, other major concerns expressed by respondents about adopting from foster care include the perceptions of medical, emotional and behavioral issues of the children and a fear of being unable to pay for the child's care and education.^{Q720}

Concerns about US Foster Care Adoption Process

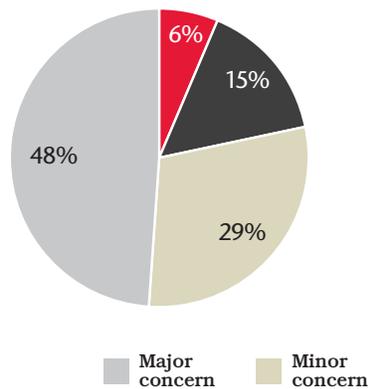
Being Sure That the Birth Parents Could not Take the Child Back



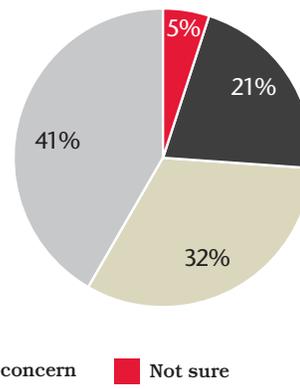
Being Able to Pay for the Adoption



Having the Financial Resources Needed to Educate the Child



The Cost of Raising the Child to Adulthood



Q720. There are a number of concerns that people might have when considering adoption of foster children. For each statement listed below, please rate the level of your concern. BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

BELIEFS VERSUS REALITY

Living environments for children

Interestingly, a barrier to adoption may be the views Americans have of healthy environments in which to raise an adopted child. Only four in 10 believe parents of a different religion than the child can definitely provide a healthy and loving environment, while less than half think single parents definitely can and a third believe same-sex parents definitely can.

Americans also appear conflicted about the subject of age. Although 56 percent believe that grandparents definitely can provide a healthy environment for a child, only 37 percent believe that a person over the age of 55 definitely can, while 20 percent believe that a person over the age of 65 definitely can.

America's Belief: **Less than half** of Americans believe that a single parent raising an adoptive child definitely can provide a healthy environment^{Q510}

Reality: **32 percent** of children adopted from foster care in 2005 were adopted by single parents or unmarried couples

America's Belief: Only **37 percent** believe a person over the age of 55 can definitely provide a healthy environment^{Q510}

Reality: **23 percent** of adopted children live with an adoptive parent 55 years or older (Child Trends analysis of 2005 AFCARS data)

America's Belief: Only **one-third** believe same-sex parents can definitely provide a healthy environment^{Q510}

Reality: An estimated **65,000** children (four percent of adopted children) are living with a lesbian or gay adoptive parent (Urban Institute data from 3/27/07)

Q510. Do you believe that the following living arrangements can provide a healthy and loving environment for children? BASE: All respondents (n=1660)

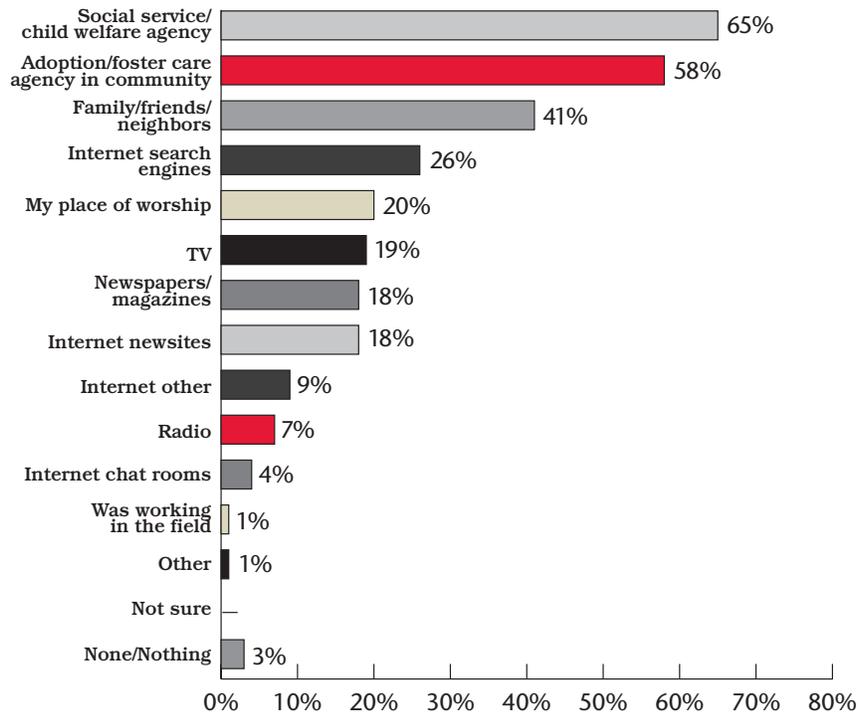
Beliefs among the foster care adoption subset

In an effort to begin to understand why those who actually begin the foster care adoption process either move forward or stop, the survey drilled down with those participants who had experience in the foster care system. Of those most interested in foster care adoption, only **23 percent** completed the process and finalized the adoption of a child.

Additionally, **nearly half** of those interested in foster care adoption chose not to engage in the process after obtaining information by phone. **Twenty-two percent** began the process after a phone call, but subsequently decided not to continue.

The survey also highlighted information sources for individuals engaged in the process. **Two-thirds** of the foster care subset noted that they turned to the social service or a child welfare agency for information about foster care adoption.^{Q800}

Sources of Information Used by Foster Care Subset^{Q805}



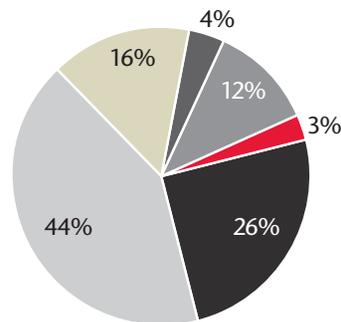
Q805. Where did you turn for information about foster care adoption? BASE: Respondents who have participated in foster care adoption (n=143)

Foster Parent Concerns about Adoption^{Q915}

Survey results of those who have been foster parents shows foster parent concerns about adopting foster children are similar to the general public. The needs of the child, financial ability to support the child and custody issues relative to the child all surface as significant concerns.

Breakdown of General (44%)

- Interference of child’s biological parents (15 percent)
- None/nothing (13 percent)
- Other (10 percent)
- Financial Concerns (6 percent)
- Transitioning process (5 percent)
- Decline to answer (0 percent)
- Don’t know (0 percent)



Legend: General (light grey), Health (olive green), Child Details (dark grey), Process (medium grey), Inconvenience (red), Personal Reasons (black)

Q915. What were or are your biggest concerns about adopting a foster child? BASE: Respondents who have been foster parents (n=72)

1.3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is hope for children waiting in foster care for adoptive families. More Americans are considering foster care adoption and may complete the process to offer a child a permanent home if we can:

- Inform potential adoptive parents about the need, the affordability and the finality of foster care adoption,
- Broaden society's definition of who can be a successful parent so potential adoptive parents do not exclude themselves from the foster care adoption process because of age, religion, or marital status,
- Overcome concerns by providing adequate post-adoption counseling and support services,

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption will use these important findings to:

- Aggressively disseminate the urgency and scope of this issue to the American public to elevate foster care adoption as a critical community, state and national priority.
- Educate the public, media and policymakers about the realities of foster care adoption relative to its affordability, the finality of the adoptive parent's custody, the needs of the children involved and the diversity of individuals who can be successful parents.
- Advocate for federal and state policymakers to understand and address the long-term financial, educational, medical and mental health support needs of families who adopt from foster care to generate additional safety nets for adoptive families.
- Inform adoption agencies and practitioners about the critical nature of responding to initial contact from those interested in adopting and supporting their efforts to drive accountable and results-driven quality customer service, from initial phone call to post-adoption support.
- Promote the need for an elevated commitment to child-focused recruitment of adoptive families for the longest-waiting children in the foster care system.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This *National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey* was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption between April 12, 2007 and May 1, 2007, among 1,660 adults (age 18 or older). Results were weighted as needed for demographic targets: age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100 percent response rates. These are only theoretical, because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to be invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

On occasion the data in the charts may not total 100 percent. This is due to rounding issues.

This year, an online methodology was used rather than the phone methodology which was used in 2002. This was done to connect with a broader sample of U.S. consumers via the Harris Poll multimillion online consumer panel. This not only allows us to reach a broader sample, but also the most representative sample. Our panel members selected us by deciding to go online, join our panel, respond to our invitations and complete our surveys.

It is also important to understand that online surveys typically elicit information with greater depth and validity on sensitive topics than what could be achieved by any other methodology. In telephone interviewing, for example, it is not uncommon to see more positive scores on sensitive topics, due to difficulty in expressing unpopular opinions to a live interviewer. This difference in scoring between online and telephone methodology is called a "mode effect." Mode effect is less obvious in straight forward and factual questions; however, on questions that are more impacted by social desirability, we find more mode effect.

This makes it more difficult to determine whether small changes in scoring from the benchmark study in 2002 to the 2006 study are driven by actual changes in attitude/behavior or by mode effects. In addition, this study is much more focused on foster care adoption, specifically, than in previous waves. Therefore, the data from these two studies cannot be directly compared.

About the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a non-profit 501(c)3 public charity dedicated to dramatically increasing the adoptions of the more than 140,000 children in North America's foster care systems waiting to be adopted. Created by Wendy's founder, Dave Thomas, who was adopted as a child, the Foundation spearheads programs such as *Wendy's Wonderful Kids*, which puts adoption recruiters in 50 states and Canada to find permanent, loving families for children in the foster care system, and *Adoption-Friendly Workplace*, which encourages employers to offer adoption benefits to their employees. The Foundation also works with adoption advocates and officials to streamline the adoption process and make adoption more affordable for families. As the only foundation dedicated exclusively to foster care adoption, we are driven by Dave's simple value: Do what's best for the child. To learn more about the Foundation's work, please visit www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is the 13th largest and one of the fastest-growing market research firms in the world. The company provides innovative research, insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for The Harris Poll, one of the longest-running independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what it believes to be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its North American, European and Asian offices and through a global network of independent market research firms. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at www.harrisinteractive.com.



National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey

November 1, 2007

Commissioned by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

Conducted by Harris Interactive



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Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care



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I. Background and Methodology



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Background and Objectives

- The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (DTFA) commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct research to understand America's knowledge about and attitudes towards adoption in general and foster care adoption specifically.
- The primary objective of this research is to determine the current level of understanding about adoption in general and foster care adoption in particular. The following questions are addressed in this research:
 - Why do people adopt or not adopt?
 - What are the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that create barriers to foster care adoption?
 - What beliefs do people have about foster care adoption and how were those beliefs developed?
 - What are the most common sources of information about foster care adoption?
 - What are beliefs around who should be adoptive parents?
 - Do people believe we are doing enough to encourage foster care adoption?



Methodology

- This National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption between April 12th and May 1st, 2007 among 1, 660 adults (18 or older). Results were weighted as needed for demographic targets e.g., age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.
- All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.
- Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to be invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.
- Please note: On occasion the data in the charts may not total 100%. This is due to rounding issues.



Definitions of types of adoption discussed

- **Private infant adoption** is the adoption of a U.S. infant through a licensed adoption agency or adoption attorney.
- **Foster care adoption** is the adoption of a foster child who has been freed for adoption when the birthparents' rights were terminated.
 - The **Foster Care Subset** refers to those people who have had some type of direct experience with the foster care system and have agreed to one of the following:
 - I had a telephone conversation to obtain information about foster care adoption (45%)
 - I began the foster care adoption process, but decided not to continue (22%)
 - I am currently in the foster care adoption process (11%)
 - I adopted a child from foster care (23%)
- **International adoption** is the adoption of a child who is a citizen of one country by adoptive parents who are citizens of a different country.



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II. Executive Summary

See preceding pages 1-14, or visit:

www.DaveThomasFoundationForAdoption.org



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III. Detailed Findings



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Adoption Attitudes

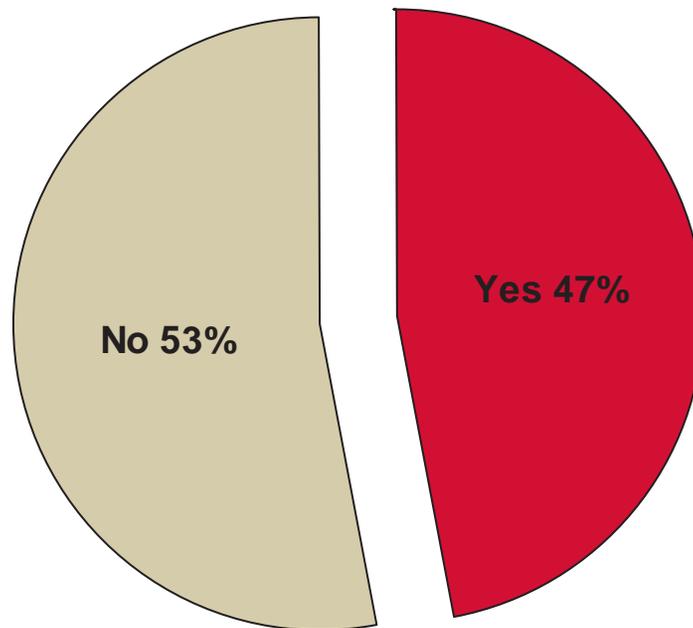
Opinions and Perceptions of the Adoption Process,
Children Available for Adoption and Potential Adoptive
Parents



Touched by adoption

*Survey /
Question /*

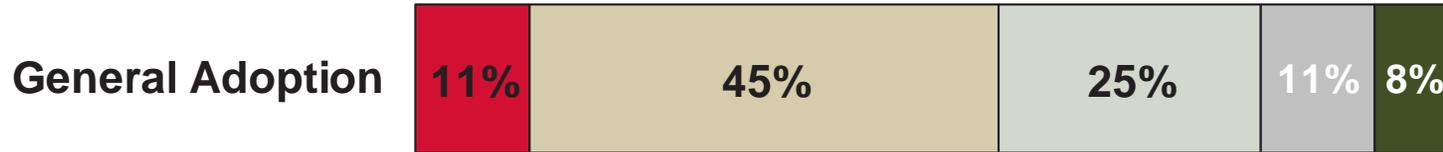
Were you adopted as a child? Have you adopted a child? Has anyone in your family or among your close friends ever been adopted?



- Nearly half of adults have been touched by adoption either by being adopted, adopting a child, or having family or close friends that have been adopted.



Familiarity with topic of adoption – all respondents



■ Not at all familiar ■ Somewhat familiar ■ Familiar ■ Very familiar ■ Extremely familiar



- Overall familiarity with adoption is high (89% familiar)
- But about twice as many people are uninformed on the subject of foster care adoption as of general adoption
- Understandably, familiarity with foster care adoption is twice as high among those *very seriously* considering foster care adoption as those *very seriously* considering other types of adoption

Survey Question

In general, how familiar would you say that you are with the topic of adoption?

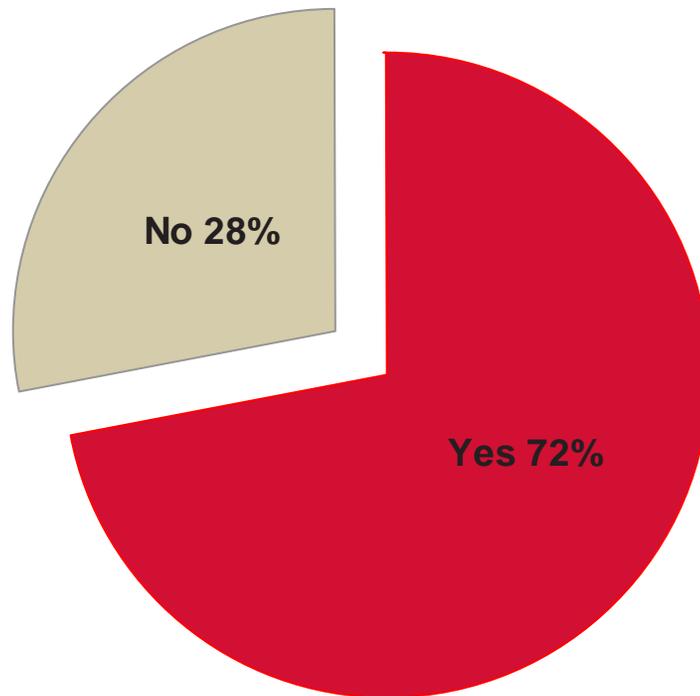
Survey Question

In general, how familiar would you say that you are with the topic of foster care adoption?



Opinions of adoption

Survey / Question / In general, what is your opinion of adoption?



- 72% of adults are very to extremely favorable of at least one form of adoption including US infant adoption, foster care adoption, or international adoption.

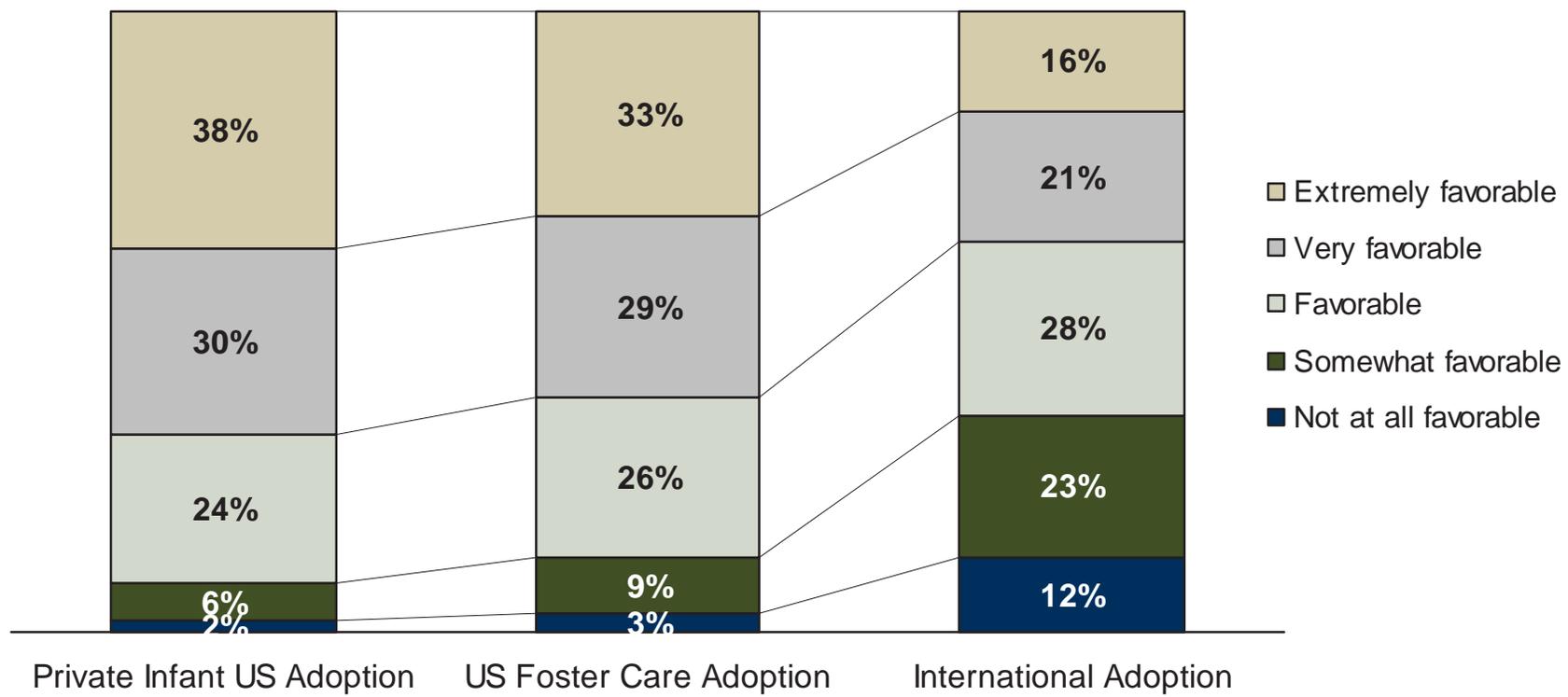


Opinions of adoption

Survey / Question / In general, what is your opinion of adoption?

• The large majority of Americans are in favor of adoption, especially private infant adoption. Closely behind in favor is foster care adoption, then there is a significant drop in favorability for international adoption.

HarrisInteractive



Q605. Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



Opinions of each type of adoption by those who have friends or family that have been adopted (Yes) vs. those who do not (No)

Survey Question /

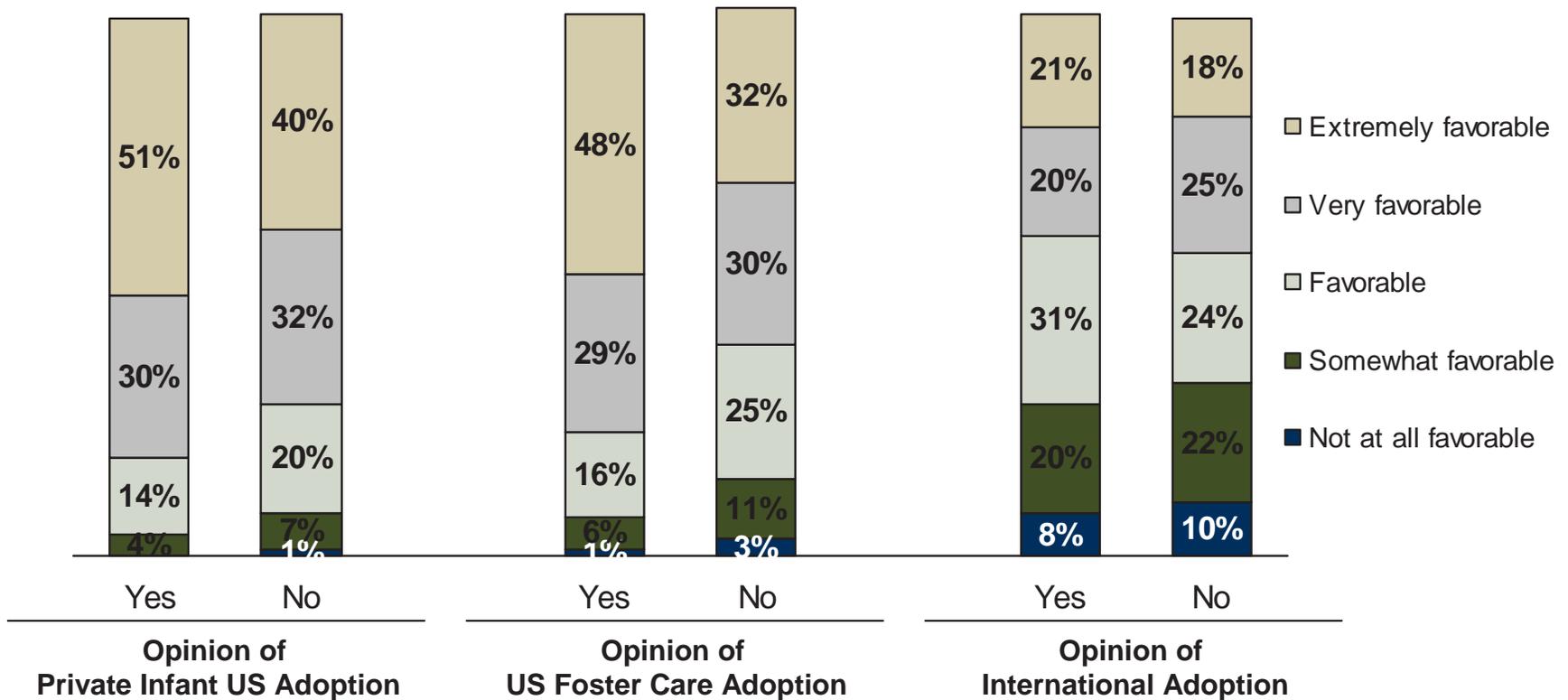
In general, what is your opinion of adoption?

Survey Question /

Has anyone in your family or among your close friends ever been adopted?

• Exposure to adoption improves opinions of private infant and foster care adoption

HarrisInteractive



Q605. Base: All qualified respondents, Yes (n=260), No (n=358)

Q485. Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



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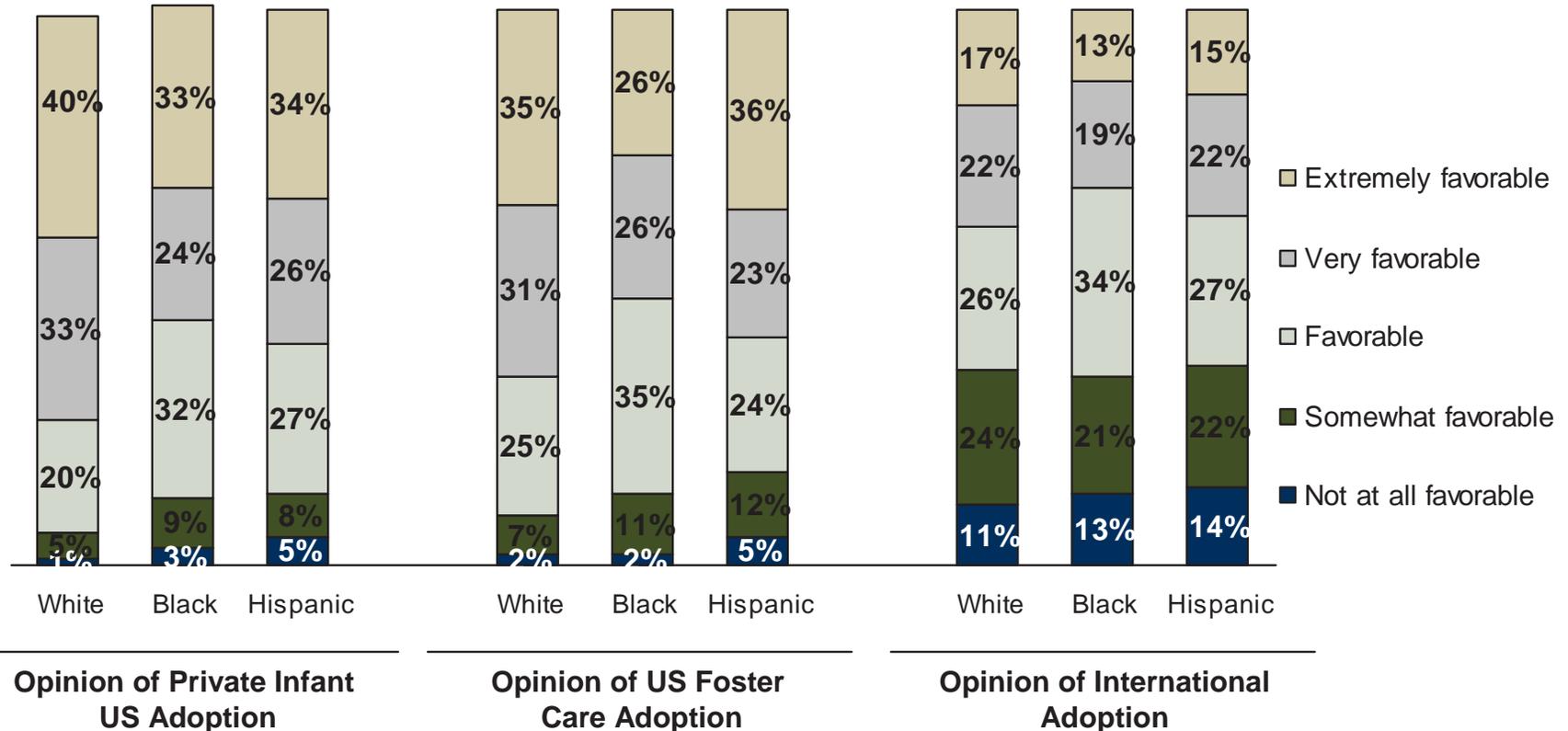
Opinions of each type of adoption by race

Survey /
Question /

In general, what is your opinion of adoption?

- Whites have the highest opinion of private infant adoption of all races
- Whites and Blacks have slightly higher opinions of private infant adoption than of foster care adoption
- Hispanics rate private infant and foster care adoption equally, though they are the least likely to have considered foster care adoption
- All races rate international adoption the least favorably

HarrisInteractive



Q605. Base: All qualified respondents, White (n=1061), Black/African American (n=277), Hispanics (n=255)



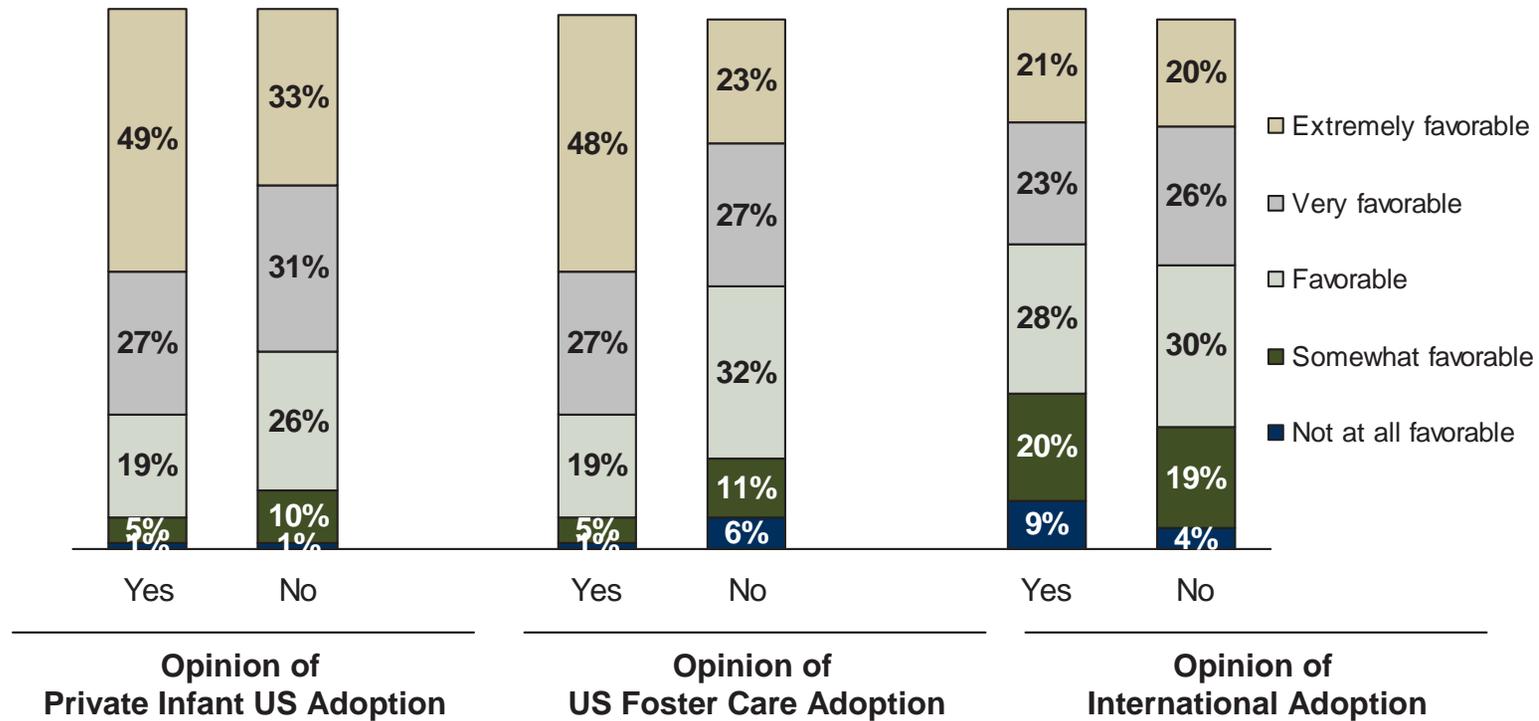
Opinions of each type of adoption by those who have (Yes) vs. have not (No) considered adopting through the US foster care system

Survey Question / In general, what is your opinion of adoption?

Survey Question / Are you considering or have you ever considered adopting a child? (Yes/No)

• While one would expect those considering foster care adoption to rate it more favorably than the other types of adoption, these people in fact rate private infant adoption just as favorably

HarrisInteractive



Q605. Base: All qualified respondents, Yes (n=376), No (n=173)

Q445. Base: Respondents who consider or have considered adopting a child (n=549)



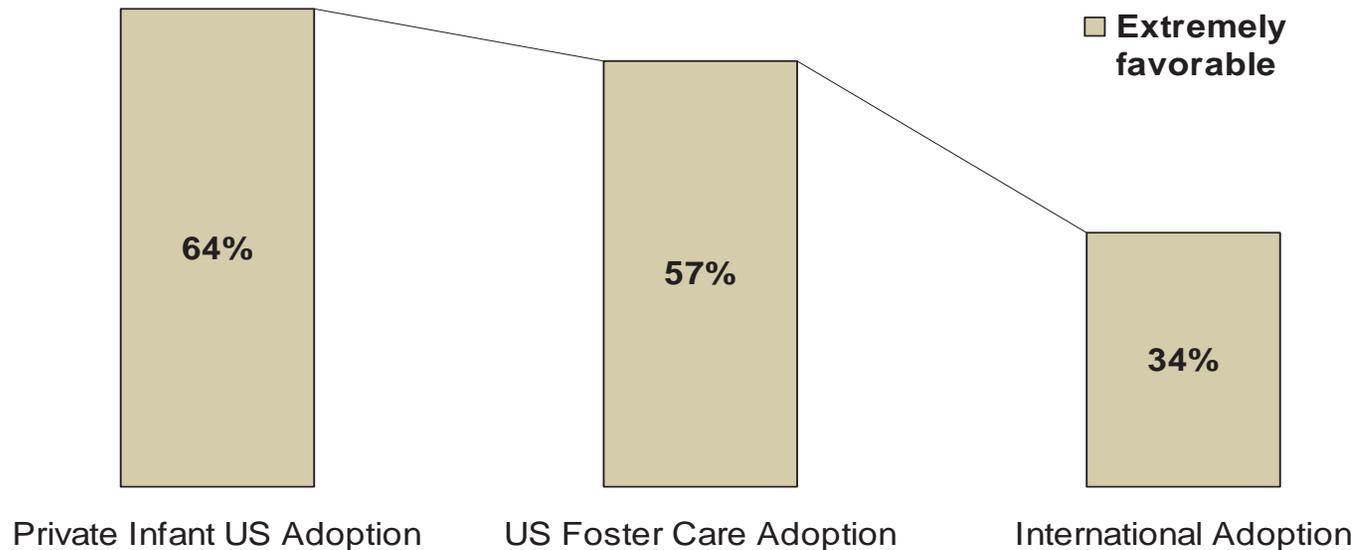
Positive opinions of adoption by *very serious* foster care adoption consideration set

Survey /
Question /

In general, what is your opinion of adoption? (Extremely favorable)

- Even more intriguingly, those *very seriously* considering foster care adoption have even higher opinions of private infant adoption than those merely considering foster care adoption
- The *very serious* foster care adoption consideration set has the most positive feelings toward all types of adoption of all respondents (except for international adoption, where even the private infant set rates international adoption more positively than the foster care set)

HarrisInteractive

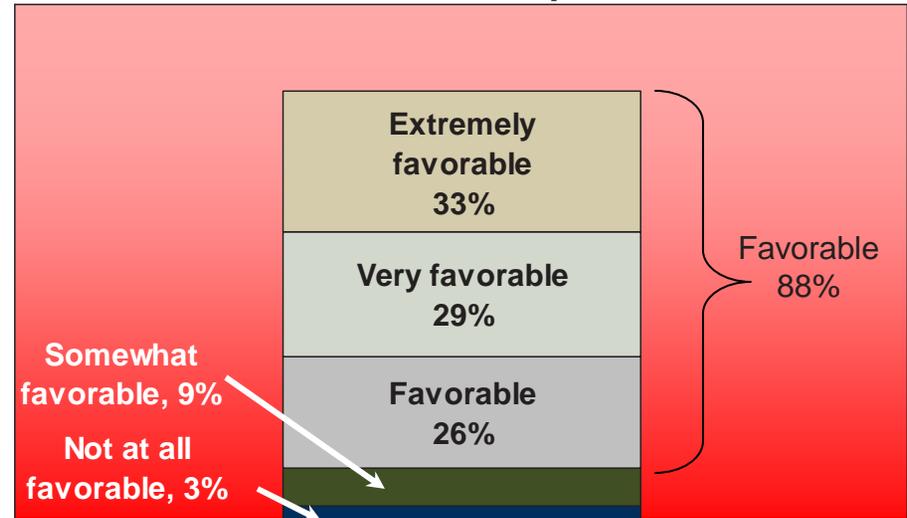




Opinions of foster care adoption vs. the US foster care system

- While Americans have overwhelmingly positive opinions of foster care adoption in principle, they have relatively negative opinions of the US foster care system.
- Over one third says it has an outright negative opinion of the system.
- Another third says it is not sure of its opinion of the system. This reflects confusion about the process, what it entails, who it involves and what it achieves.
- Americans want to believe in the foster care system. They understand the social merits of foster care adoption and know it is a worthwhile cause. They recognize the system is there to serve a valid purpose and they want it to succeed in its goals. It may be for lack of information—not for lack of experience—but they don't see it accomplishing its mission satisfactorily.

Foster Care Adoption



US Foster Care System





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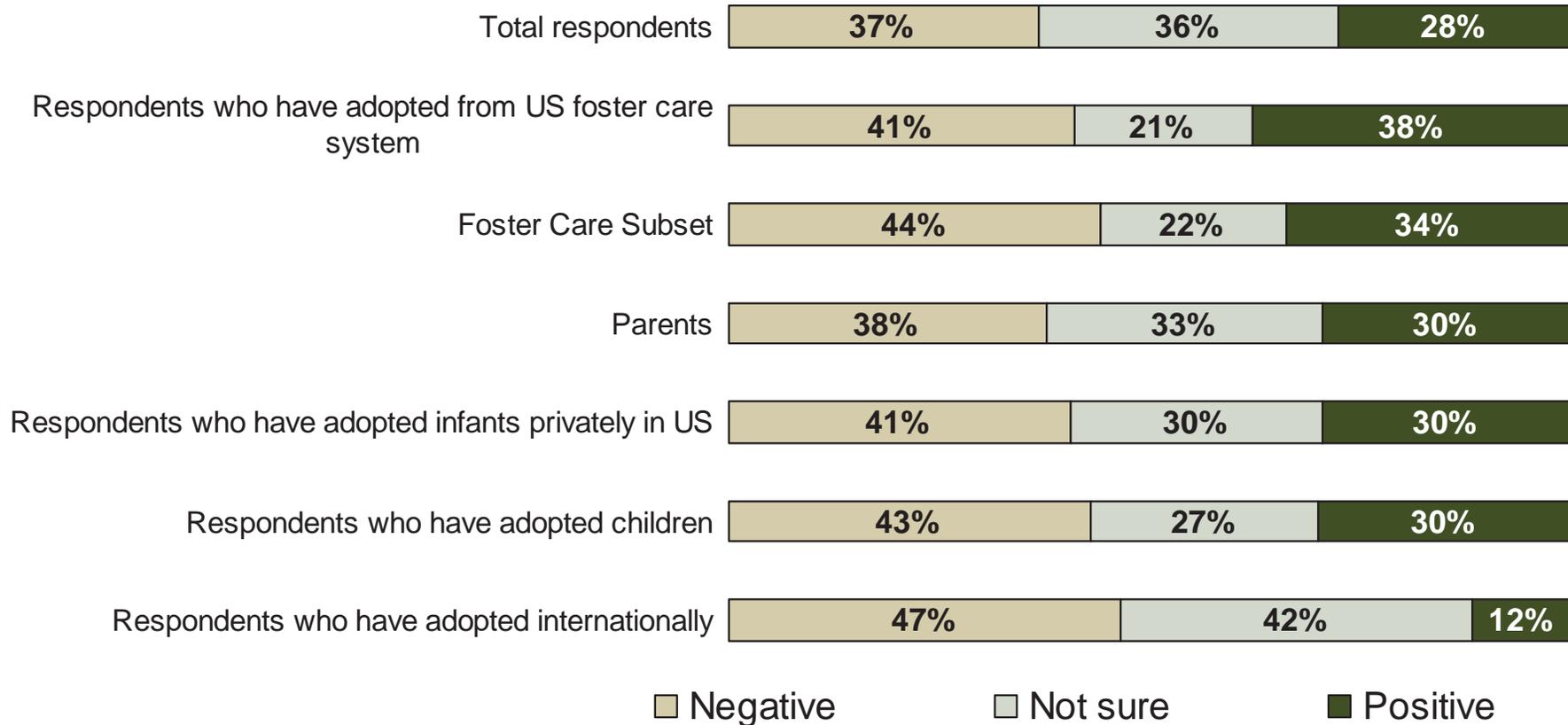
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Opinions of the US foster care system

*Survey /
Question /*

In general, would you say you have a positive or negative opinion of the foster care system?

- Across the board, people have more negative than positive opinions of the US foster care system, even those who have participated in the system
- Demographically, those more likely than average to have a positive opinion of the foster care system are:
 - Blacks and other minorities (not including Hispanics)
 - Those under 25 and over 65 years old

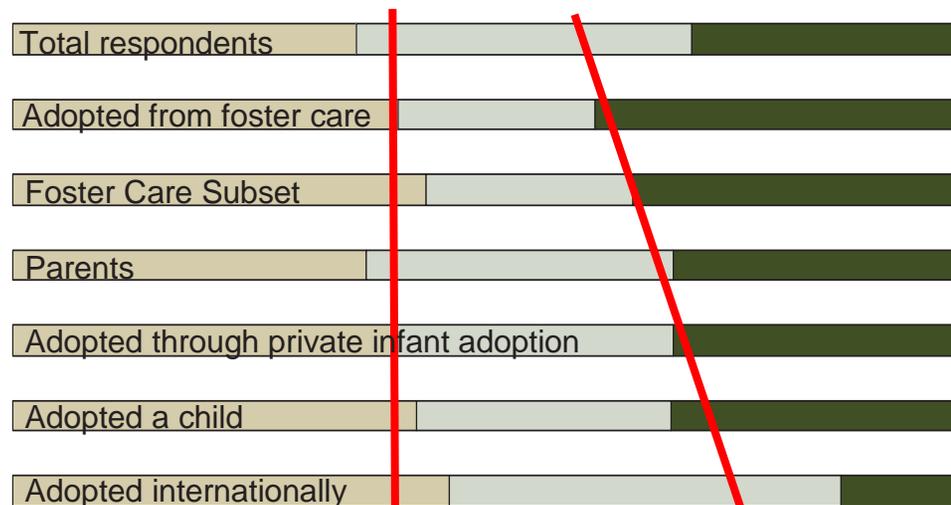


Q710. Base: Total respondents (n=1660), Respondents who have adopted from the US foster care system (n=41), Foster Care Subset (n=143), Parents (n=494), Respondents who have adopted infants privately in the US (n=46), Respondents who have adopted children (n=106), Respondents who have adopted internationally (n=21)
 Q710. Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



Opinions of the US foster care system

- Roughly, opinions of the foster care system are evenly split between those who feel positively, are unsure, and feel negatively toward it
- Those closest to the system are generally the most positively inclined to it
- Alarming, however, over one third of all respondents have negative opinions of the foster care system, even those closest to it
- The Foster Care Subset, in particular, has more negative opinions than most, at 44%. This should be taken as a clear signal that the system has faults that need to be addressed.
- Those further from the system have even lower positive opinions of it, accompanied by higher levels of ambiguity
- What occurs when people have more experience with the system is that positive opinions increase and ambiguity decreases, but *negative opinions do not decrease*
 - Positive opinions fluctuate and are inversely related to ambiguity, but there is no relationship between ambiguity and negative opinions
- It is key to *reduce ambiguity* by increasing public knowledge about the system
 - While this may not decrease negative opinions in the short term, it will increase positive opinions overall



Survey /
Question /

In general, would you say you have a positive or negative opinion of the foster care system?



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Demographic differences between those who have a positive opinion of the US foster care system specifically and those who have a positive opinion of foster care adoption as an institution 34

*Survey /
Question /*

In general, would you say you have a positive or negative opinion of the US foster care system?

*Survey /
Question /*

In general, what is your opinion of adoption of a child from the foster care system?

Those who have more positive opinions of the US foster care system than others are:

- Men
- Blacks & other minorities
- Ages 18-24 and 65+
- Living with partner (slightly)

Those who have more positive opinions of foster care adoption than others are:

- Women
- Hispanics & Whites
- Ages 25-64
- Married

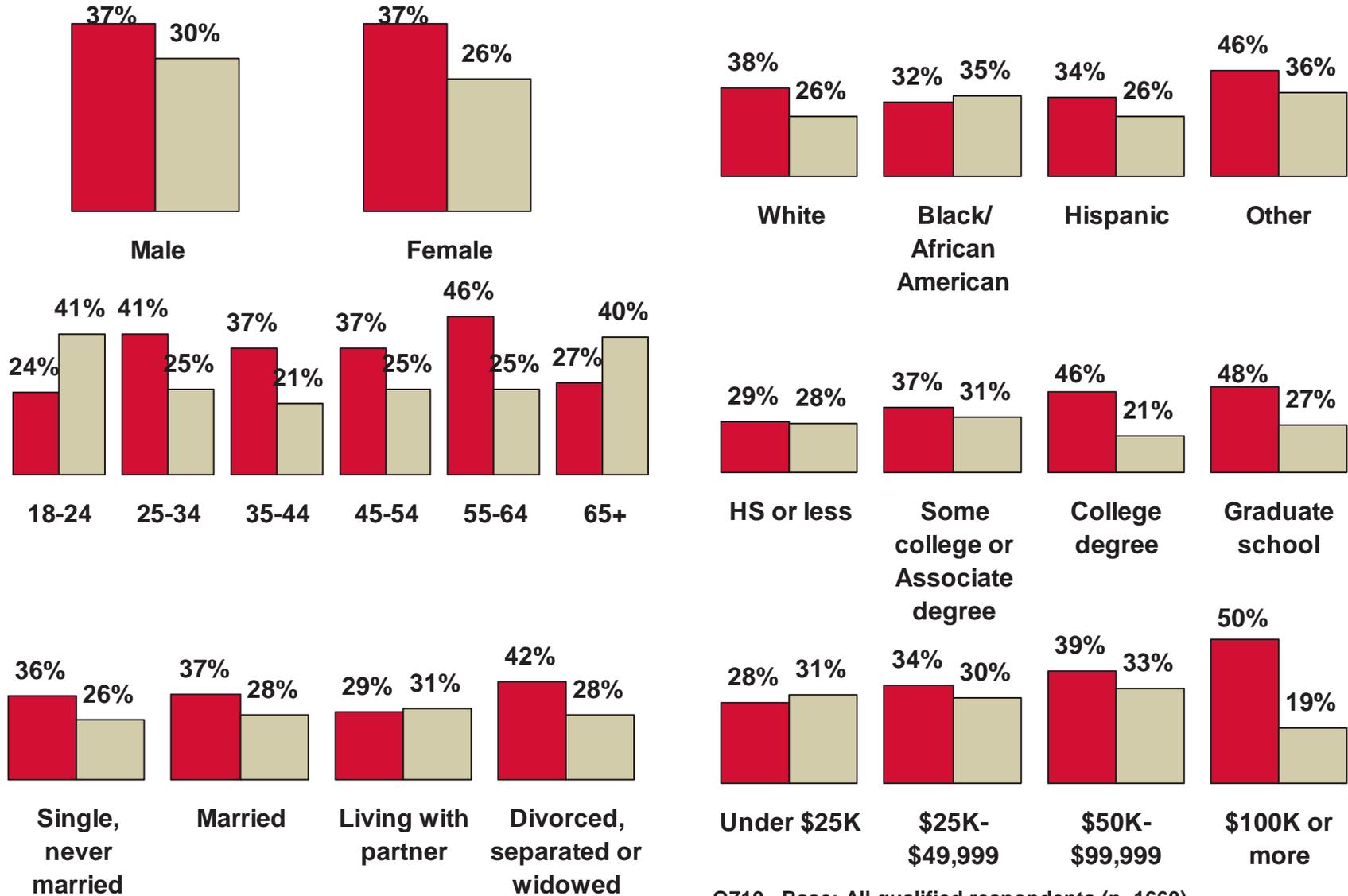
Those who have more positive opinions than others for both:

- Have some college/Associates degree
- Earn \$50K-\$99,999



Demographic differences:

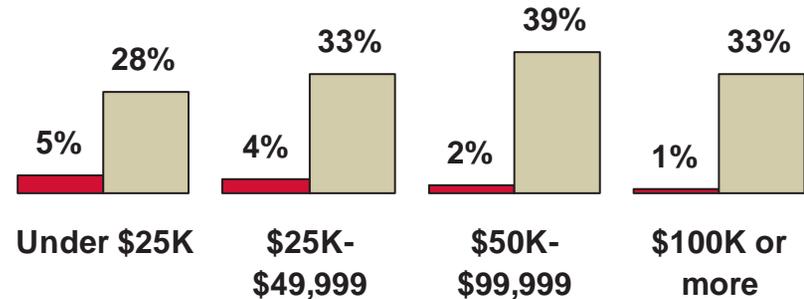
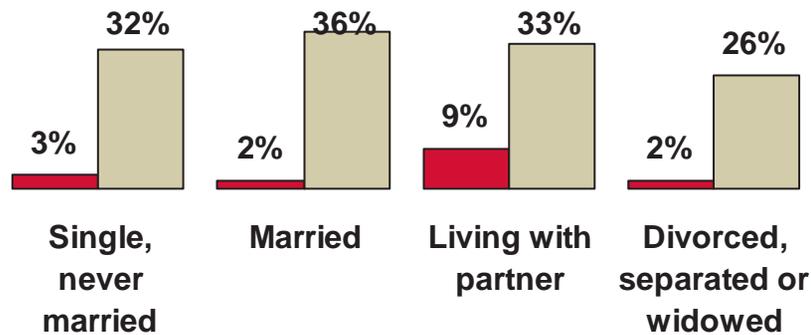
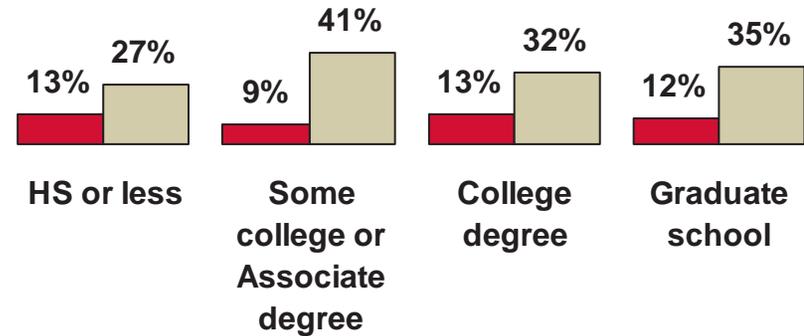
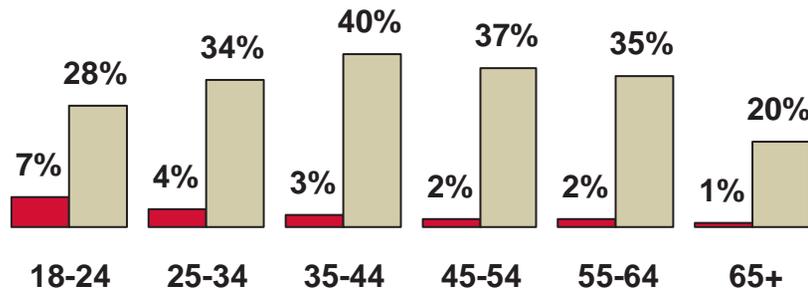
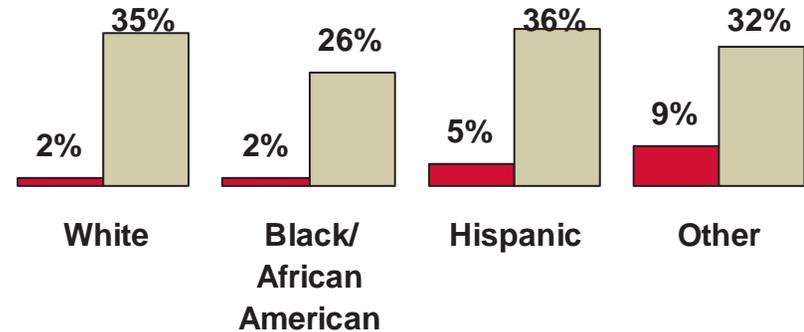
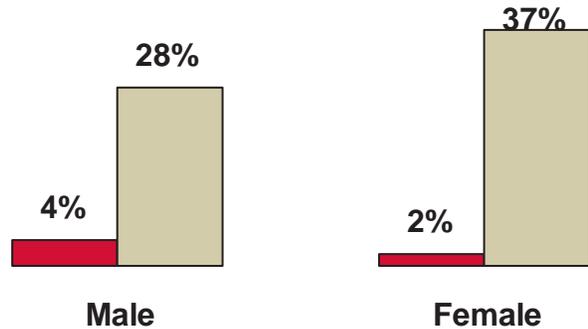
■ Those who have a *negative* opinion of the foster care system vs.
■ Those who have a *positive* opinion of the foster care system





Demographic differences:

 Those who are *not at all favorable* of foster care adoption vs.
 Those who are *extremely favorable* of foster care adoption



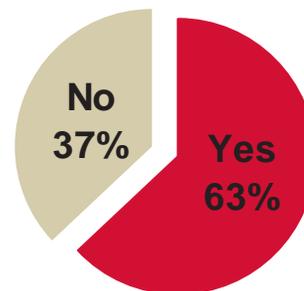
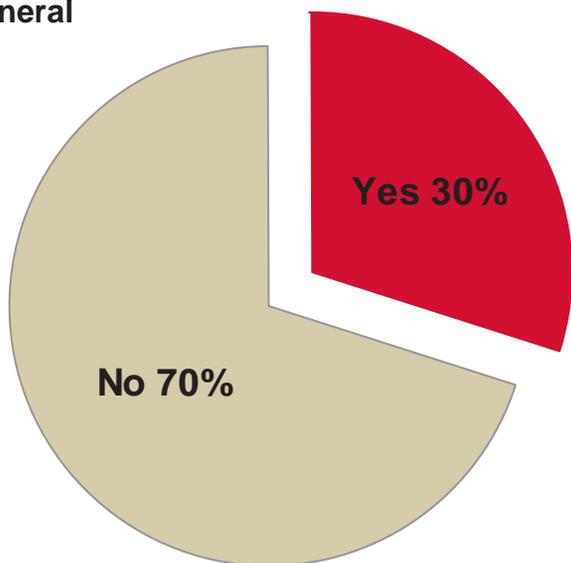
Q606/2. Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



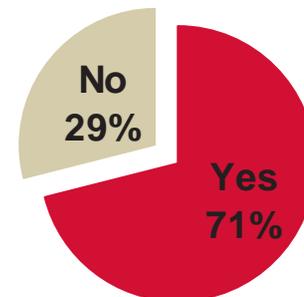
Respondents who have considered adopting

Survey / Question / Are you considering or have you ever considered adopting a child?

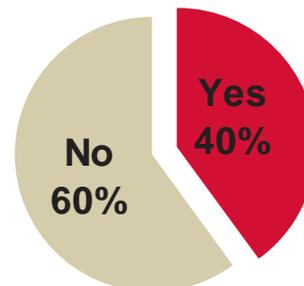
Adoption in general



Private Infant US Adoption



US Foster Care Adoption



International Adoption

- Adults with children are more likely than those without to have considered adoption (36% vs. 27%) (although the 36% includes adults who have already adopted)
- Of those who have considered adopting, more consider US foster care adoption than any other type

Q450/Q460/Q475. Are you considering or have you ever considered adopting [an infant privately in the US/a child from the US foster care system/a child from another country]?

Base: Yes, have considered adopting a child (n=549)



Demographic differences between those who consider adoption and those who don't:

Survey / Question /

Are you considering or have you ever considered adopting a child?

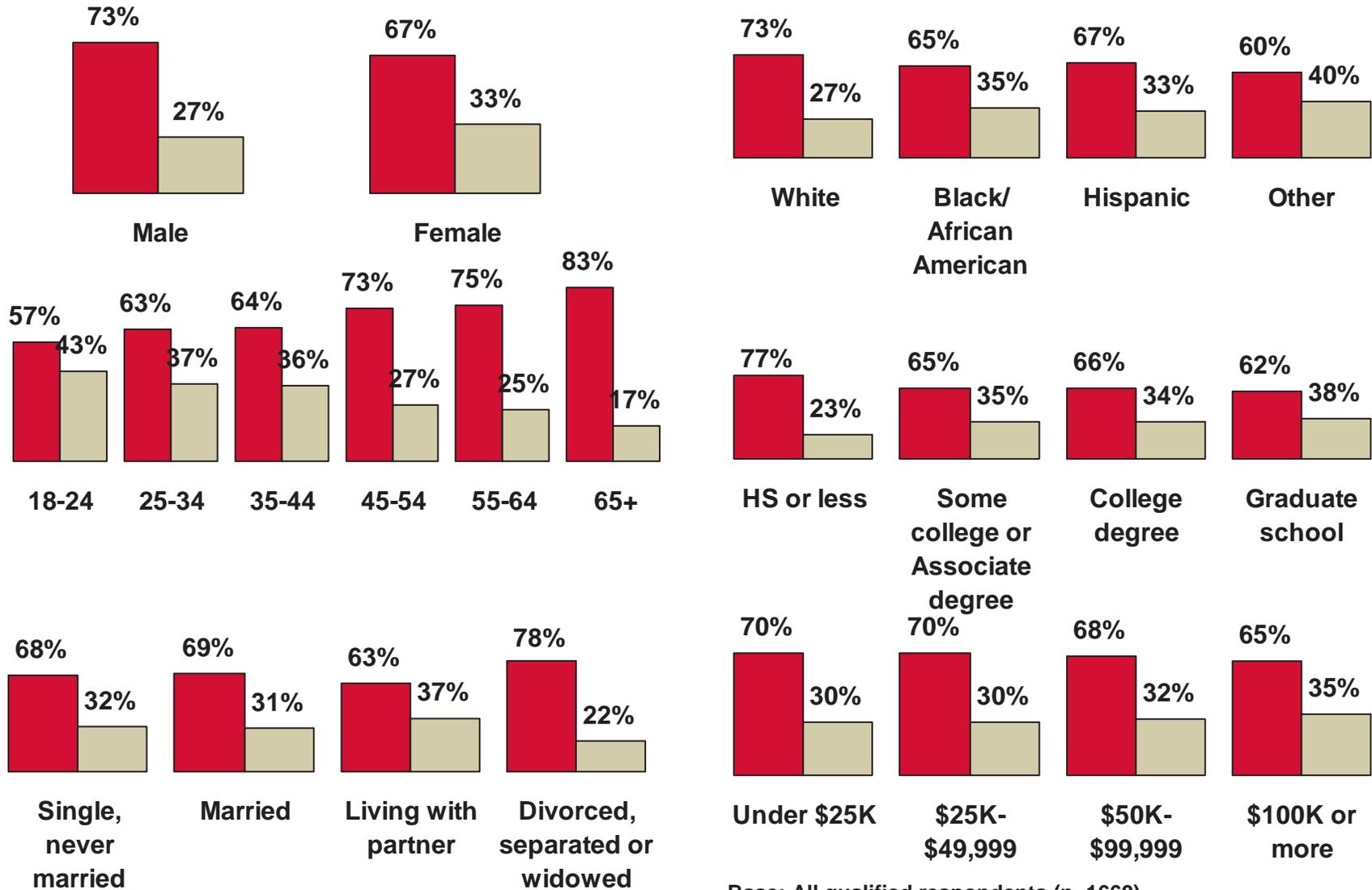
Respondents who have considered adoption are more likely to be:

- Women
- Minorities
- Younger (progressively decreases)
- More educated (progressively increases)
- Unmarried couples living with a partner
- Those with incomes of \$100K or more



Demographic differences:

■ Respondents who have *not* considered adopting vs.
■ Respondents who *have* considered adopting



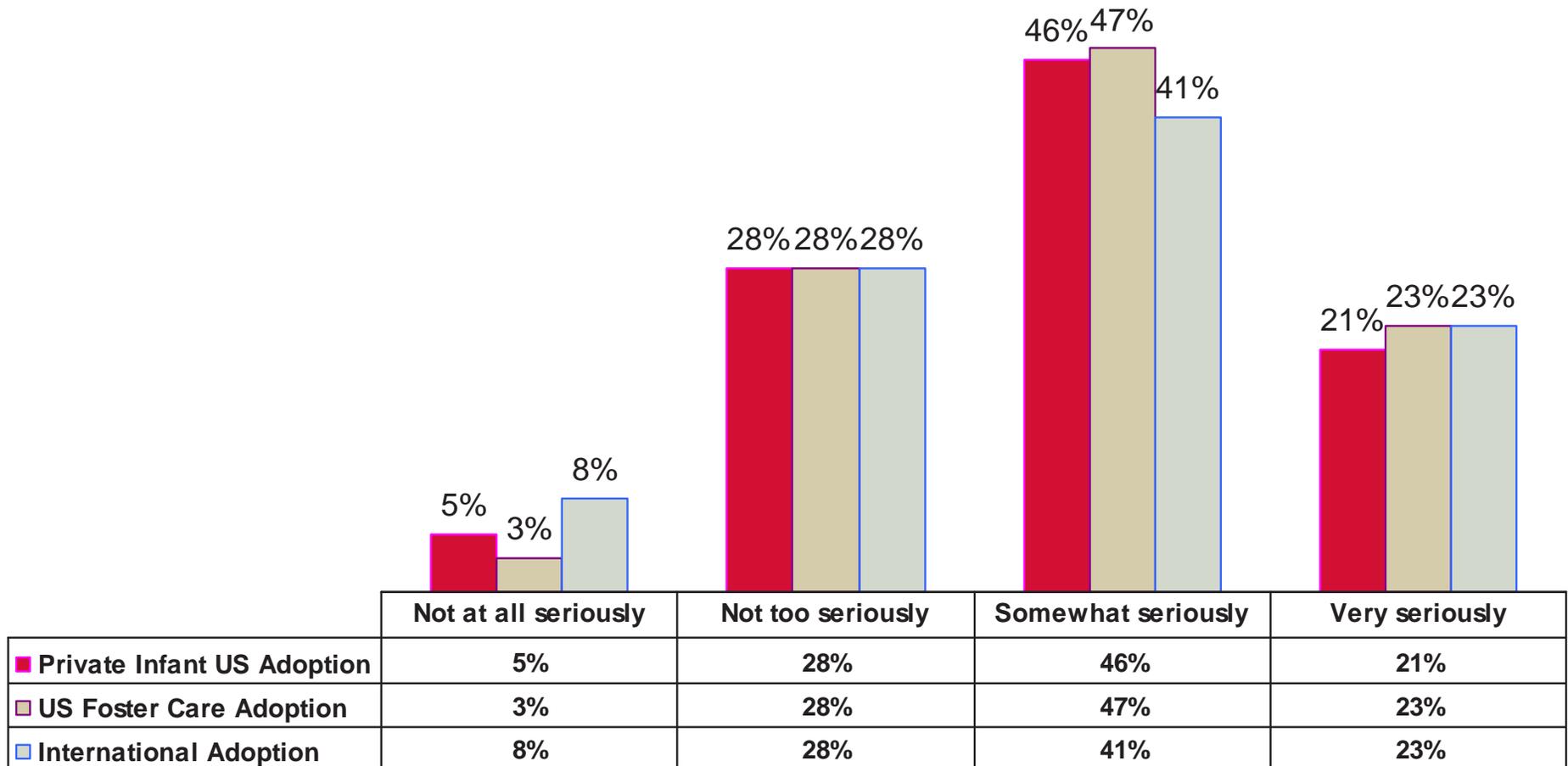
Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



Respondents who have considered adopting: How seriously?

*Survey /
Question /*

How seriously are you considering or have you considered [adopting a child through]...?





Higher consideration of adoption through exposure

- Exposure to adoption through family or friends who have been adopted appears to increase consideration of adoption, as those with family or friends who have been adopted are more likely to consider adopting.
- Further, the more exposure to foster care adoption one has, the more likely one is to consider adoption from foster care over private infant or international adoption. Respondents with family or friends who have been adopted from the foster care system are more likely to very seriously consider adopting a child from the foster care system (56%) than through private infant (42%) or international (30%) adoption.
- Exposure to adoption also improves opinions of adoption, at least of private infant and foster care adoption (curiously, having been adopted oneself does not affect opinion of adoption).



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Description of demographic differences between those *very seriously* considering different types of adoption

Survey /
Question /

How seriously are you considering or have you considered [adopting a child through]...?

Very seriously consider private infant adoption:

- Whites, men, married couples, those aged 25-34 and those with high school education or less are more likely to *very seriously* consider private infant adoption than other types of adoption

Very seriously consider foster care adoption:

- Blacks, women, those with some college/Associates degree and those with incomes \$25K-\$50 are more likely to *very seriously* consider foster care adoption than other types of adoption

Very seriously consider international adoption:

- Hispanics and those with high incomes are more likely to *very seriously* consider international adoption than other types of adoption

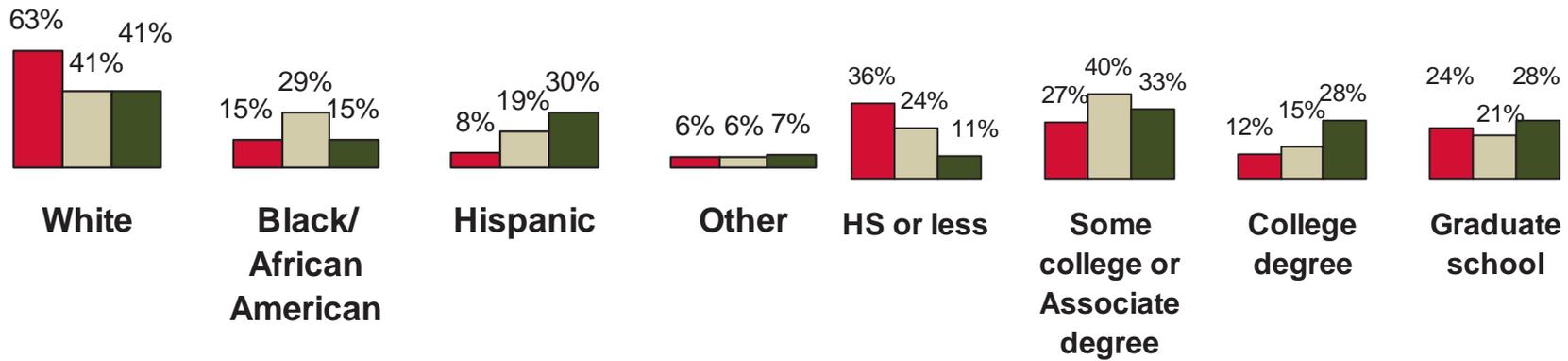
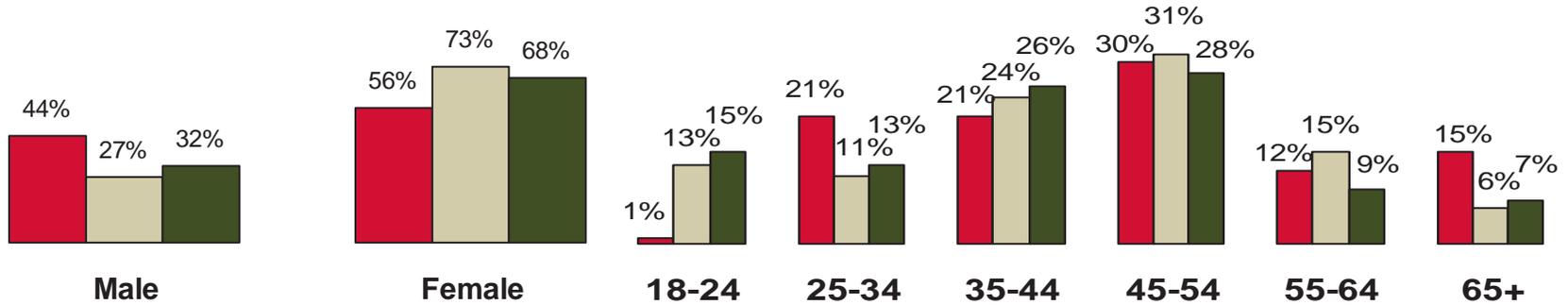


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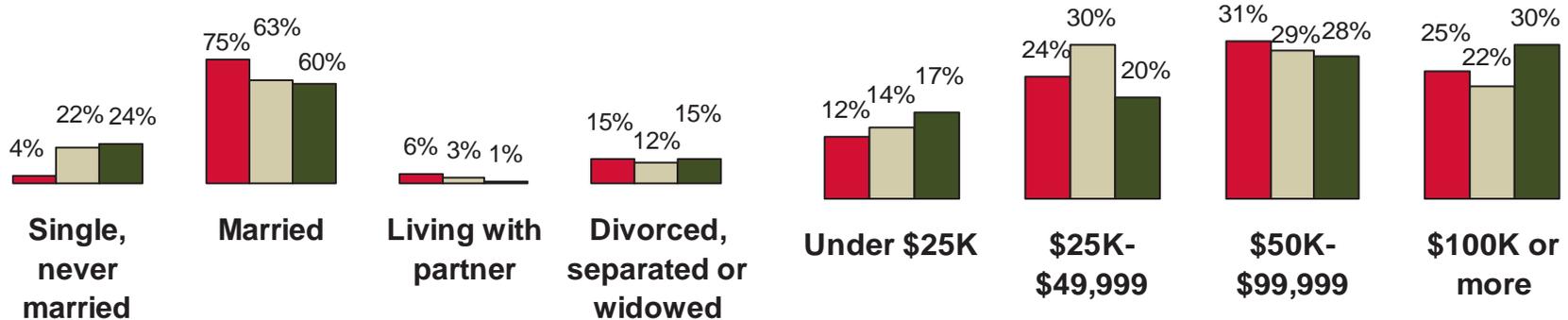
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Demographic differences:

Those who *very seriously* consider ■ private infant U.S. adoption vs. ■ foster care adoption vs. ■ International adoption



HarrisInteractive



Base: Respondents who very seriously consider private infant US (n=74), US foster care (n=92), international (n=52) adoption

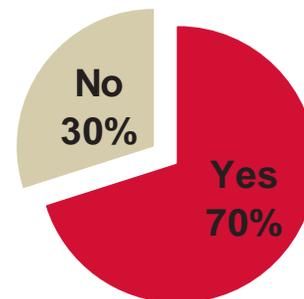
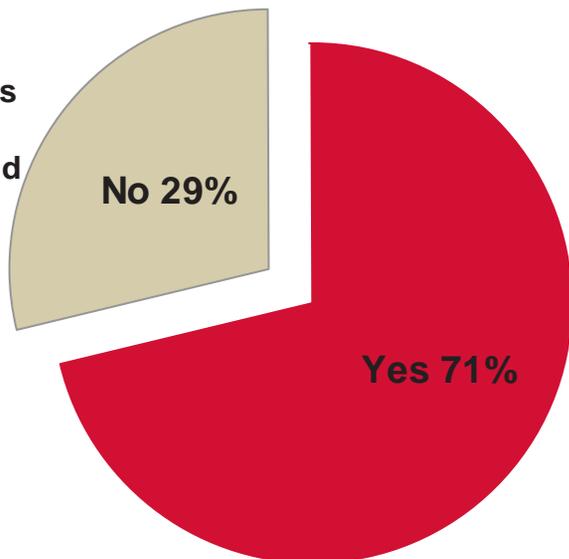


Respondents who have considered foster care adoption, by race

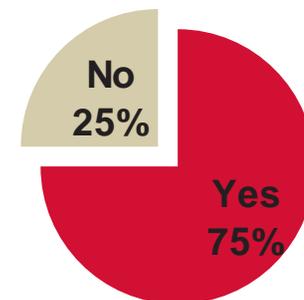
Survey /
Question /

Are you considering or have you ever considered adopting a child from the US foster care system?

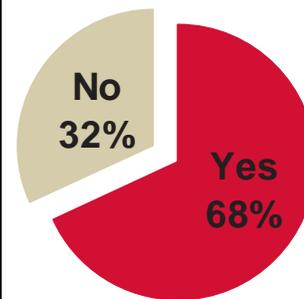
All respondents
considering
adopting a child



Whites



Blacks/
African Americans



Hispanics

- Among those considering adopting a child (30% of all respondents), more say they consider foster care adoption (71%) than private infant (63%) or international adoption (40%)
- Blacks/African Americans are the most likely of all races to say they are considering or have considered adopting a child from the US foster care system

HarrisInteractive

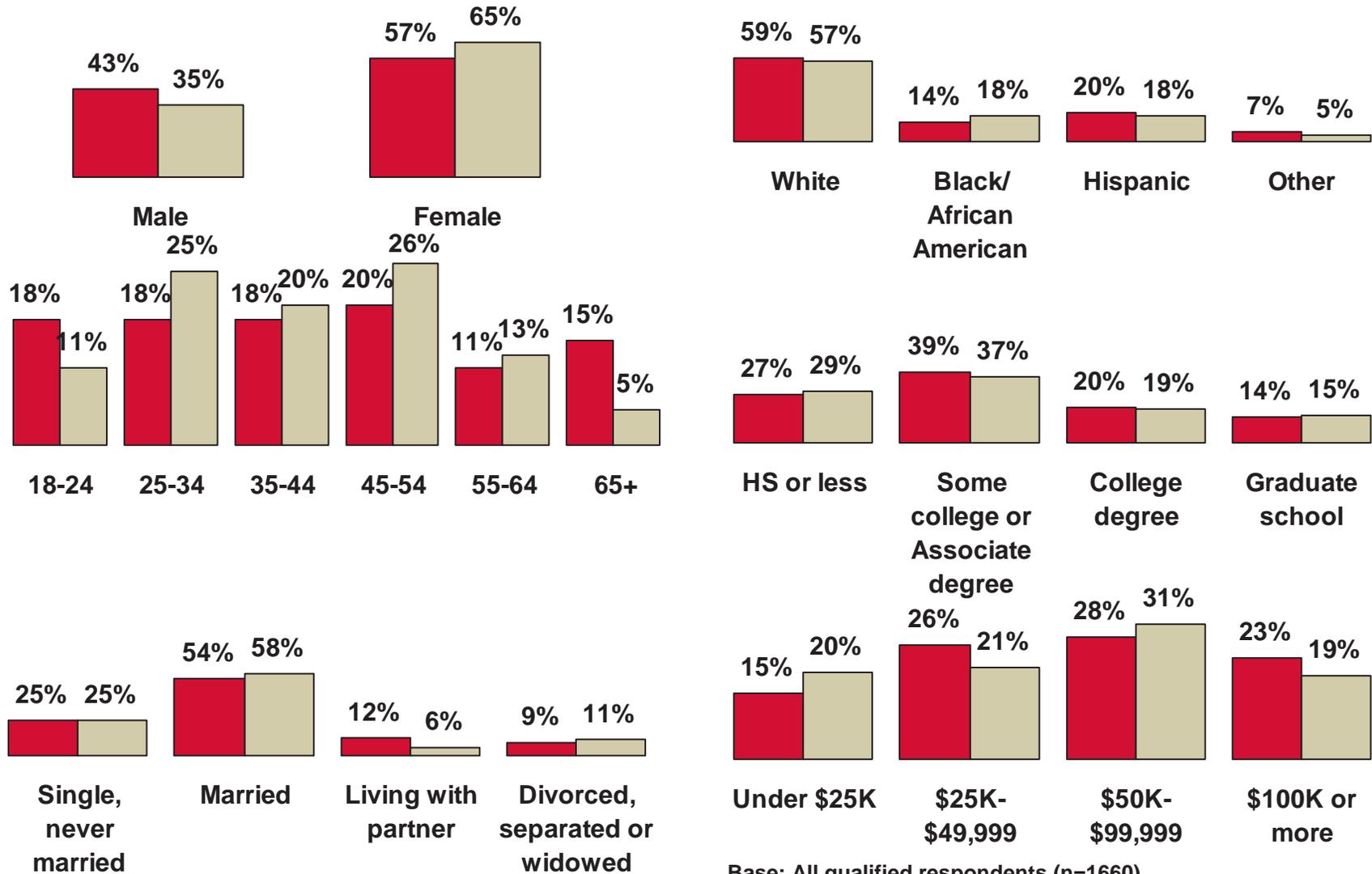


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Demographic differences:

■ Respondents who have *not* considered US foster care adoption vs.
■ Respondents who *have* considered US foster care adoption

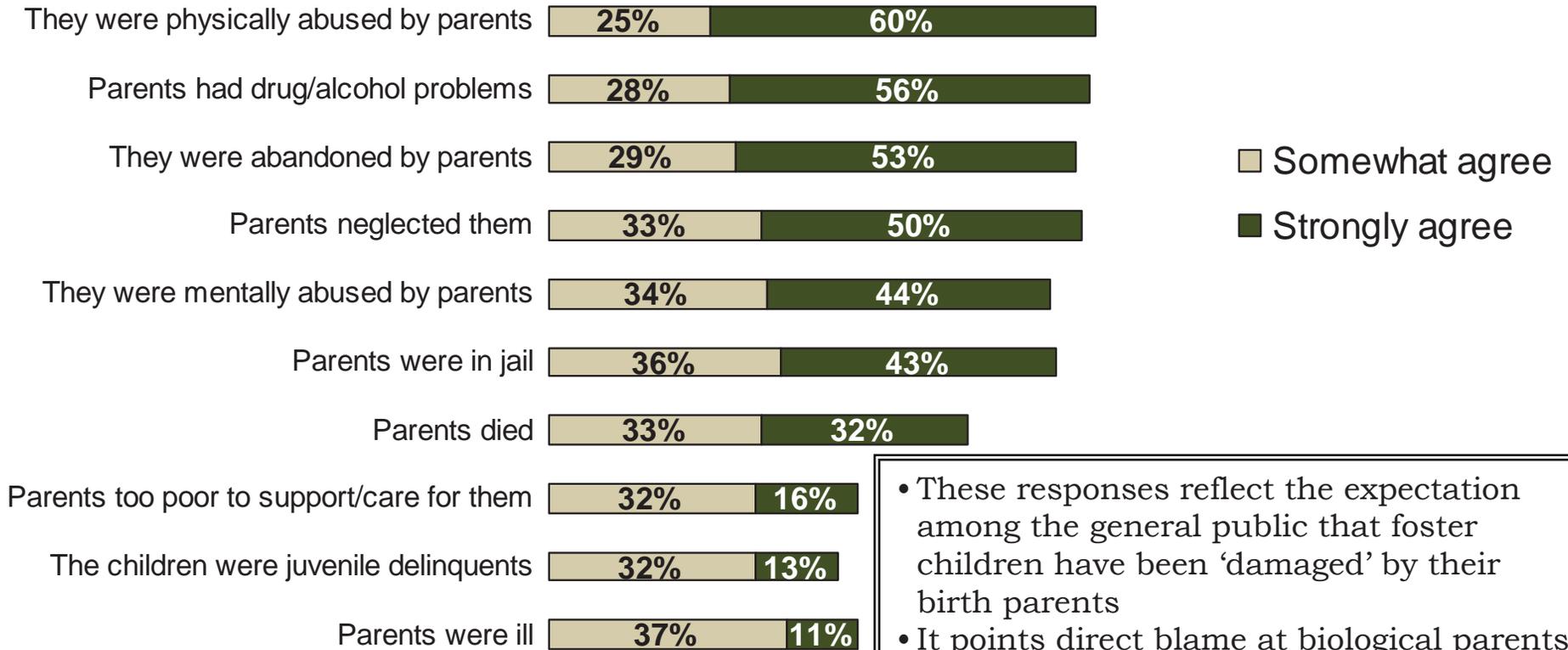


HarrisInteractive

Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



Perceptions of why children are placed in foster care



Survey / Question

There are a number of reasons why children might be placed in foster care in your community today. Please indicate your level of agreement with each reason. (Strongly agree)

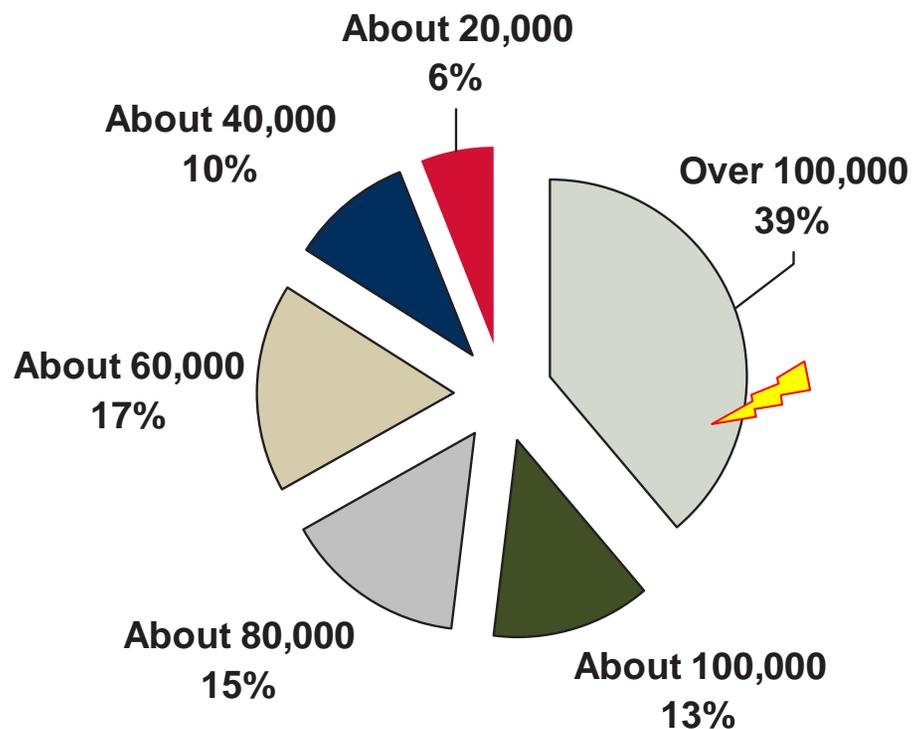
- These responses reflect the expectation among the general public that foster children have been ‘damaged’ by their birth parents
- It points direct blame at biological parents (note low scores of poverty or illness)
- Most importantly, these results show that *people do not find the foster children themselves responsible for their situation* but see them more as innocent victims
- Nonetheless, almost half of the public thinks foster care children were juvenile delinquents, underscoring worries over behavioral and adjustment problems



Estimations of number of children in foster care available to be adopted

Survey / Question /

Based on what you know of adoption, please select the answer that you think most closely estimates the number of children in foster care available to be adopted in the US.



 **Actual number: 114,000**

- While most people (79%) consider themselves to be at least somewhat familiar with the topic of foster care adoption, nearly half underestimate the number of children in foster care available for adoption, 1/3 significantly so
- 114,000 of the 513,000 in foster care are available to be adopted (i.e., have the goal of adoption and/or parental rights have been terminated)
- If people were more aware of the extent of the problem, might they be more motivated to adopt from foster care?



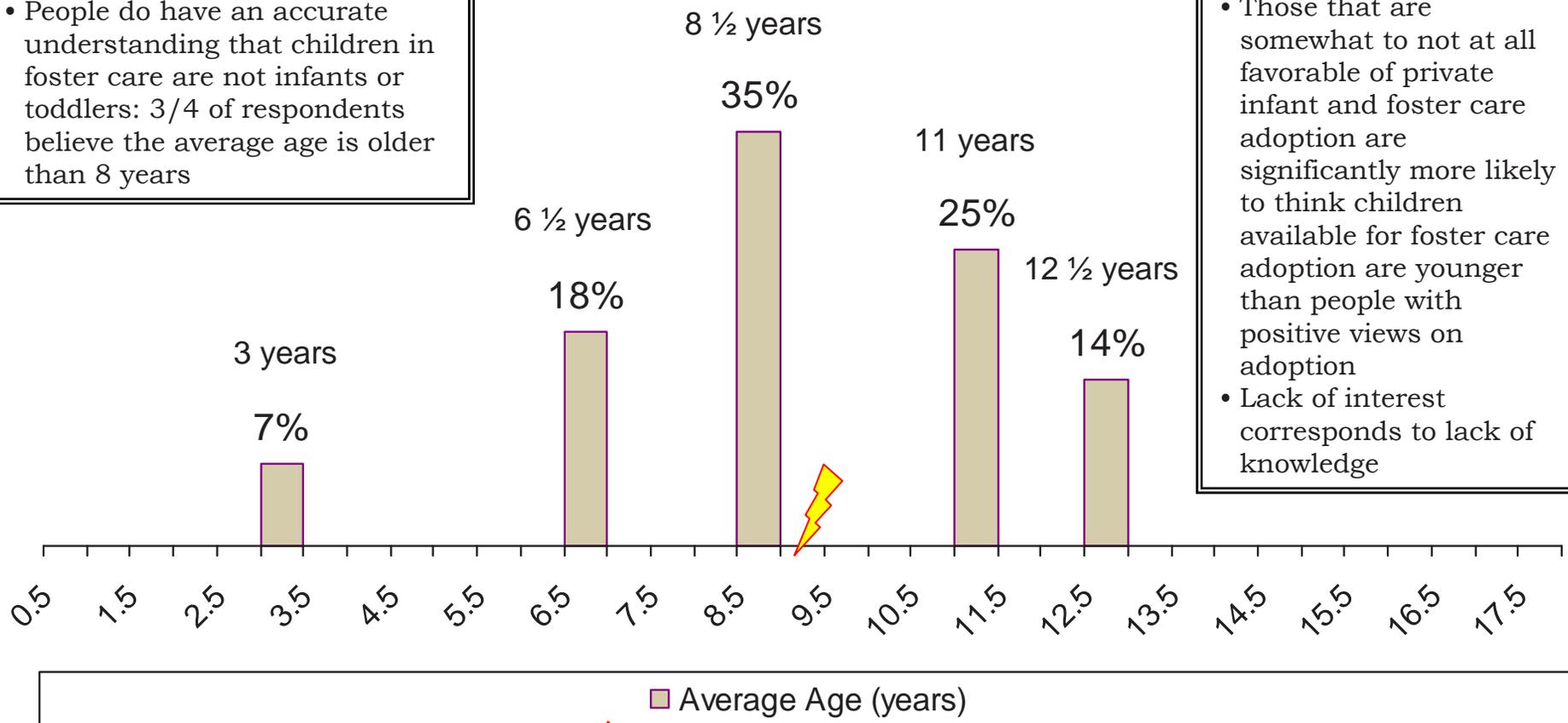
Estimations of average age of children in foster care

Survey Question

Based on what you know of adoption, please select the answer that you think most closely estimates the average age of children in foster care that are available to be adopted in the US.

• People do have an accurate understanding that children in foster care are not infants or toddlers: 3/4 of respondents believe the average age is older than 8 years

• Those that are somewhat to not at all favorable of private infant and foster care adoption are significantly more likely to think children available for foster care adoption are younger than people with positive views on adoption
• Lack of interest corresponds to lack of knowledge



Actual average age: 9



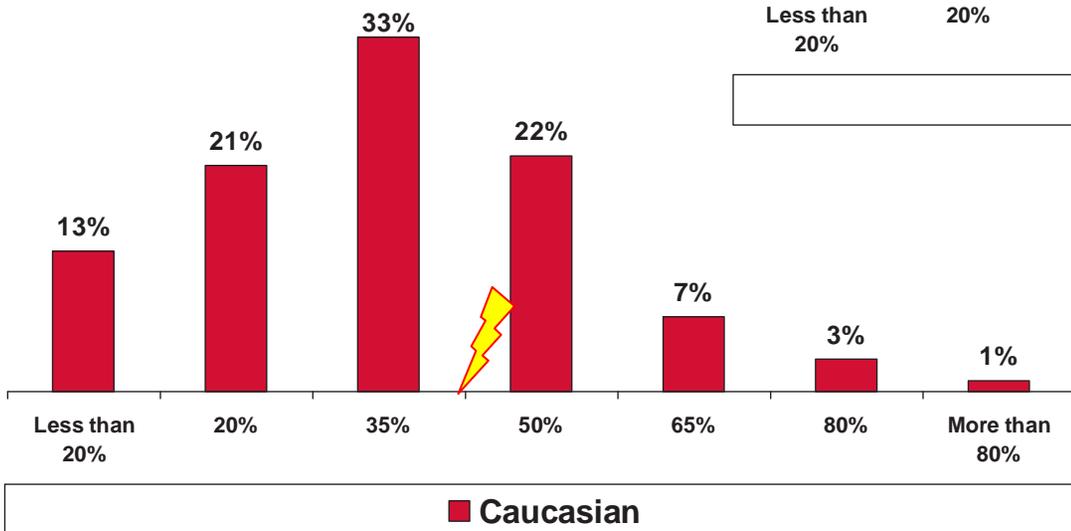
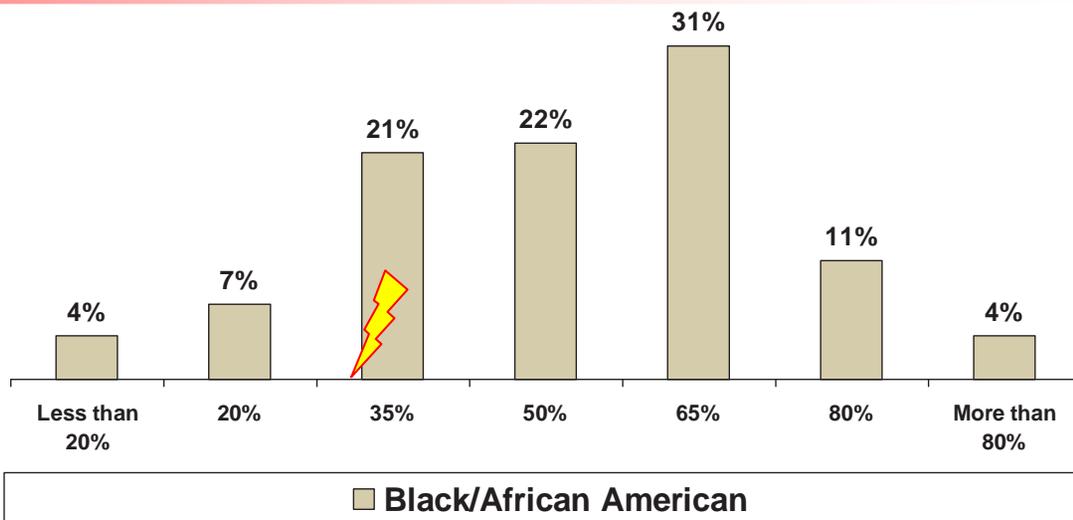
Estimations of race of children in foster care available to be adopted

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Survey / Question /

- Based on what you know of adoption, please select the answer that you think most closely estimates the percentage of children in foster care in the US that are available for adoption that are:
 - Black/African American
 - Caucasian

Actual race stats:
Black Non-Hispanic 32%
White-Non Hispanic 41%



- Most Americans overestimate the percentage of Black children in foster care and underestimate the percentage of Caucasian children
 - Whites and Hispanics in particular show this tendency
- But Blacks have a greater tendency than Whites or Hispanics to underestimate the percent of Black children available in foster care.



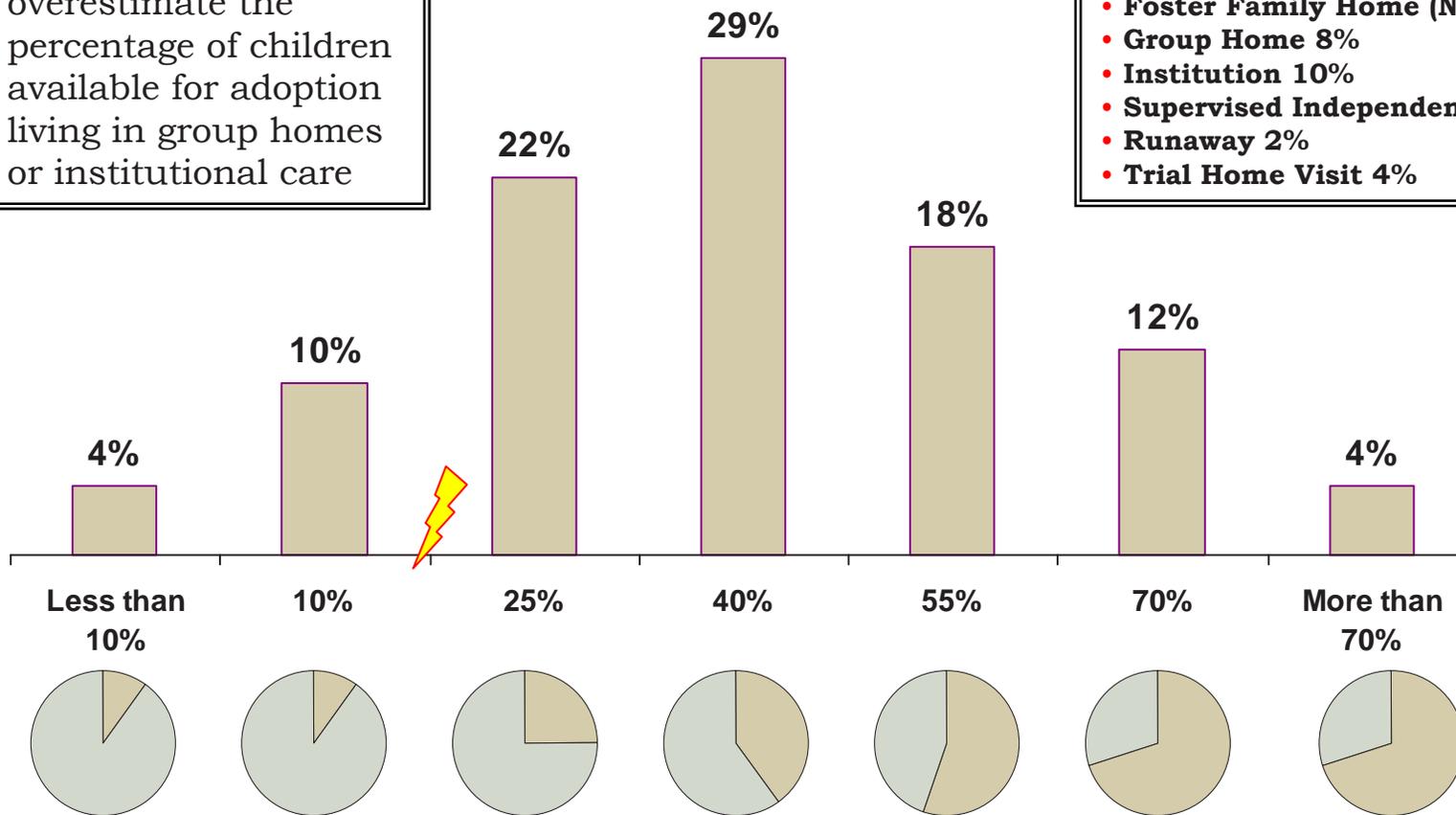
Estimations of percent of children in foster care living in group homes or institutional care

Survey Question

Based on what you know of adoption, please select the answer that you think most closely estimates the percentage of children in foster care in the US that are available for adoption that are living in group homes or institutional care.

• 85% of respondents overestimate the percentage of children available for adoption living in group homes or institutional care

- Pre-Adoptive Home 4%
- Foster Family Home (Relative) 24%
- Foster Family Home (Non-Relative) 46%
- Group Home 8%
- Institution 10%
- Supervised Independent Living 1%
- Runaway 2%
- Trial Home Visit 4%



Actual: 18% of foster care children available to be adopted live in group homes or institutional care

Proportion of children living in group homes/institutional care



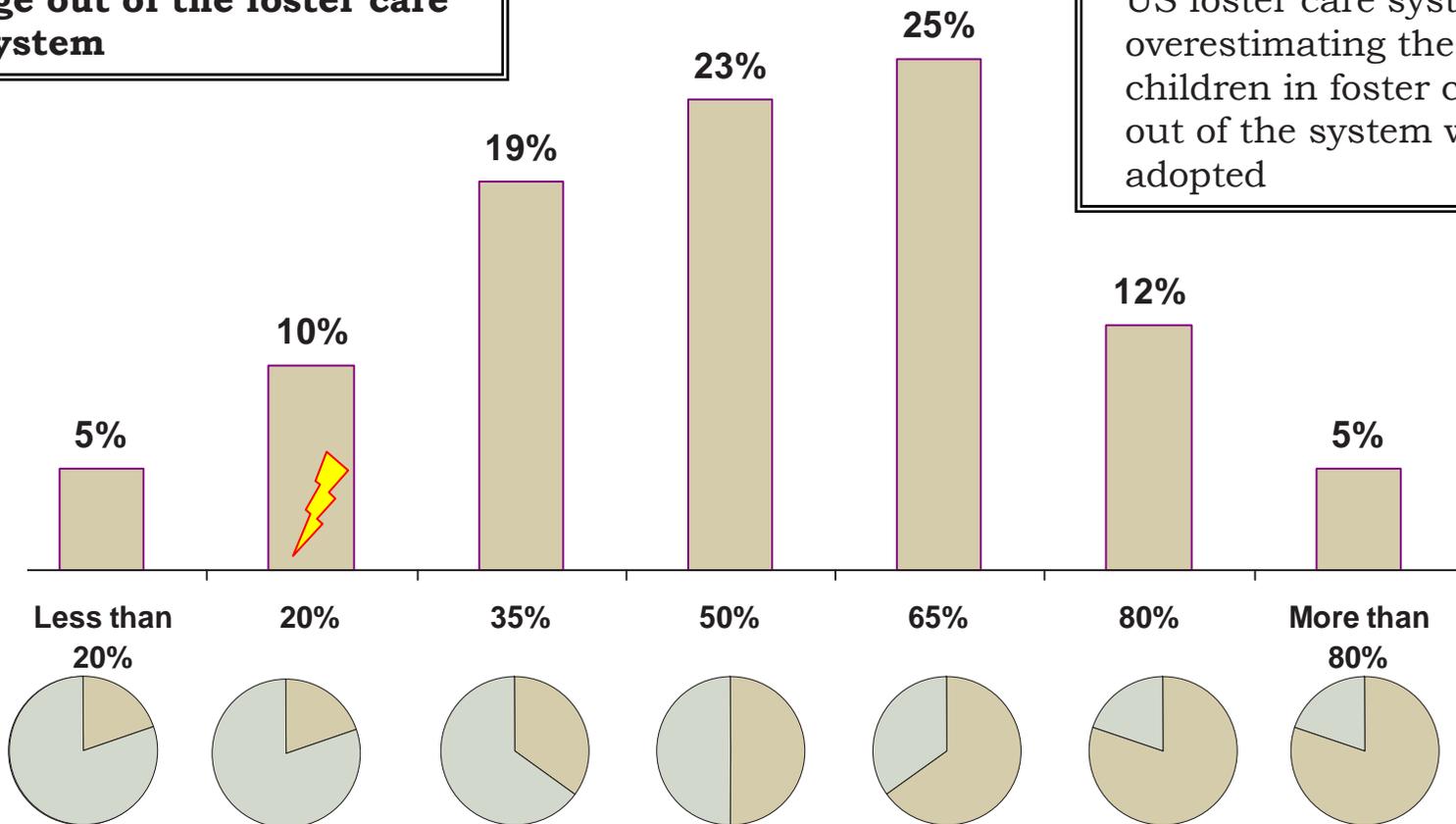
Estimations of percent of children leaving foster care at 18 without having been adopted

Survey / Question /

What percent of children do you think turn 18 and leave the foster care system in the US without being adopted?

Actual: 21% of children available to be adopted age out of the foster care system

• 85% of respondents underestimate the success of the US foster care system by overestimating the percentage of children in foster care who age out of the system without being adopted



Proportion of children who age out of the system



Perceptions of problems in foster children vary by opinion of adoption

Survey / Question /

In general, what is your opinion of adoption?

- Those that are somewhat to not at all favorable of private infant and foster care adoption are 2-3 times more likely than those that are very to extremely favorable to think children in foster care will have problems with (in order of most to least perceived likelihood):
 - Trust and bonding
 - Behavior and self control
 - School or learning
 - Physical health or disability
- Those with positive opinions of private infant and foster care adoption appear to be more optimistic with regard to likelihood of disabilities
- The trend is similar but less pronounced among those with unfavorable/favorable opinions of international adoption



Perceptions of problems in adopted children

Survey / Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have...? (More likely)

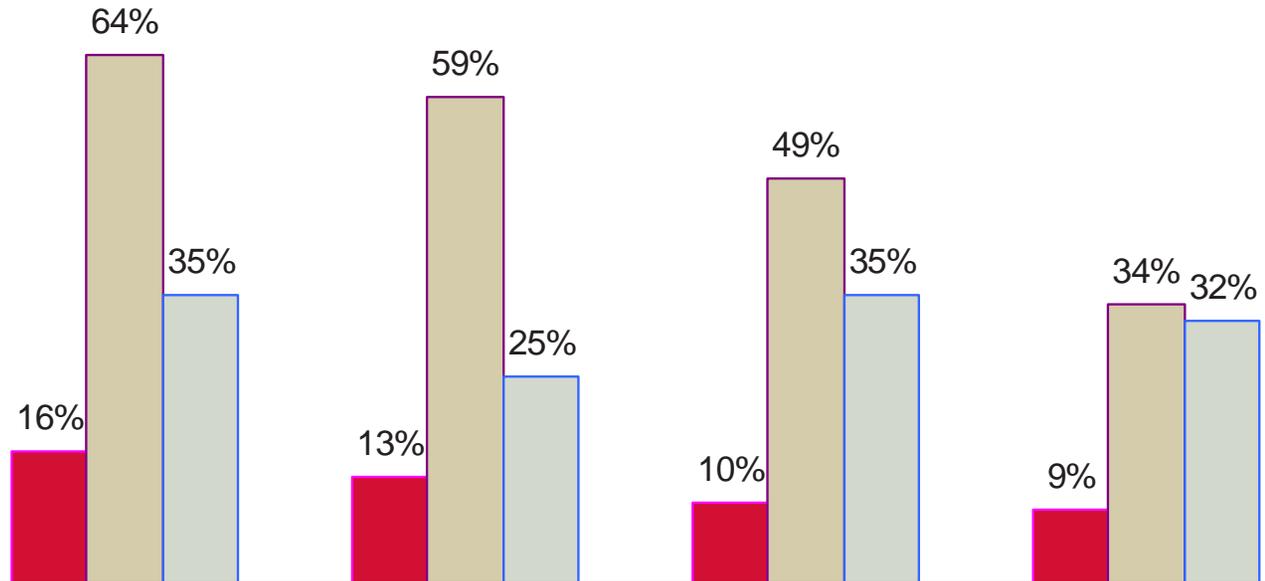
Ranking of concern level

#1

#2

#3

#4



	Problems with trust and bonding	Problems with behavior and self control	Problems with school or learning	Problems with physical health and disability
■ Private Infant US Adoption	16%	13%	10%	9%
■ US Foster Care Adoption	64%	59%	49%	34%
■ International Adoption	35%	25%	35%	32%

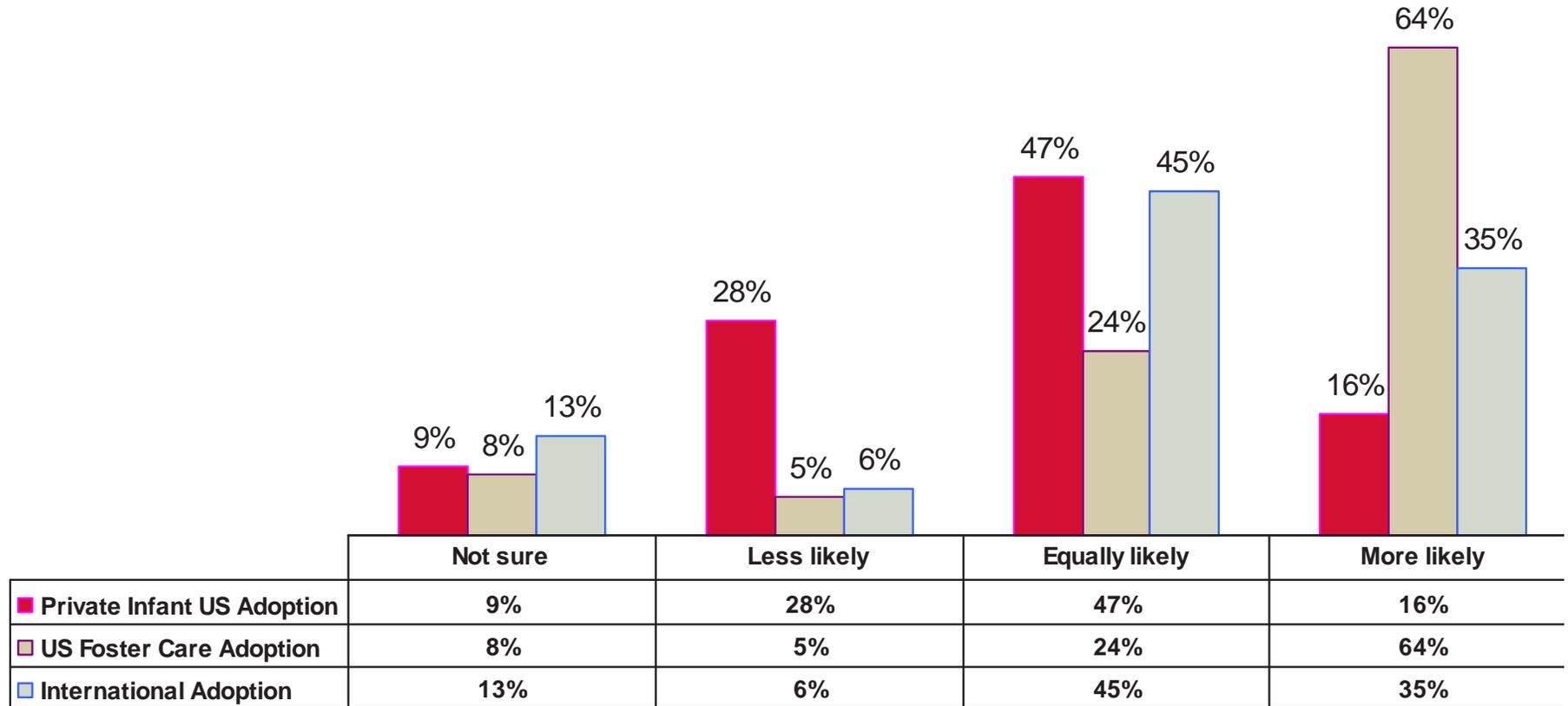


Problems with trust and bonding

Survey /
Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with trust and bonding?

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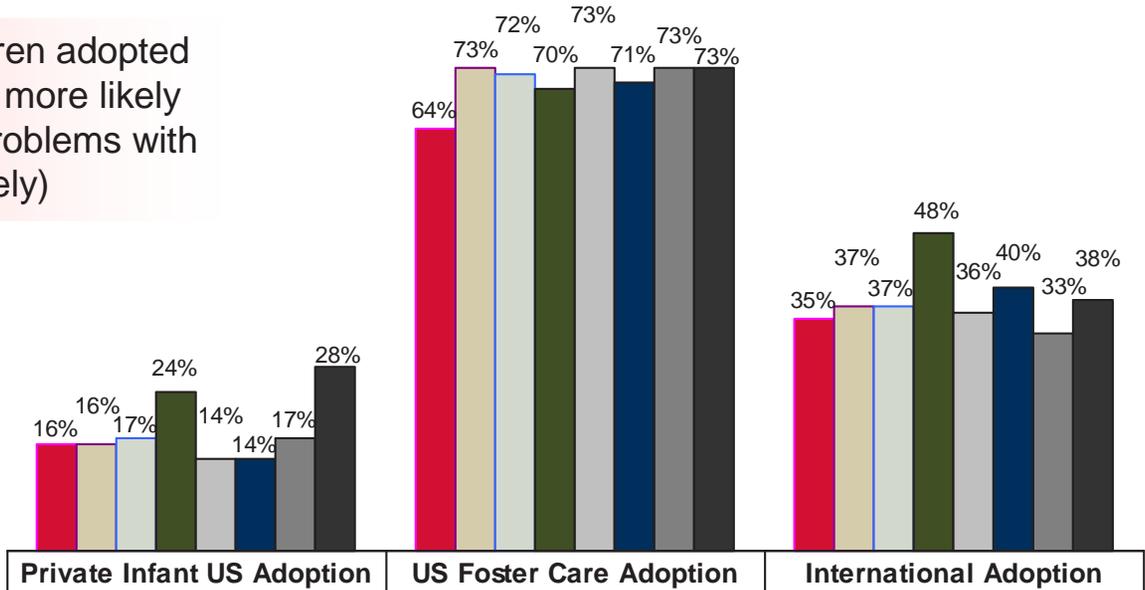


Problems with trust and bonding— perceptions of different populations

Survey /
Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with trust and bonding? (More likely)

- Issues with trust and bonding is the problem most expected to be found in adopted children, particularly those adopted from foster care
- All respondents share this perception, but especially those considering adoption (of any kind)



	Private Infant US Adoption	US Foster Care Adoption	International Adoption
■ Total Respondents	16%	64%	35%
■ Considered adopting a child	16%	73%	37%
■ Considered adopting an infant privately	17%	72%	37%
■ Very seriously considered adopting infant privately	24%	70%	48%
■ Considered adopting from foster care	14%	73%	36%
■ Very seriously considered adopting from foster care	14%	71%	40%
■ Considered adopting internationally	17%	73%	33%
■ Very seriously considered adopting internationally	28%	73%	38%



Q665/Q670/Q675. Base: Total respondents (n=1660), Considered adopting a child (n=549), Considered adopting an infant privately (n=324), Very seriously considered adopting infant privately (n=74), Considered adopting from foster care (n=376), Very seriously considered adopting from foster care (n=92), Considered adopting internationally (n=224), Very seriously considered adopting internationally (n=52)

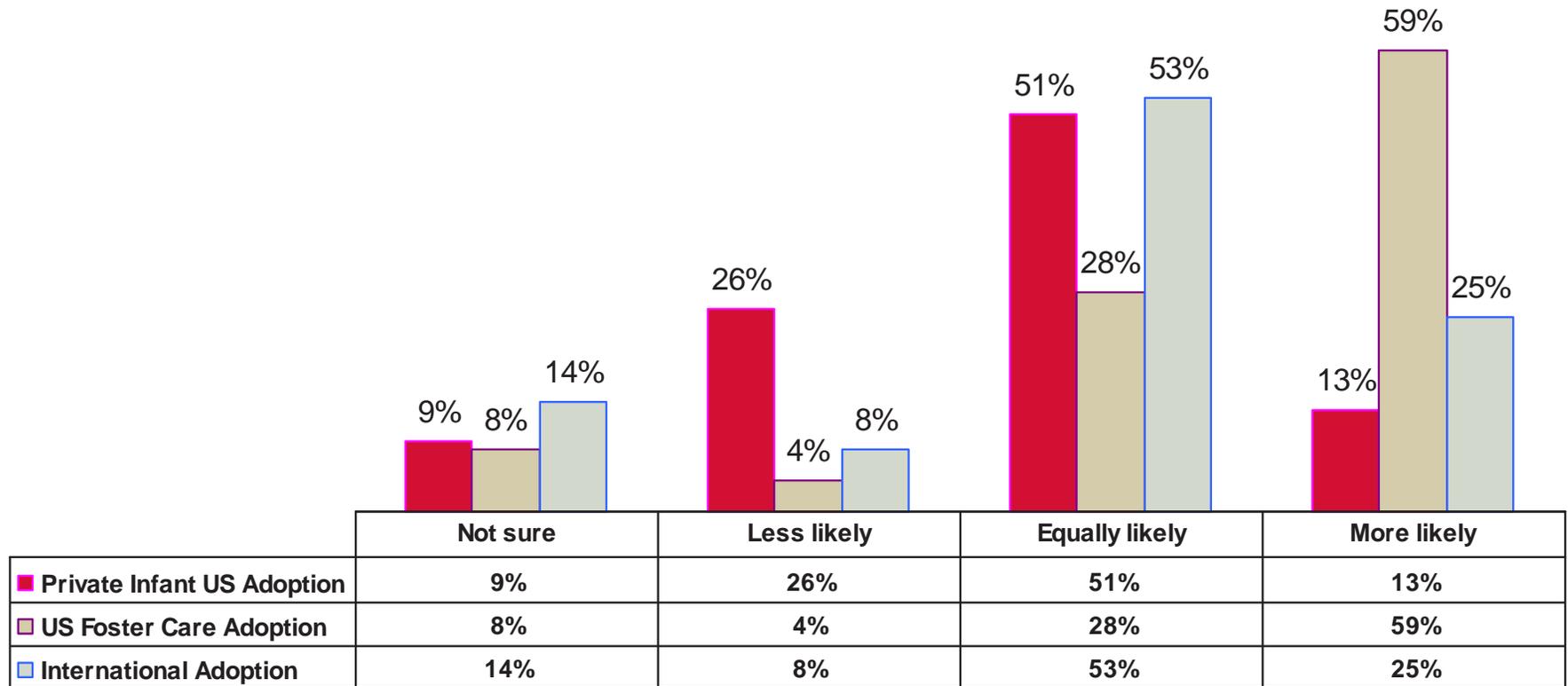


Problems with behavior and self control

Survey /
Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with behavior and self control?

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Problems with behavior and self control— perceptions of different populations

Survey / Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with behavior and self control? (More likely)

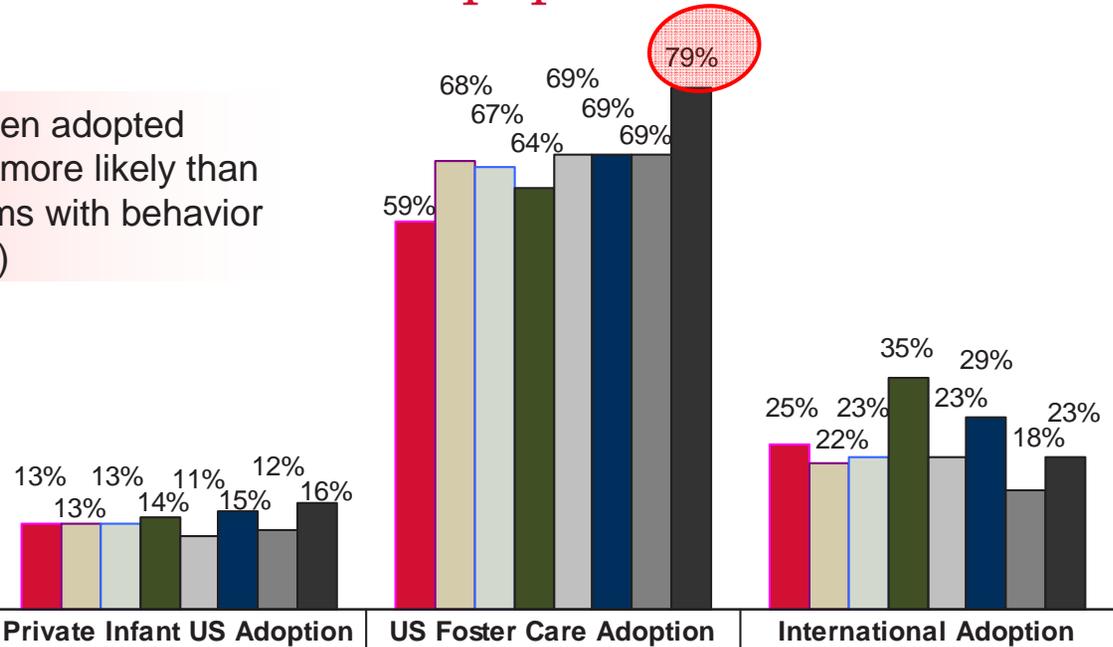
- The *very serious* international adoption consideration set has the strongest perception of all that children adopted from foster care will have problems with behavior and self control
 - Can changing this perception convert some from international to foster care adoption?
- The *very serious* international adoption consideration set is more likely than others to think foster children will have problems with behavior and self control.



Problems with behavior and self control— perceptions of different populations

*Survey /
Question*

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with behavior and self control? (More likely)



	Private Infant US Adoption	US Foster Care Adoption	International Adoption
■ Total Respondents	13%	59%	25%
■ Considered adopting a child	13%	68%	22%
■ Considered adopting an infant privately	13%	67%	23%
■ Very seriously considered adopting infant privately	14%	64%	35%
■ Considered adopting from foster care	11%	69%	23%
■ Very seriously considered adopting from foster care	15%	69%	29%
■ Considered adopting internationally	12%	69%	18%
■ Very seriously considered adopting internationally	16%	79%	23%

Q665/Q670/Q675. Base: Total respondents (n=1660), Considered adopting a child (n=549), Considered adopting an infant privately (n=324), Very seriously considered adopting infant privately (n=74), Considered adopting from foster care (n=376), Very seriously considered adopting from foster care (n=92), Considered adopting internationally (n=224), Very seriously considered adopting internationally (n=52)

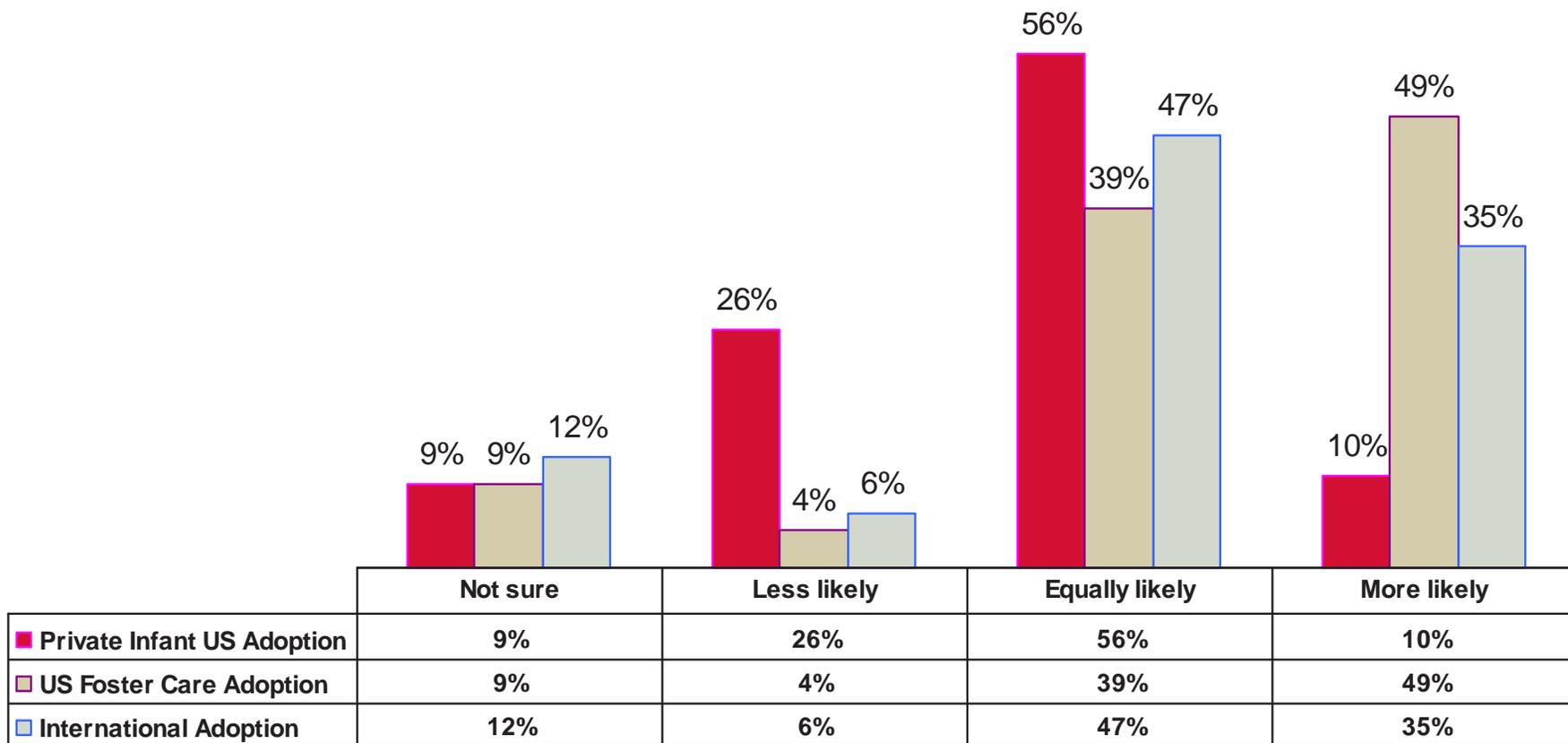


Problems with school or learning

Survey /
Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with school or learning?

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Problems with school or learning— perceptions of different populations

Survey / Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with school or learning? (More likely)

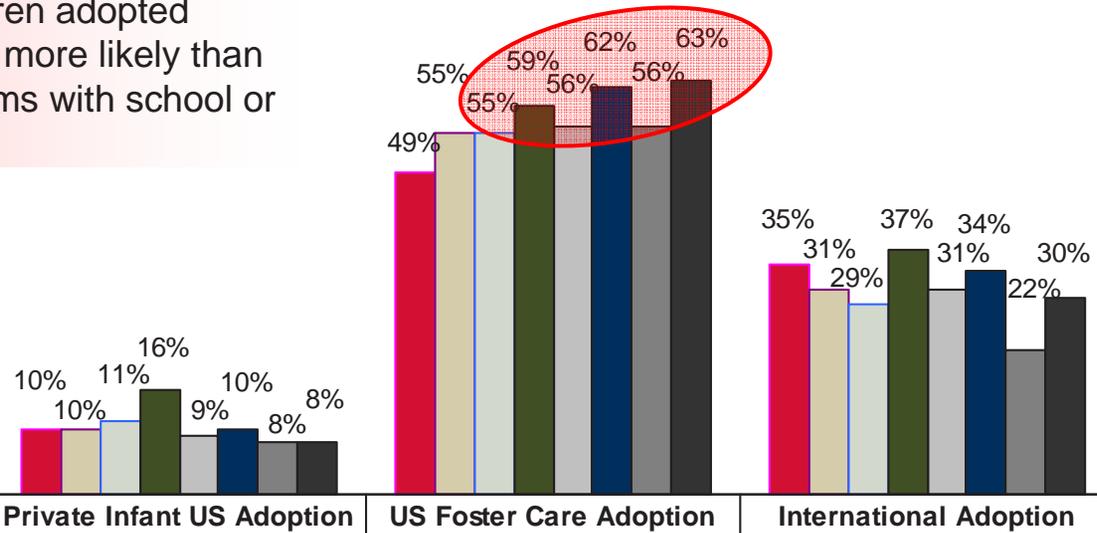
- Overall, foster care children are assumed to be more academically disadvantaged than other types of adopted children
- Internationally adopted children score lower than foster care but higher than private infant in likelihood for academic problems
- When it comes to foster care adoption, those who *most seriously* consider adoption (of any kind) are most likely to think these children are academically disadvantaged



Problems with school or learning— perceptions of different populations

Survey /
Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with school or learning? (More likely)



	Private Infant US Adoption	US Foster Care Adoption	International Adoption
■ Total Respondents	10%	49%	35%
□ Considered adopting a child	10%	55%	31%
□ Considered adopting an infant privately	11%	55%	29%
■ Very seriously considered adopting infant privately	16%	59%	37%
□ Considered adopting from foster care	9%	56%	31%
■ Very seriously considered adopting from foster care	10%	62%	34%
□ Considered adopting internationally	8%	56%	22%
■ Very seriously considered adopting internationally	8%	63%	30%

Q665/Q670/Q675. Base: Total respondents (n=1660), Considered adopting a child (n=549), Considered adopting an infant privately (n=324), Very seriously considered adopting infant privately (n=74), Considered adopting from foster care (n=376), Very seriously considered adopting from foster care (n=92), Considered adopting internationally (n=224), Very seriously considered adopting internationally (n=52)

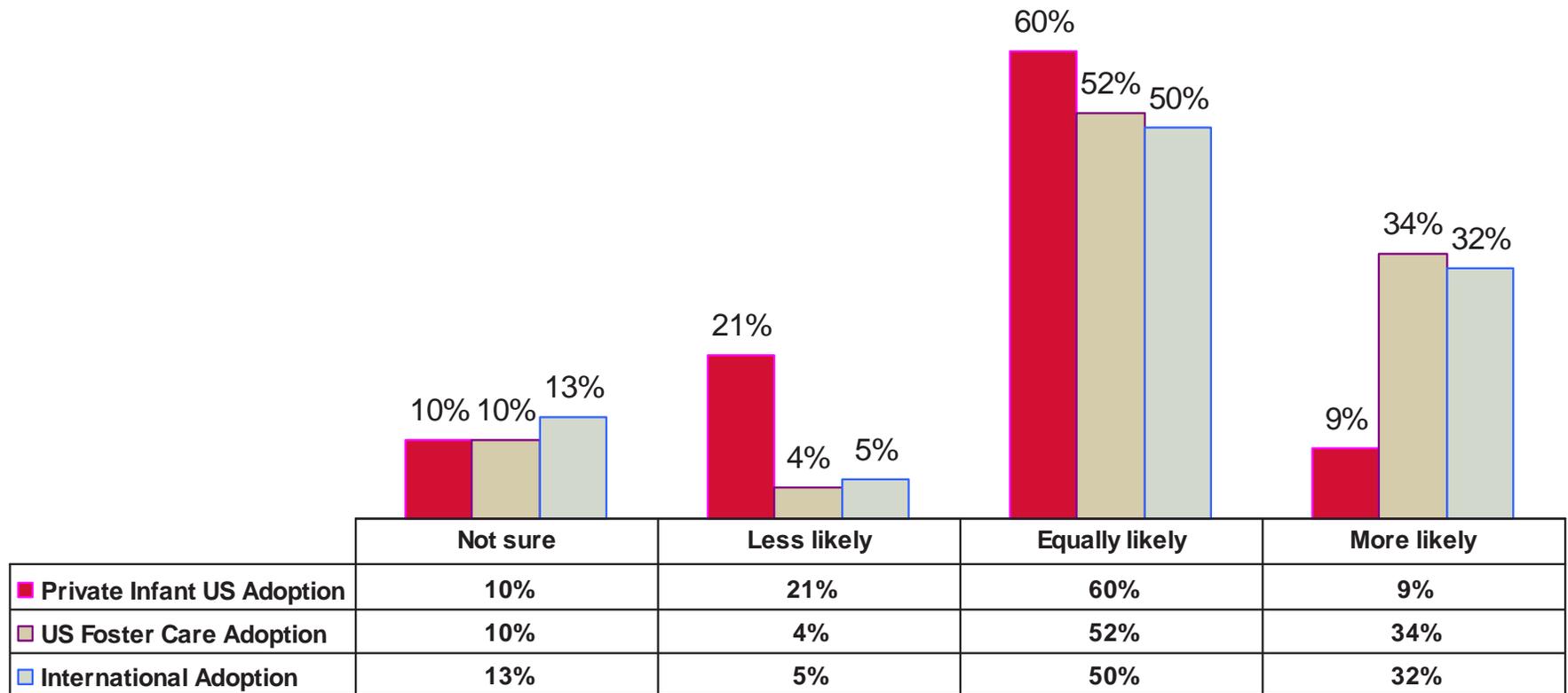


Problems with physical health and disability

Survey /
Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with physical health and disability?

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Problems with physical health and disability— perceptions of different populations

Survey / Question /

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with physical health and disability? (More likely)

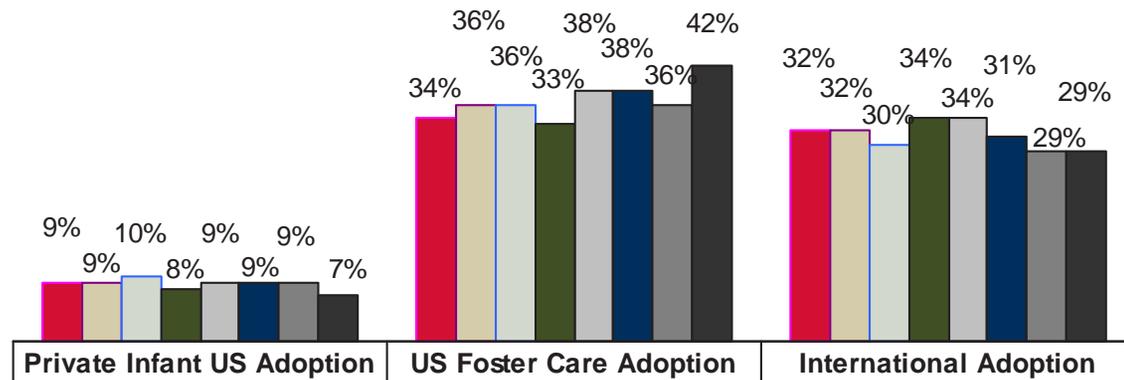
- Perceptions are fairly consistent among all consideration sets that children from private infant adoption are at the lowest risk for physical problems
- Foster care adoptees are seen to have much fewer physical than psychological problems
- This is the only area where people do not think that foster care adoptees have significantly more problems than international adoptees



Problems with physical health and disability— perceptions of different populations

*Survey /
Question /*

In general, do you think children adopted through...are less, equally or more likely than other children to have problems with physical health and disability? (More likely)



	Private Infant US Adoption	US Foster Care Adoption	International Adoption
■ Total Respondents	9%	34%	32%
■ Considered adopting a child	9%	36%	32%
■ Considered adopting an infant privately	10%	36%	30%
■ Very seriously considered adopting infant privately	8%	33%	34%
■ Considered adopting from foster care	9%	38%	34%
■ Very seriously considered adopting from foster care	9%	38%	31%
■ Considered adopting internationally	9%	36%	29%
■ Very seriously considered adopting internationally	7%	42%	29%

Q665/Q670/Q675. Base: Total respondents (n=1660), Considered adopting a child (n=549), Considered adopting an infant privately (n=324), Very seriously considered adopting infant privately (n=74), Considered adopting from foster care (n=376), Very seriously considered adopting from foster care (n=92), Considered adopting internationally (n=224), Very seriously considered adopting internationally (n=52)



Perceptions of expense of adoption

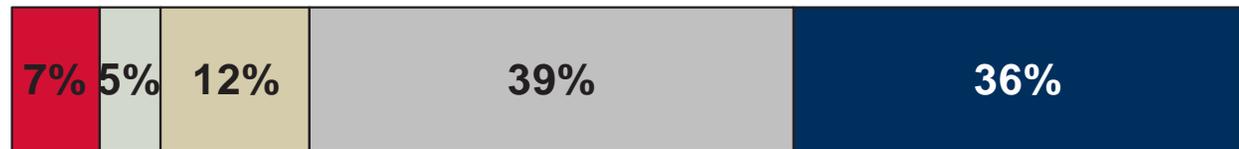
*Survey /
Question /*

How expensive would you say that each type of adoption is, based on what you have read, heard or seen?

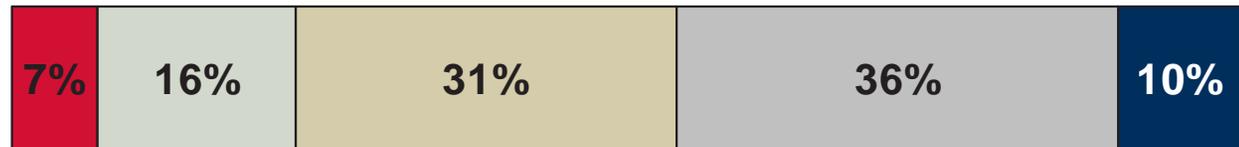
- Adoption costs are perceived to be high across the board, although substantially less so for foster care adoption

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Private Infant US Adoption



US Foster Care Adoption



International Adoption



■ Very inexpensive □ Somewhat inexpensive ■ Neither expensive nor inexpensive □ Somewhat expensive ■ Very expensive



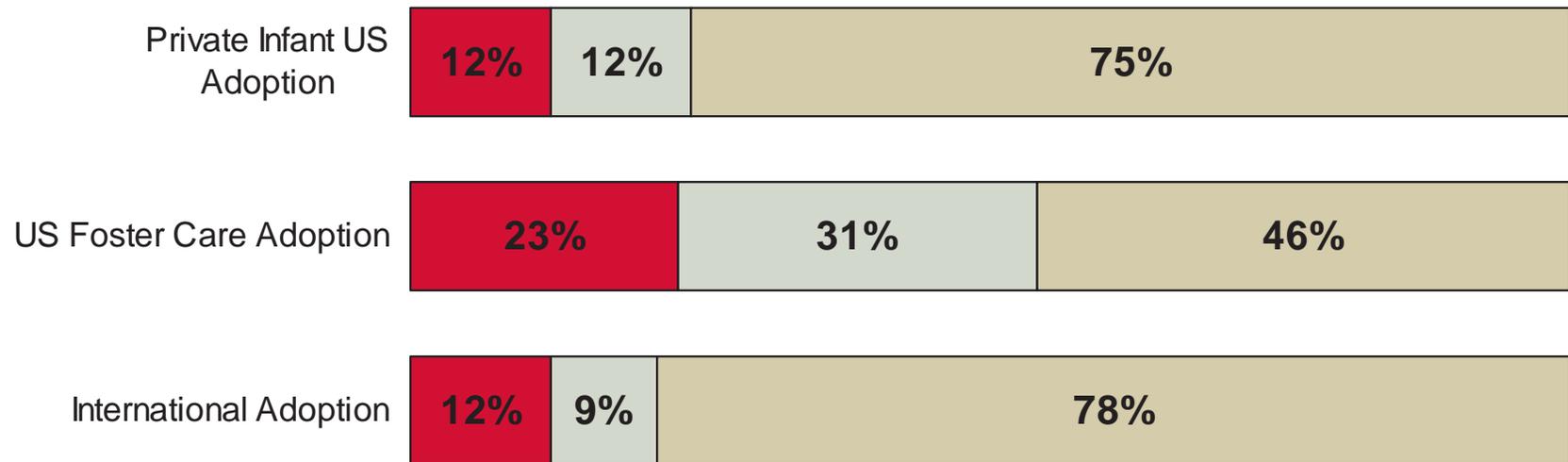
Perceptions of expense of adoption

**Survey /
Question /**

How expensive would you say that each type of adoption is based on what you have read, heard or seen?

- It is generally accepted that adoption costs are high
 - ¾ agree this is true for private infant and international adoptions
 - While there is the perception that foster care adoption costs are not *as* prohibitive, almost half still say it is expensive
 - Interestingly, Whites believe adoption is expensive more so than Blacks and Hispanics, particularly in the case of private infant adoption

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■ Somewhat to Very Inexpensive

□ Neither expensive nor inexpensive

□ Somewhat to Very Expensive

Q680. Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



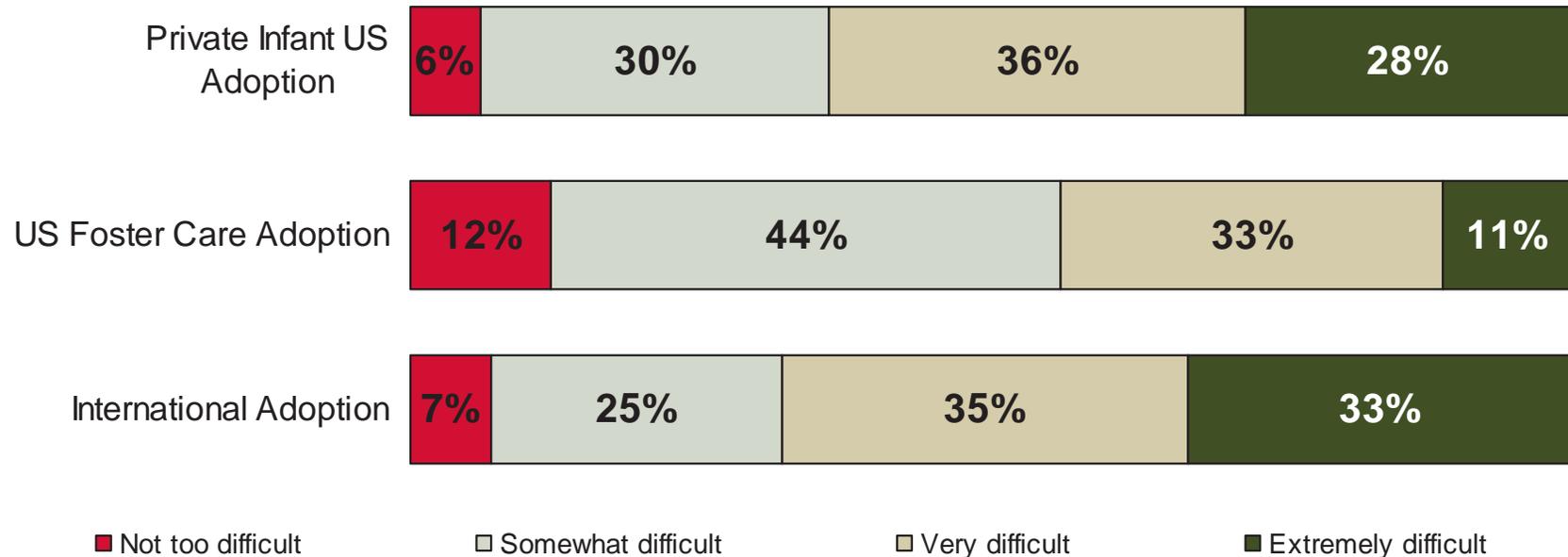
Perceptions of difficulty of adoption

*Survey /
Question /*

Based on what you may have read, heard or seen, how difficult would you say that it is to complete the steps involved in adopting a child?

- The general perception is that foster care adoption process is easier than other types of adoption: private infant and international adoption processes are judged to be about 3 times more difficult (extremely difficult) than foster care adoption

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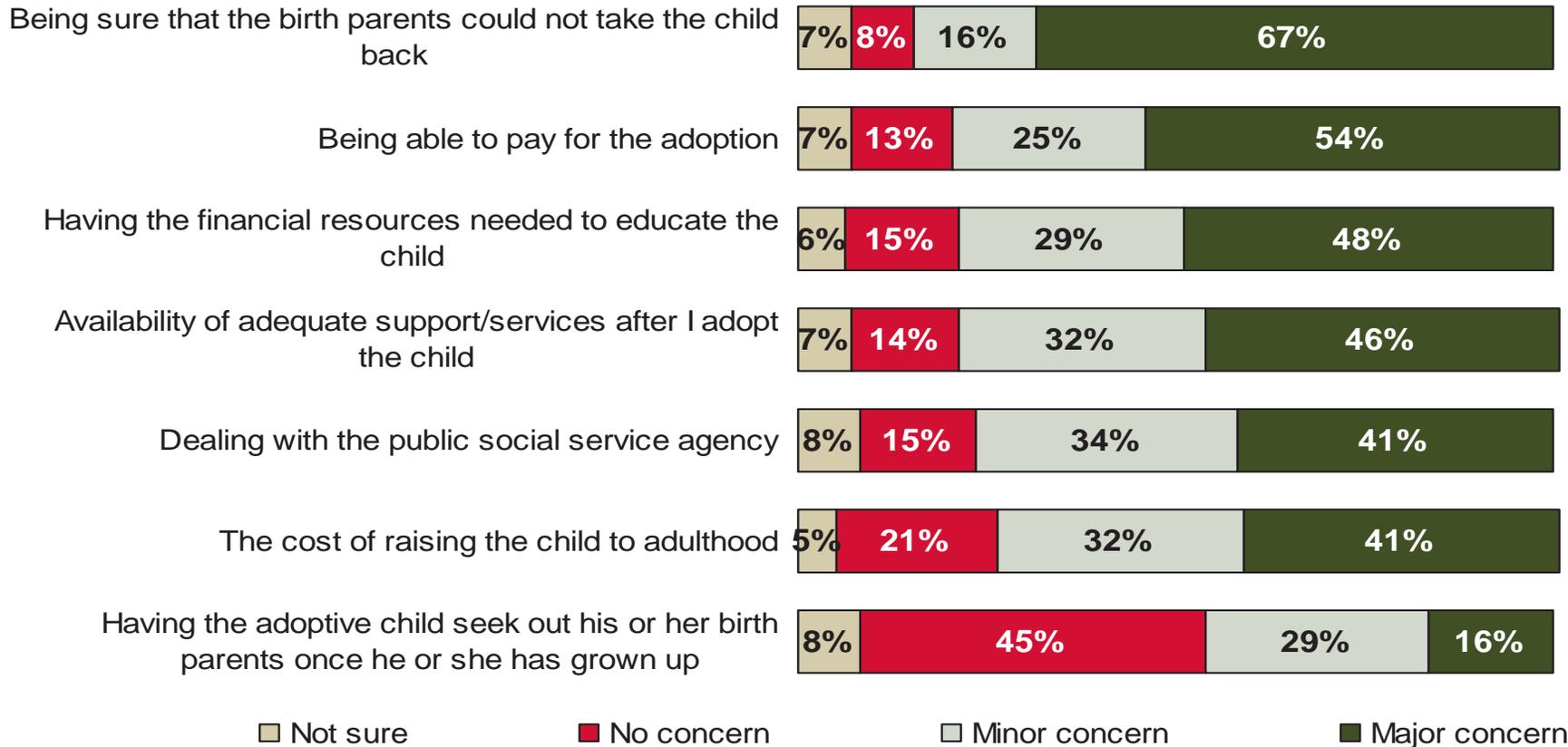




Concerns about adopting from US foster care system

Survey / Question /

There are a number of concerns that people might have when considering adoption of foster children. For each statement listed below, please rate the level of your concern.



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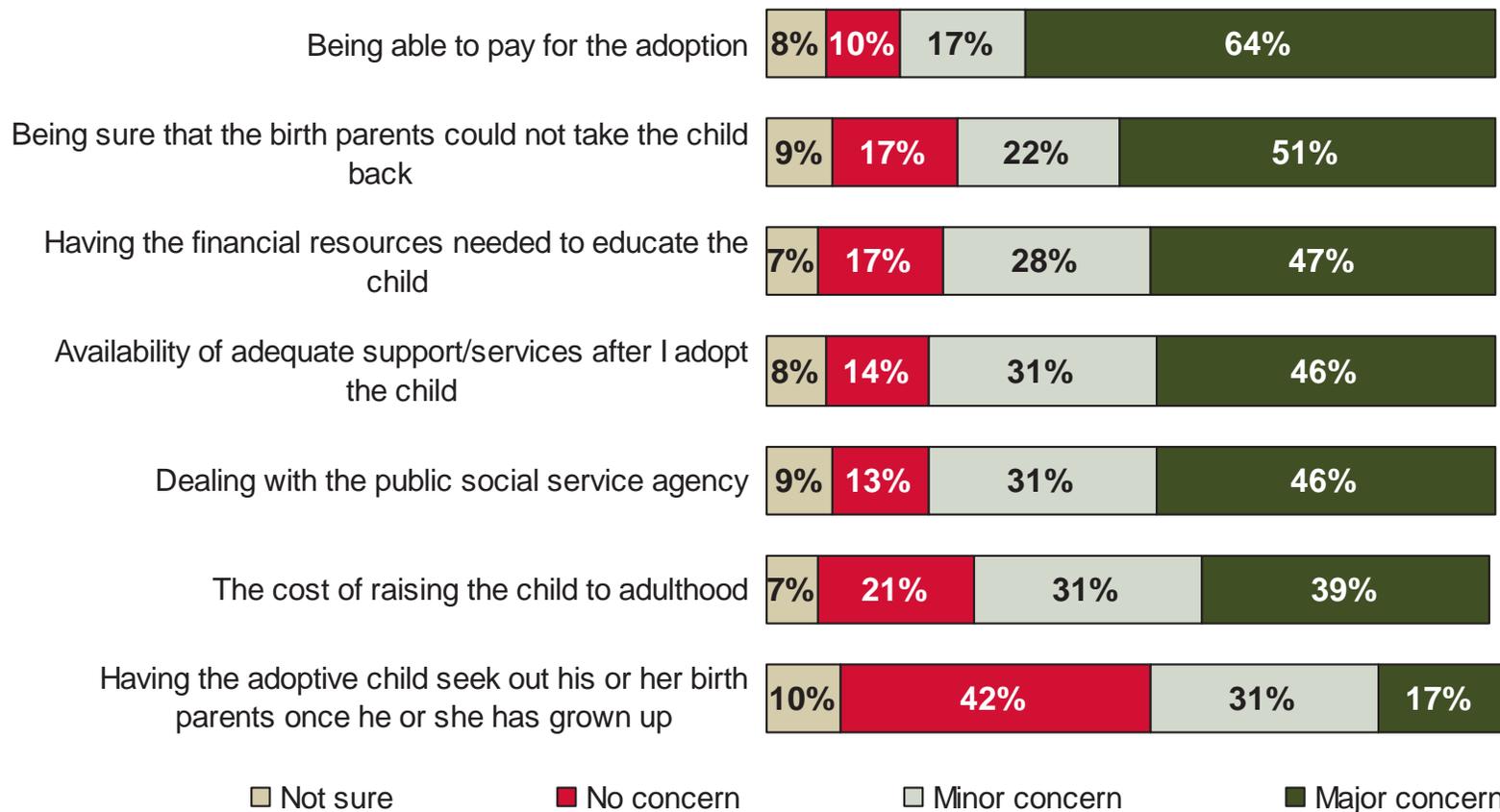
- Leading all concerns surrounding foster care adoption is the fear that a child might be taken away—2/3 of all respondents list this as a *major* concern
- Financial concerns also prevail



Concerns about adopting internationally

*Survey /
Question /*

There are a number of concerns that people might have when considering adoption of children from another country. For each statement listed below, please rate the level of your concern.





Major concerns about foster care and international adoption

Survey / Question /

There are a number of concerns that people might have when considering adoption of foster children/children from another country. For each...please rate the level of your concern.

- While the profiles of foster care and international adopters generally differ, these populations share the *same apprehensions about adopting*. Both list as their top two concerns:
 1. Fear that the birth parents will be able to take the child back
 - This is most important to those considering foster care adoption, as its likelihood is perceived as higher than with other types of adoption
 2. Being able to afford the adoption
 - Generally, financial concerns are strong overall and exist beyond the adoption stage, extending to raising and educating adopted children
 - This is most important to those considering international adoption, considered the most expensive of all

Survey / Question /

How expensive would you say that each type of adoption is, based on what you have read, heard or seen?

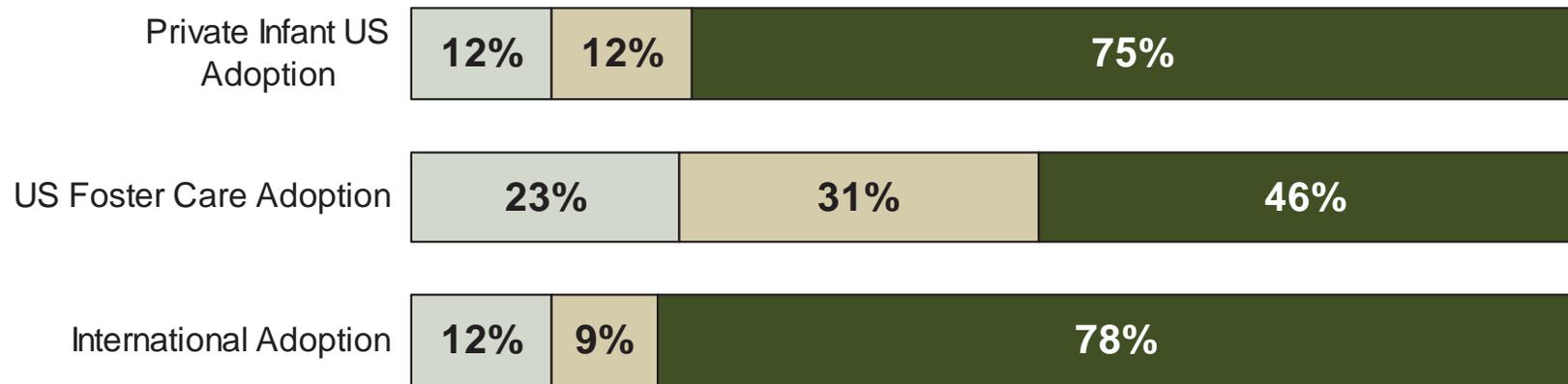


Major concerns about foster care and international adoption

Survey / Question /

There are a number of concerns that people might have when considering adoption of foster children/children from another country. For each...please rate the level of your concern.

- Other than the top two fears being inverted, both lists follow the same order and center around financial and social support



□ Somewhat to Very Inexpensive □ Neither expensive nor inexpensive ■ Somewhat to Very Expensive

- It is to be noted that almost half of these two adoption populations fear “dealing with the public social service agency”. The process needs to be simplified, and most importantly, communicated as such.

Survey / Question /

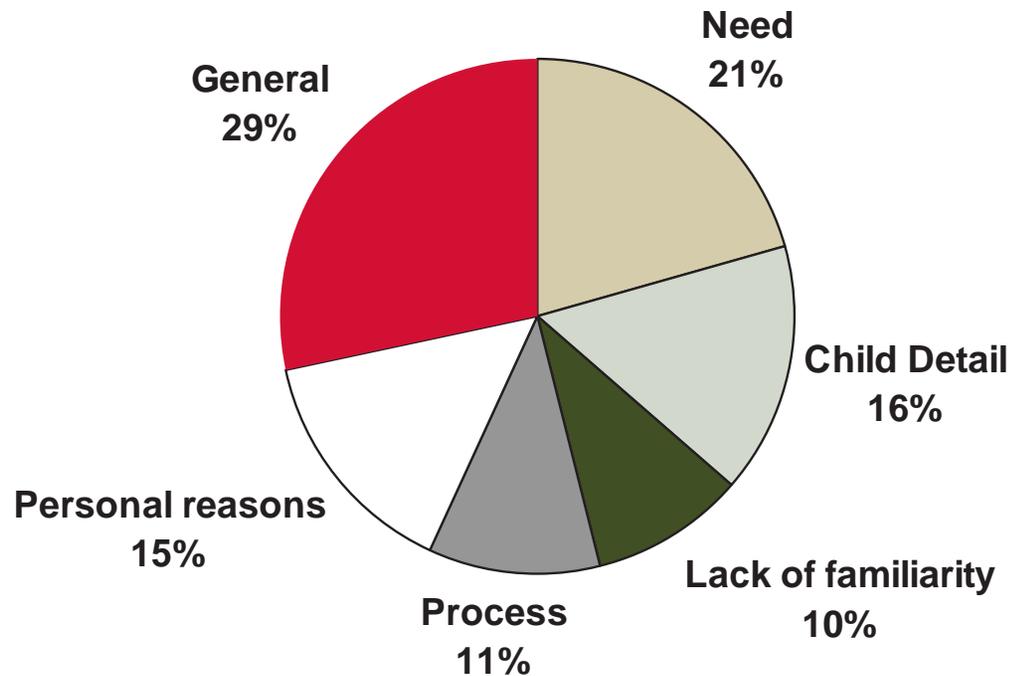
How expensive would you say that each type of adoption is, based on what you have read, heard or seen?



Respondents who consider adoption but not foster care adoption

Survey /
Question /

Why have you never considered adopting a child from the US foster care system?





Respondents who consider adoption but not foster care adoption

Survey / Question /

Why have you never considered adopting a child from the US foster care system?

- **General (29%)**
 - None/nothing (10%)
 - Don't know (6%)
 - Didn't think about it (5%)
 - Other (5%)
 - Declined to answer (3%)
- **Need (21%)**
 - Adopted/want to adopt through another system/agency (10%)
 - Already adopted/have biological children (7%)
 - Don't want to adopt/be a foster parent (4%)
- **Child Detail (16%)**
 - Want to adopt an infant (8%)
 - Concerns regarding mental physical health of child (6%)
 - Other (3%)
- **Personal reasons (15%)**
 - Not ready/responsible enough to adopt/have children (12%)
 - Too old to adopt (3%)
- **Process (11%)**
 - Difficult process (5%)
 - Concerns regarding child/custody being given to biological parents (4%)
 - Other (3%)
- **Lack of familiarity (10%)**
 - Not familiar with US foster care system (8%)
 - Not researched enough (3%)



Factors in decision-making for foster care and international adoption

Survey / Question /

If you were to consider adopting a child (or another child) from the foster care system/another country, please indicate whether each of the following would make a major difference in your decision to pursue adoption, a minor difference, or no difference at all.

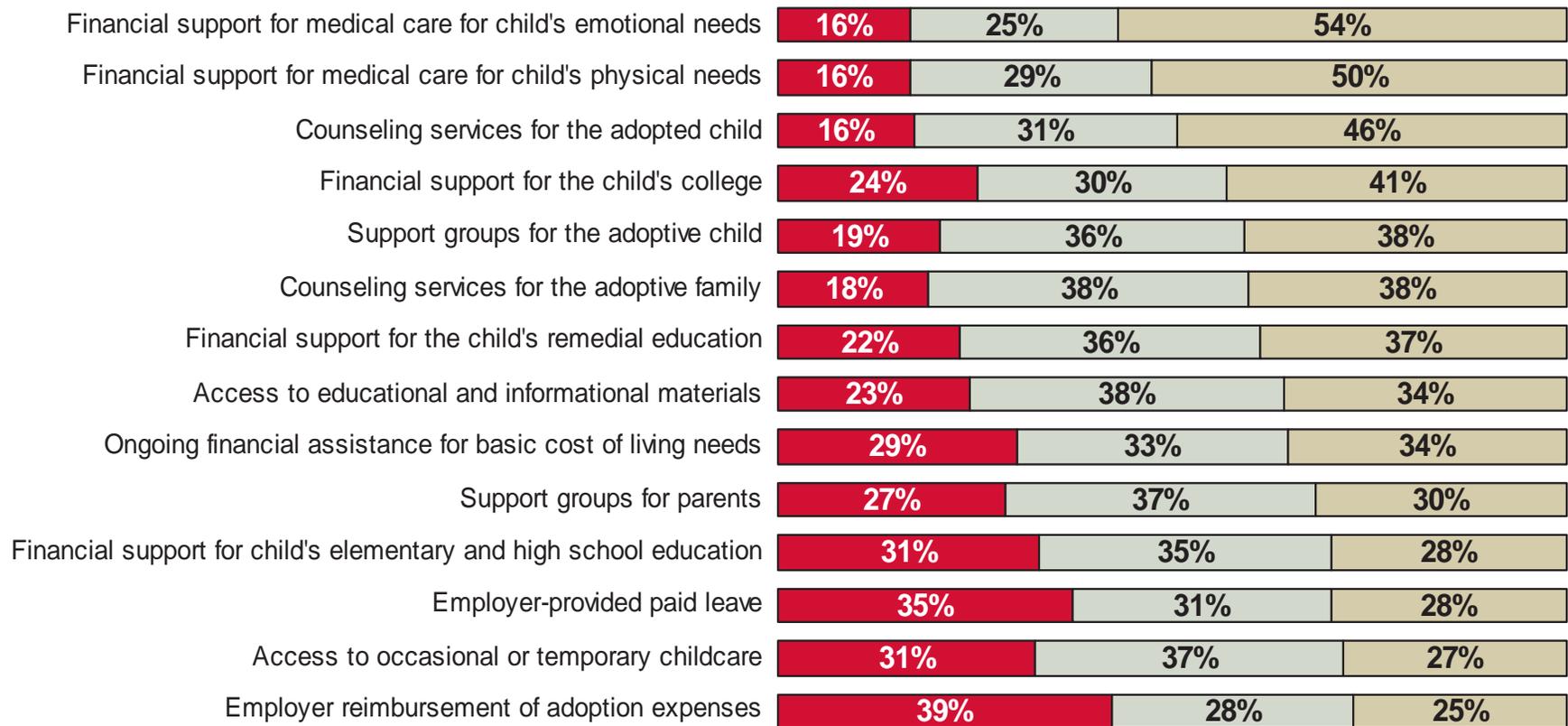
- Ultimately, prospective adopters are concerned about their ability to provide for a child's needs. When considering foster care or international adoption, they worry more about being able to meet the children's needs than their own.
- The availability of financial support for a child's physical and mental health tops all issues in the decision to adopt—be it through foster care or internationally—though it is slightly more important to those considering foster care adoption



Factors in decision-making for foster care adoption

Survey / Question

If you were to consider adopting a child (or another child) from the foster care system, please indicate whether each of the following would make a major difference in your decision to pursue adoption, a minor difference, or no difference at all.



■ No difference □ Minor difference □ Major difference

Q730. Base: Respondents who have adopted previously, considered adoption or have adopted children from the US foster care system or considered adopting children from the US foster care system (n=566)

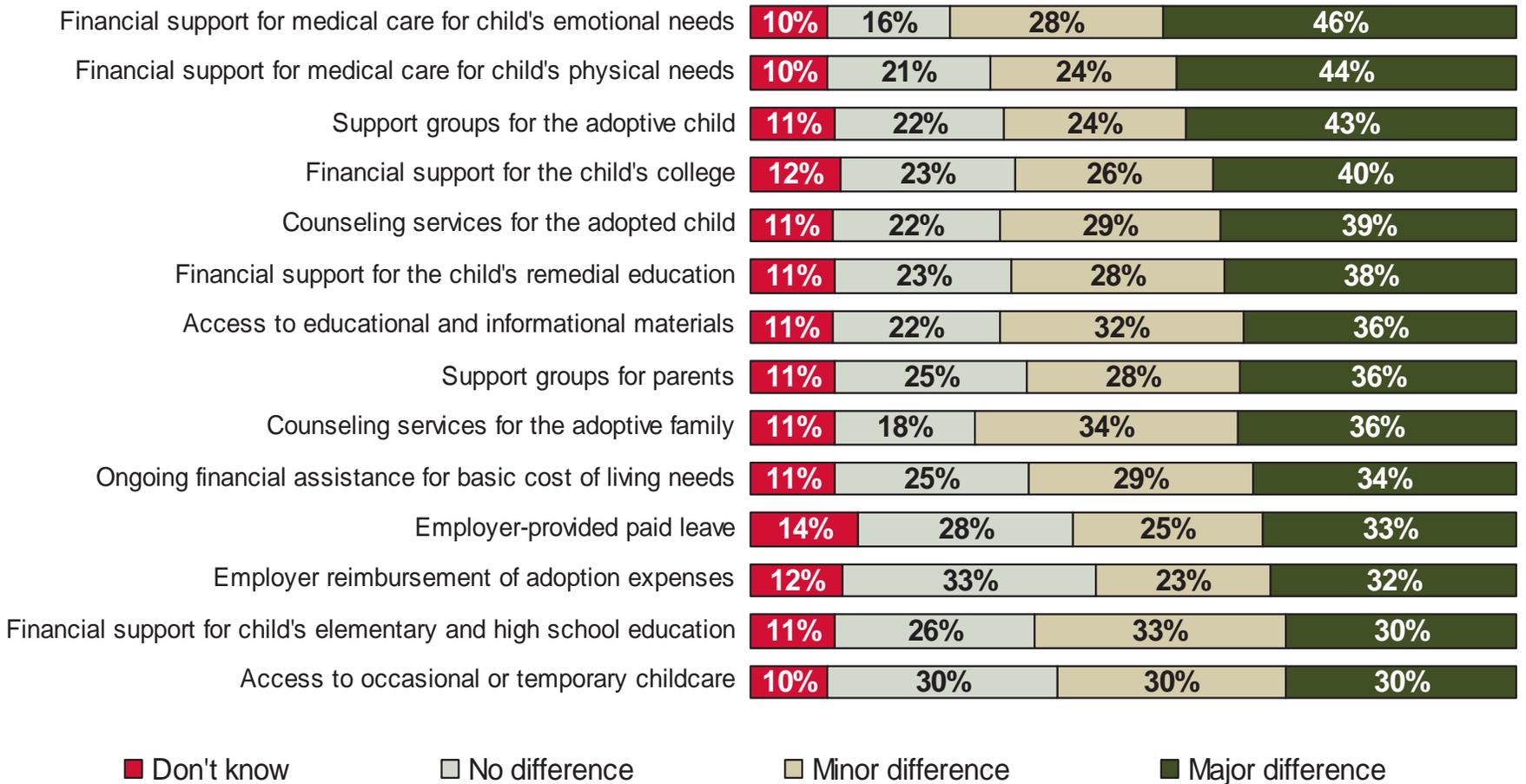


Factors in decision-making for international adoption

Survey / Question

If you were to consider adopting a child (or another child) from another country, please indicate whether each of the following would make a major difference in your decision to pursue adoption, a minor difference, or no difference at all.

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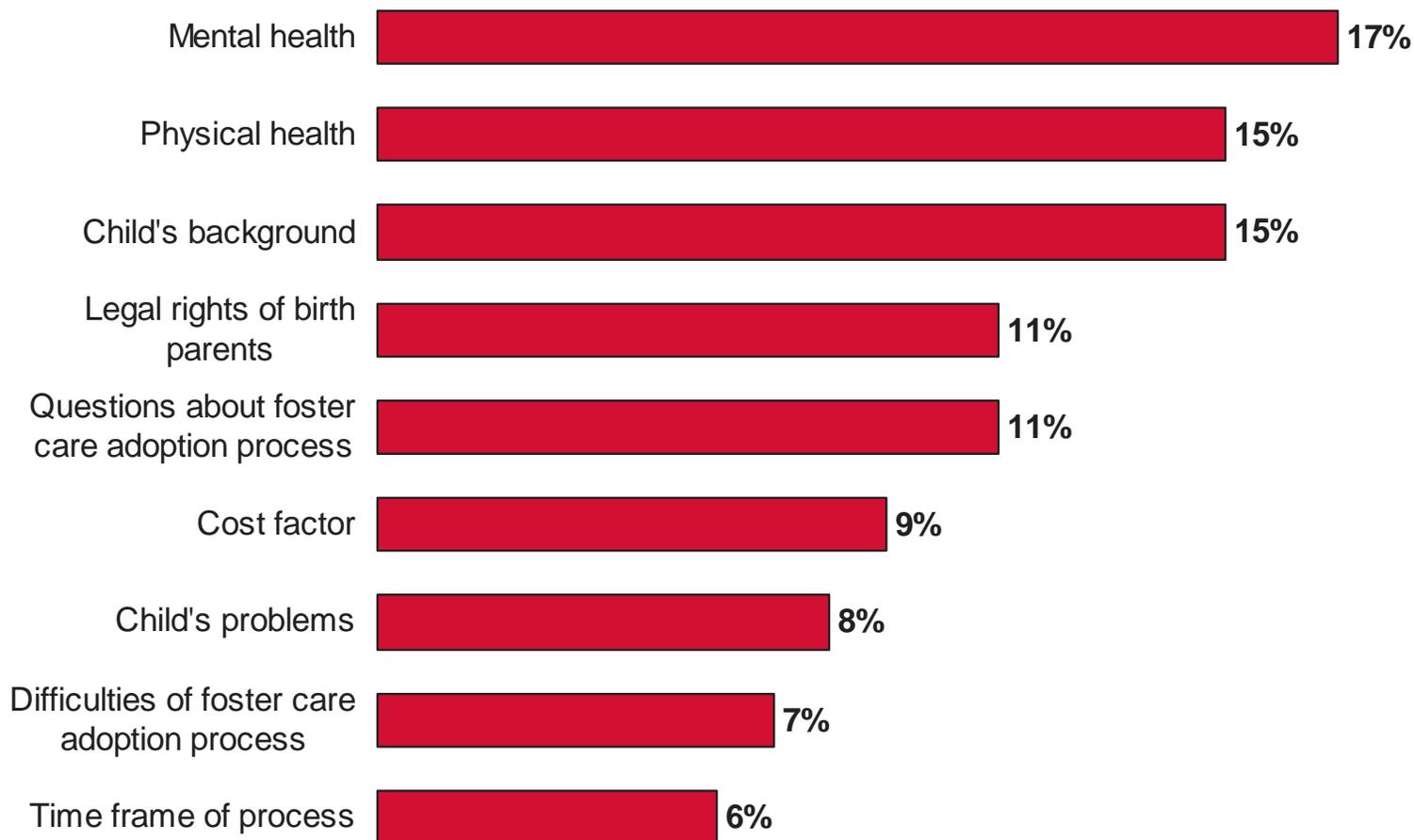
Q735. Base: Respondents who have adopted previously, considered adoption or have adopted internationally previously or considered international adoption (n=333)



Q790. Questions/concerns about foster care adoption

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?





Q790. Questions about foster care adoption: Mental health (17%)

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?

Mental health issues include:

- Psychological/emotional issues (7%) examples:
 - “Is the child functioning well in school?”
 - “How traumatized and scared are the children?”
 - “Do I have full access to the child’s medical records, including mental health, school records, and life history?”
 - “Signs to watch for regarding depression, violent acting out, running away and how to deal with anger in a positive loving manner.”
- Behavioral problems (7%) examples:
 - “How likely is it that the child will have severe emotional issues resulting in harmful behavior towards self, other children or pets?”
 - “What type of behavioral problems might I expect?”
 - “Are there significantly more discipline problems associated with adopting foster children than infants?”
- Adjustment/bonding/trust issues (6%) examples:
 - “Can the kids be trusted?”
 - “Attachment issues?”
 - “How difficult is it to get the child to trust you? What steps does one take to make them feel safe and secure?”



Q790. Questions about foster care adoption: Physical health (15%)

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?

Physical health issues include:

- Current physical health and medical history of child and its biological parents (15%) such as:
 - “Are the medical records of the biological parents available?”
 - “How could I get copies of medical evaluations, diagnoses for the child?”
 - “Do they have any physical deformities?”
 - “Health of parents and grandparents.”
 - “Would I see a complete health record before I adopted?”
 - “Does the child have any physical and/or medical health conditions that may need additional care?”
 - “Can I request health records?”



Q790. Questions about foster care adoption: Child's background (15%)

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?

- Child background issues revolve around questions about a child's family history, living environment, and things that happened to him/her in the past (15%) such as:
 - "What is the child's history?"
 - "What are the reasons these children were taken away from their birth parents?"
 - "Where is the family now?"
 - "I would want to know about the child's past relationship with parents, family, friends, and school."
 - "Was the child born out of wedlock?"
 - "I would ask about the background of the parents."
 - "How the background of foster children can affect their development?"
 - "What kind of parents/environment did they have?"
 - "Who were its parents?"
 - What kind of information I can get on a child before adopting?"



Q790. Questions about foster care adoption: Legal rights of biological parents (11%)

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?

- The concern around the legal rights of a child's birth parents (11%) centers around the possibility that the child might one day be taken from the adoptive parents after they have emotionally invested in making the child a permanent part of their families. Some comments are as follows:
 - "What claim might the birth parent retain on the child?"
 - "Are the parents completely out of the picture? I have dealt with them before and it is not nice."
 - "Is the child freed for adoption or must we wait for termination of parental rights?"
 - "What happens if the biological parent changes their mind and wants the child back?"
 - "Once this child is adopted will he/she be mind for life or can I someday expect the courts to step in and take away my child and return him/her to his original parents?"
 - "Could the biological parents ever try to take their child away from me once I have adopted him or her?"
 - "If the natural parents can later sue for the return of the child."



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Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

Q790. Questions about foster care adoption: Questions about the foster care adoption process (11%)⁸²

*Survey /
Question /*

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?

- These questions accentuate the lack of knowledge about the process and what it entails. The tone is generally neutral but inquisitive; they do not assume a negative or difficult experience. Particular comments include:
 - “What is the process?”
 - “How long does the process take?”
 - “What are the requirements and qualifications?”
 - “Is it more affordable and easy than other adoptions?”
 - “What would be expected of me?”
 - “How are families matched with children?”
 - “Could I have a specified period of observation prior to decision?”
 - “How does the whole program work?”
 - “Do you get to pick out your child?”
 - “How do I get a fair objective home study?”
 - “What sort of background and security checks are performed on prospective adopters?”



Q790. Questions about foster care adoption: Cost factor (9%) and Time factor (6%)

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?

- Cost-related questions had a principal theme:
 - “How much does it cost?”
 - “Why does it cost so much?”
- In regards to the time factor, there is a sense that foster care adoption is a lengthy process. In some cases there is a need to wait for parental rights to terminate. Questions were mainly focused on:
 - “How long does it take?”



Q790. Questions about foster care adoption: Child's problems (8%)

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?

Concerns about problems a child may have encountered include:

- The desire to understand concretely what problems, if any, exist (3%) such as:
 - “What kind of troubles could one expect with a child coming out of foster care?”
 - “Why has this child not been adopted?”
 - “What challenges the child has.”
 - “How likely is the child to have problems related to prior experiences?”
- Whether they have a history of abuse (3%) for example:
 - “Was the child physically or emotionally abused?”
 - “Were they sexually abused and were they exposed to drugs in utero?”
- Whether they have been exposed to drugs/alcohol (2%) such as:
 - “I would want to know if the child was abused or born chemically dependent.”
 - “What are the parents background as it relates to drugs, alcohol, and mental issues?”



Q790. Questions about foster care adoption: Difficulties of foster care adoption process (7%)

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it?

- These questions refer specifically to difficulties people fear are embedded in the adoption process such as:
 - “Why is the system so complicated?”
 - “What was the most difficult part of adopting from foster care?”
 - “How hard is the process to overcome to get the child?”
 - “Is it more or less difficult than private adoption?”
 - “How difficult is the process?”
 - “How difficult is the paperwork?”
 - “How much red tape is involved?”
 - “How difficult is the process and how often does the adoption fall through?”
 - “What are the main barriers to adoption out of the foster care system?”



Q790. Questions about foster care adoption by those who do and don't consider foster care adoption

Survey / Question

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it? (Multiple response question)

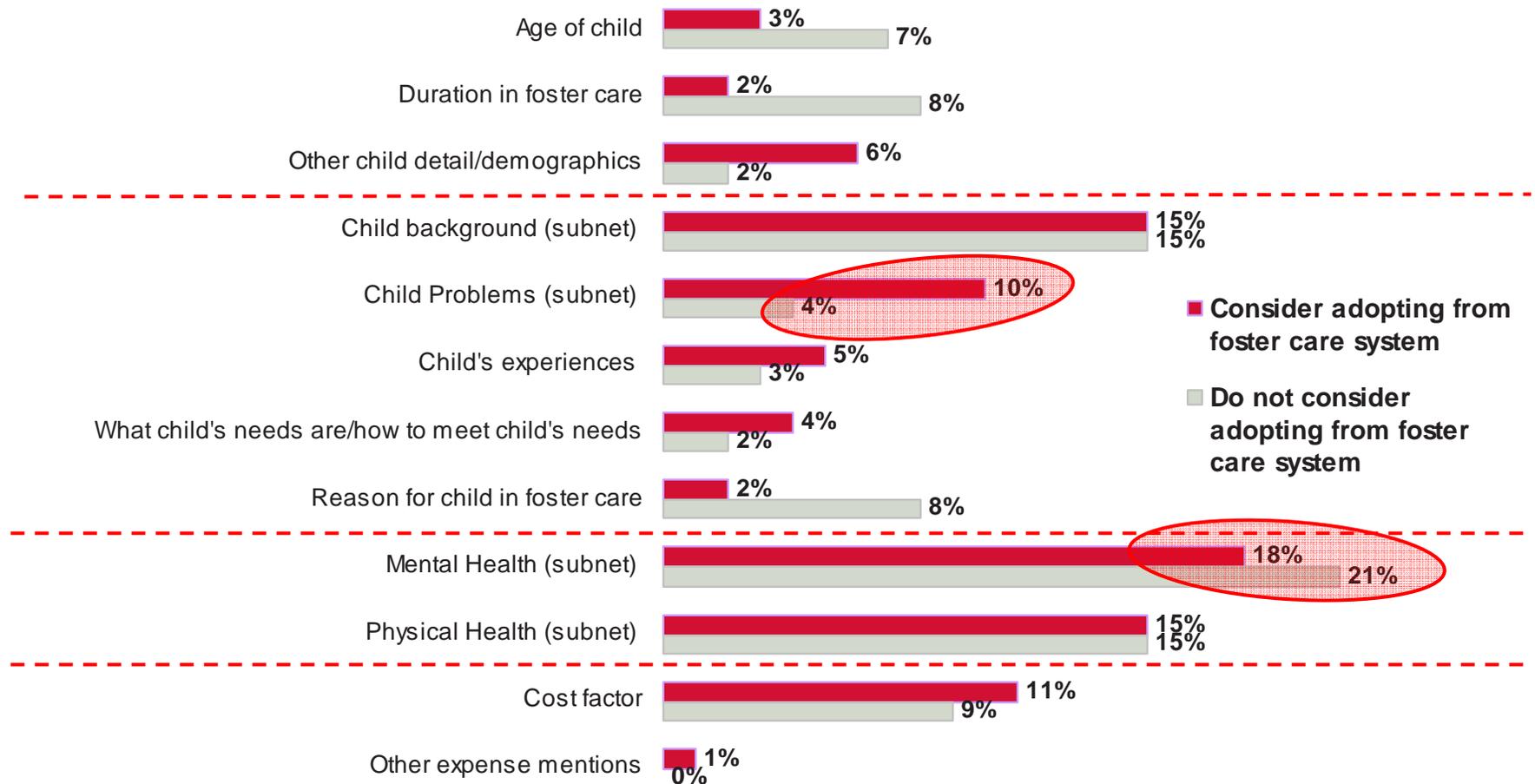
- Those who *do* consider adopting from the foster care system have many questions surrounding *the actual process* of adopting a child out of foster care. They want specific answers regarding:
 - What the steps involved are
 - How difficult it is
 - How long it takes
 - What kind of support system they can expect to be able to count on
- There is more consideration for how they can manage the process in order to get the child out of foster care and into their homes
- Those who *do not* consider foster care adoption raise more questions specific to *the child him/herself*, such as:
 - The mental health of the child
 - The length of time the child has been in foster care
 - The reason the child is in foster care
 - The age of the child
- There is more consideration for the potential negative aspects of foster care adoption that could affect their lives



Q790. Questions about foster care adoption by those who do and don't consider foster care adoption

Survey Question

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it? (Multiple response question)

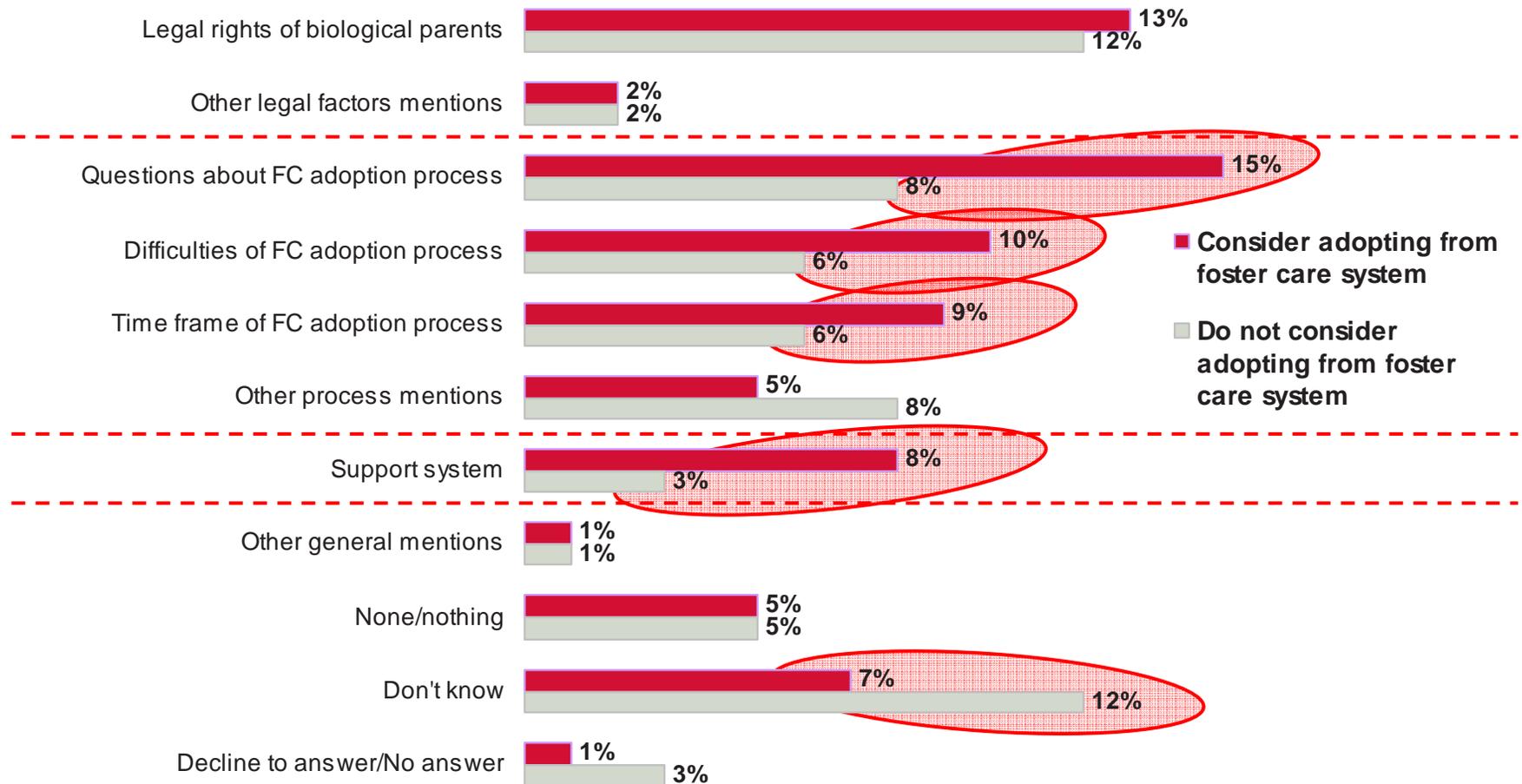




Q790. Questions about foster care adoption by those who do and don't consider foster care adoption (continued)

Survey / Question /

Suppose you were thinking about adopting a child out of foster care. What would be one or two things you would ask about foster care adoption if you had the opportunity to talk with someone who knew a lot about it? (Multiple response question)





Views on race and religion in foster care adoption

Survey / Question /

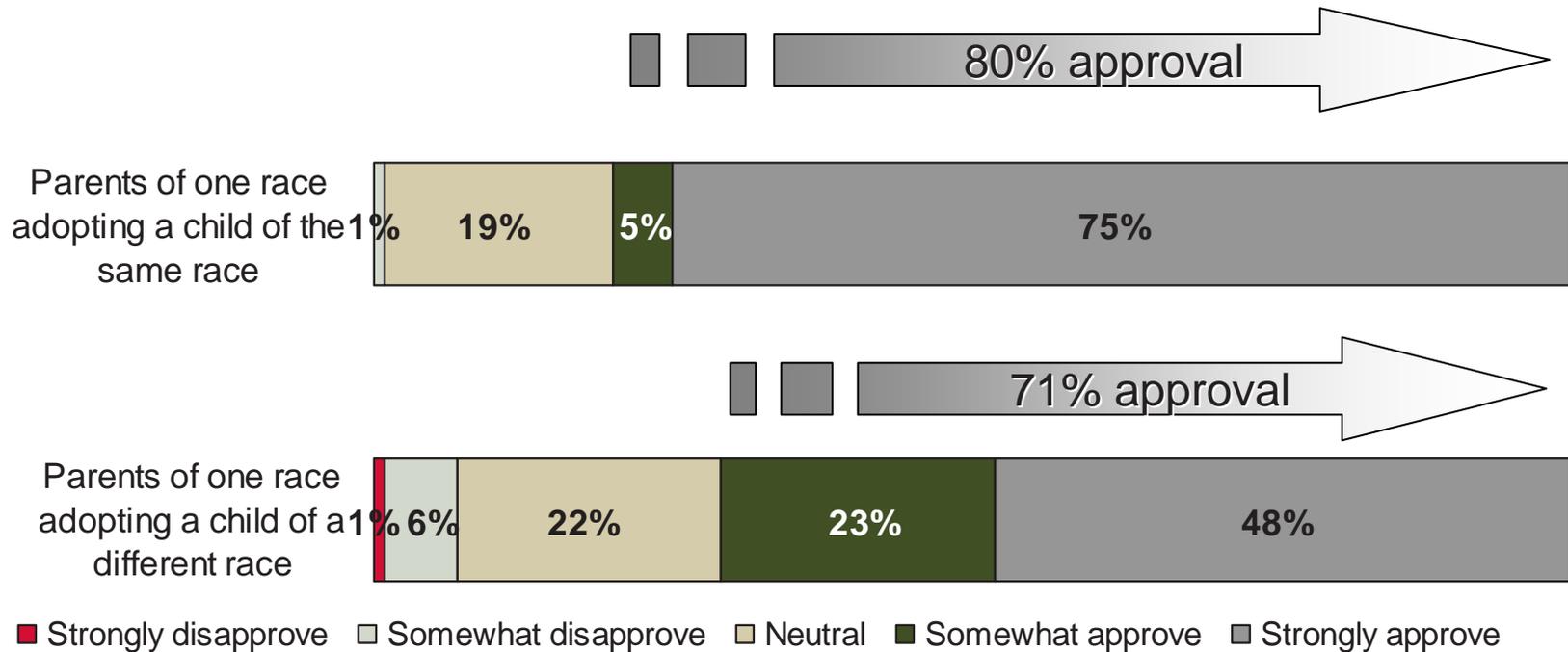
Think about adoptions from the foster care system where the adoptive parents are of one race/religion and the adopted foster child is of another race/religion. How do you feel about the following types of adoption?

- While total approval scores indicate an openness to mixed-race foster care adoption (71% somewhat to strongly approve), only half strongly approve.
- Still, while 22% feel neutral on the subject, only 7% say they somewhat to strongly disapprove of mixed-race foster care adoption
 - Blacks/African Americans and those aged 65+ show highest disapproval
- There is slightly lower approval for mixed-religion foster care adoption, at 62% (somewhat to strongly approve) 10% somewhat to strongly disapprove of mixed-religion foster care adoptions
 - Those aged 18-24, those with graduate education and those with incomes over \$100K have *slightly* higher disapproval rates
- But the highest resistance in the religious topic arises where a child is religious and the adoptive parents are not (almost 1/3 of respondents somewhat/strongly disapprove)
 - Concern again centers around the child—people worry about the possibility of a child’s freedom of expression or ideas being restricted



Views on *race* in foster care adoption

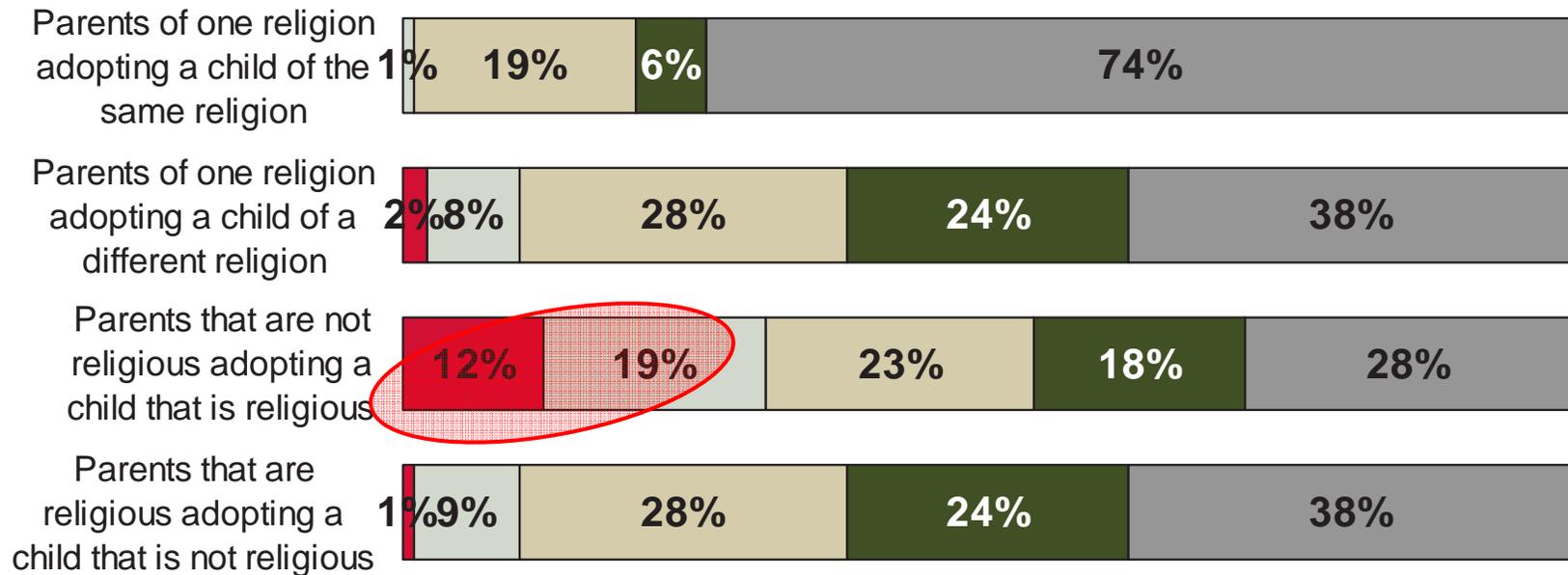
Survey Question / Think about adoptions from the foster care system where the adoptive parents are of one race and the adopted foster child is of another race. How do you feel about the following types of adoption?





Views on *religion* in foster care adoption

Survey Question / Think about adoptions from the foster care system where the adoptive parents are of one religion and the adopted foster child is of another religion. How do you feel about the following types of adoption?



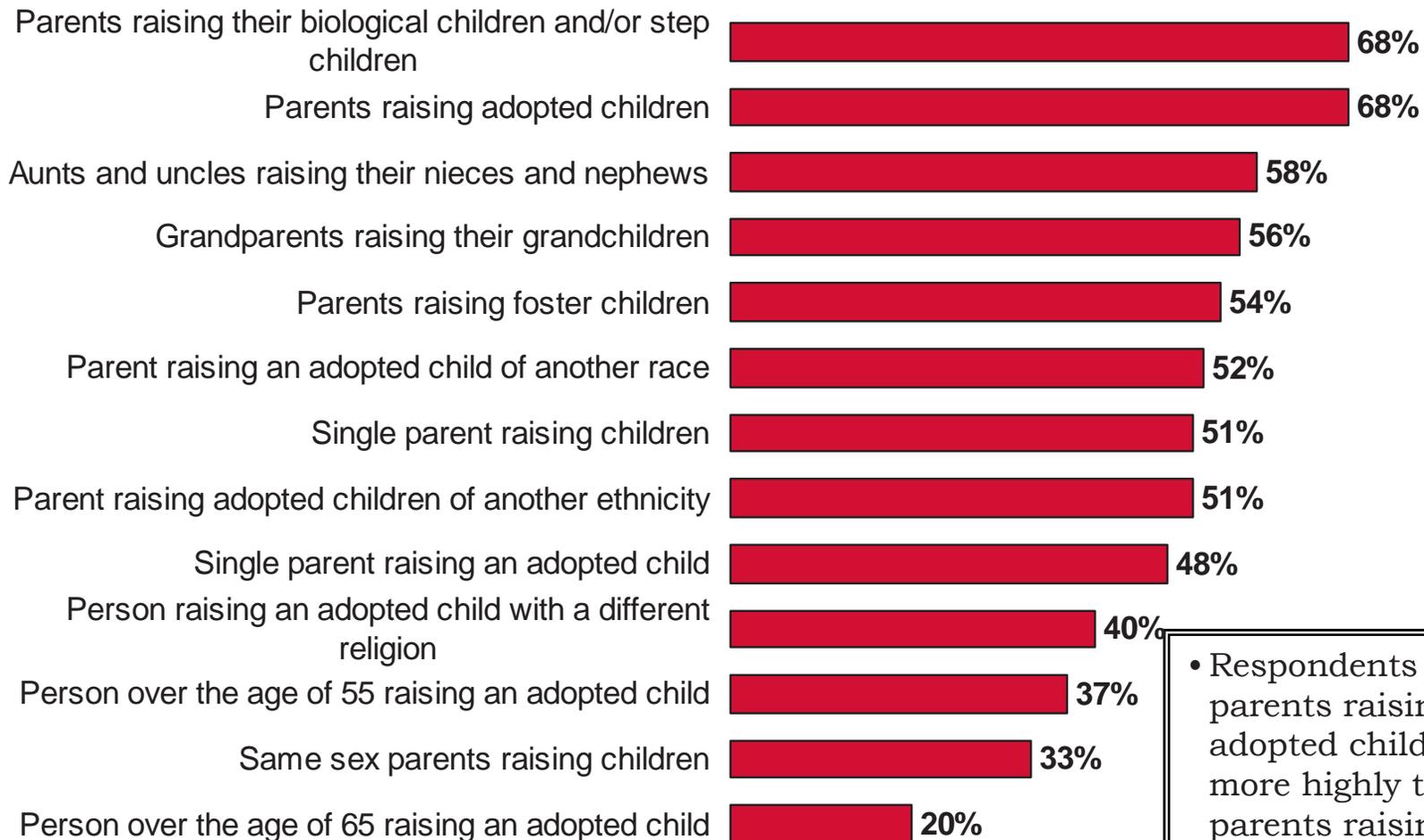
Strongly disapprove
 Somewhat disapprove
 Neutral
 Somewhat approve
 Strongly approve



Living arrangements perceived as leading to healthy environments for children

*Survey /
Question /*

Do you believe that the following living arrangements can provide a healthy and loving environment for children? (Definitely can)



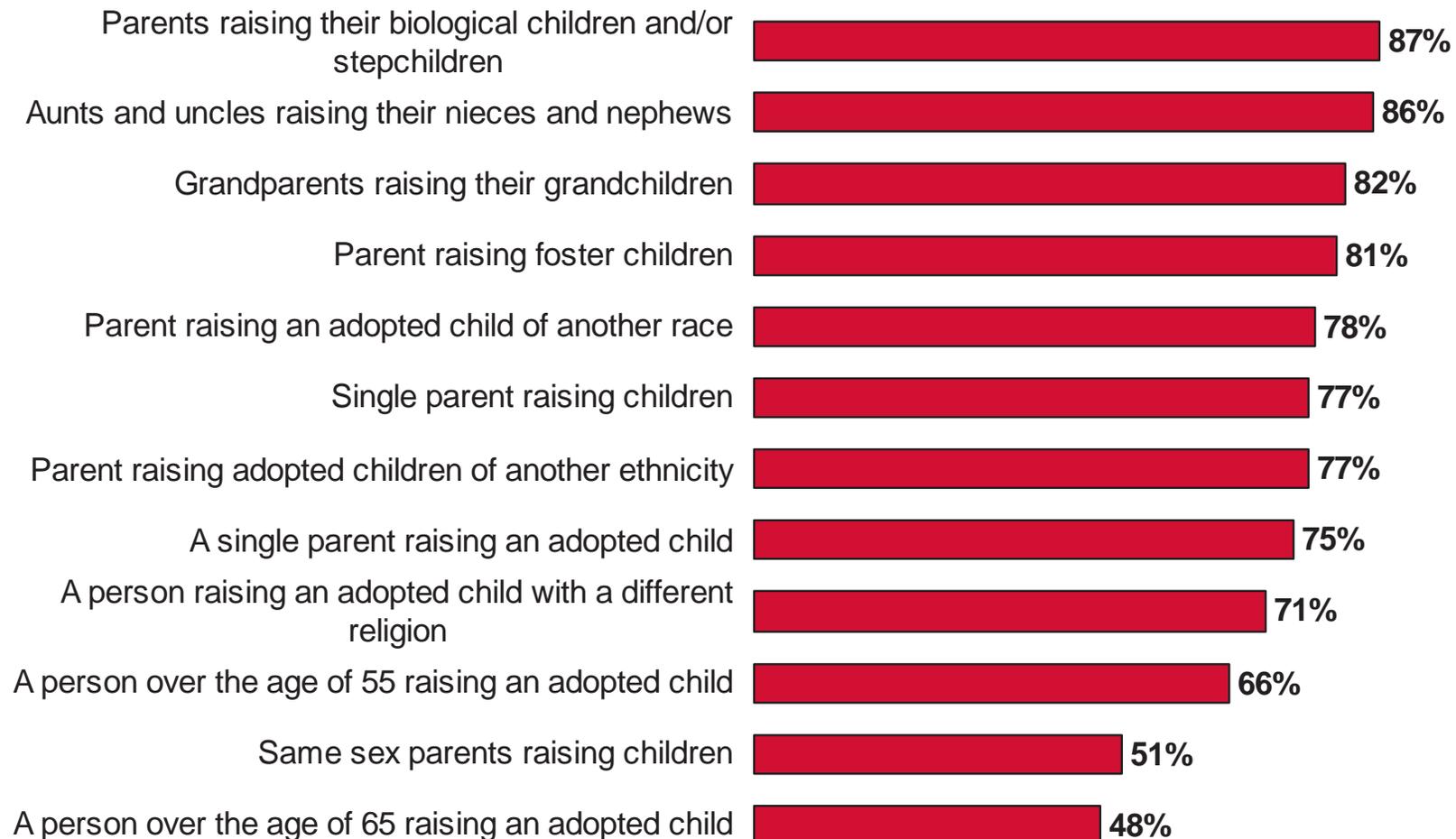
• Respondents rate parents raising adopted children more highly than parents raising foster adopted children



Living arrangements perceived as leading to healthy environments for children

*Survey /
Question*

Do you believe that the following living arrangements can provide a healthy and loving environment for children? (Definitely/probably can)

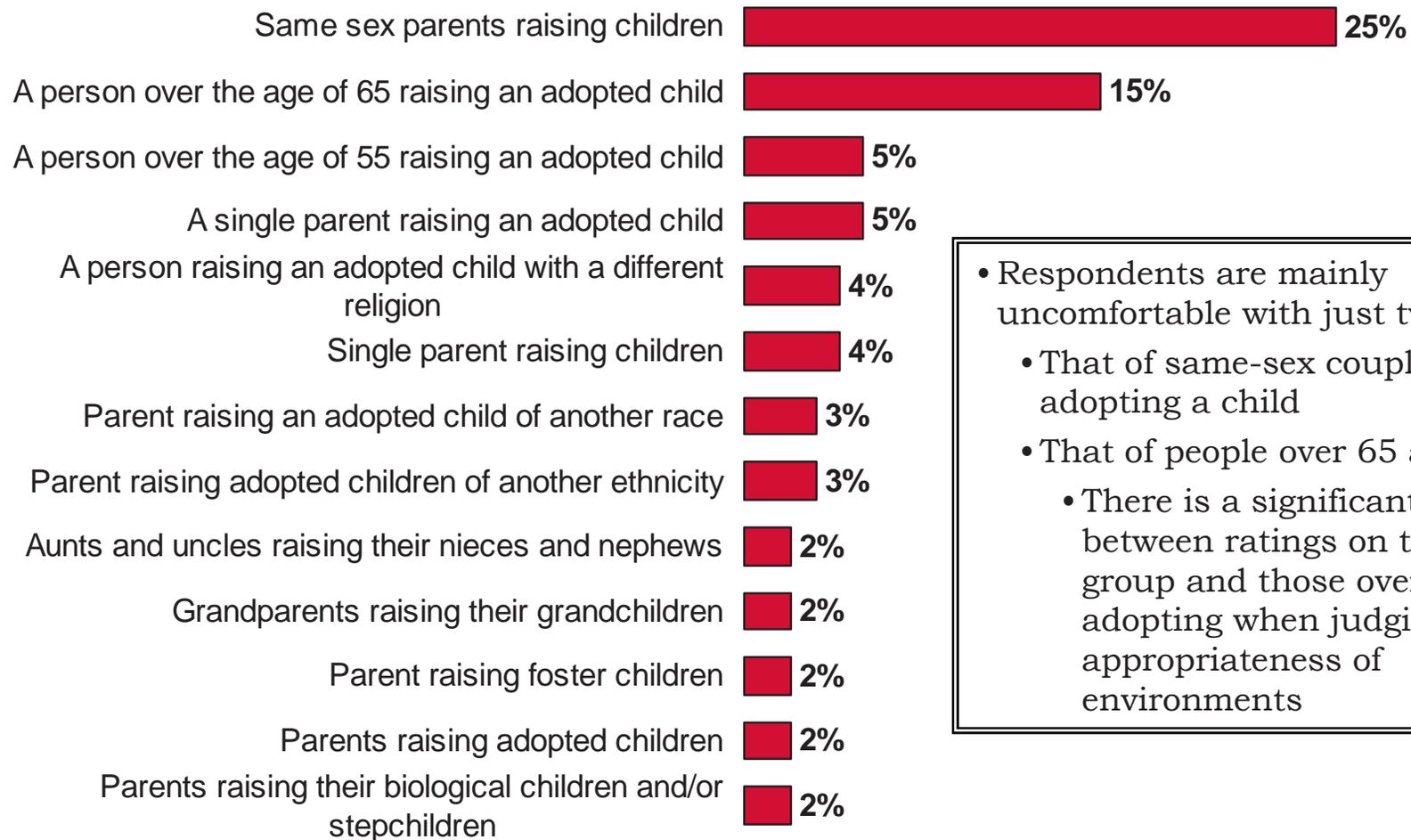




Living arrangements perceived as *not* leading to healthy and loving environments

**Survey /
Question /**

Do you believe that the following living arrangements can provide a healthy and loving environment for children? (Definitely/probably cannot)



• Respondents are mainly uncomfortable with just two issues:

- That of same-sex couples adopting a child
- That of people over 65 adopting
 - There is a significant difference between ratings on this age group and those over 55 adopting when judging appropriateness of environments



Attitudinal differences on living arrangements between those who consider adoption and those who don't

Survey / Question /

Are you considering or have you ever considered adopting a child?

Survey / Question /

Do you believe that the following living arrangements can provide a healthy and loving environment for children? (Definitely can)

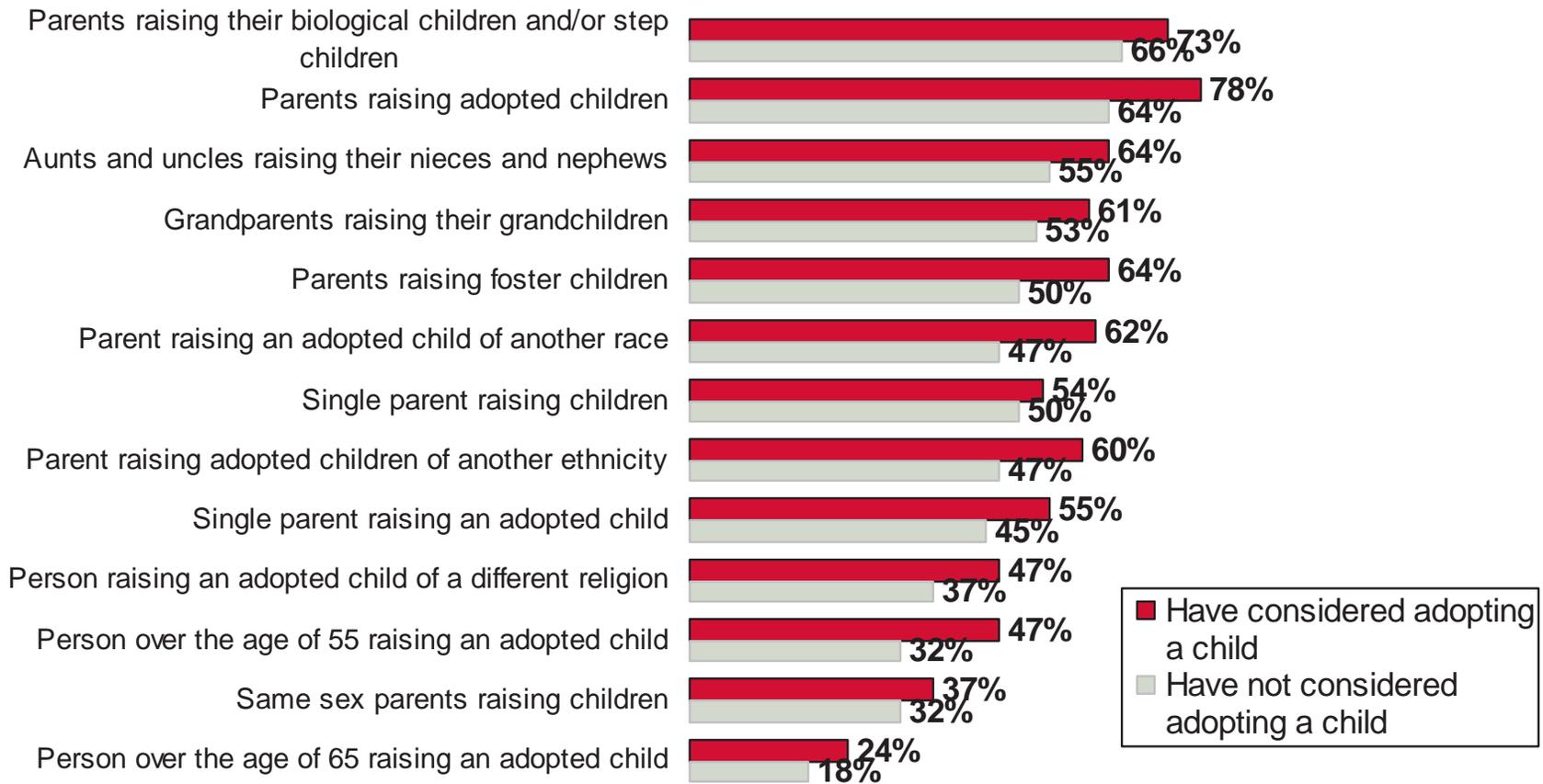
- Respondents who have considered adoption are more likely to be more liberal in their views of what kinds of environments they consider healthy for children, including:
 - Cross-race and cross-ethnicity adoption
 - Cross-religion adoption
 - Single parent adoption
 - Adoption by older parents
 - Other non-traditional families, such as aunts/uncles raising nieces/nephews and grandparents raising grandchildren
- Curiously, as a whole they are no more accepting of adoption by same-sex parents than are people who do not consider adoption
 - Just those who are considering foster care adoption are slightly more accepting of same-sex parenting than others



Attitudinal differences on living arrangements by those who have considered adoption vs. those who have not

Survey / Question /

Do you believe that the following living arrangements can provide a healthy and loving environment for children? (Definitely can)



- Those considering adoption of any type are more tolerant of nontraditional lifestyles/family units
- Overall however, pattern of approval ratings remains similar for both groups of respondents

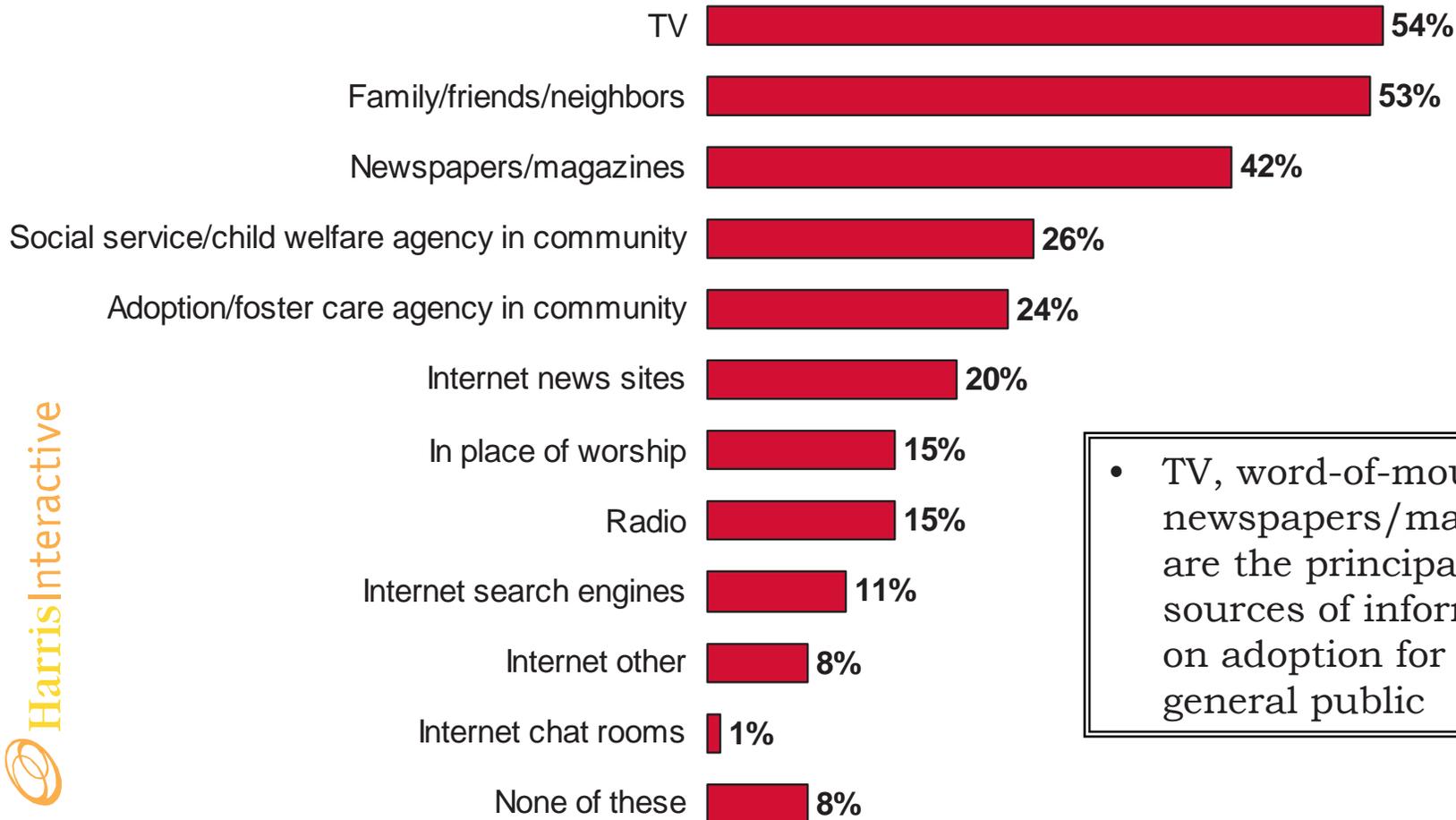
Q510. Base: Have considered adopting a child (n=549); Have not considered adopting a child (n=1111)



Main sources of information about adoption

Survey /
Question /

What are your main sources of information about adoption? Please select all that apply.



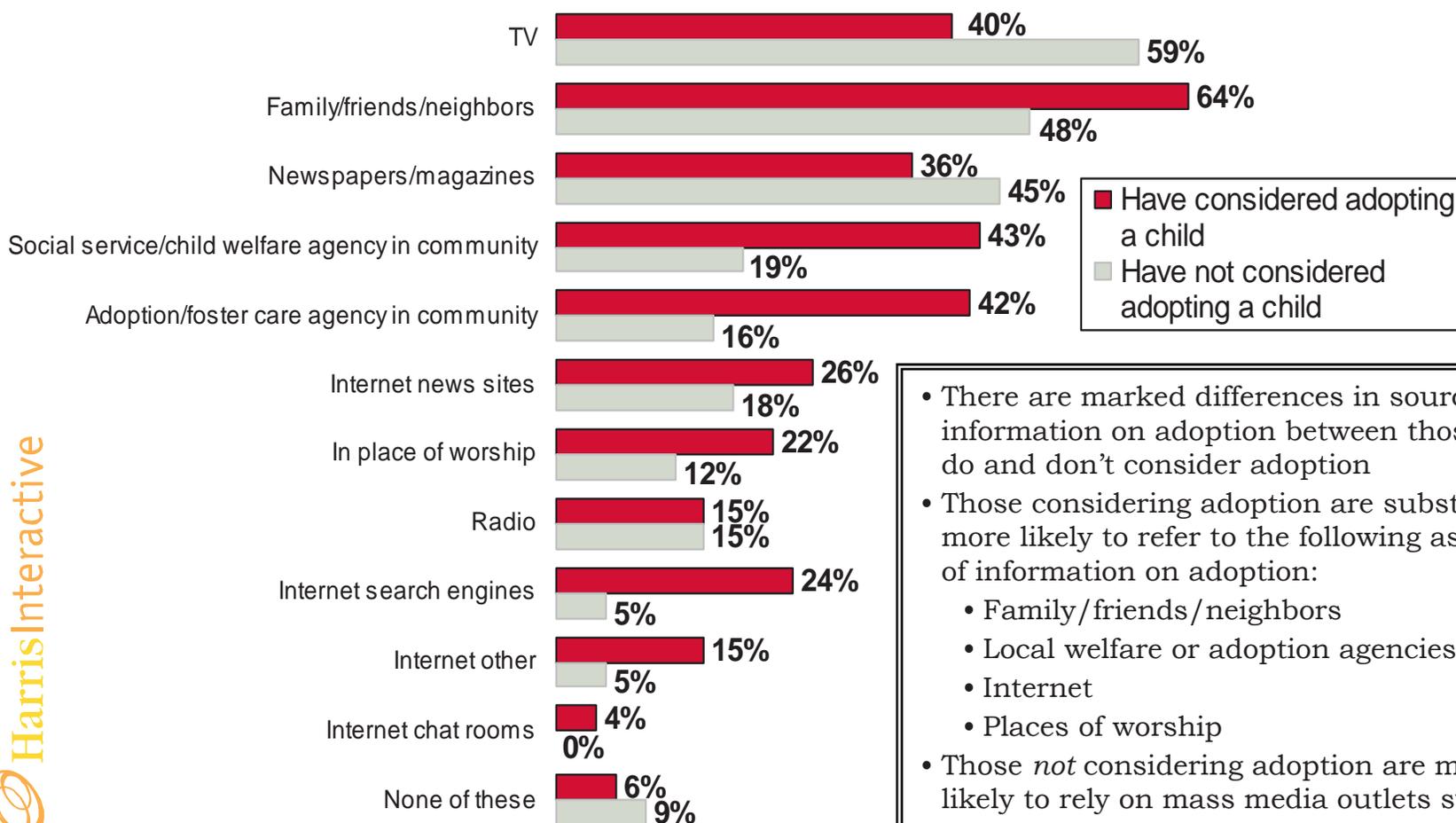
- TV, word-of-mouth and newspapers/magazines are the principal sources of information on adoption for the general public



Main sources of information about adoption for those who have vs. have not considered adoption

Survey /
Question /

What are your main sources of information about adoption? Please select all that apply.



- There are marked differences in sources of information on adoption between those who do and don't consider adoption
- Those considering adoption are substantially more likely to refer to the following as sources of information on adoption:
 - Family/friends/neighbors
 - Local welfare or adoption agencies
 - Internet
 - Places of worship
- Those *not* considering adoption are more likely to rely on mass media outlets such as:
 - TV
 - Newspapers/magazines

Q610. Base: Have considered adopting a child (n=549); Have not considered adopting a child (n=1111)



Perceptions of favorability of media coverage of adoption

Survey / Question /

In general, would you say that media coverage of adoption is...?



Very unfavorable Somewhat unfavorable Neither favorable nor unfavorable Somewhat favorable Very favorable



- In general, respondents perceive media coverage of general adoption as slightly more positive than that of foster care adoption

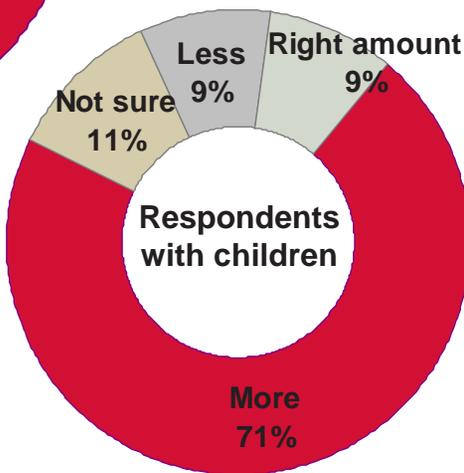
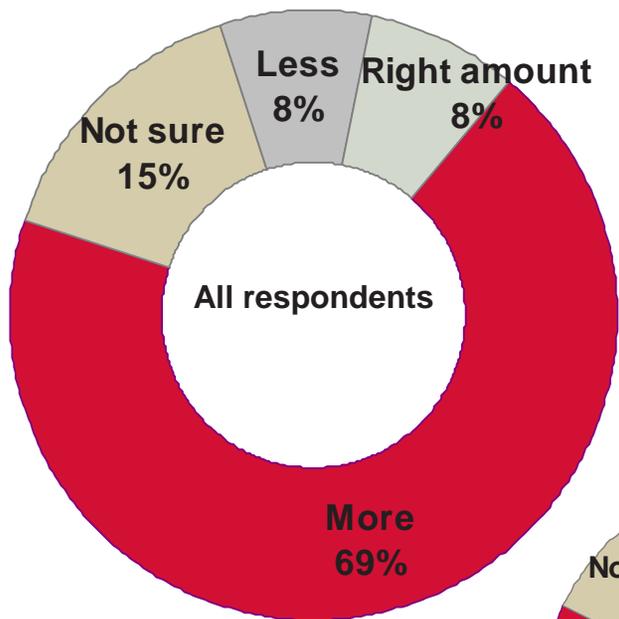


Society's commitment to foster care adoption

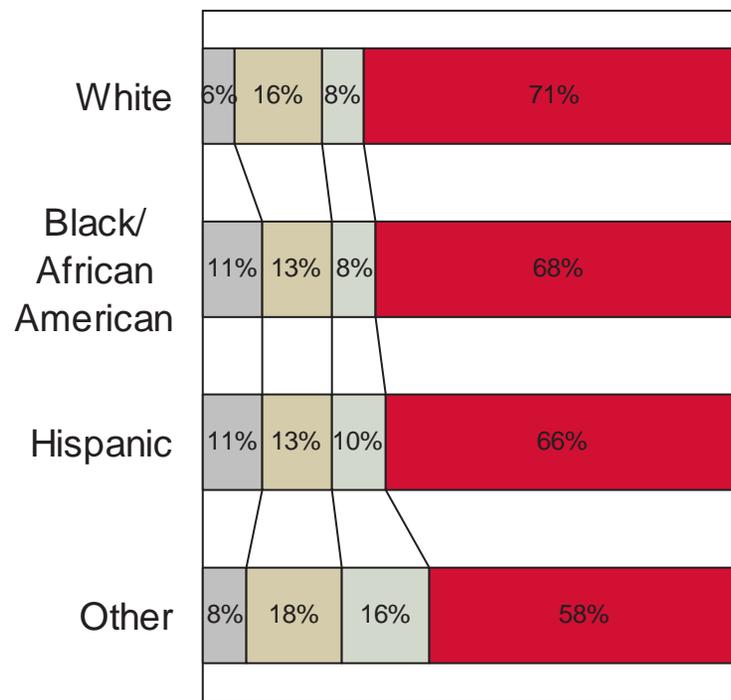
Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

**Survey /
Question /**

In general, do you think that we as a society should be doing more, less, or are doing about the right amount to encourage foster care adoption?



- 2/3 of Americans believe we should be doing more to encourage foster care adoption
- Agreement is highest among Whites, women, those aged 65 or more, and those who have been married



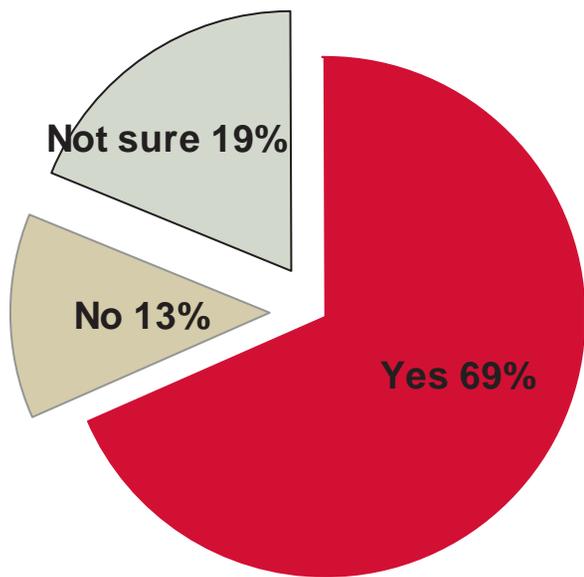
Legend: Less (grey), Not sure (tan), Right amount (light green), More (red)





Survey Question /

Do you think employers should offer employees who adopt paid or unpaid leave following the adoption?

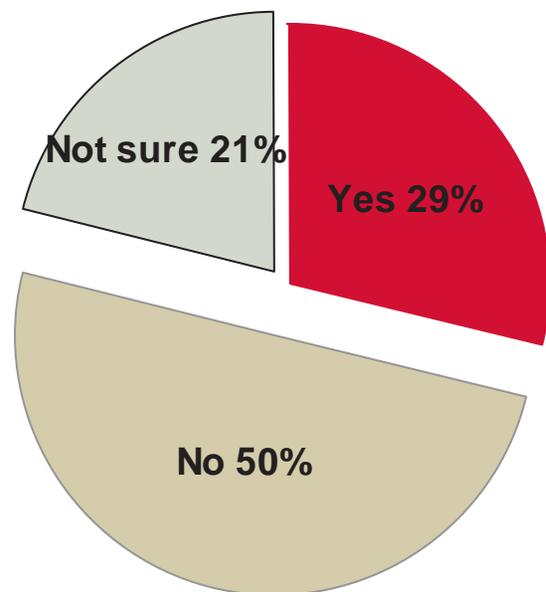


Survey Question /

Do you think employers should offer employees who adopt financial assistance for adoption expenses?

• There is more controversy on the issue of financial assistance, however. There is no clear pattern differentiating opinions except that those in favor tend to be younger (24-44)*

• * Demographics available in appendix



• A clear majority favors employers offering paid or unpaid leave to adoptive parents. Overall, those in favor are more likely to be:

- Women
- Aged 25-44
- More educated
- Those with higher incomes

HarrisInteractive

Q690. Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)

Q695. Base: All qualified respondents (n=1660)



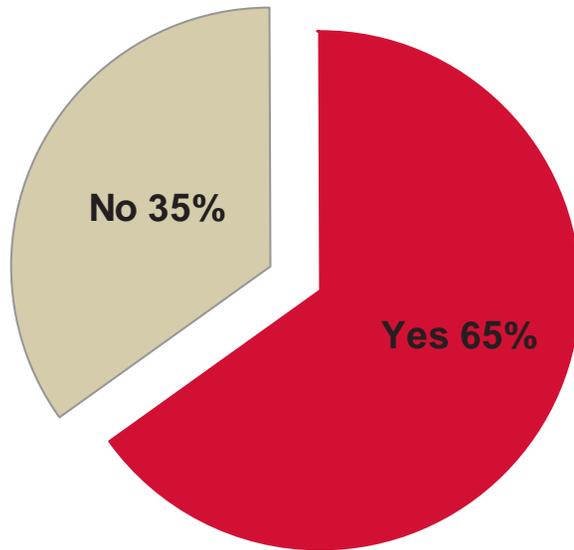
Awareness of Wendy's support for foster care adoption

Survey / Question /

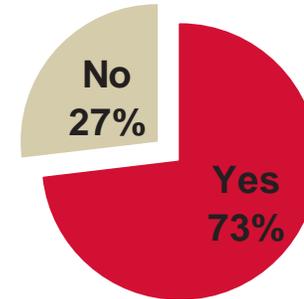
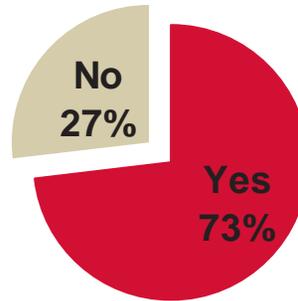
Do you think that Wendy's actively supports foster care adoption?

- Those considering adoption (of any type) are more aware of Wendy's role in supporting foster care adoption than is the general population

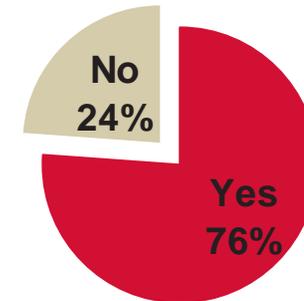
All respondents



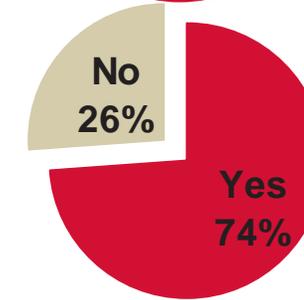
Considering adoption (any type)



Considering private infant US adoption



Considering US foster care adoption



Considering international adoption

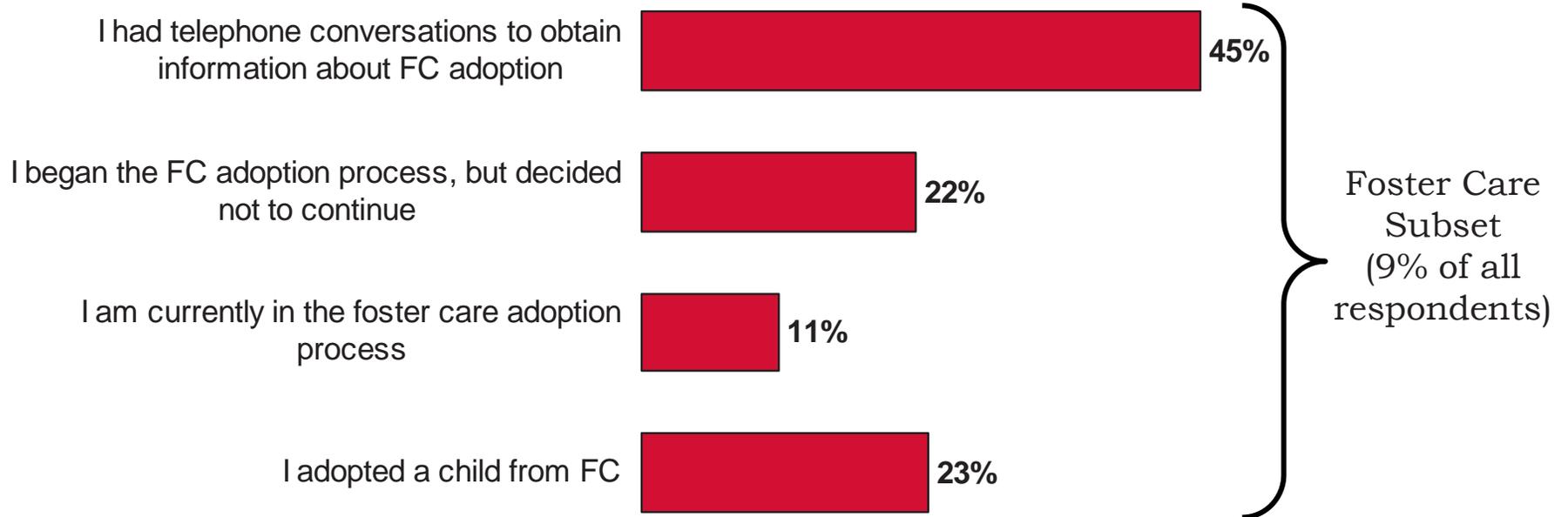
- There is no substantial difference in awareness of Wendy's role in foster care adoption among those considering different types of adoption
- Those *very seriously* considering all types of adoption have even higher rates of awareness



Foster Care Subset

Those who have participated in the foster care adoption process

HarrisInteractive

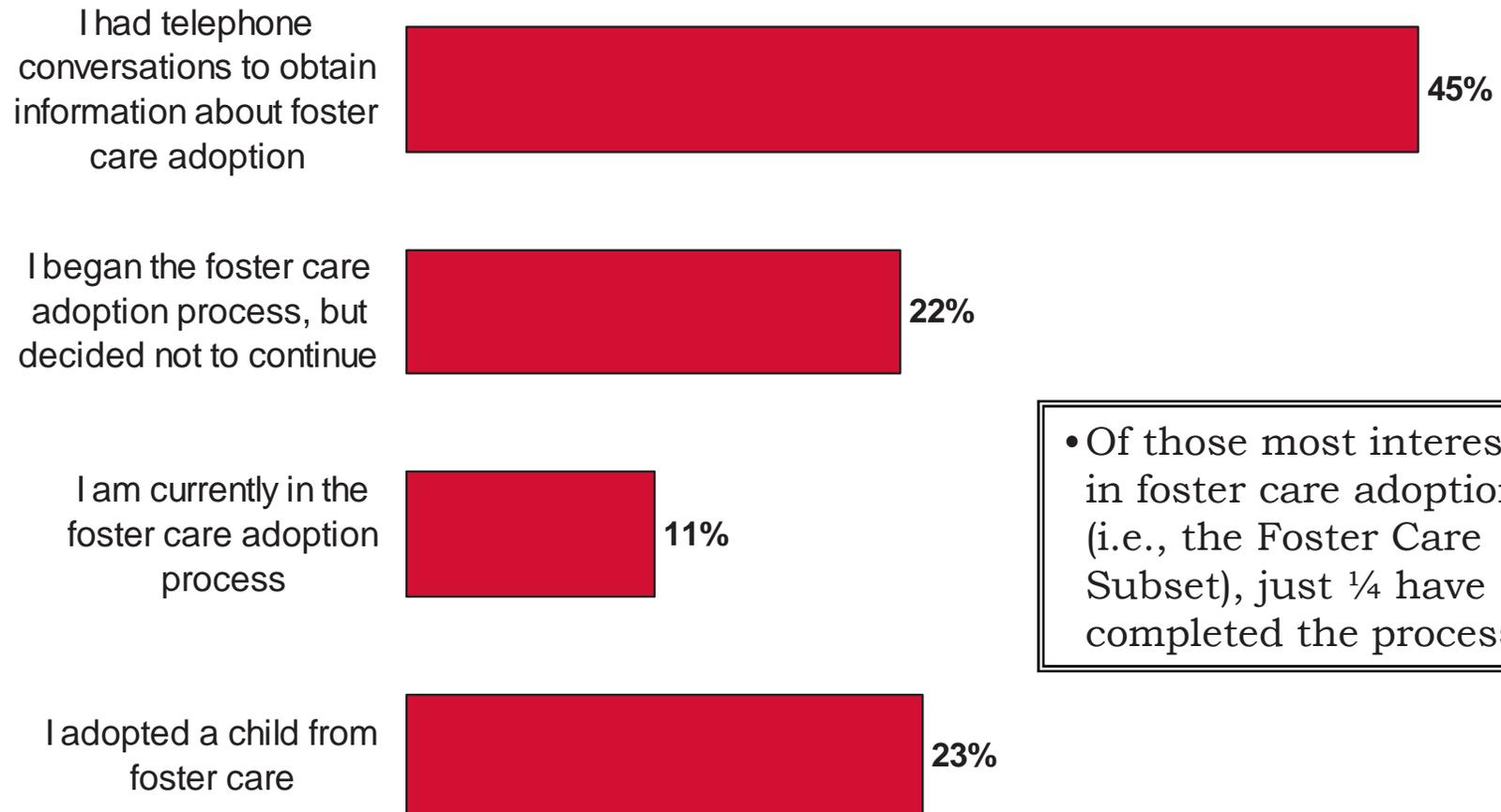




Definition of Foster Care Subset: Those who have participated in the foster care adoption process (9% of total)

*Survey /
Question /*

What type of experience, if any, have you had in the foster care adoption process? Please select only one response.



• Of those most interested in foster care adoption (i.e., the Foster Care Subset), just ¼ have completed the process



Demographic detail of Foster Care Subset

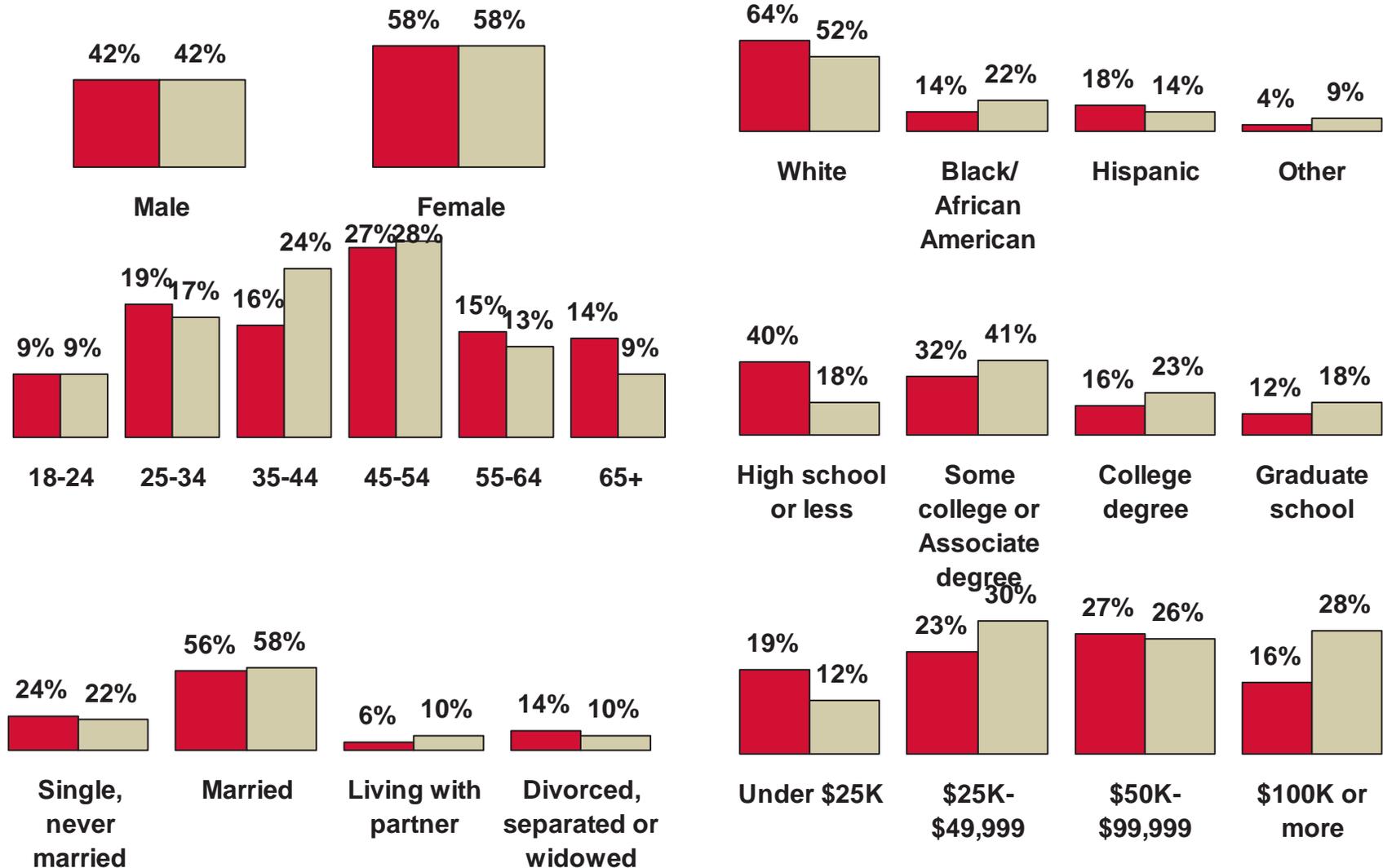
Demographically, the Foster Care Subset is very similar to the general population. Just a few differences stand out, in that the Foster Care Subset is more likely to:

- Be aged 35-44
- Have at least some college



Demographic differences:

Total population (minus Foster Care Subset) vs. Foster Care Subset

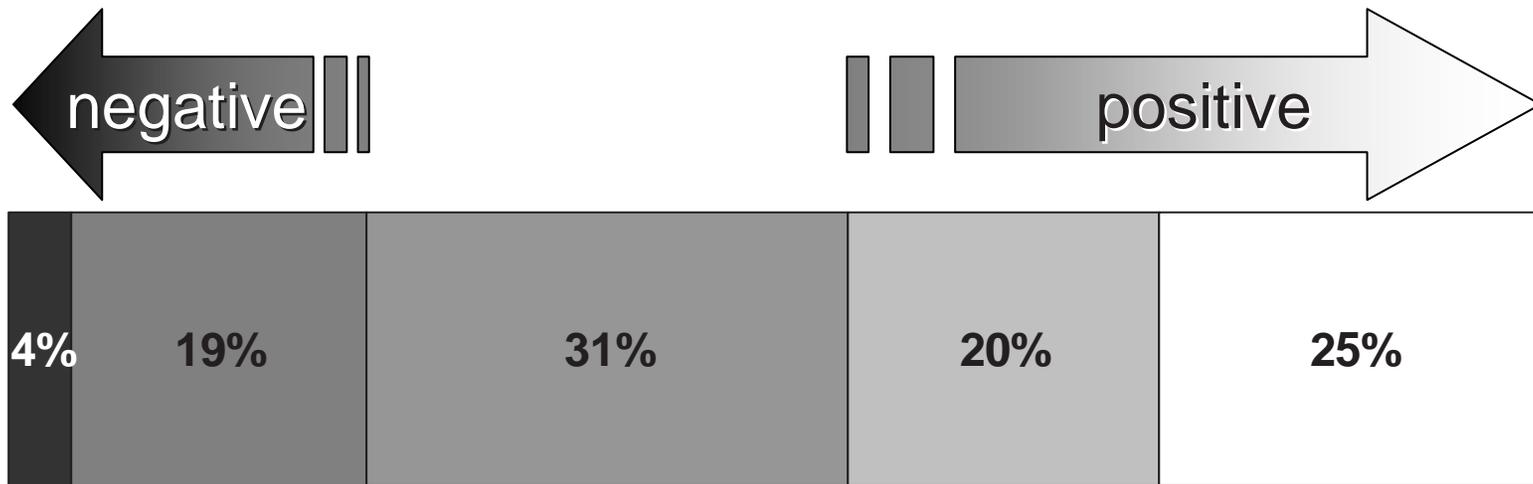




Ratings of overall foster care adoption experience

Survey / Question /

Overall, how would you rate your experience?



■ Very negative ■ Somewhat negative ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat positive □ Very positive

- Twice as many in the Foster Care Subset rate the experience positively as rate it negatively



Foster Care Subset: evaluation of experiences

Survey / Question /

Based on your experience with the foster care adoption system, how would you rate each of the following experiences?

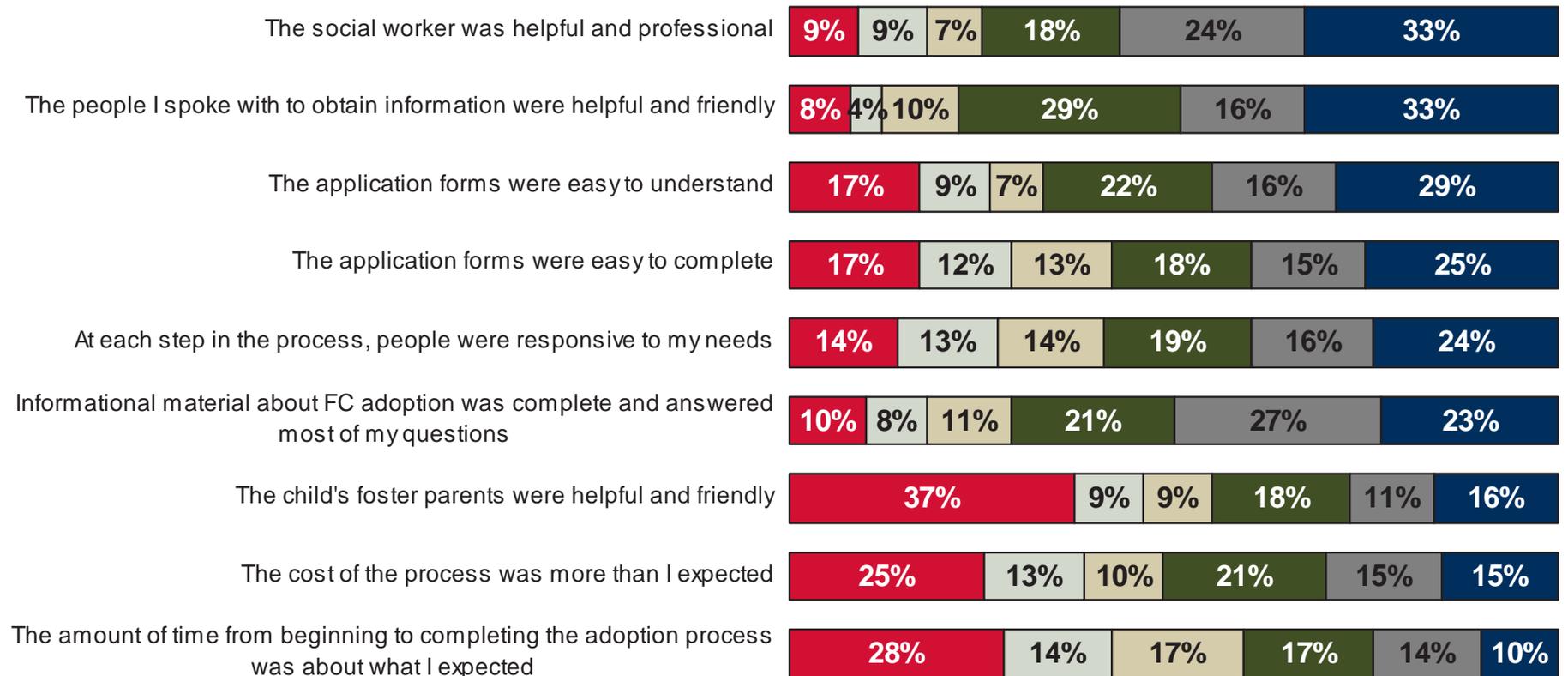
- Positive evaluations of the foster care adoption experience were moderate, but still larger than the negatives
- The only experience more than half of Foster Care Subset respondents somewhat to strongly agreed on was regarding the helpfulness of the social worker
- Only 40%-45% somewhat to strongly agreed the forms were easy to complete and understand
- Nearly 1/3 somewhat to strongly disagreed that they were not aware of the time it would take to complete the adoption
- Nearly 1/3 somewhat to strongly agreed they they were not aware of the actual costs involved



Foster Care Subset: evaluation of experiences

Survey / Question /

Based on your experience with the foster care adoption system, how would you rate each of the following experiences?



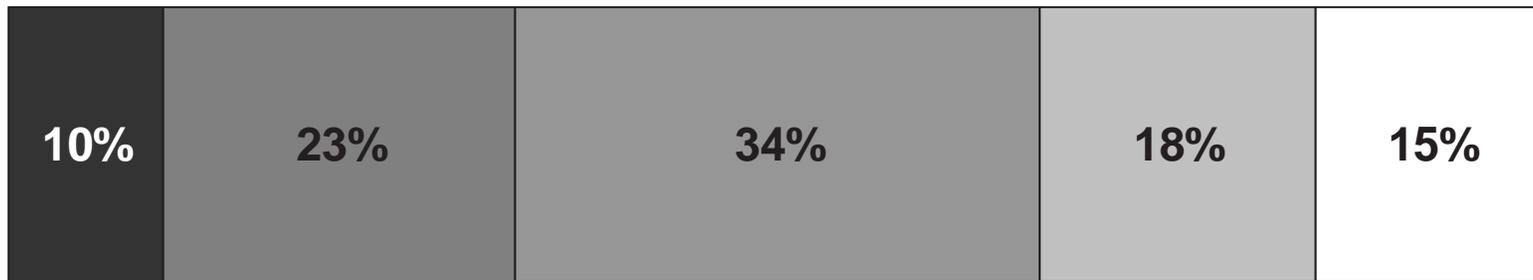
■ N/A □ Strongly disagree □ Somewhat disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree □ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree



Ease/difficulty of foster care adoption process

Survey /
Question /

However far you may have progressed in the foster care adoption process, whether it was simple information-gathering or you actually adopted a child, was the process...?



Very difficult
 Somewhat difficult
 Neither easy nor difficult
 Somewhat easy
 Very easy

- While 45% of the Foster Care Subset rated the experience positively, it is not a reflection of the ease or difficulty of the process
- Foster Care Subset respondents are evenly split on the difficulty of the process, with a full third saying it was difficult, a third saying it was easy, and a third saying it was neither



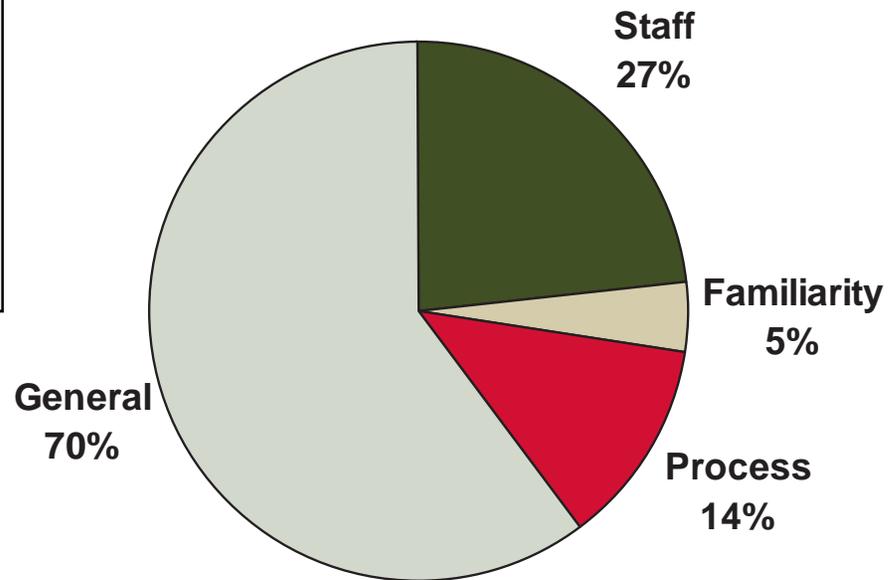
Reasons for finding foster care adoption process easy

Survey /
Question /

What made the process easy for you? (Somewhat/very easy)

Among the general reasons cited for finding the foster care adoption process easy are:

- Help from case worker
- Excited to adopt a child
- Classes/training





Reasons for finding foster care adoption process easy

*Survey /
Question /*

What made the process easy for you? (Somewhat/very easy)

- **General (70%)**

- Other (40%)
- Help from case worker/social worker (8%)
- Wanted to adopt/excited to adopt a child (5%)
- Classes/training (5%)
- None (4%)
- Declined to answer (3%)
- Foster care wanted a good family (1%)
- Help from agency (1%)
- Don't know (1%)

- **Staff (27%)**

- Knowledgeable staff (22%)
- Help/support (9%)
- Other (2%)

- **Process (14%)**

- Easy paperwork (5%)
- Other (5%)
- Clear instructions (4%)

- **Familiarity (5%)**

- Other (4%)
- Have been a social worker (1%)



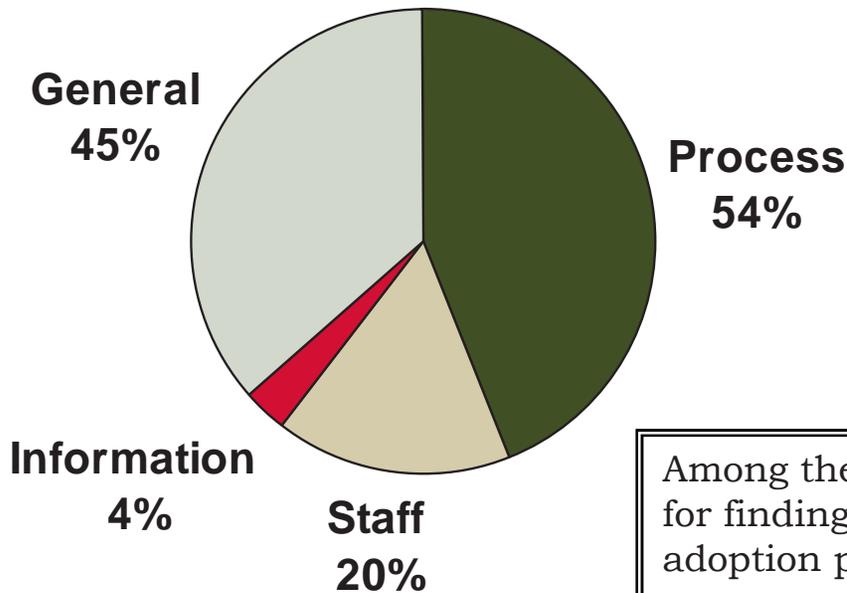
Reasons for finding foster care adoption process difficult

Survey /
Question /

What made the process difficult for you? (Somewhat/very difficult)

Among the general reasons cited for stopping the foster care adoption process are:

- Red tape
- Personal reasons
- Financial concerns
- Inconvenient schedules



Among the process reasons for finding the foster care adoption process difficult are:

- Paperwork
- Time-consuming process
- Background checks
- investigations



Reasons for finding foster care adoption process difficult

*Survey /
Question /*

What made the process difficult for you? (Somewhat/very difficult)

- **Process (54%)**
 - Other (19%)
 - Paperwork (17%)
 - Time-consuming process (12%)
 - Background checks (10%)
 - Investigations (9%)
 - Courts/legal system (4%)
 - Home visits (3%)
- **General (45%)**
 - Other (20%)
 - Red tape (13%)
 - Personal reasons (10%)
 - Financial concerns (5%)
 - Inconvenient schedules (3%)
- **Staff (20%)**
 - Other (12%)
 - Non-availability/shortage of workers (8%)
 - Not knowledgeable/competent workers (1%)
- **Information (4%)**
 - Other (4%)
 - Lack of information (2%)



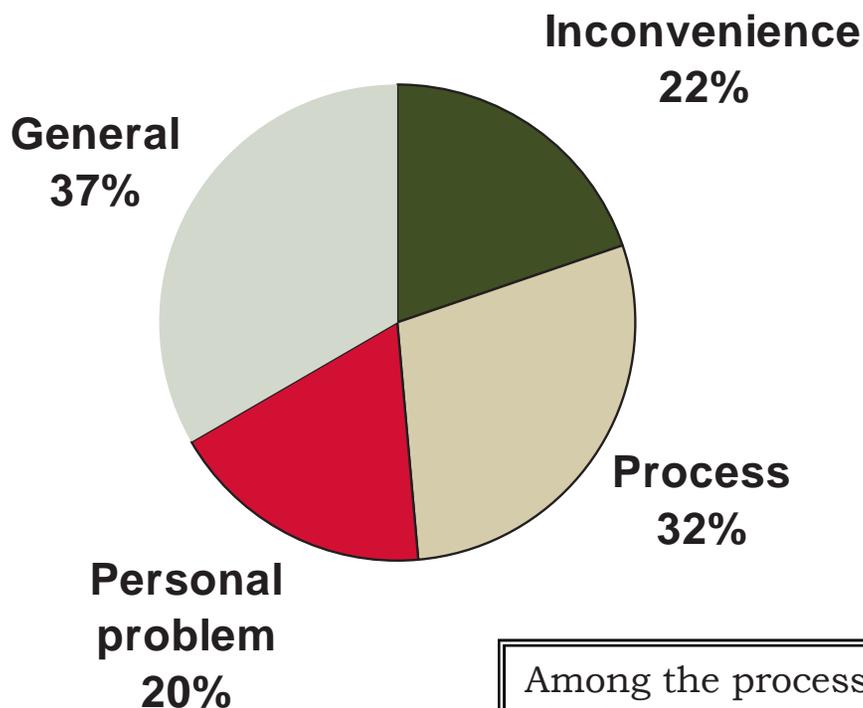
Q815. Reasons for having stopped foster care adoption process

Survey /
Question /

...you mentioned that you began the foster care adoption process, but decided not to continue. Why did you stop?

Among the general reasons cited for stopping the foster care adoption process are:

- Financial problems
- Concerns regarding effect on biological children
- Concerns regarding the mental/physical health of the child



Among the process reasons cited for stopping the foster care adoption process are:

- Concern about custody being given to birth parents



Q815. Reasons for having stopped foster care adoption process

*Survey /
Question /*

...you mentioned that you began the foster care adoption process, but decided not to continue.
Why did you stop?

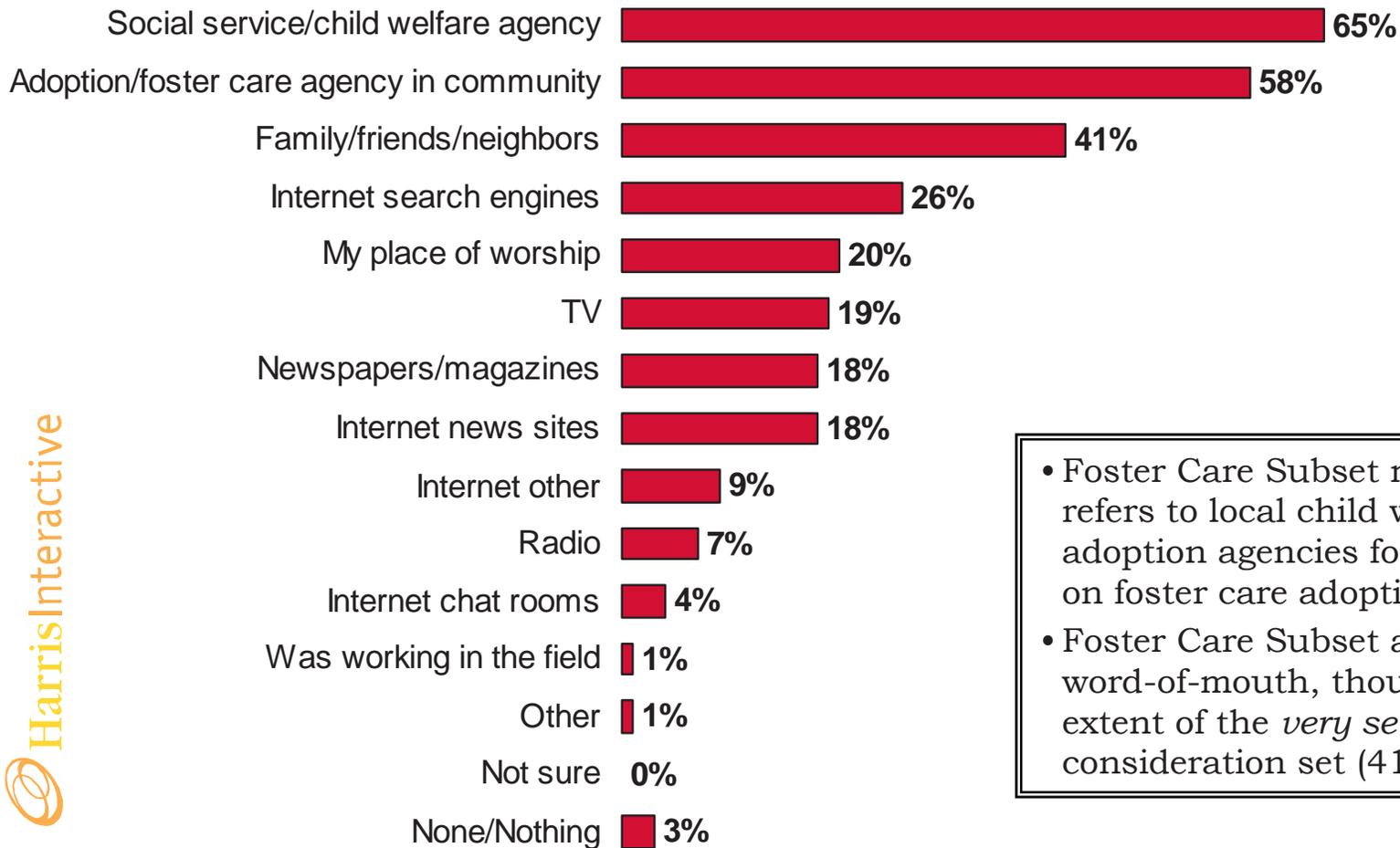
- **General (37%)**
 - Other (10%)
 - Financial problems (9%)
 - Concerns regarding effect on biological children (8%)
 - Concerns regarding mental/physical health of child (5%)
 - None/nothing (5%)
- **Process (32%)**
 - Concern regarding rights/custody being given to biological parents (16%)
 - Other (16%)
- **Inconvenience (22%)**
 - Difficult process (16%)
 - Other (4%)
 - Too long/time consuming process (2%)
- **Personal problem (20%)**
 - Got pregnant (13%)
 - Problems with spouse/partner (6%)
 - Other (1%)



Main sources of information about foster care adoption for Foster Care Subset

Survey /
Question /

Where did you turn for information about foster care adoption? Please select all that apply.

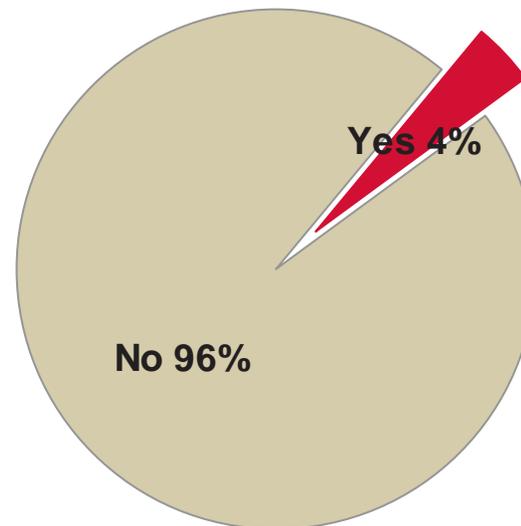


- Foster Care Subset most often refers to local child welfare or adoption agencies for information on foster care adoption
- Foster Care Subset also relies on word-of-mouth, though not to the extent of the *very serious* foster care consideration set (41% vs. 77%)



Foster Parents

Those Who Have Temporarily Hosted Foster Children





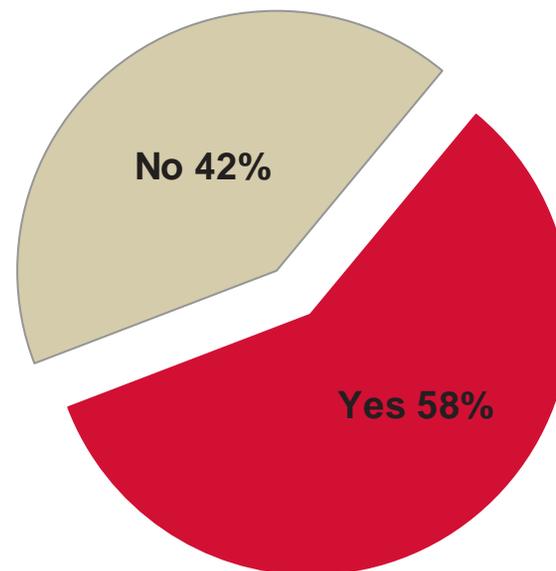
Foster Parents

Survey / Question /

Has anyone in your family or among your close friends ever been a foster parent?

- One quarter of foster parents (or previous foster parents) would *very seriously* consider adopting a foster child. This is 3 times more than they would *very seriously* consider adopting a child through private infant or international adoption
- Demographically, foster parents differ from the rest of the population in that they are more likely to:
 - Be women
 - Be Black/African American
 - Be married
 - Be aged 55 and up
 - Have some college/Associates degree
 - Have household incomes between \$25K and \$100K

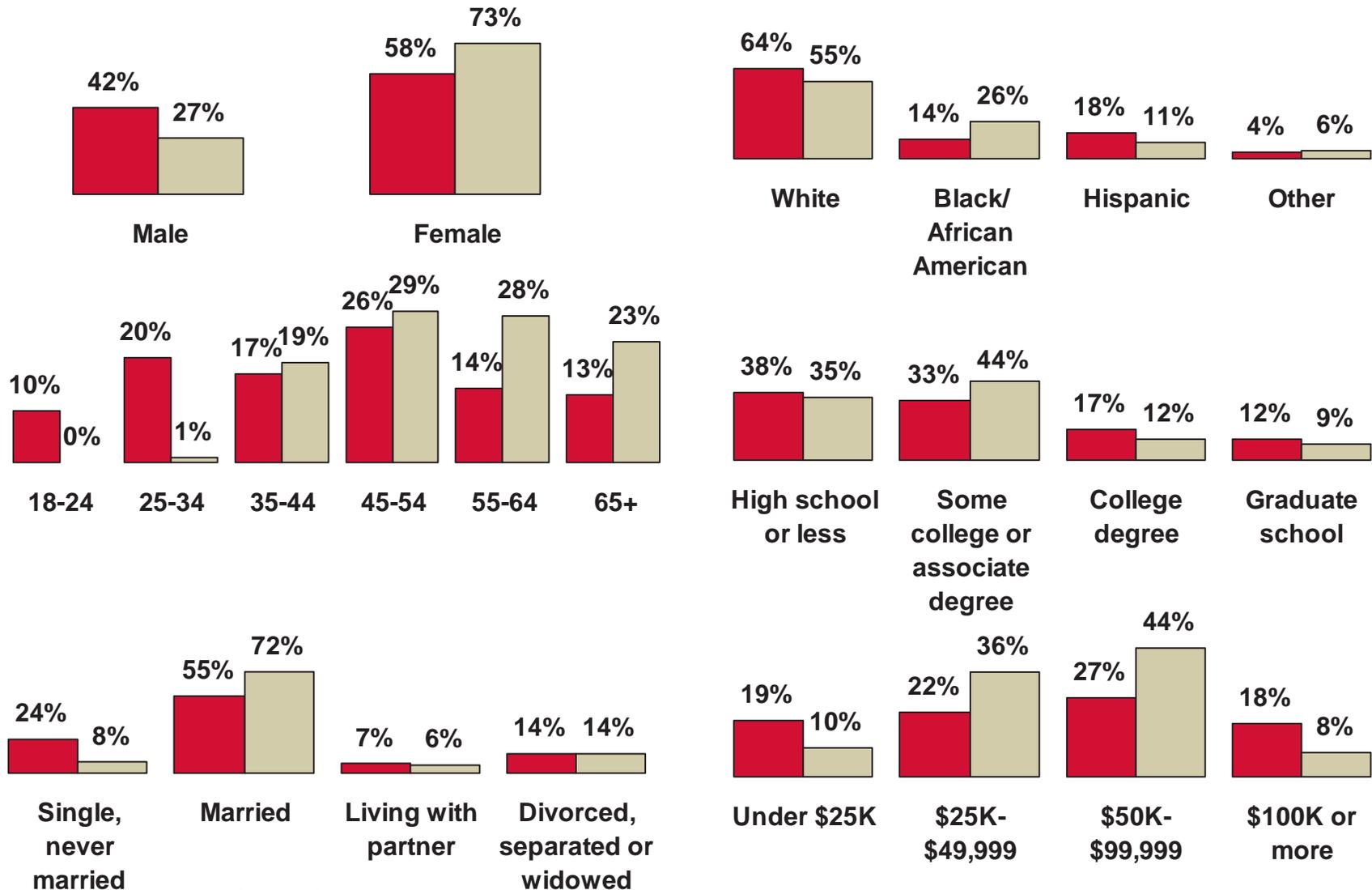
- 4% of all respondents report having been a foster parent.
- The likelihood of being a foster parent is twice as high among those who have family or close friends involved in foster parenting (58% vs. 29% of general population)
- Clearly, greater personal exposure and increased involvement are correlated





Demographic Differences:

Total population (minus foster parents) vs. Foster parents





Reasons for becoming a foster parent

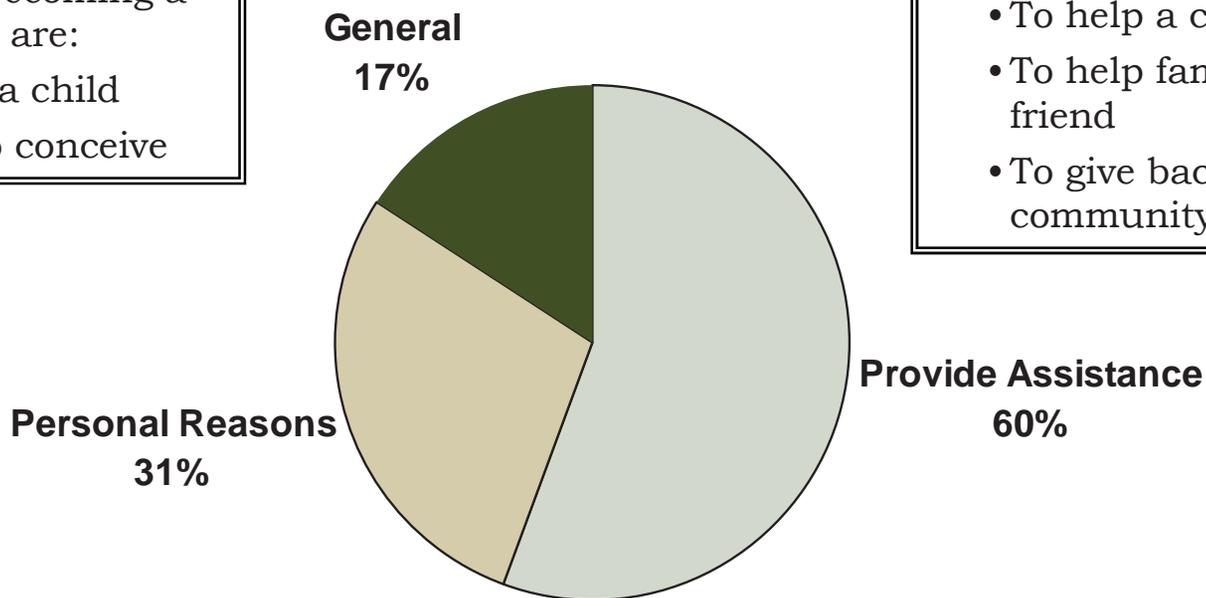
Survey / Question / Why did you become a foster parent?

Among the personal reasons for becoming a foster parent are:

- To adopt a child
- Unable to conceive

Among the providing assistance reasons for becoming a foster parent are:

- To help a child
- To help family/family friend
- To give back to the community





Survey / Question / Why did you become a foster parent?

- **Provide assistance (60%)**

- To help a child (30%)
- Other (13%)
- To help family/family friend (7%)
- To give back to the community (5%)
- To provide a safe home to children (3%)
- To give financial help (3%)
- To help others (2%)

- **Personal reasons (31%)**

- Other (19%)
- To adopt a child (12%)
- Unable to conceive (8%)

- **General (17%)**

- Other (10%)
- Spiritual desire (4%)
- None/nothing (2%)

- **Reasons directly from foster parents:**

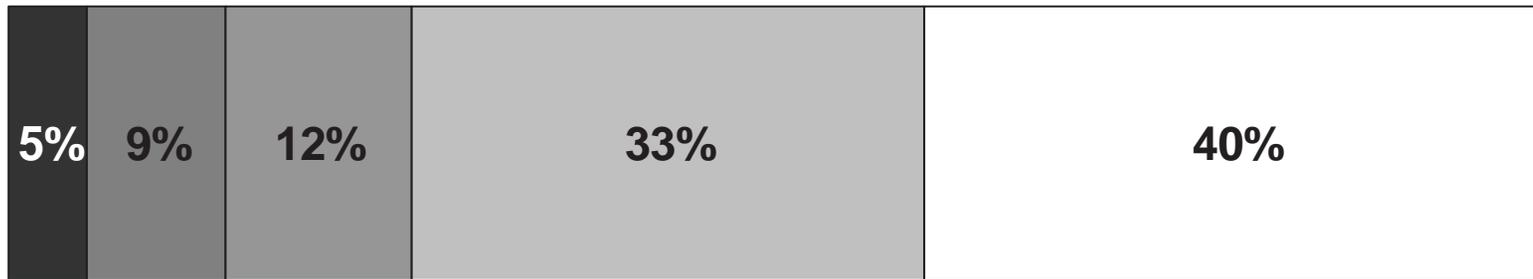
- “Couldn't have any biological children or our own and knew that the reason was that it was meant for us to help children who needed a home.”
- “I became a foster parent because I think that someone needs to be willing to stand up and to be a voice for the children in the foster care system whether they eventually become your forever child or not, kids need someone willing to love them and stand up for them.”
- “I love kids, I wanted to adopt.”
- “My parents were foster parents and I wanted to give back to a child in the community.”
- “To give a child a good family home.”
- “To make a difference in a child's life.”
- “We wanted to help a child.”
- “We wanted to provide a safe home for children.”



*Survey /
Question /*

Overall, how would you rate your experience?

- Overwhelmingly, foster parents describe their experiences as positive



Very negative
 Somewhat negative
 Neutral
 Somewhat positive
 Very positive

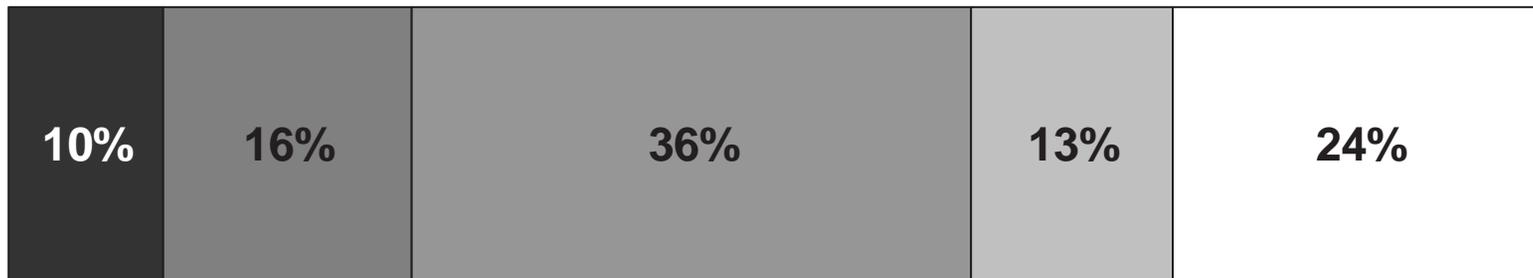


Ease/difficulty of process of becoming a foster parent

Survey Question

Did you or do you find the process of becoming a foster parent...?

- 1/4 of foster parents say they found the process of becoming a foster parent difficult
 - Mostly the reasons were process-related
- 1/3 found it easy



■ Very difficult ■ Somewhat difficult ■ Neither easy nor difficult ■ Somewhat easy □ Very easy



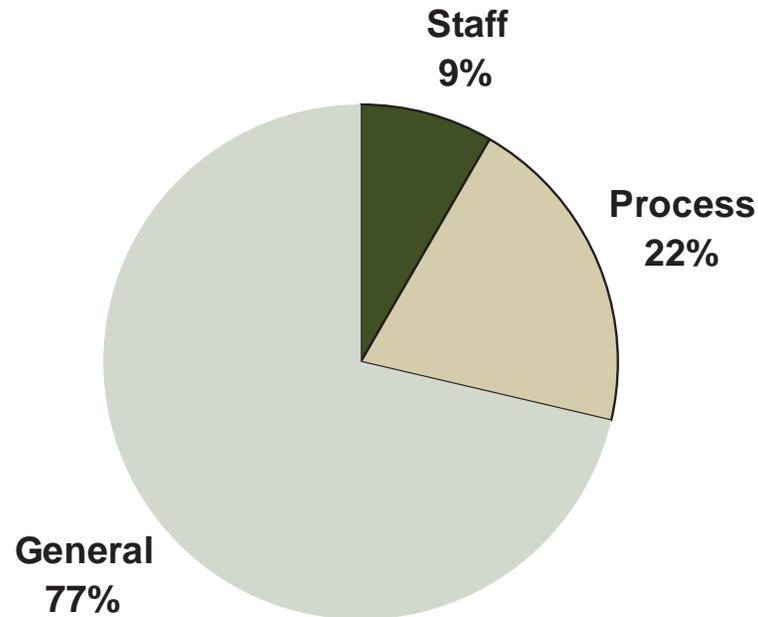
Reasons for finding process of becoming a foster parent easy

Survey /
Question /

What made the process easy for you? (Somewhat/very easy)

Among the general factors contributing to an easy foster parent process are:

- Excited to adopt a child
- Help from a case worker
- Foster care wanted a good family





Reasons for finding process of becoming a foster parent easy

Survey / Question /

What made the process easy for you? (Somewhat/very easy)

- **General (77%)**
 - Other (31%)
 - Wanted to adopt/excited to adopt a child (21%)
 - Help from case worker/social worker (17%)
 - Foster care wanted a good family (6%)
 - Help from agency (3%)
 - None/nothing (1%)
- **Process (22%)**
 - Other (22%)
 - Easy paperwork (10%)
 - Clear instructions (2%)
- **Staff (9%)**
 - Knowledgeable staff (6%)
 - Other (3%)



Reasons for finding process of becoming a foster parent difficult

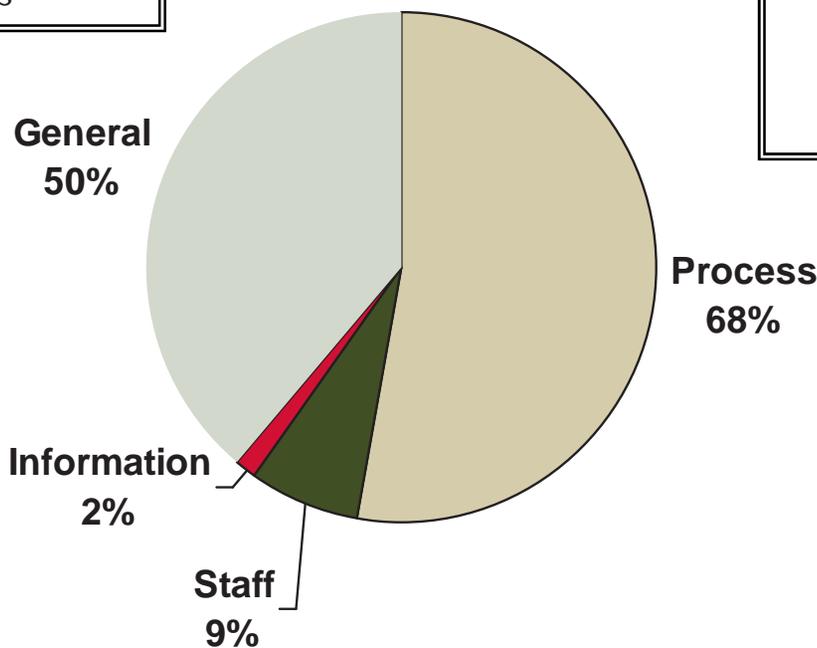
Survey Question / What made the process difficult for you? (Somewhat/very difficult)

Among the general reasons contributing to a difficult foster parent process are:

- Personal reasons

Among the process factors contributing to a difficult foster parent process are:

- Paperwork
- Background checks
- Time-consuming process
- Home visits





Reasons for finding process of becoming a foster parent difficult

Survey / Question /

What made the process difficult for you? (Somewhat/very difficult)

- **Process (68%)**
 - Paperwork (29%)
 - Background checks (23%)
 - Time-consuming process (21%)
 - Other (19%)
 - Home visits (11%)
 - Courts/legal system (1%)
- **General (50%)**
 - Personal reasons (25%)
 - Other (20%)
 - Financial concerns (4%)
 - Declined to answer (1%)
- **Staff (9%)**
 - Other (6%)
 - Non-availability/shortage of workers (3%)
- **Information (2%)**
 - Lack of information (2%)



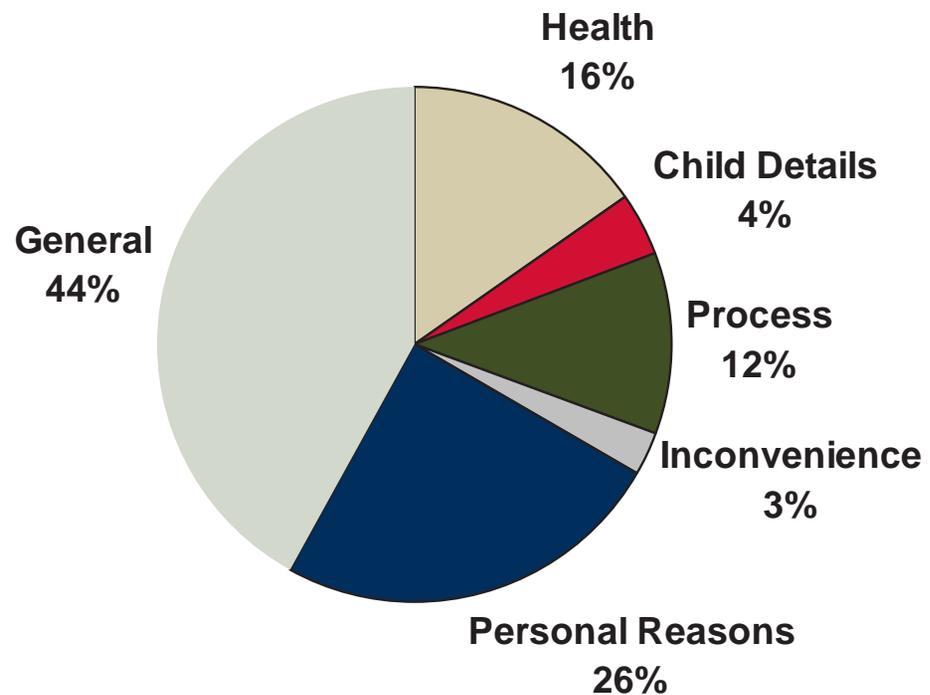
Foster parents' concerns about adopting foster children

Survey /
Question /

What are or were your biggest concerns about/barriers to adopting a foster child?

Among the general concerns foster parents have about adopting a foster child are:

- Financial concerns
- Interference from the child's biological parents
- Transitioning process





Foster parents' concerns about adopting foster children

Survey / Question /

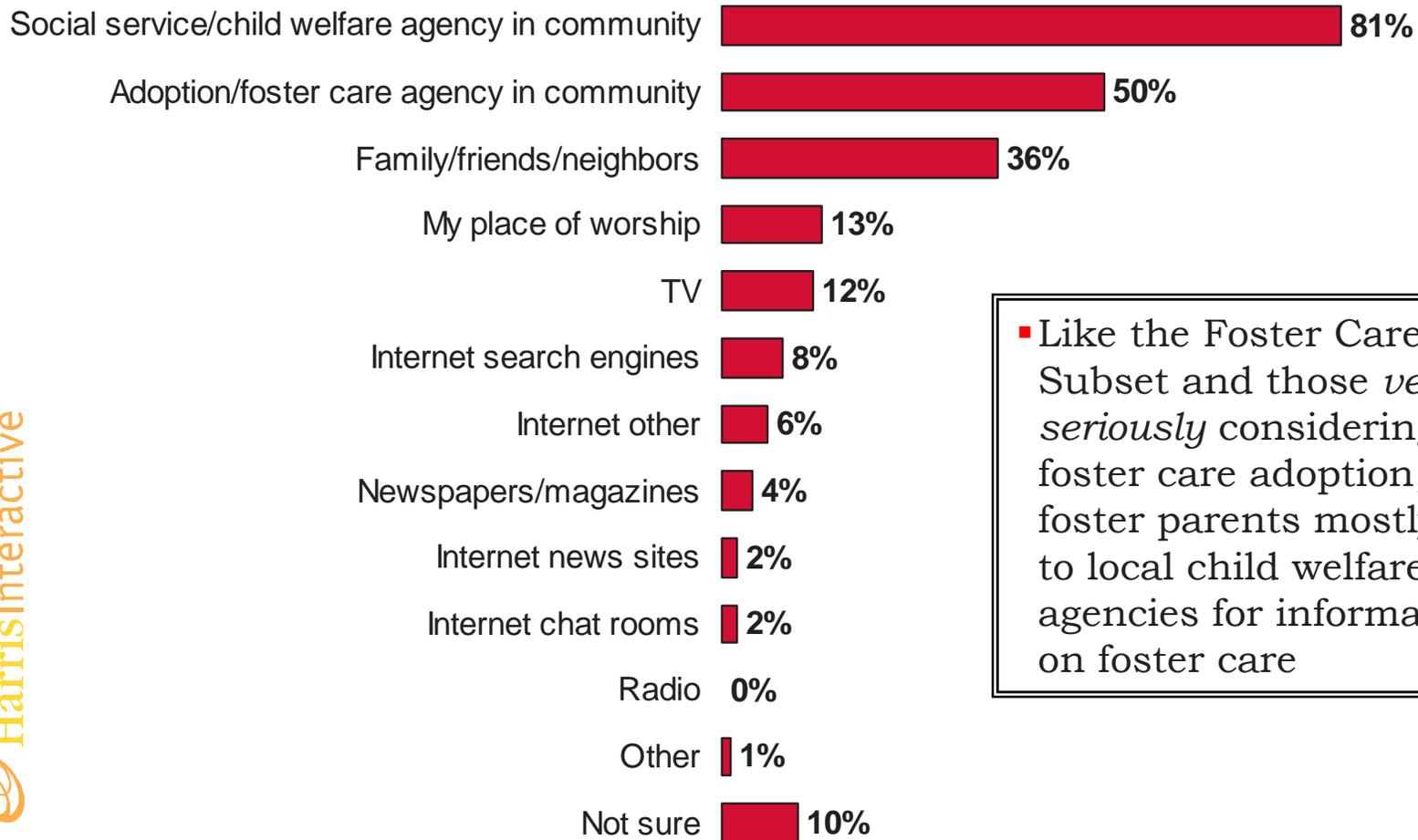
What are or were your biggest concerns about/barriers to adopting a foster child?

- **General (44%)**
 - Financial concerns (6%)
 - Interference of child's biological parents (15%)
 - Other (10%)
 - Transitioning process (5%)
 - None/nothing (13%)
 - Decline to answer (0%)
 - Don't know (0%)
- **Personal reasons (26%)**
 - Other (14%)
 - Effect on biological children (8%)
 - Ability to support/meet needs of child (4%)
 - Age factor (2%)
- **Health (16%)**
 - Behavioral concerns (6%)
 - Emotional issues (5%)
 - Health concerns (4%)
 - Other (3%)
- **Process (12%)**
 - Concerns regarding child/custody of child being given to biological parents (7%)
 - Failure to disclose truthful information (3%)
 - Too many legal processes (2%)
 - Other (1%)
- **Child details (4%)**
 - Child's background/unknown background (4%)
- **Inconvenience (3%)**
 - Support/lack of support (3%)



Main sources of information about foster parenting

Survey / Question / Where did you turn for information about becoming a foster parent? Please select all that apply.



▪ Like the Foster Care Subset and those *very seriously* considering foster care adoption, foster parents mostly turn to local child welfare agencies for information on foster care



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