



A Desire for Dialogue

Podcasts and Forums as a
Response to Media Polarization

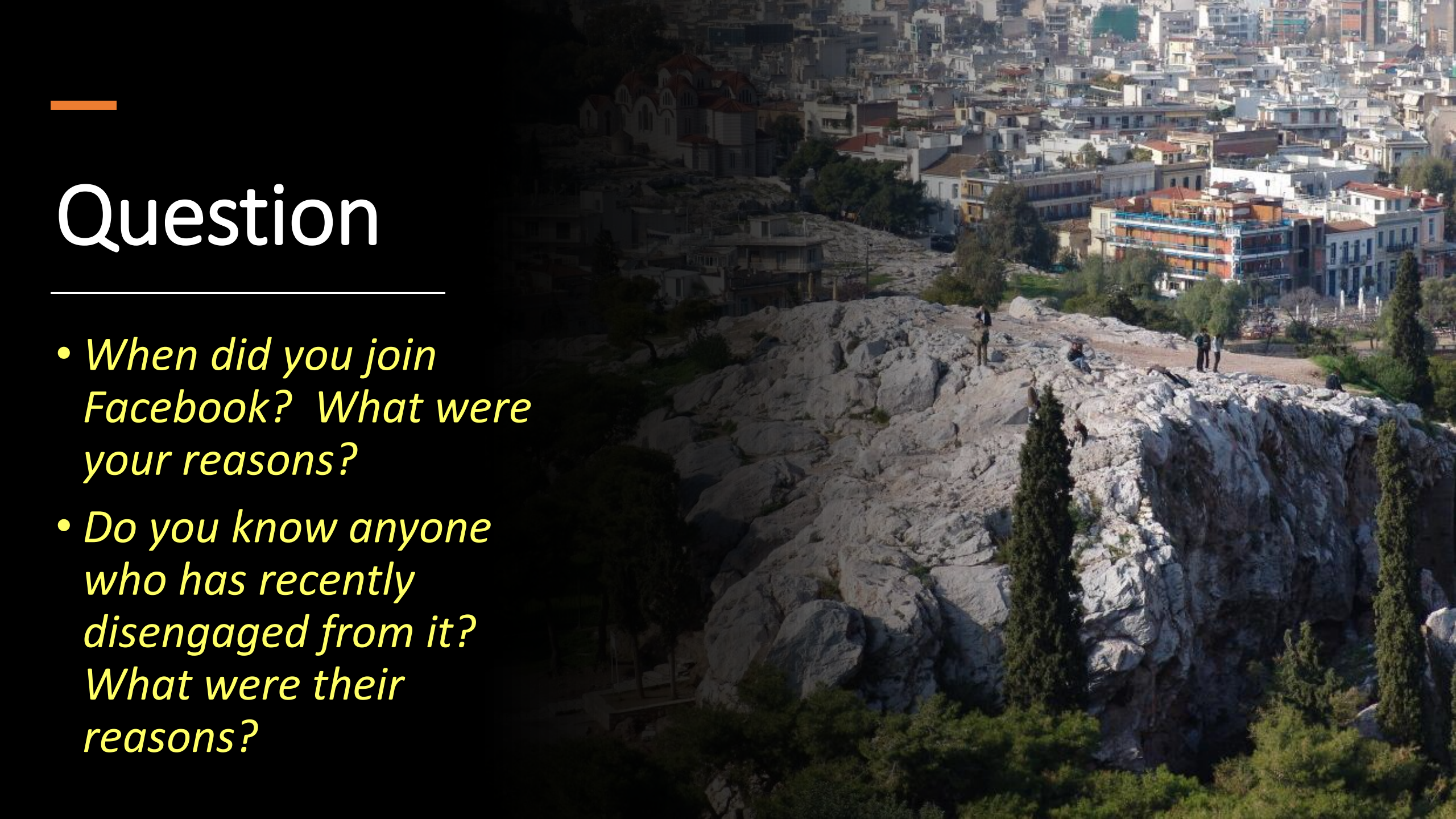
The Trend

- A shift from more polarized forms of media to platforms that better facilitate meaningful dialogue



Perspective

- 10 years ago:
Facebook as the new
Aeropagus (Mars Hill)
where our culture
exchanges ideas
- Acts 17:19-21

The background image shows a panoramic view of a city, likely Athens, with a prominent rocky hill in the foreground. The hill is covered with large, light-colored rocks and some greenery. In the distance, a dense urban landscape with various buildings and a church with a red roof is visible under a clear sky.

Question

- *When did you join Facebook? What were your reasons?*
- *Do you know anyone who has recently disengaged from it? What were their reasons?*

Trend Indicators

- Political polarization in America
- Polarization of mainstream media and main social media platforms
- Leveling and decline of their usage
- Rise of alternative platforms

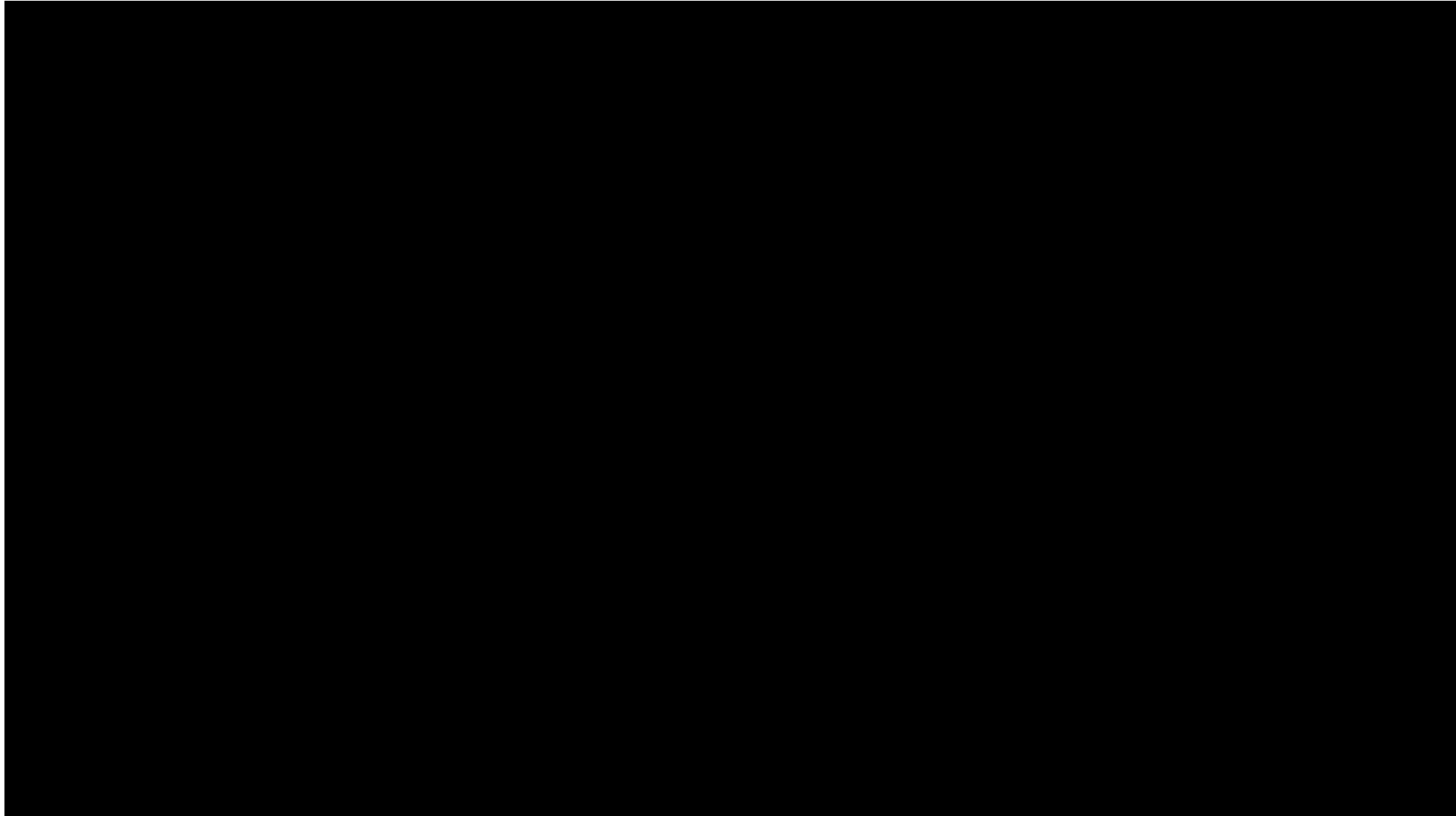
Political Polarization in America

May 5, CBS News

- **"One-hundred percent of our focus is on stopping this new administration,"** McConnell said, adding, "We're confronted with severe challenges from a new administration, and a narrow majority of Democrats in the House and a 50-50 Senate to turn America into a socialist country, and that's 100 percent of my focus."
- May 12 – ousting Liz Cheney from 3rd in command for opposing Trump, voting for impeachment

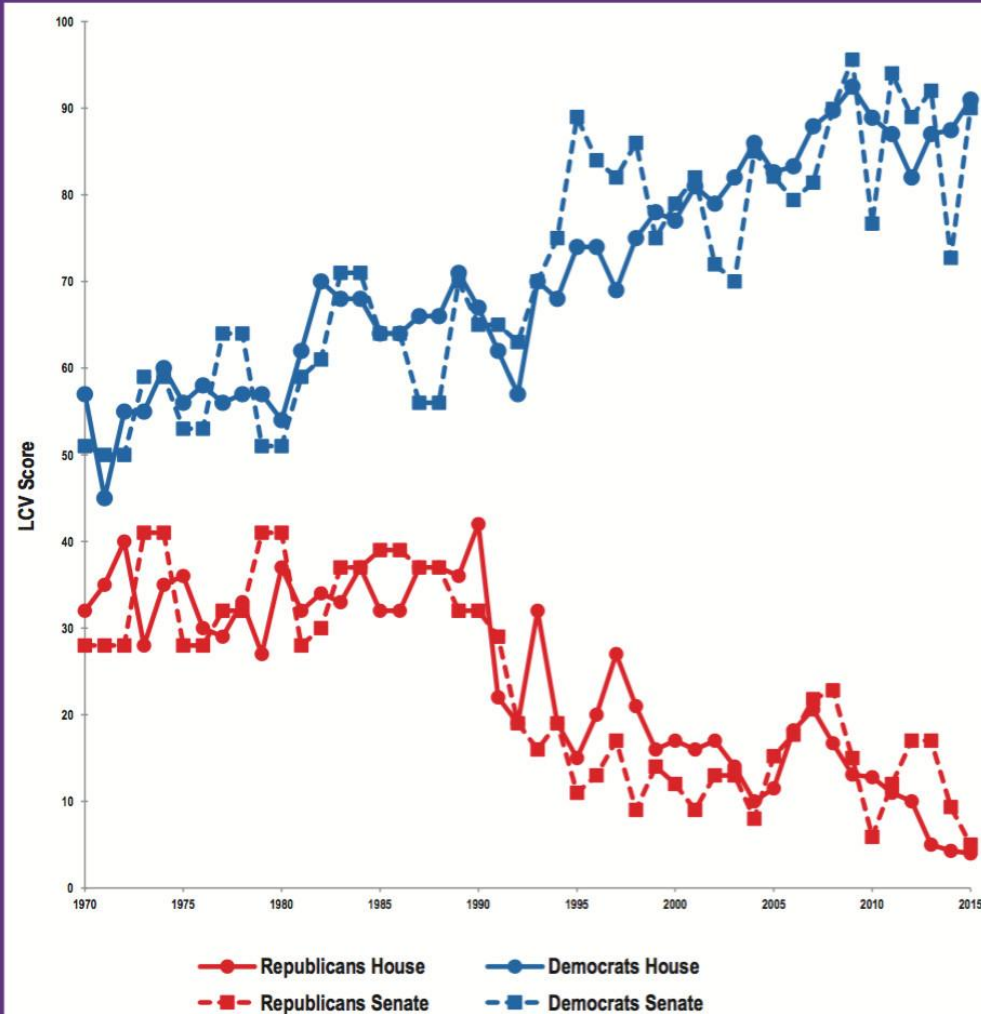


Political Polarization in America



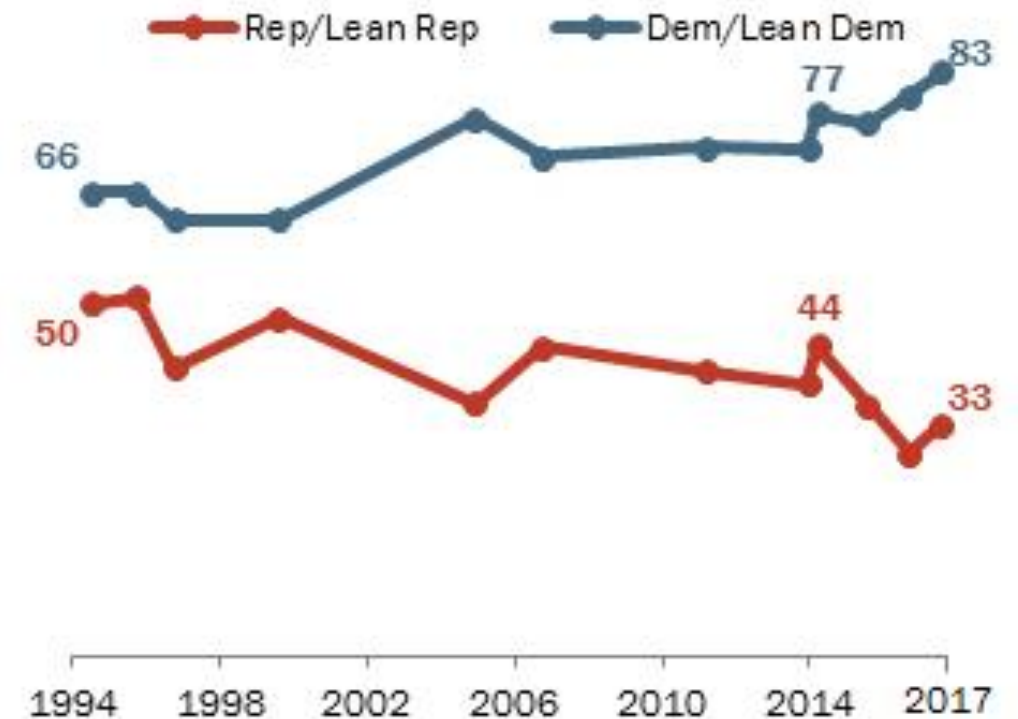
Political Polarization in America

Figure 1. League of Conservation Voters' environmental voting scores
U.S. Congress – by chamber and party



Source: League of Conservation Voters

% who say good diplomacy is best way to ensure peace



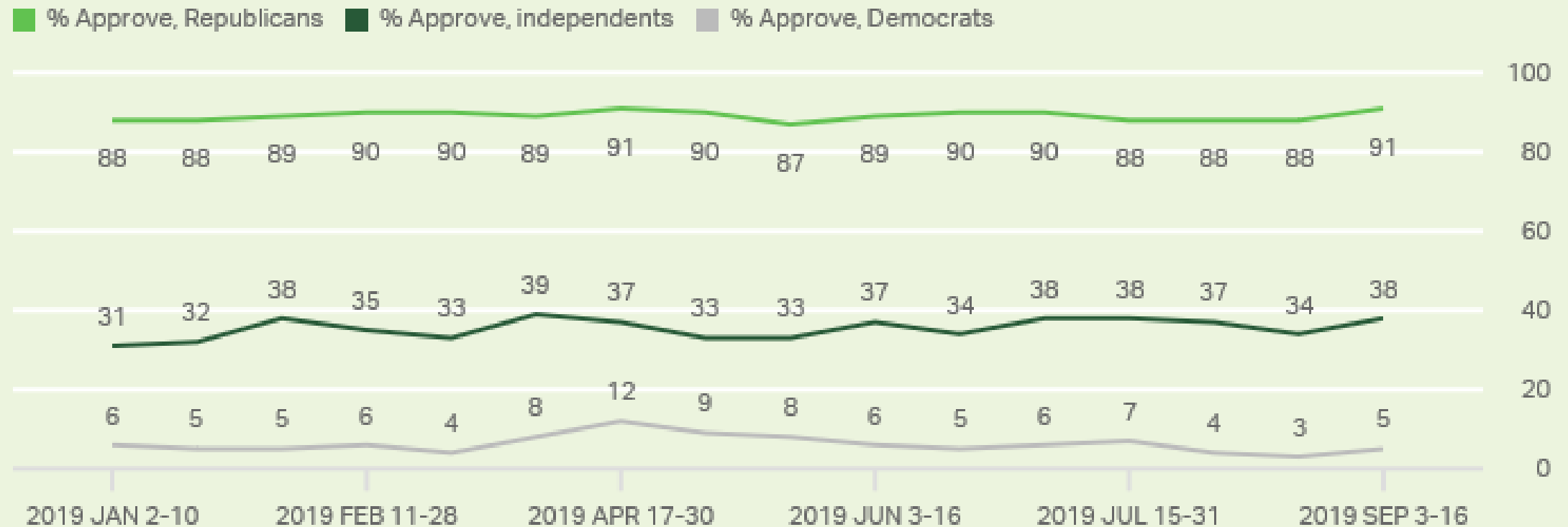
Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey conducted June 8-July 9, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Political Polarization in America

President Donald Trump's Job Approval Ratings, 2019



GALLUP

Political Polarization in America

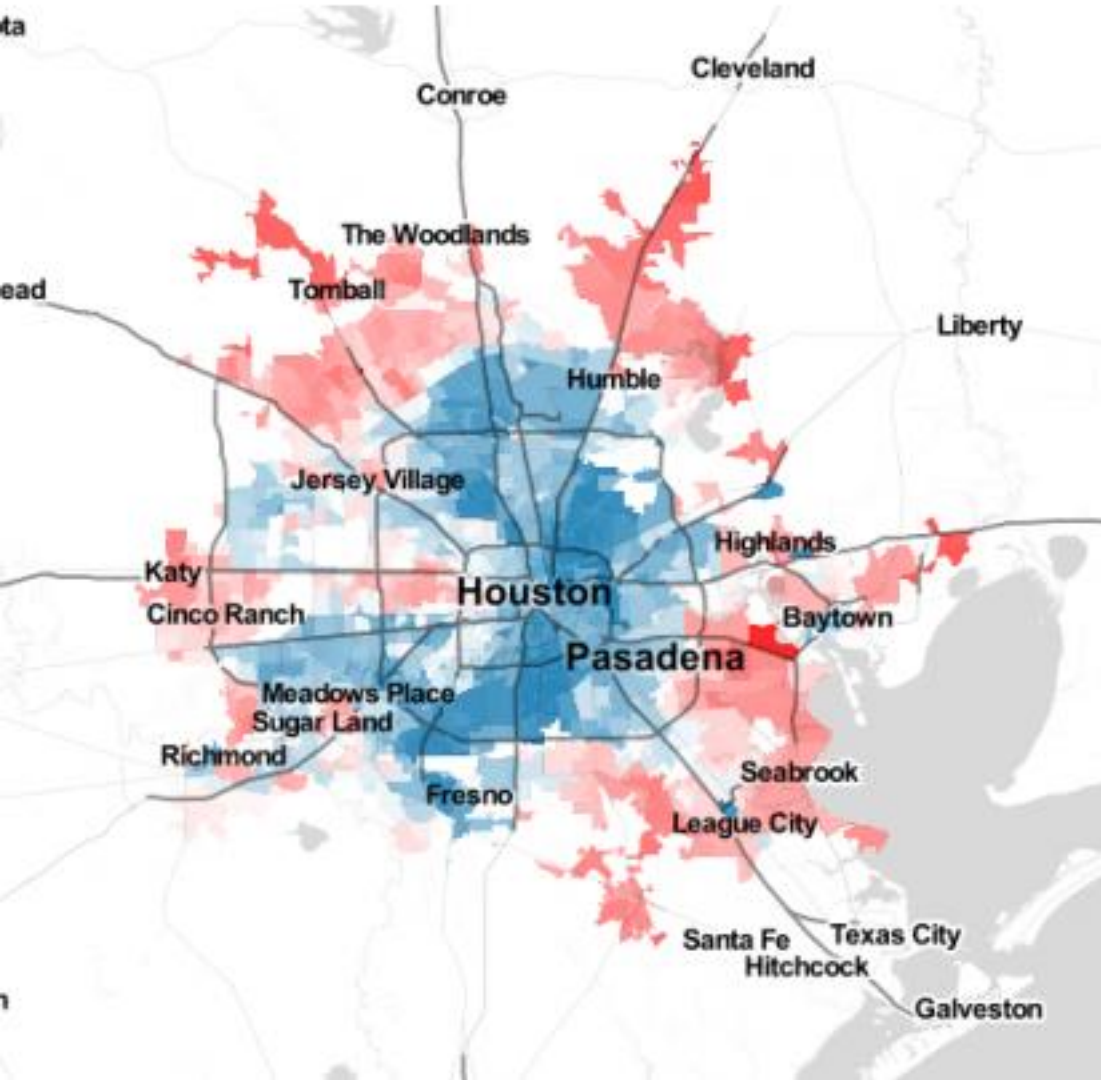
Gaps in Presidential Job Approval, by Subgroup

■ Joe Biden ■ Donald Trump ■ Barack Obama ■ George W. Bush ■ Bill Clinton

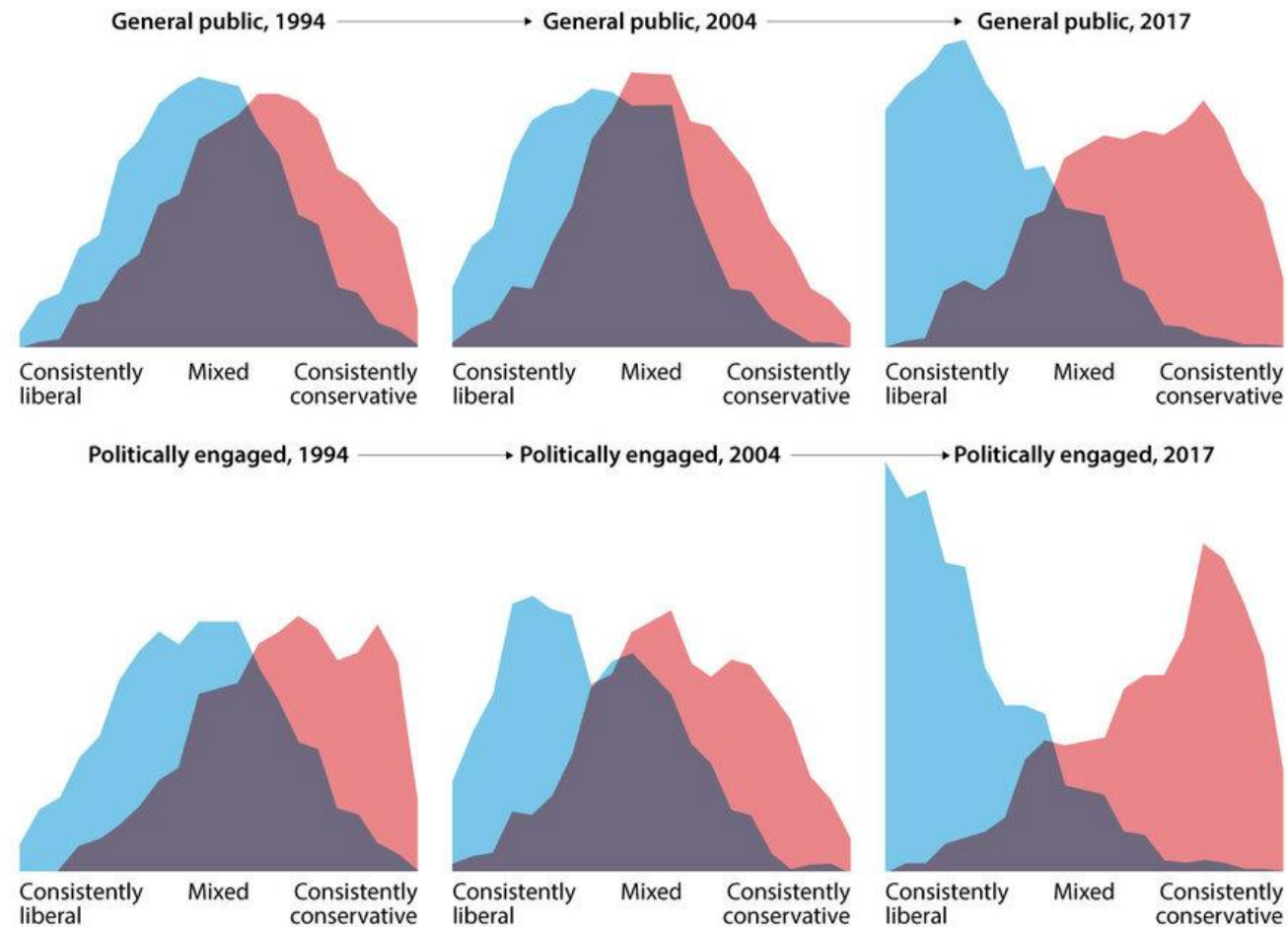
Party
(Democrats vs. Republicans)



Political Polarization in America



The political divide between **liberal** and **conservative** views has widened far more among the most politically engaged Americans.



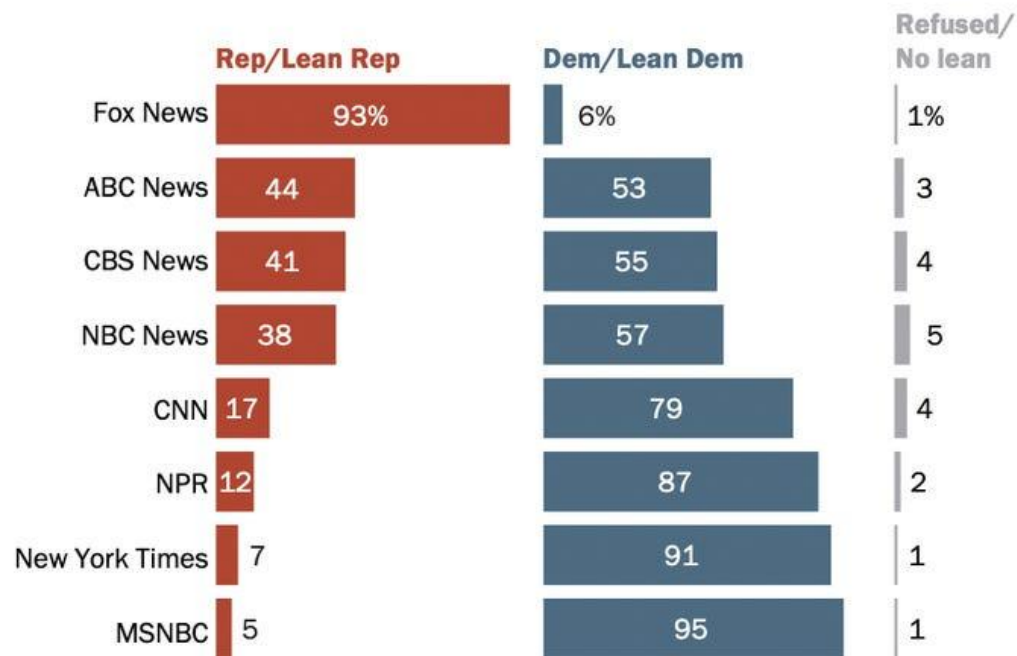
Polarization

- *What part does the media have to play?*

Polarization of TV

U.S. adults who name Fox News or MSNBC as their main political news source are equally partisan

% who say they identify as ____ among those who name each as their main source for political and election news

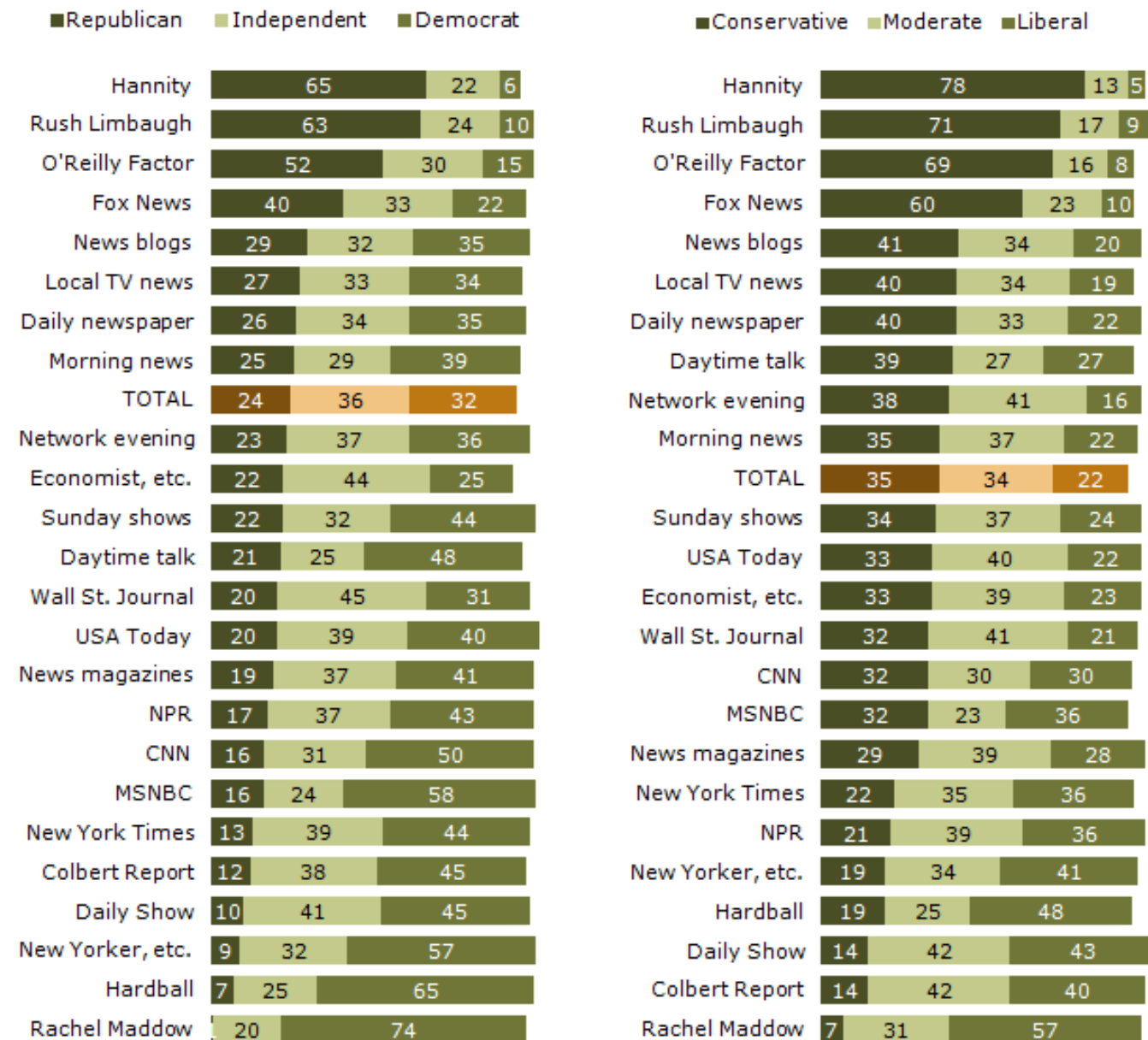


Note: Main source asked as an open-ended question. Outlets mentioned by less than 2% as main source not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 29-Nov. 11, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

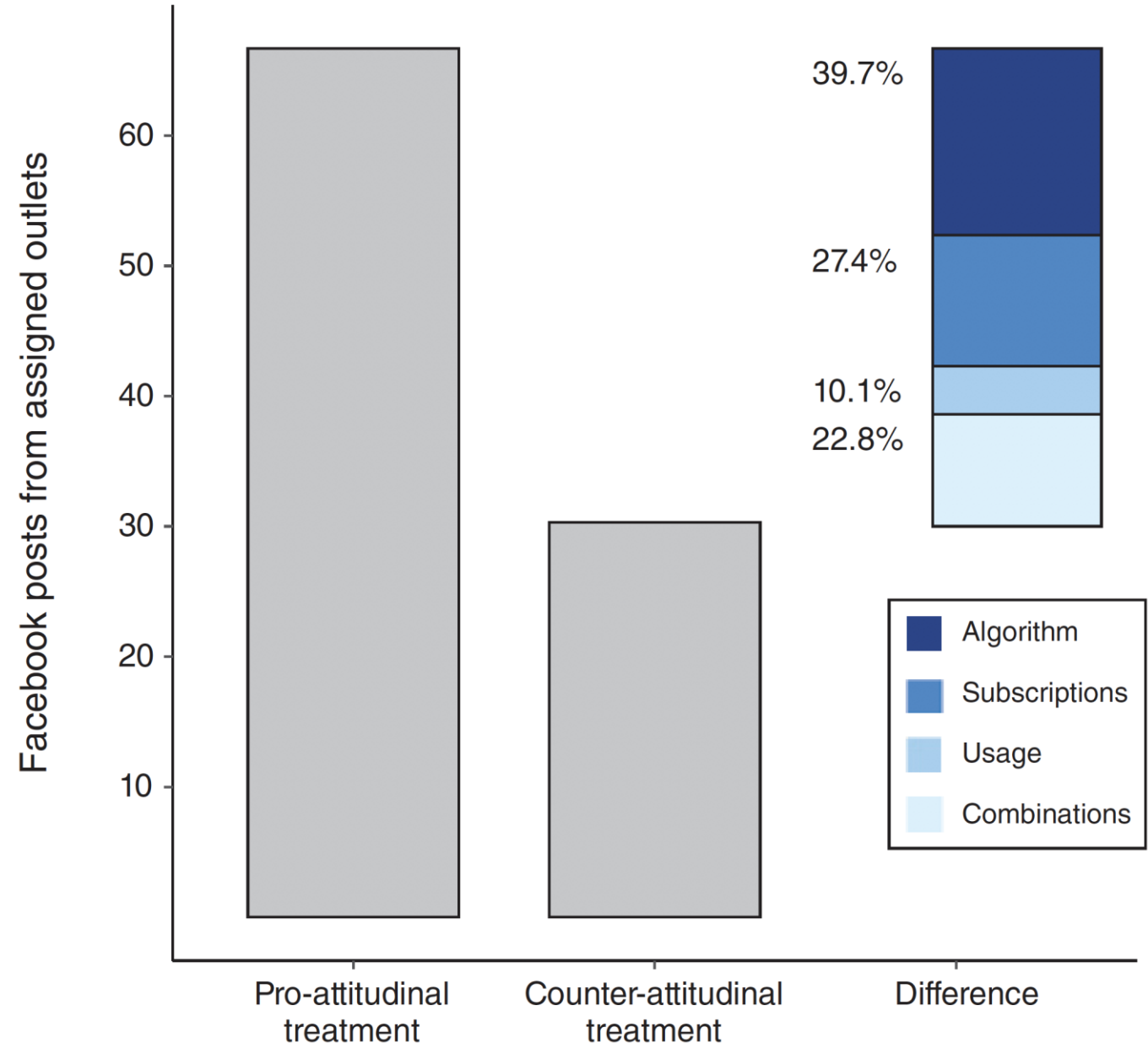
Partisanship and Ideology of News Audiences



PEW RESEARCH CENTER 2012 News Consumption Survey. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding; don't know not shown. Based on regular readers/viewers/listeners of each news source.

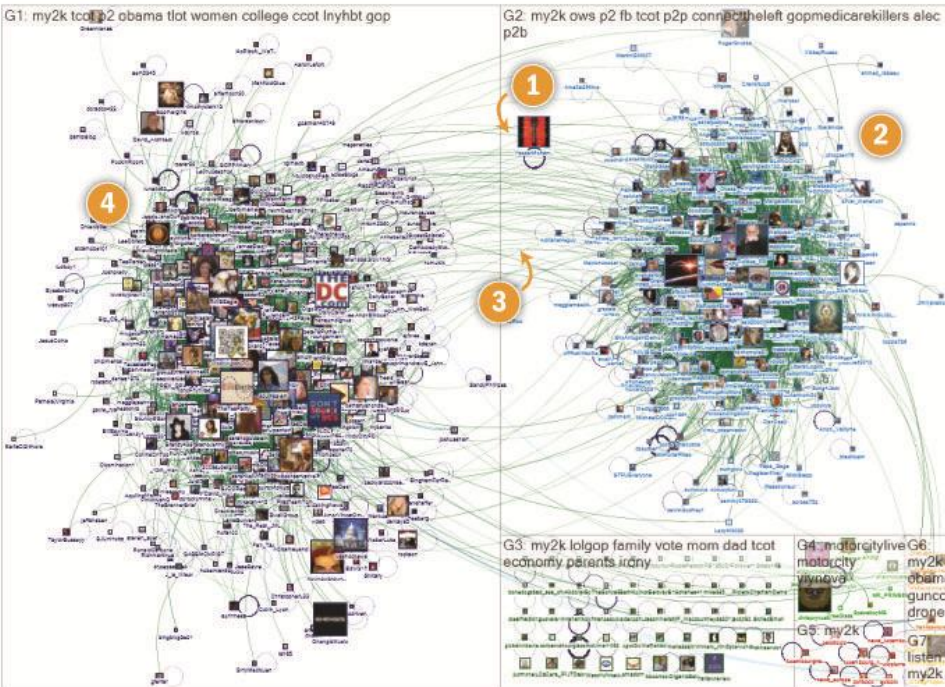
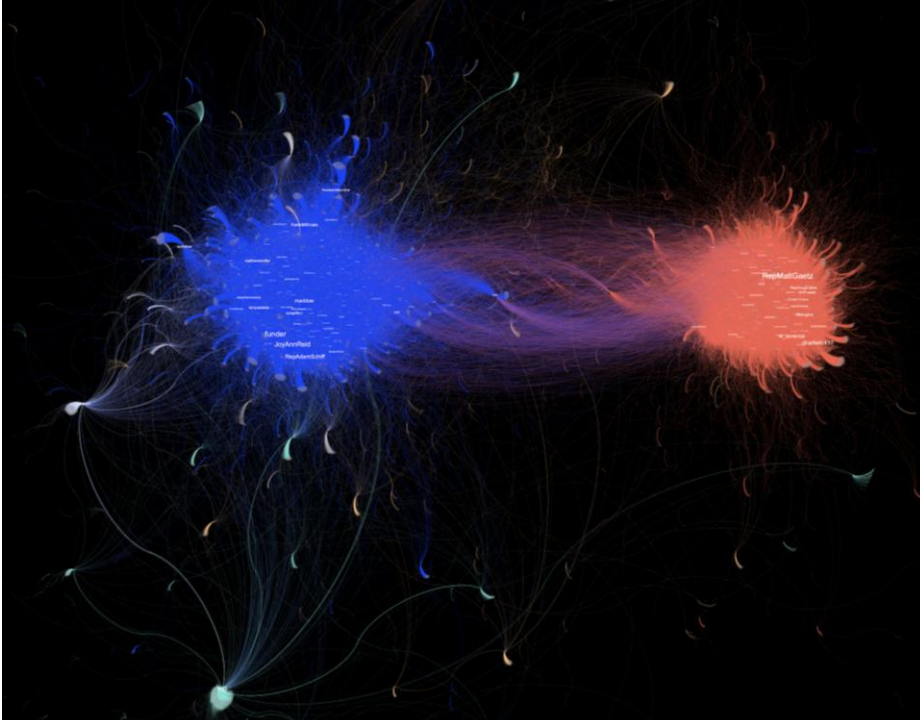
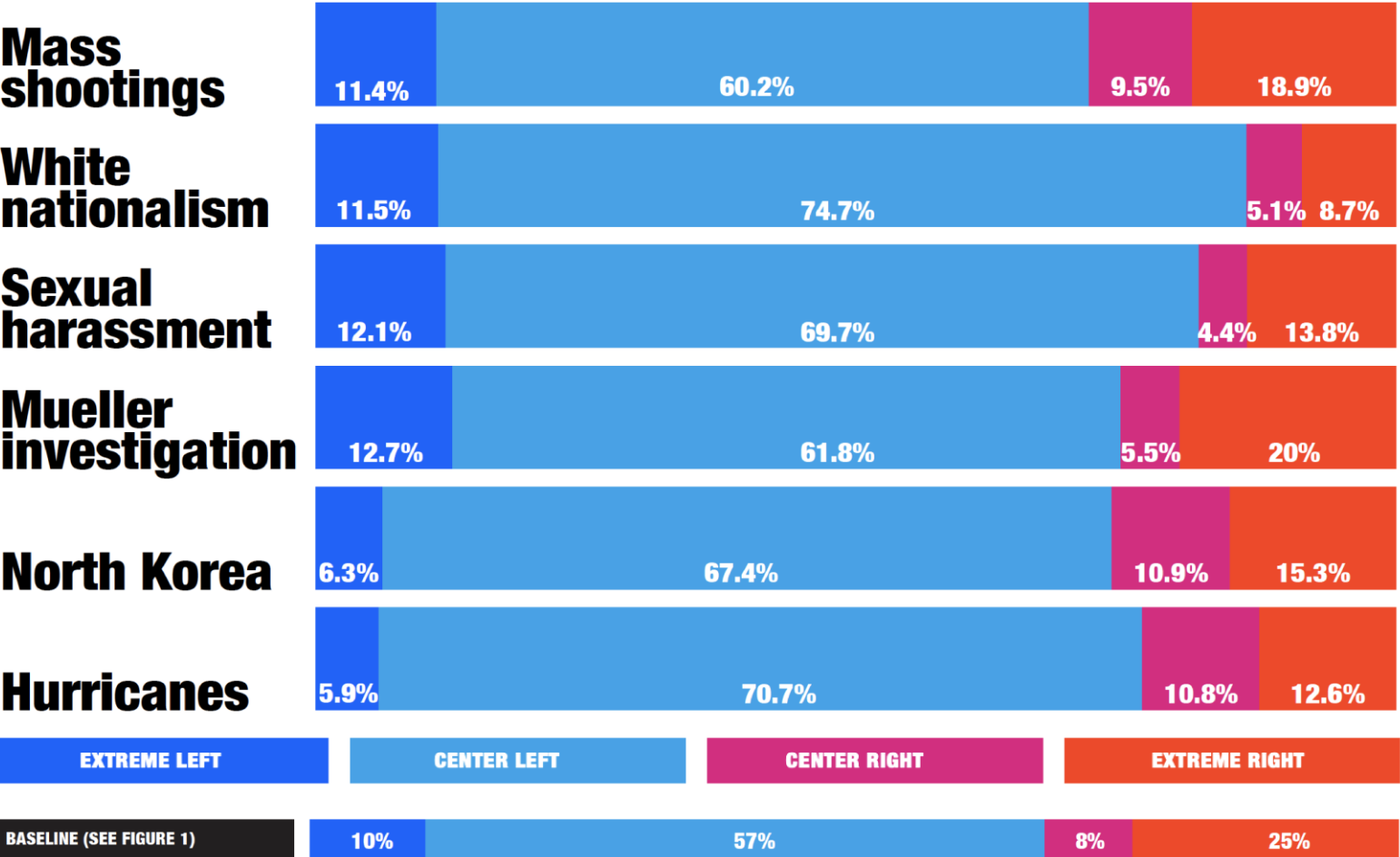
Polarization of Facebook

- Effect of algorithms
- From subscriptions to filtering news feed
- Customized ads
- Echo chamber



Polarization of Twitter

Figure 5
Ideological segment proportions by issue

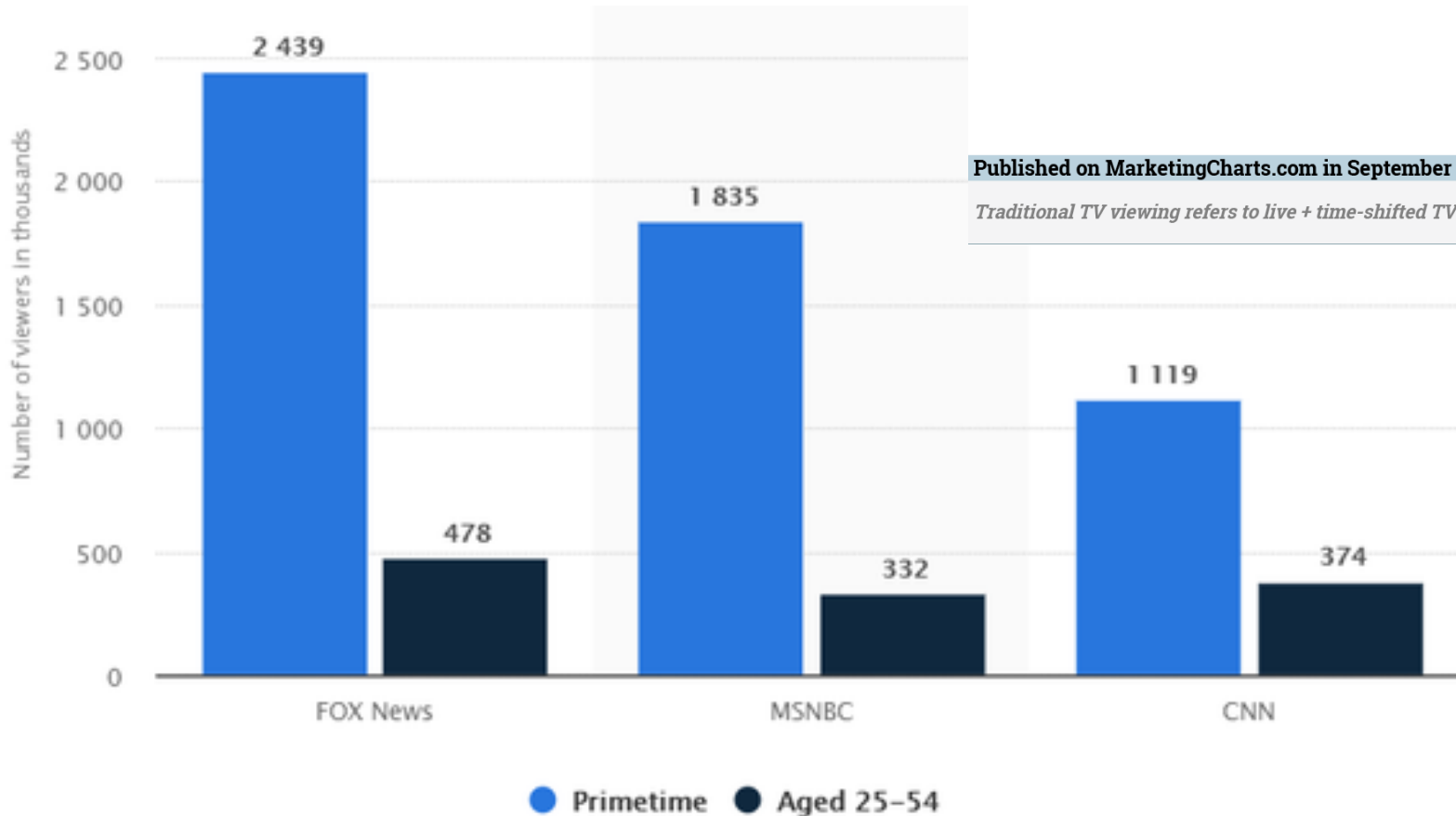
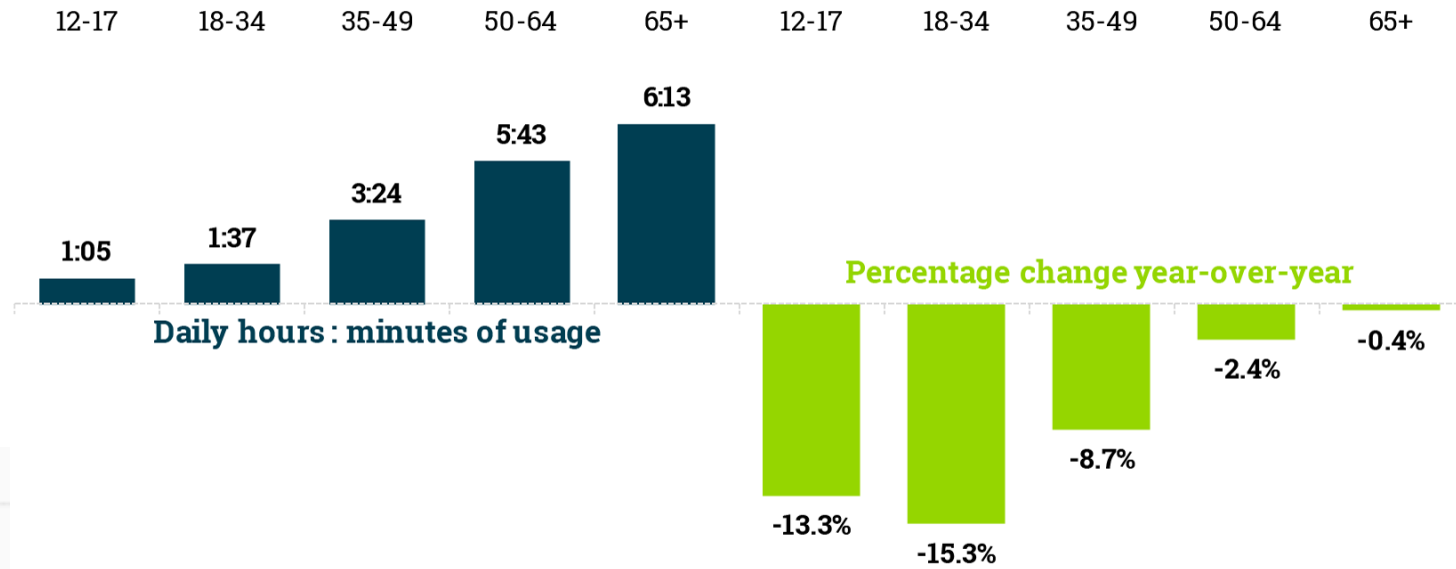


Polarization

- *How are people responding?*

Decline of TV

US Traditional TV Viewing in Q1 2020



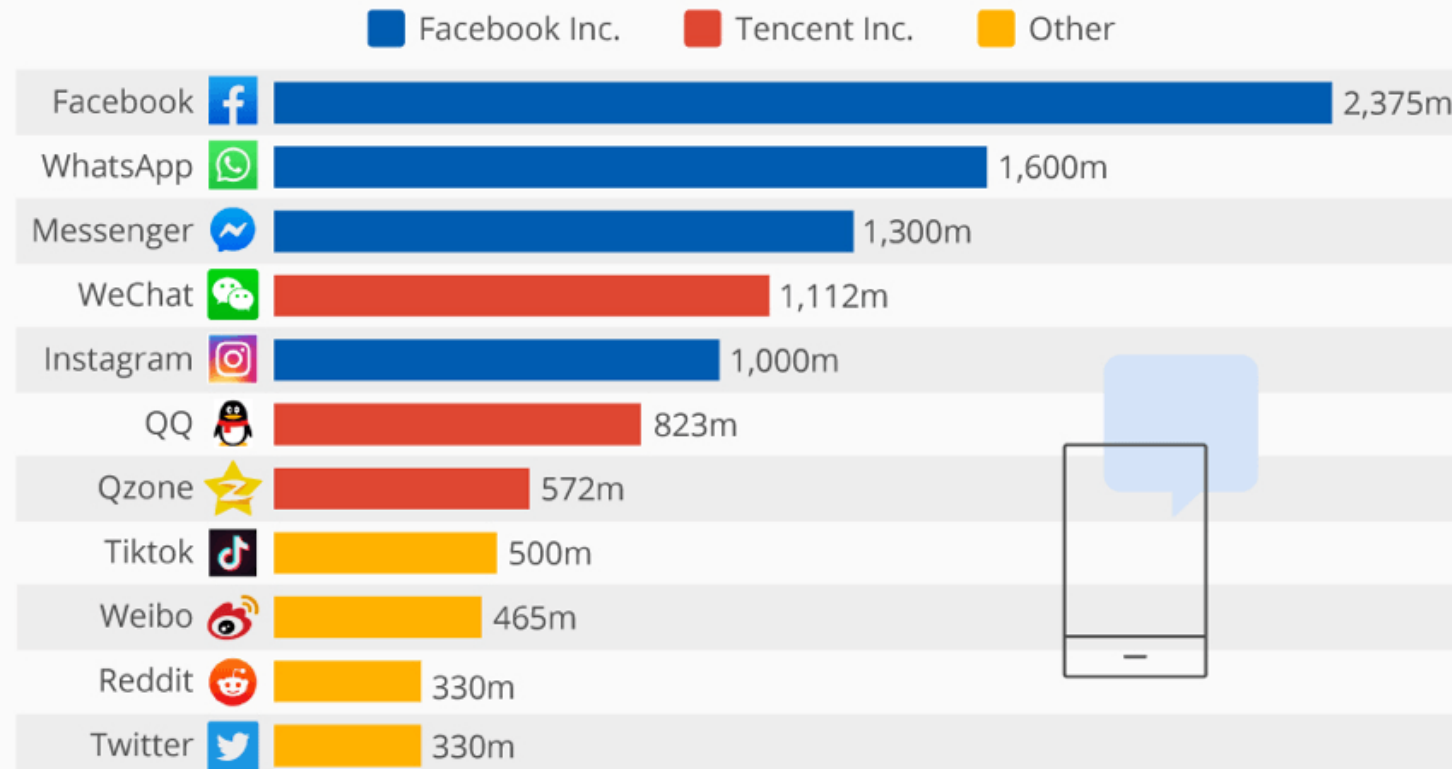
Published on MarketingCharts.com in September 2020 | Data Source: Nielsen

Traditional TV viewing refers to live + time-shifted TV viewing

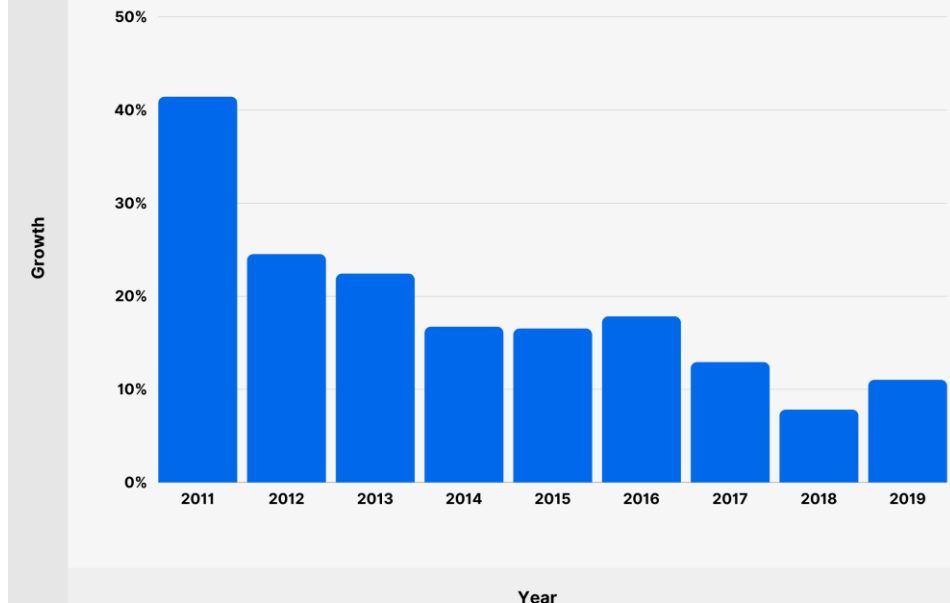
Slowing of Facebook Growth

Facebook Inc. Dominates the Social Media Landscape

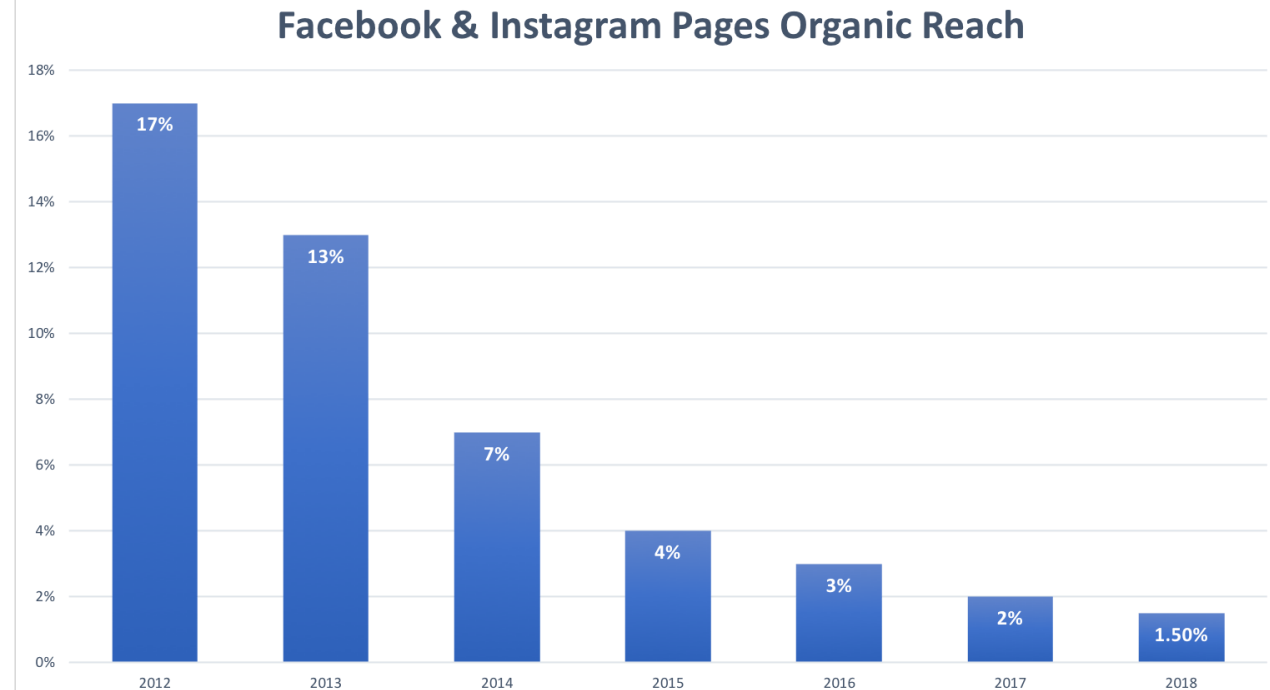
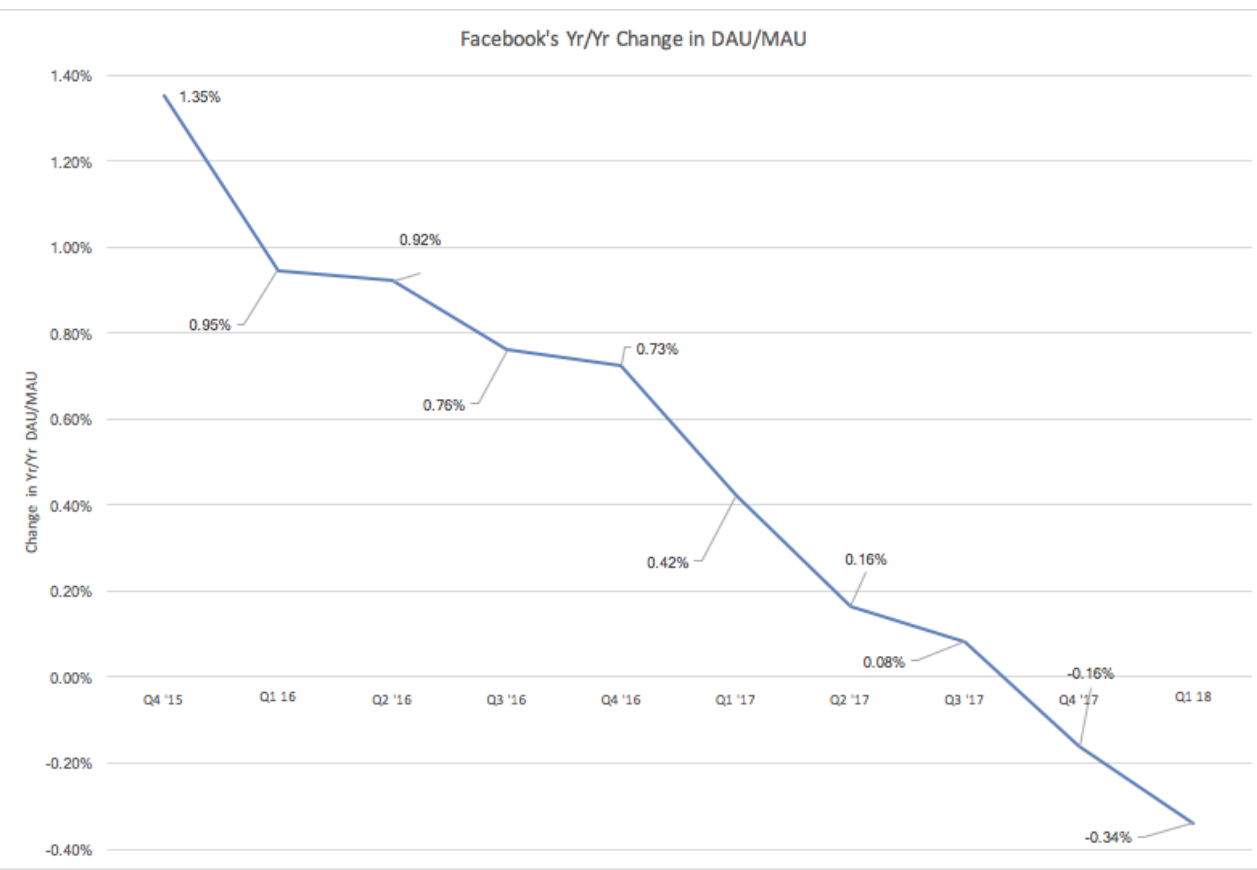
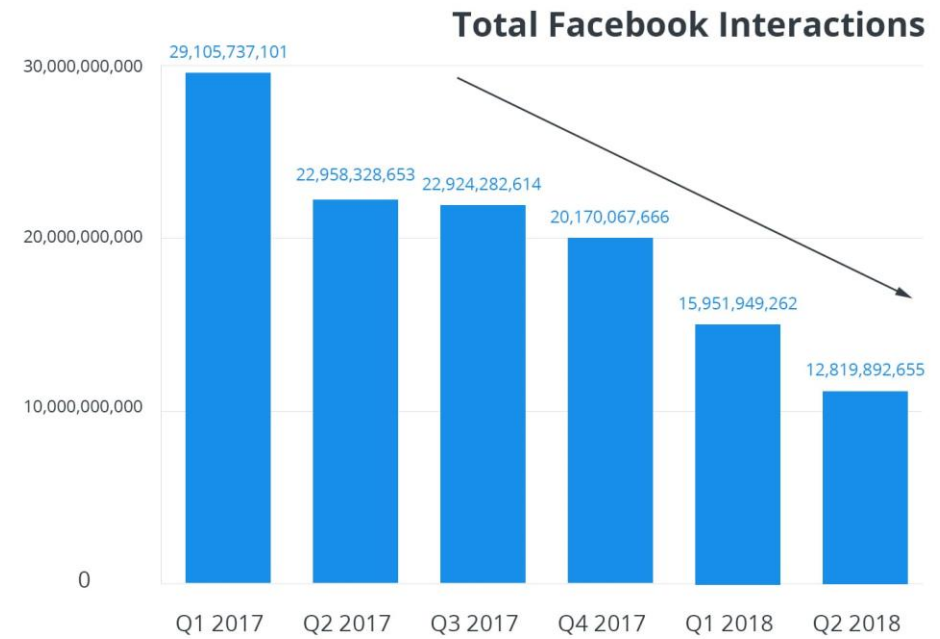
Monthly active users of selected social networks and messaging services worldwide*



Facebook User Growth Rate History



Slowing of Facebook Engagement



Podcasts

- Accessibility
 - Time, place
 - multitasking
- Openness
 - Variety of guests
 - Based on topic, not view
- Intimacy
 - Conversation, interview, dialogue
 - Loyalty, building community



A photograph of three people in a podcast studio. On the left, a man with glasses and a beard wears large headphones and has his hand raised. In the center, a woman is partially visible. On the right, a man is looking towards the center. They are all seated at a desk with microphones and laptops. The background is a wall made of wooden pallets, decorated with blue stars and a small framed picture.

Podcast Examples

Pro-Grace

- Open conversations about abortion

Holy Post

- Tough topics, showing both sides

Joe Rogan Experience

- Interview diverse, alternative views

NPR

- Topics, experts, surpassing radio

New North Church

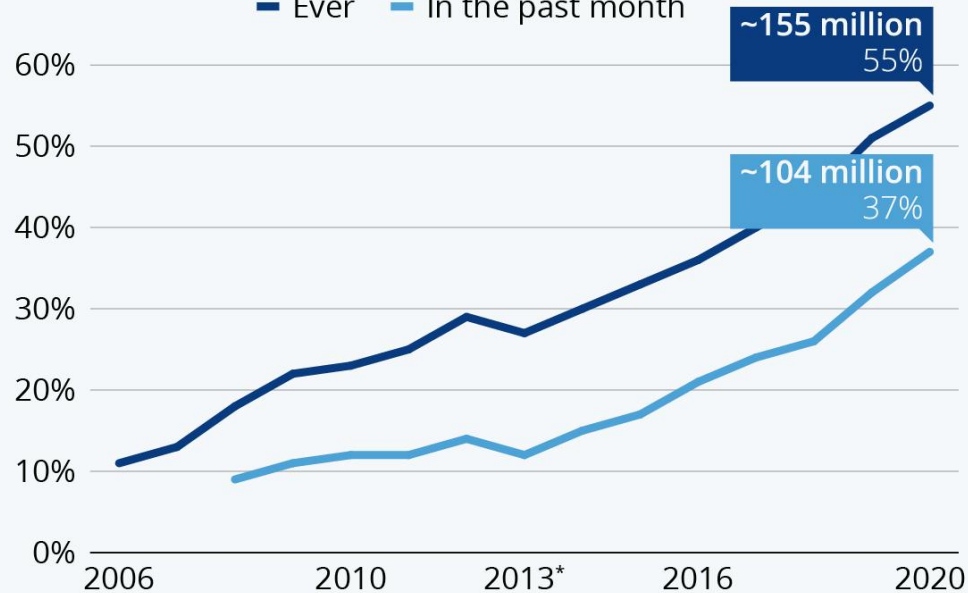
- “Stewarding Your Words”

Growth of Podcast Use

The Steady Rise of Podcasts

Percentage and number of Americans (12+) who have listened to a podcast in the past

— Ever — In the past month



* in 2013, the source changed the definition of what qualifies as a podcast

Sources: Edison Research, Triton Digital

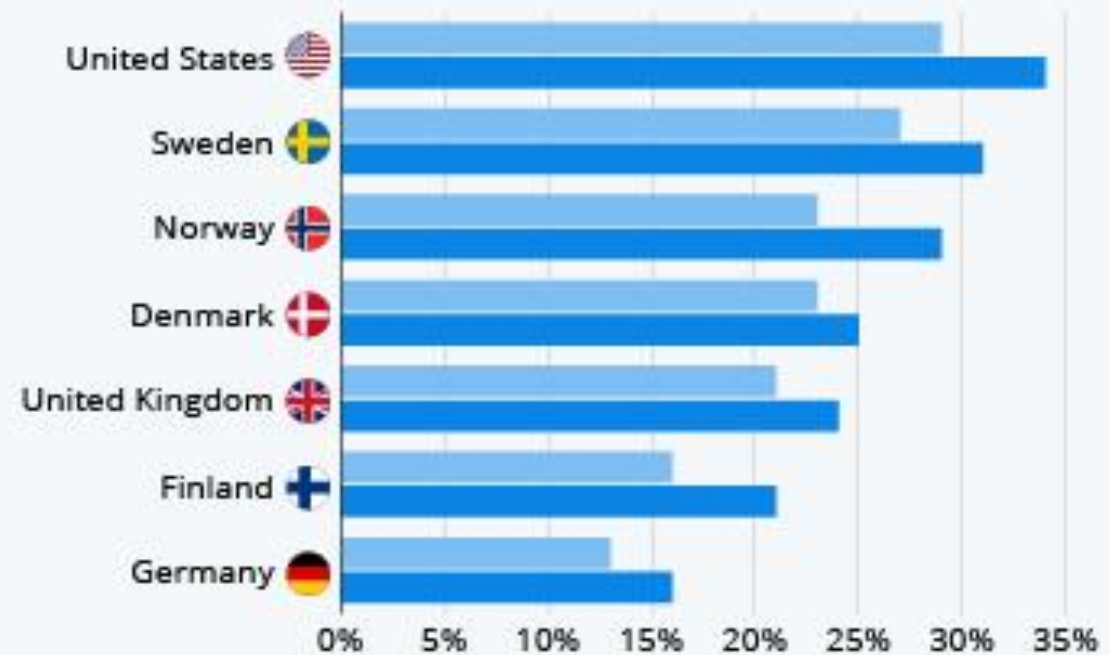


statista

Podcasts Rising in Prominence

Share of people that listen to podcasts on a weekly basis

■ 2019 ■ 2020



Based on the responses of over 14,000 adults.

Source: AudienceProject

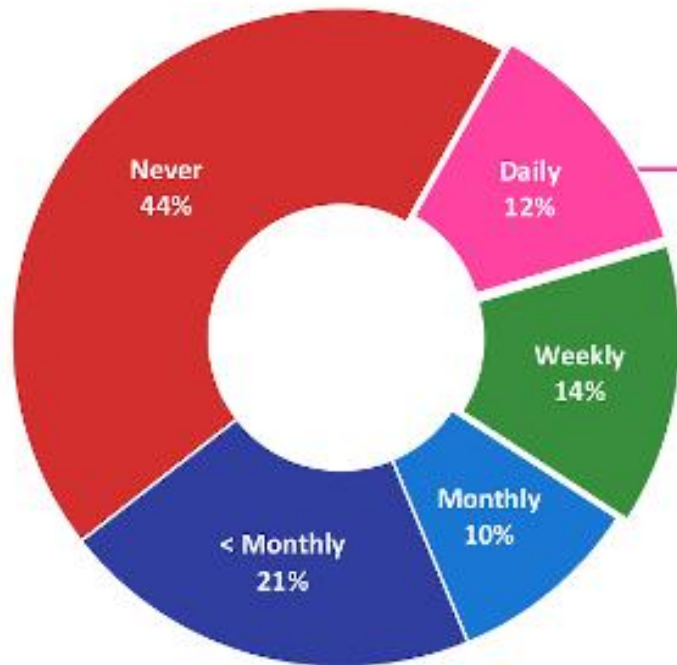


AudienceProject

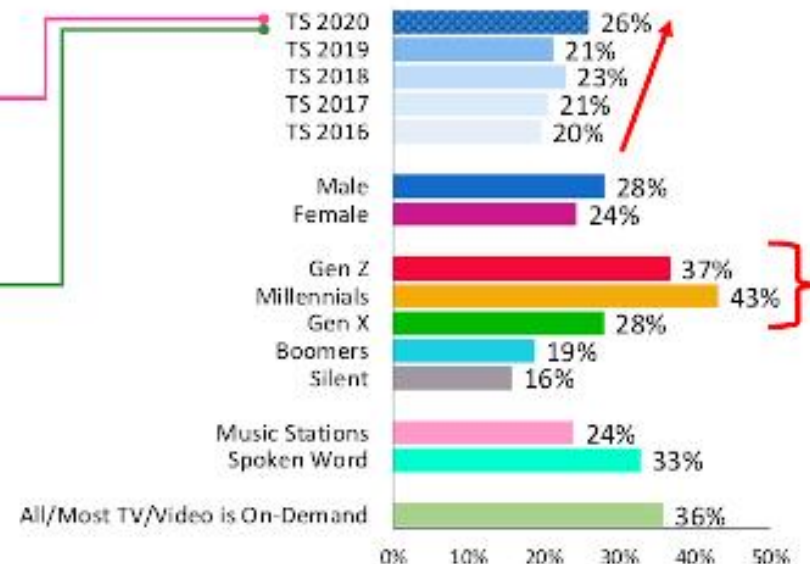
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Intensity of Podcast Use

More Than One in Four Now Listens to Podcasts Weekly or More, Led By Gen Z, Millennials, and Spoken Word Fans

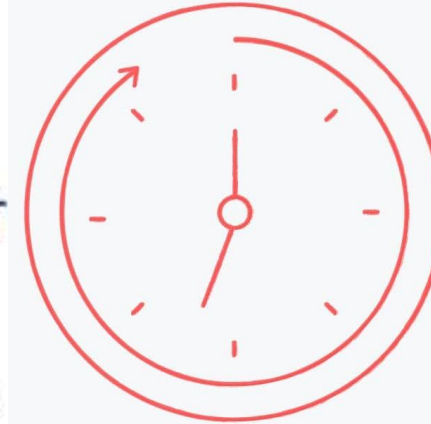


% Who Listen to Podcasts/
On-Demand Audio Weekly or More



ERLO

Podcast Statistics: Time Spent



82.4%

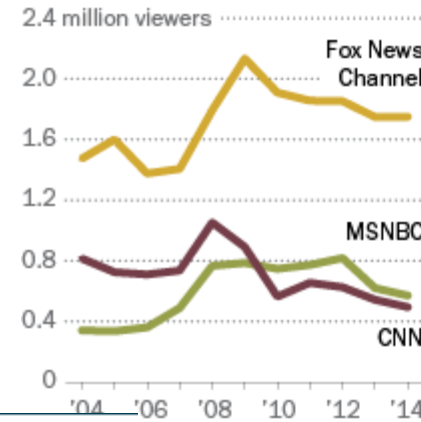
of podcast listeners
spend more than
seven hours a week
listening to podcasts.

(Discover Pods, 2019)

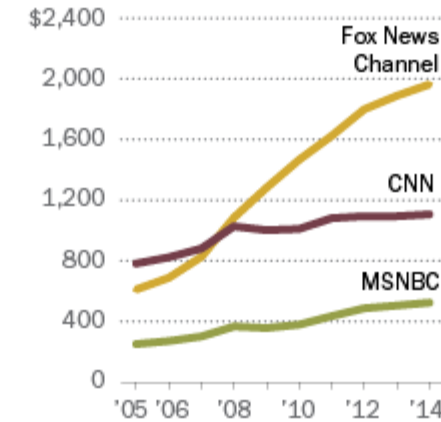
Usage Compared

Cable News Struggles With Shrinking TV Audience Despite Steady Revenue

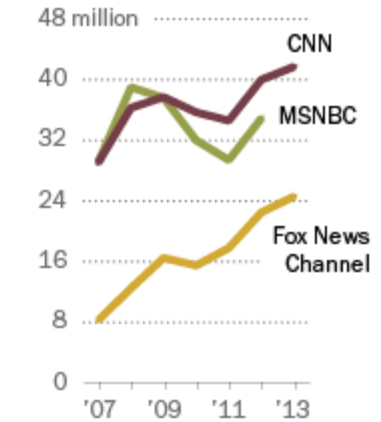
Cable news channel viewership



Total revenue for cable news channels, in millions of dollars



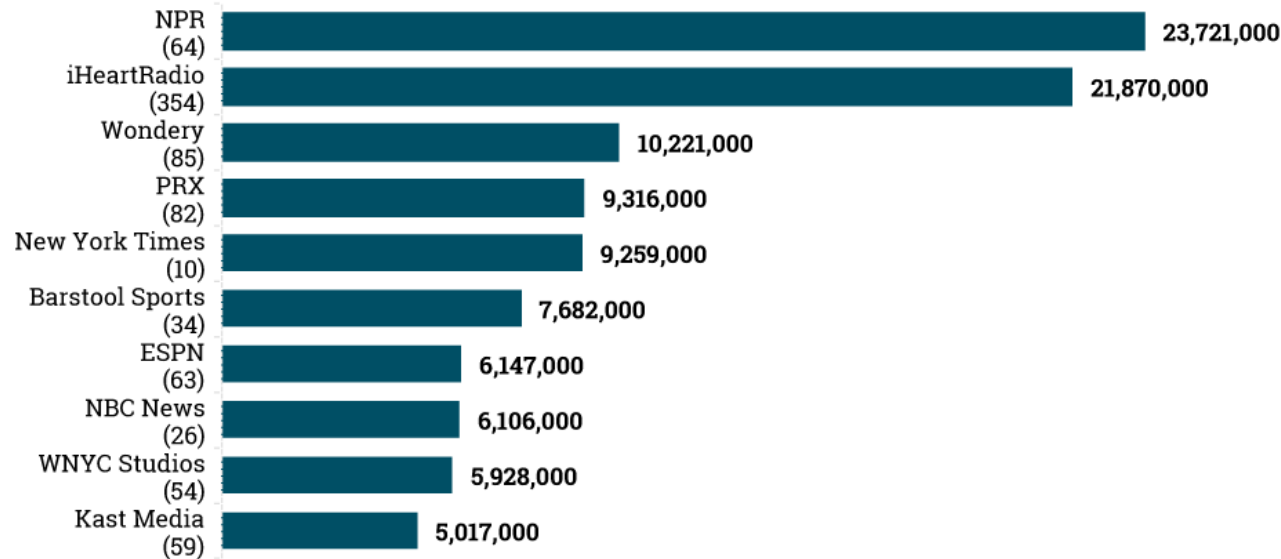
Average unique monthly visitors to cable news websites



Viewership data measured as median viewership during the hours of 8PM-11PM. 2014 viewership data reflect all other years are Jan.-Dec. All revenue figures are estimates. MSNBC website data unavailable for 2013 due to measurement. Nielsen Media Research (viewership and website visitors); SNL Kagan (revenue).

ARCH CENTER

Top Podcast Publishers in January 2020 by US unique monthly audience



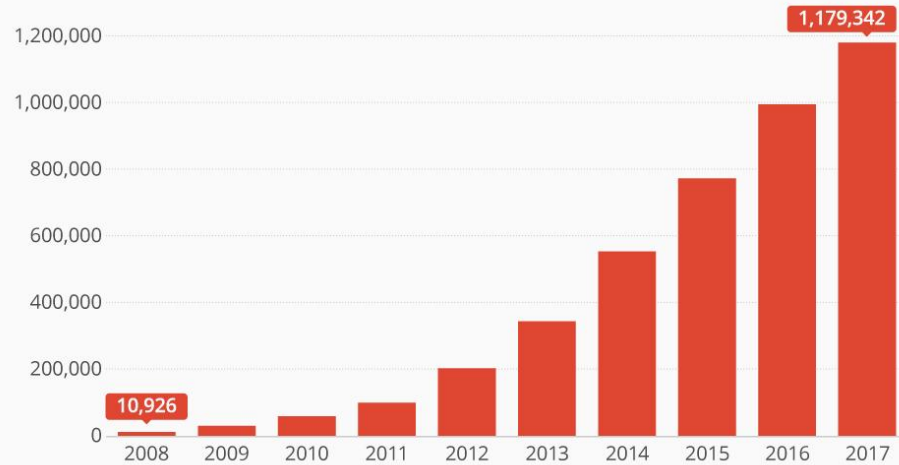
Published on MarketingCharts.com in March 2020 | Data Source: Podtrac

Total mobile and desktop podcast audience. The unique monthly audience refers to "the total of unique audience members who stream or download [the] publisher's podcast content across all shows they produce." | Figures in parentheses indicate the number of active shows for each publisher.

Rise of Reddit

The Explosive Growth of Reddit's Community

Number of subreddits, i.e. forums dedicated to a particular topic, available on Reddit*



* all figures as of the end of the respective year; 2017 figure as of November 12
Source: Reddit Metrics

statista

JAN
2020

REDDIT OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL HEADLINES FOR REDDIT USE AROUND THE WORLD

NUMBER OF
WORLDWIDE MONTHLY
ACTIVE REDDIT USERS



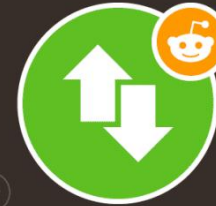
430
MILLION

SHARE OF POPULATION
AGED 13+ THAT USES
REDDIT EACH MONTH



7.1%

YEAR-ON-YEAR
INCREASE IN MONTHLY
ACTIVE REDDIT USERS



+30%

NUMBER OF NEW
POSTS PUBLISHED TO
REDDIT DURING 2019*



199
MILLION

ANNUAL INCREASE IN THE
NUMBER OF COMMENTS
POSTED TO REDDIT*



+37%

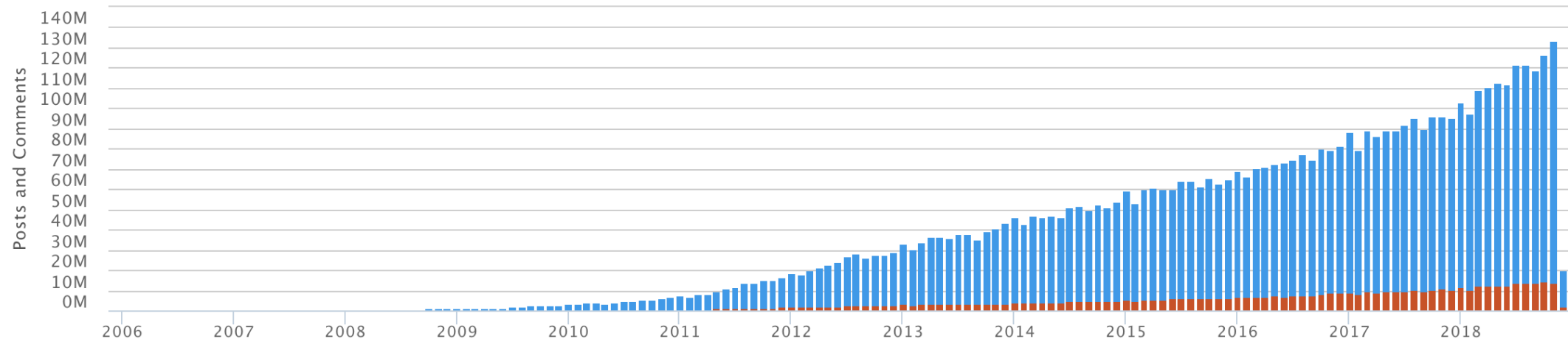
173

SOURCE: REDDIT (JANUARY 2020). *NOTE: FIGURE FOR NEW POSTS PUBLISHED TO REDDIT ONLY INCLUDES POSTS PUBLISHED BETWEEN JANUARY AND OCTOBER 2019, SO THE FIGURE FOR POSTS MADE THROUGHOUT 2019 IS LIKELY HIGHER. FIGURE FOR ANNUAL GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF COMMENTS REFLECTS THE YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE TO OCTOBER 2019.

we
are
social

Hootsuite

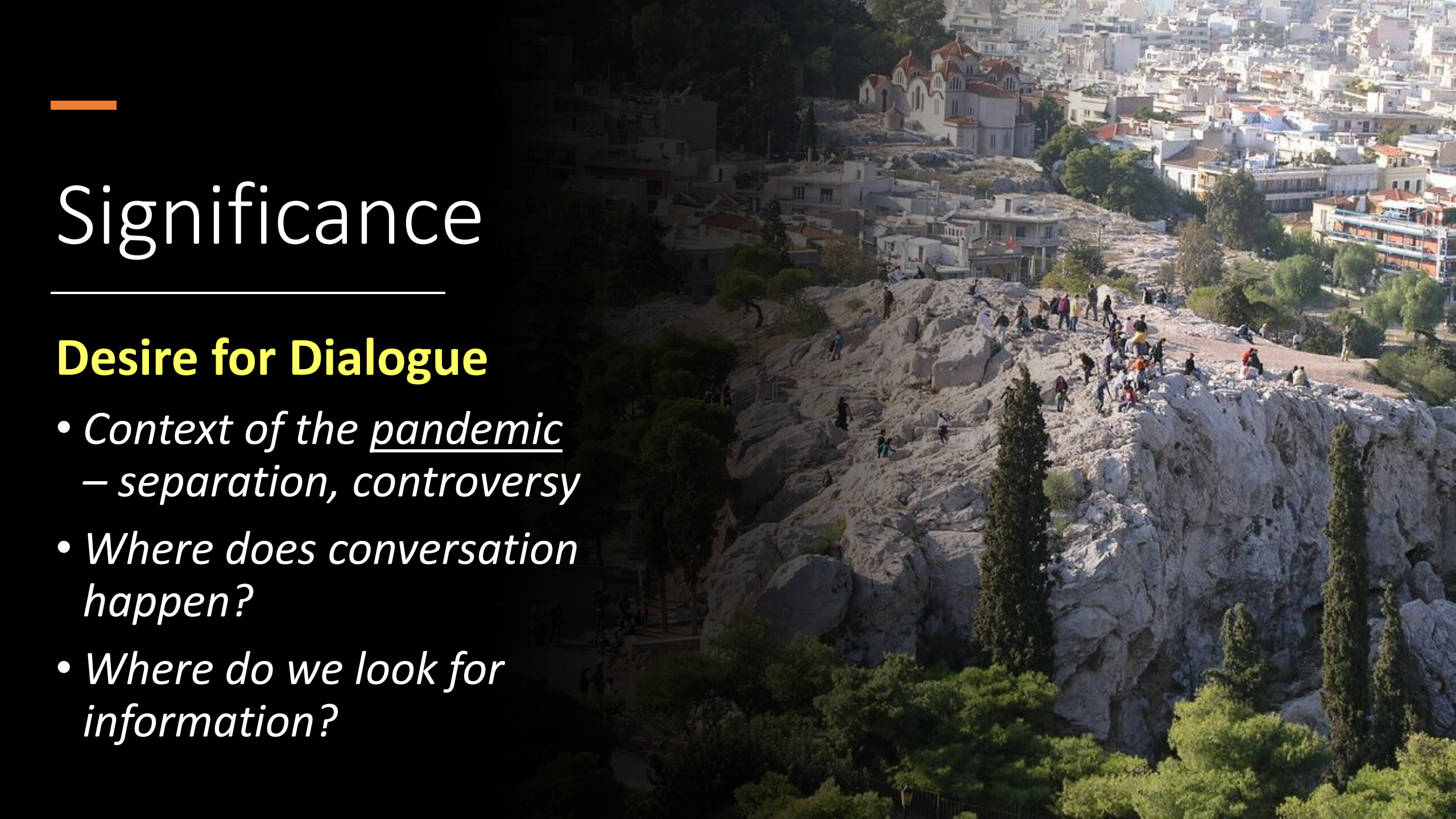
Reddit Activity (Complete History)



The Shift

- *Polarization & decline of mainstream news & social media*
- *Increased engagement with platforms that facilitate meaningful dialogue*





Significance

Desire for Dialogue

- *Context of the pandemic
– separation, controversy*
- *Where does conversation happen?*
- *Where do we look for information?*



Our Calling

When & where does discipleship happen?

How & does evangelism happen?

Communication in Church

What is our primary means of communicating with our people?

- Advantages & Disadvantages...
- Considering forums

What about our preaching style?

- Learning from podcasts – interaction, questions, alternating speakers...

What kind of culture are we making?

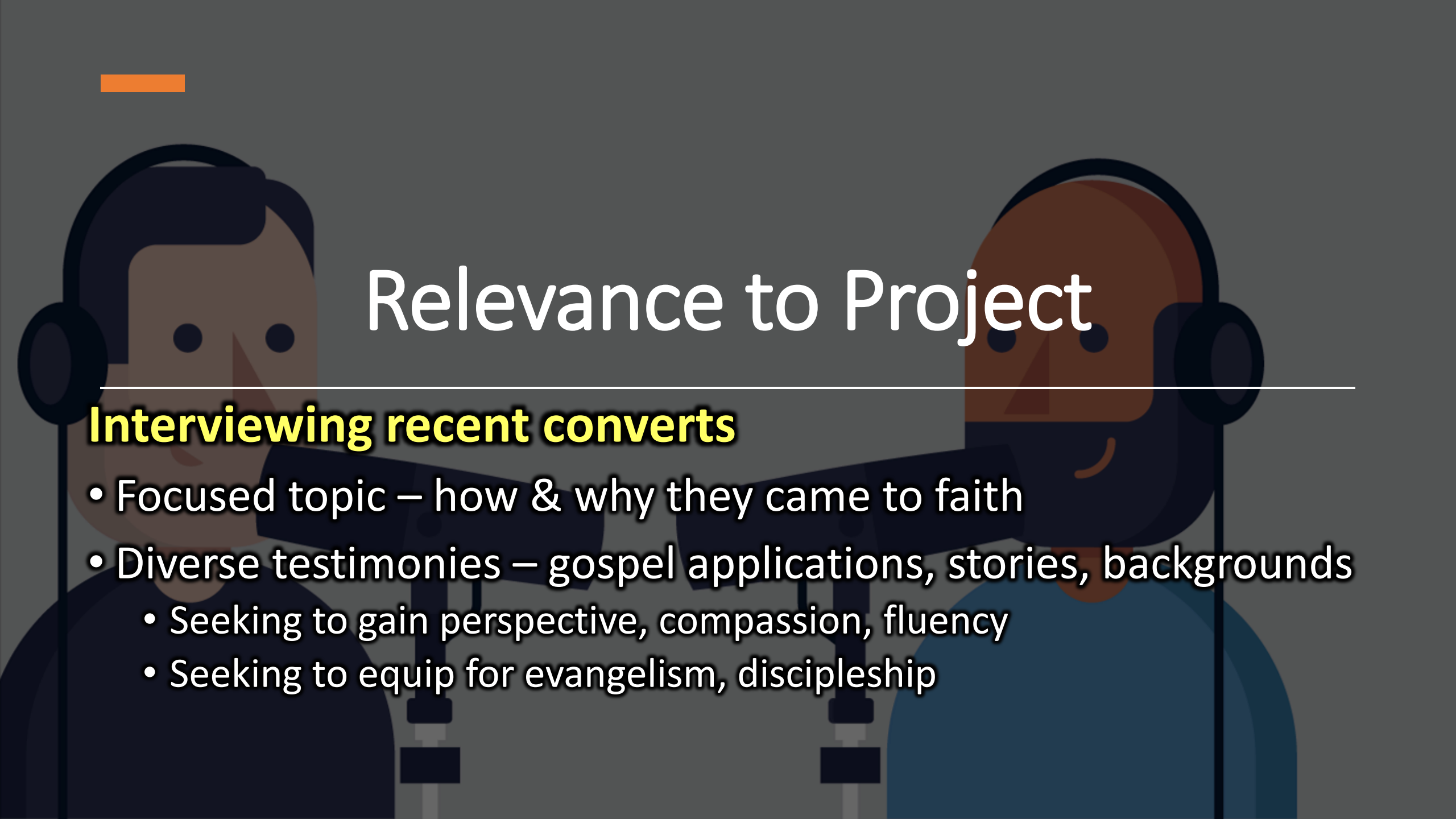
- Crouch – on a small enough scale, nearly everyone can change the world



Communication in Church

- **James 1:19** – Quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry
- **Romans 12:2** – do not conform...
- **Romans 12:14** – try to live at peace
- **Romans 14:1** – not quarrel over disputable matters
- **Romans 15:7** – accept one another
- **John 17:20-23** – unity as witness





Relevance to Project

Interviewing recent converts

- Focused topic – how & why they came to faith
- Diverse testimonies – gospel applications, stories, backgrounds
 - Seeking to gain perspective, compassion, fluency
 - Seeking to equip for evangelism, discipleship