



**THE NEXT  
FRONTIER:**  
Public Attitudes  
Toward Space and  
the Space Economy

# Overview

**Space is no longer the exclusive domain of governments and astronauts.** In the span of a generation, it has become an engine of the global economy — powering the satellites behind everyday GPS and weather forecasting, attracting billions in private investment, and sitting at the center of a new era of U.S.-China competition.

To understand how the American public is thinking about this moment, Global Strategy Group surveyed 1,000 voters nationwide. **We found an electorate that is broadly enthusiastic about space — but one that views it through a distinctly practical lens.**

**Americans across party lines support government investment in space exploration,** and they are united in believing the United States must remain competitive against China and Russia, even if that means spending more. But that support comes with conditions: **voters want meaningful government oversight, a genuine public-private partnership, and confidence that space investment delivers real benefits back home.**

The space economy itself is still a concept most Americans are just beginning to understand. But once they do, they see its promise. They recognize the jobs, the national security benefits, and the technologies that already touch their daily lives. They are less certain about what the rules should be that govern commercial activity in space.

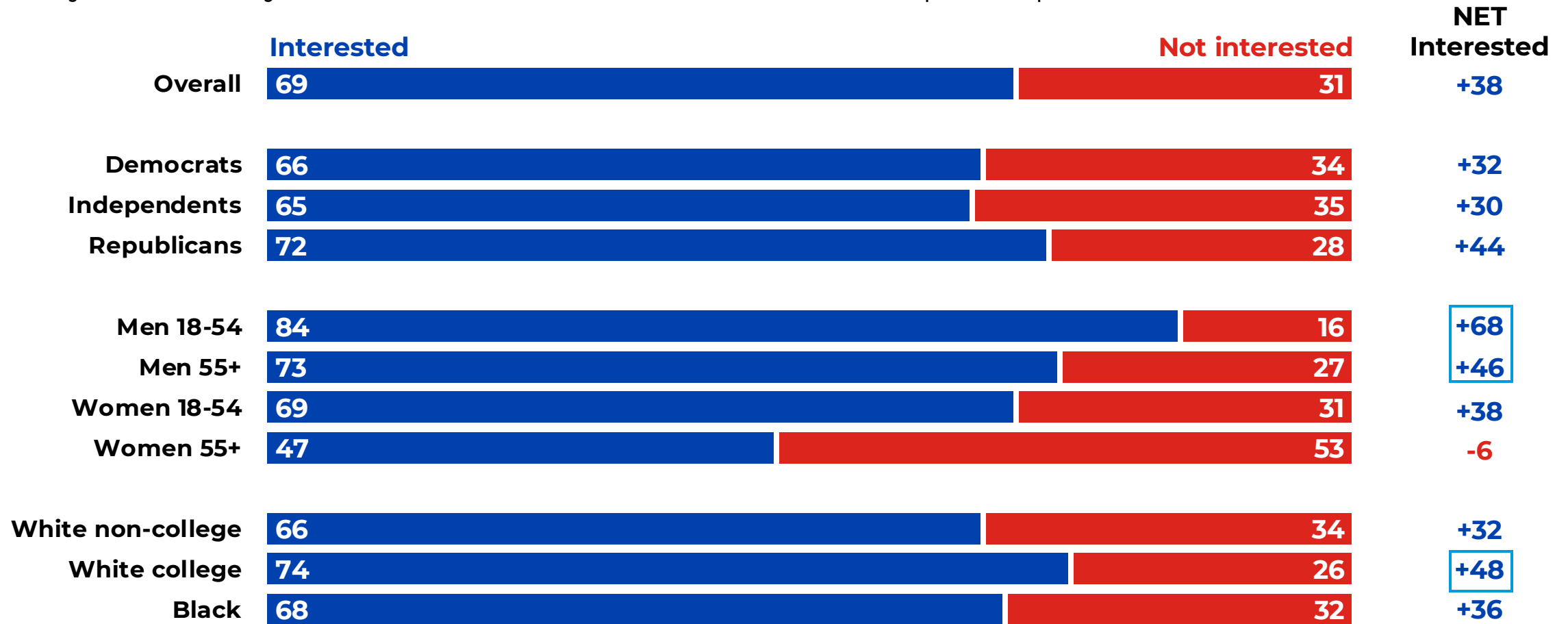
These findings offer a clear signal for policymakers, industry leaders, and communicators working in this space: **bipartisan public support is there, but it is contingent. The case still needs to be made.**

The background is a deep blue space filled with various celestial objects. There are numerous small, bright stars scattered throughout. Some stars have prominent diffraction spikes, particularly a large, bright one on the right side. On the left side, there is a large, colorful nebula with shades of blue, purple, and red. In the distance, several galaxies are visible, including a prominent one in the upper right and another in the lower right. The overall scene is a rich, multi-colored cosmic landscape.

# VOTERS' FEELINGS AND ENTHUSIASM TOWARD SPACE

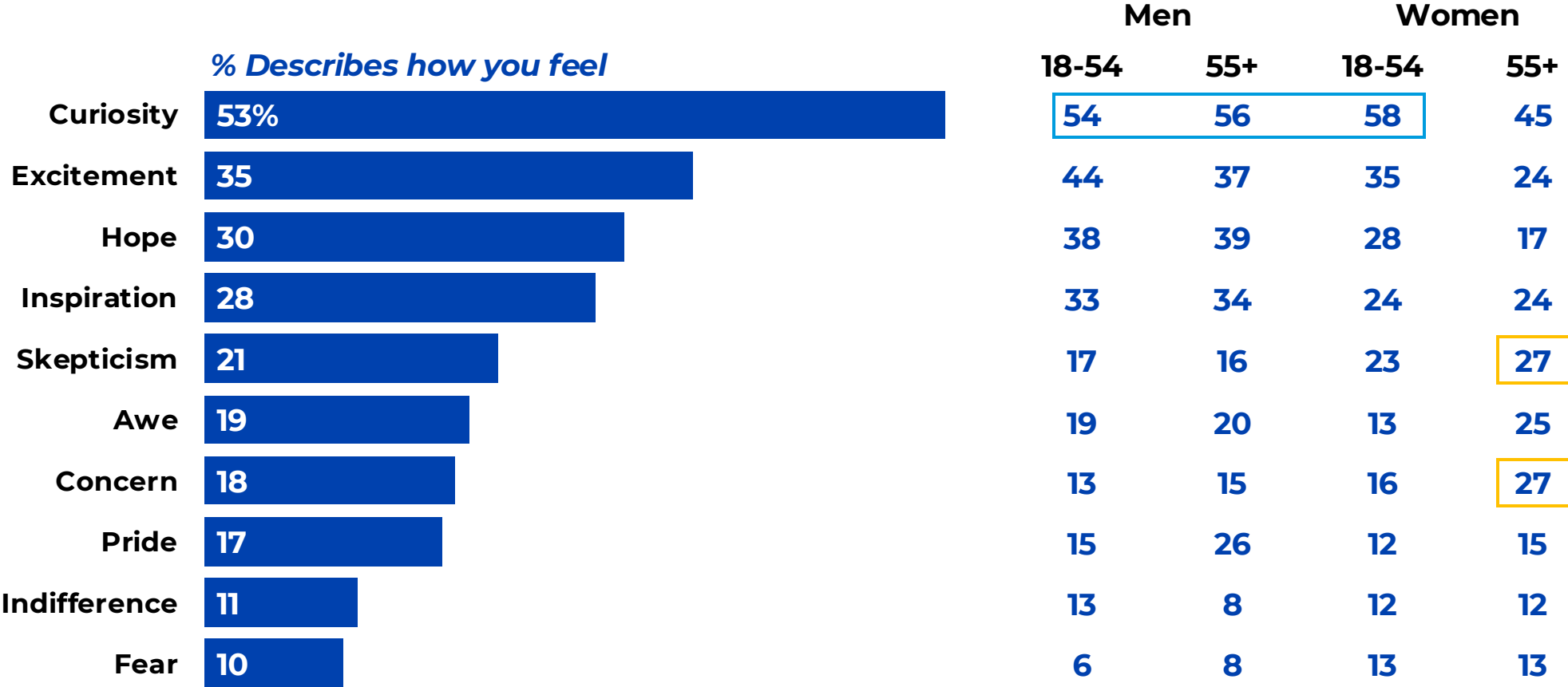
# There is broad interest in space exploration — older women being the exception

Would you consider yourself to be someone who is interested in space exploration?



# Most voters tend to feel curious and excited when they think about space exploration while older women are more likely than others to feel concerned or skeptical

When you think about space exploration, which of the following best describes how you feel? Please select up to three.





# GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN SPACE

# Overview — Government's Role in Space

In a moment of intense political divisions, **this survey finds broad support for government funding of space exploration and development across party lines**. Notably, while Americans support space investment, they don't support a blank check. While few voters believe the U.S. spends too much on space programs, most are comfortable with current spending levels and are hesitant to increase funding absent a compelling reason.

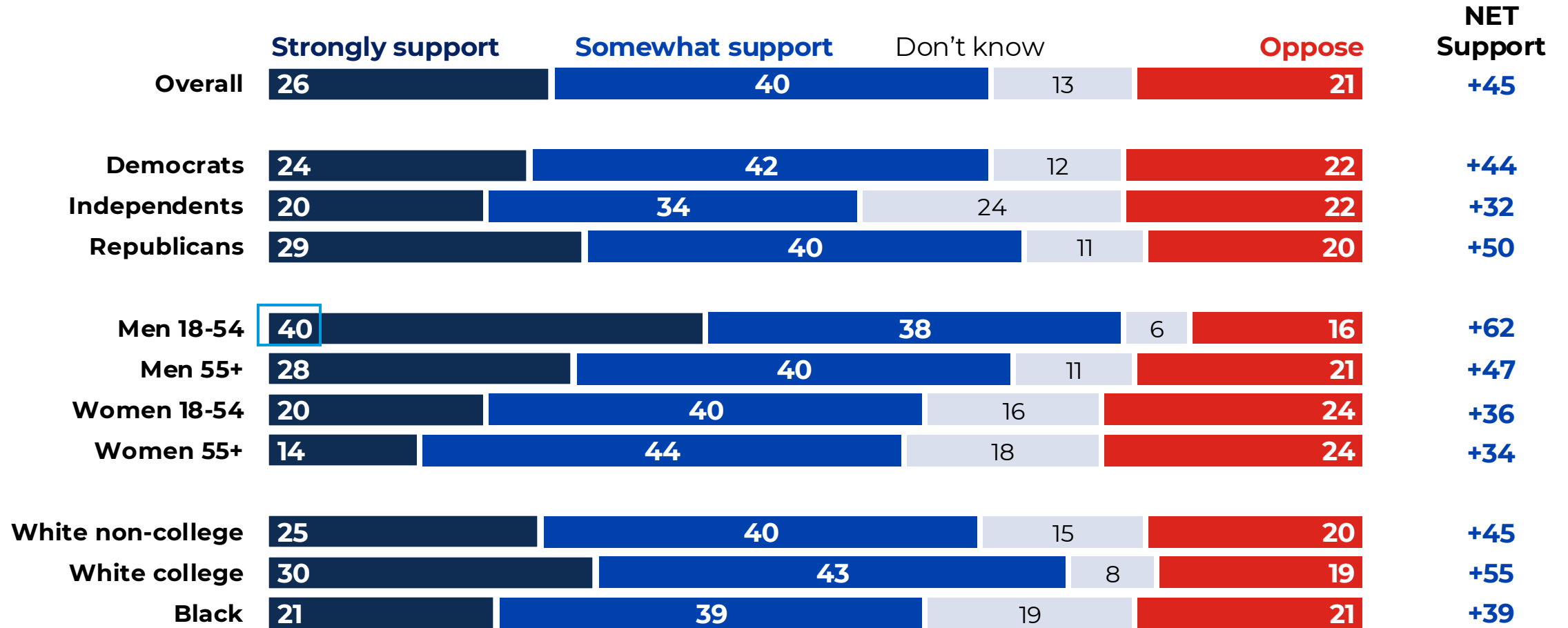
As China's space program has accelerated this century, including targeting a crewed landing by the end of the decade, it is clear that **Americans will make winning the next space race a real priority** — by a wide margin, voters say that it is important for America to remain on the cutting edge of space exploration, *even if it means spending more money*.

The public prefers a partnership model for the future of space. Rather than choosing between NASA and private industry, **voters favor an equal partnership between government and commercial companies, reflecting confidence in both sectors playing complementary roles**.

**Americans want innovation, but with guardrails**. Faced with a choice between faster private-sector development and slower government-led development with stronger oversight, voters lean toward caution. The public broadly supports progress in space, but not at the expense of accountability and safety.

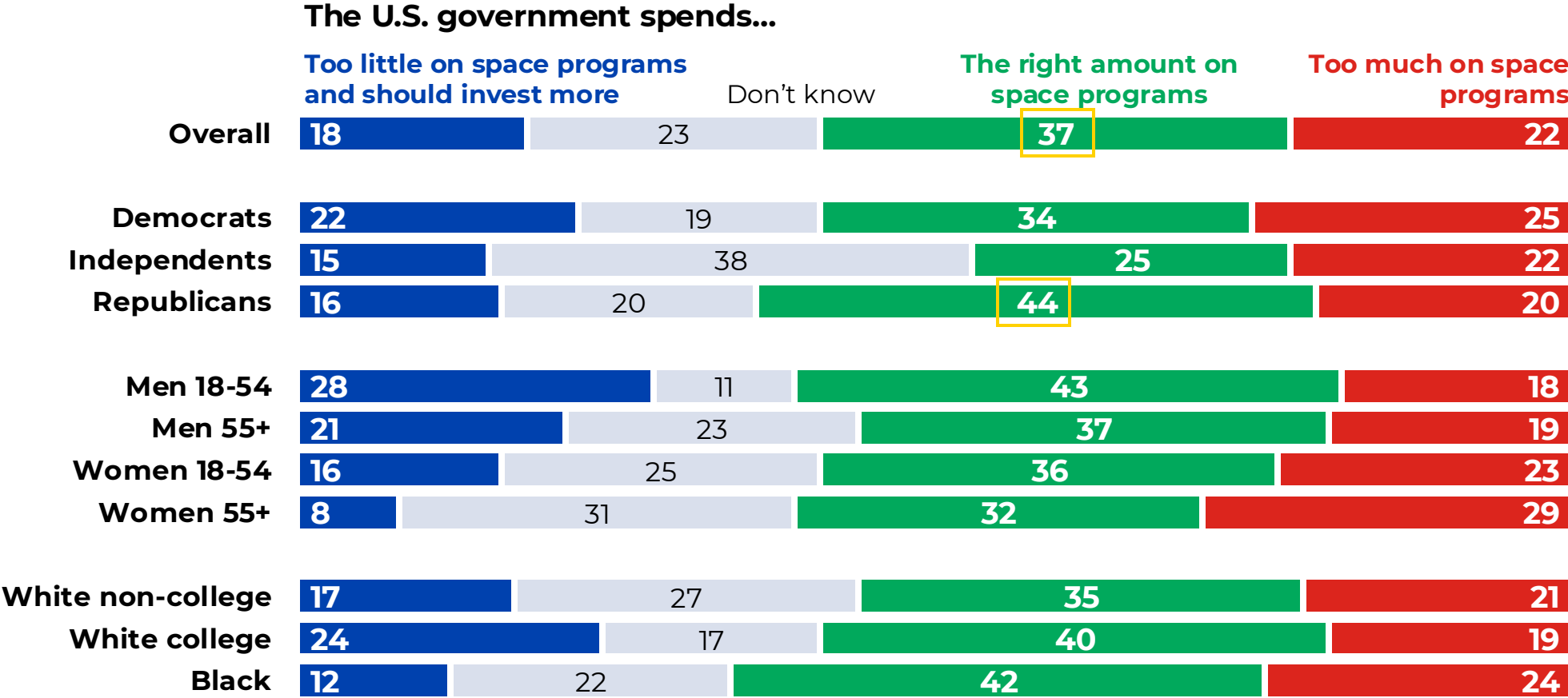
# Across party lines, voters support government funding for space exploration by a wide margin (even older women)

Generally speaking, do you support or oppose government funding for space exploration and development?



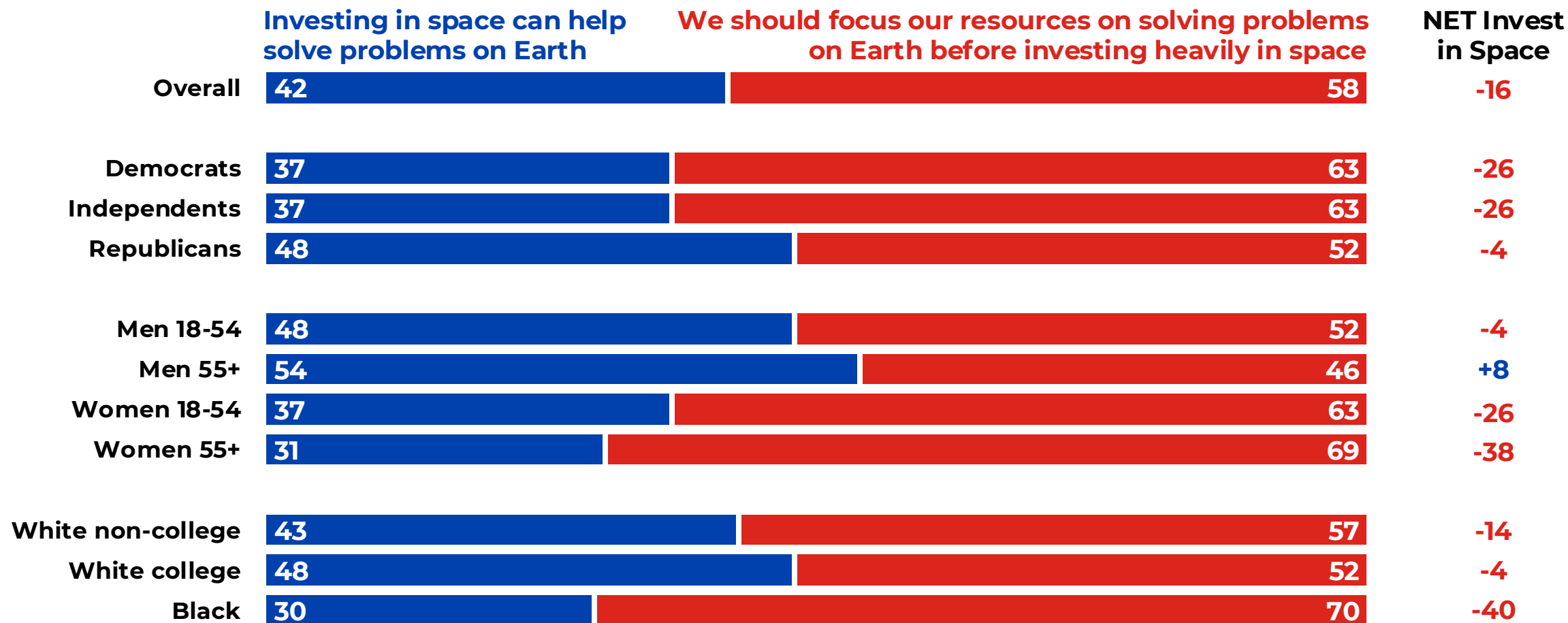
# Few believe the U.S. spends too much on space programs, but at the same time, there is not a big appetite for increased funding

Which comes closest to your view, even if none are exactly right?



# While voters support government funding for space exploration, they would still want to prioritize programs on Earth first

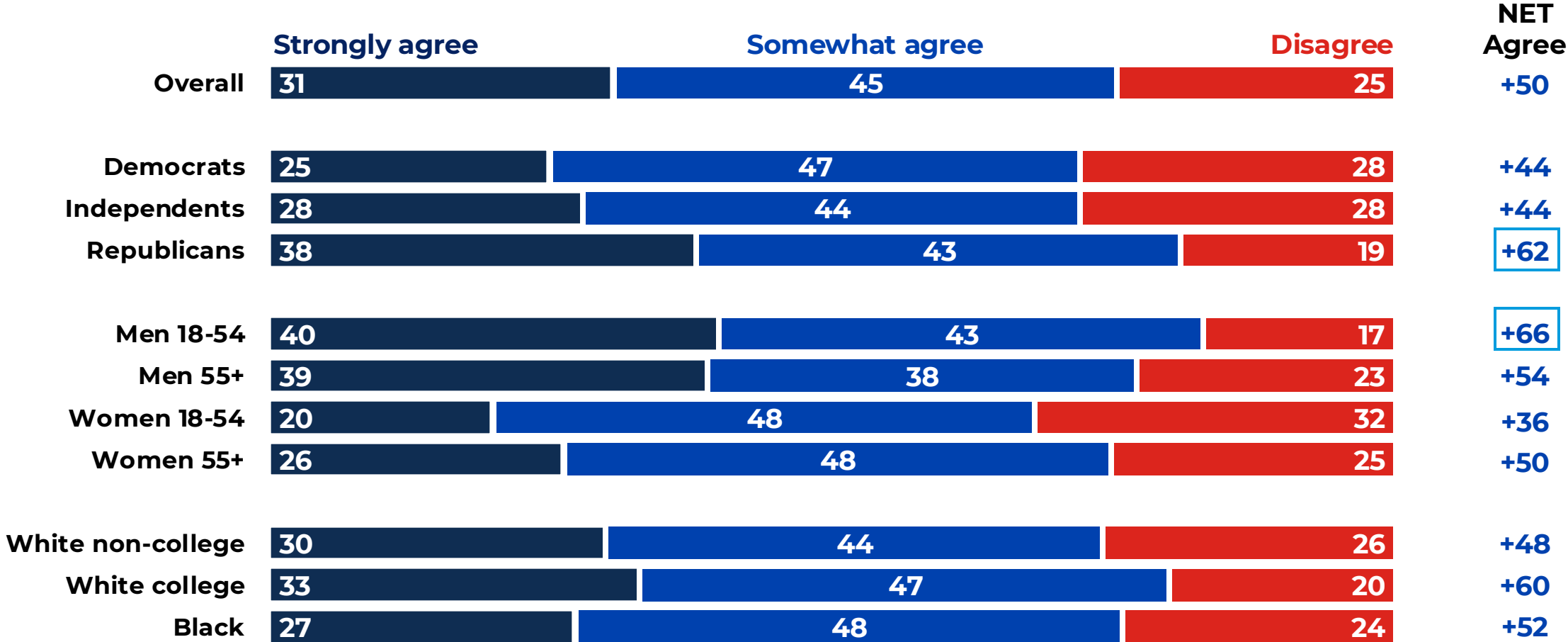
Which of the following statements do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right?



# But Democrats and Republicans agree: Winning the space race is important and, in this case, are willing to increase spending to do so

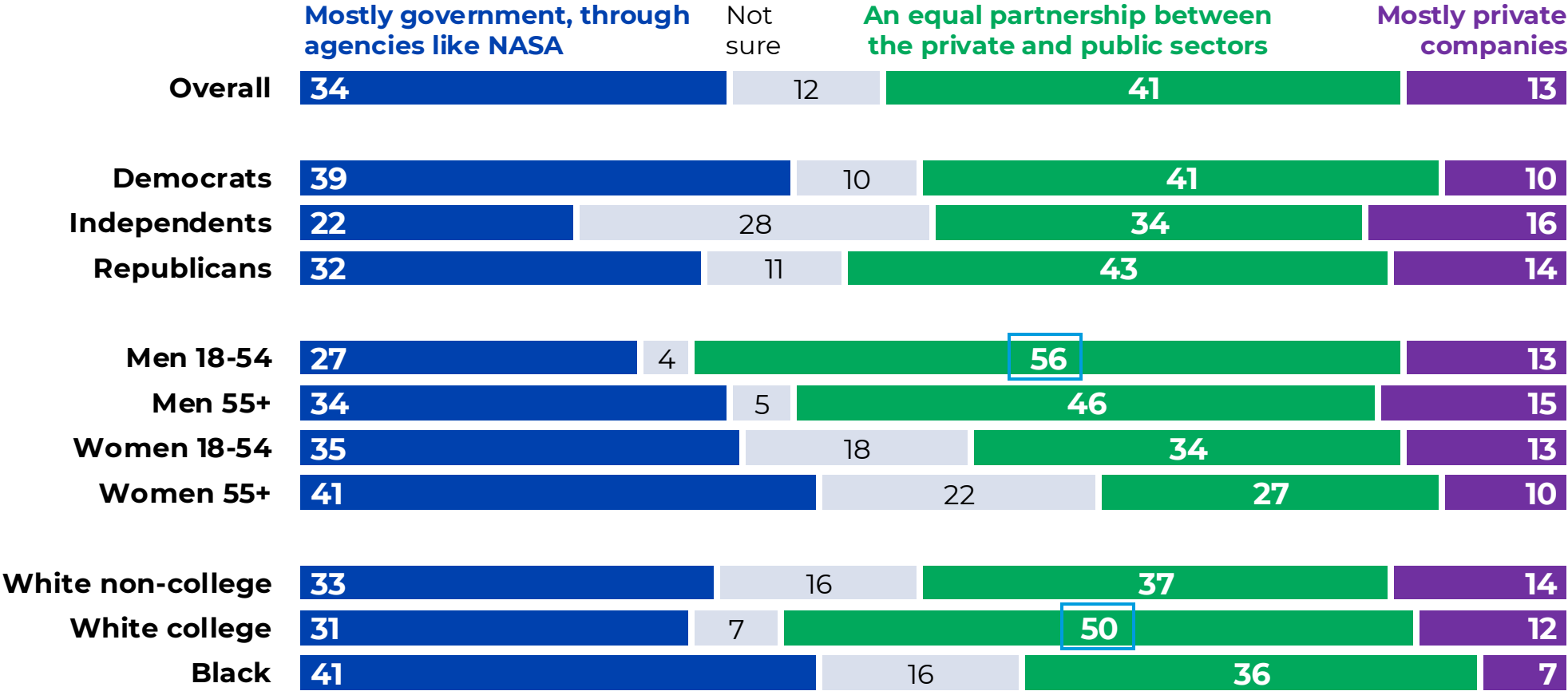
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

**It is important that the United States remains on the cutting edge of space exploration, and we cannot allow other countries like China or Russia to surpass us, even if that means spending more money on the space economy.**



# When it comes to leading space exploration and development, voters want both government and the private sector to work together in partnership

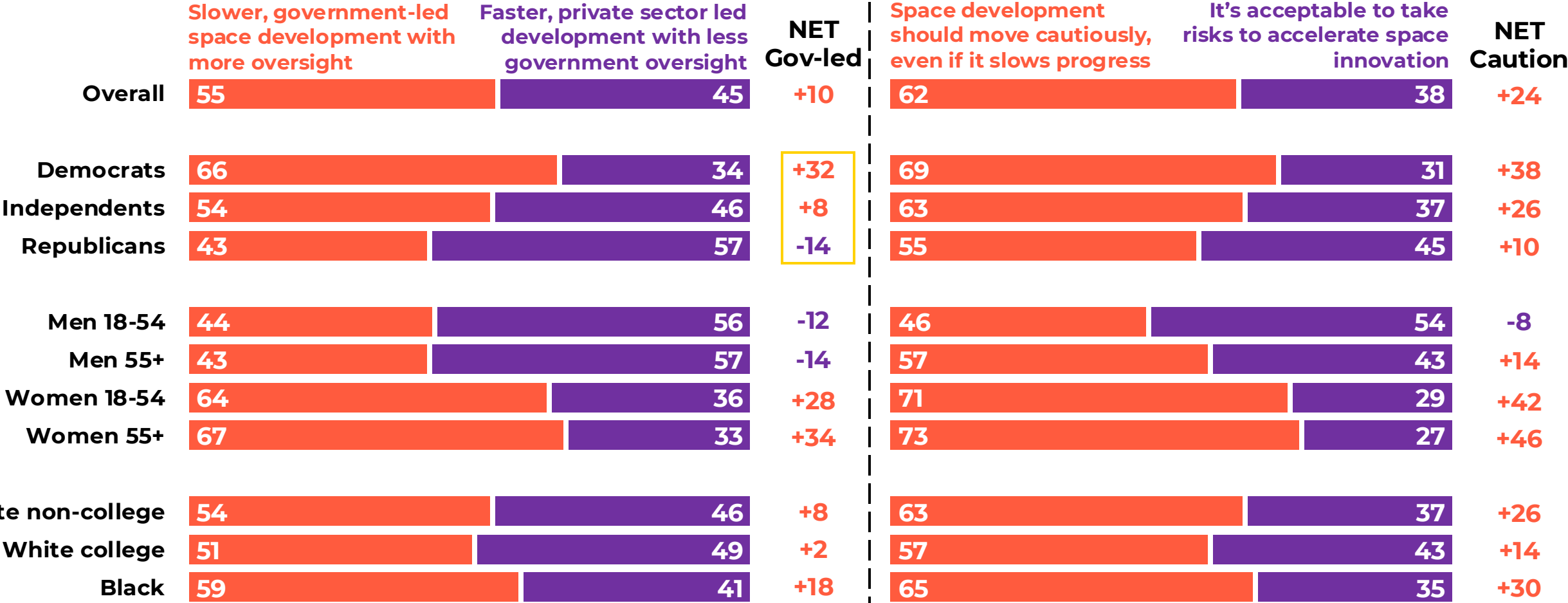
In your opinion, who should play the leading role in space exploration and development?



# Voters err on the side of caution when it comes to government oversight — even if it means things move at a slower pace

Which of the following approaches would you prefer, if you had to choose?

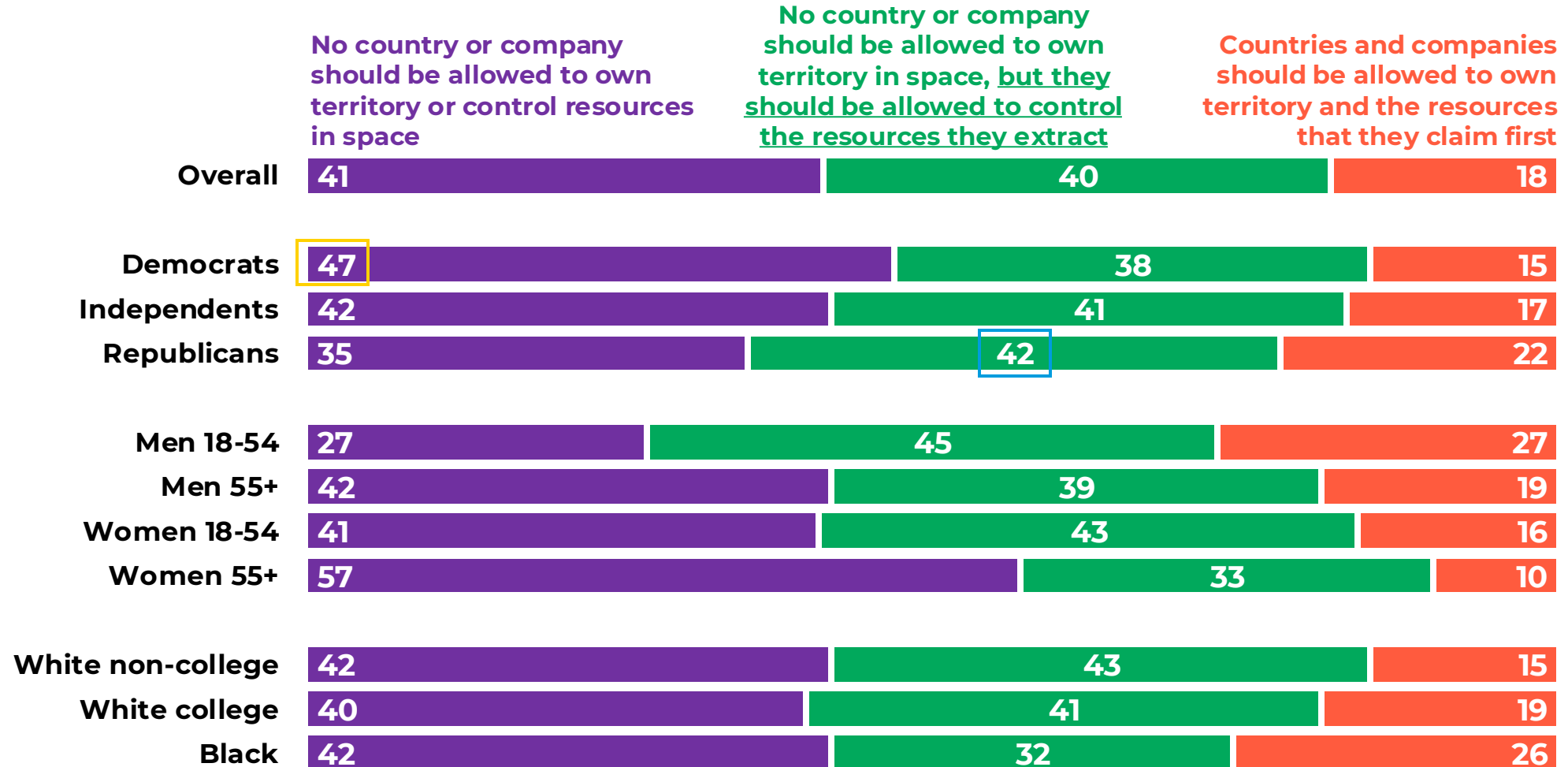
Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



Attitudes on space and the space economy are largely consistent across partisanship; however, Democrats and Republicans differ in their preference for private-public mix and Republicans are more open to risk taking

# Most agree that countries and companies should not be able to own territory in space, but there is disagreement over whether they should be able to control resources they extract

Which of the following comes closest to your opinion, even if none are exactly right?





# THE SPACE ECONOMY

# Overview — The Space Economy

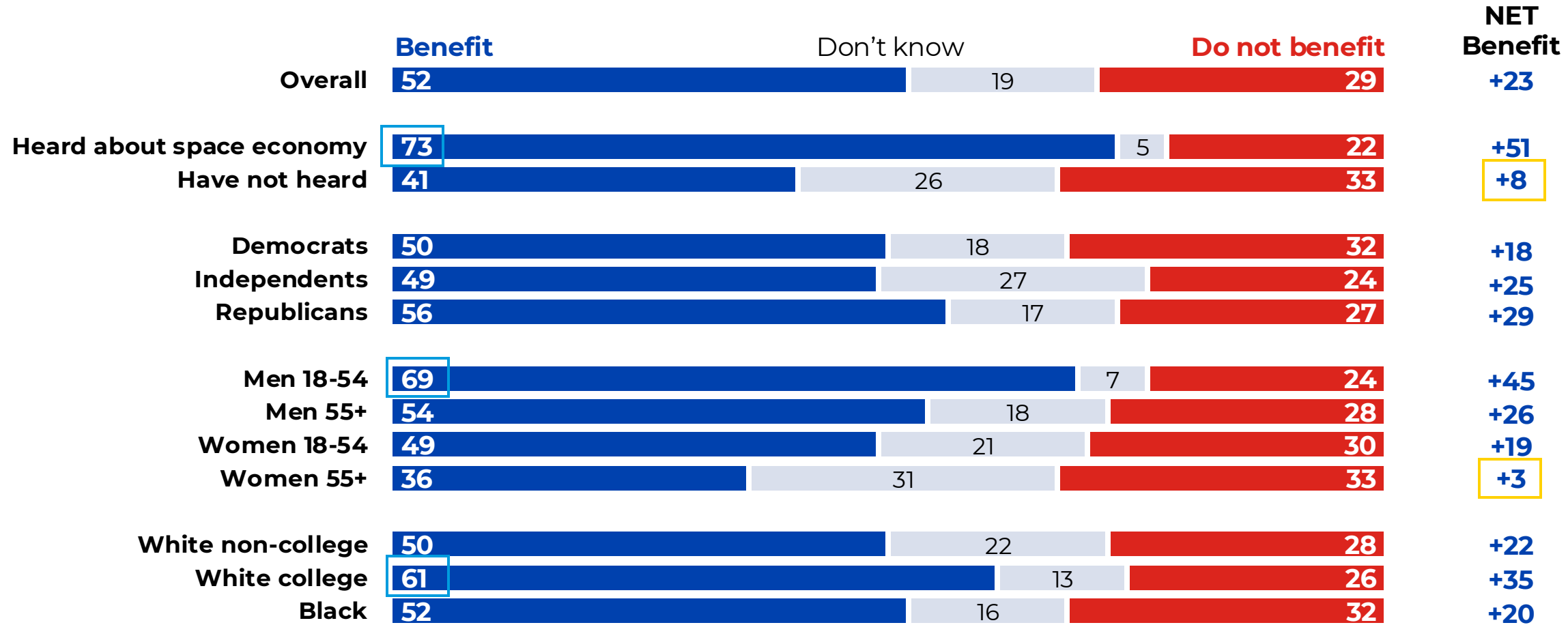
**Awareness matters: people who are familiar with the space economy are much more likely to believe they personally benefit** from space-enabled technologies like GPS, communications, and weather forecasting. And once all voters are introduced to the space economy with a simple definition, **Americans say that a growing space economy would be a positive thing**, with more than a quarter of voters saying it would be very positive.

**The strongest perceived benefits of the space economy are practical ones.** Americans place the greatest value on economic growth, job creation, national security, and scientific advancement, while expanding humanity's presence beyond Earth ranks as a lower priority. **At the same time, voters have meaningful concerns about the downsides of a growing space economy such as costs to taxpayers, safety risks, militarization of space, environmental impacts, and a lack of regulation**, particularly among Democrats and women.

Overall, the public sees the space economy as a promising source of economic and national security benefits, but support is strongest when growth is paired with oversight, accountability, and clear public value.

# About half the electorate says they benefit from technologies pioneered by the space industry. Notably, the more you hear about the space industry the more likely you are to believe you personally benefit

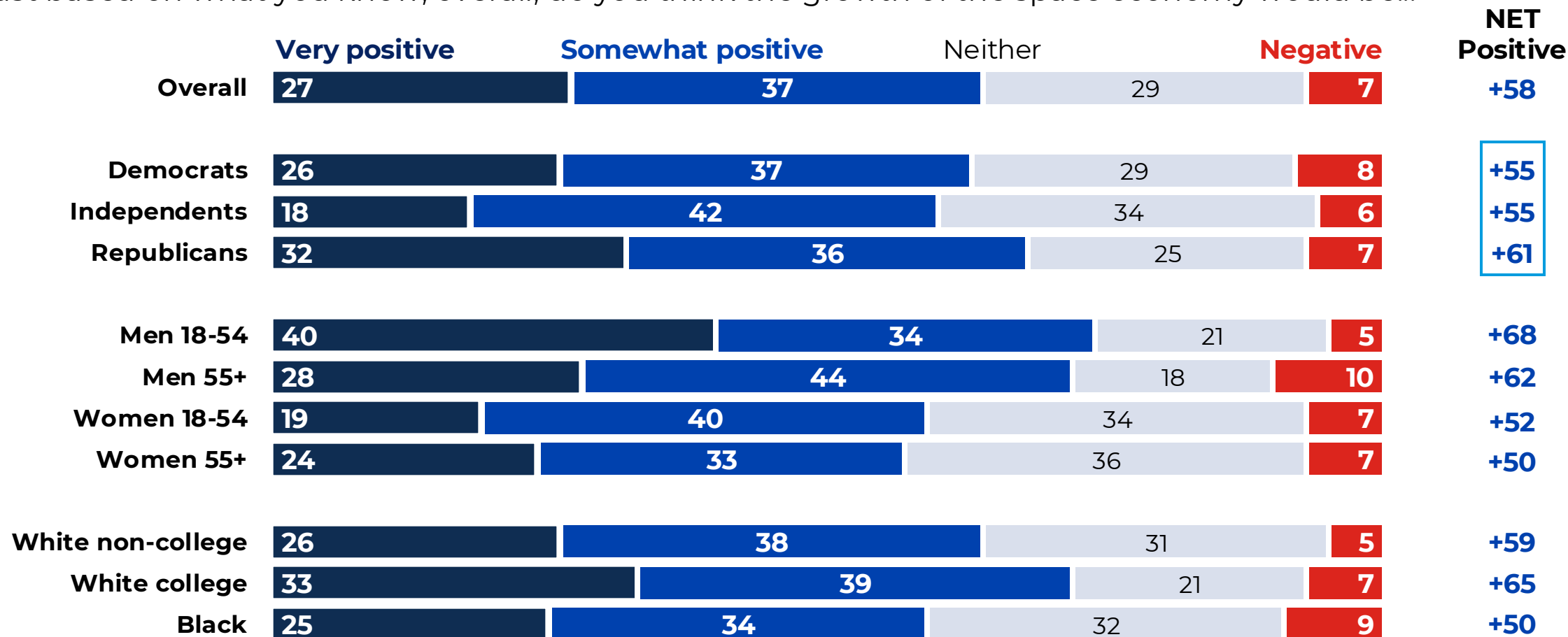
Generally speaking, how much do you think you benefit from technologies pioneered by the space industry?



# After an explanation of what the space economy actually includes, most see the growth of the space economy as a good thing

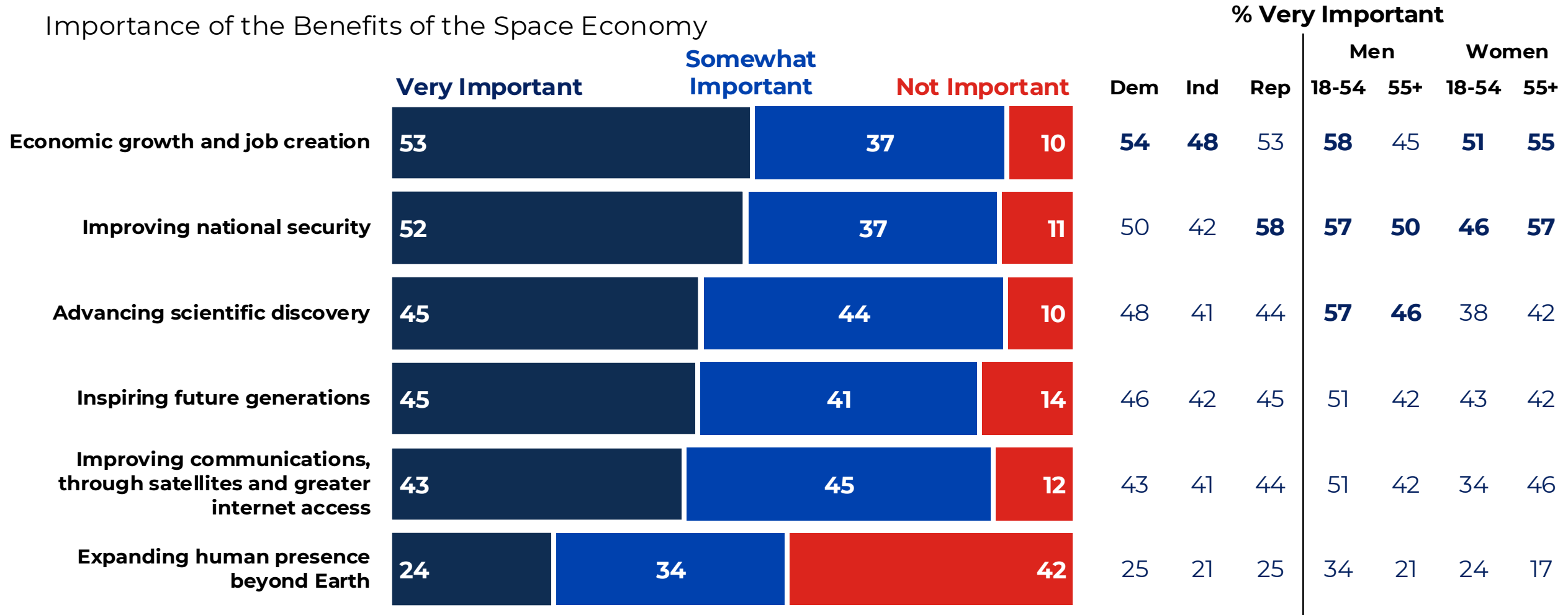
The space economy means all the work and services connected to space, including things like building and launching rockets, using satellites, studying space, and everyday services that depend on space technology, like GPS and weather forecasting.

Just based on what you know, overall, do you think the growth of the space economy would be...



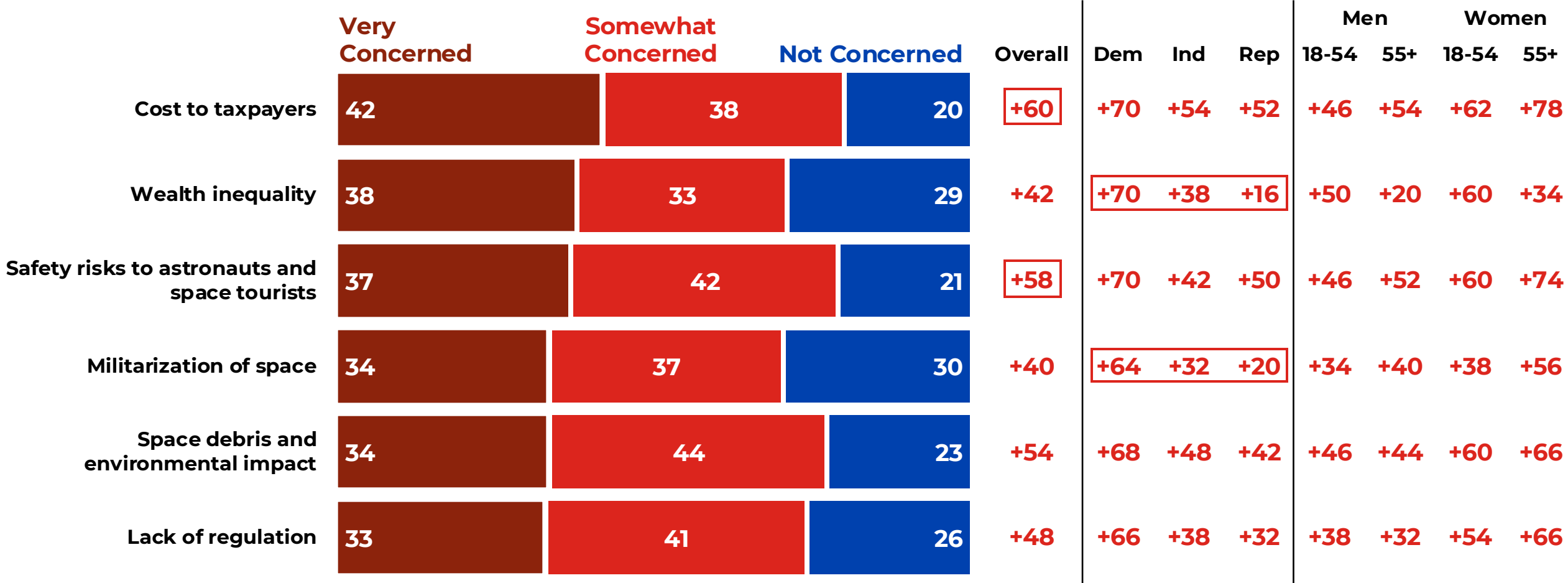
# Most agree the benefits of the space economy, like job creation and national security are important; voters are less interested in expanding human presence beyond Earth

Importance of the Benefits of the Space Economy



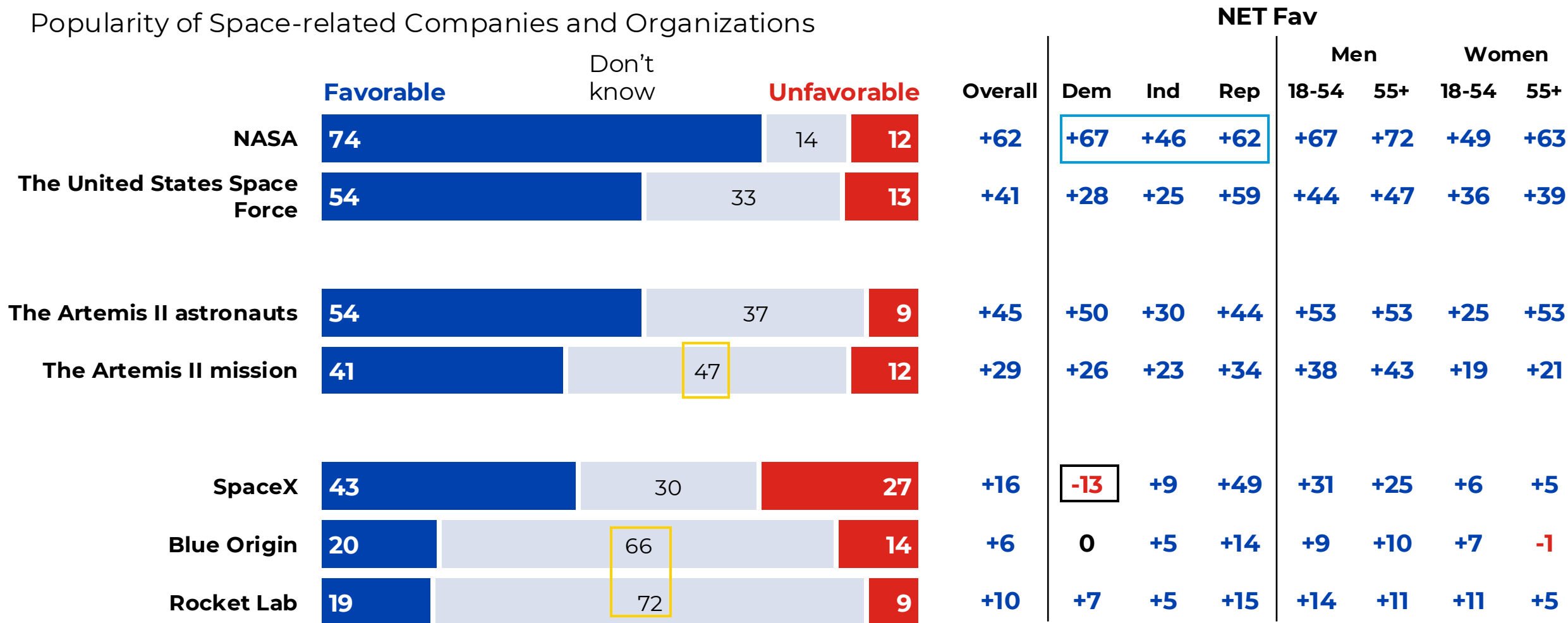
# While voters recognize the many benefits of the space economy, they also have concerns; notably, this where we begin to see some partisan differences

Concerns about Potential Drawbacks to the Space Economy



# While Democrats and Republicans agree about a lot of things when it comes to space, they are divided when it comes to SpaceX

Popularity of Space-related Companies and Organizations

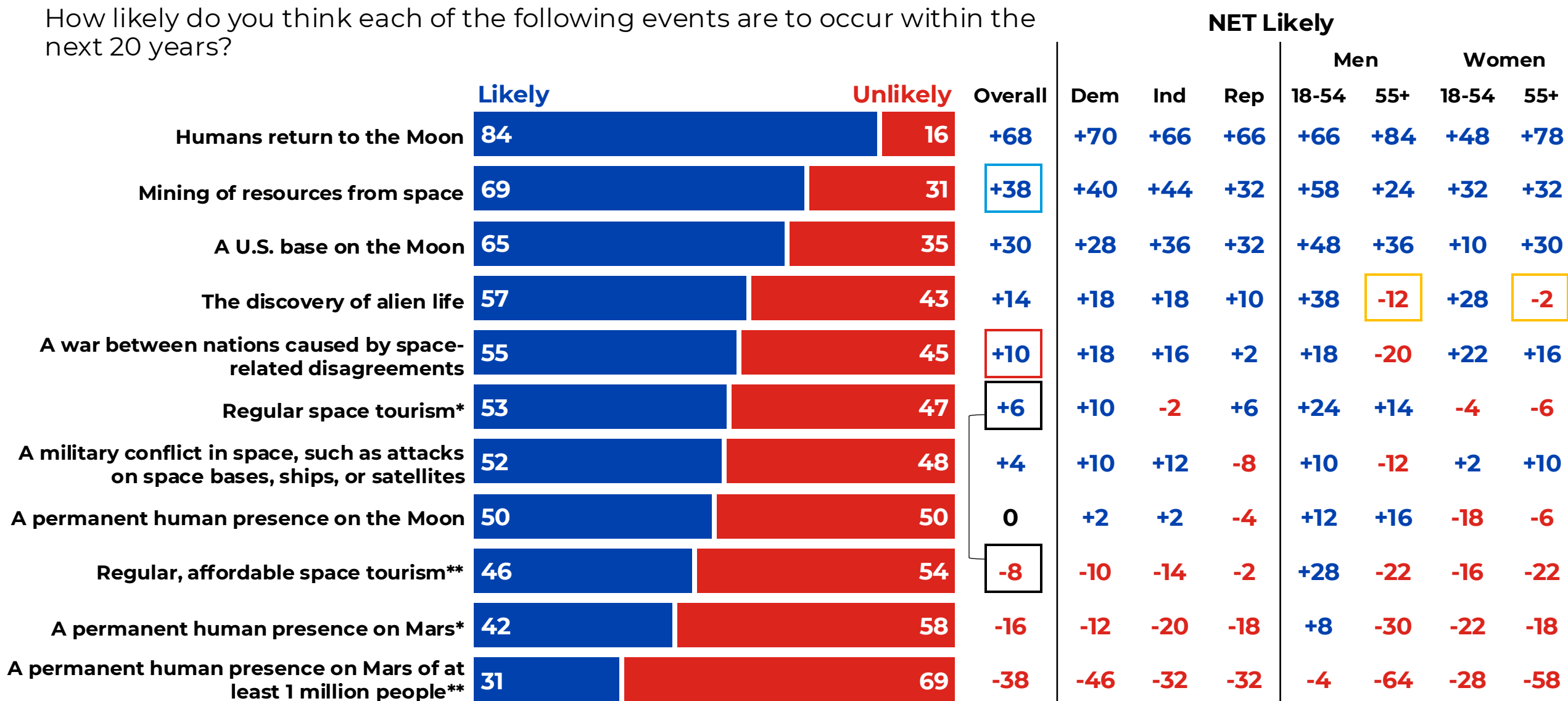




# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

# Voters see significant progress in space development within the next 20 years; but they also see space as a potential flashpoint for conflict

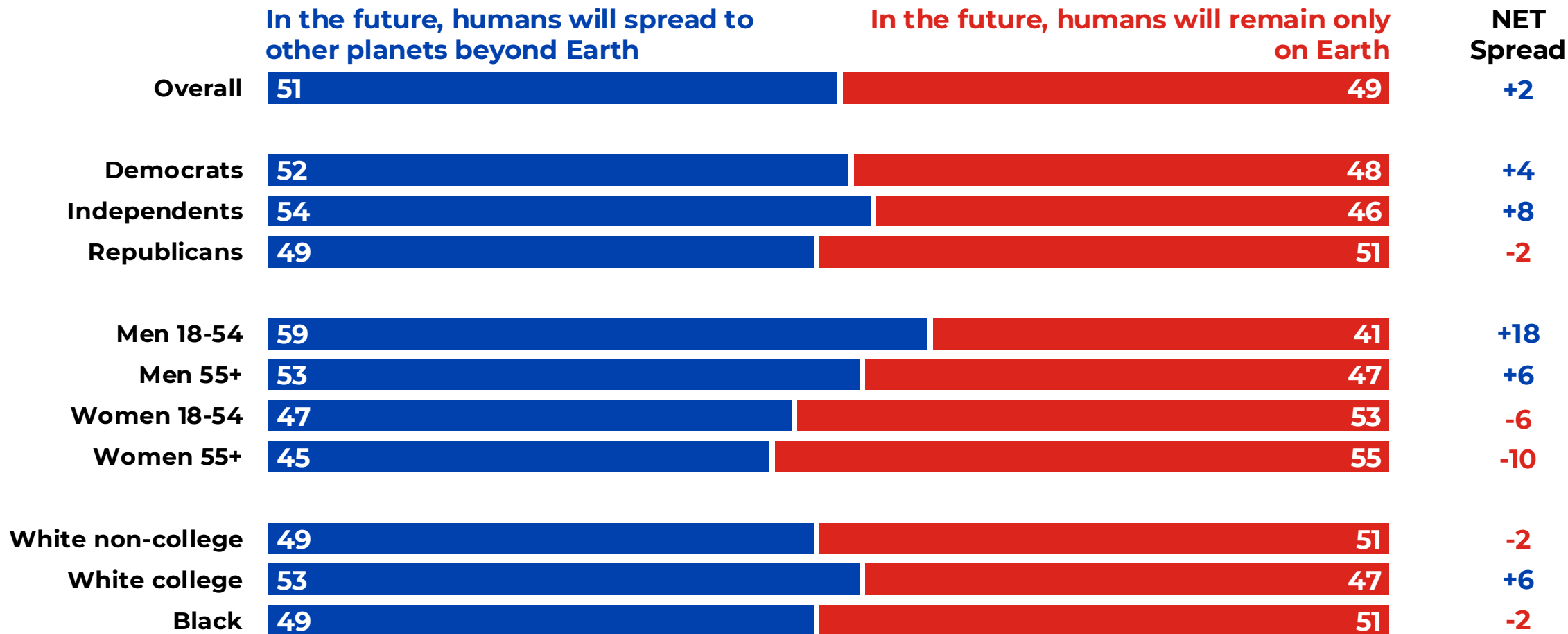
How likely do you think each of the following events are to occur within the next 20 years?



\*\* Indicates split sample

# Americans are split on whether humanity will ever be multiplanetary

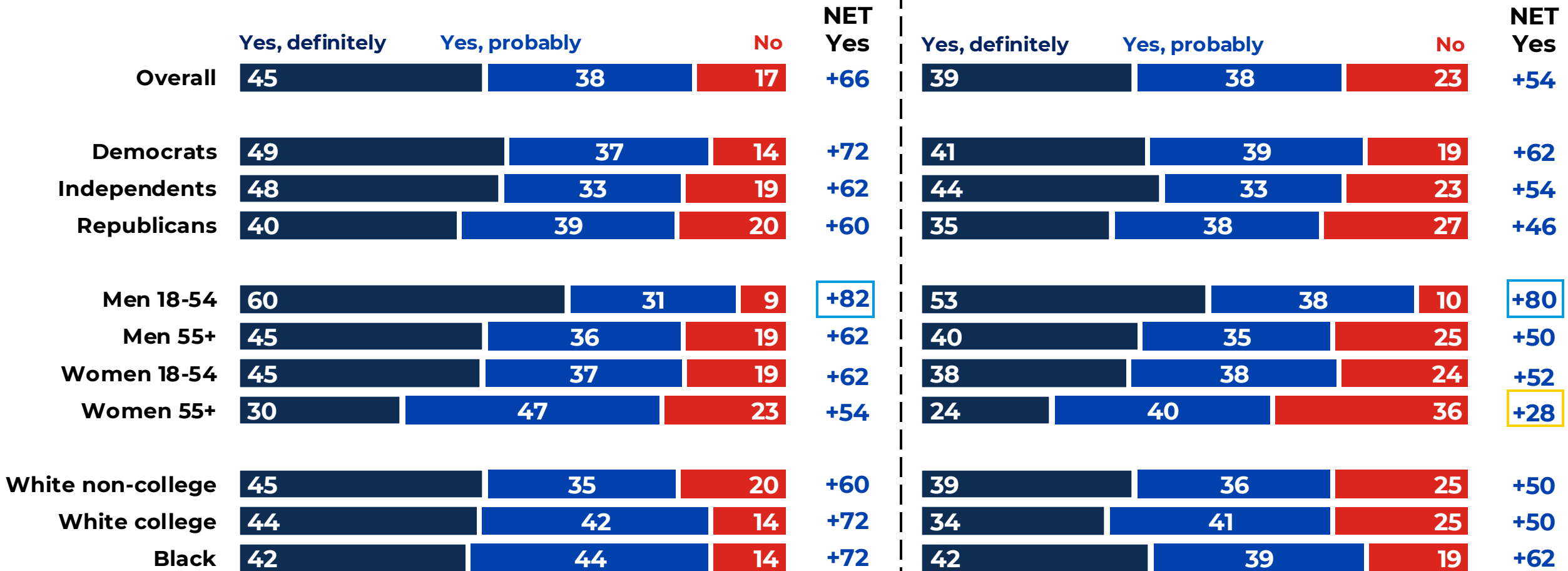
Which of the following statements do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right?



# There's widespread belief that life — intelligent or otherwise — exists in the universe, particularly from young men. Older women relatively more skeptical

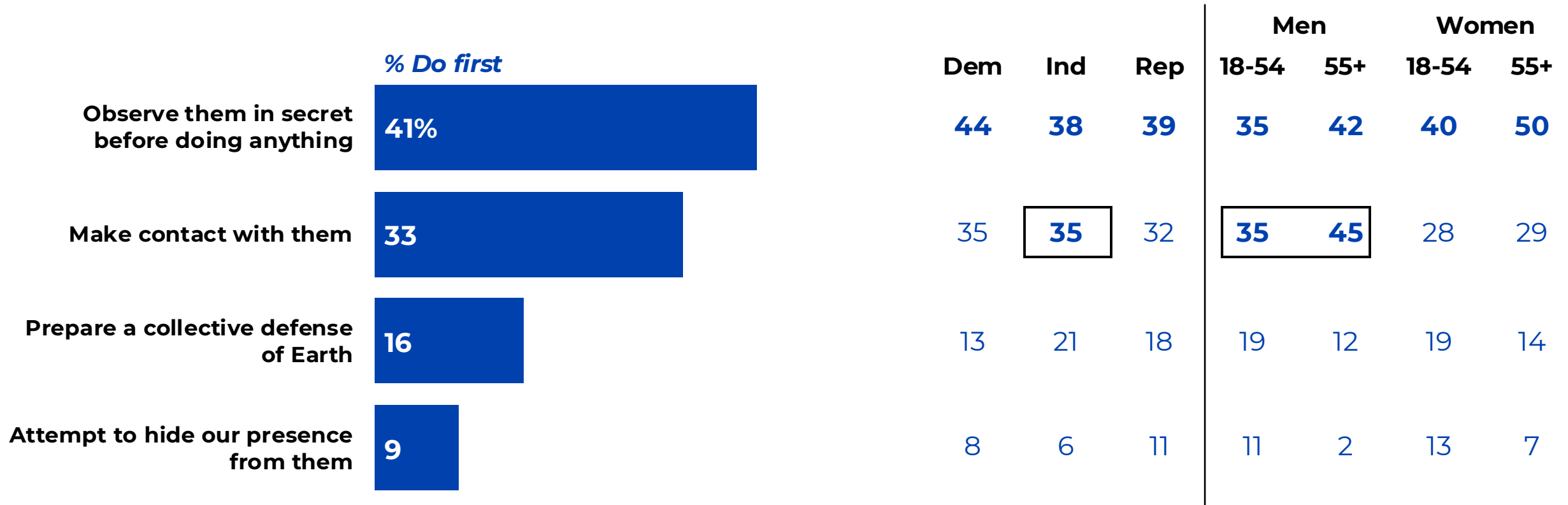
Do you believe that there is life elsewhere in the universe, including things like plants or single-cell organisms?

Do you believe that there is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe?



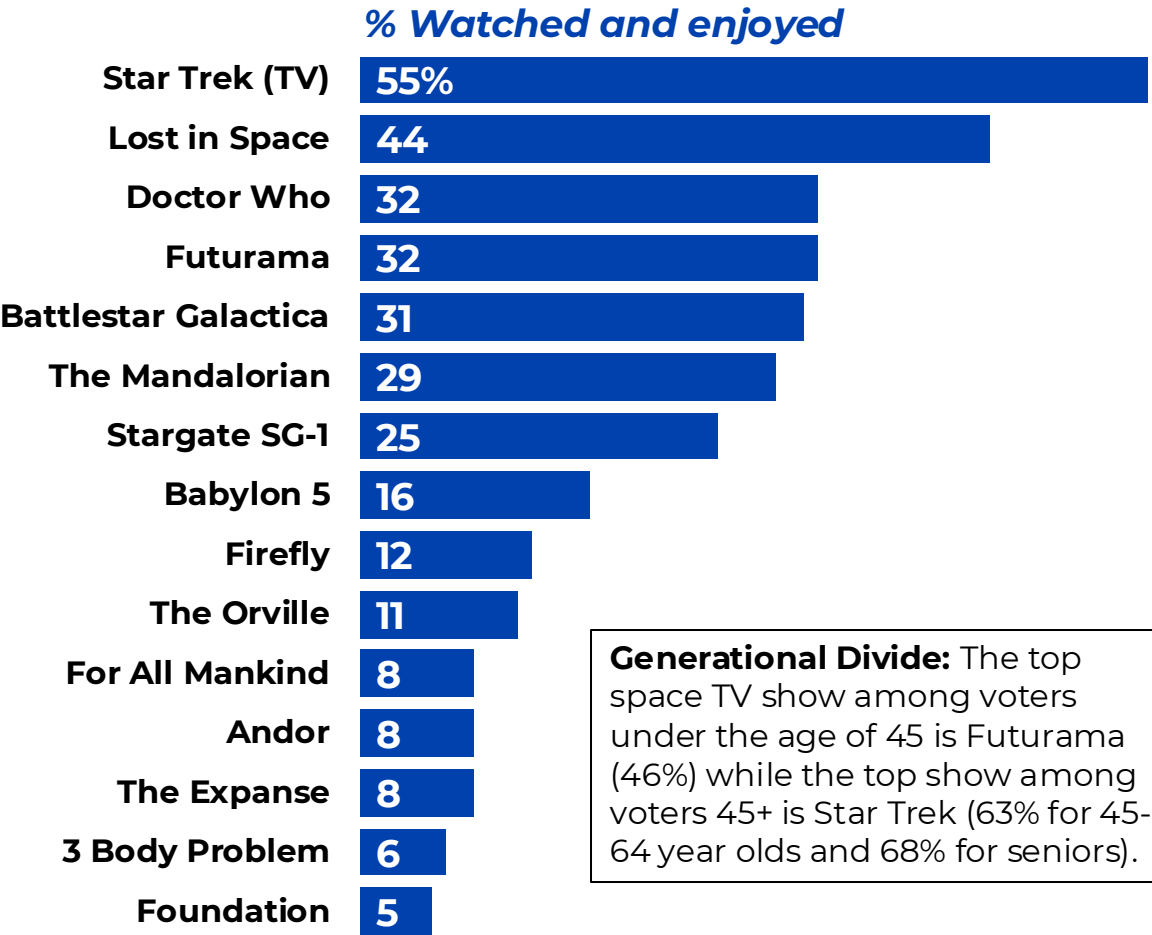
# In the scenario we discover evidence of intelligent life there is a clear gender gap: women would like us to observe first while men are split between observing and making contact

If humanity discovered evidence of an alien civilization or intelligent life, what do you think we should do first?



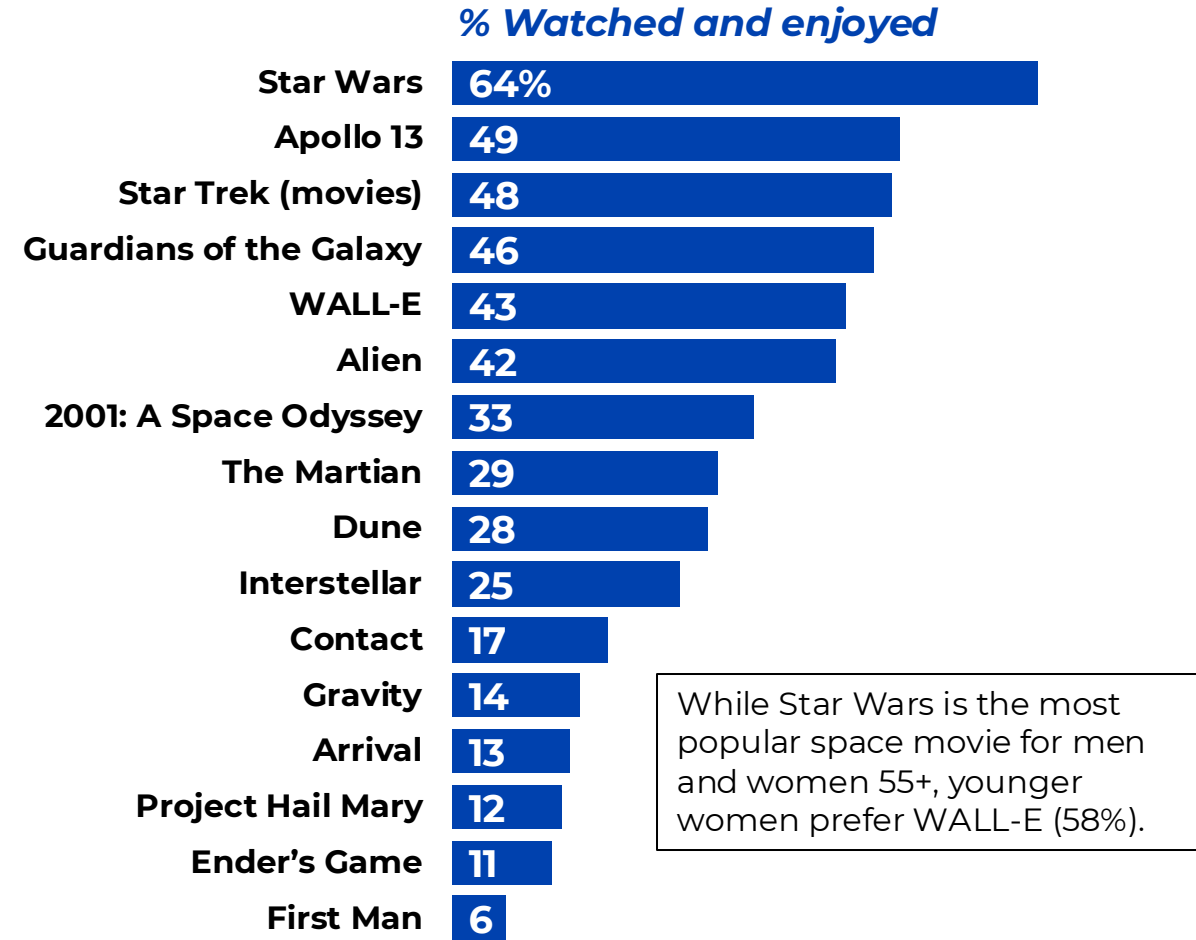
# Majorities of Americans have watched and enjoyed Star Trek and Star Wars

Please check all of the space-themed TV shows that you have watched and enjoyed.



**Generational Divide:** The top space TV show among voters under the age of 45 is Futurama (46%) while the top show among voters 45+ is Star Trek (63% for 45-64 year olds and 68% for seniors).

Please check all of the space-themed movies that you have watched and enjoyed.



While Star Wars is the most popular space movie for men and women 55+, younger women prefer WALL-E (58%).



# KEY FINDINGS

# Key Findings

1

**While partisanship may drive views on most things these days, attitudes toward space exploration, the role of government, and funding are one of the few exceptions.**

Both Democrats and Republicans agree: space is exciting, the space economy is promising, and the American government should continue to play a role. Notably, variations in attitude are more likely to be driven by generation and gender differences with older women least likely to be interested in space and most likely to be cautious about the future.

2

**Americans want a public-private partnership model, but with meaningful government oversight.**

The preferred model for space development is an equal partnership between government and industry rather than dominance by either sector. At the same time, voters generally favor stronger oversight and a more cautious approach to development, even if it slows progress. This is one of the few areas where partisan differences emerge, with Republicans more comfortable with private-sector leadership and risk-taking.

3

**Competition and security concerns are powerful motivators.**

While voters do not strongly advocate increasing general space spending, they overwhelmingly agree that the United States must remain competitive against countries such as China and Russia, even if maintaining leadership requires additional investment. Looking ahead, Americans expect major advances in space activity over the next 20 years, but many also anticipate geopolitical tensions and even conflict extending into space.

4

**One consistent tension throughout this research is that voters are broadly pro-space, pro-NASA, and optimistic about the space economy, but they consistently evaluate space through a practical lens.**

Economic benefits, national security, oversight, and real-world applications matter more than exploration for exploration's sake.

# Methodology

## VOTERS

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of **1,000 voters nationwide** between May 27 and May 31, 2026.

## CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

The confidence interval at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.1%.

The confidence interval on sub-samples is greater.

## REPORT AUTHOR



### **Melissa Bell, PhD**

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HEAD OF GSG'S MIDWEST OFFICE

Melissa is a seasoned researcher with over a decade of experience using both quantitative and qualitative research to help political, non-profit, and corporate clients meet their goals.

Melissa has provided research and strategic advice for countless congressional races for the DCCC, House Majority PAC and EMILYs List. Most recently, Melissa was awarded the Gold Pollie by the American Association of Political Consultants for her work on behalf the successful 2025 Save Maine Absentee Voting Campaign.



**THANK YOU**

**GSG**  
POLITICAL