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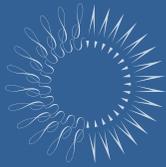


## The Invisible Center

As political polarization grows, is anyone still in the middle?

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Winter 2015 | Vol. 17, No. 1



# TIME CAPSULE

*A History of Trusting the People*



Two sons and two daughters of **Joseph Newton Pew Sr.** and **Mary Anderson Pew** created a foundation in 1948 to honor the memory of their parents and affirm the values they held dear. That foundation—dedicated to improving public policy, informing the public, and invigorating civic life—evolved to become The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The founders of the Trusts understood that history evolves and that the challenges their posterity faced would be far different from the ones they and their contemporaries were working to solve. For this reason, the founders did not want the Trusts to be an entity frozen in time—a monument to how, during their lifetimes, they changed America for the better. The Trusts would not be for one era; it would be for every era. It would not claim credit for itself; it would give voice to the people. But that meant creating an organization and mission as adaptable, creative, and entrepreneurial as the country they and their parents loved—with the ability to rethink conventional wisdom and reimagine the future.

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Cover Photograph by Darren Hauck/Getty Images

# Voices From the Middle



*"As freedom is our most precious national asset, I am convinced that apathy—indifference—is our greatest national sin."*—J. Howard Pew, 1953

Fostering a robust democracy has been part of The Pew Charitable Trusts' mission from the beginning. One of the latest ways we have fulfilled this goal is with the Pew Research Center's look at who is participating in the political process, how these voters make their voices heard, and what their effect is on America's priorities and civic discourse. The rigorous 78-page report, *Political Polarization in the American Public: How Increasing Ideological Uniformity and Partisan Antipathy Affect Politics, Compromise and Everyday Life*, documents some troubling trends. Thirty percent of adults, for example, believe that supporters of the opposing party's policies are "so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being."

This polarization has a real impact on the choices we make as a country. The report found that the loudest voices in policy debates are at either end of the political spectrum—and that those voters are the most likely to turn out on Election Day, debate politics on social media, contribute to campaigns, write their legislators and members of Congress, and try to push policy in one direction or another.

But another important finding of the report is that roughly two-thirds of Americans are open to compromise and consensus-building. These voices from the middle are not indifferent to the challenges that confront our nation, but many are turned off by the partisanship, gridlock, and rancor that too often characterize modern politics. They want unbiased and fact-based information—the kind that Pew seeks to provide—and they believe that the two sides of the political divide should find common ground and focus on the ties that bind us together as a nation. You can read more about Pew's report on polarization in the cover story of this issue of *Trust*.

There are inspiring examples throughout American history in which people of goodwill have found ways to forge agreement and change the nation for the better—even when the political divide appeared unbridgeable. In 1920, for example, women were still denied the right to vote. The opponents of women's suffrage were vocal and powerful, and passage of the 19th Amendment took years of hard work, becoming the law of the land only when Tennessee ratified the amendment by one vote. It was cast by Harry T. Burn, who was 24 years old and in 1918 had become the youngest person elected to the Legislature in state history. He planned to oppose suffrage until he received a letter from his mother, who wrote: "I noticed some of the speeches against. They were bitter. I have been watching to see how you stood, but have not noticed anything yet."

The 19th Amendment was an important step toward making our nation a more perfect union. But there was much more work to do. That's why decades later, Rosa Parks—another voice from the middle with deeply held convictions—helped to launch the modern civil rights movement by defying segregation. Like Burn's mother, she proved that one person lifting her voice and standing by her convictions can strengthen our democracy and foster change that benefits all Americans.

Throughout our history, Pew has sought out these collaborators: the men and women who pull disparate voices together to make our democracy stronger. In 2014, our partners in progress sometimes came from government but often were the small-business owners, parents, and motivated advocates who work to encourage change in the public interest.

For example, Pew worked with “supermoms” such as Everly Macario, who lost a son to a drug-resistant infection, to help win new guidelines for the use of antibiotics to maintain their effectiveness. We joined with outdoorsmen, conservationists, and local merchants who live and work near some of our nation’s most special places to create seven new wilderness areas under the Wilderness Act. We collaborated with federal regulators and the financial industry to protect consumers by designing clear and simple disclosure documents for prepaid cards. And we joined fishermen, environmentalists, indigenous populations, and federal policymakers to ensure that Alaska’s Bristol Bay remains pristine. Details about these accomplishments, and other highlights of the past year, can be found in “Looking Back: The Milestones of 2014.”

All of my colleagues at Pew thank our partners and are grateful to have contributed to the collective good with these successes. But we’re not focused on our rearview mirror. In “Looking Forward and Making Connections,” you can read about our agenda for 2015, one that brings people together and centers on improving government performance, protecting the environment, supporting American families, informing the public, and invigorating civic life in our hometown of Philadelphia.

At Pew we strive to never be indifferent; we seek to make a meaningful difference. We must continue to focus on our shared challenges and opportunities while learning from one another and remaining open to differences in opinion and approach. When we all work together, we can make the kind of progress we could never achieve alone.



Rebecca W. Rimel, *President and CEO*

# Trust

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## THE BIG PICTURE

**“How the funding formula  
...issues are resolved in  
Pennsylvania will go a long  
way toward determining  
how the School District of  
Philadelphia...fares in the  
years ahead.”**

— From the Pew report: *A School Funding  
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## Catholicism on the Wane In Latin America

*The Pew Research Center documents a steep decline in the faith as more people turn to evangelical Protestant churches.*

BY ARTHUR ALLEN

On first glance, Catholicism remains dominant in Latin America. The region is home to 425 million Catholics, nearly 40 percent of the world's total, and two years ago produced its first pontiff, Pope Francis—the former Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina.

Yet identification with Catholicism has been in decline in Latin America for more than four decades, and a major Pew Research Center study released in November shows that the retrenchment of the Catholic faith has advanced even faster than many experts had believed.

Historical data show that for much of the 20th century, at least 90 percent of Latin America was Catholic, a supremacy that began to ebb in the 1970s.

Pew's in-depth survey, based on more than 30,000 interviews in 18 countries and Puerto Rico, shows that today only 69 percent of Latin American adults identify as Catholic. The interviews were conducted from October 2013 to February 2014 and 19 percent of respondents are evangelical Protestant, while another 8 percent are not part of any organized religion.

The trend to Protestantism is well known to observers of the region, but many were startled by the size and pace of it. Most of the shift to Protestantism occurred in a single generation, notes Neha Sahgal, a Pew senior researcher and expert on religious polling who was one of the leaders of the study.

For example, in Brazil, the world's largest Catholic country, 81 percent of people say they were raised Catholic, but 61 percent are Catholic today, according to the report.

The Pew survey indicates that for the most part, Catholics converted in search of a more personal connection with God, because they sensed a greater emphasis on morality in Protestantism, and because of help—money, food, services—from their new church.

They also preferred the more vocal, passionate style of worship. In every country Pew surveyed, half or more of Latin American Protestants are members of Pentecostal churches or identify with Pentecostal beliefs, which focus on the role of the Holy Spirit and encourage intense religious experiences. Prayer in these churches bears little resemblance to Protestant denominations with their roots in northern Europe, such as the Episcopal and Lutheran churches.

"Speaking in tongues, raising hands and clapping, and singing in church—you don't see these things in a traditional Catholic church," says Sahgal.

That sense of engagement—in church but also in activities outside worship time—explains a lot of why people have left Catholicism for the new churches, Sahgal says. "Protestants are more likely to talk about God and share their faith with others," she says. "The differences in commitment are huge."

The emphasis on the Holy Spirit has also made inroads among Latin American Catholics. In most countries, at least a third of Catholics identify as charismatics. The Catholic charismatic renewal movement began in the United States in the late 1960s. While faded among Anglo-Americans by the 1980s, the movement became very popular among U.S. Hispanics and in Latin America, notes Andrew Chesnut, who holds the Bishop Walter F. Sullivan Chair in Catholic Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and was a consultant on the study.

***"Protestants in Latin America are more socially conservative than Catholics."***

"In some profound ways, Pentecostalism is more Latin American now than Catholicism is after five centuries," Chesnut says. "The worship style of Pentecostalism is more in sync with Latin American culture. And 90 percent of Pentecostal clergy are Latin Americans, while in a lot of countries the majority of (Catholic) priests are foreigners who don't necessarily speak Spanish or Portuguese fluently."

People in Latin America who moved to new cities or towns in recent decades were more likely to convert from Catholicism, because evangelical churches have



**Worshippers attend an evangelical service in Brazil, where more than half of those raised Catholic are now Protestant. For much of the 20th century, 9 in 10 of Latin Americans were Catholic, a number that began to ebb in the 1970s. Evaristo Sa/AFP/Getty Images**

done better connecting with the poor and rootless, says Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado, a professor of religious studies at the University of Miami.

Protestants in Latin America are more socially conservative than Catholics, opposing gay marriage and abortion, for example, at much higher rates, and are more skeptical of the theory of evolution, the Pew study finds. Latin American Protestants are also more likely than Catholics to say that the best way for Christians to help the poor is to point them to Christ, rather than offering them charity or government aid.

That said, the survey found some surprising results when it comes to the actual activities of the two religious groups. Across all the countries surveyed, a much greater share of Protestants than Catholics engaged in charity work such as helping people find jobs and providing food and clothing.

While the Catholic Church has become a vocal critic of the injustices it blames on capitalism,

Pentecostal churches have shown “an attentiveness to daily life that we haven’t seen in the Catholic Church in recent decades,” says Gonzalez Maldonado.

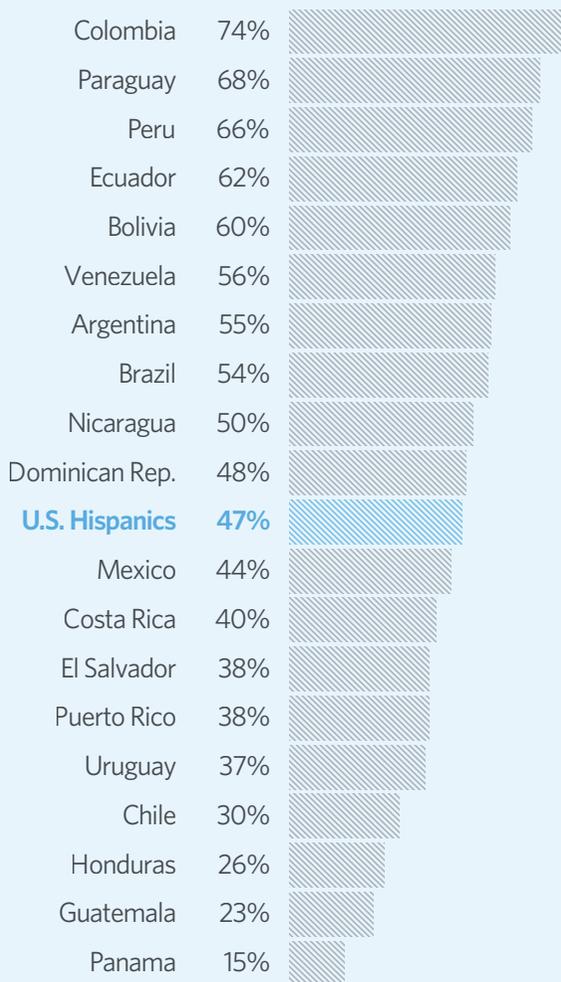
Evangelicals are more conservative politically but also create small, tight-knit communities where people find a home in the urban landscape. There is a doctrinal condemnation of smoking, drinking, and gambling that has enriched family life. “Church is not just where you go on Sunday for an hour,” Gonzalez Maldonado says. “You’re there numerous nights a week, with a strong sense of community.”

Another strong trend revealed in the study is the increase in adults unaffiliated with any religion. While Protestantism increased from roughly 4 percent in 1970 to 19 percent today, the percentage of unaffiliated went from 1 to 8 percent over that period.

The growth of atheists and those unaffiliated with a religion is particularly notable in Uruguay, which has a 153-year tradition of separation of church from

## Catholic to Protestant

Percentage of current Protestants who say they were raised Catholic



Source: Pew Research Center, 2014

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Many of the major patterns revealed by the survey mirror trends found among U.S. Hispanics, according to a 2013 Pew Research Center poll. The U.S. Hispanic population (now approximately 54.1 million people) is larger than the total population of all but two Latin American countries—Brazil (195 million) and Mexico (113 million). Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of Hispanic adults in the United States were raised Catholic but have since left the faith. Just 2 percent of U.S. Hispanics have converted to Catholicism after being raised in another religious tradition or with no affiliation—a net drop of 22 percentage points.

state and is the great religious outlier in the region. Less than half (42 percent) of Uruguayans consider themselves Catholic; 15 percent are Protestants, with more than a third of the nation—37 percent—unaffiliated with any church, making Uruguay the most secular Latin American country.

While the political significance of the trend toward Protestantism remains to be seen, Sahgal says, the Pew poll shows that especially in countries such as Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, and Chile, social views now correlate strongly with the brand of faith.

“In the United States, we find that religious identification has a strong influence on people’s political preferences,” Sahgal says. “Now that may be becoming true in Latin America.”

*Arthur Allen is a Washington writer who covered Latin America for the Associated Press in the early 1980s.*

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## Stagnating Wages and Little Savings Leave Families Vulnerable

BY DANIEL LeDUC

The national economy is recovering from the Great Recession, but according to *The Precarious State of Family Balance Sheets*, a report from The Pew Charitable Trusts released in January, many U.S. families have little short-term savings while wages have barely budged.

“Many families have little if any cushion to absorb an unexpected financial setback,” says Erin Currier, who directs Pew’s financial security and mobility project. “It’s a very risky state for people, threatening not only their financial security but also their chance to move up the economic ladder.”

The report drew on data from the Congressional Budget Office, the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, the University of Michigan’s Panel Study of Income Dynamics, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Expenditure Survey, and the Federal Reserve Board’s Survey of Consumer Finances.

The statistics paint a disquieting picture showing that although income and earnings have increased over the past 30 years, they changed little in the first decade of the century. The report finds that the

typical worker's wages grew 22 percent from 1979 to 1999 but just 2 percent from 1999 to 2009, the year the economic downturn ended in the United States.

Over those three decades, substantial fluctuations in family incomes became the new normal. In any two-year period, almost half of the nation's households experienced an income gain or drop of more than 25 percent. That rate of volatility has been fairly constant since 1979.

The study finds that the Great Recession has had a lasting effect by eroding two decades of consumption growth, pushing spending back to 1990 levels—with a net increase in average household spending of just 2 percent since 1990.

More than half of American households—55 percent—can replace less than one month of their income through liquid savings. And even pooling all financial resources—including retirement accounts and investments—the typical middle-income household can replace only about four months of income in the event of a calamity.

Most families, the analysis finds, face financial strain across all the pieces of their household balance sheets: income, savings, and debt. Seventy percent of households face challenges in at least one of these areas, with many confronting two or even all three.

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## A 'Saint of the Seas' Comes to Pew

BY PENELOPE PURDY

World-renowned fisheries biologist Daniel Pauly joined *Washington Post* journalist Juliet Eilperin for a conversation about the challenges facing the world's oceans during a December event held at Pew's Washington office, before an audience of more than 100 scientists and fisheries experts.

The evening, which marked the 15th anniversary of Sea Around Us, a research collaboration between Pew and the University of British Columbia, began with Pew's President and CEO Rebecca W. Rimel introducing Pauly as a "saint of the seas." His research on how fishing affects the world's oceans has drawn international attention from regulators and governments concerned about overfishing. He developed the groundbreaking concept of "shifting



**Biologist Daniel Pauly, the world's most widely cited fisheries scientist, says overfishing's effects are most visible in the developing world. *Martin Dee/UBC***

baselines," noting that as the populations of larger fish decline, people accept that drop as a "new normal" and start overfishing species lower down the food web. And he is considered the world's most widely quoted fisheries scientist, having been cited more than 46,000 times.

The effects of overfishing aren't visible in industrialized countries, Pauly told the experts gathered at Pew, because consumers see their local grocery stores teeming with all sorts of seafood. "But in developing nations, it is really in your face," Pauly said. He recalled researching in Indonesia in the 1970s and seeing small fishing boats return from a day on the water having caught less than 5 pounds of fish. His current research on small-scale fishing includes a new global catch estimate that he says will confirm that far more fishing is occurring than estimates show.

Pauly stressed that reliable data are essential for policymakers who make difficult decisions about oceans. And, he added, he worries that gaps often exist between scientists who don't make their research easily understood and policymakers who are able to take action. Good fisheries management, Pauly said, "could buy time and make the [fish] stocks more resilient."



# WHO VOTERS ARE—AND WHAT THEY WANT

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While political partisanship  
hardens, the majority of voters  
want compromise.

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By Peter Perl



New York magazine called the report “the best deep dive into U.S. political opinion anywhere.” *National Journal* declared there is “no better study of a fast-changing electorate.” And the popular website Vox.com praised it for precisely documenting the “single most important fact about American politics.” Within just a week, 200 stories about the report hit major media, picked up by more than 350 websites. Since the report was published, over 1.7 million visitors have found it or follow-up studies online, and more than 1 million people have taken an interactive quiz about their political beliefs.

Few political surveys have landed in the public square with more resonance than the Pew Research Center’s 78-page report, *Political Polarization in the American Public: How Increasing Ideological Uniformity and Partisan Antipathy Affect Politics, Compromise and Everyday Life*. The study, released last June and based on a telephone survey of 10,013 adults, is by far the largest political polling project Pew has ever undertaken, and its sample size—roughly 10 times that of most media polls—allowed for a description of political polarization that many political analysts said was far more detailed, nuanced, and potentially valuable than anything preceding it. (See *Trust*, Summer 2014.)

It found that Republicans and Democrats are more ideologically divided, and that political antipathy runs more deeply, than at any point in the past two decades, presenting profound challenges for the nation.

That comprehensive view of the electorate is only one way in which Pew is pursuing one of its central missions—the furthering and strengthening of American democracy.

The Pew Charitable Trusts also has made a substantial investment in improving the basic tools and functioning of the nation’s voting system, promoting efficient, cost-effective, and data-driven solutions that ultimately can achieve greater participation in the electoral process. Pew’s election initiatives have helped states modernize voter registration through use of new technology to make rolls more accurate and to more easily provide election information to the public.

Central to all those efforts has been Pew’s commitment to independent research and nonpartisanship.

## DEEP DIVISIONS

Pew’s goal in undertaking the massive polarization study was to “bring real facts and data to the table about the phenomena that are affecting people’s lives and affecting decision-making,” says Michael Dimock, president of the Pew Research Center. “Holding a mirror up to society” may help the public decide whether polarization is a serious enough problem to require individual and/or collective actions, he says. (See Page 40.)

Partisan gridlock has become a dominant and discouraging theme in U.S. politics, but the Pew study dramatically illustrates that it is far broader and deeper than just a battle of politicians on the Harry Reid-vs.-Mitch McConnell level. Rather, the report paints a picture of a fragmented landscape of increasingly rigid “ideological silos” that permeate nearly all facets of life—including where people choose to live and whom they choose for friends. Political differences now generate such intense animosity that 27 percent of Democrats and 36 percent of Republicans see the opposing political party’s policies as “so misguided that they threaten the nation’s well-being.”

Pew’s work—which has tracked changes in opinion since 1994—shows that the United States has moved “beyond polarization to a kind of tribalism” that threatens the underpinnings of democracy, says Norman Ornstein, a prominent political scientist at the American Enterprise Institute, who called Pew’s study “the best of its kind” and “an urgent warning that the majority of Americans must not surrender the political stage to extremists.”

On the other hand, a major finding of the report, according to Dimock and Carroll Doherty, the center’s director of political research, is that despite the intensifying polarization, the majority of the U.S. population—about 54 percent—is “not ideological in its thinking” and remains open to compromise and consensus building.

The potential danger of this scenario, says Ornstein, is that increasing partisan conflict among rabid minorities on the right and left may suppress participation of the moderate majority. The most hopeful outcome: The majority becomes so disgusted with rigid partisanship on the extremes that it becomes much more politically engaged, he says.



Pew's work to improve the voting process dates to the 2000 presidential election, when officials were reduced to examining ballots by hand and the voting process itself was widely questioned. Rhona Wise/AFP/Getty Images

As part of the basic study—supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and Don C. and Jeane M. Bertsch—Pew also published *Beyond Red vs. Blue: The Political Typology*. The typology, the Pew Research Center's sixth since 1987, breaks the survey's respondents into eight attitudinal cohorts, ranging from "Steadfast Conservatives" and "Solid Liberals" to "Hard-Pressed Skeptics" and "Bystanders." These refinements allow for highly detailed assessments that capture the nuances and contradictions within a complex electorate whose attitudes should not be oversimplified by the labels "liberal" or "conservative." Because of the large sample size of the polarization survey, Pew was able to recruit more than 4,000 respondents from the initial telephone survey of 10,013 for an ongoing "trends panel" to determine, via detailed online questionnaires, how their political opinions evolve as the 2016 election approaches—and beyond.

## MODERNIZING VOTING

Beyond such respected studies of voters, Pew also has focused on the nuts-and-bolts administration of elections. This work dates to the landmark 2000 Bush v. Gore case, which drew worldwide attention to potential pitfalls for democracy because the very mechanics and integrity of the voting process were widely questioned. Pew's activities evolved from initial research about problems at polling precincts to the realization that the institution might be able to directly help state and local governments redesign and operate state-of-the-art voter registration systems.

Pew's elections initiatives are headed by David Becker, a former voting rights attorney with the Justice Department. Beginning in 2009, he assembled more than 40 state and local election administrators, legislators, academics, and systems experts with the audacious goal of ending the chaos of an archaic voter-registration structure that in most states was



Voters in the last two elections, faced with an array of choices, used Pew's Voting Information Project tool more than 50 million times to find polling places and learn what was on the ballot. *Brendan Smialowski/Getty Images*

fundamentally unchanged since the 19th century—still relying on paper, pen, and postal mail. Before Pew undertook its project, most reform efforts were narrow and ideologically motivated: Liberal Democrats filed lawsuits and funded voter registration drives based on the belief that poor and minority voters were being denied access to the ballot box, while conservative Republicans pushed legislation and administrative changes in the registration and voting processes to stop allegedly widespread voter fraud. Such demands from the left and right, however, rarely lead to the kind of lasting, constructive, and systemic change that would best serve voters. After seven years handling this issue at the Department of Justice, Becker says, he learned that “if a lot of enforcement is necessary, then the system is fundamentally not working, and you can’t rely on enforcement to make it work.”

Meaningful improvement, he concluded, would come only from changing the system through new technology and practices based on solid nonpartisan research. When he first convened the 2009 working group, Becker says, he asked the members: “If we had to design a voter registration system from scratch, how many of you would design a system like we have today?” And, he adds: “Not a single hand went up. Not one.”

Millions of Americans (an estimated 1 in 8) change their addresses every year, but election officials are unable to track them because the vast updated troves of computerized records—motor vehicle registrations, death lists, and data from Social Security, the U.S. Postal Service, and other agencies—were never integrated with voter rolls. Election registrars in thousands of cities and counties have no way of cross-referencing their records with those of

neighboring jurisdictions, and none of the 50 states has any idea whether their registered voters are now living in other states. Even in the relatively rare cases in which election officials actually receive updated information, the data-entry process is done by hand. “You can only imagine the error rate,” Becker says.

States are left with a patchwork of disconnected systems that result in millions of out-of-date voter records, which can result in those voters going to the wrong polling places, waiting in unnecessarily long lines to vote, casting provisional ballots that might not get counted, or being discouraged from voting at all. Beyond the impact on American democracy, this bureaucratic morass costs governments a fortune in wasted mailings and futile staff time trying to make outdated paper systems work.

The result of Pew’s efforts and its collaboration with the states was the Electronic Registration Information Center. ERIC is a sophisticated data center that enables states to share information and better keep up with a highly mobile population. It was founded in 2012 with the participation of seven states—Colorado, Delaware, Maryland, Nevada, Utah, Virginia, and Washington—and added Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota, Oregon, and the District of Columbia in 2014. Becker says he hopes to have several more states signed up for the 2016 election, with expansion to many more states shortly thereafter.

ERIC operates as a nonprofit organization with a representative from each state serving as a member of its board of directors. Each state pays \$25,000 to join, plus about \$50,000 annually based on size—spending that will be easily offset by ERIC’s savings.

“Pew was a great facilitator: assembling this wide variety of participants, having a 30,000-foot-level overview discussion, but also getting down in the

# Two Decades of a Growing Gap

*The Pew Research Center reports that Republicans and Democrats are farther apart on the issues facing the nation than at any point in the past 20 years. Among the key findings about the increase in political polarization from 1994 to 2014:*

- The share of the public that expresses “consistently” liberal or conservative views has more than doubled, from 10 percent to 21 percent.
- Diversity within parties has shrunk dramatically. In 1994, slightly less than two-thirds of Republicans were more conservative than the median Democrat, but that segment has now grown to 92 percent. And the share of Democrats who are more liberal than the median Republican, once 70 percent, has reached 92 percent.
- Animosity has skyrocketed: Those with “very unfavorable” views of the opposition party have increased among Republicans from only 17 percent to 43 percent; among Democrats, from 16 to 38 percent. And the percentage of Americans who go so far as to see the other party as “threatening the nation’s well-being” is now 36 percent among Republicans and 27 percent among Democrats.
- Americans are increasingly living in ideological silos. Overall, 35 percent of people say that most of their close friends share their views on government and politics. But much larger segments of consistent conservatives—63 percent— and consistent liberals—49 percent—say they associate mainly with those who share their politics.
- Differences extend beyond politics to lifestyle: Roughly 75 percent of consistent conservatives want to live in communities where “houses are larger and farther apart, but schools, stores, and restaurants are several miles away.” By contrast, 77 percent of consistent liberals prefer smaller houses closer to amenities.
- Political compromise, ironically, is now a divisive issue: Consistent liberals overwhelmingly prefer leaders who compromise rather than stick to their positions, by a margin of 82 percent to 14 percent. But consistent conservatives don’t favor such leaders: Only 32 percent want those who compromise, while 63 percent want their leaders to hold firm against change.
- The political center has shrunk: In 1994, 49 percent of respondents said they took roughly the same number of liberal and conservative positions. Now that group is only 39 percent. That contrast is exacerbated, Pew found, because this middle group is far less engaged in politics, voting less frequently, and giving less money to political campaigns, than the more strongly committed groups of Republicans and Democrats.

weeds to figure out how to make change happen,” says Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman. In ERIC’s initial stages, her state updated or canceled more than 100,000 existing registrations and located and registered nearly 90,000 voters, and she expects far more progress and savings yearly.

Pew’s other major election initiative, in partnership with Google and state governments, was creation of the Voting Information Project (VIP), and a powerful online tool that will enable anyone in the United States to find his or her correct polling place, learn what is on the ballot, and navigate the local election process. Previously, voters could query various search engines

but wouldn’t know where to find the best information and whether any of it was up-to-date and accurate.

VIP is a free service—offering apps and tools across multiple platforms—that voters have used to look up information more than 50 million times in the past two major elections. Pew established VIP with support from the Rita Allen Foundation, the Democracy Fund, the Ford Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the State Infrastructure Fund at NEO Philanthropy, and the Open Society Foundations. Besides Google, technology partners including Microsoft and Facebook, have helped extend VIP nationwide, and Becker hopes that the system

will be highly automated throughout the states by 2017.

Pew's other major elections effort has been leading research on the value of online voter registration. Pioneered by Arizona in 2002, online registration has grown in the past several years to 20 states, with many more now designing systems. Pew's research has shown that online registration has had no partisan effect on elections, and Becker describes it as "a rare win-win for government. ... It saves a ton of money. It creates much more accurate records. Voters prefer it. Those concerned about voter access are happy because people can access it easily, and those concerned about the integrity issue also love it because it's an electronic record that can be vetted in real time as opposed to a paper record that takes weeks."

Pew's innovations "have had phenomenal impact. These are cutting-edge approaches to very complex issues," says Dean Logan, the Los Angeles County registrar-recorder. "The nuts and bolts of running elections are crucial to voting remaining relevant. If we don't reach out to voters, the system itself can lose relevancy."

*Peter Perl is a Washington journalist who last wrote for Trust about Pew helping Kentucky lawmakers improve policies and transform their state government into a laboratory of ideas and accomplishments.*

## Polarized on Political Views—and News

*When it comes to getting political news, liberals and conservatives look in different directions.*

BY PAUL FARHI

The Pew Research Center has found, in a series of reports, that Americans have become increasingly polarized in many aspects of life—especially in their views of government and politics.

With these ideological lines becoming more entrenched, Pew researchers explored an essential question: Where do the most ardent conservatives and liberals, as well as those in the middle, get their news and information? The question is especially relevant in an age marked by a growing divide within the media itself, with the proliferation of more overtly partisan news outlets.

The key finding in Pew's *Political Polarization and Media Habits* study, released in October: Those at the ends of the political spectrum subsist on very different media diets, with liberals and conservatives drawing news from their own set of sources. Almost half (47 percent) of "consistent" conservatives named Fox News as their primary source; "consistent" liberals named a wider array of sources (NPR, 13 percent; MNSBC, 12 percent; *The New York Times*, 10 percent) but with little commonality with conservatives.

That is not to suggest that Americans don't receive alternative news and opinions. A secondary finding in the Pew report revealed that even the most unbending conservative or unalloyed liberal gets news from an array of media sources and encounters alternative opinions on social media or in conversations with friends, family, or co-workers.

"Nearly everybody is exposed to different views than their own," says Amy Mitchell, director of journalism research for the Pew Research Center and the media study's principal author. "It's very hard to live in a true echo chamber today."

Nevertheless, a third key finding may be the most critical to understanding the impact of polarization on the national dialogue. Despite being a relatively small part of the population—roughly 20 percent—consistent liberals and conservatives tend to drive the nation's overall political conversation, spreading their views to others and participating more actively (through voting and campaign donations) in the political process. Nearly 4 in 10 (39 percent) consistent conservatives and 3 in 10 consistent liberals talk about politics often, have others turn to them for information, and consider themselves leaders in these conversations.

Pew doesn't draw conclusions or make value judgments about its findings. But many political scientists and pundits did, renewing a lively debate about the consequences of polarization.

In one commentary, John Avlon of the *Daily Beast* said Pew's study suggests that the political hard-core has "essentially hijacked debates large and small by sucking up all the oxygen and



exhausting people who have lives and increasingly see politics as an ugly waste of time.” Added Avlon, “If we don’t find a way to reverse this media trend, America is headed toward Tower of Babel territory.”

On the other hand, Dartmouth College political scientist Brendan Nyhan, in *The New York Times*, presented a less ominous interpretation. One reason for skepticism, he wrote, is that the Pew study is based on self-reported media habits, and “sometimes memories of what we do are different from actuality.” Other political research, Nyhan said, has found that even partisans consume more centrist media coverage, suggesting an even broader awareness of “the other side” than Pew did.

Others question whether one can draw any link between the growth of partisan media and more partisanship among voters (a question outside the scope of Pew’s research). Princeton University professor Markus Prior, an expert on political polarization, says the evidence for such a link is “mixed at best....There is no firm evidence that partisan media are making ordinary Americans more partisan.”

Prior even rejects the notion that Americans are becoming more polarized.

Instead, he suggests they are increasingly “sorting” themselves into consistent and like-minded camps but not necessarily at the extremes. “Most Americans continue to be moderate or indifferent, not blindly ideological or partisan,” he says. “My sense is that much of this change has now played itself out, and the starker contrast between parties, and their media advocates, will remain for a while.”

Beyond the expert class of political scientists and pundits, Pew had another eager audience for its

research: news organizations. The study had some chastening, if not entirely surprising, news for the media about the public’s view of them—namely that “trust” in the media often depends on where you stand on the political spectrum.

Consistent liberals, for example, deemed 28 of 36 news outlets Pew asked about as ones they “trust,” whereas consistent conservatives labeled only eight of the 36 that way. (*The Wall Street Journal* is the only outlet to achieve more trust than distrust among all groups in the survey).

The media report is based on an online survey of 2,901 members of Pew’s new American Trends Panel, a group recruited from a survey of 10,013 adults conducted early last year.

After it appeared, Mitchell and Pew heard from many media representatives who wanted to know more about their readers and viewers’ perceptions.

As for the “Tower of Babel” analogy, Mitchell says we’re not there—yet. Few people have, or want to, shut themselves off from opposing views. “But it’s one of the reasons why it’s important for us to do this research,” she says. “It’s to understand if we are moving toward a society where it is more difficult to understand the other way of viewing an issue, or to be informed in a different way.

“We’ve now established a tremendously valuable baseline,” Mitchell says. “Hopefully we’ll be able to continue to study this area and look at this trend over time.”

*Paul Farhi covers the media for The Washington Post.*





# Looking Back

## The Milestones of 2014

With evidence-based, nonpartisan analysis, Pew seeks to solve some of society's most difficult challenges. These successes over the past year helped protect public health, steward the environment, enhance civic life, and strengthen democracy.

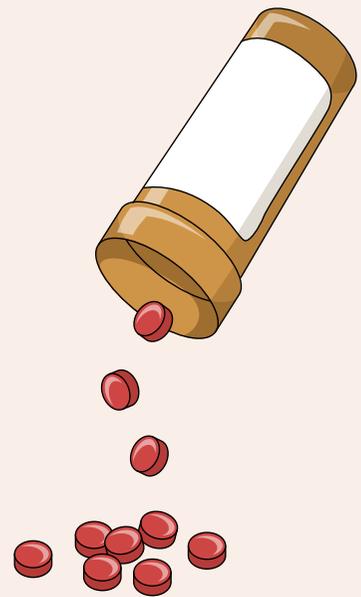
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.  
*Cornelia Schaible/Getty Images*

## Better dental care means better health

Regular dental care is critical to good health. That's why Pew strongly advocates for the creation of midlevel dental practitioners, who work much like physician assistants, to expand access to quality care. In Maine, more than 62 percent of low-income children didn't see a dentist in 2011. But in 2014, Pew joined a coalition of more than 20 Maine organizations to successfully urge passage of bipartisan legislation that authorizes the new providers—and will make dental care in the state more widely available.

## A new strategy to save antibiotics— so they can save us

Antibiotics save lives by taming some of the world's most dangerous infectious diseases. But when these drugs are overused, they become less effective. So Pew is working to curb the unnecessary use of antibiotics. For example, antibiotics added to animal feed—often simply to promote faster growth among farm-raised animals—can help lead to superbugs that are resistant to these vital medicines. Our experts' testimony before the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology helped shape President Barack Obama's national strategy for addressing the challenge of antibiotic resistance, including accelerating research and development of new drugs, supporting judicious use of existing antibiotics, and strengthening efforts to monitor drug-resistant bacteria in public health and agriculture. Pew also worked with members of Congress from both parties on legislation to promote the development of new antibiotics.



1



2



3





## **Bristol Bay: Beauty and bounty**

Home to millions of birds and 25 species of marine mammals, Alaska's Bristol Bay is one of the most magnificent seascapes in the world—and the heart of a region that accounts for more than 40 percent of the seafood caught in the United States. Working with the people of the region and the commercial fishing industry, Pew helped persuade the Obama administration to put more than 52,000 square miles of Bristol Bay off limits to energy development.





## The Australian Outback—managed by those who know it best

The land down under is a place of overwhelming beauty, much of it remote; a place ecologically threatened by wildfires, invasive species, and development; and a place sacred to indigenous populations. Pew has been a leading advocate for creating Indigenous Protected Areas—large tracts of Outback wilderness managed by those whose ancestors have lived on the land for centuries, with a combination of local cultural knowledge and contemporary scientific methods. In 2014, the federal government created three new Indigenous Protected Areas, covering 27.3 million acres in Western Australia.

*Uluru, also known as Ayers Rock, in Central Australia. Jason Edwards/  
National Geographic Creative*



## #WorldWideWeb Turns 25

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Tweets   Tweets & replies   Photos & videos



**The Pew Trusts** @pewtrusts · Mar 10

Pew Research Center reports in 2014 detailed how the Internet has transformed our lives —and what to expect in the future.  
[#WeDoSocialMedia](#)

  19    48   



**The Pew Trusts** @pewtrusts · Mar 5

Web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee says Pew's research "can inform decisions that will shape the world."  
[#ThanksSirTimButYouStartedIt](#)

  19    83   

### Globally speaking: what do you think?

From key geopolitical events, to the shifting balance of power between the United States and China, to the great economic changes occurring for the world's rich and poor—the Pew Research Center measured what the world thought in 2014 with one of its largest-ever global surveys. The findings were cited on the pages of major newspapers around the globe and by policymakers in multiple capitals: Ghana's president mentioned the results in his speech at the U.N. General Assembly; Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker used the data in a joint op-ed in a major Indian newspaper; and Singapore's former U.N. ambassador told *The New York Times* that the survey was being used in governmental debates in Beijing.

### When it comes to marine reserves, bigger can be better

Pew and its partners are helping to create the world's first generation of large marine reserves, extending the idea of national parks to the sea. Last September, Pew's Global Ocean Legacy project supported the expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, originally created by President George W. Bush. The enlarged reserve doubles the amount of highly protected U.S. ocean territory.

## News from the North: On the way to protecting 1 billion acres

Canada's boreal forest cleanses the air we breathe and is home to a rich array of wildlife.

Last year, the government of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador agreed to conserve 9.8 million acres of intact boreal forest for at least 10 years. Manitoba and Quebec protected another 1.3 million acres. And the Northwest Territories preserved 18.9 million acres of parks and refuges. More than 740 million acres are now protected, committed for protection, or pledged to be sustainably developed. This marks significant progress toward Pew's goal of saving 1 billion acres of the boreal by 2022.

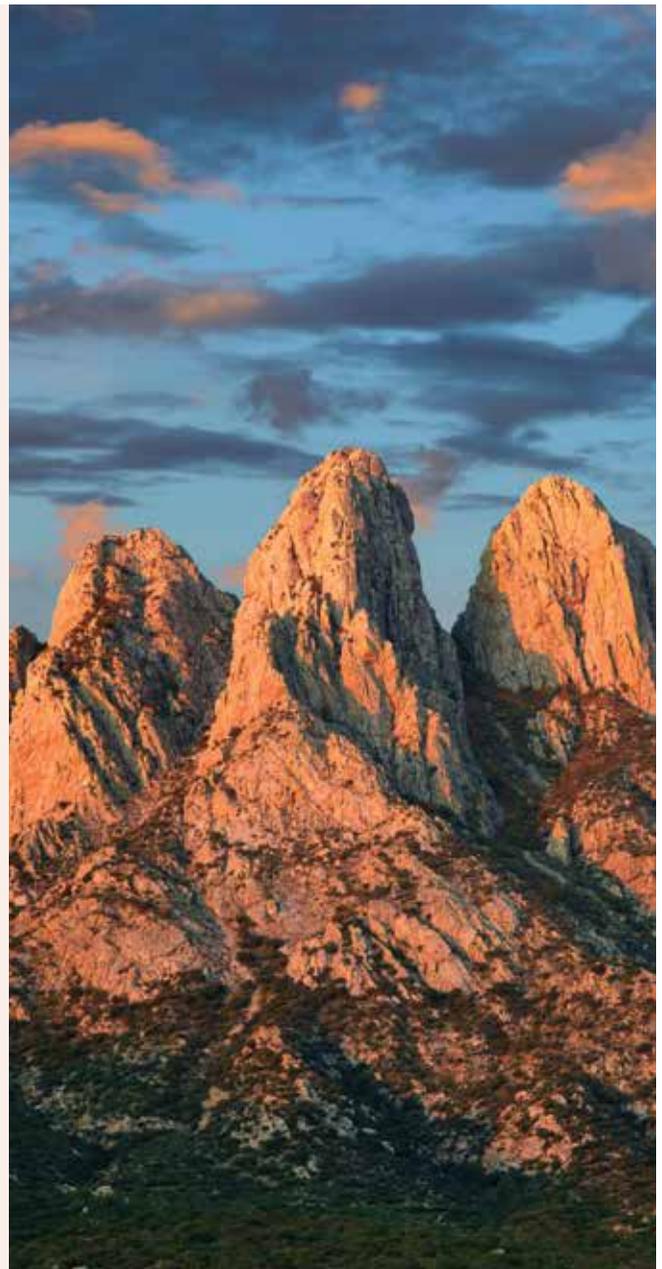


## This land is your land

The Wilderness Act turned 50 in 2014, and, in bipartisan votes, Congress celebrated the conservation milestone by designating seven new wilderness areas. They include Sleeping Bear Dunes, along the shores of Lake Michigan, which attracts more than 1 million visitors annually, as well as lands in Colorado, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, and Washington. And President Barack Obama continued the more than century-old tradition of his predecessors in using the Antiquities Act to designate two national monuments. The 500,000-acre Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument in New Mexico encompasses historic stagecoach trails and prehistoric petroglyphs carved into cliffs and canyons. The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument safeguards 350,000 acres of mountains, canyons, rivers, and streams—home to the California condor and bighorn sheep and source of one-third of the drinking water for metropolitan Los Angeles. Pew worked on behalf of all these national treasures, collaborating with policymakers, local community leaders, and scientists to determine which public lands should be priorities for conservation and how best to protect them. By the end of 2014, more than 1.1 million acres of our nation's land had been newly preserved.

**Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.**

*Tim Fitzharris/Getty Images*



# Looking Forward

## and Making Connections

As 2015 moves forward, The Pew Charitable Trusts continues its endeavors to solve some of society's greatest challenges, guided by a growing understanding of how we all can learn from one another. Pew's work extends from our hometown of Philadelphia, throughout the 50 states, and around the globe. Our nonpartisan policy portfolio focuses on the environment; the performance of city, state, and federal government; and the health and financial security of American families. But no matter where we work or what the subject, we base policy solutions on accurate, balanced data and seek achievable results in the public interest in an unending quest to find the common ground where real progress occurs.

This approach is clearly visible in Pew's efforts to help state governments become more effective in serving the public. "States are beginning to learn the power of data," says Executive Vice President Susan Urahn, who oversees Pew's government performance projects. "And data are at the heart of all that we do. Whether it's helping states understand their historic revenue trends in order to guide budget practices, or in public safety as lawmakers try to gauge their corrections policies, we help policymakers better understand their own states and help them learn from others."

Indeed, it is often those connections—transferring knowledge learned in one place to inform policy solutions in another—that leads to the best outcomes. And in the coming year, Pew's work on public safety issues will not only help states but will also inform the federal debate over effective criminal justice approaches.

We also often find that our policy successes can illuminate new challenges and frame our next goals to achieve even greater good. Building on the knowledge developed in protecting public lands in the western United States, Canada's boreal forest, and the Australian Outback, we have embarked on an ambitious effort to create the world's first generation of great parks in the sea. We anticipate

at least one new marine reserve being established this year, building toward our goal of 15 by 2022.

We also are applying what we've learned on the land to how we must manage the oceans and their resources—moving from a concentration on a single species to conserving large ecosystems, changing how we think about the sea and its importance to life on the planet. To further protect the oceans from those who abuse them, this year we also are designing a global system for tracking and monitoring illegal fishing, which accounts for about 20 percent of the worldwide catch each year.

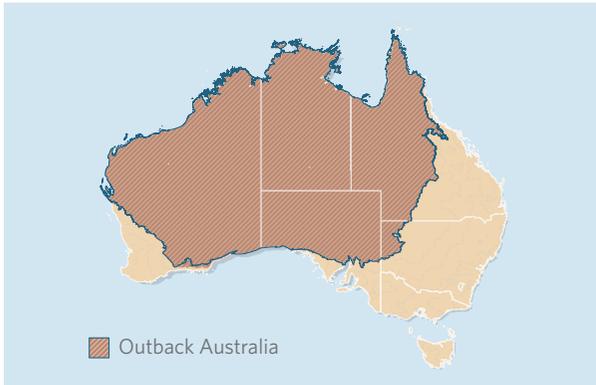
"The public and policymakers are beginning to recognize the value of healthy oceans for people as well as nature," says Executive Vice President Joshua Reichert, who directs Pew's environmental efforts. "It's not too late to repair the damage done to our seas, but we have to move quickly because there is little time to spare."

Closer to home, Pew's efforts in Philadelphia are having an impact that resonates beyond the city's boundaries. The Philadelphia research initiative compares urban trends among major U.S. cities, helping local policymakers as well as mayors, council members, and civic leaders throughout the nation learn from one another. And our grants to arts organizations in the Philadelphia region help those with bold, creative ideas to reach new audiences and invigorate the area's cultural life. "We strongly believe that these organizations will serve as models for other arts groups both on the local scene and on the national stage," says Senior Vice President Michael Dahl, who oversees Pew's Philadelphia portfolio.

Making these kinds of connections and helping transfer knowledge increases the return on Pew's strong investments as we seek to improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life. More than ever, 2015 promises to showcase the progress that can be made when we all learn from each other and work together.

# Creating a Modern Outback

*Australia's red center doesn't need fewer people. It needs more.*



BY BARRY TRAILL

The Outback is a deep part of Australia's identity, legendarily red, vast, and barely inhabited. Magical, mysterious, spectacular places dot the land—icons such as Kakadu, Uluru, and the Kimberley that draw visitors from throughout the nation and beyond.

The astonishingly varied Outback covers more than 70 percent of the continent, from the arid center and west to the tropical savannas, wetlands, and rain forests of the north. It is alternately lush and bountiful, harsh and inhospitable. Hummocks of spinifex grass dot red sand dunes, barramundi nose along tropical water holes lined with paperbarks, dust fills the air from cattle on a brown plain, and mist rises in the dawn light of a Cape York rain forest.

And less than 5 percent of Australia's 24 million people live there.

Only a small number of similarly vast natural landscapes remain on Earth, wild regions where ecological processes function normally and movements of wildlife remain largely unfettered by the fragmentation of habitats.

But the Outback's intact nature and low population hide an apparently perverse problem. One of the great threats to its nature is not too many people, but not enough people—living on the land and actively managing it.

From the 1950s onward, the Aboriginal peoples of the Gibson and Great Sandy deserts progressively left their country, moving to more centralized settlements on the desert fringes, to cattle stations, to missions, and to government-run communities. Most people had moved out of the deserts by the end of the 1960s.

Meanwhile, the tropical savannas of the north have seen major losses of native mammals and birds in the last decade. A range of causes is at play in these losses. But a key factor in the disappearance of wildlife has been the absence of people to manage the land.

## The Outback needs fire

Fire is the ancient connection. Practices varied from place to place, but Aboriginal clans traditionally burned the drier parts of the Australian landscape, often in very nuanced ways. The general pattern was to set smaller fires when the vegetation was moist, and large wildfires were rare. The smaller fires created a patchwork of bush plants of different ages, a mosaic that provided food and shelter for the bilby, a once abundant marsupial, and dozens of other species.

Where the population exodus of the mid-20th century left the deserts and savannas unmanaged, Outback fires have tended to get bigger and more intense. Sometimes they ignite naturally from lightning strikes; other times they're unintentionally set by people in the driest seasons. These fires can now burn huge areas, dramatically altering the balance in the bush. In the Aboriginal Martu lands of the desert, the average size of fires in the 1950s was nearly 150 acres. By the 1980s, across lands empty of their custodians, the average fire had grown to cover more than 120,000 acres. While some animals prefer such fire-rich habitat, others fail to find food or shelter over wide fire-scarred areas and struggle to survive.

A second threat came with the partner colonists of Europeans—feral animals. The Outback now has a rich collection of introduced animals gone wild in the bush—cattle, water buffaloes, pigs, donkeys, horses, camels, rabbits, and goats. All of them eat native



Feral animals—including an estimated 300,000 camels—are among the challenges in the Outback that require more human intervention.  
*Robert Sleep*

plants. Feral cats and foxes hunt native animals, which are not adapted to escaping nonnative predators.

In days gone by, Aboriginal people hunted the feral animals for food—helping to keep their numbers down. Desert people loved eating feral cats in particular, finding them relatively easy to track and run down in sandy country.

### **The Outback needs people**

Today, the Outback and its remaining residents face social, economic, and environmental challenges. Meeting these challenges depends, to a large degree, on the condition of the land, which underpins many of the key enterprises of the region, including tourism, livestock, and fishing. And successful land management depends on more people.

But national policies over the last 150 years have led to a decades-long trend of people moving out of many parts of the Outback—much of which now has fewer human inhabitants actively managing the land than at any time over the past 50,000 years. As a result, parts of the landscape are faltering.

Establishing a modern approach to the Outback that values and respects nature is fundamental to protecting the region's wildlife and communities.

This approach recognizes that the Outback must pay its way and that it is in the national interest to further develop some of its areas; but it also recognizes that the scale of such efforts needs to be carefully managed. It should, above all else, be a sustainable approach, without damaging the broader ecological health that defines and underpins the area.

Indigenous Rangers use a combination of modern and traditional techniques to manage the Outback, including controlled fires. *Glenn Campbell*





Such changes are already happening in many districts.

More than 1.2 billion acres of the Outback are now managed and protected in Indigenous Protected Areas.

These are parks on Aboriginal-owned lands managed by Indigenous Ranger groups using a combination of modern and traditional knowledge and techniques. The growth of Indigenous Protected Areas over the past 10 years, and their management for the benefit of local communities and all Australians, has been one of the success stories in the environmental and economic development of remote Australia.

In substantial parts of the Outback, some pastoral leases—for grazing enterprises on state lands held by private individuals and companies—are no longer commercially viable. However, some existing leaseholders and new owners, such as conservation organizations, mining companies, Aboriginal communities, tourism operators, and individuals, are now using the lands for activities such as tourism, carbon farming, and conservation, which provide better land management and stronger economies in some districts.

Much in the old Outback has stagnated over the course of decades of general neglect. There is now the potential for the modern Outback—the future Outback—to be shaped more deliberately and thoughtfully. This represents one of Australia's greatest conservation and development opportunities.

Those in the best position to lead this creation are the people who live in, value, and actively care for the immense landscape. Providing connections, support, and resources for these stewards, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, offers the best chance to protect Australia's largest natural wonder forevermore.

*Barry Truill is the director of Pew's Outback Australia program.*

# A Shared Philosophy for Success

*In seeking partners, New Mexico's Thornburg Foundation wanted collaborators who shared its vision of nonpartisanship and research-based policy solutions. It found Pew.*



**Garrett Thornburg built his business by relying on research and facts, a philosophy he extends to his philanthropy. *Katye Martens/The Pew Charitable Trusts***

BY DANIEL LeDUC

When Garrett Thornburg looked around his home state of New Mexico, he saw a poor place with big needs—and wanted the foundation he was creating to have impact. Rather than “scattering money on the ground,” he says he wanted to do things differently: “I wanted to focus on improving policy.”

That was a little more than a decade ago. In the years since, the Santa Fe-based Thornburg Foundation has become one of New Mexico's largest foundations, focusing on early childhood education, agriculture and food concerns, and campaign finance reform. When the foundation launched its efforts on early childhood issues, Thornburg discovered that The Pew Charitable Trusts was already at work in New Mexico, pressing for better family support and coaching for new parents. Seeing an advantage in tapping that experience, the Thornburg Foundation decided to join forces with Pew in 2013, beginning a partnership that flourishes today.

A successful investor, Thornburg built his business by relying on research and facts, a philosophy he

extends to his philanthropy. As a self-described political “ardent independent,” he prefers to take on policy issues with a nonpartisan approach based on data-driven analysis and an effort to bring disparate factions together—an ethos that Pew also follows in pursuing workable solutions to public policy problems at the state, federal, and international levels.

“I really like the Pew approach,” Thornburg says. “You gather the facts, you bring in all the different parties, you find consensus that can move the ball forward, and then you evaluate how you’ve done.”

Over the past two decades, Pew has been in every state in the nation. Working on a range of national and international projects, Pew seeks out and relies on partners who share the organization's goals of solving society's difficult challenges, helping government be more efficient and effective in serving the public, protecting consumers, promoting public health, and conserving the environment.

One example is the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative, which has worked in a number of states, including New Mexico. That partnership—with the Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation—has assisted state legislators in bringing a robust cost-benefit analysis to policy and budget decisions in the areas of early childhood development and criminal justice. The initiative has helped lawmakers reduce recidivism rates, better protecting the public from crime and saving tax dollars, and highlighted investments in evidence-based programs that protect vulnerable youngsters and reduce the state's long-term costs for children's services.

As Results First was making its mark in New Mexico, the Thornburg Foundation was beginning to raise its profile and decide where it should direct its grants. The foundation's new executive director, Allan Oliver, remembers state Senator Sander Rue, who represents Albuquerque, telling him, “Your foundation should work like Pew—with real research and evidence.”



One of the greatest challenges for family support and coaching programs in New Mexico is getting new parents to participate, so the project is working to expand outreach. *Katye Martens/The Pew Charitable Trusts*

In 2013, at Pew's urging, New Mexico lawmakers passed the Home Visiting Accountability Act, meant to measure the success of programs that provide family support and coaching for expectant mothers and fathers. Not long after the legislation's approval, the Thornburg Foundation leadership and Pew's experts decided to work together to continue progress on behalf of families in the state. "When Pew comes in and says we'll work in a nonpartisan way with research—it gives strength to a campaign and helps build momentum that keeps things going," Oliver says.

One of the greatest challenges for family support and coaching efforts is winning the trust of vulnerable new parents so they will participate in the programs. So the Thornburg-Pew partnership is working to strengthen the outreach of the programs. By listening to participating families and family support providers through interviews and focus groups, the partnership is identifying why some vulnerable families do not participate and developing strategies for overcoming that hesitancy. The result will be a stronger family support and coaching system in New Mexico that will lead to parents being more capable and confident in raising their children—and children who are safer, healthier, and on track to grow and learn.

"Our collaboration with Garrett Thornburg and the Thornburg Foundation is having a transformative

impact on families in New Mexico," says Sally O'Brien, Pew's senior vice president for philanthropic partnerships. "What is just as gratifying has been the partnership itself. We have shared knowledge and information with each other and worked hand in hand."

Thornburg says he has found that Pew helps build strong partnerships, allowing smaller foundations to have outsize impact. The foundation's top staff has met with Pew's planning and evaluation team leaders for assistance in developing the Thornburg Foundation's new initiatives and to learn how to set up measurements to gauge their success. And Thornburg and Oliver have met with other Pew policy experts, to seek guidance on strategies for the foundation's projects as well as to offer advice about New Mexico that has helped Pew in its other work in the state.

"We've learned a lot from Pew," says Thornburg, "not just about early childhood policy, but how to manage our philanthropy."

*For more information about philanthropic partnerships at Pew, please contact Senior Vice President Sally O'Brien at 202-540-6226 or [sobrien@pewtrusts.org](mailto:sobrien@pewtrusts.org).*

*Daniel LeDuc is the editor of Trust.*

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

*The Pew Charitable Trusts applies a rigorous, analytical approach to **improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life**, as these recent accomplishments illustrate.*

### IMPROVING PUBLIC POLICY



Pew found that almost 90 percent of the nation's school cafeteria kitchens needed at least one new piece of kitchen equipment.  
*Katye Martens/The Pew Charitable Trusts*

### **New funding approved for healthier school meals, food safety, and safer drugs**

With passage of omnibus legislation to fund the federal government for 2015, Congress provided funding that will lead to healthier lunches for schoolchildren, safer foods for everyone, better oversight of some drugmakers, and increased tracking of antibiotic resistance in foodborne bacteria.

The legislation includes \$25 million in grants to help the nation's schools purchase kitchen equipment. A recent Pew report found that nearly 90 percent of

school cafeterias around the nation needed at least one new piece of kitchen equipment so they can serve nutritious meals. Pew advocated for the grants as part of an effort that has helped to secure \$60 million in federal appropriations for school kitchens since 2012.

The omnibus bill also provided \$27.5 million in new funding for the Food and Drug Administration's implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act. The 2011 law, the first major overhaul of the nation's food safety regulations since the Great Depression, gives the FDA the authority

## California expands dental care through technology

California Governor Jerry Brown signed legislation Sept. 27 that expands access to dental services for individuals in schools, nursing homes, and other community settings using dental hygienists who consult electronically with off-site dentists. The Virtual Dental Home program authorizes Medicaid reimbursement for hygienists and dental assistants

providing temporary fillings and other preventive services. The program is the first of its kind in the nation and could be replicated in other states to increase access to dental care. The Pew children's dental campaign led the effort supporting the new law and worked with 37 other organizations, including the California Dental Association.

to recall tainted food and to make more frequent inspections of food processing plants in the United States and abroad. Pew worked closely with congressional appropriations committees and the FDA to help win the funding.

The FDA also received \$15 million to enforce the new pharmacy compounding provisions of the Drug Quality and Security Act. Pew worked to gain passage of the law, which took effect in November 2013, and the new funding.

With antibiotic resistance a growing health concern, the omnibus bill included \$3 million in additional funding for the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System, a partnership of the FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Agriculture that tracks antibiotic resistance in foodborne bacteria. Government auditors had concluded that the program did not have enough funding to accurately determine the degree to which resistance to some antibiotics in the food supply is harming human health. The funding will allow the FDA to expand its testing and assess whether a new federal policy, calling for an end to use of antibiotics in food animals to make them grow faster, is helping to protect public health.

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## More schools to buy chicken raised without antibiotics

In December, the Urban School Food Alliance—a coalition of school districts in Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, Dallas, Miami-Dade, and Orlando—announced that its schools would purchase only chickens raised with few or no antibiotics for their cafeterias. The districts, which feed millions of students daily, join Jefferson County Public Schools in Colorado, Portland Public Schools in Oregon, and Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky in adopting such a policy. Human antibiotics are used on industrial farms to make animals grow faster, but the practice can increase bacteria's resistance to the lifesaving drugs. Pew has been working with schools around the nation to encourage them to purchase meat raised without the overuse of antibiotics.

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## Pew pushes for stronger consumer financial protections

On Sept. 18, Travis Plunkett, director of Pew's family economic stability research portfolio, testified before the U.S. Senate Banking Committee on the

subject of assessing and enhancing protections in consumer financial services. His testimony highlighted Pew's efforts to make financial markets safer and more transparent through objective research and policy recommendations on checking accounts, prepaid cards, and small-dollar loans. He also discussed the importance of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in strengthening safeguards for customers through data-driven analysis of financial markets, and how that could lead to safe and easily understood products.

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## Website details financial relationships between doctors and industry

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on Sept. 30 launched the Open Payments website, which lists the payments that physicians receive from the pharmaceutical and medical device industries. The site, [cms.gov/openpayments](http://cms.gov/openpayments), provides transparency on the financial relationships between physicians and industry and also supplies data to patients to help them make informed decisions

about their health care. Open Payments revealed that in one five-month period in 2013, drug and medical device companies made 4.4 million payments totaling \$3.5 billion to more than half a million doctors and 1,360 teaching hospitals. Pew—along with top drug and medical device companies, numerous consumer organizations, and leaders from the medical profession—has advocated for this transparency since 2007.

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### **Pew helps inform Securities and Exchange Commission staff**

Greg Mennis, who directs Pew's research on public pension issues, spoke at a Sept. 15 training conference for the Securities and Exchange Commission's Municipal Securities and Public Pensions Unit. Many state and local retirement plans are on an unsustainable course, having failed to set aside enough money to fund the promises they have made to employees. Mennis provided the SEC staffers with an overview of how experts study the fiscal and governmental issues that affect public pensions.

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### **Canada to restrict industrial fishing in large region of the Beaufort Sea**

The Canadian government on Oct. 17 announced a final fisheries plan that protects more than 309,000 square miles in the Beaufort Sea from industrial fishing until scientists and Inuvialuit communities agree that it can be done in a sound, sustainable fashion. The protected area in the Beaufort Sea, which is north of Canada's Northwest Territories, is twice the size of California. The decision represents a regional consensus that is aided by scientific research with support from Pew. Combined with a similar precautionary fisheries plan for adjoining U.S. Arctic waters, Canada's move creates the largest no-fishing area in the Arctic and ensures that globally significant populations of beluga and bowhead

whales, seals, seabirds, and fish—and the Inuvialuit communities that rely on them—will continue to thrive.

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### **Countries make new commitment to protect sharks and rays**

Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals agreed Nov. 9 to protect three species of thresher sharks, two species of hammerhead sharks, one species of silky shark, the reef manta ray, and nine species of mobula rays. The reef manta ray and mobula rays, as well as five species of sawfish, will receive the strongest level of protection afforded by the convention—a listing on its Appendix I—prohibiting their deliberate capture. The others will be listed under Appendix II of the convention, meaning that the 120 governments that are parties to the treaty agree to coordinate efforts to address the animals' population declines. Pew worked with Egypt and the European Union to develop and submit proposals to protect thresher and silky shark species, which are experiencing serious population declines.

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### **South Australia votes to affirm its marine park system**

South Australia's parliament voted Oct. 1 to affirm its new system of marine parks, becoming the first state government in the country to give final approval to such a network. South Australia's parks are the nation's only series of marine protected areas other than the Great Barrier Reef to connect distinct and varied ocean ecosystems. The network—which Pew has supported—covers almost half of the state-managed waters off South Australia—10,292 square miles, of which 1,457 square miles are part of a highly protected sanctuary zone with prohibitions on all fishing and mining.





U.S. soldiers participate in a NATO-led peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. Pew polling found that Americans increasingly favor strengthening the military. *Armend Nimani/AFP/Getty Images*

### **A shift: Americans say national security as important as jobs**

At the beginning of each year, the Pew Research Center polls the public on the top policy issues facing the president and Congress. For the first time in five years, as many Americans cite defending the United States against terrorism (76 percent) as a top policy priority as say boosting the nation's economy (75 percent). Americans are also increasingly interested in strengthening the military, addressing immigration, improving the nation's infrastructure, and dealing with global warming. And by more than a 3-to-1 margin (67 percent to 20 percent) Americans say that the president should focus on domestic policy issues rather than foreign policy.

## Barriers remain for female leaders

About two-thirds of Americans, including majorities of men and women alike, say it is easier for men than women to be elected to high political offices and to attain top executive positions in business, even as majorities say that men and women make equally good leaders, according to a Pew Research Center survey released in January. There is little consensus, however, on the major reason why fewer women than men are in top leadership roles in business and politics. About 4 in 10 believe it's because women are held to higher standards than men and because there's a lack of readiness by companies to hire women for top positions—and by voters to elect women to higher office.

## Wealth inequality grows in the United States

The Pew Research Center in December published two widely covered analyses of household wealth based on data from the Federal Reserve Bank. The first analysis found that wealth inequality has widened along racial and ethnic lines since the end of the Great Recession in 2009. The median wealth of white households was 13 times that of black households in 2013, compared with eight times the wealth in 2010. Likewise, the wealth of white households in 2013 was more than 10 times the

wealth of Hispanic households, compared with nine times the wealth in 2010. A second analysis showed the wealth gap between middle-income and upper-income families to be the greatest on record. In 2013, the median wealth of the nation's upper-income families was nearly seven times the wealth of middle-income families. Upper-income families have begun to regain some of the wealth they lost during the recession, while middle-income families haven't seen any gains.

## Survey shows a dark side of the Web

Nearly three-quarters of adult Internet users say they have witnessed online harassment and 40 percent have personally experienced it, according to a Pew Research Center report released in October. Sixty percent say they have seen someone being called offensive names, 25 percent saw someone being physically threatened, and 24 percent witnessed someone being harassed for a sustained period of time. Men are somewhat more likely to experience name-calling and embarrassment, while women, particularly young women, are more likely to experience menacing behavior, such as stalking and sexual harassment. Social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook are the most common forums where respondents report experiencing online harassment.

## INVIGORATING CIVIC LIFE

### Pew grantees garner national attention

- Two 2014 Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theatre, which honor Philadelphia-area productions, went to Paula Vogel's new Pew-funded play, "Don Juan Comes Home From Iraq."
- Pew arts fellow and theater artist Matt Saunders received the prestigious Hodder Fellowship from Princeton University. The \$77,000 fellowship is awarded to artists "of exceptional promise" to pursue independent projects.
- Pew arts fellow and poet Thomas Devaney has been awarded a residency at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, one of the most prestigious artist-in-residence opportunities in the country.
- Pew arts fellow Geoff Sobelle continues to tour in his one-man show, "The Object Lesson," after winning the top award at the 2014 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Sobelle, whose Philadelphia premiere was funded by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage in 2013, has completed a run at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, where *New York Times* theater critic Ben Brantley applauded the "bravura" performance.
- *The New York Times* covered this year's FringeArts festival projects in Philadelphia, including "The Adults" by Pew arts fellow Whit MacLaughlin and "99 Breakups" by Pig Iron Theatre Company, which is headed by Pew arts fellows.



Rehearsal at the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, which hopes to make revenue more stable through memberships. *Steve Langdon*

### Grant advances Philadelphia Chamber Music Society

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage in December presented the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society with \$425,000 to support a five-year endeavor that will shift the organization to a membership model. The society hopes that the new model will provide a predictable, recurring revenue stream. The funding is the Pew center's third Advancement Grant, designed to fund multiyear transformative projects by Philadelphia-area arts and culture organizations. The first two were awarded to Opera Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Zoo.

### Pew-funded exhibit spans artistic and state borders

The exhibition "Paul Evans: Crossing Boundaries and Crafting Modernism" recently received critical acclaim from Michigan media outlets when it traveled to the Cranbrook Art Museum in suburban Detroit. The Philadelphia-area artist's sculpted-bronze furniture—which was initially on display at

the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, with support from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage—has been seen by more than 26,000 people and recognized by *The New York Times*, *Antiques* magazine, and other leading publications.

# The Challenges of Polling in the Digital Age

*The Pew Research Center's accurate and timely surveys of national and world opinion have made it a valued resource for news organizations around the globe. In October, Michael Dimock became president of the center, a Washington-based subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts. He is a 14-year veteran of the center and has co-authored some of its landmark research reports. With the digital revolution presenting new challenges to public polling, Dimock spoke with Trust about survey research in a new era.*

### **It seems like there are more polls and data available than ever. What role does the Pew Research Center play in the crowded information ecosystem?**

It's true that there are more surveys being conducted today than at any point in the past. Yet there are arguably fewer pollsters doing the kind of in-depth, substantive work that the Pew Research Center provides, whether on key populations like Latinos, Muslim-Americans, or nonvoters; timely topics like gun policy or foreign affairs; or critical trends such as technological, religious, or generational changes.

For example, in the heat of a presidential election, there may be as many as a dozen new "horse race" surveys released on a given day purporting to measure who is ahead and who is behind. But few of those surveys explain or provide context around why public opinion is moving the way it is, what people's priorities and concerns are, and whether the public is monolithic or diverse in its views.

While there are multiple surveys focusing on President Obama's popularity, many important, more nuanced subjects, such as people's perceptions of his ability to handle certain issues, are often left by the wayside. Our research strives to paint the full picture of the trends we measure.

### **What should someone look for in and/or be wary of in evaluating data and information in this new environment?**

It is important for data consumers to keep several things in mind when evaluating information. The first is the representativeness of the sample. A study of Twitter users is just that: a study of Twitter users. No matter how many millions of Tweets can be

captured and analyzed, they can never describe the overall population at large. Our surveys show that only about a fifth of all adults in the United States use Twitter. The same concerns arise with many surveys conducted online or through automated phone systems. These new tools make it far cheaper to collect data, but they may or may not include a complete sample of the general public, many of whom do not use new technologies as quickly. The second, and related, caution I often raise about the new data world is what I call the "illusion of precision"—that the volume of data today does not always mean that we have any greater accuracy in our measurements. Technology today provides a level of precision in many ways, but most data collection still has at least some error to it. And when data from multiple sources are combined, new errors can be introduced.

### **Pew has expanded its overseas research in recent years. What are the challenges associated with that?**

International research is a huge opportunity now because of the spread of technology and the growth of many economies around the world, which allow for more rigorous data collection and research. Of course, this presents its challenges, including coordinating the work across multiple countries with the same methodological rigor we apply to our domestic polling. For example, our 2014 Global Attitudes survey was fielded in 44 nations at the same time and had to be translated into 75 languages. Each country had its own unique circumstances—some could be surveyed by phone, and others required face-to-face interviews.



The Pew Research Center's Michael Dimock: "Our goal is to provide information that can help people make informed decisions and better understand their daily lives." *Katye Martens/The Pew Charitable Trusts*

### **How does the Pew Research Center decide what it will study, and is there new research in the works?**

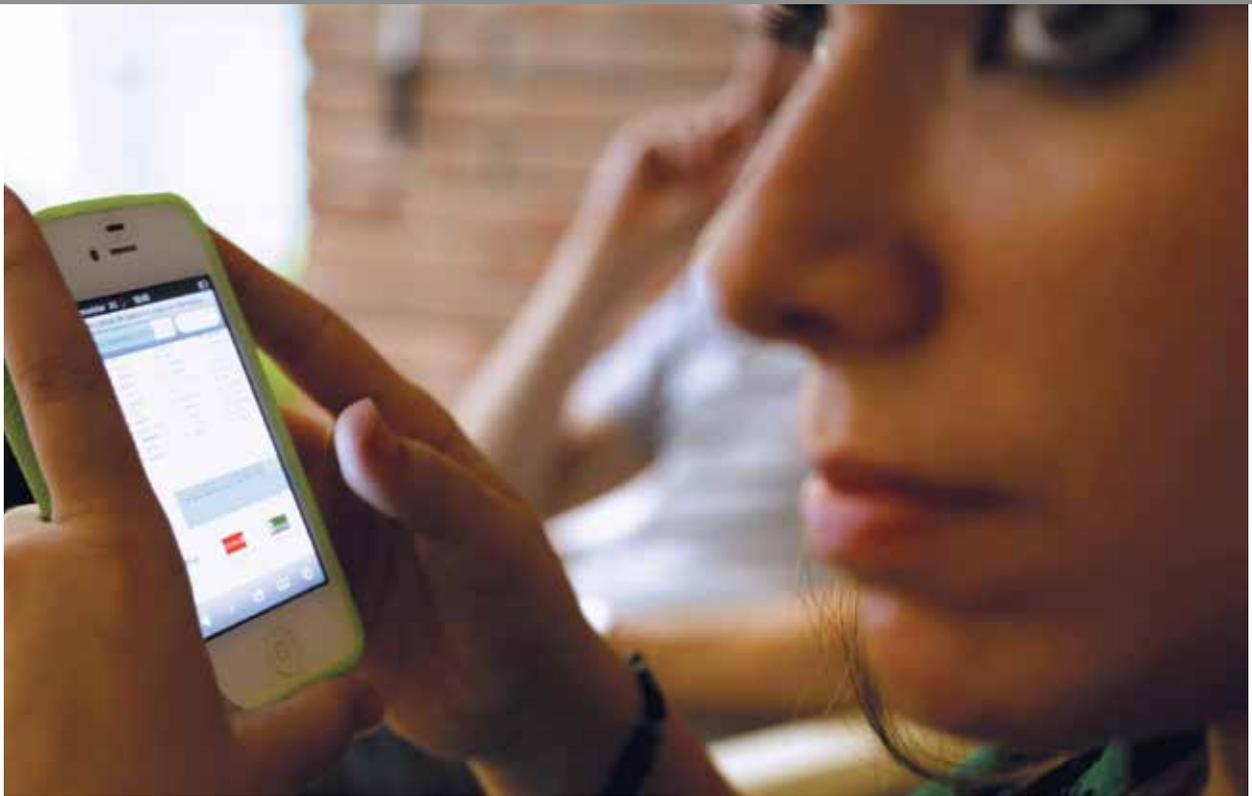
We are constantly looking for the fundamental trends that are shaping the world around us and are open to adding new lines of research where we see a knowledge gap. This year we will launch new research on science and society, because we believe there are clear opportunities to contribute unique and timely information about public attitudes, awareness, and preparedness related to scientific advancement. We'll also study the attitudes of scientists and science-watchers about coming technological and scientific advances and their implications.

We have a flexibility that has allowed us to address any number of key issues in recent years that would otherwise lack quality data and information. We

conducted a major study on Asian-Americans—the fastest-growing minority group in the nation. We did a deep study on military veterans. We produced the most rigorous census of religious identity, beliefs, and practices in the nation and the world.

### **This proliferation of data largely has been caused by new technology, which has led to changes in methodologies, including by some major news organizations. How have these changes affected the Pew Research Center?**

Technological change has a huge impact on our work. The spread of cellphones, caller ID, the Internet, and social media have fundamentally changed the way people live their lives, and we invest a lot of time and energy into understanding those



**"The increasing complexity of technology—and of people's lives—has made it harder to conduct rigorous surveys using traditional approaches,"** says Dimock. *Artur Debat/Getty Images*

changes, both to report on them and to improve our own methodologies. The increasing complexity of technology—and of people's lives—has made it harder to conduct rigorous surveys using traditional approaches, which face challenges such as declining response rates. But these technological changes also open a wide array of new opportunities with the potential to improve our data collection and expand our reach.

We are continually searching for ways to expand and strengthen our current methodologies and exploring the potential for alternative research methods that adhere to our standards.

This year, for example, we launched the American Trends Panel, a 4,000-person representative online group. It has provided us with an unprecedented depth of information, along with the flexibility of online survey administration. We also are increasing the share of interviews conducted by cellphone to 65 percent in order to keep pace with the growing number of Americans who rely only on mobile phones. And we're starting an innovation initiative to experiment with data sources and analytical tools that complement and expand our traditional research agenda.

### **What are some other ways that the Pew Research Center helps people understand the trends that shape the world?**

While we're probably best known for our public opinion polling, we use a variety of research methodologies in our work, including demographic research, various forms of content analysis, and other data-driven social science research. Our demographers, economists, and other analysts examine publicly available data sources to explore key social trends such as educational attainment, household wealth, and marriage and fertility rates. Our demographic research helps answer important questions, like how many unauthorized immigrants are in the U.S., how many reporters cover U.S. statehouses, and how much the world's Muslim population is expected to grow in the coming years. Content analysis also has played a major role in the center's work over time, particularly in our ongoing research on journalism and media, including how media outlets covered Barack Obama and Mitt Romney during the 2012 election. In all our work, our goal is to provide information that can help people make informed decisions and better understand their daily lives.

# The Numbers Show Rags-to-Riches Happens Only in Movies

The New York Times' "Room for Debate" feature recently posed the question, "Is the modern American Dream attainable?"

"According to recent studies, more than half of Americans believe the American Dream is dead, never existed, or is unachievable," the newspaper said. "This breaks down along racial lines, with blacks and Hispanics taking more pessimistic views. Is the modern American Dream attainable?"

The Times asked Erin Currier, who directs Pew's financial security and mobility project, to contribute an essay addressing the state of the American Dream. It appeared Jan. 1, 2015.

The American Dream is usually defined in terms of financial security, homeownership, and higher education. Our data on financial security shows why it is in doubt. When it comes to economic mobility—the ability to move up or down the economic ladder within a lifetime or from one generation to the next—your place on the ladder as a child can often be a predictor of your place as an adult.

Just 4 percent raised at the bottom rung of the income ladder make it to the top a generation later.

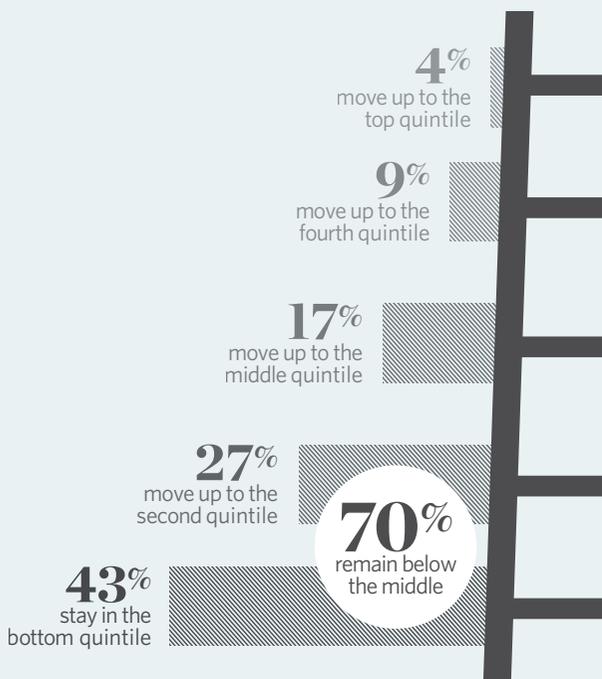
The Pew Charitable Trusts uses two different measures: absolute mobility and relative mobility. Absolute mobility measures whether people have more (or less) income or wealth than their parents had at the same age. On the income side, 84 percent of American adults today have surpassed their parents. But that hasn't translated into greater wealth, which is all the financial assets a family has minus its debt—a strong measure of economic security. Only half of Americans are wealthier than their parents were.

Relative mobility, which looks at whether Americans have moved up or down the economic ladder compared to their parents, indicates similar cause for concern. Forty-three percent of those raised in the bottom fifth of the income ladder remain there a generation later, and 40 percent of those raised at the top stay there. Just 4 percent raised at the bottom rung of the income ladder make it to the top a generation later, highlighting the unfortunate truth that rags-to-riches stories are more common in movies than in reality.

Recent polling shows that Americans feel increasingly financially insecure, perhaps in part because of this lack of mobility out of the bottom rung of the economic ladder. It's no surprise, then, that for many the American Dream may feel out of reach.

## A Hard Climb for Most Americans

Percent raised in the bottom quintile who stay put or move up



Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts

## END NOTE

# Love, American Style

The share of Americans who have never married is at an historic high, the Pew Research Center has found after analyzing recent Census data, with the public divided over the value of marriage. This comes as adults are marrying later in life, and many are co-habiting and raising children out of marriage. But there is a bright spot for romantics—or at least optimists: Four-in-ten new marriages now include at least one partner who has walked down the aisle before. Maybe they listened to Frank Sinatra, who, after all, liked to croon, “love is lovelier the second time around.”

### The public is divided on the value of marriage

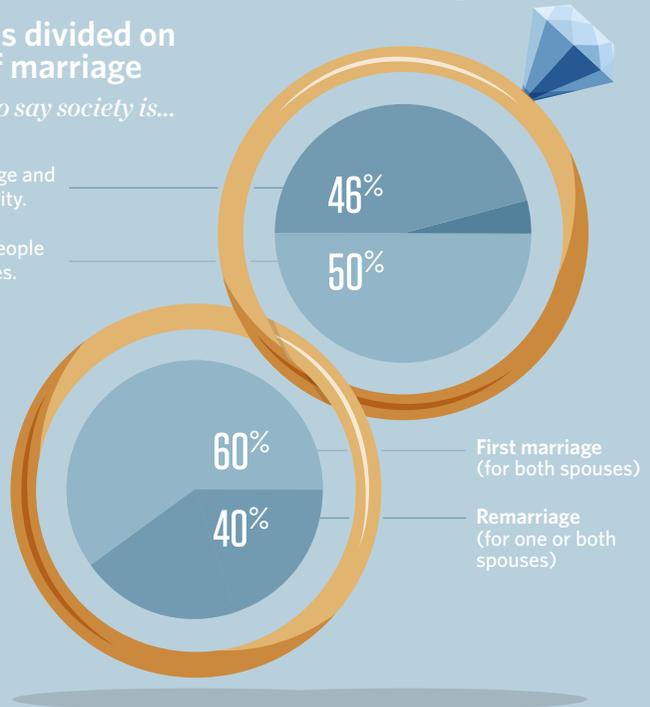
Percentage who say society is...

Better off if marriage and children are a priority.

Just as well off if people have other priorities.

### Four in ten new marriages involve remarriage

Percentage of people who got married in 2013



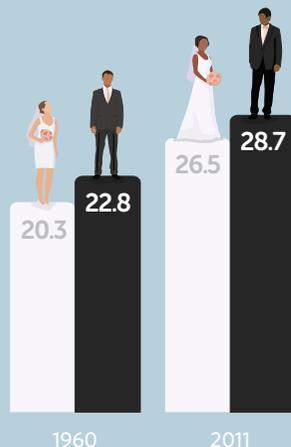
### Barely half of U.S. adults are married—a record low

Percentage of married people 18 and older in:



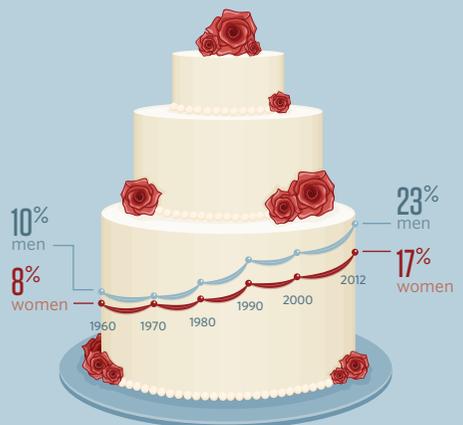
### The median age for first marriages has never been higher

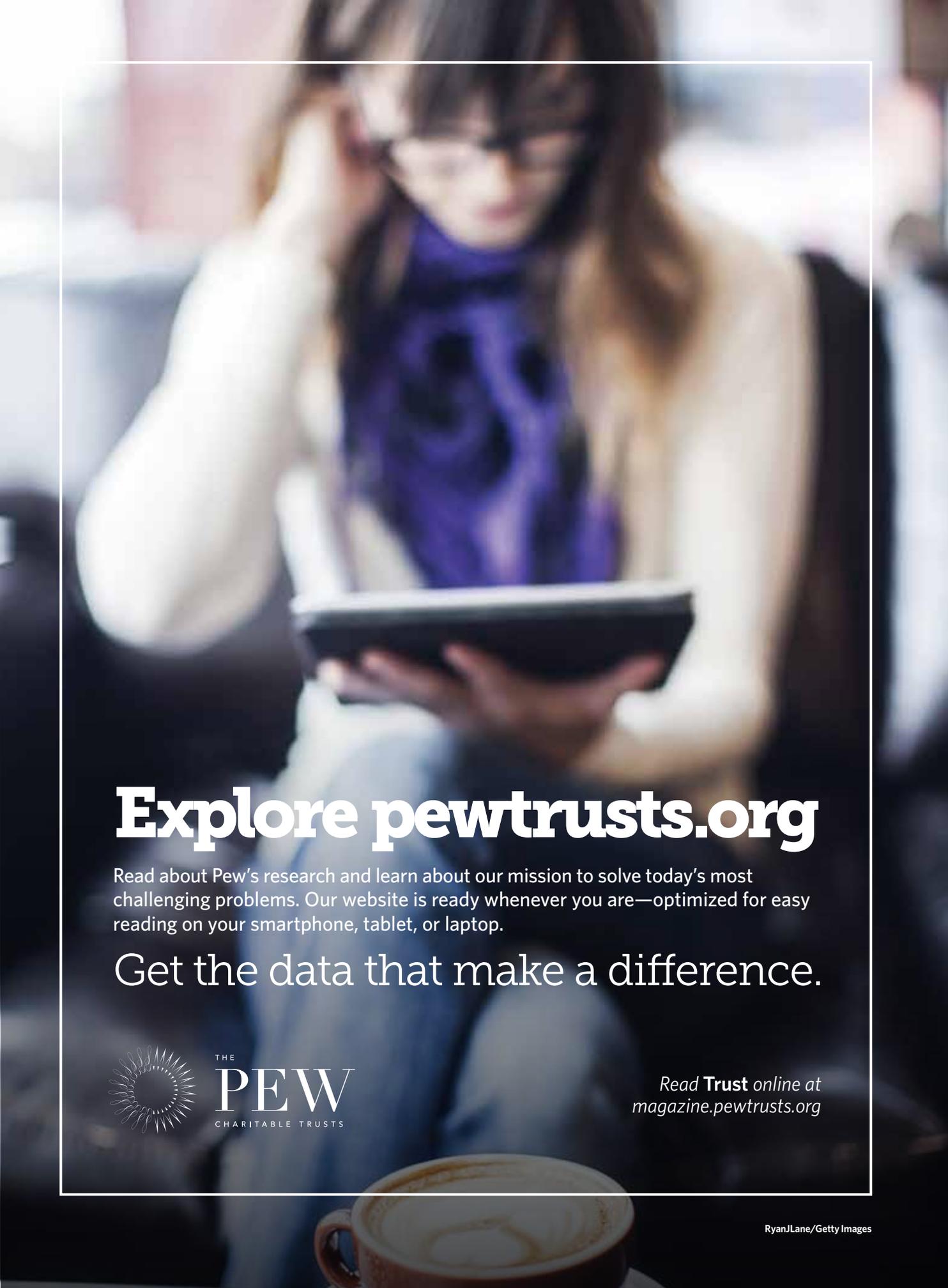
Age in years



### A record share of Americans have never been married

Percentage of men and women ages 25 and older who have never been married





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# Australia's Outback doesn't need fewer people. It needs more.

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