

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LGB DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS in Identity and Community Connectedness

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A 2020 Williams Institute report said that nearly 9 million LGBT adults are registered and eligible to vote in the 2020 general election and half of registered LGBT voters (50%) are Democrats, 15% are Republicans, 22% are Independents, and 13% identify with another party or did not know with which party they most identified.¹ In this report we assess differences and similarities between sexual minority people who identified themselves as Republicans or Democrats. The U.S. Transgender Survey finds only 2% of transgender people, not included in this report, are Republicans.

Researchers and LGBT community members have seen an inherent incompatibility between LGBT identity and Republican affiliation.² Nonetheless, LGBT people, like other minority groups, hold diverse beliefs and political affiliations. In order to better understand the relationship between sexual minority and political identities, we examined five indicators that describe the relationship people have with their lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) identity and their connection with the LGBT community.

We used data collected in *Generations*, a study that explored identity, stress, health outcomes, and health care and services utilization among three generations of LGB adults who came of age at different historical contexts (www.generationsstudy.com). The study used a national probability sample of LGBT people recruited between 2016 and 2017.³ In this report we focus on non-transgender LGB individuals (including those identified with other sexual

¹ Mallory, C. (2020). The 2020 LGBT vote: Preferences and characteristics of LGBT voters. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020-LGBT-Vote-Oct-2019.pdf>

² Grant, W.H. (2018). Issues framing and identity politics in the Log Cabin Republicans. Northern Arizona University. ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 10817262

³ For detailed information about the study's methodology see Krueger, E. A., Lin, A., Kittle, K. R., & Meyer, I. H. (2020). *Generations -- A Study of the Life and Health of LGB People in a Changing Society (Methodology and Technical Notes)*. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.generations-study.com/s/Generations-Quantitative-Survey-Methods-v20_copy.pdf

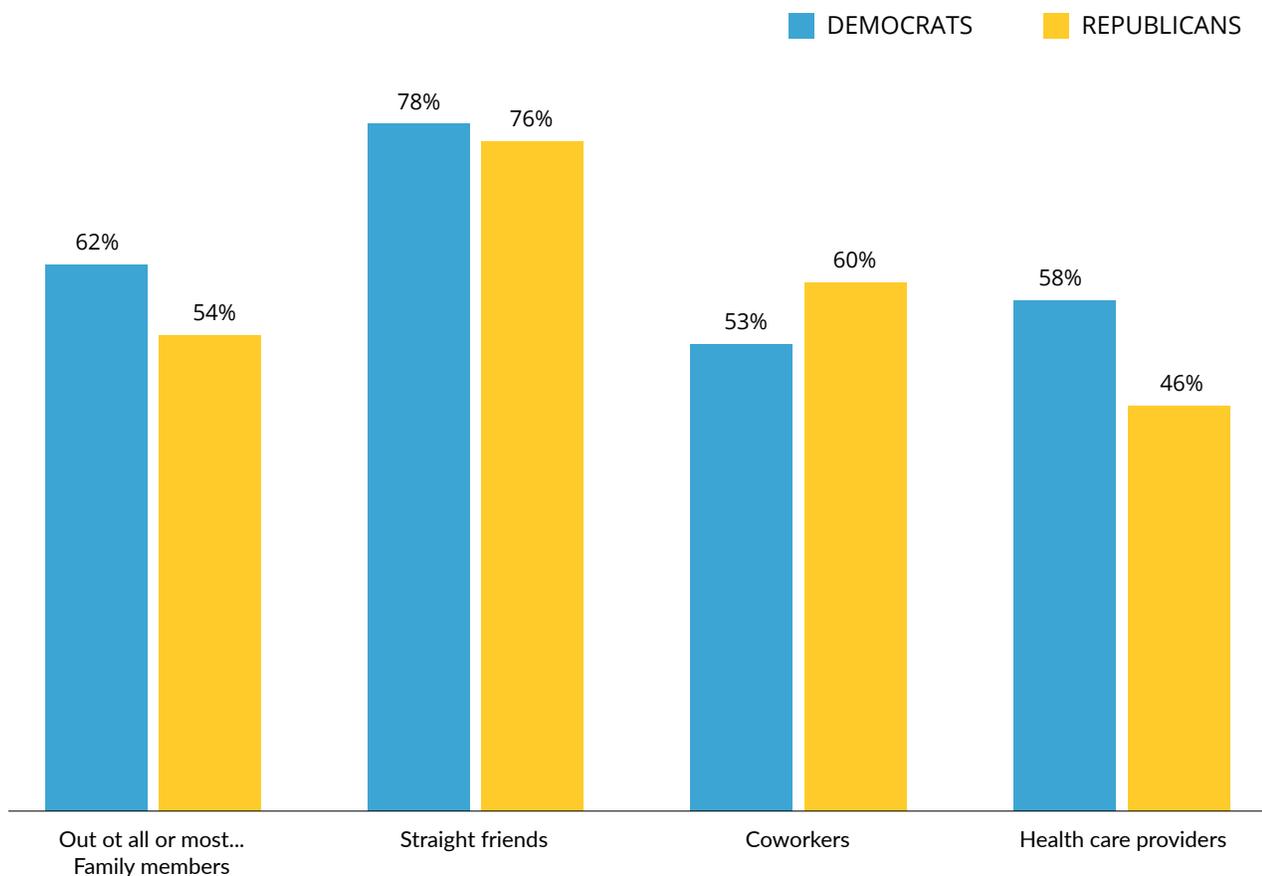
minority identities, like queer and pansexual) whose party affiliation was Republican or Democrat.⁴

Our results show some similarities but also important differences between Republican and Democratic LGB people⁵ in how they view their sexual identity and how they connect to the LGBT community.⁶

DISCLOSURE (OUTNESS)

Republican and Democratic LGB people were similar in the degree that they disclosed their sexual identity. Most people of both party affiliations disclosed to family members, straight friends, coworkers, and health care providers that they were LGB (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Disclosure of LGB identity among LGB Democrats and Republicans



Note: differences were not statistically significant.

⁴ People were eligible if they were 18 – 60 years old; White, Black, Latino or multi-race (the study did not recruit Asian and American Indian/Native Alaskan LGBT people); had an education level of at least 6th grade; and could complete the survey in English.

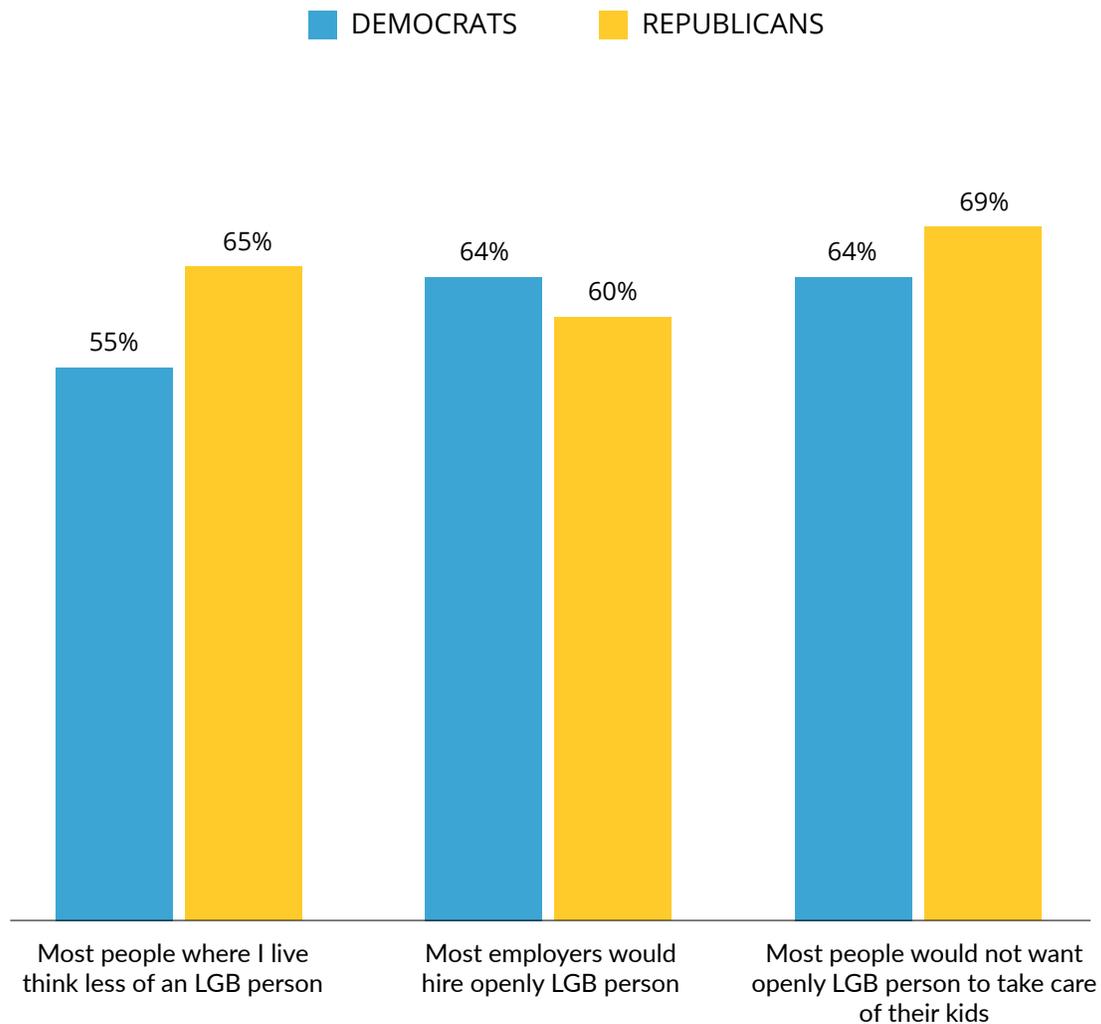
⁵ There were no statistically significant differences between Republican and Democratic LGB people in terms of age; gender, race/ethnicity, and education. Although not statistically significant, estimates show that more Democrats than Republicans identified as gender non-binary (4.9% vs. 1.2%); more were non-White race/ethnicity than White (Democratic 40.6% vs. Republican 29.0%); and more had higher than high-school education (Democratic 64.4% vs. Republican 50.5%).

⁶ Analyses consisted of unadjusted crosstabulation of political party affiliation by outcome of interest and using the Chi² statistical test to determine statistical significance of the difference in estimates between the groups.

PERCEIVED STIGMA

Also, Republican and Democratic LGB people perceived similar levels of rejection and discrimination in the communities where they lived. A majority of each group said that they believed that people thought less of an LGB person and that most people would not want to hire an openly LGB person to take care of their children. Still, a majority of people of both party affiliations thought that most employers would hire an openly LGB person who is qualified for the job (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Perceived stigma among LGB Democrats and Republicans

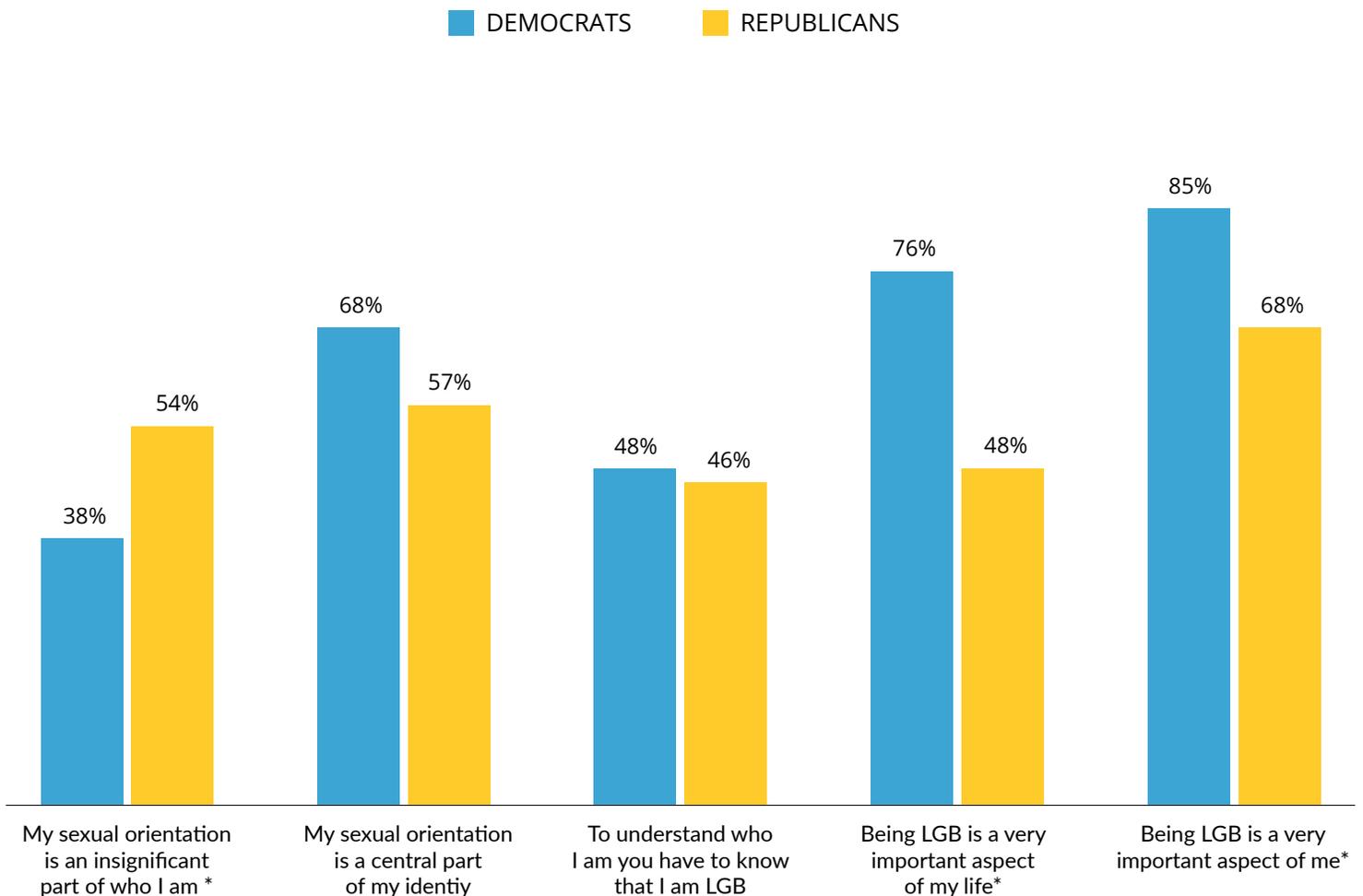


Note: differences were not statistically significant.

CENTRALITY OF LGB IDENTITY

Republican and Democratic LGB people differed in how they felt about their sexual identity and relationship to the LGBT community. Compared with Democratic LGB people, fewer (but still a majority) of Republican LGB people said that being LGB is a very important aspect of their life (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Centrality of LGBT identity among LGB Democrats and Republicans

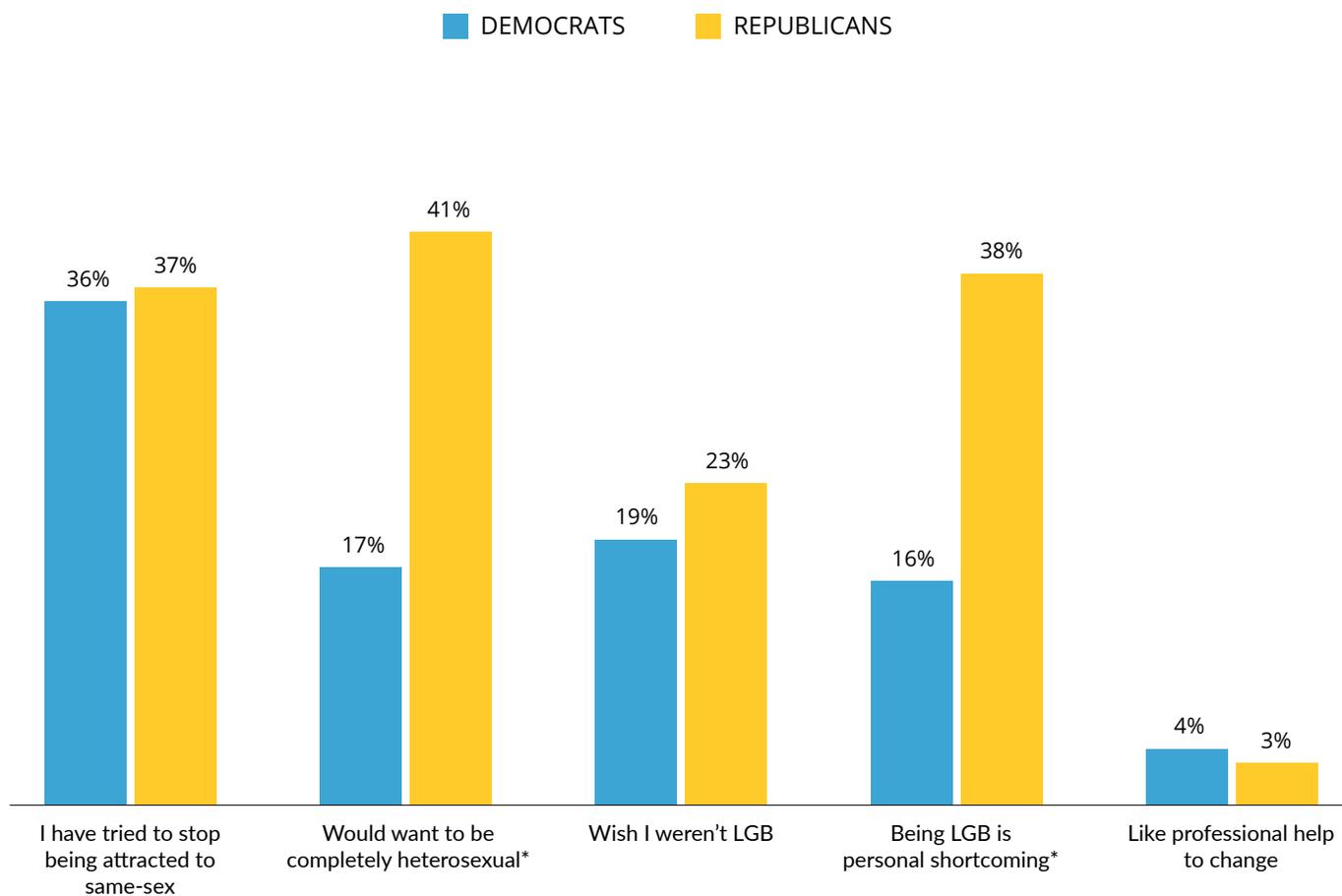


*Differences are statistically significant

INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA

Compared with Democratic LGB people, more Republican LGB people said they would want to be completely heterosexual and that being LGB is a personal shortcoming. But similar proportions—more than a third—of LGB people of both party affiliations said they had tried to stop being attracted to same-sex partners at some point in their life (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Internalized homophobia among LGBT Democrats and Republicans

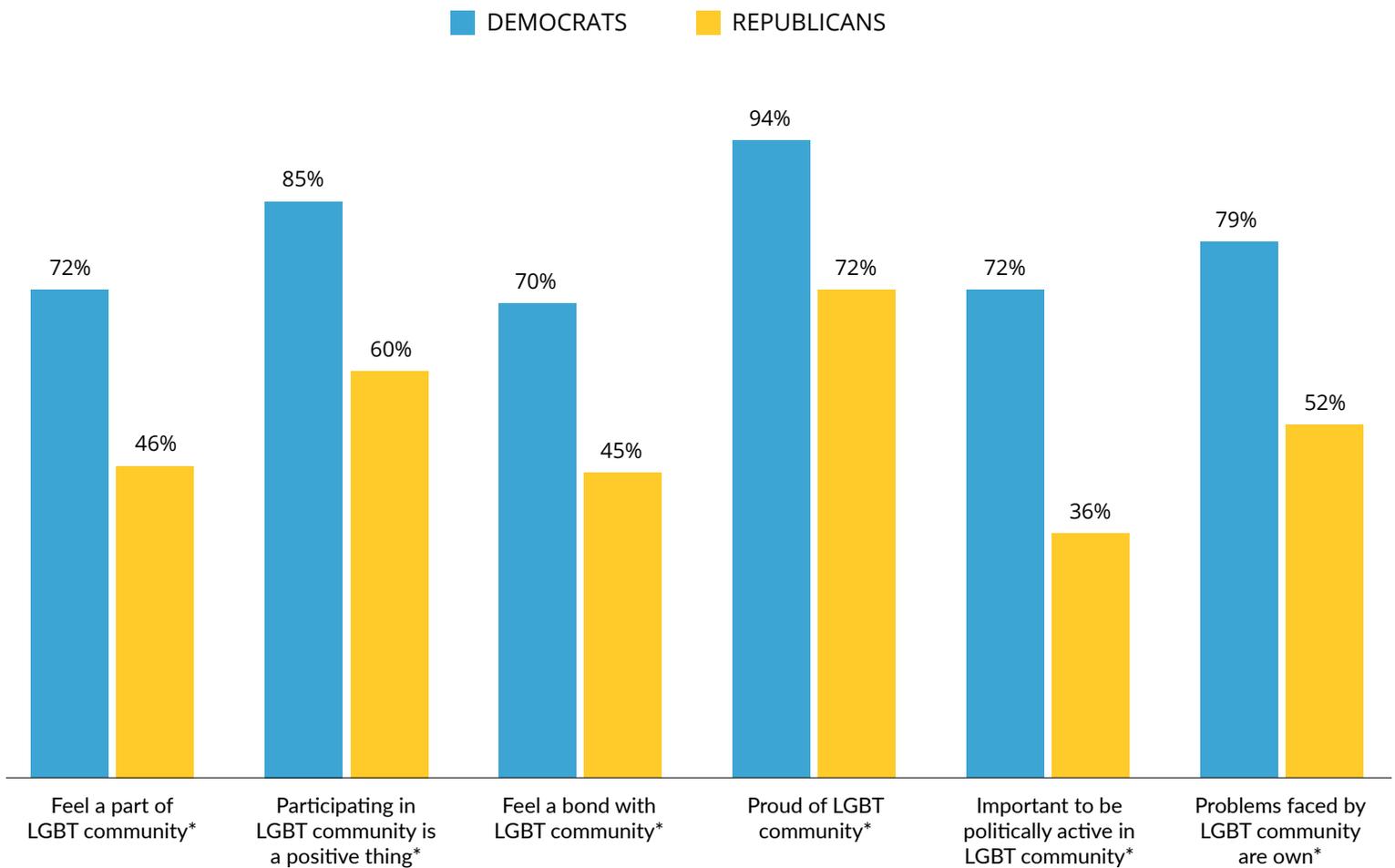


*Differences are statistically significant

COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

There were very marked differences in Republican and Democratic LGB people's sense of connectedness with the LGBT community. Republican LGB people were less likely than Democratic LGB people to feel that they are a part of the LGBT community, to agree that participating in the LGBT community is a positive thing, to feel a bond with the LGBT community, to be proud of the LGBT community, and to feel that problems faced by the LGBT community are their own problems (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Connectedness to the LGBT community among LGB Democrats and Republicans



*Differences are statistically significant

SUMMARY

In summary, this shows a diversity of opinions among LGB people. Although a small minority, LGB people are affiliated as Republicans. Republican and Democratic LGB people similarly perceive stigma against LGB people in their communities. But they differ in terms of their connections with LGBT communities. Our data show that Republican LGB people have a weaker connection to the LGBT community than Democratic LGB people and half as many Republican as Democratic LGB people said that it was important for them to be politically active in the LGBT community.

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