



# Edelman Trust Barometer 2021



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer  
Special Report

# Business and Racial Justice in America

Fieldwork: April 19 – April 26, 2021

\*Asian includes Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders

Margin of error:

- U.S. total margin of error: +/- 2.2% (n=2,000)
- Ethnicity-specific data margin of error: Non-Hispanic White +/- 2.9% (n=1,159); Black, Latinx, and Asian +/- 4.4% (n=500)

## U.S. Online Survey

- 2,000 general population respondents
- All data is nationally representative based on age, region, gender, ethnicity
- Racial and ethnic segments

|        |         |
|--------|---------|
| White  | n=1,159 |
| Black  | n=500   |
| Latinx | n=500   |
| Asian* | n=500   |

- All racial and ethnic segments are nationally representative based on age, region and gender

## Demographic Composition

|           |     |        |     |                  |     |
|-----------|-----|--------|-----|------------------|-----|
| Northeast | 19% | Male   | 49% | Republican       | 28% |
| Midwest   | 23% | Female | 51% | Democrat         | 44% |
| South     | 36% |        |     | Ind./Third-party | 23% |
| West      | 22% | 18-34  | 30% |                  |     |
|           |     | 35-54  | 33% |                  |     |
|           |     | 55+    | 37% |                  |     |

# RACIAL JUSTICE IN AMERICA

Key findings from  
**2020**  
Edelman Trust  
Barometer Special  
Reports

**Business**  
seen as failing  
to act

**Employers**  
only institution  
trusted with racism  
response

**Media**  
seen as  
fueling racism

**Brands and  
corporations**  
both expected to  
take a stand

*Higher expectation for  
brands*

**Workplace  
racism**  
harms the  
employer-  
employee  
relationship

**Brands and  
corporations**  
that take a stand  
far more likely to  
gain trust  
than lose it

## 2020 Reports

**Brands and Racial Justice in America**  
fielded June 5 – June 7, 2020

**The Fight for Racial Justice in America**  
fielded August 14 – August 21, 2020; August  
28 – August 31, 2020

⊥

**A LACK OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE**

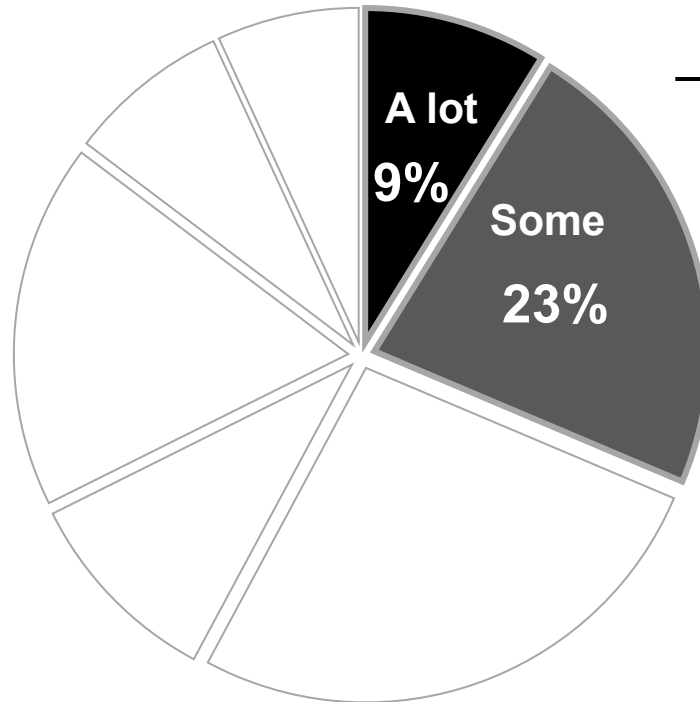
T

# ONLY 1 IN 3 SEE AMERICA MAKING PROGRESS ON RACIAL JUSTICE OVER THE LAST YEAR

Percent who say

*How much progress do you feel the country has made over the past year in addressing systemic racism and racial injustice?*

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 27%        | A very small amount of progress          |
| 10%        | No progress at all                       |
| <b>18%</b> | <b>Things have actually gotten worse</b> |
| 8%         | Not a problem in our country             |
| 7%         | Don't know                               |



U.S. general population

# 32%

**Some or a lot of progress**

|        |    |
|--------|----|
| White  | 34 |
| Black  | 28 |
| Latinx | 31 |
| Asian  | 32 |

# A NATION DIVIDED: RACIST INDIVIDUALS OR A RACIST SYSTEM?

Which do you agree with more?

2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. IDEAL. You are about to see a series of two choices. Please choose the one that you agree with more. General population, U.S., by age, and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations.

The biggest challenge in solving the problem of racial injustice in this country is **changing a system** that is racist

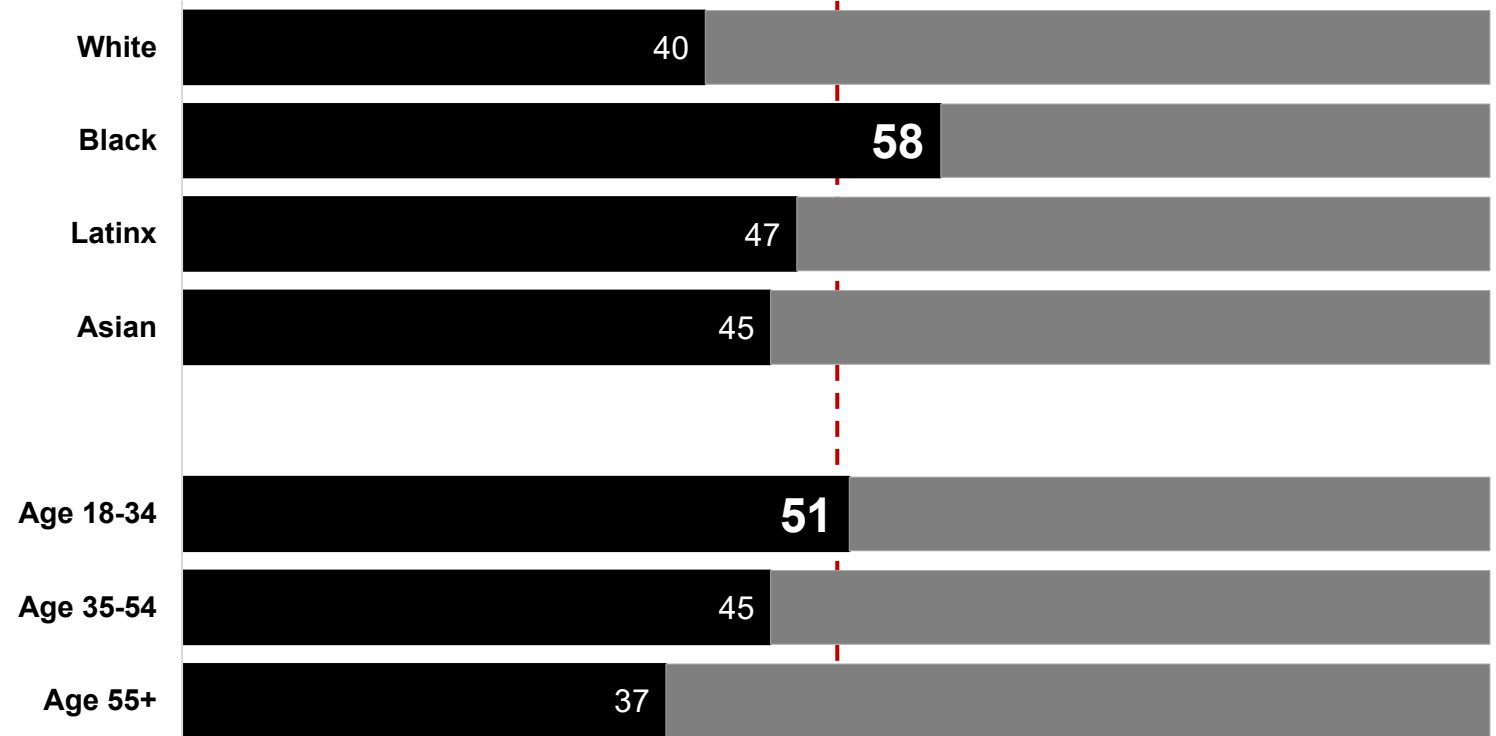
OR

The biggest challenge in solving the problem of racial injustice is **changing the attitudes of people** who are racist

U.S. general population

44%

56%



50%

# MEDIA FAILS TO REPORT ROOT CAUSES

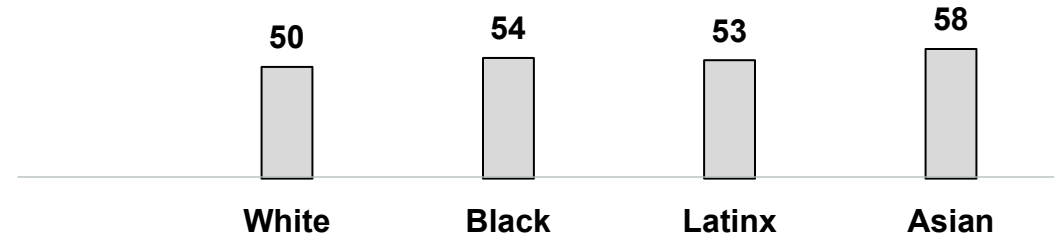
Percent who agree

The **media is failing to adequately examine and report** on the **root causes of racism** in this country

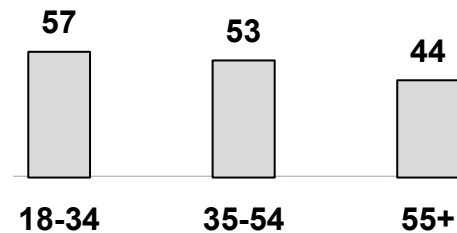
# 51%

U.S. general population

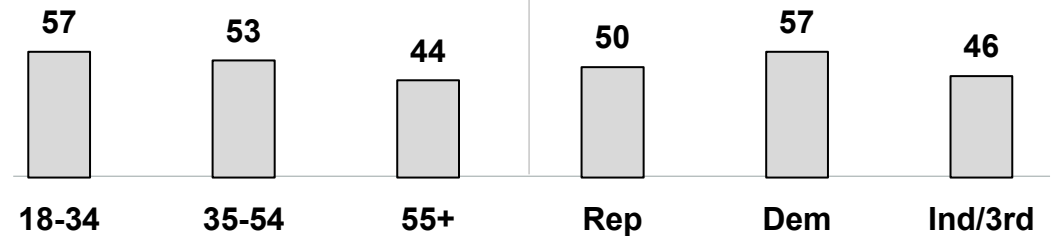
## Communities



## Age



## Political Affiliation

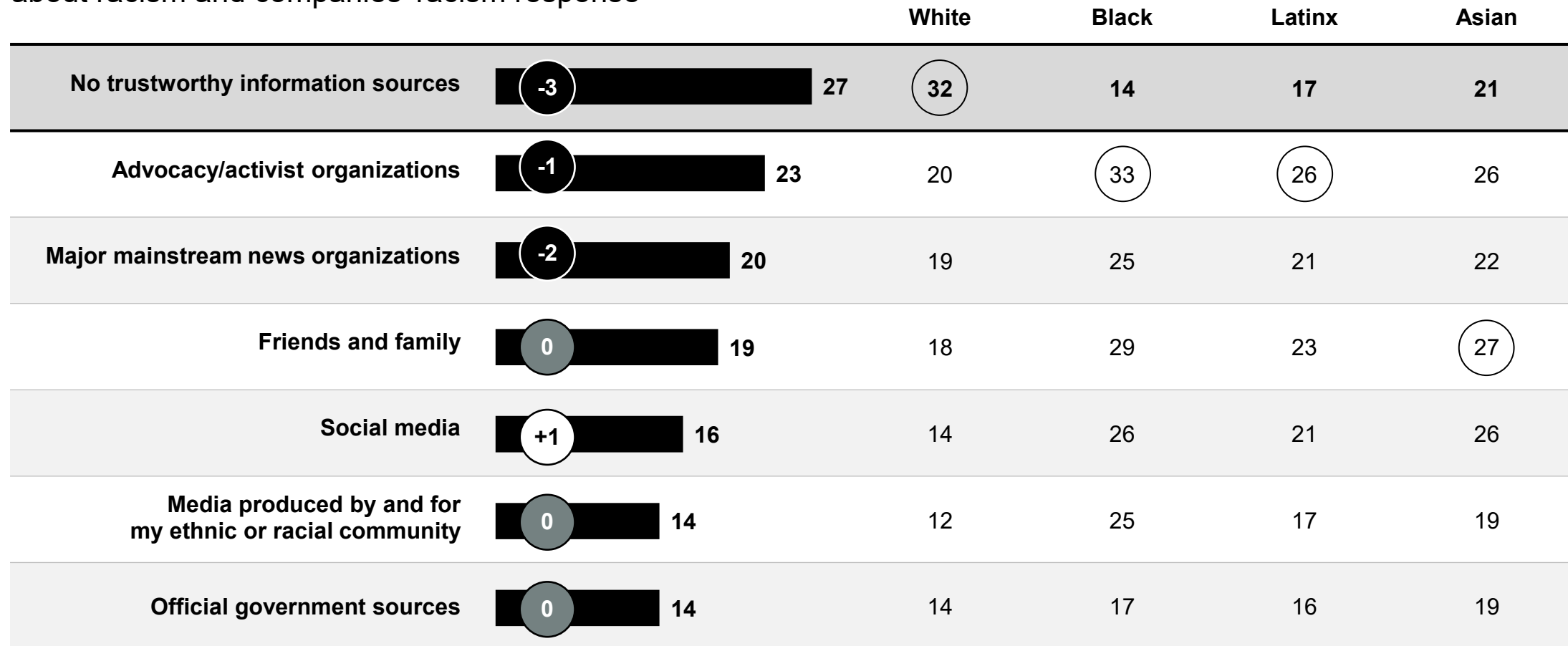


2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. MED\_AGR\_RACE. Below is a list of statements. For each one, please rate how much you agree or disagree with that statement using a nine-point scale where one means “strongly disagree” and nine means “strongly agree”. 9-point scale; top 4 box, agree. General population, U.S., by age and political affiliation, and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations.

# MORE THAN 1 IN 4 DON'T TRUST ANY INFORMATION SOURCE ON RACIAL JUSTICE

Percent who say each information source is the best place to get the truth about racism and companies' racism response

Change, Aug 2020 to Apr 2021  
 Most trusted source within each community



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q28. Which of the following information sources are the best places to go to get the truth about racism and racial injustice in this country, and how companies and institutions are responding to calls for change? Pick all that apply. General population, U.S., and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations. "Advocacy/Activist organizations" is an average of attributes 9 and 10.

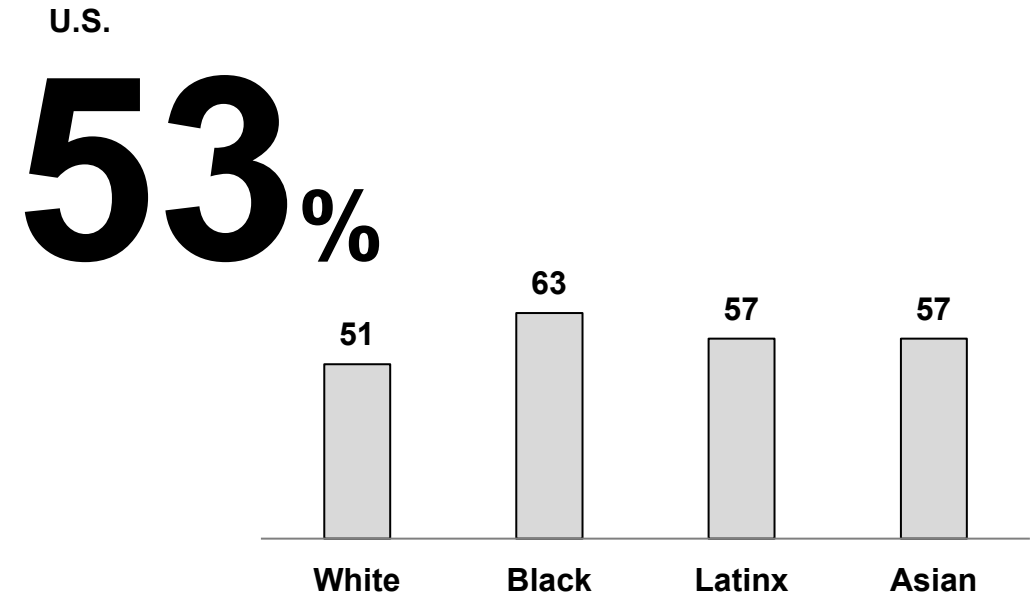
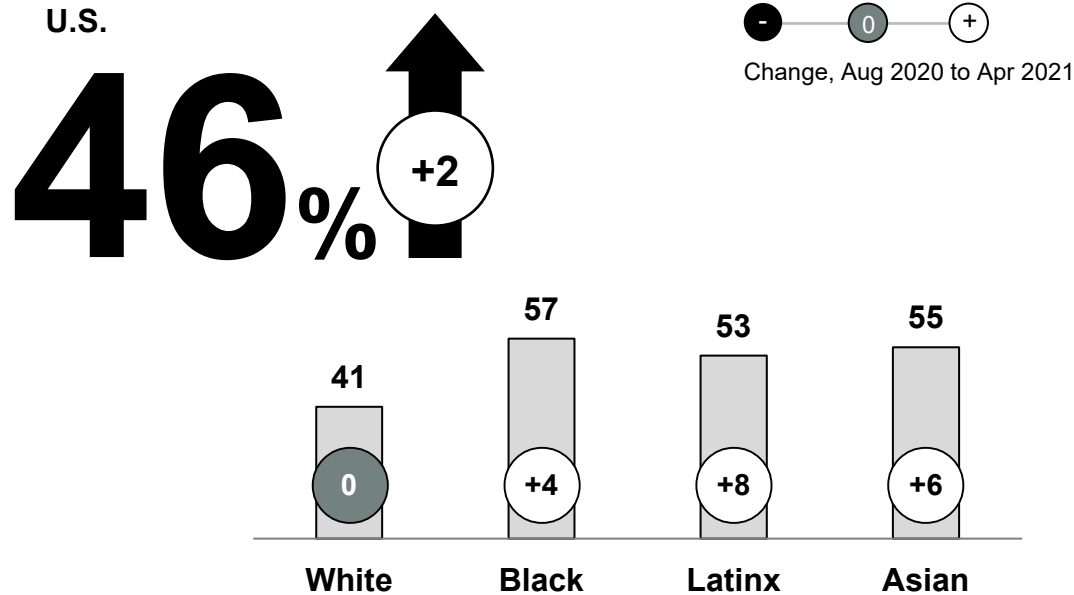


# BUSINESS FALLS SHORT ON CONCRETE ACTION AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Percent who agree

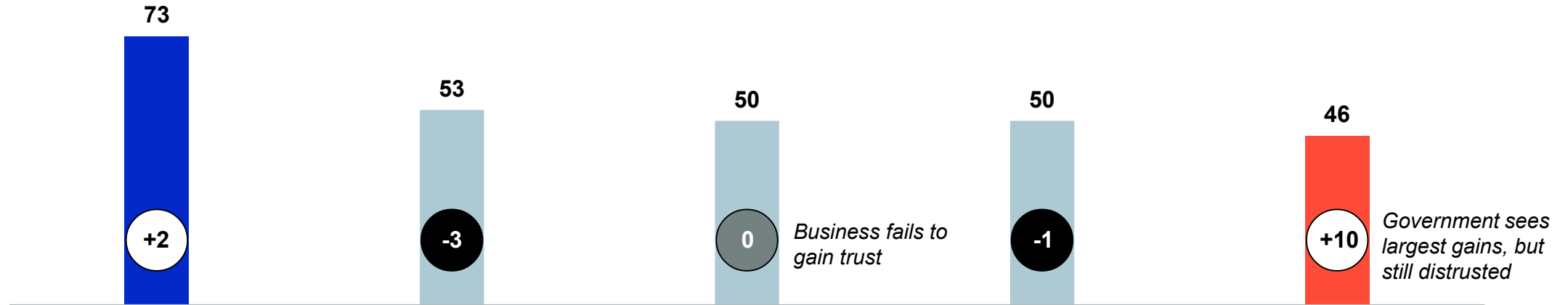
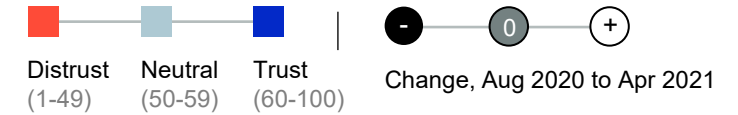
With few exceptions, the **business community has done very little in the way of concrete actions** to address systemic racism in our country

Brands and companies that issue a statement in support of racial equality **need to follow it up with concrete action** to avoid being seen by me as exploitative or as opportunists



# MY EMPLOYER ONLY INSTITUTION TRUSTED WITH RACISM RESPONSE

Percent who trust each institution to do what is right when it comes to racism



|            | Your employer |     | NGOs |     | Business |     | Media |     | Government |     |
|------------|---------------|-----|------|-----|----------|-----|-------|-----|------------|-----|
|            | %             | +/- |      |     |          |     |       |     |            |     |
| White      | 77            | +4  | 54   | -2  | 52       | +3  | 50    | -1  | 47         | +12 |
| Black      | 68            | +9  | 50   | +1  | 48       | +3  | 52    | +4  | 44         | +10 |
| Latinx     | 71            | +3  | 57   | +7  | 50       | +3  | 52    | +10 | 47         | +11 |
| Asian      | 74            | +3  | 59   | +1  | 51       | -2  | 47    | -3  | 46         | +6  |
| Republican | 74            | -9  | 51   | -9  | 55       | -10 | 42    | -11 | 47         | -9  |
| Democrat   | 75            | +2  | 59   | +1  | 54       | +3  | 60    | +3  | 54         | +16 |
| Ind/3rd    | 67            | +4  | 44   | -12 | 39       | -4  | 36    | -10 | 31         | +4  |

2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q7A. For each of the institutions and groups of people listed below, please indicate how much you trust them to do what is right when it comes to responding to the problem of systemic racism and racial injustice in this country. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. Question asked among those who believe systemic racism and racial injustice exists (Q7/1). General population, U.S., by political affiliation, and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations. "Your employer" only asked to those who are an employee (Q43/1).

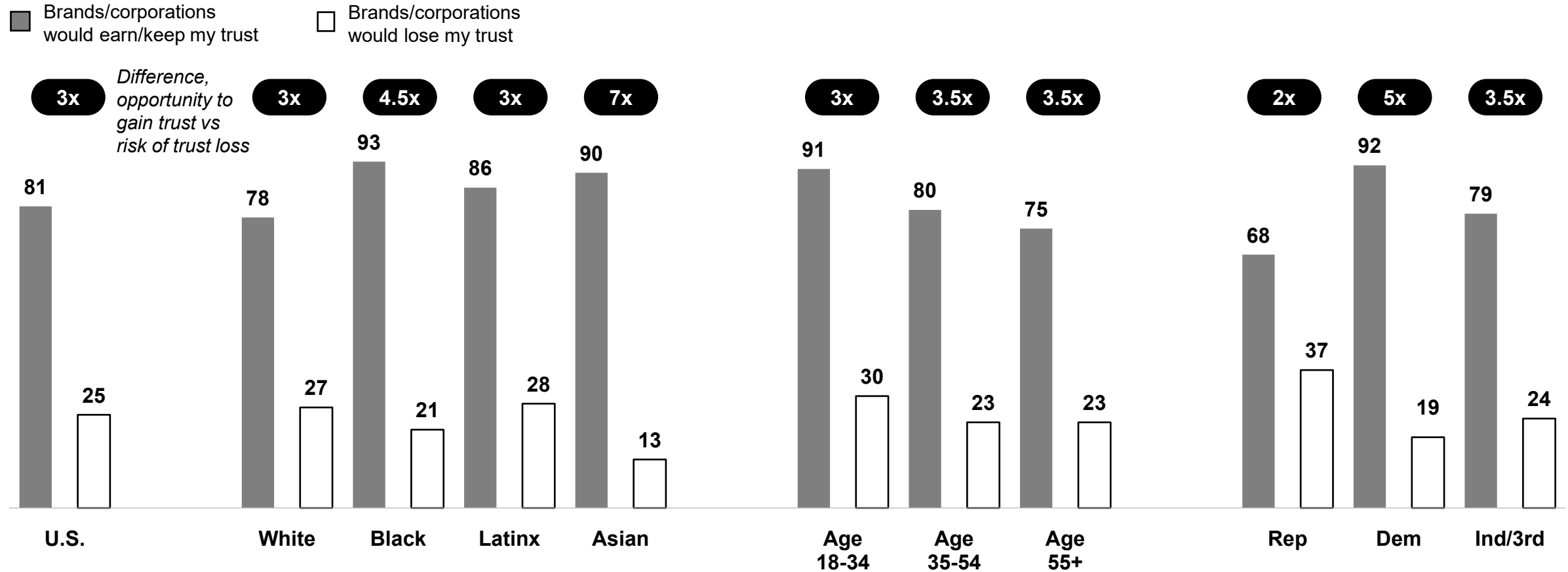
⊥

# A RECKONING FOR BUSINESS

T

# BRANDS AND CORPORATIONS THAT TAKE A STAND FAR MORE LIKELY TO GAIN TRUST THAN LOSE IT

Percent who say actions taken by brands/corporations in response to racial injustice would result in trust gain or trust loss



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q29/Q20. In general, how important is it to earning or keeping your trust that [brands – the specific products and services people buy and use / corporations -- organizations or companies that engage in industrial and commercial activities, including producing and selling products and services] - do each of the following in response to systemic racism and racial injustice in this country? 6-point scale; top 3 box, important; code 1, doing this would lose my trust. Each question asked of half of the sample. General population, U.S., by age and political affiliation, and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations. Data shown is a net of attributes 2-13.

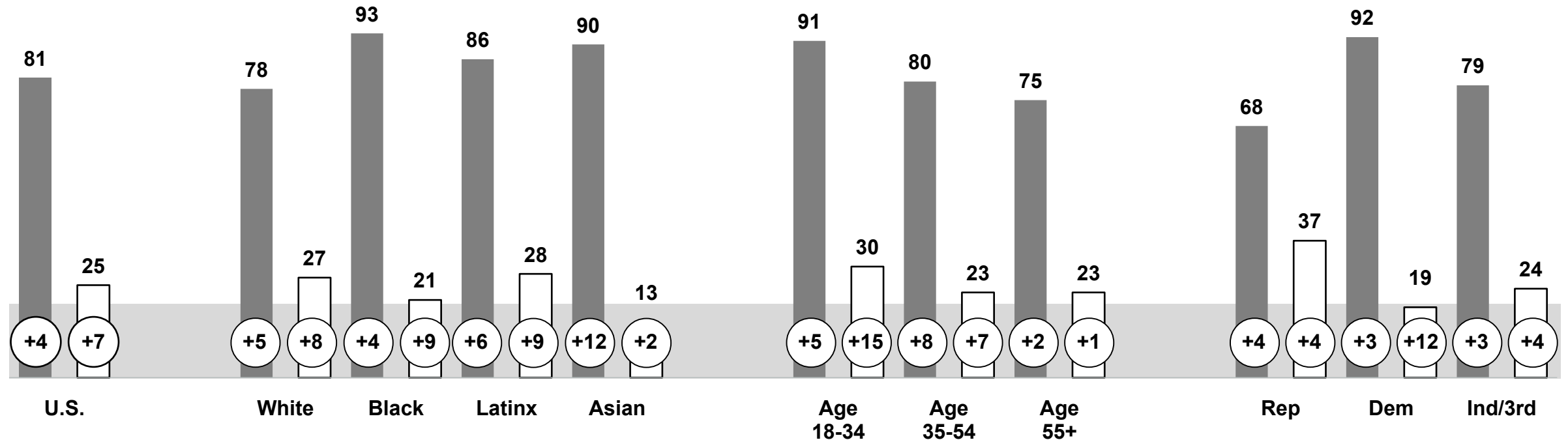
# HIGHER STAKES FOR TRUST: REACTION TO RACISM RESPONSE INTENSIFIES

Percent who say actions taken by brands/corporations in response to racial injustice would result in trust gain or trust loss

■ Brands/corporations would earn/keep my trust

□ Brands/corporations would lose my trust

● 0 ● Change, Aug 2020 to Apr 2021



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q29/Q20. In general, how important is it to earning or keeping your trust that [brands – the specific products and services people buy and use / corporations -- organizations or companies that engage in industrial and commercial activities, including producing and selling products and services] - do each of the following in response to systemic racism and racial injustice in this country? 6-point scale; top 3 box, important; code 1, doing this would lose my trust. Each question asked of half of the sample. General population, U.S., by age and political affiliation, and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations. Data shown is a net of attributes 2-13.

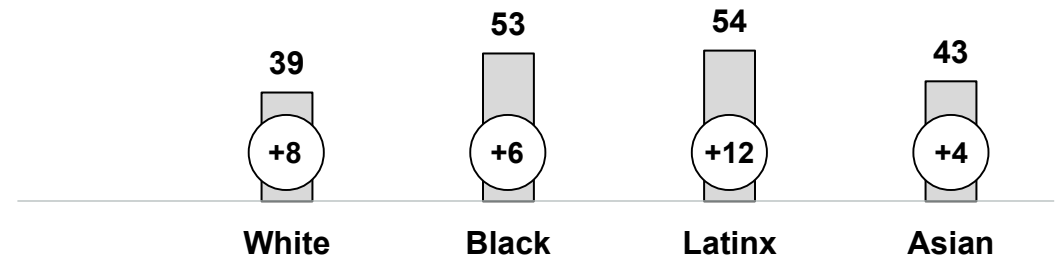
# MORE PEOPLE BUY AND BOYCOTT OVER BRAND RACISM RESPONSE

Percent who agree

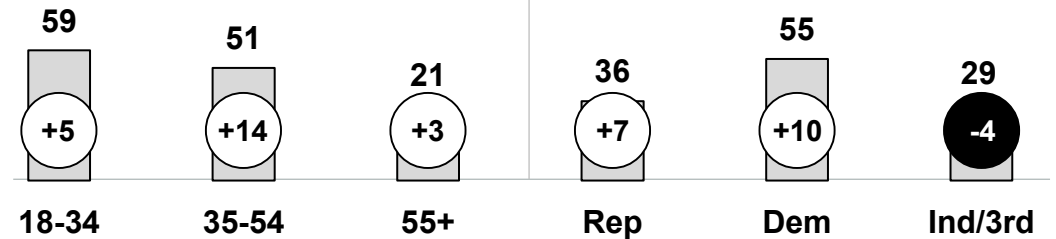
Change, Aug 2020 to Apr 2021

Within the past year, I have **started or stopped using a new brand** because of its response to the protests against systemic racism and calls for racial justice

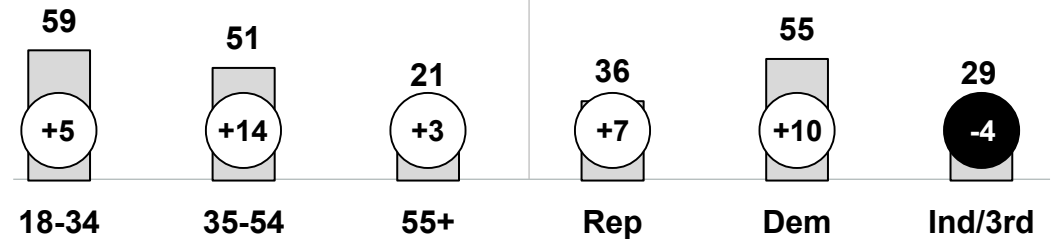
## Communities



## Age



## Political Affiliation

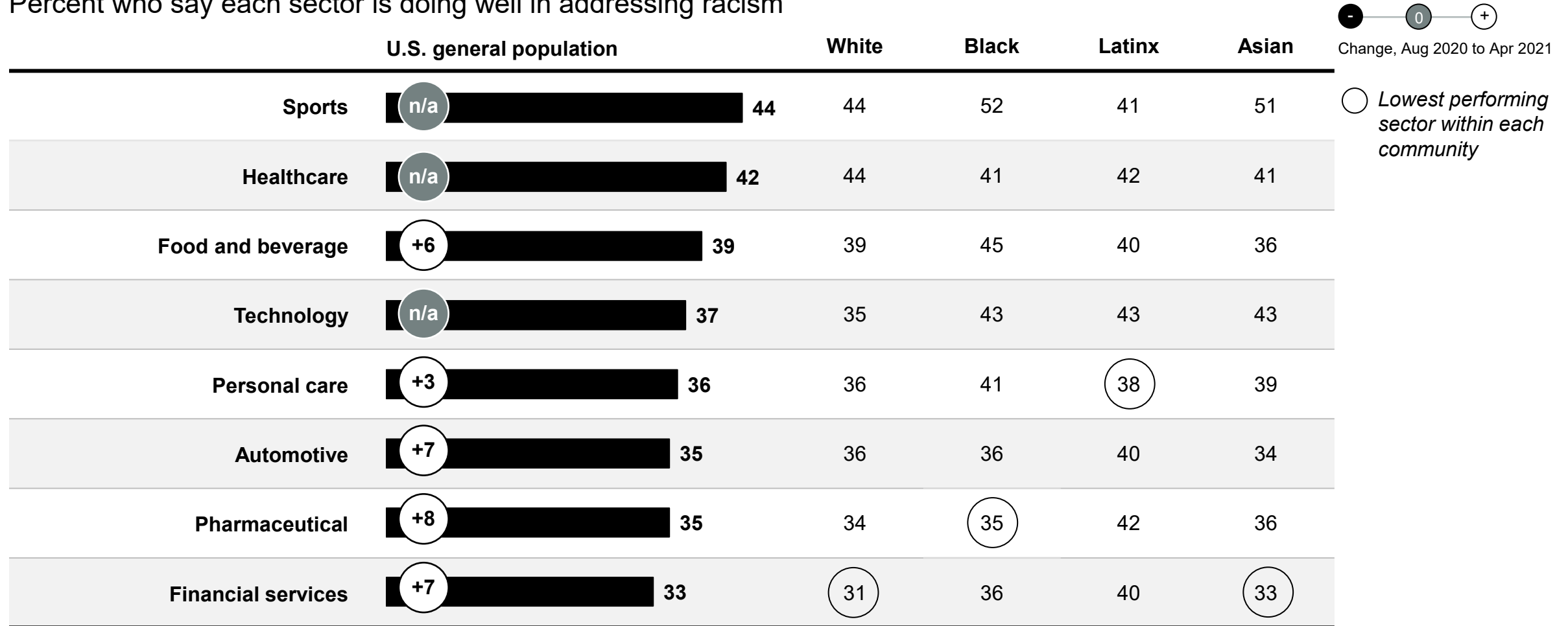


**42%** ↑ **+7 pts**

U.S. general population

# SIGNS OF PROGRESS, BUT NO SECTOR SEEN AS DOING WELL ON RACIAL JUSTICE

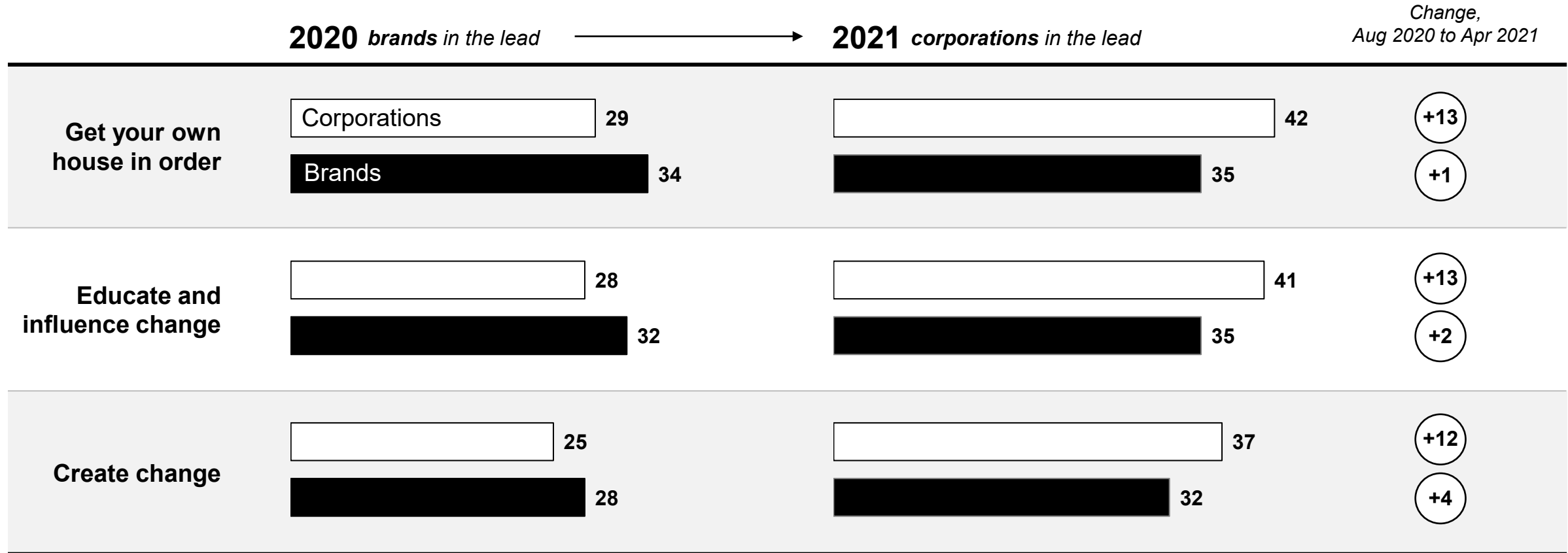
Percent who say each sector is doing well in addressing racism



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q15. How well are each of the following industry sectors currently doing when it comes to addressing the problem of systemic racism and racial inequality in their industry? 6-point scale; top 2 box, doing well. Industries shown to half of the sample. General population, U.S., and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx, and Asian populations.

# CORPORATIONS OVERTAKE BRANDS ON RACISM RESPONSE

Percent who say corporations and brands are performing well on each



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q21. How well do you feel brands are currently doing each of the following in response to systemic racism and racial injustice in this country? 5-point scale; top 2 box, doing well. Question asked of half of the sample. Q22. How well do you feel corporations are currently doing each of the following in response to systemic racism and racial injustice in this country? 5-point scale; top 2 box, doing well. Question asked of half of the sample. General population, U.S. "Get your own house in order" is an average of attributes 5,7-11; "Educate and influence change" is an average of attributes 1-3; "Create change" is an average of attributes 4, 6, and 12.



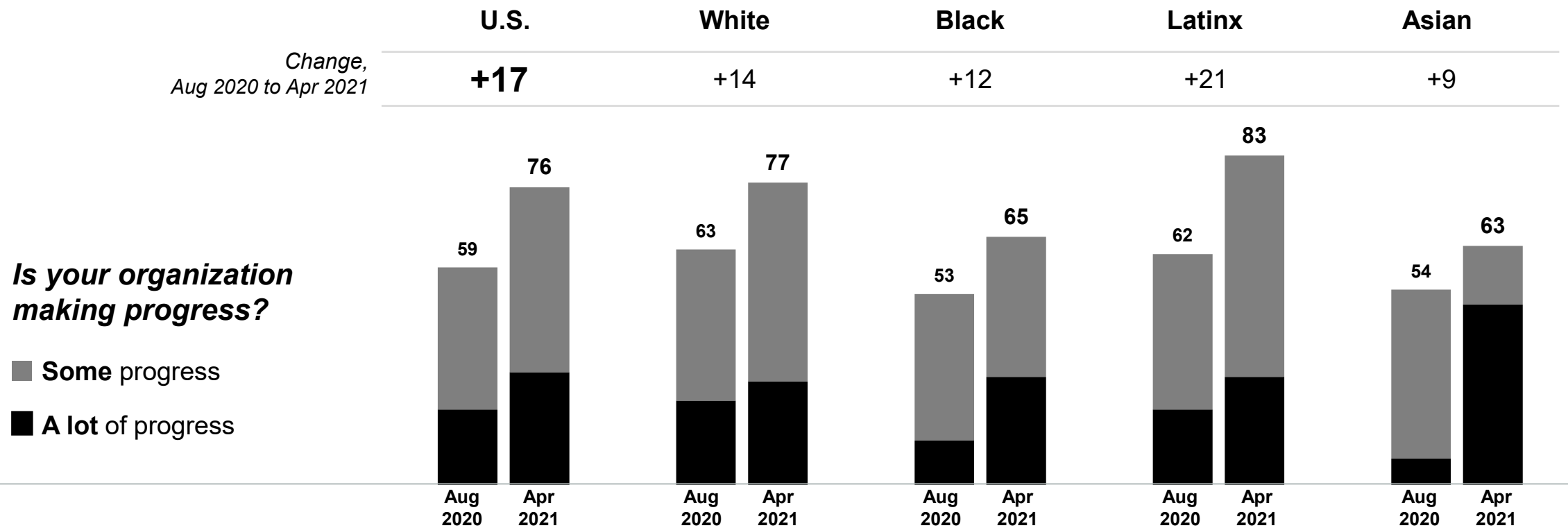
⌊

**FOR EMPLOYERS,  
HARD WORK AHEAD**

⌋

# DOUBLE-DIGIT GAINS ADDRESSING RACISM AT WORK

Percent who feel their employer is making progress in redressing racism at their workplace



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q26. Do you feel that the organization you work for is making any progress in redressing these forms of racism that you are currently seeing? Question asked of employees who have seen some form of racism at work (Q43/1 AND Q24/1-16; 18-20). General population, U.S., and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations.

# PROGRESS ON DIVERSITY; INCLUSIVE CULTURE NOW OF GREATEST CONCERN

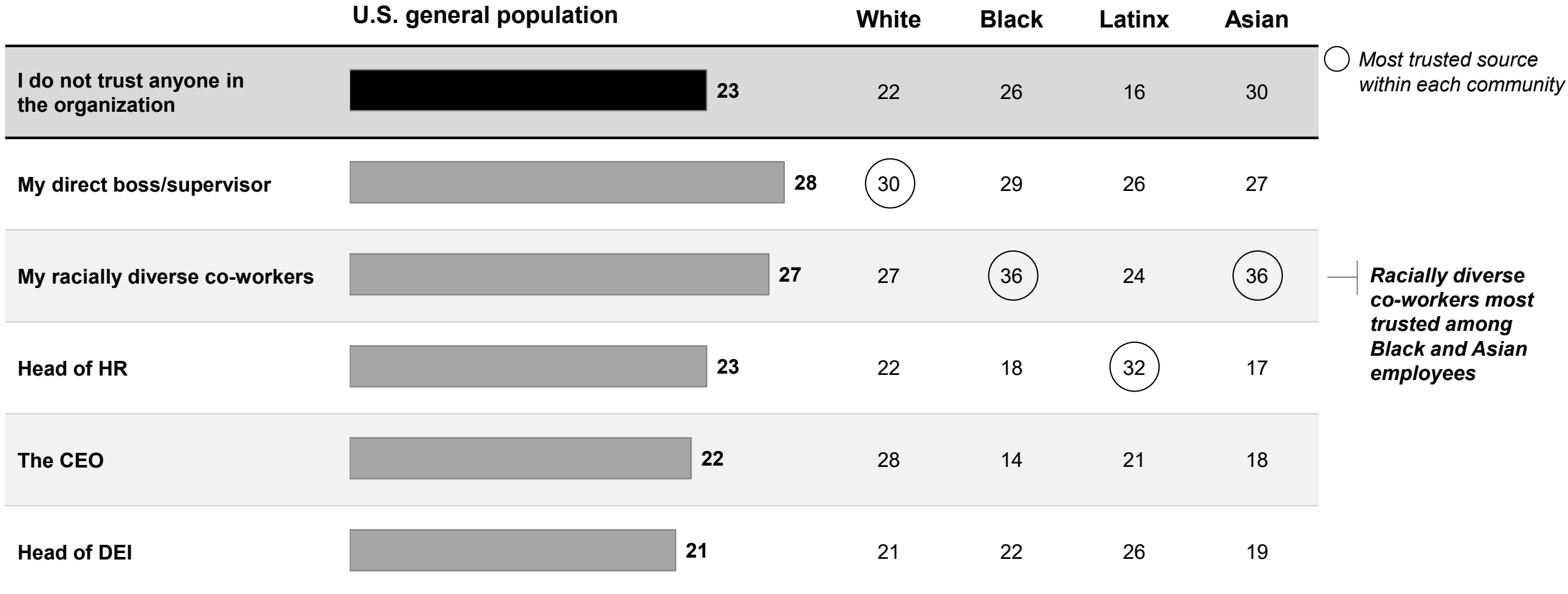
Percent who report seeing each type of racism at their employer



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q24. Within the organization you work for, what forms of racism, if any, do you currently see? Pick all that apply. Question asked of those who are employed (Q43/1). General population, U.S., and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations. "Inclusive workplace culture" is a net of attributes 7,9,12-14; "Diversity" is a net of attributes 1-4; "Bias in customer engagement" is a net of attributes 5,8,10, and 15; "Bias in employee pay" is a net of attributes 6, and 11.

# NEARLY 1 IN 4 LACK TRUSTED SOURCE OF DEI INFORMATION

Percent who trust each to tell them the truth about racism, diversity, equity and inclusion within their organization



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. VOICES. Which of the following people do you trust to tell you the truth about racism, diversity, equity and inclusion matters within the organization you work for? Pick all that apply. Question asked of those who are employed (Q43/1). General population, U.S., and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations.

# MORE THAN HALF SAY WORKPLACE RACISM HAS DAMAGED THEIR EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIP

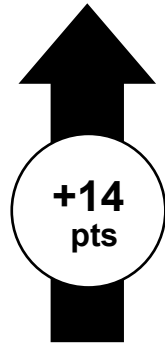
Percent of employees who agree

**Racism** in my workplace has damaged my relationship with my employer

Top three forms of damage to the employer relationship:

- Less trust
- Less loyalty
- Less advocacy

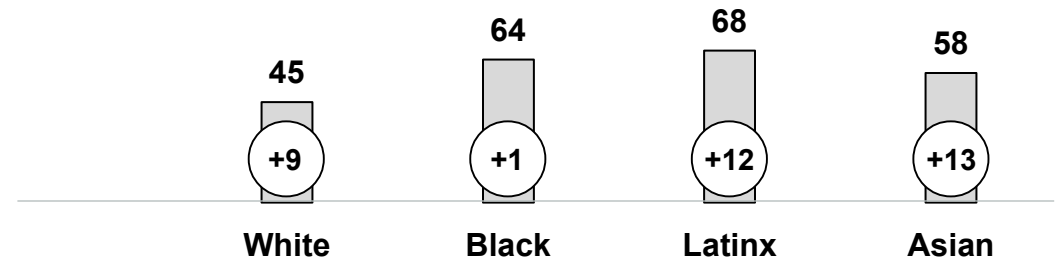
**55%**



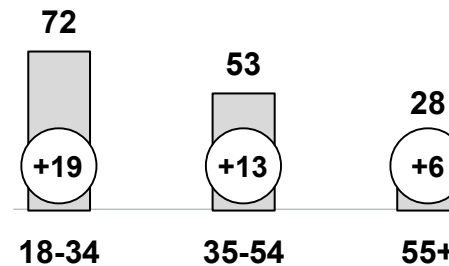
U.S. general population

Change, Aug 2020 to Apr 2021

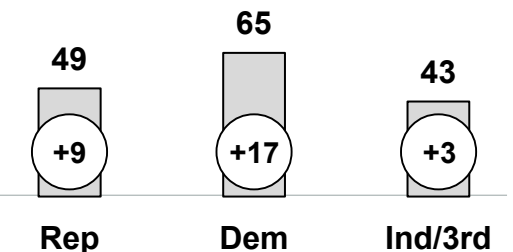
## Communities



## Age



## Political Affiliation



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q27. How does the presence of these forms of racism affect your relationship with your employer? Pick all that apply. Question asked of employees who have seen some form of racism at work (Q43/1 AND Q24/1-16; 18-20). General population, U.S., by age and political affiliation, and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations. Data shown is rebased to be among all employees. "Advocacy" is a net of attributes 3 and 4; "Loyalty" is a net of attributes 5 and 6.

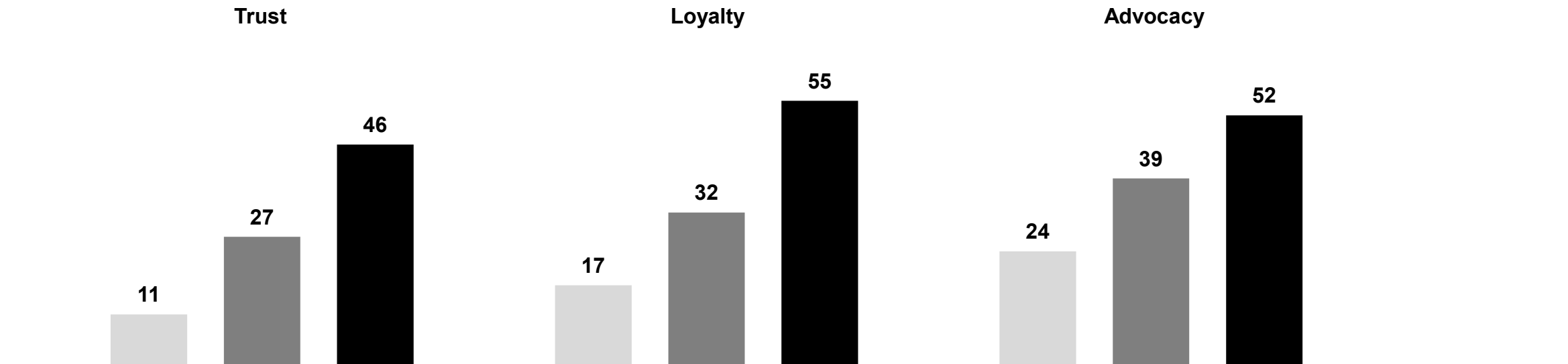
# THE MORE RACISM IN THE WORKPLACE, THE MORE DAMAGE TO THE EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIP

Number of different types of racism seen in the workplace, and percent of employees who say their relationship with their employer has been affected in each way

**The more workplace racism,  
the more damage to employer-employee relationship**

Number of types of racism seen in the workplace

One
  Two-to-three
  Four or more

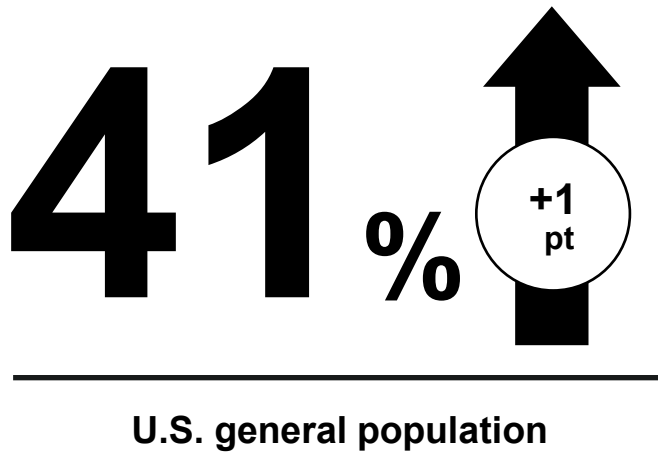


2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. Q27. How does the presence of these forms of racism affect your relationship with your employer? Pick all that apply. Question asked of employees who have seen some form of racism at work (Q43/1 AND Q24/1-16; 18-20). General population, U.S., by how many forms of racism employees are seeing in their workplace asked at Q24 (43/1). "Advocacy" is a net of attributes 3 and 4; "Loyalty" is a net of attributes 5 and 6.

# 4 IN 10 WOULD AVOID EMPLOYERS THAT FAIL TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST RACISM

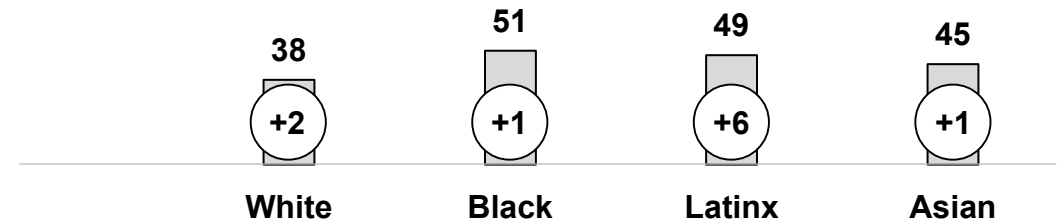
Percent who agree

**I would not work for an organization that fails to speak out publicly at this time to address racism in this country**

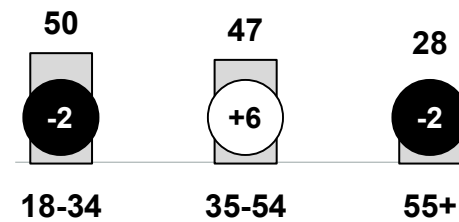


● 0 ● Change, Aug 2020 to Apr 2021

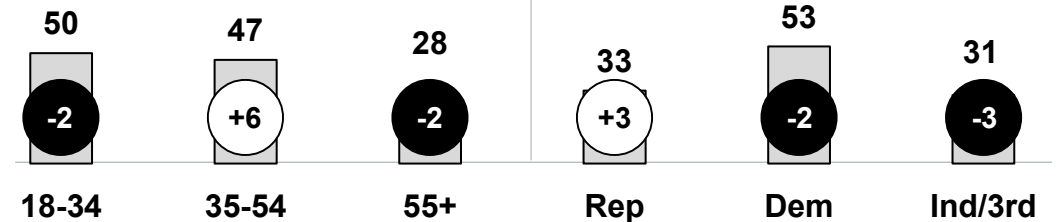
## Communities



## Age



## Political Affiliation



⊥

**BUSINESS MUST DRIVE  
SYSTEMIC CHANGE**

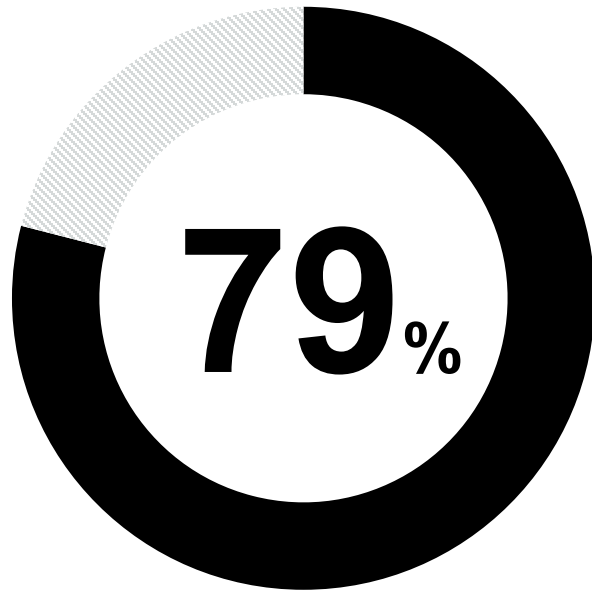
⊥



# 8 IN 10 EXPECT CEOS TO ACT; ZERO TOLERANCE FOR RACISM AT WORK

Percent who believe that CEOs must do each action in response to systemic racism and racial injustice

Percent who expect  
CEOs to do something



Top 5 expected actions,  
U.S. general population

|   | U.S. | White | Black | Latinx | Asian |
|---|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Institute a policy of <b>zero tolerance</b> of racism within their organization                                   | 37   | 35    | 41    | 32     | 47    |
| <b>Getting their own house in order</b> when it comes to racial equality  | 30   | 28    | 39    | 27     | 35    |
| Ensure that there is <b>ethnic diversity on the company's board</b>   | 30   | 26    | 40    | 28     | 40    |
| <b>Foster the career growth and development</b> of Black, Hispanic and Asian American employees                   | 29   | 26    | 39    | 27     | 35    |
| Consult with <b>Black, Hispanic and Asian American community leaders</b> on what the organization should be doing | 26   | 23    | 42    | 29     | 34    |

*Black respondents most concerned about having their voices heard and acted upon*

2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. WCEO\_RESP. Which of the following things do you believe that CEOs must do in response to the systemic racism and racial injustice in this country? Pick all that apply. General population, U.S., and among Non-Hispanic White, Black, Latinx and Asian populations. Data on the left is a net of attributes 1-12.

# BROAD SUPPORT FOR CEOs TO ACT BEYOND THE BUSINESS

Which do you agree with more?

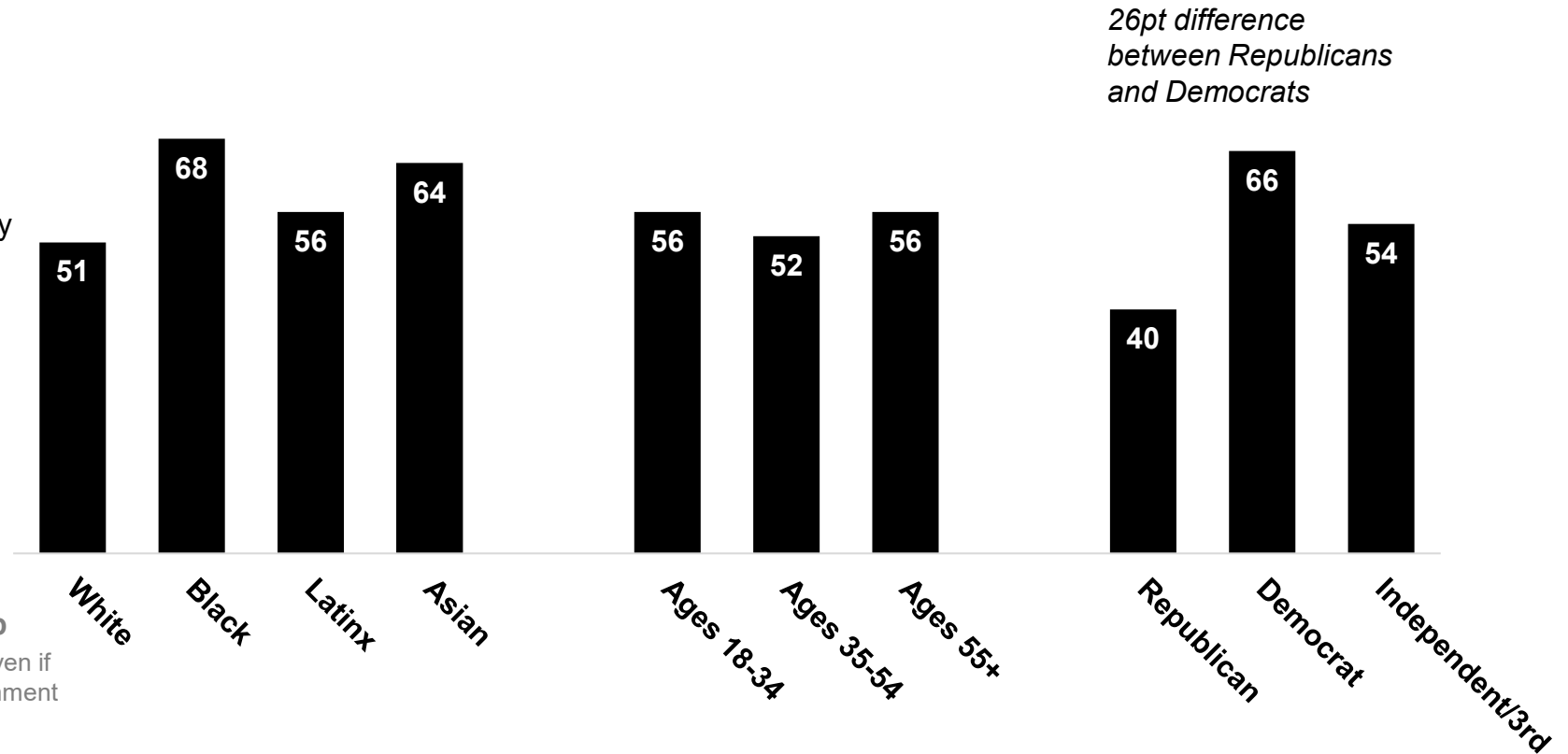
U.S. general population

**55%**

CEOs are acting appropriately when they **boycott states** because they believe the actions of **state government leaders/laws they pass are racially discriminatory**

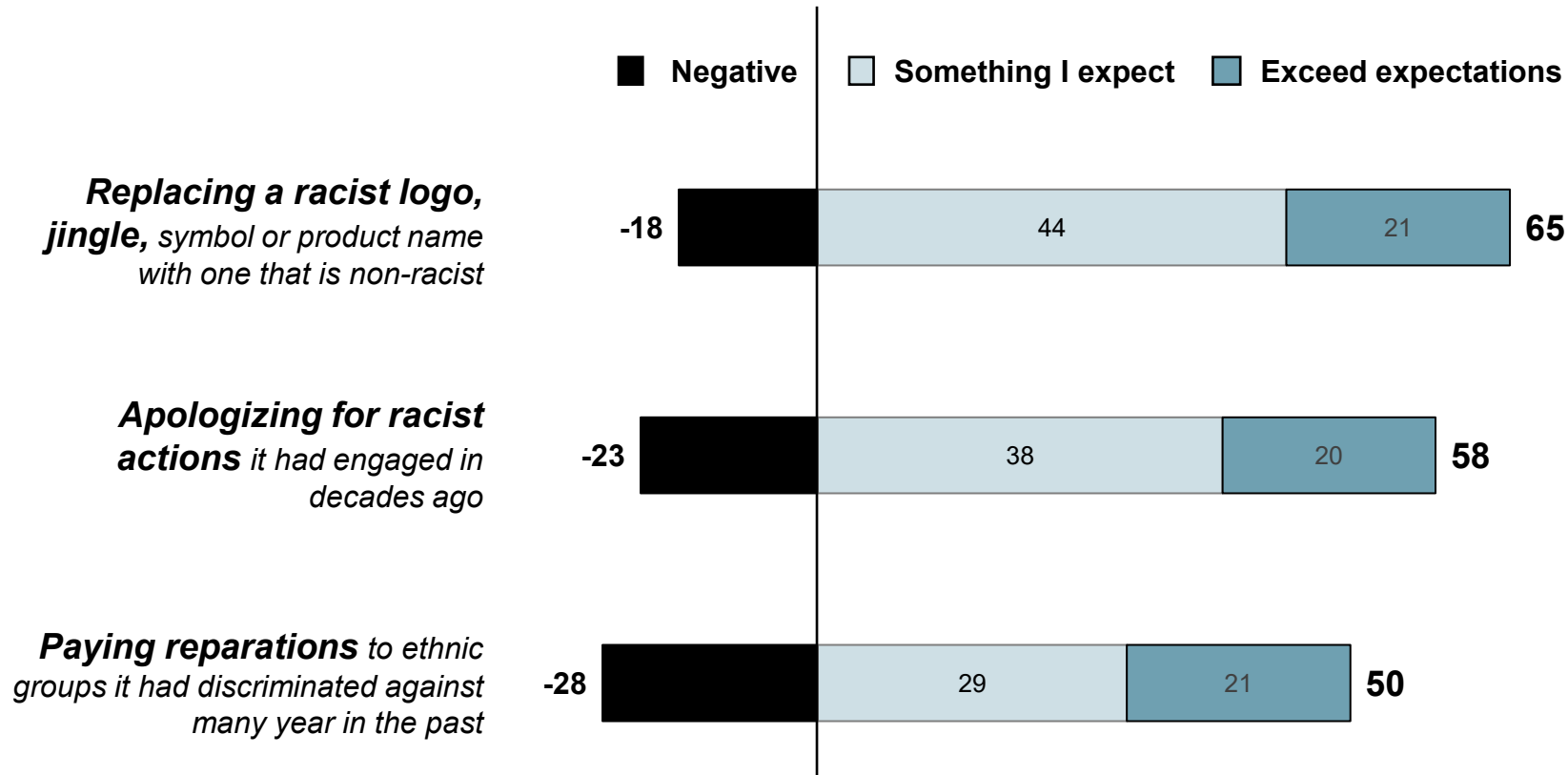
vs

CEOs are **starting to overstep when they boycott states** even if they feel the actions of state government leaders/laws they pass are racially discriminatory



# REPUTATION GAINS FOR COMPANIES THAT GET THEIR HOUSE IN ORDER

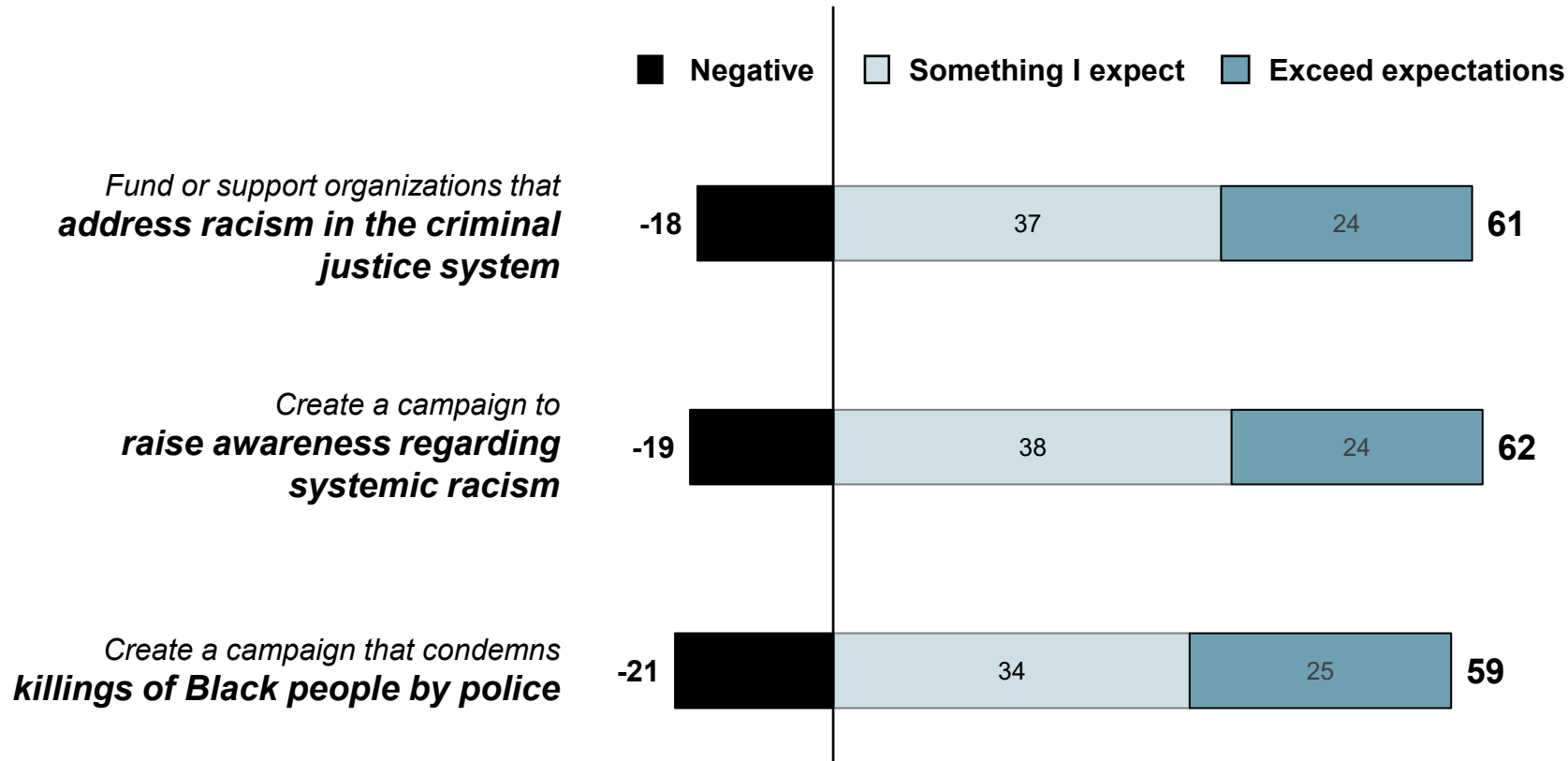
Percent who say that they would view each action by a company as...



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. EXTRA\_CREDIT. For each of the following actions a company could take to address racism, please indicate whether the action would lead you to see the company as going beyond your expectations when it comes to addressing racism, whether the action is something you would expect every company to do, or whether the action is something that would negatively impact your opinion of the company. 3-point scale; code 1, exceed expectations; code 2, something I expect; code 3, doing this will negatively impact my opinion. General population, U.S. "Replacing a racist logo, jingle" is an average of attributes 1 and 2.

# REPUTATION GAINS FOR COMPANIES THAT ADVOCATE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

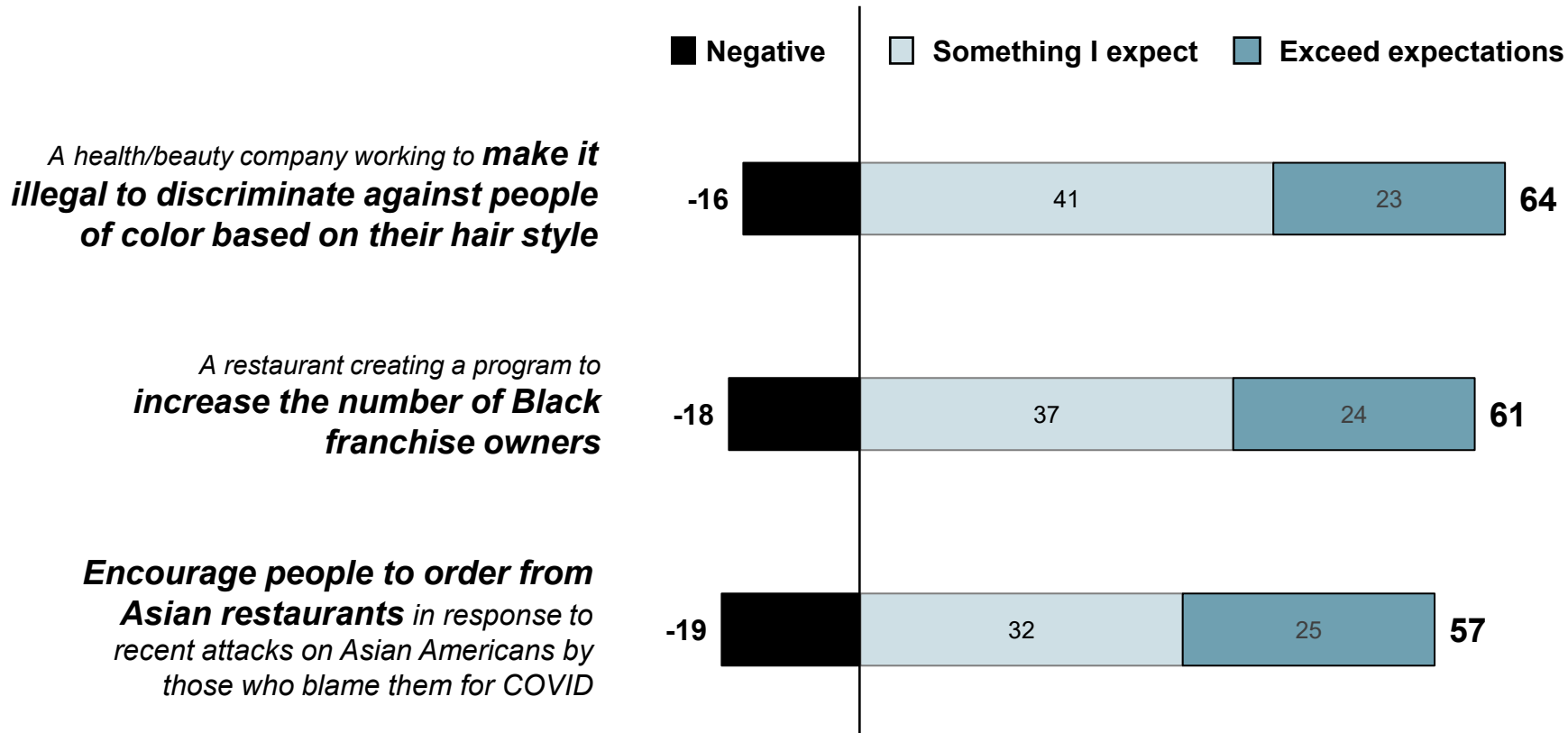
Percent who say that they would view each action by a company as...



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Business and Racial Justice in America. EXTRA\_CREDIT. For each of the following actions a company could take to address racism, please indicate whether the action would lead you to see the company as going beyond your expectations when it comes to addressing racism, whether the action is something you would expect every company to do, or whether the action is something that would negatively impact your opinion of the company. 3-point scale; code 1, exceed expectations; code 2, something I expect; code 3, doing this will negatively impact my opinion. General population, U.S.

# REPUTATION GAINS FOR COMPANIES THAT DRIVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Percent who say that they would view each action by a company as...



2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: **Business and Racial Justice in America**. EXTRA\_CREDIT. For each of the following actions a company could take to address racism, please indicate whether the action would lead you to see the company as going beyond your expectations when it comes to addressing racism, whether the action is something you would expect every company to do, or whether the action is something that would negatively impact your opinion of the company. 3-point scale; code 1, exceed expectations; code 2, something I expect; code 3, doing this will negatively impact my opinion. General population, U.S.

# RACIAL JUSTICE IN AMERICA: FROM SMALL STEPS TO SYSTEMIC CHANGE

1

## The stakes intensify

*Businesses that don't take action to address racism will lose customers and employees. Companies must commit to a meaningful, long-term effort to drive systemic change.*

2

## A C-suite imperative

*CEOs must work to combat systemic racism and promote equity both within and outside their organization. The majority of consumers support CEOs taking on an expanded role to lead societal change.*

3

## Progress on Diversity, falling short on Equity and Inclusion

*While employers have made progress, hiring is not enough. Systemic change requires sustained work across the organization's culture, operations and business model.*

4

## Brands must move beyond campaigns

*Consumers expect brands to do more than talk. Brands must demonstrate their commitment through substantive efforts to educate, advocate and drive change.*