

STAATUS Index 2023

Attitudes towards Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders



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Introduction

The STAATUS Index (Social Tracking of Asian Americans in the U.S.) is a leading, annual survey of attitudes towards and stereotypes of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). Through a nationally representative survey, we aim to understand how Americans view Asian Americans, observe trends related to perceptions, and tap into the pulse of the country on important issues impacting Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities. By surveying all Americans—including AAPIs—we hope our data can increase awareness and provide solutions to continue improving the status of our community in the U.S.

This is the third consecutive year of the STAATUS Index; the inaugural study in 2021 was one of the first national analyses of American attitudes towards Asian Americans in 20 years. Even within this short span, our findings have been used by academics, policy makers, and program experts to educate, inform, and make evidence-based decisions.

This year, the expanded STAATUS Index survey takes a deeper dive into questions related to belonging, and includes new questions related to U.S.-China relations, personal safety, and cross-racial solidarity. Additionally, we consulted with academic scholars deeply entrenched in research related to the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) community to add questions related to the perception of NHPIs, as well as questions specific to NHPI communities.



Academic Advisory Committee

The STAATUS Index is advised by our esteemed Academic Advisory Committee. We are honored to have their guidance in developing the survey, advising on the methodology, reviewing analyses, interpreting data, and crafting key takeaways. Here, we list our Committee members:

We are also delighted to collaborate with leading AAPI research and data organizations including AAPI Data and the Asian American Research Initiative.



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Executive Summary

Against the backdrop of continued rhetoric and violence stemming from COVID-19 and rising U.S. China tensions, AANHPIs are still confronted with pervasive discrimination and racism in this country we call home.

This year’s STAATUS Index builds upon two consecutive years of research to better understand how perceptions towards AAPIs are evolving over time. We surveyed 5,235 Americans across racial/ethnic groups, demographic characteristics, and geographies to uncover the most pressing issues AAPIs are facing in today’s social, political, and cultural landscape. Key results include:

- Majority of Asian Americans report feeling unsafe in the U.S. because of their race/ethnicity, especially on public transportation, but also in their neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces.
- Of all the racial groups surveyed, Asian Americans—especially young, Asian American

women— are the least likely to feel they completely belong and are accepted in the U.S. The top reason cited was racial discrimination, followed by the lack of representation of Asian American leaders in the workplace.

- While Americans see China as a threat from a national security and economic perspective, Americans view Asian Americans in different (and sometimes contradictory) ways. The continuing relevance of tropes and stereotypes portraying Asian Americans as the yellow peril, perpetual foreigner, and model minority are evident in American society today.
- AANHPIs remain largely invisible within American society, with respondents continuing to struggle to name prominent individuals and historical events.
- Many Americans across the country are open to more opportunities to interact with AAPIs, support AAPI businesses, and learn more about AAPI stories and history.

At TAAF, we are committed to working with our partners, community-based organizations, policy makers, academic leaders, and cross-racial allies to improve the status of AAPIs across the country. Together we can build belonging and prosperity for all.

Key Findings

Race Relations in America

- Overall, majority of Americans believe that race relations have deteriorated in the U.S. over the past 5 years.
- White Americans are seen as most advantaged and Black Americans as most discriminated against.
- Americans believe COVID blame is top reason for attacks against Asian Americans, followed by people perceiving Asian Americans as foreigners and spying by the Chinese government on America.

Perceptions of AAPIs

- 82% of Americans overestimate the percentage of AAPIs in the country.
- Americans view Asian Americans still in model minority terms – nice, hardworking, and smart.
- Americans see China as a military, economic, and health threat, but do not feel the same towards people of Chinese descent living in America.
- Americans believe Asian Americans should be

employed in jobs that involve national security, yet one in three feel Asian Americans should be subject to extra scrutiny if working in globally strategic areas. Over 1 in 4 Americans continue to believe Asian Americans are more loyal to their country of origin than the U.S.

Visibility and Awareness

- Americans still cite Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee as most prominent Asian Americans.
- 3 out of 10 Americans cannot recall a significant Asian American historical event or policy.
- Half of Americans say they have an Asian American friend.

Belonging and Safety

- Among all racial groups, Asian Americans—especially women and young Asian Americans—are the least likely to feel that they completely belong and are accepted in the U.S.
- Asian Americans reported that they don’t feel like they belong in both online and physical

(workplace, neighborhood, and school) spaces.

- Racial discrimination and lack of Asian American leadership were reported as the top reasons for Asian Americans feeling a lack of belonging and acceptance.
- 1 in 2 Asian Americans report feeling unsafe in the U.S. due to their race/ethnicity.
- Asian Americans report feeling the least safe on public transportation and in their own neighborhoods.

Future Directions

- Many Americans believe they share economic interests and core values with AAPIs.
- 3 out of 5 Americans think it’s important to include the Asian American experience into the teaching of American history.
- Americans are open to improving their relationship with and understanding of AAPIs, signaling room for progress, cross-racial solidarity, and representation.

Background

The STAATUS Index utilizes various social psychology frameworks, including the Stereotype Content Model, which was created by Professor Fiske in 2002. This model analyzes how dominant groups use two key dimensions - competence and sociability - to evaluate the potential threat of "other" groups. Several studies have demonstrated that Asian Americans, Jewish people, and others, such as female professionals, tend to be classified as outgroups that are generally respected but not very liked. These groups are often stereotyped as highly competent, which elicits respect, but low in sociability or likeability. As a result, this combination of perceptions creates a complex mix of admiration, resentment, and envy.

Scholars have been documenting the stereotyping of Asian Americans for decades, and a review of such studies shows that dominant groups often use the dimensions of competence and sociability to categorize Asian Americans. A seminal study by Professors Katz and Braly in 1933, found that the Japanese were perceived as intelligent, industrious, progressive, and shrewd (competent),

but shy and quiet (unsociable). Similarly, the Chinese were viewed as sly (implying competence), but conservative, tradition-loving, superstitious, and loyal to family (implying a lack of mainstream sociability). A replication of this study in 2001 confirmed these stereotypes: both the Chinese and Japanese were seen as especially intelligent, industrious, and scientifically-minded (highly competent), but also reserved and loyal to their families (not sociable with the dominant group).

Stereotyping not only has the potential to result in extreme outcomes such as violence, but it also has significant mental health implications, particularly for Asian Americans' sense of belonging. In a 1992 study, Professor Hagerty and colleagues suggested that a sense of belonging is a crucial mental health concept that has two key attributes: (1) valued involvement or the experience of being valued, needed, or accepted; and (2) fit, which refers to the perception that an individual's characteristics align with their environment or system.

Professor Powell describes belonging as the opposite of "othering," which occurs when societies experiencing significant change become anxious and exclude specific groups seen as potential threats to the "favored" group. Politicians and other leaders often use Asian American stereotypes and misperceptions to advance their own agendas.

For Asian Americans, this stereotyping and othering are often reflected through the following three tropes:

- 1 **Model Minority:** The model minority myth is a stereotype that portrays certain minority groups in the U.S., typically Asian Americans, as highly successful, due in large part to their cultural values, hard work, and intelligence. As a result, the presumption is that these minority groups have overcome systemic racism and discrimination, and have attained high levels of education, income, and professional success.

The term "model minority" was coined in the

1960s during the civil rights movement in the United States, as a way to contrast Asian Americans with other minority groups, particularly African Americans, who were advocating for their civil rights and equality. It is a divisive stereotype that pits communities of color against each other and masks the socioeconomic diversity within the AAPI community.

2 Yellow peril: Yellow peril refers to the perceived threat to Americans posed by people of Asian descent, particularly those from East Asian countries. The term was used to stoke fear and anxiety about Asian immigrants, and it fueled xenophobia, discrimination, and anti-Asian sentiment. This stereotype is used to justify discriminatory policies, such as anti-immigration laws, restrictive measures against Asian communities, and the portrayal of Asians as a threat to Western values, civilization, and supremacy.

3 Perpetual foreigner: The perpetual foreigner myth is a stereotype that portrays individuals of certain racial/ethnic backgrounds as "foreign"

or "outsiders" even if they are born and raised in the U.S. and have citizenship or permanent residency. This myth suggests that these individuals, often from minority or immigrant communities, are never fully accepted as belonging to the country or society in which they live, and are constantly perceived as foreign or alien. The perpetual foreigner myth is often applied to individuals from Asian, Middle Eastern, Latinx, and African backgrounds.

Both the yellow peril and perpetual foreigner stereotypes have been used to cast suspicion on the loyalty of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans during times of international tensions with Asian countries. This has led to discrimination, hate, and violence during World War Two, the Vietnam War, and after 9/11.

Through the STAATUS Index, we research these stereotypes and other misperceptions affecting AANHPIs to gain a better understanding of, and ultimately improve, the status of our community in American society.



Methodology

We designed and administered a nationally representative 15-minute survey of 5,235 US-based respondents, aged 16 and above, conducted through an online panel, between February 9 to March 13, 2023 by [Savanta Research](#). We oversampled Asian Americans to enable us to perform additional subgroup analyses.

The sample was weighted using population parameters (race, age, gender, education, and region) from the U.S. Census Bureau. The weighting reflects the national population, and is reflected in the presentation of the main findings. For subgroup analysis among Asian Americans—specifically for comparisons between Asian American groups (East Asian/South Asian/Southeast Asian/Filipino)--unweighted data was used.

For a subset of questions, the sample was split and randomly assigned questions related to Asian Americans or NHPs or a different racial group. Additionally respondents identifying as NHPs were asked questions specific to their community;

however, these results are not included in the report due to the small sample size (n=71).

Data was cleaned and analyzed using Stata 17 and Tableau. Eighteen percent of the records were randomly chosen and open-ended responses that occurred at least 6% or more times were manually coded. For questions specifically about a particular demographic group (such as famous Asian American/Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, etc.) all the relevant open-ended responses were coded.

Results are valid within +/-1% at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error increases with subgroup analyses. As a note, for findings below, some of the percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Given the unique identities and perceptions of the NHP population, the primary focus of the STAATUS Index is on the Asian American population. This year, the study team, in consultation with scholars working closely with the NHP community, introduced a few questions related to perceptions of Americans towards NHPs. Where possible, we provide disaggregated data relevant to perceptions of NHPs.

- A note on terminology:
- We refer to all respondents in the survey as Americans irrespective of their citizenship status.
 - We refer to the following racial/ethnic groups (as listed in the U.S. census) Asian as Asian American; Black American or African American as Black American; Hispanic or Latino as Hispanic American; Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander as NHPs ; White as White Americans; and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander as AAPI or AANHPI in our report.

Unweighted sample sizes and margins of error for the groups against which we report are listed below:

Analysis category	Sample size (unweighted) n (%)	Margin of Error (unweighted)
Sex		
Female	2,293 (55.0%)	2%
Male	2,880 (43.8%)	2%
Age group (disaggregated)		
16–24 yrs	601 (11.5%)	4%
25–44 yrs	2,056 (39.3%)	2%
45–64 yrs	1,514 (28.9%)	3%
65+ yrs	1,064 (20.3%)	3%
Race/ethnicity		
Asian Americans	1,330 (25.4%)	3%
Black Americans	339 (6.5%)	5%
Hispanic Americans	571 (10.9%)	4%
NHPs	71 (1.4%)	12%
White Americans	2,790 (53.3%)	2%
Political affiliation		
Democrats	2,038 (38.9%)	2%
Republicans	1,382 (26.4%)	3%
Asian American group (disaggregated)		
East Asian	456 (8.7%)	5%
Filipino	241 (4.6%)	6%
South Asian	367 (7.0%)	5%
Southeast Asian	225 (4.3%)	7%

Results

We structure our analysis into four sections covering distinct themes:

In *Race Relations in America*, we provide an overview of current attitudes and beliefs among Americans regarding racial issues in the United States, with a particular emphasis on discrimination and racism against AAPIs.

In *Perceptions of AAPIs*, we unpack the different ways in which AAPIs are perceived, especially through the lens of the three stereotypes: yellow peril, perpetual foreigner, and model minority, and explore the bases of these perceptions.

In *Visibility and Awareness*, we explore knowledge about AAPIs and also explore the various ways in which people learn about AAPIs.

In *Belonging and Safety*, we examine the issue of belonging and acceptance among Asian Americans and other communities of color in the United States, and explore the factors that contribute to a sense of belonging, including perceptions of safety.

Lastly, in *Future Directions*, we highlight research findings that can inform strategies to enhance belonging and build cross-racial solidarity.



CHAPTER ONE

Race Relations in America

STATUS INDEX



57%

Getting worse

In the last five years, do you think the relationships between racial groups in the U.S. are...

23%

Staying the same

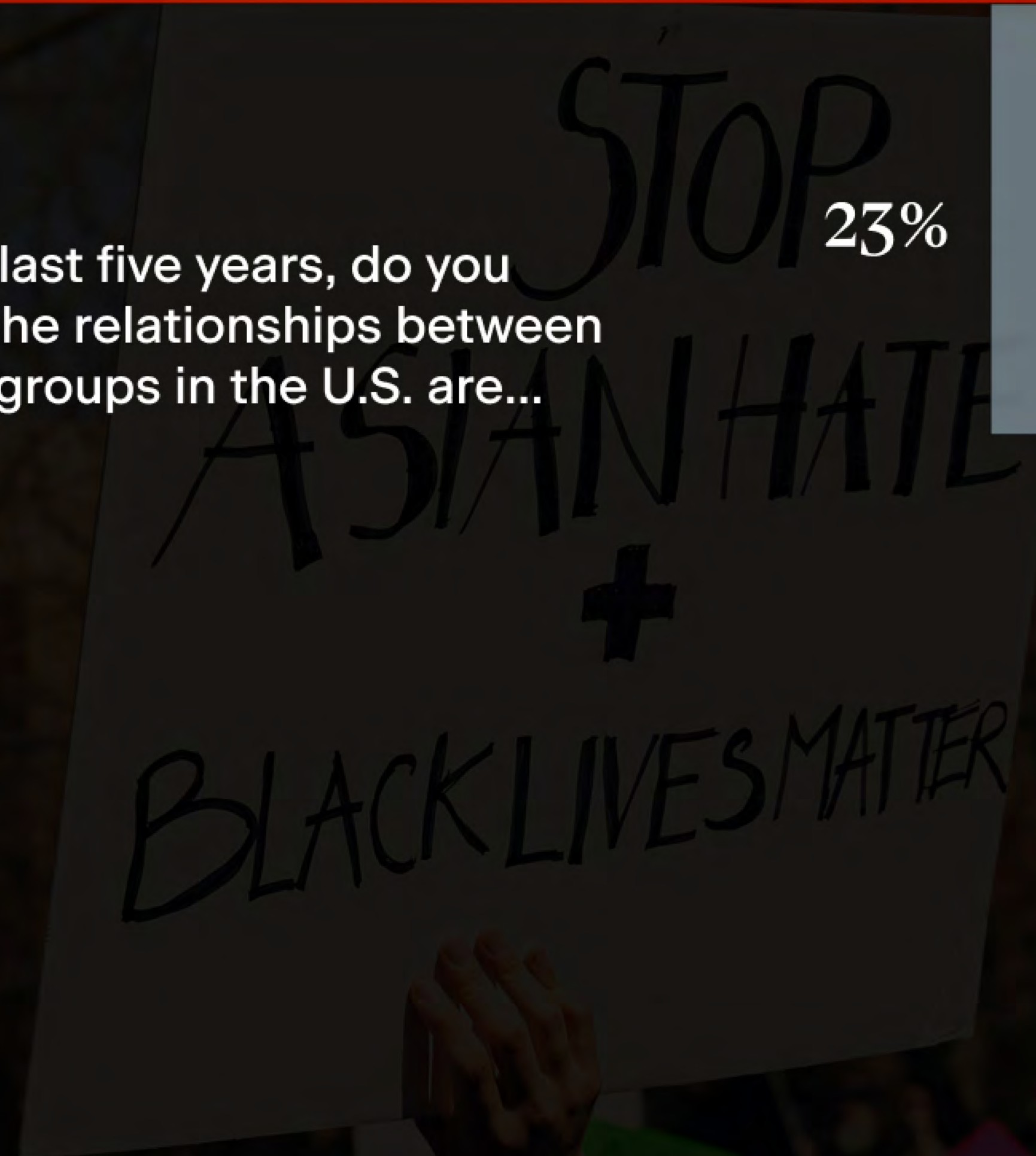
16%

Improving

4% Not sure/don't know

Many Americans think race relations are worsening in our country

The majority (57%) of respondents believe that race relations are declining over the last five years.



White Americans are seen as more advantaged by all racial groups

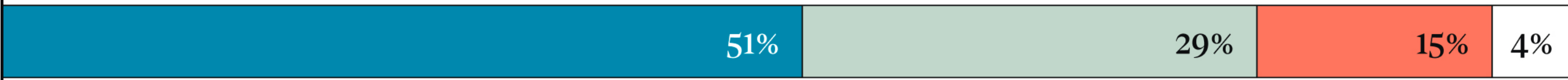
Black Americans are seen as most discriminated against. Over the past three years, there has been a decline in the proportion of respondents who believe that Asian Americans are being discriminated against (59% in 2021, to 56% in 2022, to 47% in 2023).

Among minority groups, NHPs are seen more as being treated fairly than discriminated against but have the highest proportion of respondents who are unsure how NHPs are being treated (22%).

How are the following racial groups being treated in U.S. society today?

More advantaged Treated fairly Discriminated against Not sure/Don't know

White Americans



Black Americans



Hispanic Americans



Asian Americans



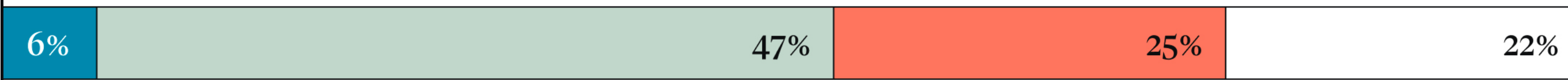
American Indians and Alaska Natives



Middle Easterners and North Africans



Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders





75%

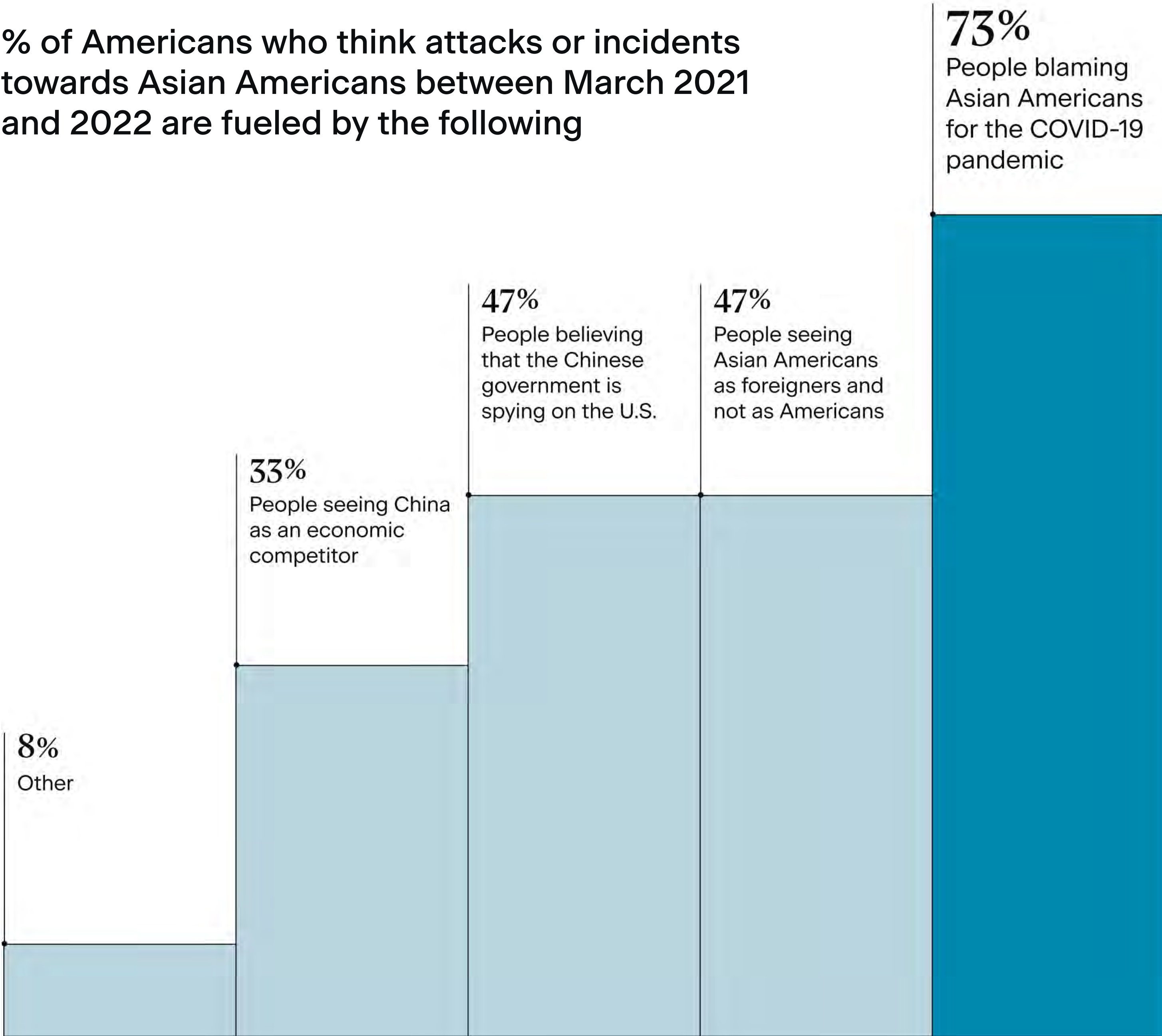
of Americans think racist attacks
against Asian Americans are a
problem today

More Democrats (**82%**) than Republicans (**64%**) believe these attacks are a problem today, with **43%** of Democrats considering these to be a “very serious” problem, compared to **20%** of Republicans.

Americans believe COVID blame is a top reason for attacks against Asian Americans

Seeing Asian Americans as foreigners and the belief that the Chinese government was spying on the U.S. were additional factors that nearly half of respondents believed led to attacks against Asian Americans. These concerns reflect the continued presence of the perpetual foreigner and yellow peril stereotypes in the American psyche.

% of Americans who think attacks or incidents towards Asian Americans between March 2021 and 2022 are fueled by the following

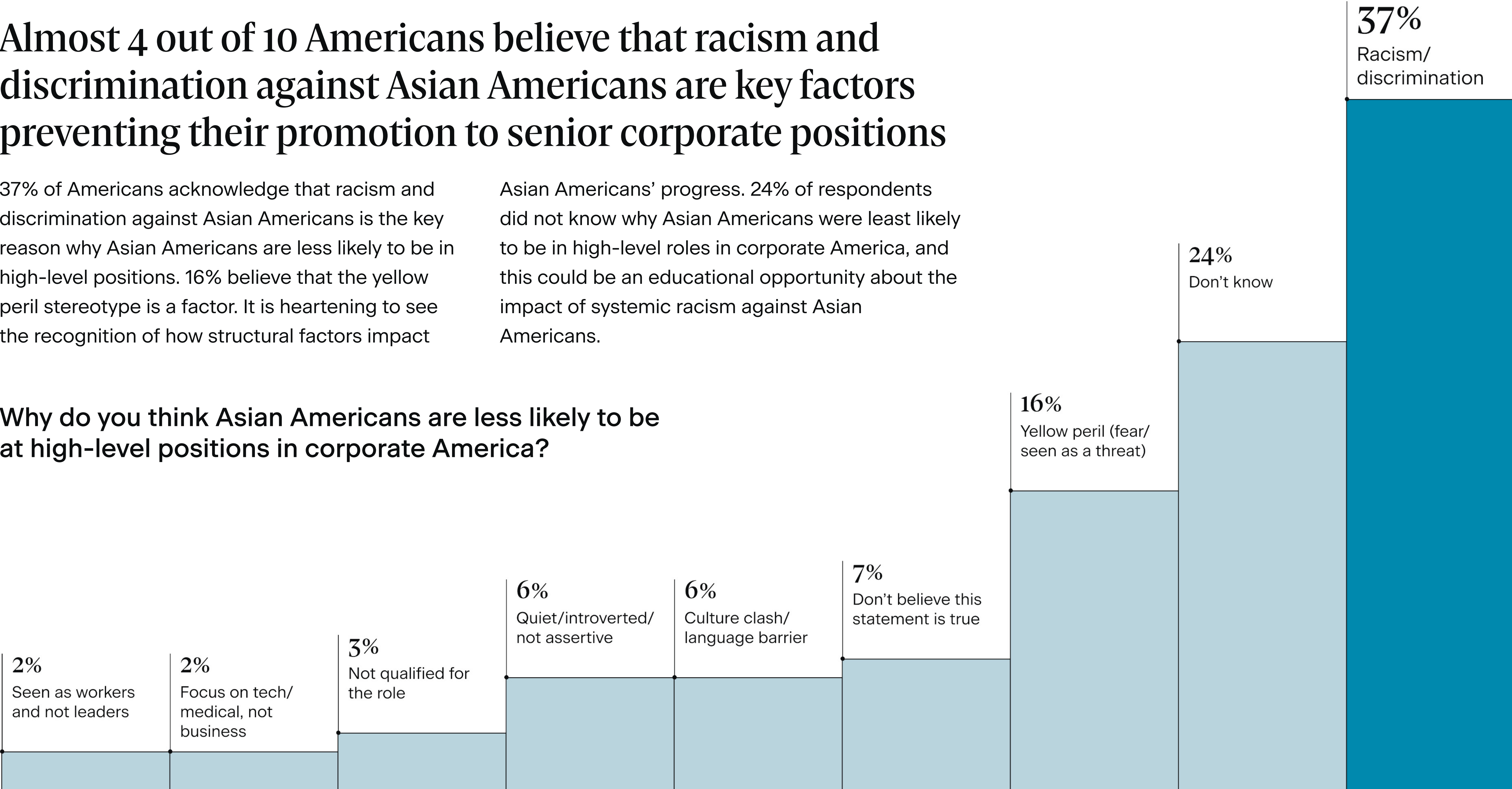


Almost 4 out of 10 Americans believe that racism and discrimination against Asian Americans are key factors preventing their promotion to senior corporate positions

37% of Americans acknowledge that racism and discrimination against Asian Americans is the key reason why Asian Americans are less likely to be in high-level positions. 16% believe that the yellow peril stereotype is a factor. It is heartening to see the recognition of how structural factors impact

Asian Americans' progress. 24% of respondents did not know why Asian Americans were least likely to be in high-level roles in corporate America, and this could be an educational opportunity about the impact of systemic racism against Asian Americans.

Why do you think Asian Americans are less likely to be at high-level positions in corporate America?



Perceptions of AAPIs

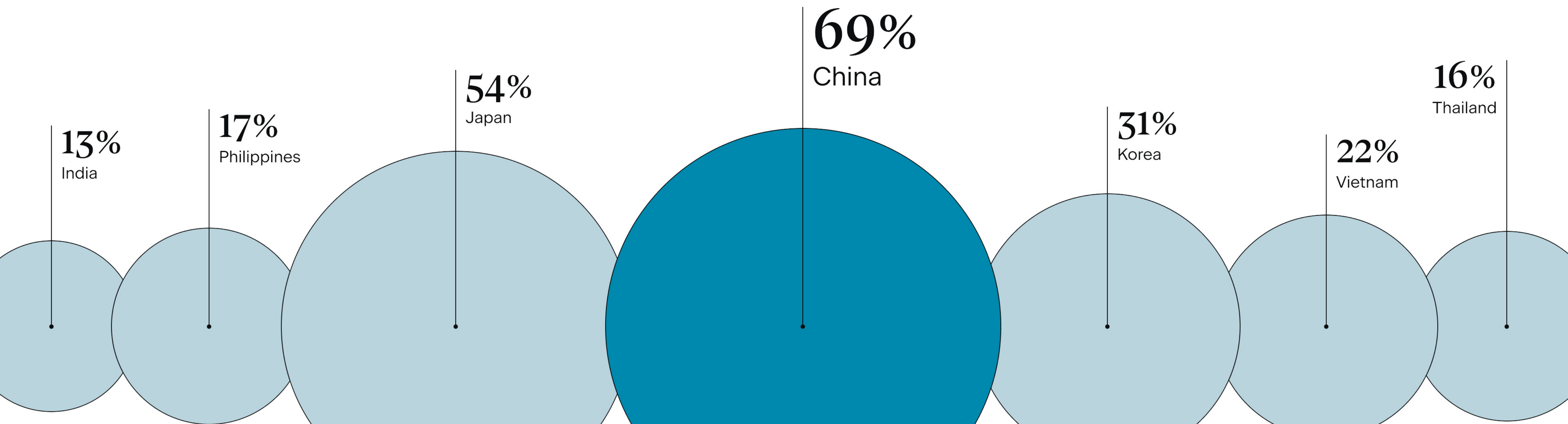


When thinking of countries of origin for Asian Americans, many Americans think of East Asia, and specifically China

This is despite the fact that Indian Americans and Filipino Americans make up 21% and 19%, respectively, of the Asian American population compared to 24% for Chinese Americans.

When asked to name countries of origin for Pacific Islanders, respondents named Hawaii (29%), Don't know (22%), Samoa (16%), Philippines (15%), and Fiji (12%), among others.

What countries of origin come to mind when you think of Asian Americans?



Only 3.4% of Americans

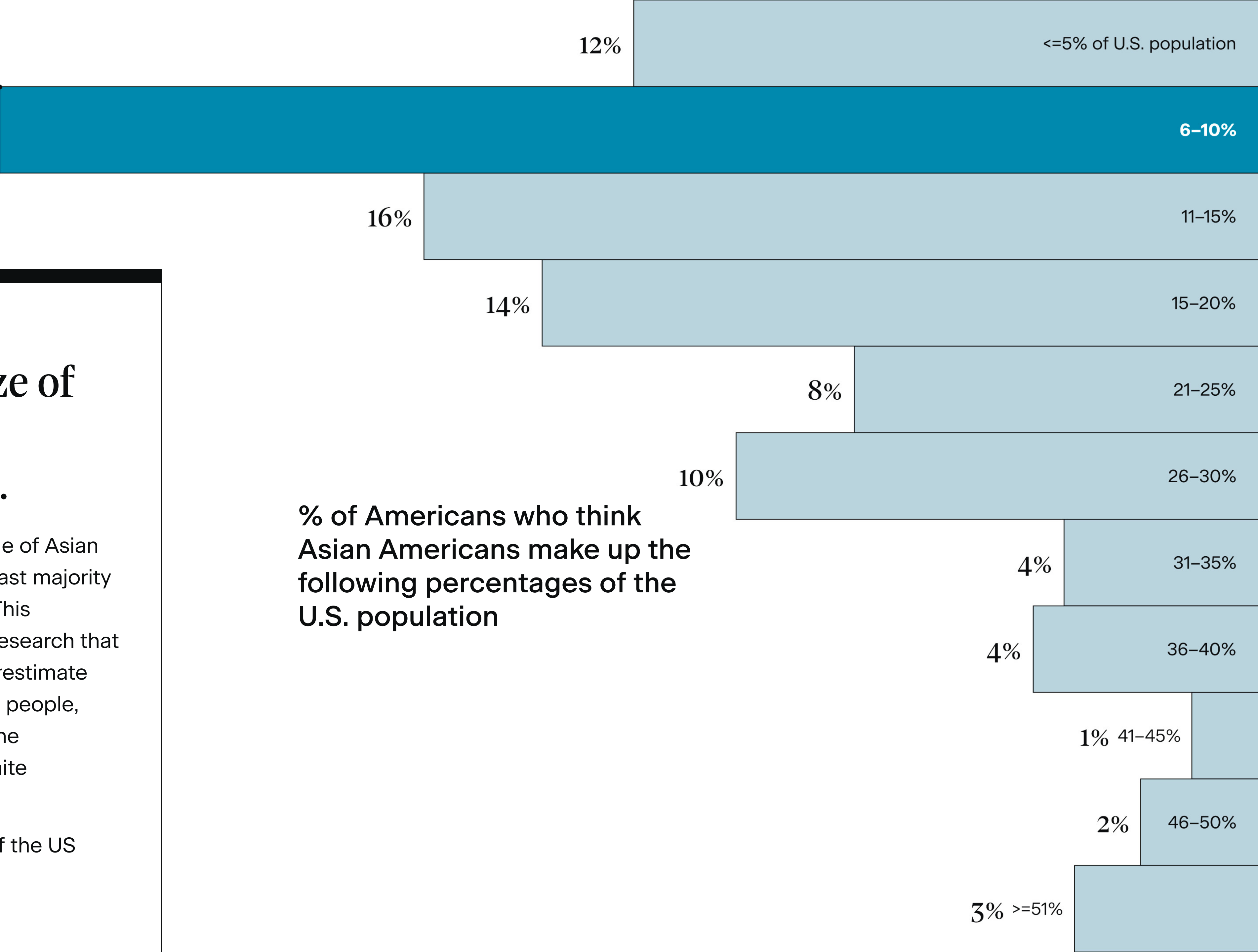
correctly guessed that Asian Americans make up of 7% of the U.S. population

82% of respondents overestimated the size of the Asian American population in the U.S.

When asked to estimate the percentage of Asian Americans in the U.S. population, the vast majority of respondents (82%) overestimated. This phenomenon is consistent with other research that has shown that Americans tend to overestimate the size of minority groups (e.g. Jewish people, Asian Americans) and underestimate the percentage of majority groups (e.g. White Americans, Christians).

Fact: Asian Americans make up 7.2% of the US population.

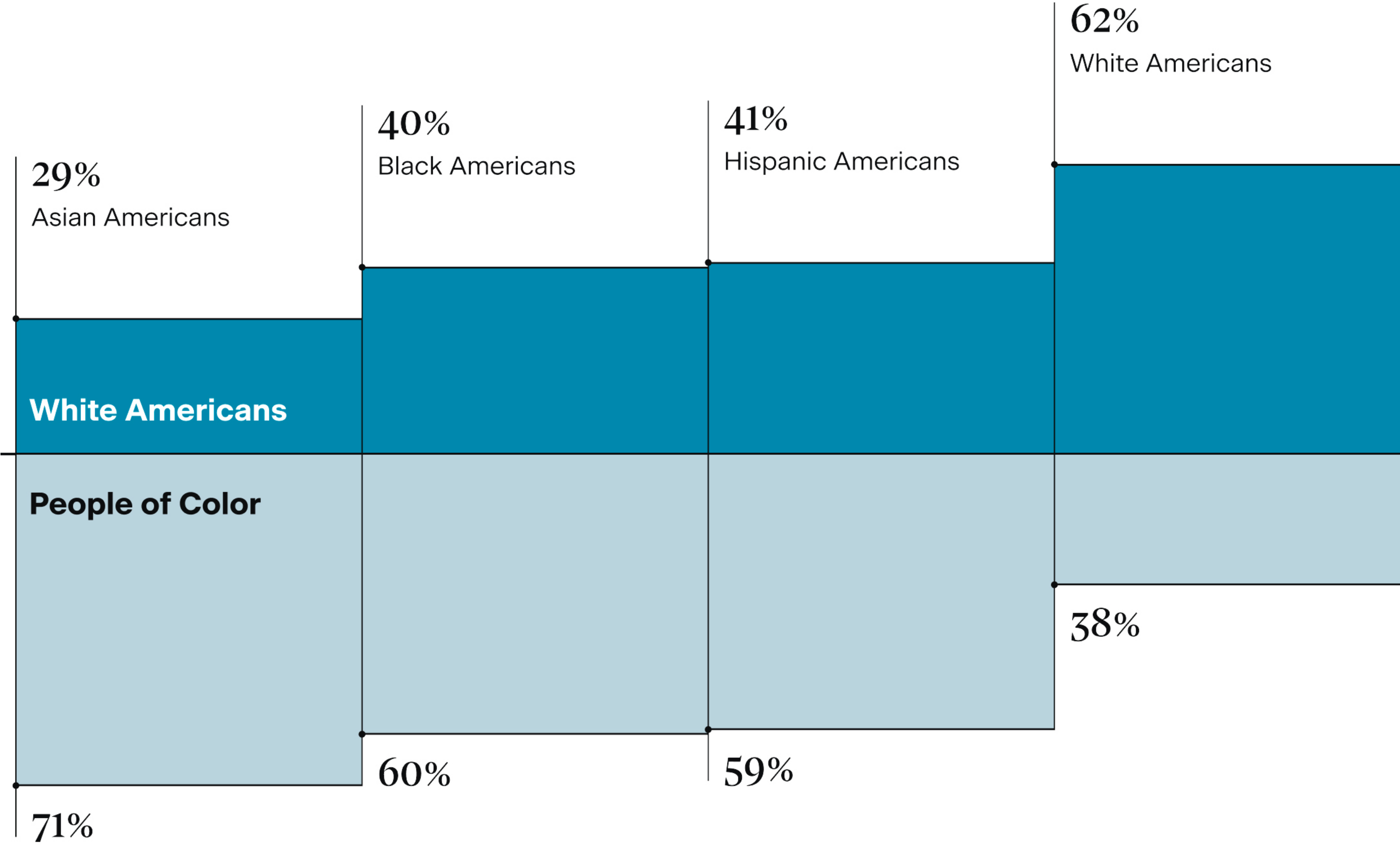
% of Americans who think Asian Americans make up the following percentages of the U.S. population



White Americans see status of Asian Americans as closer to themselves; Asian Americans overwhelmingly view themselves as closer to people of color

While 3 out of 5 White Americans (62%) see Asian Americans as closer to themselves, the majority (71%) of Asian Americans see their status closer to people of color. South Asians (22%) are less likely to see Asian Americans as closer to White Americans compared to Southeast Asian (26%), Filipino (28%), and East Asian (34%) Americans.

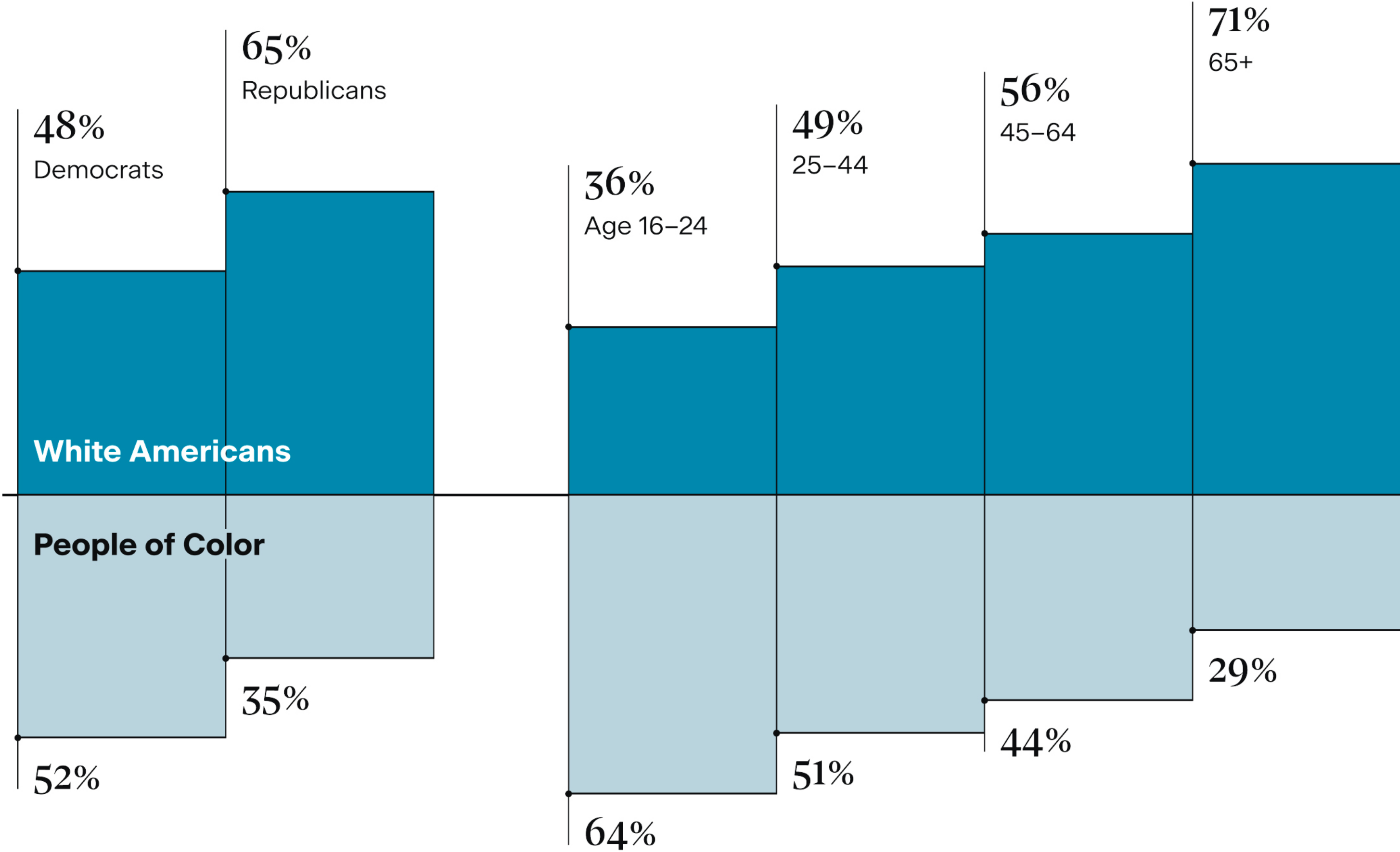
% of Americans who say they view Asian Americans as more similar to...



% of Americans who say they view Asian Americans as more similar to...

Older Americans and Republicans view Asian Americans as similar to White Americans

Younger Americans increasingly see Asian Americans as having their own identity and separate from White Americans.



51%

Intelligent/smart/educated

32%

Hard-working

21%

Kind/nice/thoughtful

15%

Good/great/awesome

9%

Motivated/ambitious/driven

8%

Honest/trustworthy

8%

Family-oriented

Many Americans still describe Asian Americans in terms of the “model minority” — as smart, hardworking, and nice

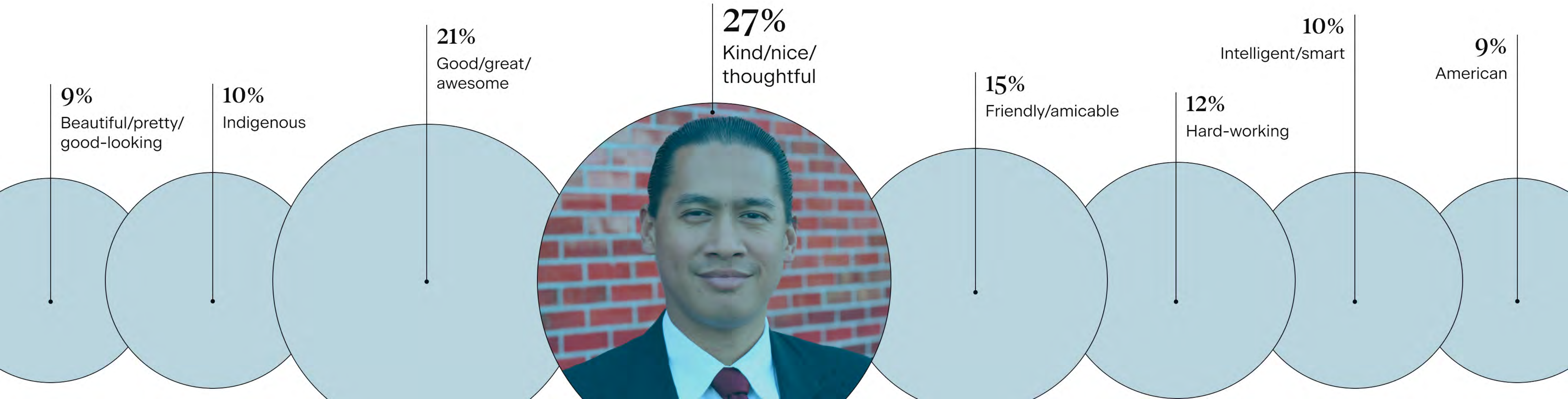
Similar to previous years, Asian Americans continue to be seen as a “model minority”, which can be harmful to our progress. Some respondents also described Asian Americans as “cheap”, “rude”, “dishonest” or used physical attributes such as “small”, “short”, and “petite.”

If you had to describe Asian Americans as a group with up to three words, what adjectives or words would you use to describe them?

Many Americans describe NHPIs as kind, friendly

The top adjectives which respondents used to describe NHPIs were nice, good, and friendly. Some respondents also used words such as beautiful and pretty, nodding to a history of sexualization of NHPI women.

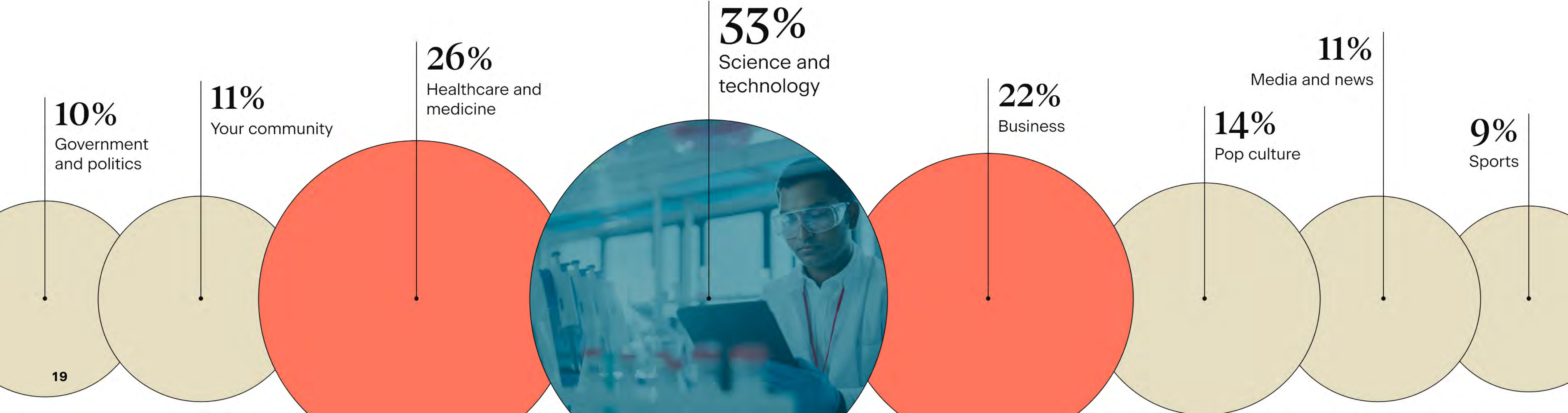
If you had to describe Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders with up to three words, what adjectives or words would you use to describe them?



The fields in which Asian Americans are seen as very influential included science and technology, healthcare and medicine, and business

Asian Americans are seen as being most influential and well-represented in senior roles in similar industries - science and technology, healthcare and medicine, and business; and viewed as less visible in fields like sports and government and politics.

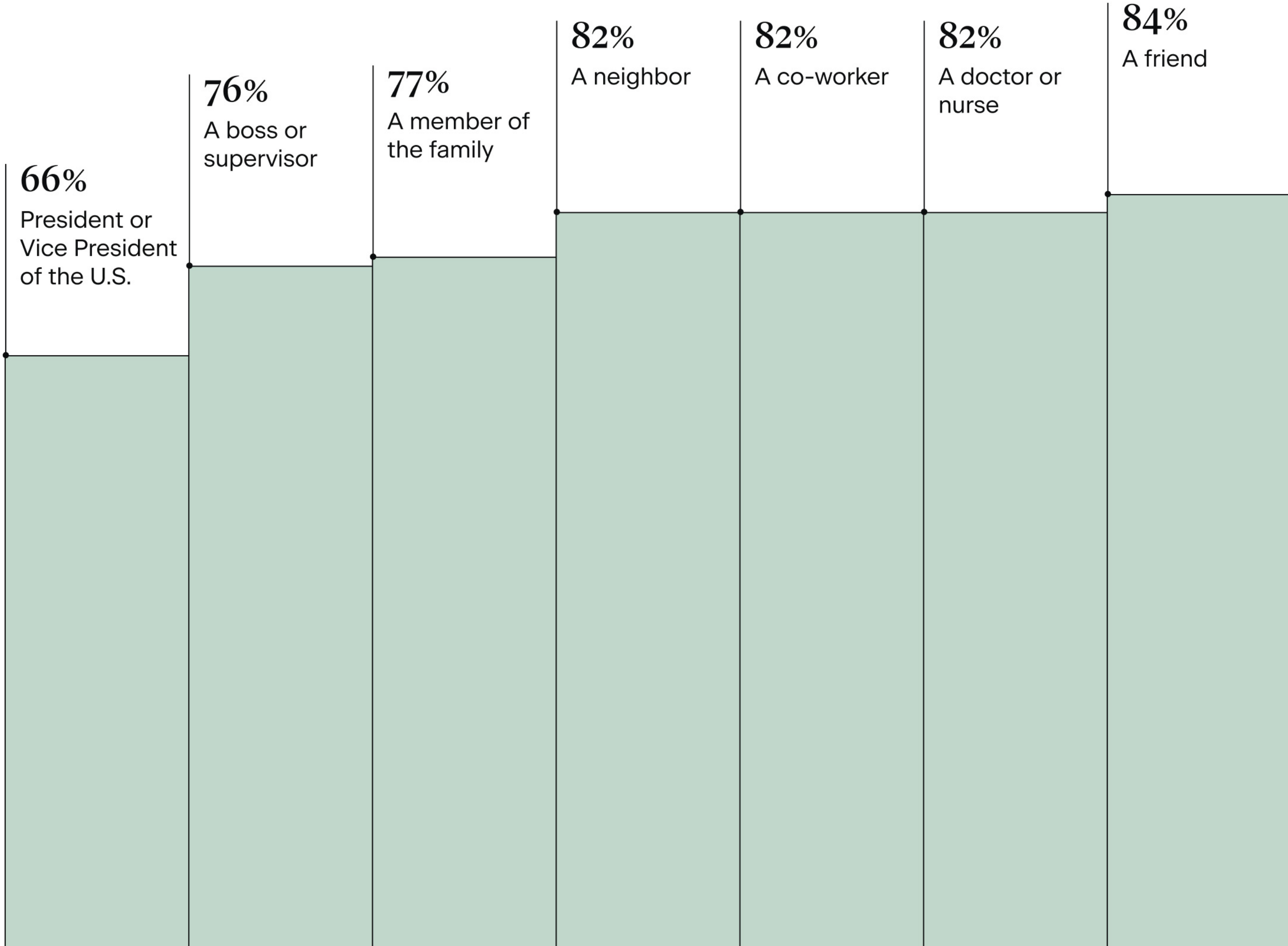
% of Americans who felt Asian Americans are very influential in the following areas of U.S. society



Americans are most comfortable with Asian Americans as friends, and less comfortable with Asian Americans in positions of power and leadership

In general, respondents were comfortable with Asian Americans as friends, neighbors, healthcare professionals, or co-workers, but less comfortable with Asian American family members, supervisors, or as President/Vice-President.

% of Americans who say they are at least somewhat comfortable in having an Asian American as...

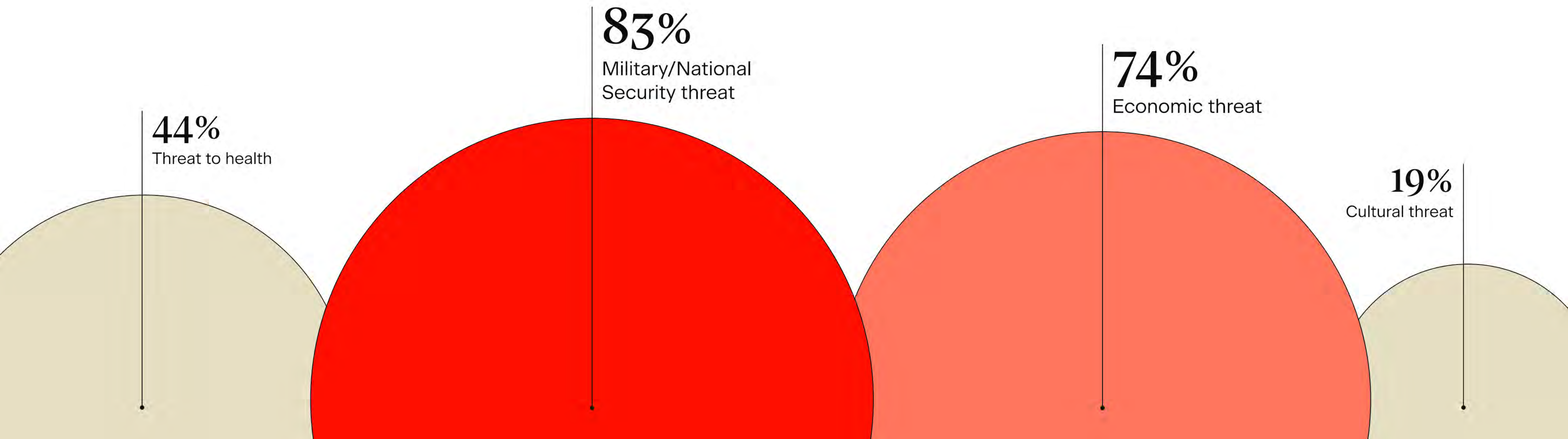


78% of Americans see China as a threat. Among these Americans, when asked what kind of threat, 83% said Military/National Security threat and 74% said Economic threat.

White Americans (84%), Republicans (86% vs. Democrats 74%), and older Americans (54% of 16–24 year olds vs. 94% of 65+ year olds) are more likely to see China as a threat.

As a note, our survey was fielded soon after the Chinese balloon incident which may have impacted how Americans view China.

% of Americans who think China poses the following kind of threats



79% of Americans do not see people of Chinese descent as a threat

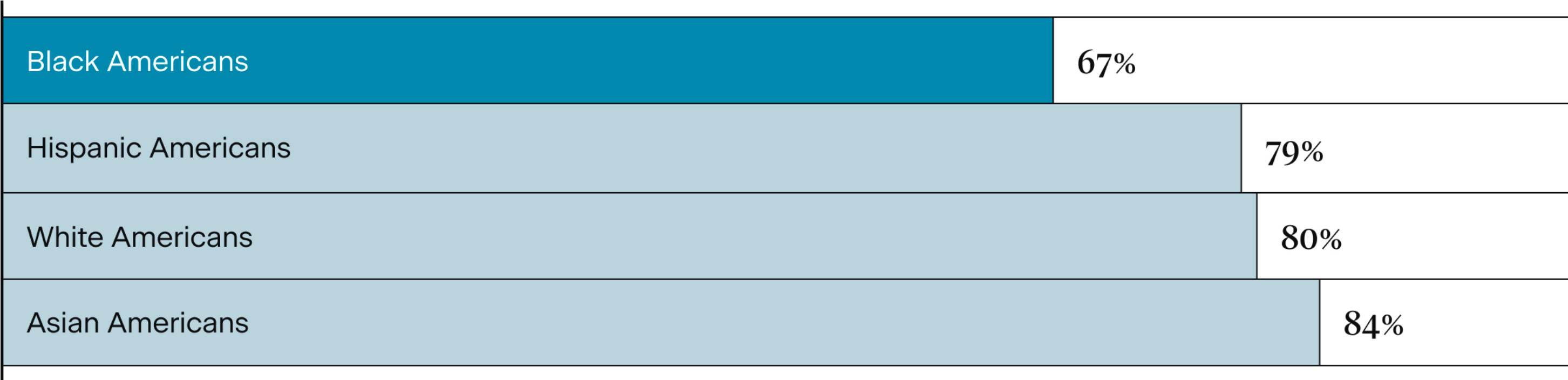
Although the majority of Americans see China as a threat, they do not necessarily see people of Chinese descent living in the U.S. as a threat.

% of Americans who do not believe that people of Chinese descent living in America may pose a threat to the United States

Overall



By race/ethnicity



By political affiliation



Majority of Americans think that Asian Americans should be in jobs that involve national security

87% of Americans think that Asian Americans should be employed in jobs that involve national security. Black and Hispanic respondents are less likely to want Asian Americans in national security jobs.

% of Americans who believe Asian Americans should be employed in jobs that involve national security

By race/ethnicity

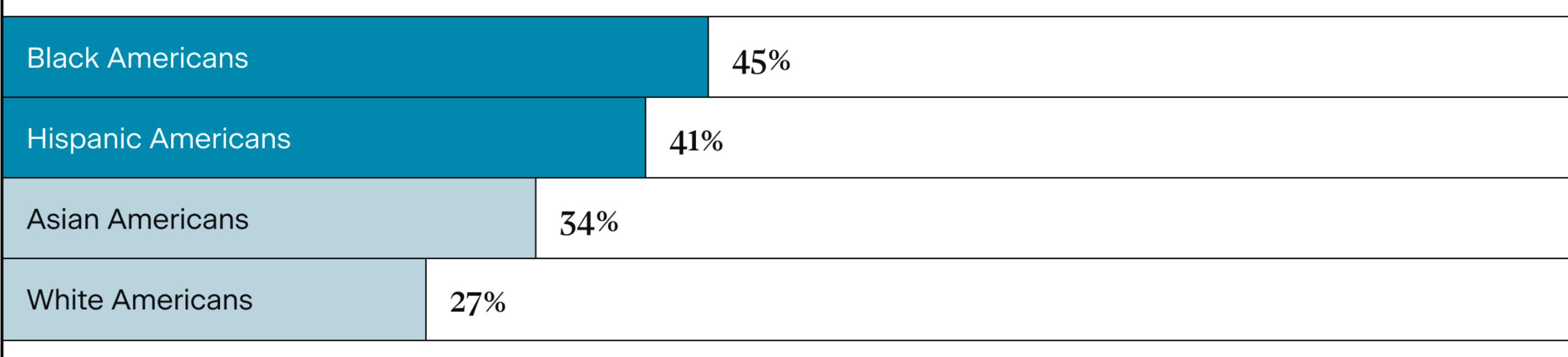
White Americans	89%
Hispanic Americans	85%
Black Americans	73%

31% of Americans believe that Asian Americans should be subject to greater scrutiny if they work in roles critical to U.S. global strategic competitiveness

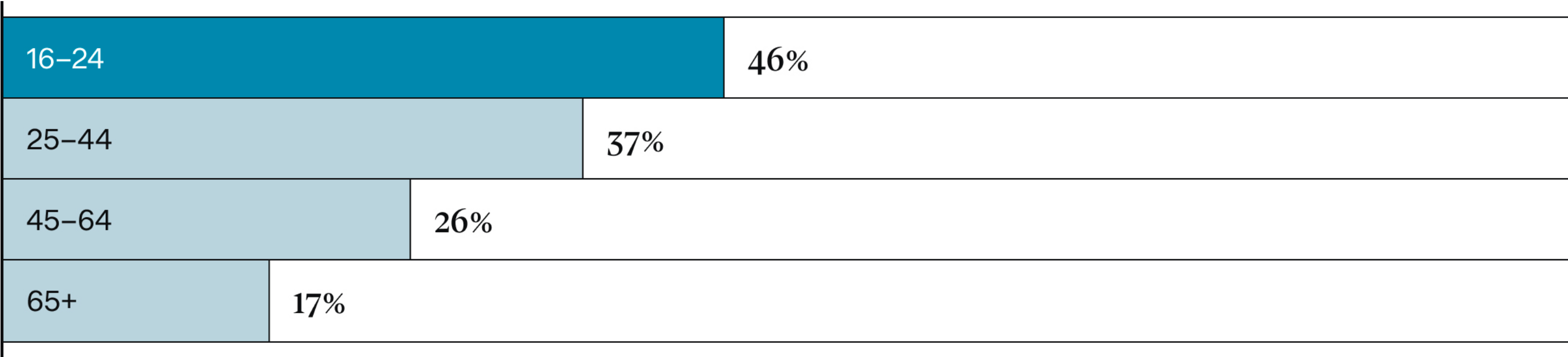
Black and Hispanic respondents and younger Americans are more likely to want additional scrutiny for Asian Americans.

% of Americans who think that Asian Americans should be subject to more scrutiny, compared to other Americans, when working in areas considered critical to U.S. global strategic competitiveness

By race/ethnicity



By age





1 in 4

Americans believe Asian Americans are more loyal to their country of origin than U.S.

36% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, and **37%** somewhat or strongly disagreed to the statement on loyalty to country of origin.

It is also concerning that nearly **1 in 5 Americans** still believe Asian Americans are partly responsible for COVID-19. These data points are consistent with the perpetual foreigner and yellow peril stereotypes. Black Americans tend to agree more strongly with these statements.

Visibility and Awareness



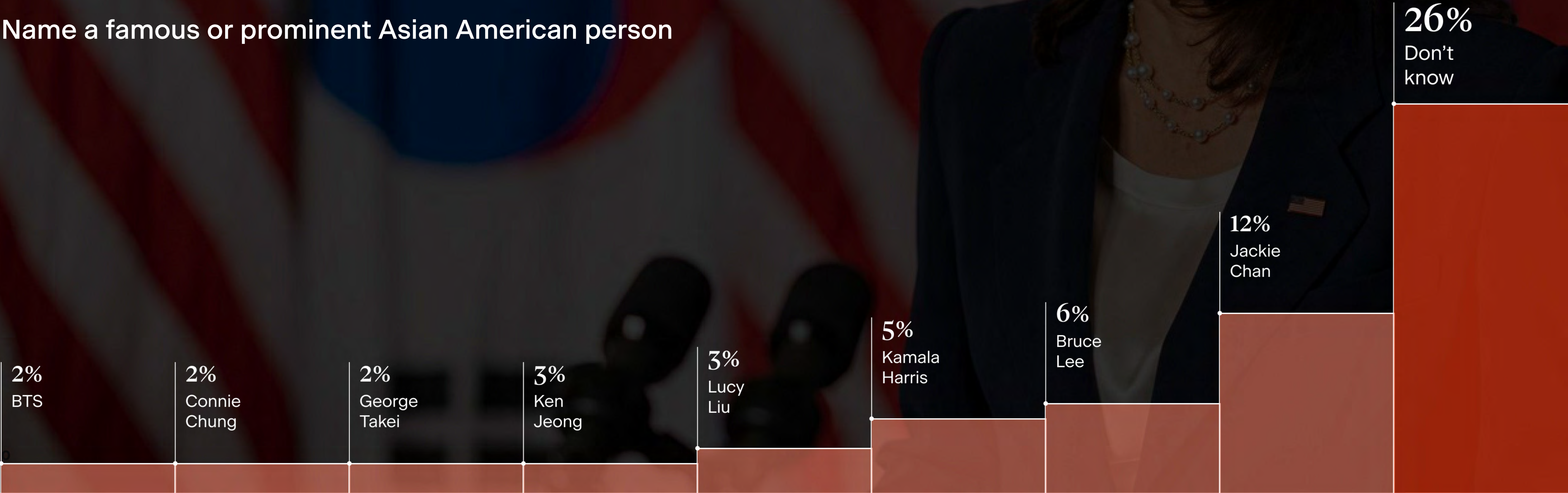
Many Americans are unable to name a famous Asian American/ Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander

26% of respondents were unable to name a famous Asian American. Among those named, the two most popular for three years in a row are Jackie Chan (who is not American) and Bruce Lee (who died 50 years ago). Kamala Harris replaced Lucy Liu as the third most popular name this year

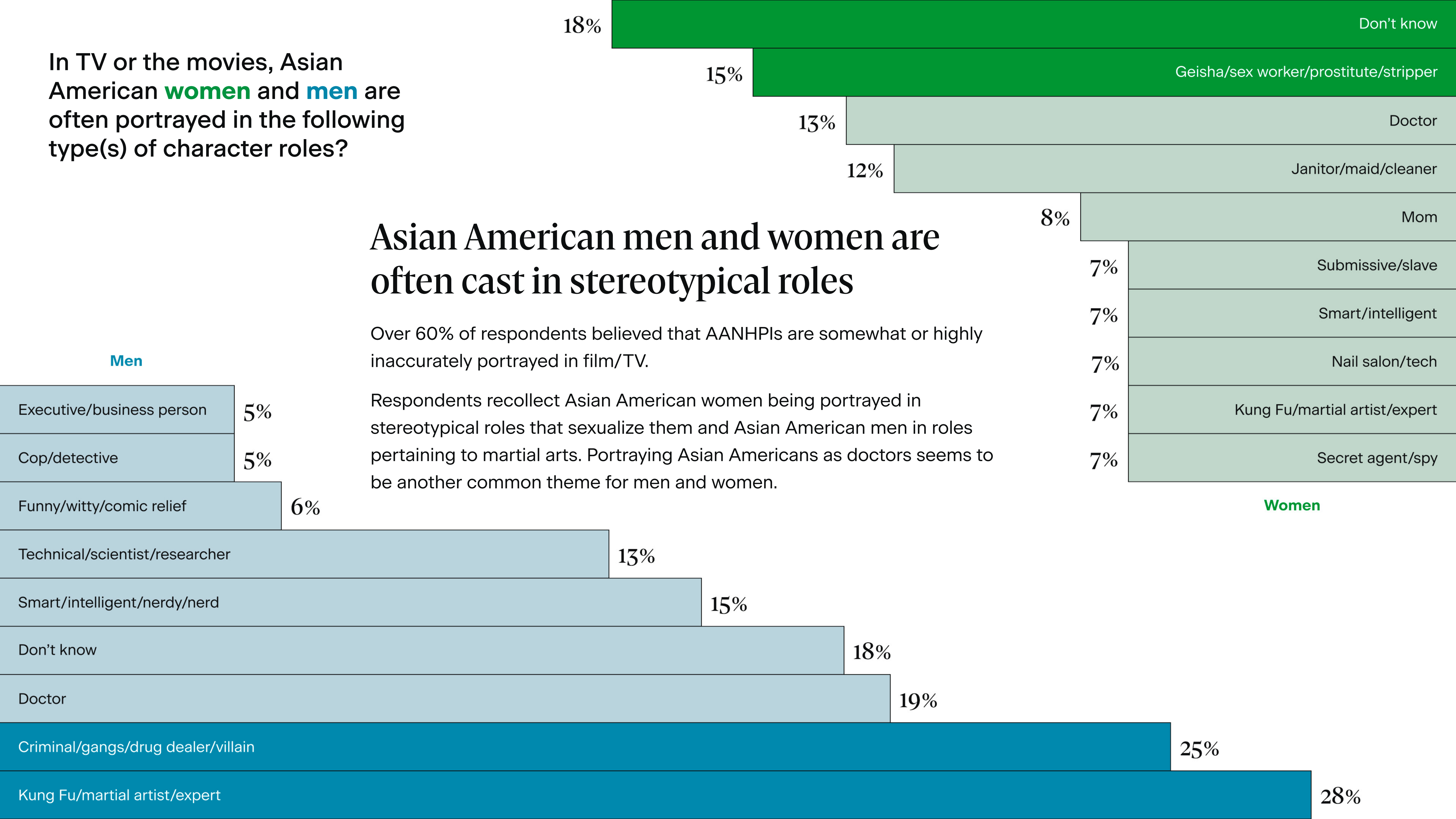
(Lucy Liu was the fourth most popular). After Kamala Harris, the next South Asian American to be named was Kalpana Chawla (0.7%), indicating a cultural lag. No Southeast Asians were listed among the top 20 names.

When asked to name a famous/prominent NHPI, almost one-third of respondents were unable to name one. The Rock/Dwayne Johnson (23%), followed by Don Ho (8%), and Jason Mamo'a (5%) were the top responses.

Name a famous or prominent Asian American person



In TV or the movies, Asian American **women** and **men** are often portrayed in the following type(s) of character roles?



Asian American men and women are often cast in stereotypical roles

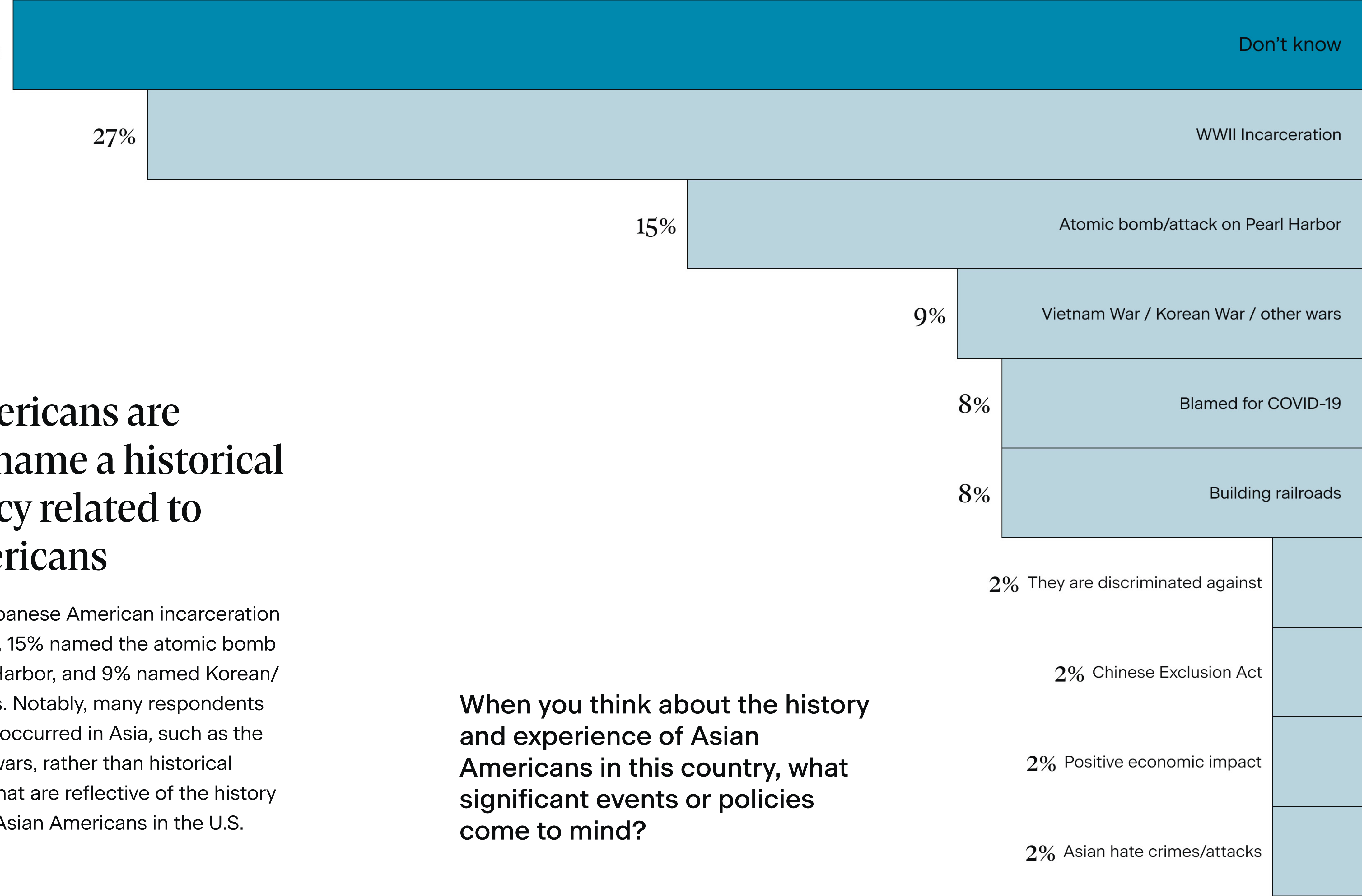
Over 60% of respondents believed that AANHPIs are somewhat or highly inaccurately portrayed in film/TV.

Respondents recollect Asian American women being portrayed in stereotypical roles that sexualize them and Asian American men in roles pertaining to martial arts. Portraying Asian Americans as doctors seems to be another common theme for men and women.

3 of 10 Americans are unable to name a historical event/policy related to Asian Americans

27% named the Japanese American incarceration during World War II, 15% named the atomic bomb or attack on Pearl Harbor, and 9% named Korean/Vietnam/other wars. Notably, many respondents named events that occurred in Asia, such as the atomic bomb and wars, rather than historical events or policies that are reflective of the history and experience of Asian Americans in the U.S.

When you think about the history and experience of Asian Americans in this country, what significant events or policies come to mind?

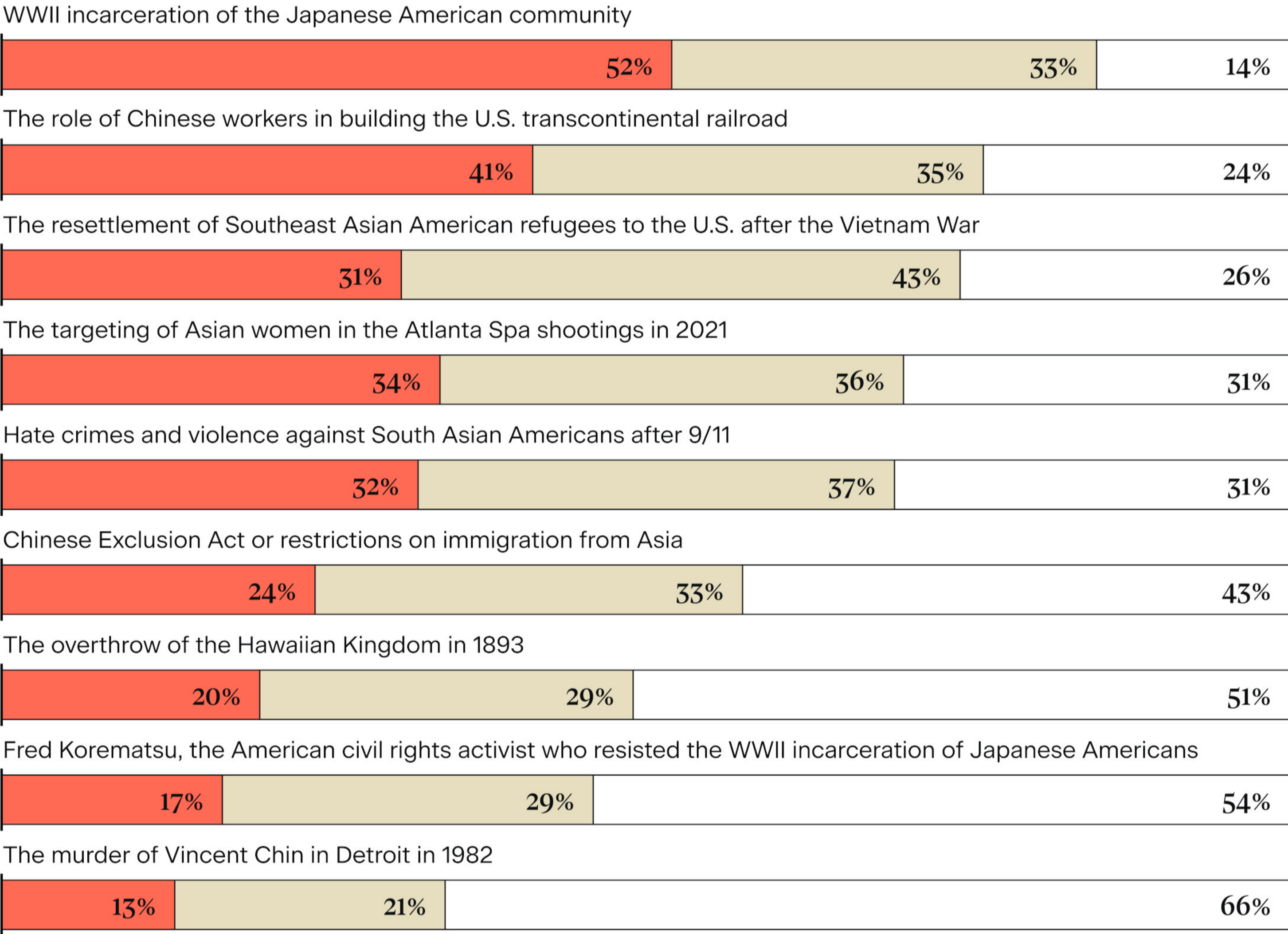


When prompted about historical AAPI events, Americans are most familiar with the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and least familiar with the murder of Vincent Chin

Respondents are also not very familiar with the role of Fred Korematsu, the American civil rights activist who resisted the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II; the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom in 1893; and the Chinese Exclusion Act.

How familiar are you with the following?

Extremely or moderately familiar Somewhat or slightly familiar Not at all familiar



News is the number one source of information for AANHPIs, followed by social media

Friends and TV/movies/music are the other important sources of information for Asian Americans. Social media is most popular for younger respondents.

Among Black and Hispanic Americans, social media is a more popular source than friends.

Similar to information about Asian Americans, respondents get most of their information about NHPIs from the news (46%), social media (36%), and TV, movies, or music (36%).

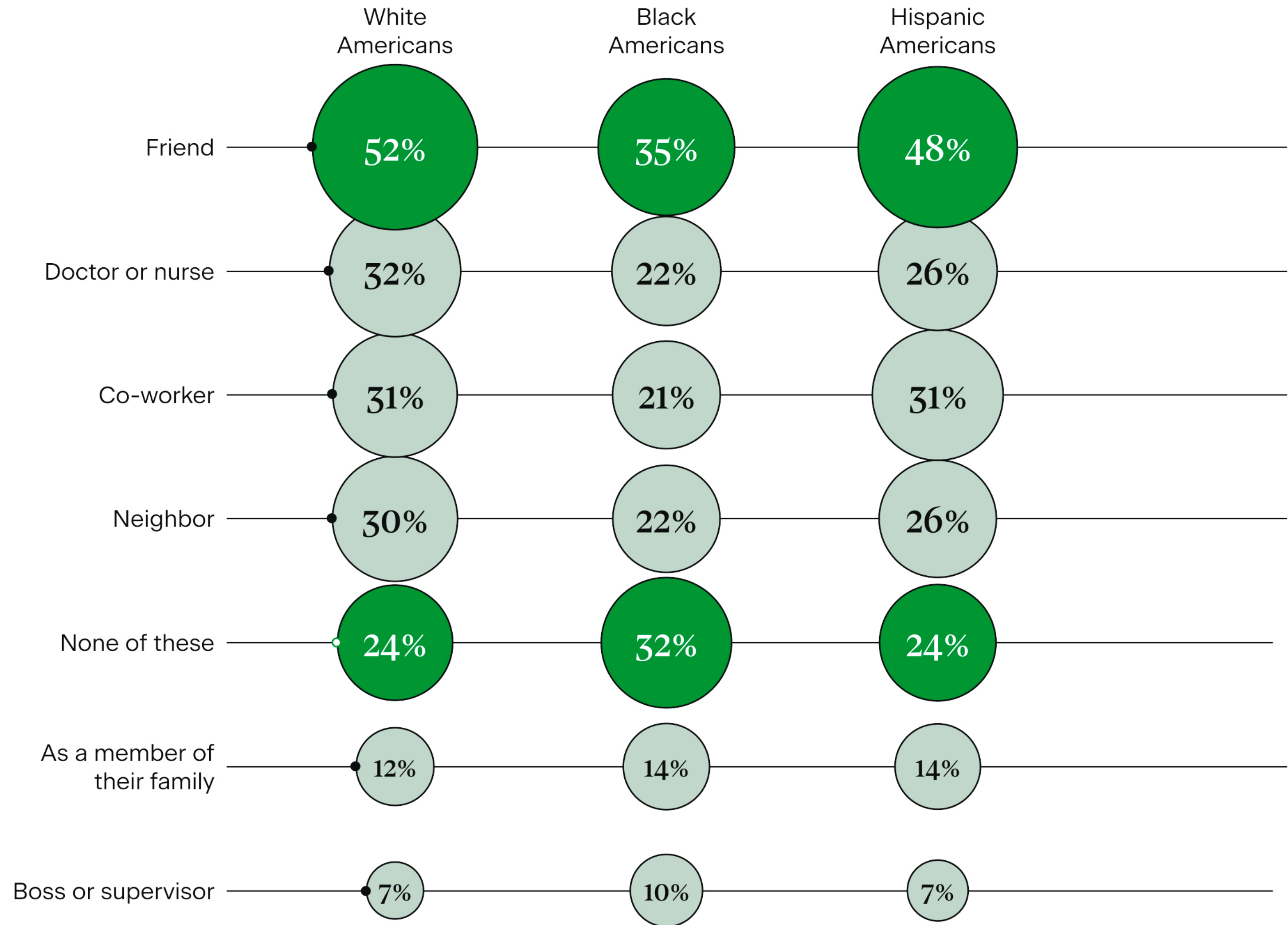
Where do you get most of your information about Asian Americans?

	White Americans	Black Americans	Hispanic Americans
News	61%	46%	46%
Social media	34%	45%	48%
Friends	34%	22%	31%
TV, movies, or music	33%	33%	39%
Family	19%	14%	16%
Co-workers	17%	13%	16%
Neighbors	16%	10%	14%
School	15%	19%	24%
Politicians	12%	19%	15%

Half of Americans have an Asian American friend

The majority (52%) of White Americans have an Asian American friend, while 32% of Black Americans don't appear to have any relationships with Asian Americans.

% of Americans who say they already have one of the following relationships with an Asian American, by race/ethnicity



Belonging and Safety



Asian Americans are among the least likely racial groups to feel they belong in the U.S.

We asked respondents to share to what extent (completely agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/completely disagree) they agree with the statement, “Personally, I feel like I belong and am accepted in the U.S.”.

Asian Americans (22%), along with Black (24%) and Hispanic (25%) Americans, feel much less a sense of belonging compared to White Americans. In 2022, 29% of Asian Americans completely agreed with the statement.

% of respondents who completely agree with the following statement: “Personally, I feel that I belong and am accepted in the U.S.”

57%

White Americans

25%

Hispanic Americans

24%

Black Americans

22%

Asian Americans

Many Asian Americans feel like they don't belong in online and physical spaces

We asked respondents who didn't (completely or somewhat) agree with the statement on belonging, where they felt like they didn't belong.

Many Asian Americans tend to feel like they don't belong specifically in the workplace (39%); in online spaces (39%); in their neighborhood (33%); and at school (32%).

In which of these spaces do you feel like you do not belong?

Asian Americans		
Online spaces/social media		39%
In my workplace		39%
In my neighborhood		33%
In my school or university		32%
With my friends		13%
In my place of worship		12%
With my family		10%
Other		10%

Black Americans		
Online spaces/social media		31%
In my workplace		24%
In my neighborhood		30%
In my school or university		22%
With my friends		14%
In my place of worship		18%
With my family		12%
Other		12%

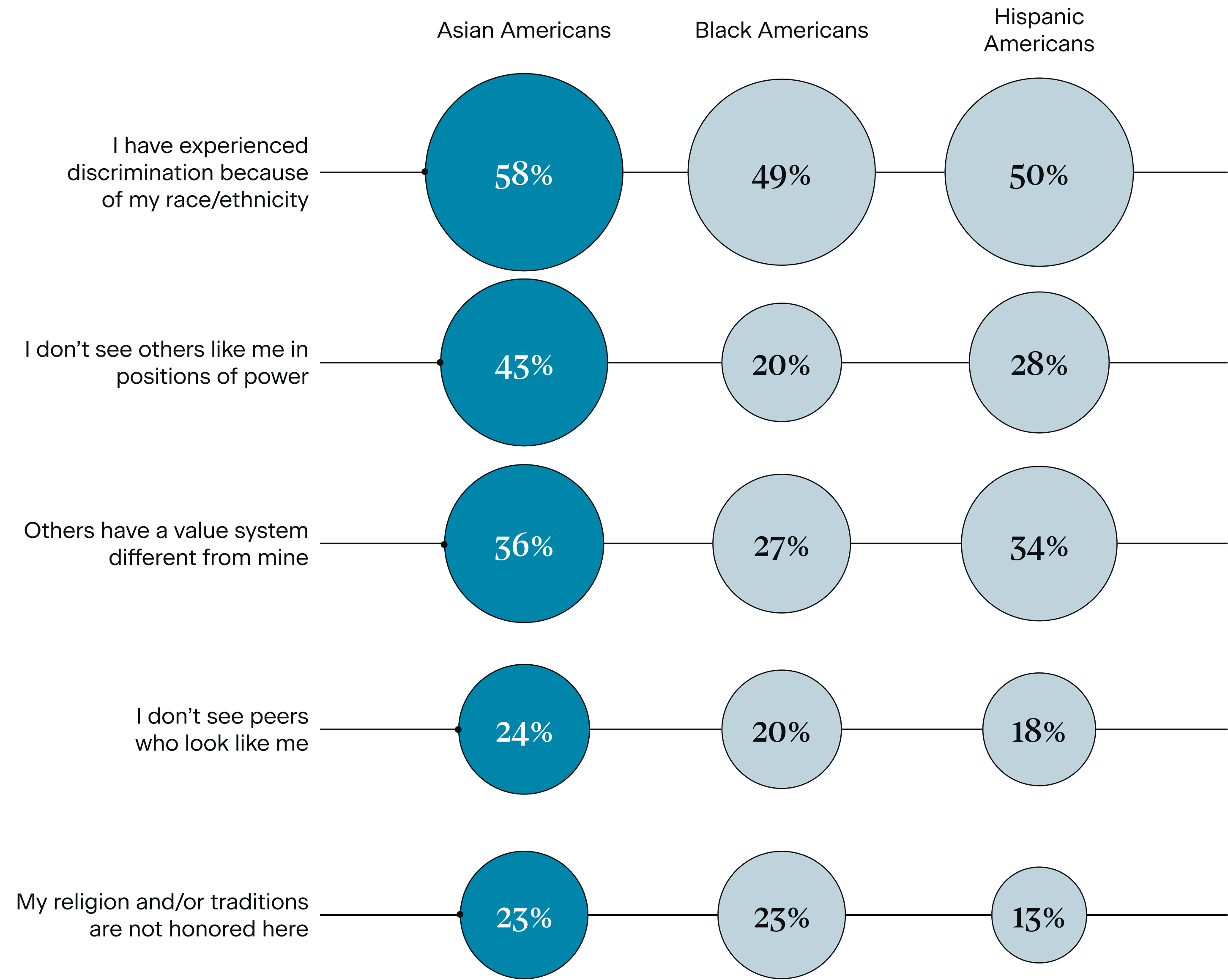
Hispanic Americans		
Online spaces/social media		23%
In my workplace		32%
In my neighborhood		30%
In my school or university		25%
With my friends		12%
In my place of worship		13%
With my family		14%
Other		11%

Discrimination and lack of representation lead to a lack of belonging among Asian Americans

We asked respondents who didn't agree with the statement on belonging, why they felt that way.

Compared to Black and Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans were more likely to attribute their lack of belonging and acceptance due to having personally experienced discrimination as a result of their race/ethnicity and failing to see others like them in positions of power.

Why do you feel like you do not belong/are not accepted?



% of Americans who feel or have felt uncomfortable or unsafe due to their race or ethnicity

1 in 2 Asian Americans feel unsafe due to their race

Asian Americans (52%), along with Black (53%) and Hispanic (47%) Americans are least likely to feel safe. Younger Asian Americans feel more unsafe than older Asian Americans.



Asian Americans feel most unsafe on public transportation

Asian Americans are concerned about their personal safety in public spaces as well as in work/school. Asian American women (32%) feel more unsafe on public transportation compared to Asian American men (25%). Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans felt much more unsafe in their schools, markets and public transportation than White Americans.

29%

On public transportation

19%

Own neighborhood

19%

School or university

17%

Workplace

17%

Local market

12%

Voting Location

8%

Place of worship

% of Asian Americans who have felt unsafe or uncomfortable in the following locations:

Future Directions

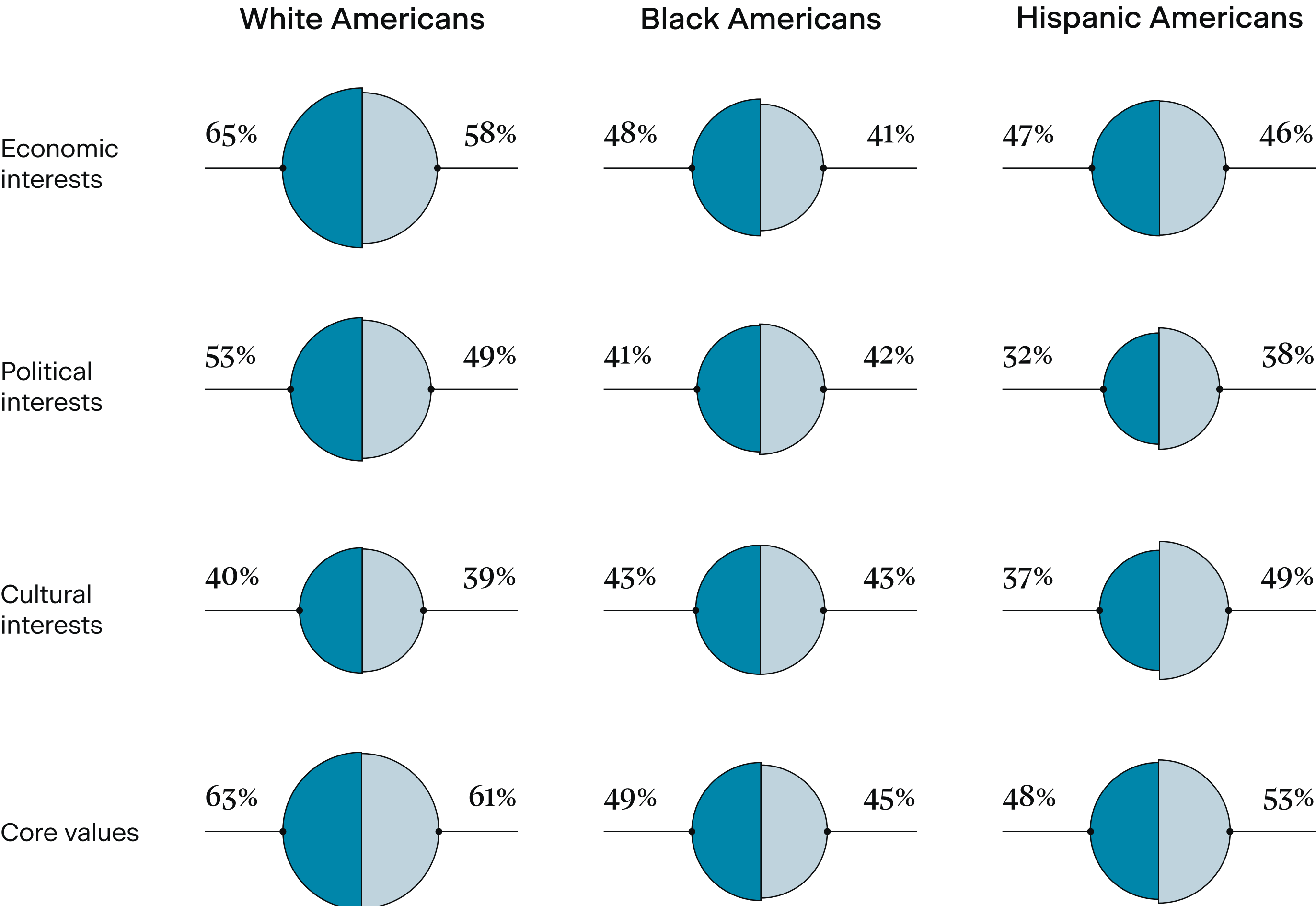


Commonalities for bridge building: Many Americans see shared economic interests and core values with AAPIs

Across all racial groups, economic interests and core values were identified as shared aspects with AAPIs. Strategies for cross-racial solidarity could center these interests.

% of Americans who feel their racial group shares the following with AAPIs

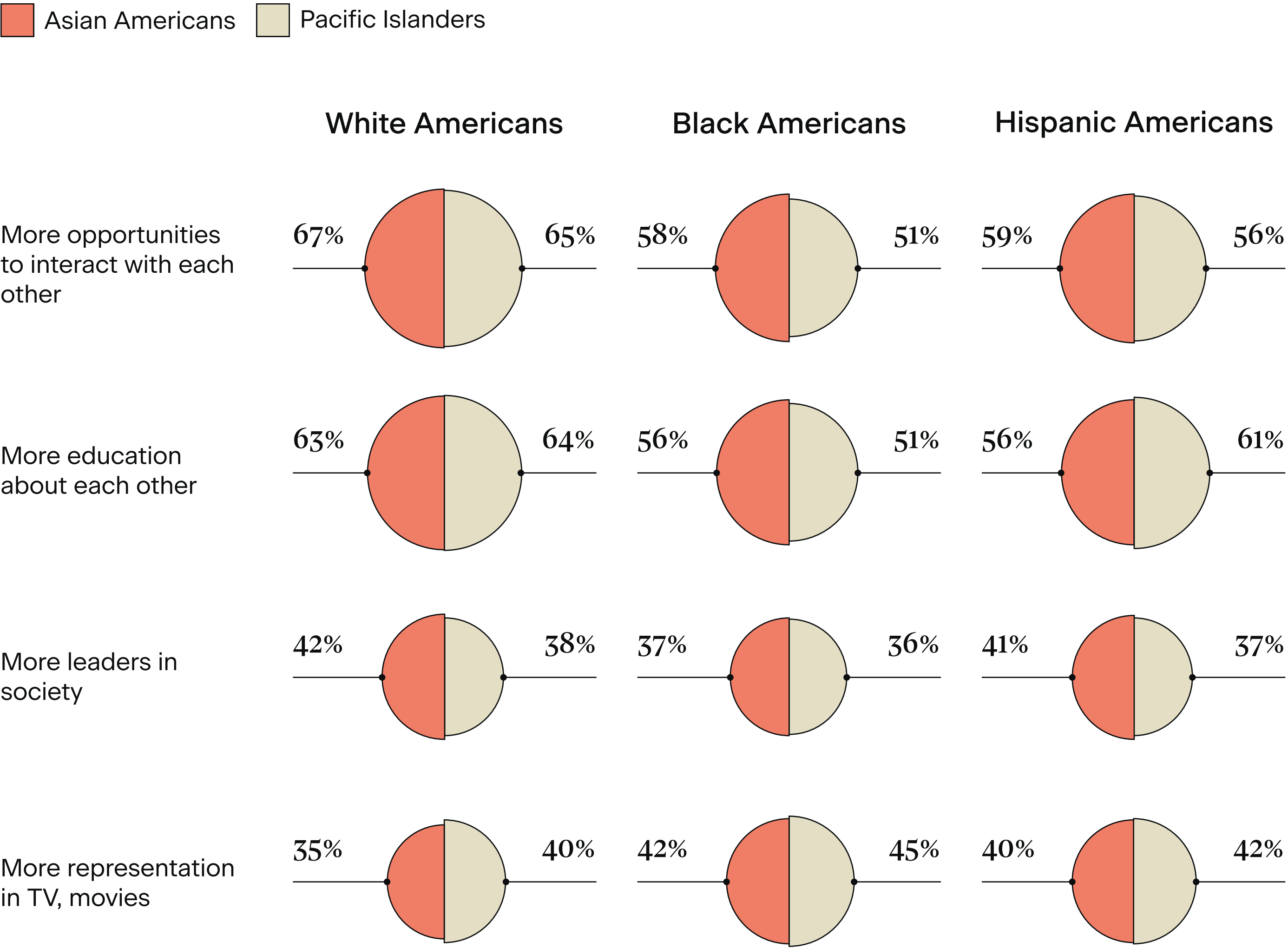
Asian Americans Pacific Islanders



Americans cite more opportunities to interact and more education as best ways to build relationships with AAPIs

13% of the respondents who were open to more interaction did not have any relationships with Asian Americans, signaling openness. Some respondents are also open to seeing more representation of AAPIs in TV and movies.

% of Americans who feel the following areas could improve the relationship between their racial group and AAPIs



Most Americans think that incorporating the Asian American experience into the teaching of American history is important

Close to one-third of Americans think that it should be mandatory. Democrats are more likely to feel that it should be mandated (46%).

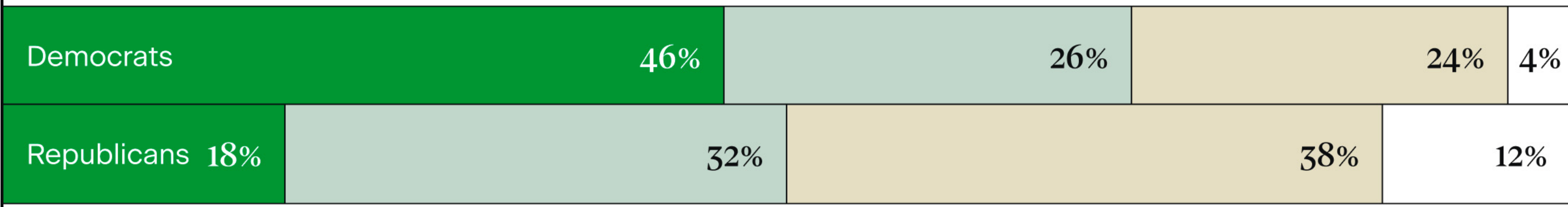
% of Americans who believe that incorporating the Asian American experience into the teaching of American history is:

- Absolutely important and should be mandatory
- Important, but should be optional
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important

All Americans



By political affiliation



Discussion

Our data show that Asian Americans continue to be perceived in different, and sometimes conflicting ways. We also see that the lens of racist tropes such as yellow peril, perpetual foreigner, and model minority are embedded deep in the American psyche.

The majority of Americans overestimate the size of the Asian American population. Moreover, they tend to think mainly of East Asians, specifically Chinese, when they consider who counts as Asian American. Roughly one-third of respondents believe that Asian Americans should be subject to additional scrutiny if they work in areas critical to U.S. global competitiveness. Additionally, this year, we see heightened concerns regarding the collective threat of China as a military/national security and economic threat — underscoring how Asian Americans continue to be viewed through the lens of the yellow peril.

Nearly one-third of the respondents question the loyalty of Asian Americans. Many respondents are unable to name a famous Asian American, or look

beyond the perception that Asian Americans are martial artists (Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee continue to be the most popular Asian Americans in the minds of most Americans). Critically, many remain unaware of the historical injustices towards AAPIs. One-third of Americans remain uncomfortable by the prospect of having an Asian American president or vice president, revealing a lack of trust among Americans in the belief that Asian Americans can successfully occupy the highest positions of power.

Simultaneously, the model minority lens leads Americans to view Americans of Chinese-descent and Asian Americans more broadly as nonthreatening. We continue to be viewed as smart, educated, nice, kind, and hardworking, and our influence and contributions are perceived as limited to fields such as science and healthcare. In terms of group status, the majority of White Americans see us as White-adjacent rather than as people of color, while most Asian Americans believe that their status is closer to people of color.

These contradictory views of Asian Americans co-exist, making Asian Americans perceived as safe

enough to be a friend or co-worker but not trustworthy enough to be in a position of power. Not seeing people like themselves in positions of power and leadership, along with experiences of racism and discrimination, has led Asian Americans to feel that they do not completely belong, nor are accepted in the U.S. Furthermore, key to belonging is feeling safe, and our data show that 1 in 2 Asian Americans feel unsafe; and we feel unsafe in physical as well as online spaces.

Also, not being recognized as actors in American history could further isolate Asian Americans - while events in Asia did have an impact on Asian Americans, our data show that Americans continue to think of Asian American history as Asian history, and Asian Americans as Asians.

Additionally, our findings also provide some preliminary insights into the diversity within the Asian American population. South Asia is least likely to be considered as the place of origin of Asian Americans; no Southeast Asian American was named as a prominent Asian American; such

factors can result in biased narratives of Asian Americans. Focusing only on the experiences and attitudes of East Asians, and then making generalizations about Asian Americans based on East Asians, fails to accurately portray the diverse experiences and beliefs of all Asian Americans. Our results point to a cultural lag in who Americans count as Asian.

Also, although some Black and Hispanic respondents are less supportive of Asian Americans holding national security jobs and believe Asian Americans should be subject to additional scrutiny, there are many commonalities that unite our communities of color. Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans are less likely to feel they completely belong and are accepted in the U.S., report feeling unsafe compared to White Americans, and report feeling shared economic interests and core values. Additionally, given that Black and Hispanic respondents are open to opportunities to interact with and learn more about Asian Americans, strategies involving cross-racial solidarity could be based on these commonalities. Identifying and providing community resources

and infrastructure that can help create safer spaces can better support all communities of color. Furthermore, the openness across communities to incorporate Asian American experiences into the teaching of American history is a positive sign. It moves us forward towards building a sense of belonging for Asian Americans and ensuring that a more accurate and inclusive American history is taught in all of our classrooms. By expanding AAPI education, we can help grow a shared sense of humanity to accelerate awareness and foster understanding. Altogether, by encouraging greater interracial solidarity and allyship, we can create stronger connections across our communities.

Lastly, our data also provide preliminary insight into how NHPIs are viewed by all Americans. We see stereotypes of kind, friendly—more touristy-type descriptors—being perpetuated. We also see a lack of awareness around the history and origins of NHPIs, as well as their contributions. While there is already some recognition that NHPIs are misrepresented on TV/media, narrative change in front and behind the camera is one important step

towards reclaiming AAPI stories to combat harmful stereotypes.

There is also a lack of understanding of the challenges faced by the NHPI community, leading to NHPIs being regarded as treated fairly or Americans being unsure about what the lived experience of NHPIs might be like. Further research is needed to better understand attitudes towards and perceptions of NHPIs, as well as strategies to counter stereotypes and misperceptions specific to the NHPI community.

Limitations

- Our survey was administered only in English. Specifically for AAPI communities, where a significant portion of the population are non-native English users, offering other languages to take the survey in may have been more appropriate.
- Our survey was administered through an online panel, rather than through a phone and/or door-to-door survey, given cost considerations. However, different quotas were set up to reach a nationally representative sample, and the

vendor used multiple panels from different sources to generate diverse responses.

- Although we oversampled for Asian Americans, we were unable to get desired sample sizes for all Asian subgroups, hence our subgroup analyses were limited.
- Our sample for NHPIs was limited to 71, hence we were unable to share robust analyses on how NHPIs perceived themselves. Additional research is needed to understand and document how NHPIs perceive themselves and how Americans perceive NHPIs, as well as challenges unique to the NHPI community and approaches to center the needs of the community.



Conclusion

The STAATUS Index provides deeper understanding how Americans view AAPIs, in ways that have not been previously examined through nationally representative survey data. Three years since the global pandemic, we're continuing to see patterns and insights behind stereotypes and racial bias towards our community.

When the STAATUS Index was launched in 2021, at the height of anti-Asian sentiment, we saw how AAPIs were scapegoated for Covid-19 and were either invisible in the public consciousness or seen in highly stereotypical ways (i.e. Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee, and other martial artists). In 2022, our data revealed the lack of belonging within our community, especially among youth and women, while this year's study provides new insights into how discrimination and the lack of role models contribute to these feelings of "otherness" and how the growing concern of China as a threat ties to continued questions of AAPI loyalty and foreignness.

While widespread violence against Asian Americans has slowed since the height of the pandemic, its effect on our community reflects a much deeper wound born from legacies of exclusion and discrimination. Amidst economic, political, and social challenges today, our AAPI friends, families, and elders still feel unsafe, unwelcome, and a lack of belonging. Our multi-year findings show that we can not reduce or attribute anti-Asian sentiment to political rhetoric or COVID-19 alone. Racism is deeply entrenched in American history, culture, and institutions.

By continuing our work to understand the complex dynamics in racial/ethnic communities, we strongly believe that accurate and inclusive data is key to address and dismantle racial bias, discrimination, and stereotypes. Through new insights and discovery, we can identify and collaborate on concrete solutions to fight racism towards the AAPI community, and work toward a more just and inclusive society.



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