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Black Americans' Perceptions of Criminal Justice and Personal Safety After George Floyd's Murder

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Data Sources

Gallup Center on Black Voices Web Studies

Jun 23-Jul 6, 2020; N= 36,403 adults

Jun 17-Jul 9, 2021; N= 13,098 adults

Oct 5-27, 2021; N=13,520

Gallup U.S. Telephone Polls (70% cell/30% LL)

Jun 1-Jul 5, 2021; N= 1,381 adults

Dec 1-16, 2021 N= 811 adults

Overview

- ❖ Perceptions of Personal Safety
- ❖ Public Observations and Preferences for Policing
- ❖ Expectations and Evaluations of Interactions with Police
- ❖ Trust in Law Enforcement
- ❖ Support for Policing and Criminal Justice Reforms

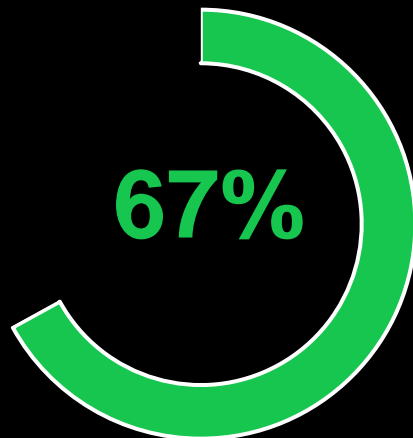
Americans' Perceptions of Their Personal Safety

76%

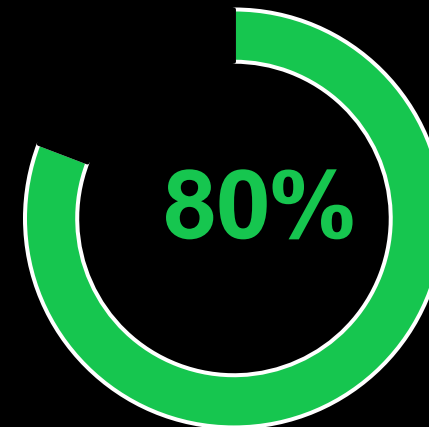
of U.S. adults say they **feel safe** walking alone at night in the area where they live

Jun 2021

Black adults



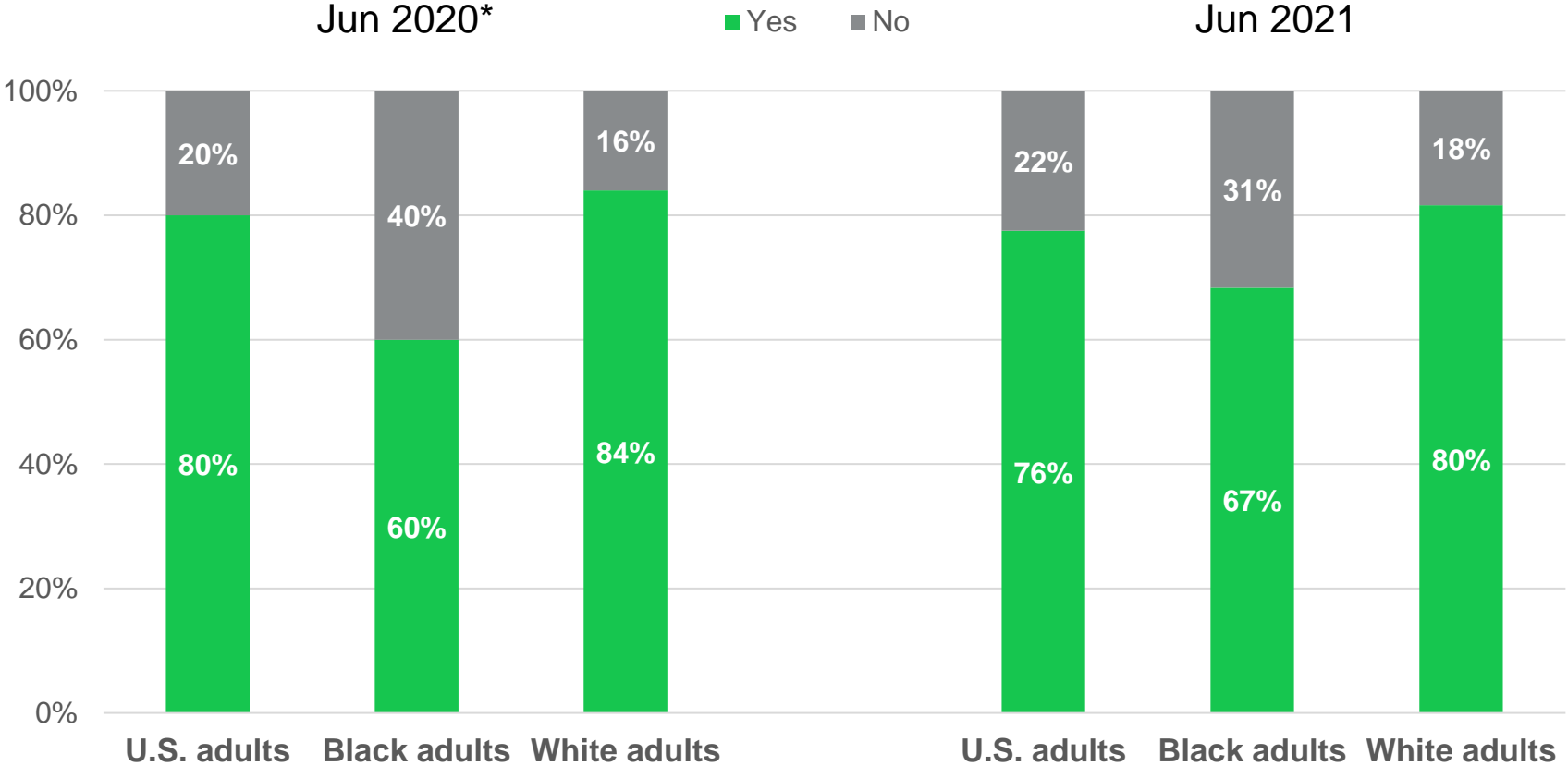
White adults



Changes in Feelings of Personal Safety

Between June 2020 and June 2021, Americans overall became slightly less likely to say they feel safe walking alone at night in their neighborhood. However, there was an uptick in the percentage of Black adults saying they feel safe.

Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the area where you live?



*question wording: Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?

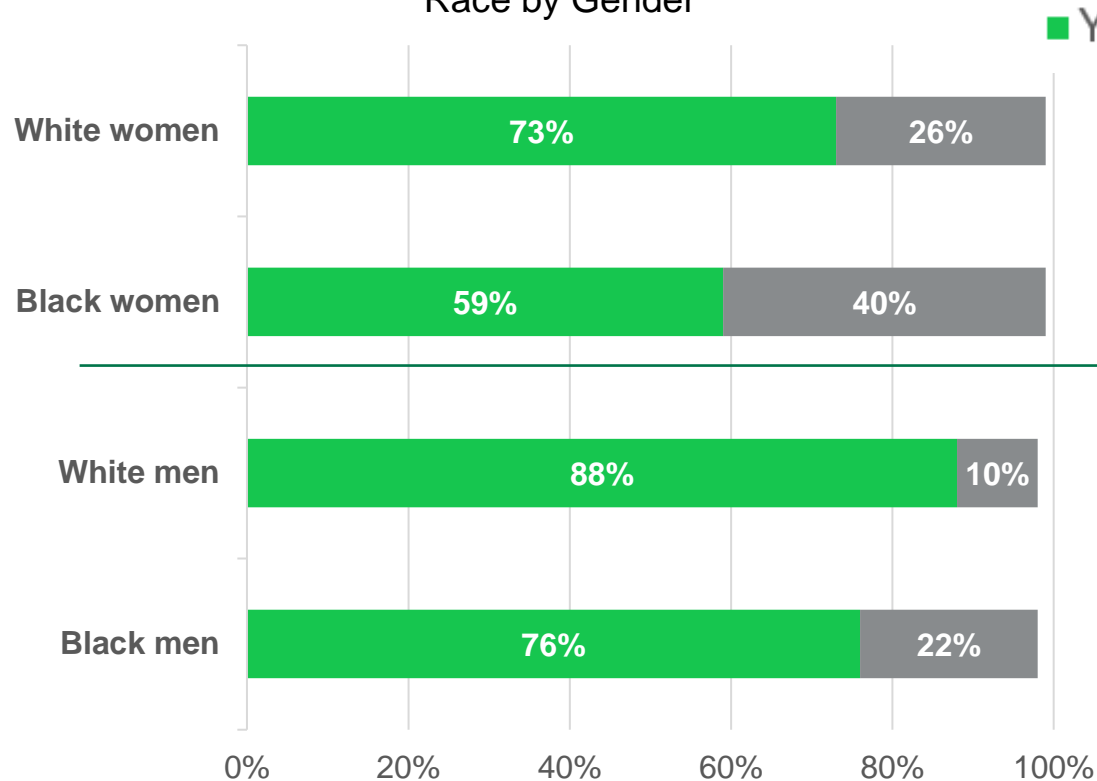
Subgroup Differences in Perceptions of Personal Safety

Men are more likely than women to say they feel safe walking alone at night, and White women and men are more likely than their Black counterparts to say so. White adults across age groups are more likely than Black adults to feel safe. Black adults aged 65 and older are least likely to report feeling safe.

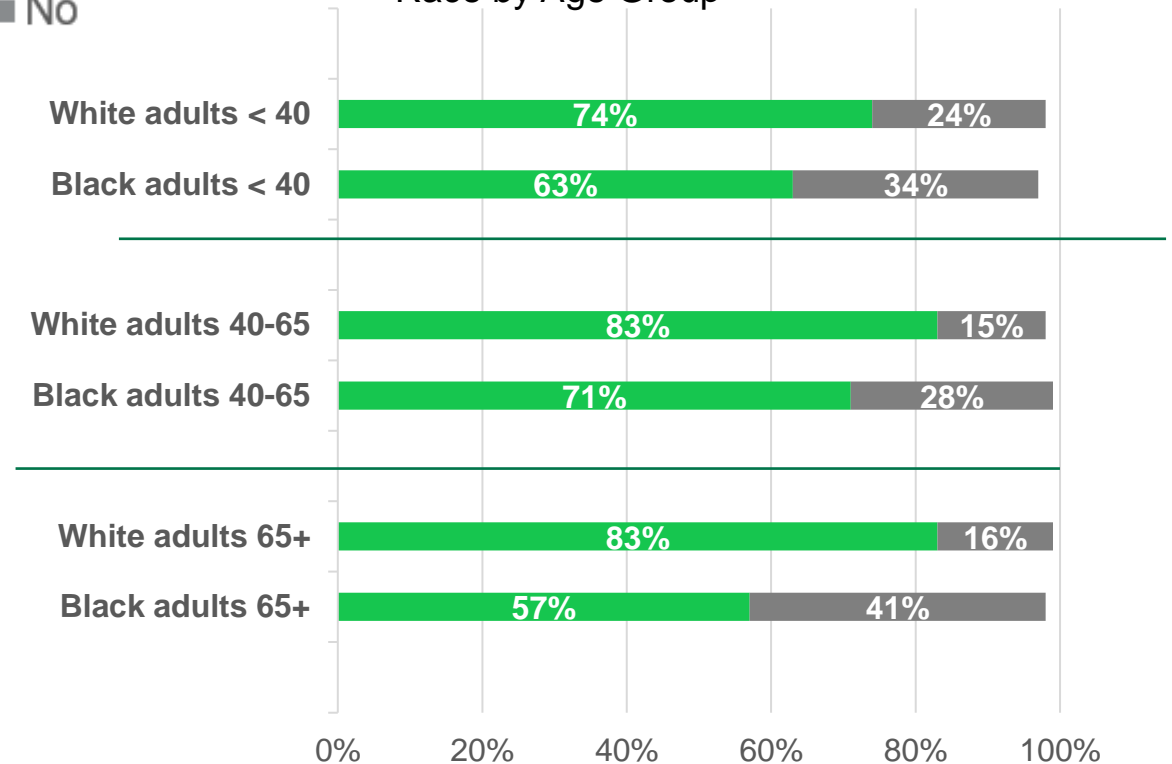
Jun 2021

Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the area where you live?

Race by Gender

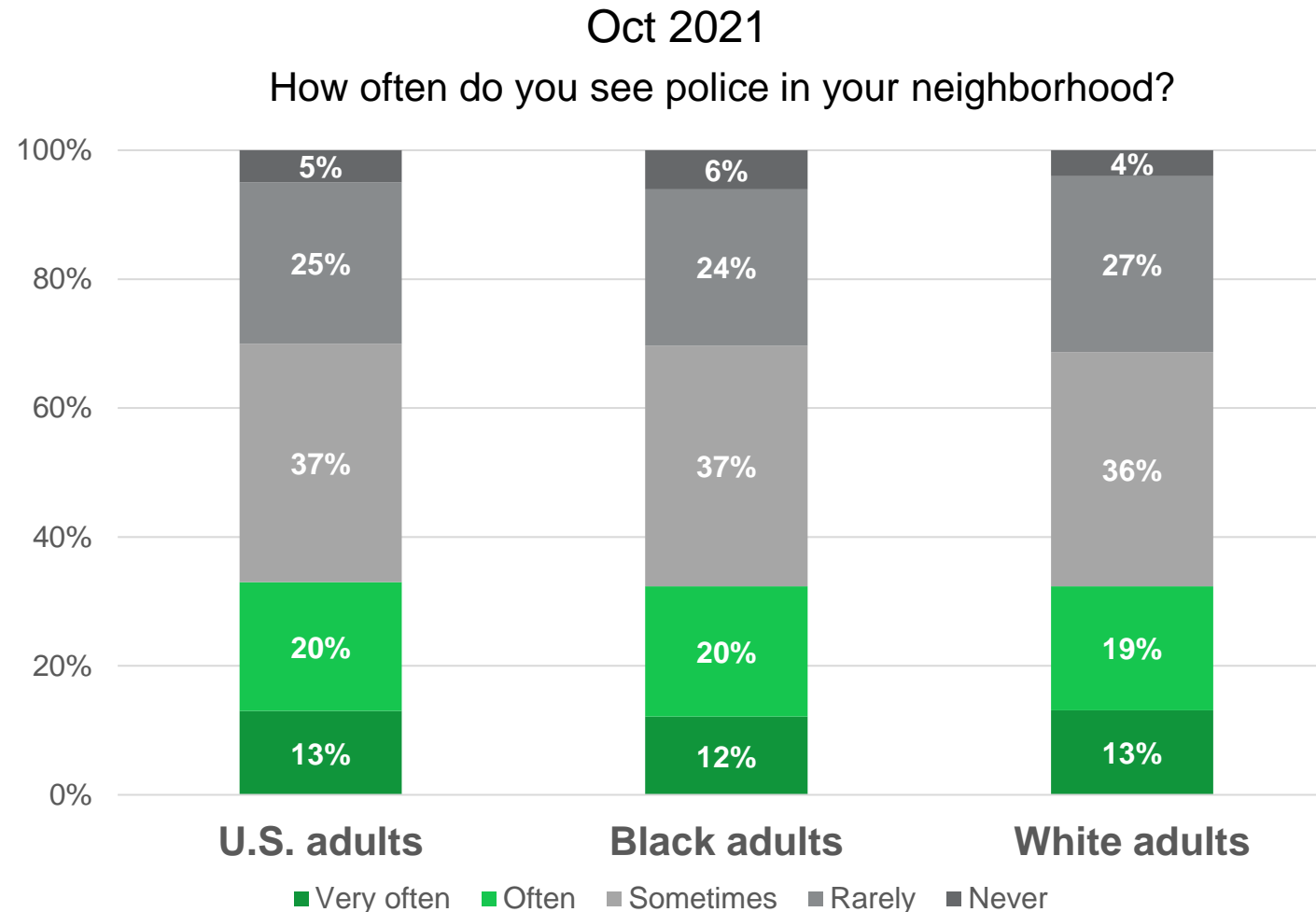


Race by Age Group



Americans' Observations of Police in Their Neighborhoods

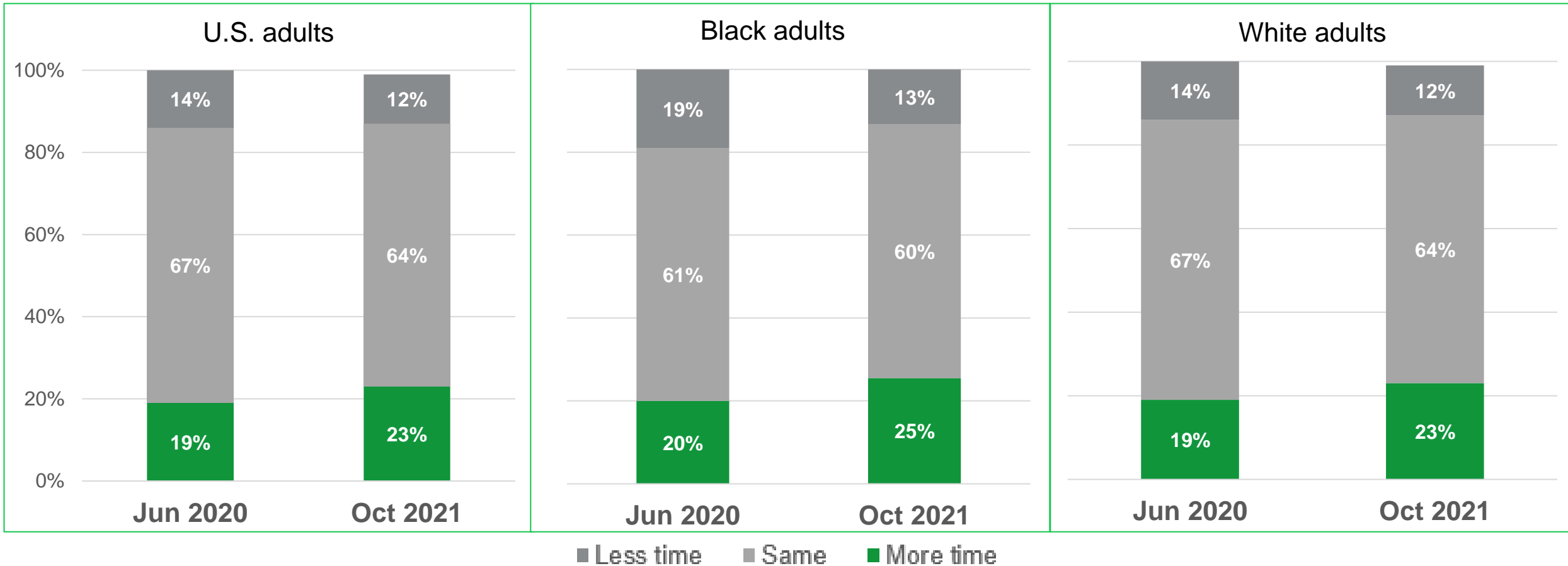
Roughly one in three Americans, regardless of their race say they see police in their neighborhood “very often” or “often.”



Americans' Preference for Police Presence

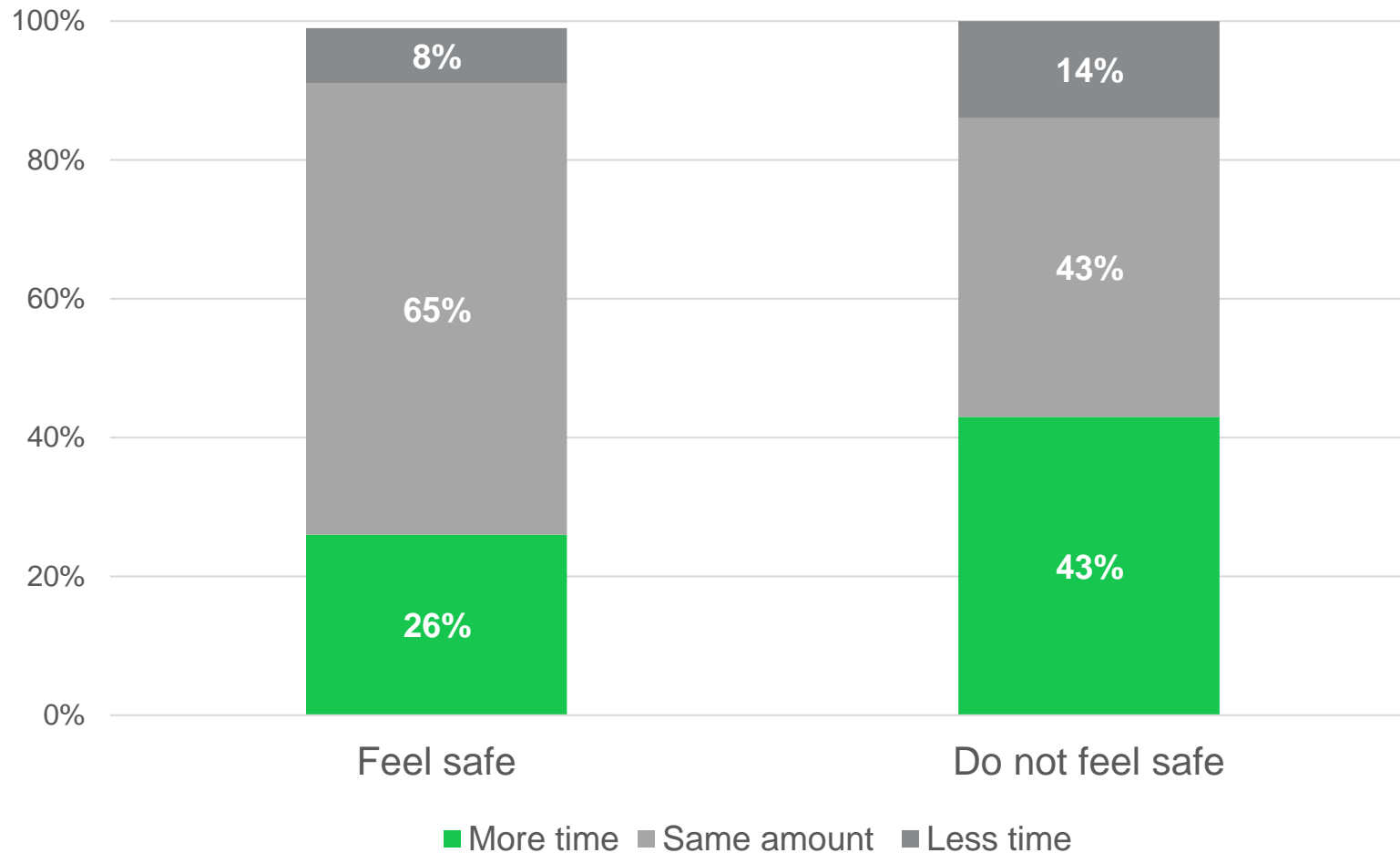
In June 2020, one in five Americans, including roughly equal percentages of White and Black adults, said they would prefer that police spend more time in their area. By October 2021, slightly more expressed the same preference.

Would you rather the police spend more time, the same amount of time, or less time, as they currently spend in your area?



Americans' Preference for Police Presence

Those who feel unsafe walking alone at night do not overwhelmingly favor an increased police presence in their neighborhoods. There is little difference between White and Black Americans.

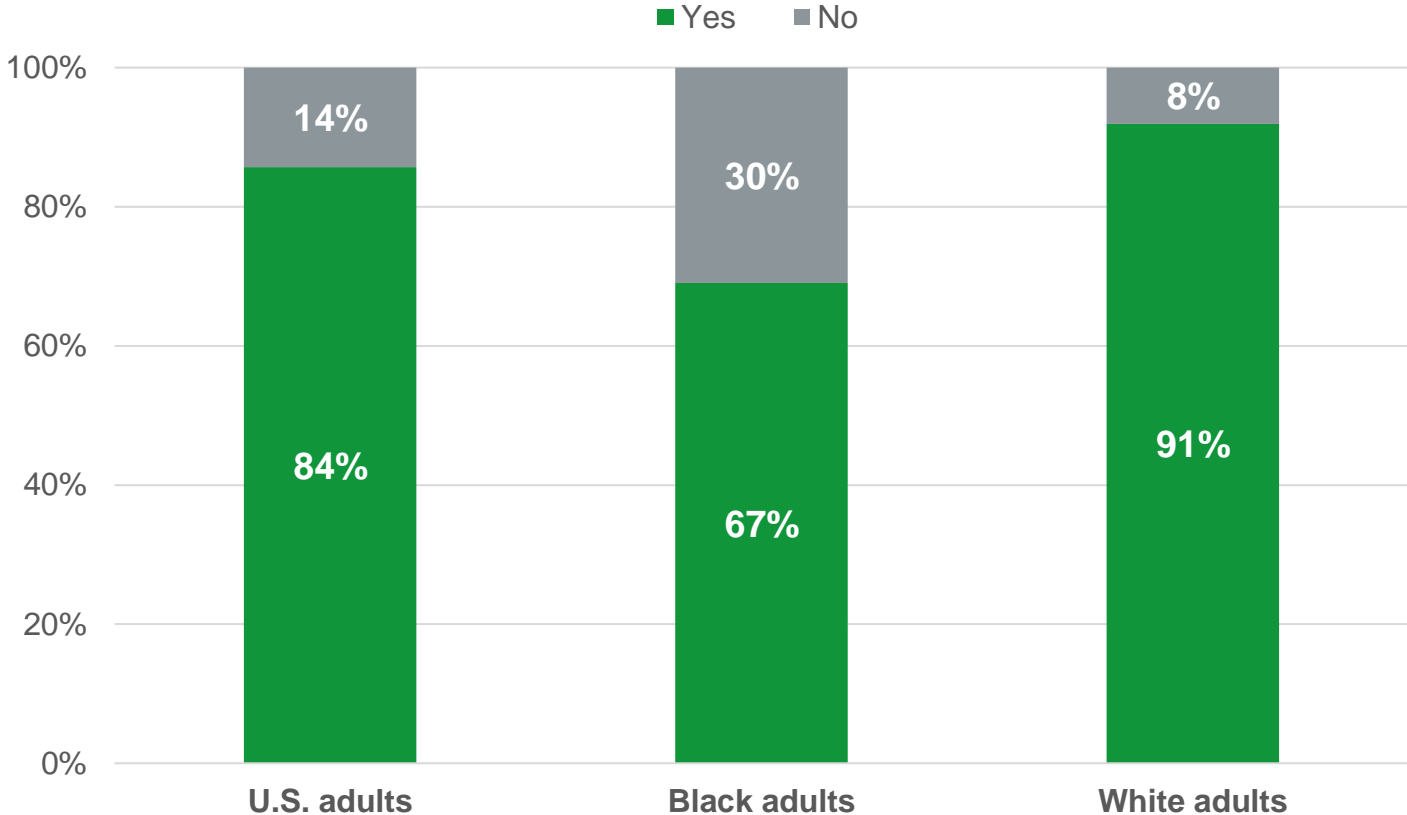


Public Expectations of Police Interactions

More than four in five Americans believe that they would be treated with courtesy and respect in an interaction with police in their area. More than nine in ten White adults think so, but far fewer Black adults do (67%).

Jun 2021

If you had an interaction with police in your area, do you think they would treat you with courtesy and respect, or not?

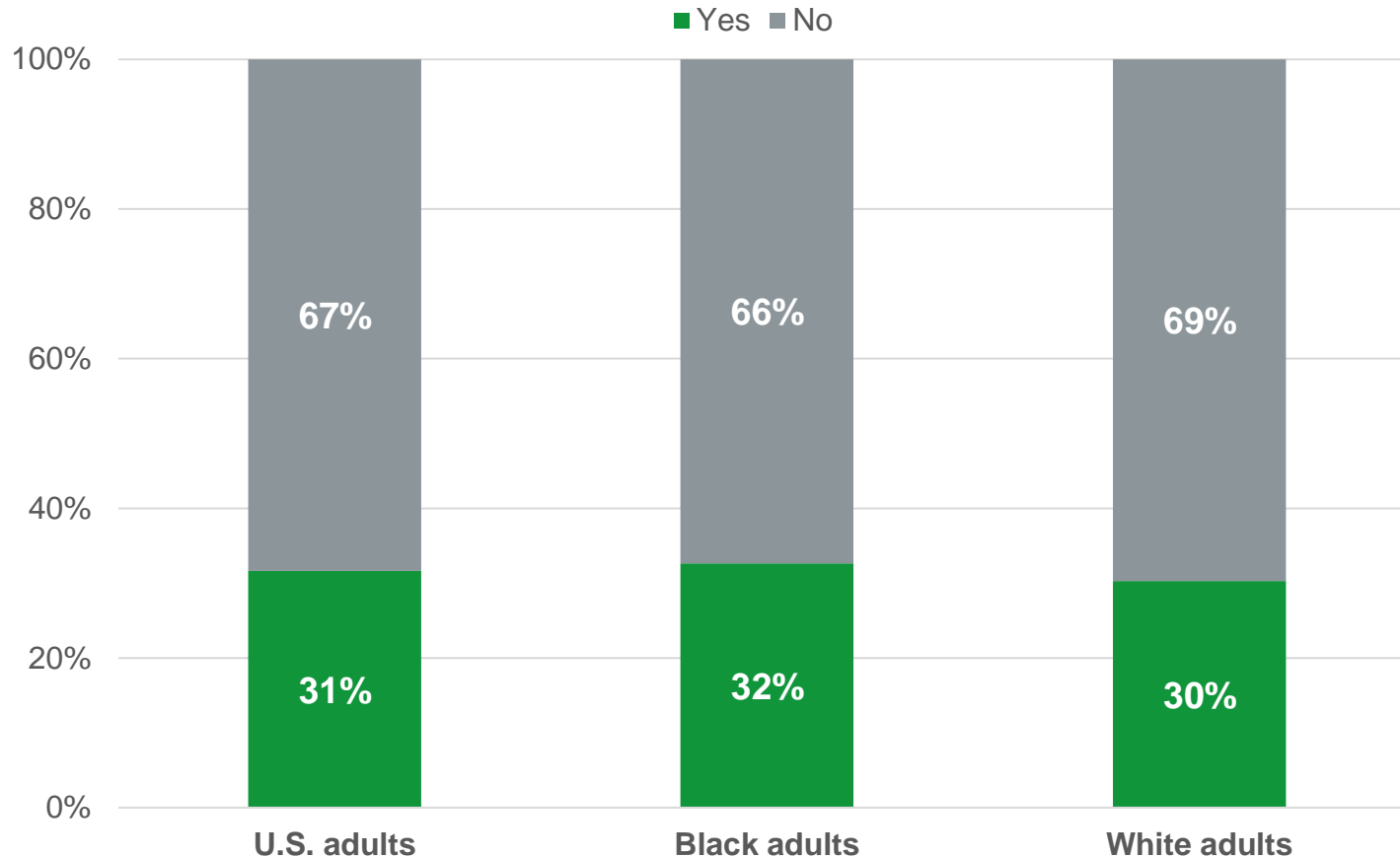


Americans' Interactions with Police

About three in 10 Americans say they had an interaction with the police in the prior year. There are no significant racial differences.

Jun 2021

Have you personally had an interaction with police in the past 12 months?

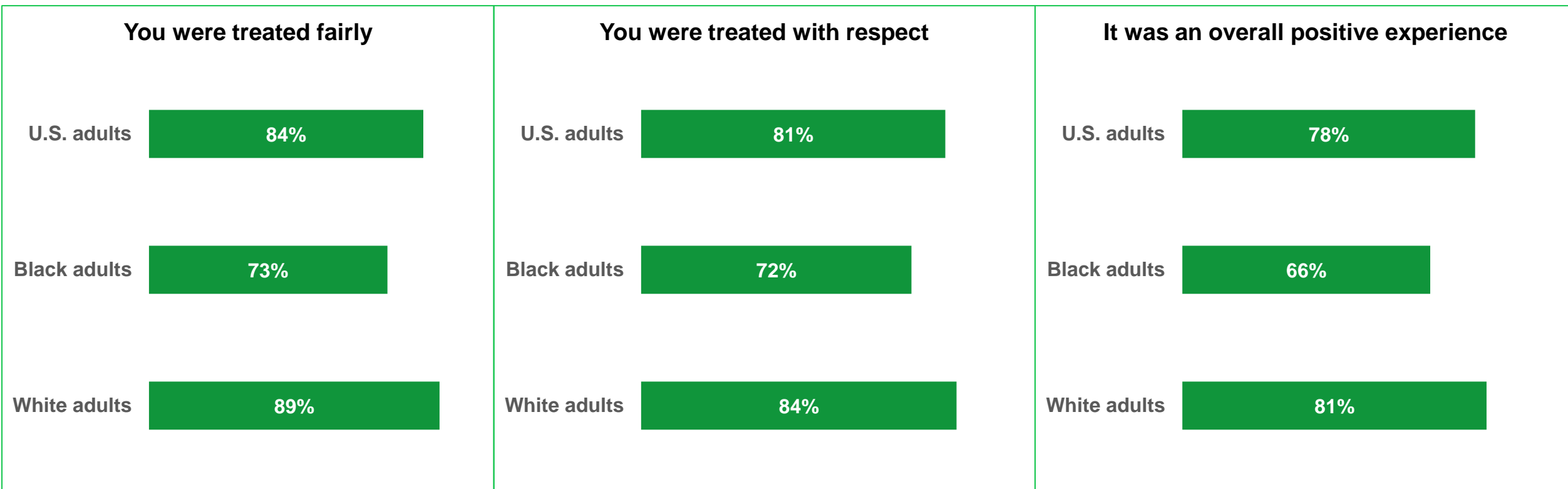


Racial Differences in Americans' Interactions with Police

Asked to rate those interactions, roughly four in five Americans say they were treated fairly and with respect, and nearly as many say it was an overall positive experience. While majorities of Black adults rate their interactions positively, they are significantly less likely than White adults to do so.

Jun 2021

Thinking about any interactions you may have had with police over the past 12 months, overall, would you say...? *(Based on those who said they had an interaction)*



How Much Trust Do Black Americans Have in Local Law Enforcement?

Most Black Americans express satisfaction with police-community relations and have confidence in local police, but these figures of trust trail behind the national averages.

Jun 2021

	U.S. adults	Black adults	White adults
Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the relationship between the police and your local community?			
% Satisfied	75	63	81
% Dissatisfied	23	35	17
In the city or area where you live, do you have confidence in the local police force, or not?			
% Yes	73	57	79
% No	26	41	20

Most Describe Police-Community Relations as Stable or Improving

Most Black adults say that the relationship between police and their community is remaining the same or getting better. About one in six Black Americans say that police-community relations are getting worse.

Jun 2021

	U.S. adults	Black adults	White adults
Do you think the relationship between the police and your community is ...			
% Getting better	24	21	25
% Getting worse	12	16	10
% Staying the same	62	62	64

Many Feel Police Don't Administer Fair Treatment

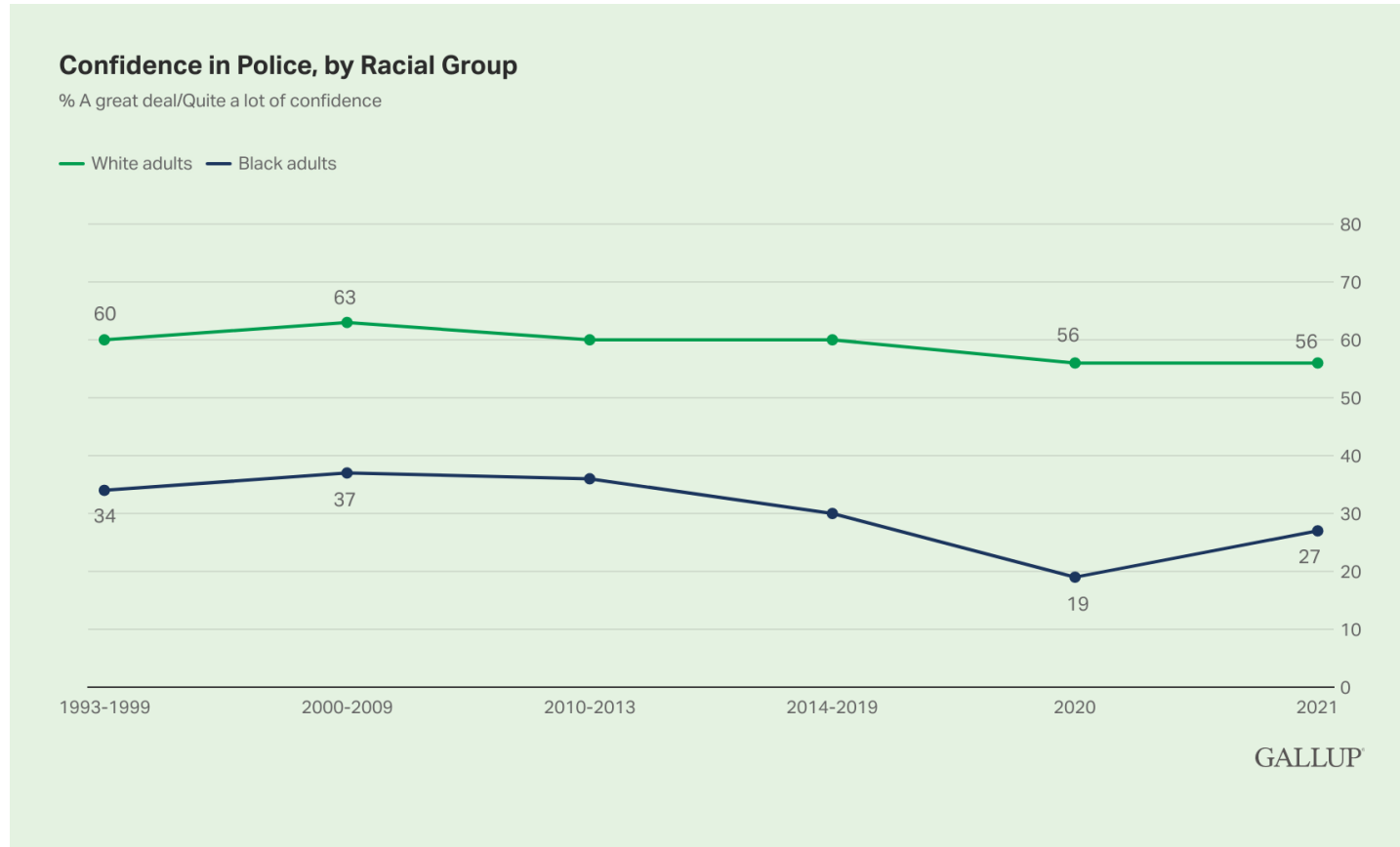
Most Black Americans say that people like them are treated fairly by the police, but about four in 10 say that local police treat them unfairly.

Jun 2021

	U.S. adults	Black adults	White adults
Do local police treat people like you fairly or unfairly?			
% Fairly	82	59	89
% Unfairly	16	38	9

Confidence in Police Has Waned Among Black Adults

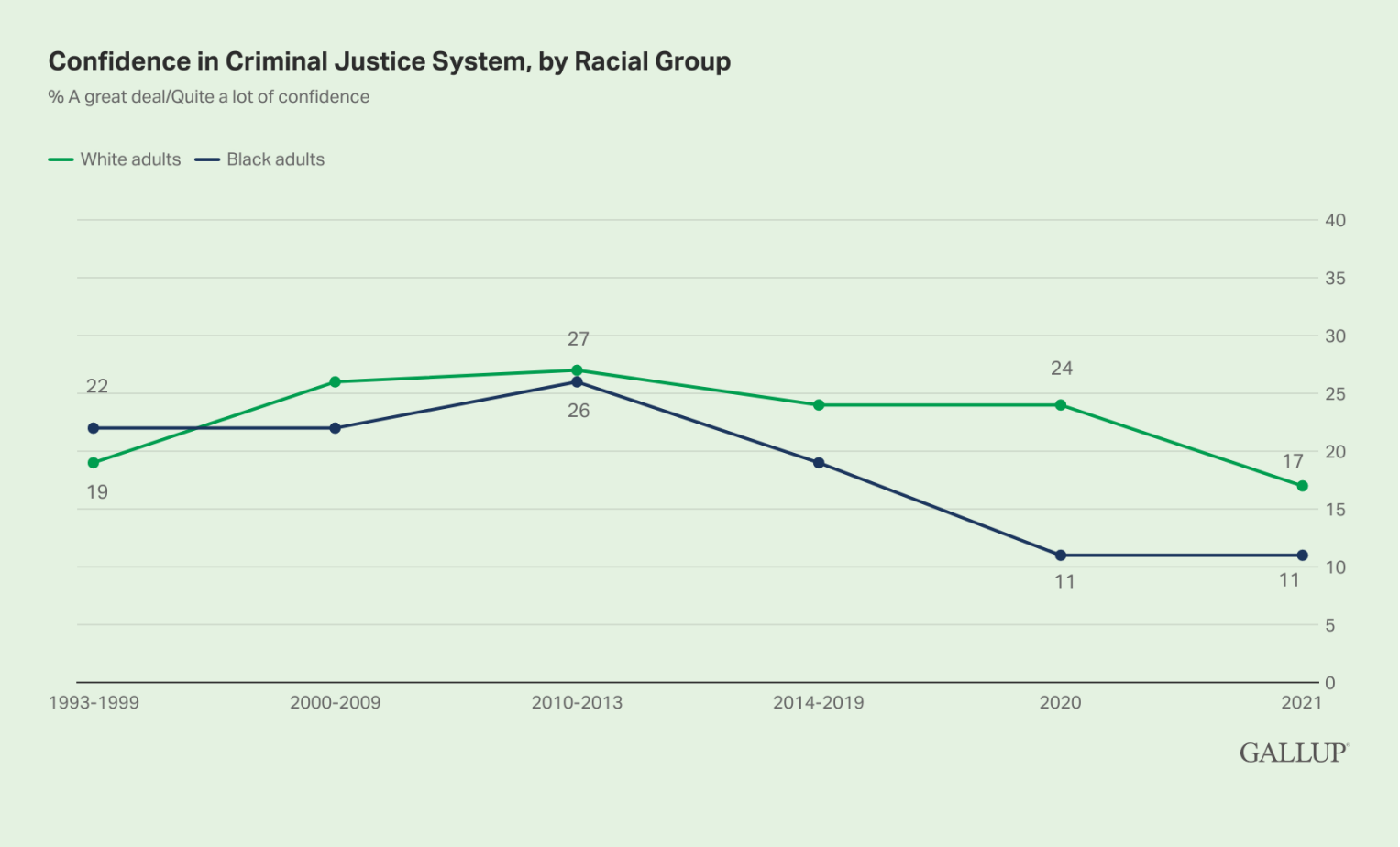
Black adults have consistently been less likely than White adults to express confidence in police as an institution. Confidence in police among the Black community began to decline in 2014 after a string of deadly shootings of unarmed Black Americans by police officers. The murder of George Floyd exacerbated this.



Source: Gallup U.S, telephone polls, including oversamples of Black and Hispanic adults in 2020 and 2021

Confidence in the Criminal Justice System Has Also Suffered

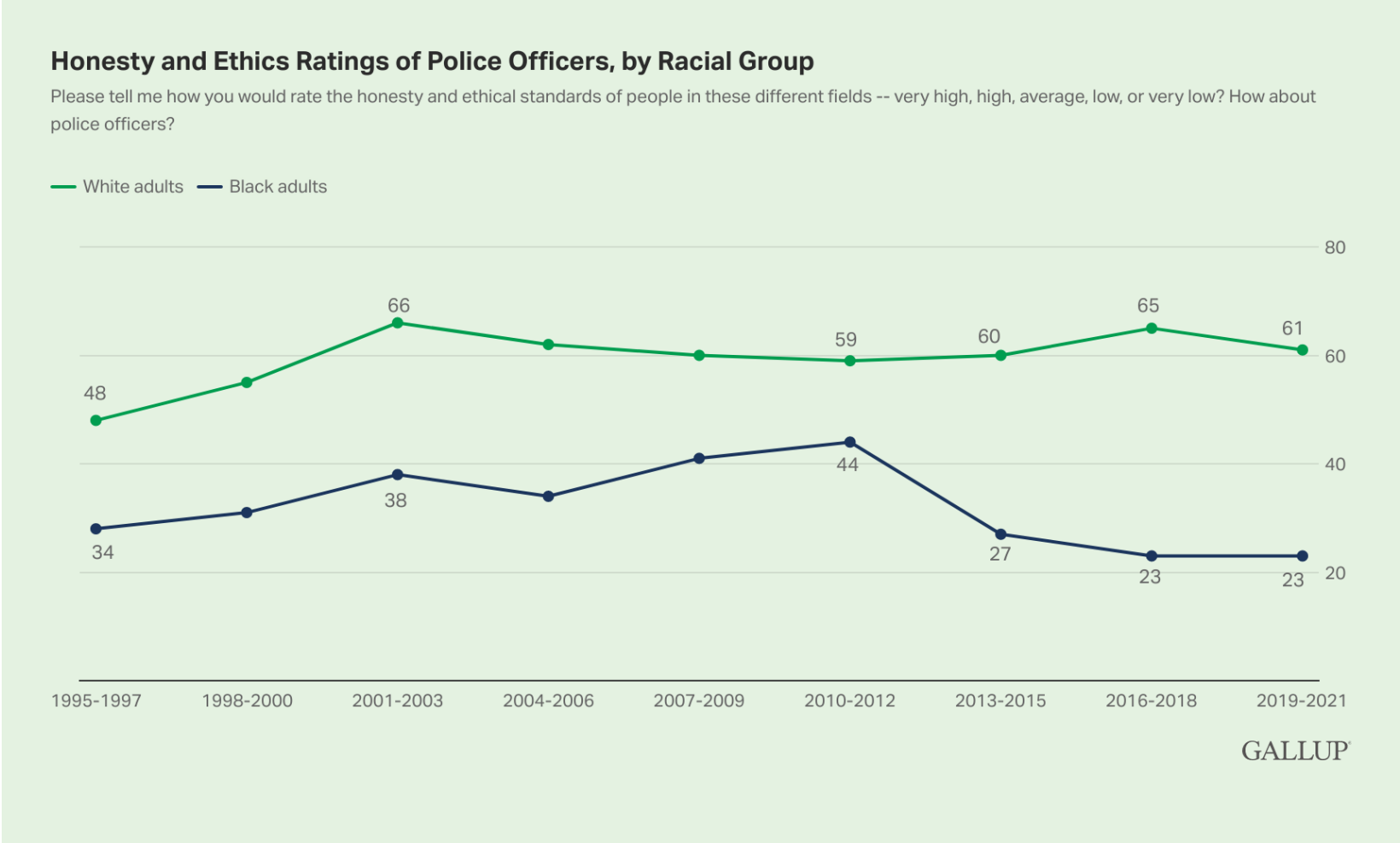
Black adults have had even lower confidence in the criminal justice system since 2014. About one in 10 Black adults express confidence in the justice system.



Source: Gallup U.S., telephone polls, including oversamples of Black and Hispanic adults in 2020 and 2021

Evaluations of Honesty and Ethical Standards of Police Officers

Black adults have also become less likely to rate police officers as honest and ethical.



Source: Gallup U.S, telephone polls

Widespread Belief That U.S. Policing Needs Reform

Both among the national public and among Black Americans, nearly all say that policing in the U.S. needs some degree of change. About nine in 10 Black adults say that policing in the U.S. needs “major changes.”

Oct 2021

	U.S. adults	Black adults	White adults
Which of the following best describes your view about changes that may or may not need to be made to policing in the United States?			
% Major changes are needed to make policing better	58	88	51
% Minor changes are needed to make policing better	36	10	42
% No changes are needed to make policing better	6	2	7

Reform Proposals With Majority Support from U.S. Adults

Oct 2021
% Strongly agree

- ❖ Change management practices so officers with multiple incidents of abuse of power are not allowed to serve.
 - 68% U.S. adults
 - 75% Black adults
 - 66% White adults
- ❖ Require officers to have good relations with the community.
 - 66% U.S. adults
 - 72% Black adults
 - 64% White adults
- ❖ Change management practices, so officer abuses are punished.
 - 61% U.S. adults
 - 72% Black adults
 - 57% White adults

Reform Proposals With Majority Support from Only Black Americans

Oct 2021
% Strongly agree

- ❖ Change legal practices so that police officers face legal action for abuse of power or unnecessary harm.
 - 50% U.S. adults
 - 66% Black adults
 - 44% White adults
- ❖ End stop-and-frisk (stopping people with no probable cause).
 - 44% U.S. adults
 - 63% Black adults
 - 39% White adults
- ❖ Promote community-based alternatives such as violence intervention.
 - 42% U.S. adults
 - 57% Black adults
 - 38% White adults

Reform Proposals With Less than Majority Support

Oct 2021
% Strongly agree

- ❖ Removing military weapons and equipment from police forces

24% U.S. adults
31% Black adults
22% White adults

- ❖ Eliminate police unions

16% U.S. adults
20% Black adults
15% White adults

- ❖ Eliminate officer enforcement of nonviolent crimes

22% U.S. adults
30% Black adults
18% White adults

- ❖ Providing only non-lethal weapons to police forces

14% U.S. adults
18% Black adults
12% White adults

- ❖ Reduce the budget of police departments and shift the money to social programs

18% U.S. adults
25% Black adults
14% White adults

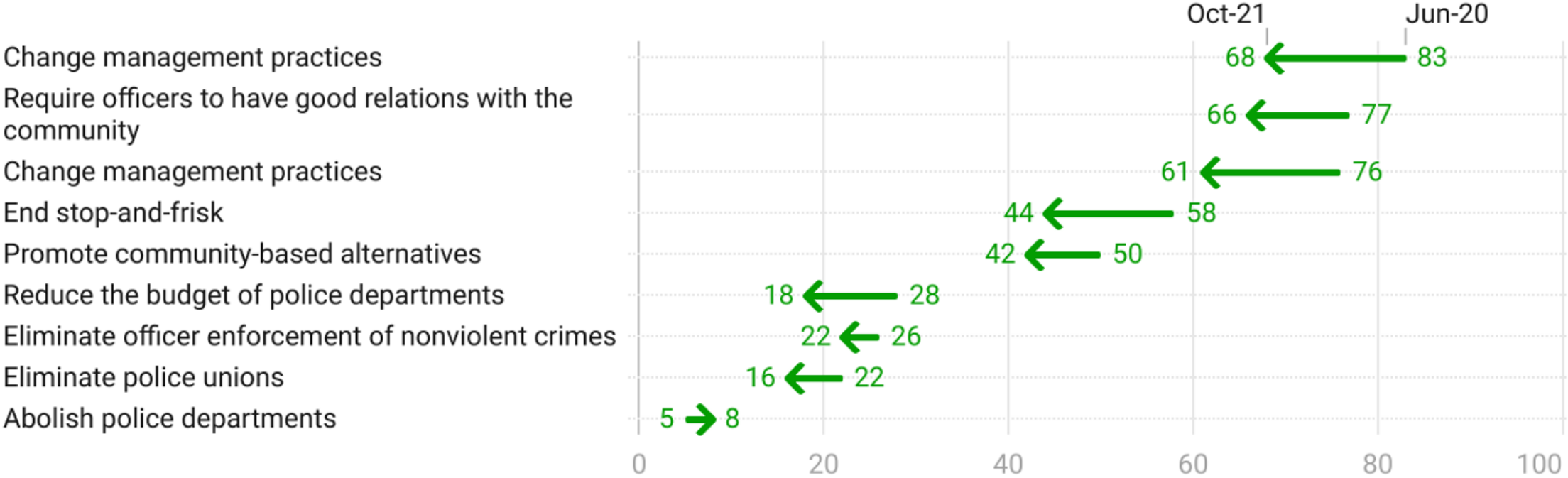
- ❖ Abolish police departments

8% U.S. adults
13% Black adults
5% White adults

U.S. Adults' Support for Police Reform, Jun 2020 vs. Oct 2021

Support for nearly all of the reform proposals fell significantly between June 2020 and October 2021. This is true among U.S. adults, including Black and White adults.

% Strongly agree



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