

COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 148 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAY 5 - 7, 2023

Stagwell and **The Harris Poll** have partnered to conduct research to monitor the pulse of the American Consumer.

The executive summaries on the pages that follow provide insight into current consumer attitudes and behavior and can be used to help navigate the changing industry landscape. We hope this information proves useful to you and your team as you address these changes in real time and strategize for your next moves.

As always, we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

Positively,

Ryan Linder + The Stagwell Family

Global Chief Marketing Officer, EVP



WAVE 148

WAVE 148 INTRODUCTION

The following research was conducted between **May 5 - 7, 2023** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **2,102** U.S. adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

01

Topic:

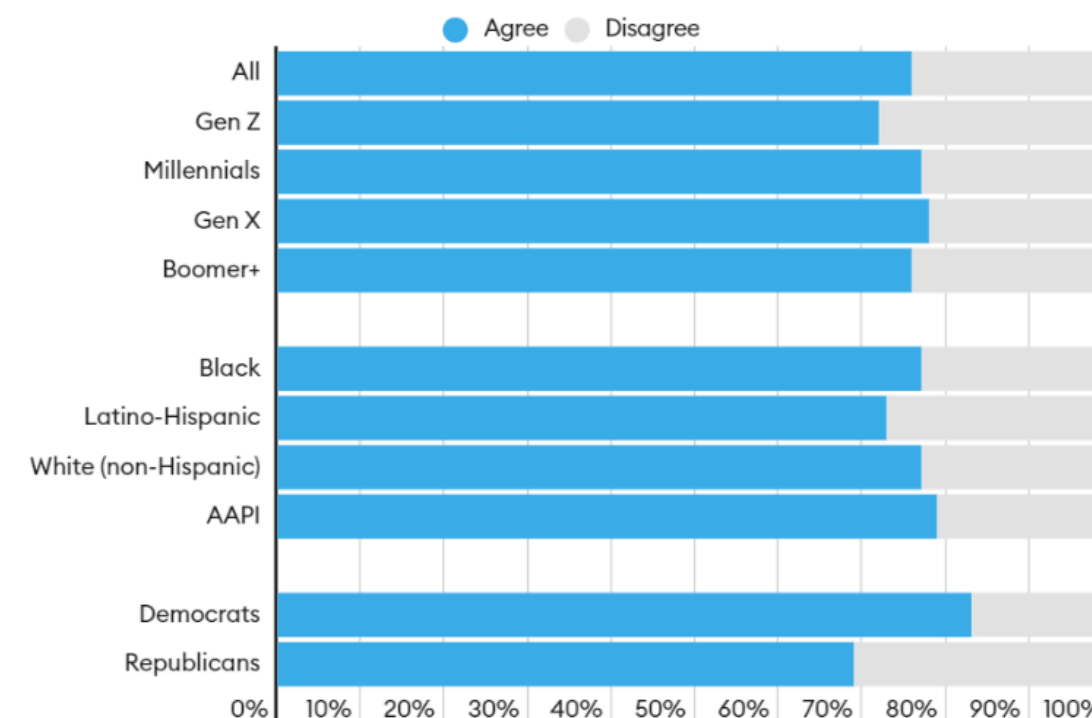
CAPITALISM'S CRISIS OF PERCEPTION: FORBES-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

While no economic system has lifted more people out of poverty, solved more of life's ills, and created more innovation, opportunity, and socio-cultural benefit than capitalism—the system remains imperfect. And today, with growing inequality and generational shifts, many more Americans are critical of its comparative good, according to our latest poll [with Forbes](#).

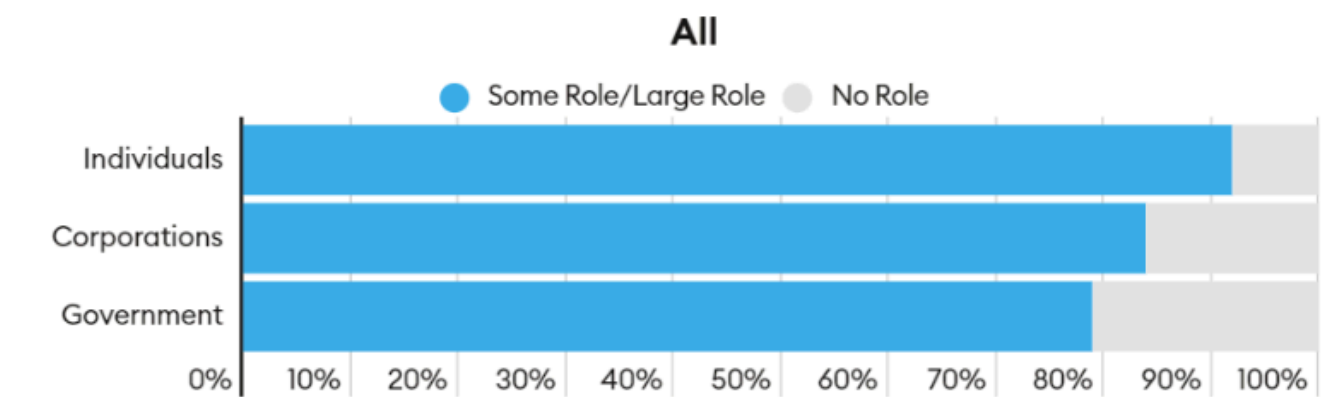
- Most Americans think capitalism needs to evolve: Across age, gender, race, ethnicity, and even political affiliation, almost (80%) of Americans think capitalism needs to become:

Q: How much do you agree or disagree that today's form of capitalism needs to evolve?



- Younger Americans interested in socialism: Over half of younger Americans would be willing to trade today's form of capitalism for socialism (Gen Z: 55%, Millennials: 65% v. Gen X: 43%, Boomer+: 27%).
- Despite doubts, more Americans think that capitalism is the best option compared to other market types to foster the ability to accumulate wealth (70%), start a business (68%), and secure a well-paying job (62%). However, Gen Z needs more convincing (52%, 47%, and 37%).
- Americans think capitalism's evolution requires people, businesses, and government to all play a role, where over half (57%) would be willing to pay more for goods and services to guarantee living wages for workers.

Q: How much of a role should the following have in evolving today's form of capitalism



Forbes Harris Poll 2023

Implication:

Building a better future and an evolved and more perfect form of capitalism will take all of us. "Capitalism is not a static economic model. Instead, it adapts and evolves with the times," says Harris Poll CSO Libby Rodney. "It's clear in the data that Americans want an evolution of capitalism that enables better access to their foundational needs of liveable wages, affordable housing, and healthcare."

Section:

02

Topic:

THE EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE BREAKDOWN: TRANSAMERICA INSTITUTE-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

If you feel more disconnected from your boss, you're not alone. According to our [latest report](#) with the Transamerica Institute, employers feel responsible for their employees; however, apparent employer-employee disconnects need attention.

- More than nine in ten employers (96%) believe they help support their employees' work-life balance, but (75%) of employees believe this.
- And most employers (85%) are concerned about their employee's mental health, as are most workers (61%). Yet only one-third of employers (33%) offer an employee assistance program (EAP).
- Cultivating an age-friendly work environment: (83%) of employers consider themselves age-friendly, compared with just two-thirds (67%) of employees.

Implication:

"Employers are grappling with workforce issues ranging from attracting and retaining talent to productivity, flexibility, and return-to-work policies. Many are reevaluating their business practices and benefit offerings in today's rapidly evolving environment. Still, the question is whether they are in sync with employees' needs," said [Catherine Collinson](#), CEO and president of Transamerica Institute and TCRS.

Section:

03

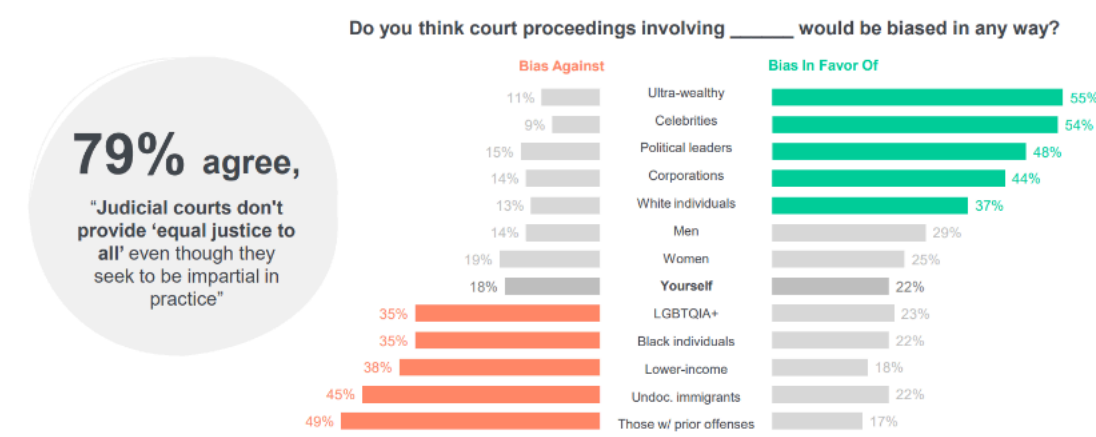
Topic:

WITH HUMAN BIAS ON TRIAL, A.I. WINS

Introduction:

Justice is blind, the saying goes, but nearly half of Americans don't believe this. If they were in court, most would prefer an A.I. judge to a human one, according to the [latest research](#) from The Harris Poll Thought Leadership and Futures Practice (as featured in the latest Harris Poll substack: [The Next Big Thing!](#)).

- The winners and losers of the current system: Eight in ten Americans (79%) believe the court system is biased and provides unequal justice, with majorities saying courts give special treatment to the ultra-wealthy (55%), celebrities (54%), and political leaders (48%), while being biased against those with prior offenses (49%), undocumented immigrants (45%), and Black Americans (35%):



Harris Poll 2023

- Many Americans would welcome A.I. into the courtroom: (45%) believe an A.I. judge would be more likely to provide a fair sentence.
- In fact, (43%) say, "I would prefer an A.I. judge rather than a human one in a potential court hearing."

- In fact, (43%) say, "I would prefer an A.I. judge rather than a human one in a potential court hearing."
- And a majority agreed that A.I. could provide a variety of benefits, including preventing long waits for court hearings (62%), countering human error and bias (60%), and providing more equitable sentences (59%).

Implication:

"We were surprised to learn over half of Americans think A.I. judges would be more equitable in sentencing, but when you take into consideration the doubts around the impartiality of our judicial system, it starts to add up," said Libby Rodney, Chief Strategy Officer at The Harris Poll. However, Rodney cautioned that the perceived impartiality of A.I. is somewhat of an illusion: "It's crucial to note A.I. is not necessarily neutral, as it reflects the values and biases of its creators. Essentially, 'people programming' codifies our belief systems into a machine that reflects our values back to us."

Section:

04

Topic:

THE MENTAL HEALTH PERCEPTION GAP

Introduction:

You know an issue needs attention when it has a designated month. For example, May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and Harris and CVS Health bring attention to growing disparities in awareness and care [in HealthLeaders Media](#).

- Gen Z's mental health concerns are higher than the national average. While (42%) of Americans express concerns about their mental health, that number swells to (60%) of younger Americans aged 18-32.
- Physicians report more significant declines patient's mental health. While only (14%) of Americans say their mental health has declined since 2022, (56%) of physicians believe patients' mental health has deteriorated.
- Worried for others but not seeking self-help? Two-thirds (67%) say they knew many people with mental health struggles. But only 12% regularly see a mental health professional themselves.

Implication:

The reasons for the disconnects – between providers and patients, patients and "other people" – are likely varied but perhaps not as unexpected as they seem. "Often we assume that people they're thinking and feeling...We have been feeling the impacts of COVID, of pandemic socialization over the past three years. We're perhaps even immune to it. But physicians continue to see the impact and disruption when patients come in to see them and for reasons other than mental health," says Cara McNulty, DPA and CVS Health president of Mental Well-Being & Behavior Health.

Questions?

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