



Race unchanged, but millennials assured and white working class men impressed

Dial meter viewers reaction to the first debate

September 30, 2020

Methodology

On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers, *Democracy Corps* on September 29, 2020, conducted online dial meter research during the first presidential debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, among 201 registered voters nationally.

Key line groups include:

- African Americans
- Latinos
- White millennials
- White unmarried women
- White working-class women
- White college women
- White working-class men

To ensure each line was as representative as possible, these lines were individually recruited. Surveys were administered before and after the live dial meter session.

****This research is qualitative, and results are not statistically projectable onto a larger population.****

Key Findings:

- Debate leaves structure of the race untouched, which is extremely favorable to Biden uniting the country, on middle class values, education, and dealing with the racial strife. The debate affirmed powerfully that Trump governs only for his party and for billionaires and elites.
- The debate cut the undecided in half — breaking evenly for Biden and Trump, but that helps Biden too.
- Biden was strong and self-confident in the debate and gained standing with white millennials who were a key part of consolidating the progressive coalition.
- White working class men may end up playing the biggest role. They came away feeling less positive about Trump (7 points) and they gave Biden 6 more points in the race against Trump.
- White working class women move to Trump after the debate, but turned to Biden on every issue affecting the middle class.



Key Findings:

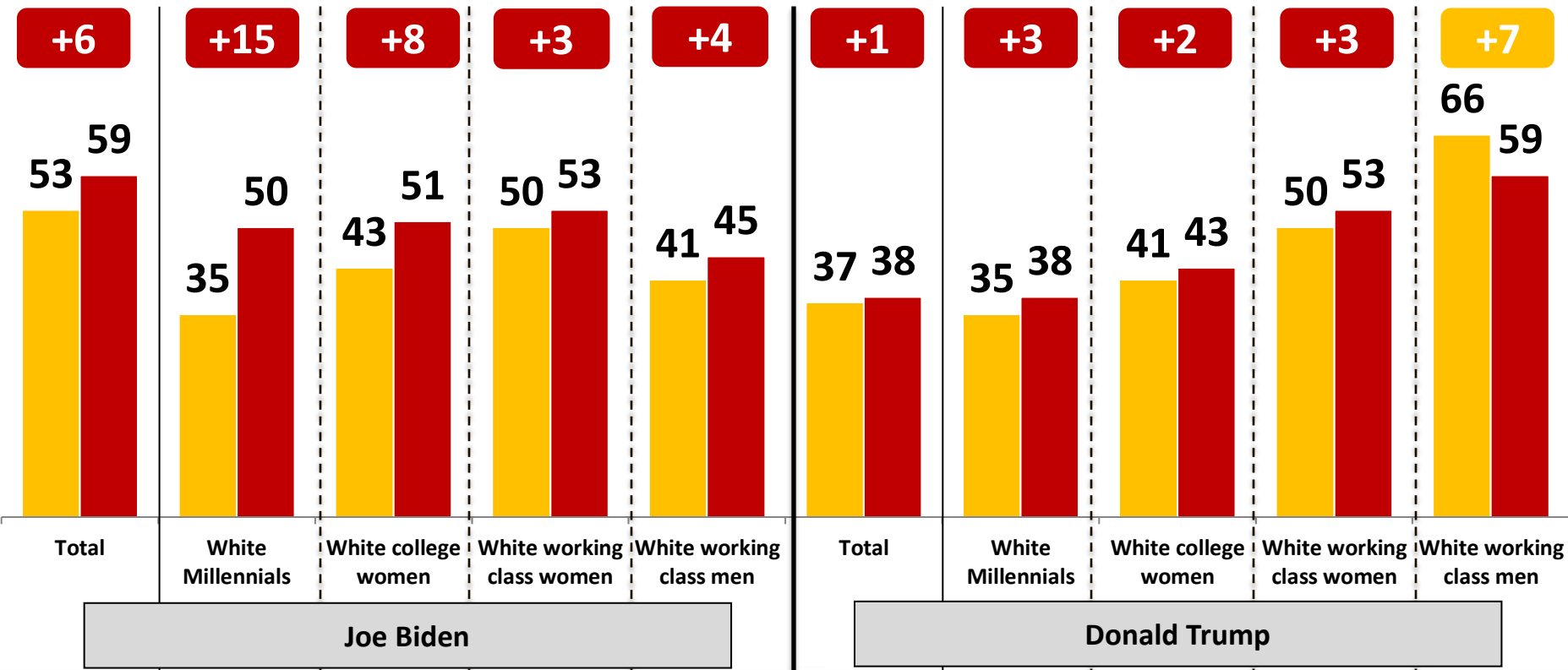
- Trump's aggressive open up the economy drove away white millennials and other voters, but not the white working class who gave him higher marks on the economy.
- Trump made big gains on health care and keeping health care costs down, but they were most pronounced with white working class women – who went in giving Biden an 11 point margin and came out, supporting Trump on health care by 6 points. Trump led on drug costs while Biden was defending the ACA.
- The debate put Biden ahead on the big battle for the forgotten Americans that may settle how far Biden can take his advantage.

Biden increased person favorability, particularly with white millennials, while Trump disappointed the white working class men

I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations with 100 meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; 0 meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and 50 meaning not particularly warm or cold.

BIDEN/TRUMP FAVORABILITY (% FAVORABLE)

■ Pre ■ Post



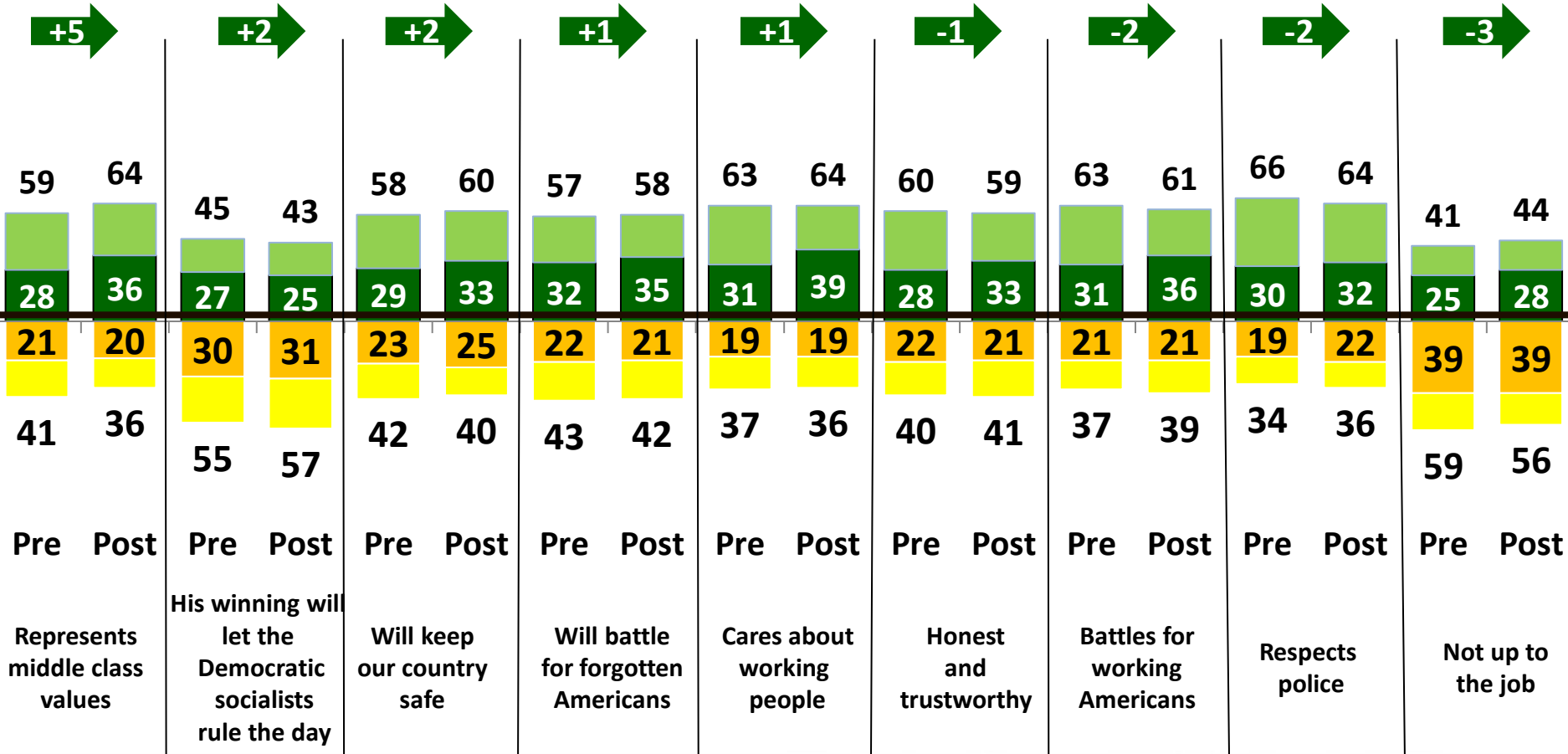
Biden's image strong and varied and untarnished, with biggest rise on representing middle class values

How well do these descriptive terms describe Joe Biden- very well, well, not so well, or not well at all?

BIDEN ATTRIBUTES: PRE & POST

Very well

Not well at all



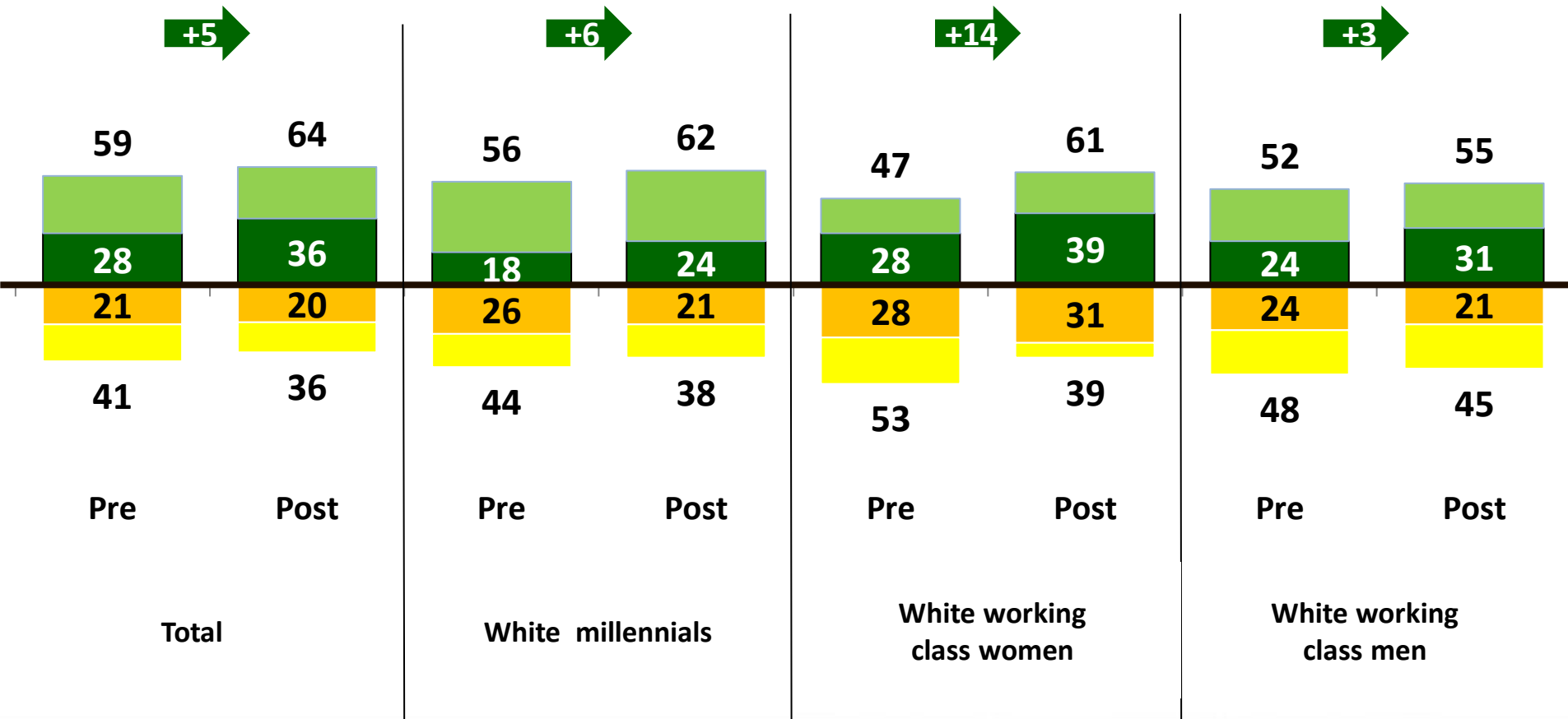
It is white working class women who moved the most on Biden, “represents middle class values”

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Very well

Not well at all



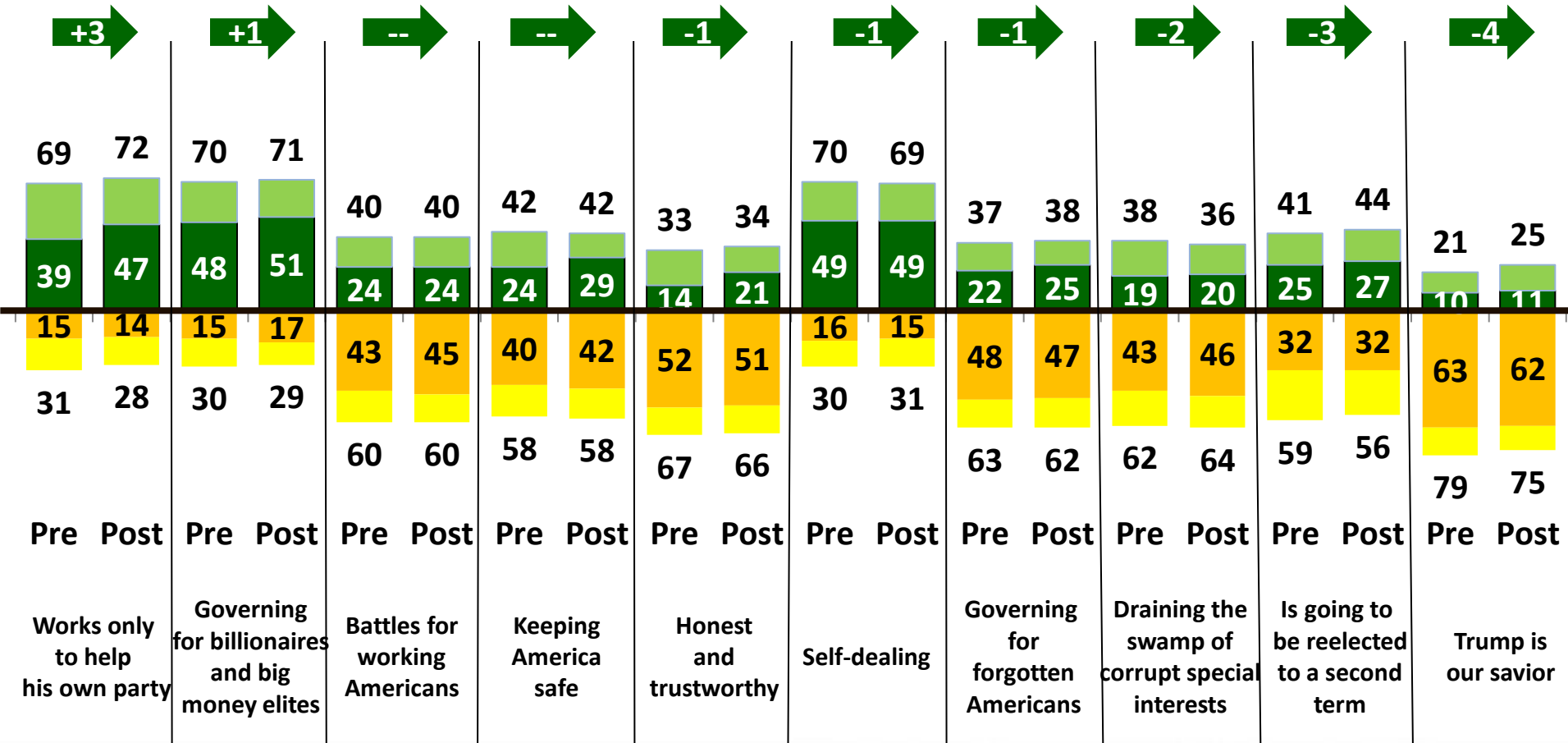
Trump's brand unchanged, but with intense rise on "works only to help his own party"

How well do these descriptive terms describe Donald Trump - very well, well, not so well, or not well at all?

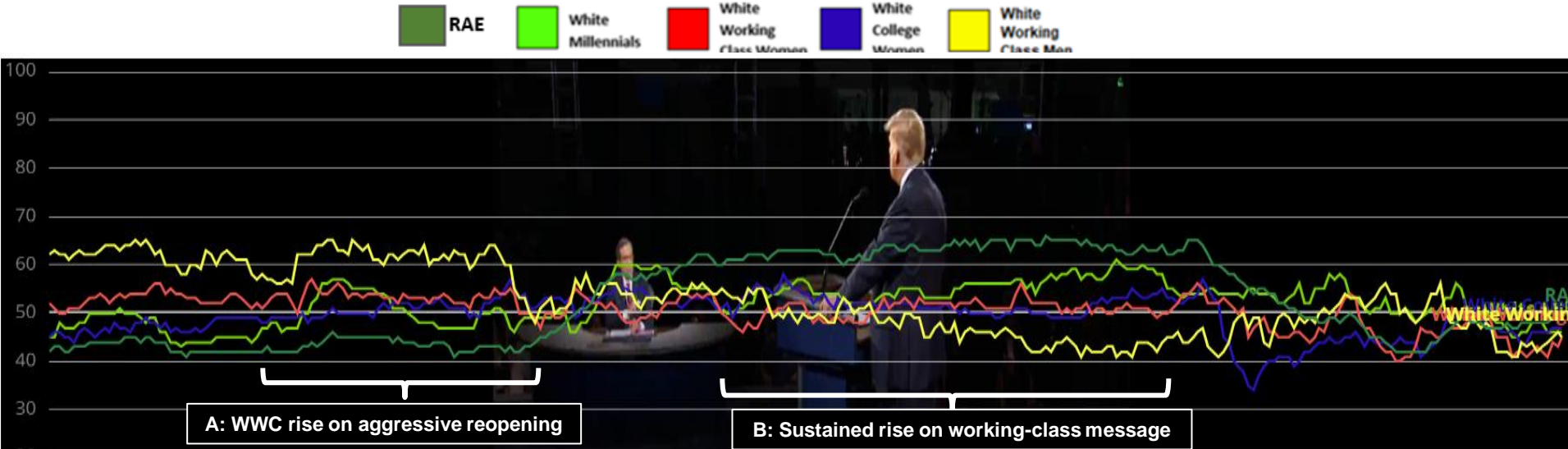
TRUMP ATTRIBUTES: PRE & POST

Very well

Not well at all



Trump gets a brief rise on aggressive reopening among working class and millennials, but Biden gets a long, sustained rise with pro working-class anti-corporate message



- [A] Trump:** When you look at North Carolina, when you look, and these governors are under siege, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and a couple of others, you got to open these states up. It's not fair. You're talking about almost it's like being in prison. And you look at what's going on with divorce, look at what's going on with alcoholism and drugs. It's a very, very sad thing. And he'll close down the whole country. This guy will close down the whole country and destroy our country. Our country is coming back incredibly well, setting records as it does it. We don't need somebody to come in and say, "Let's shut it down." It drops when it goes to Wallace asking about the V-shaped economy to Biden
- [B]** The difference is millionaires and billionaires like him in the middle of the COVID crisis have done very well. Billionaires have made another \$300 billion because of his profligate tax proposal, and he only focused on the market. But you folks at home, you folks living in Scranton and Claymont and all the small towns and working class towns in America. [...]the people who have lost their jobs are those people who have been on the front lines. Those people who have been saving our lives, those people who have been out there dying. People who've been putting themselves in the way to make sure that we could all try to make it. And the idea that he is insisting that we go forward and open when you have almost half the states in America with a significant increase in COVID deaths and COVID cases in the United States of America, and he wants to open it up more. Why does he want to open it up? Why does he take care of the... You can't fix the economy until you fix the COVID crisis. And he has no intention of doing anything about making it better for you all at home in terms of your health and your safety. Schools. Why aren't schools open? Because it costs a lot of money to open them safely. They were going to give, his administration going to give the teachers and school students masks, and then they decided no, couldn't do that because it's not a national emergency.



*Rising American Electorate (RAE) refers to voters of color, millennials, and white unmarried women.

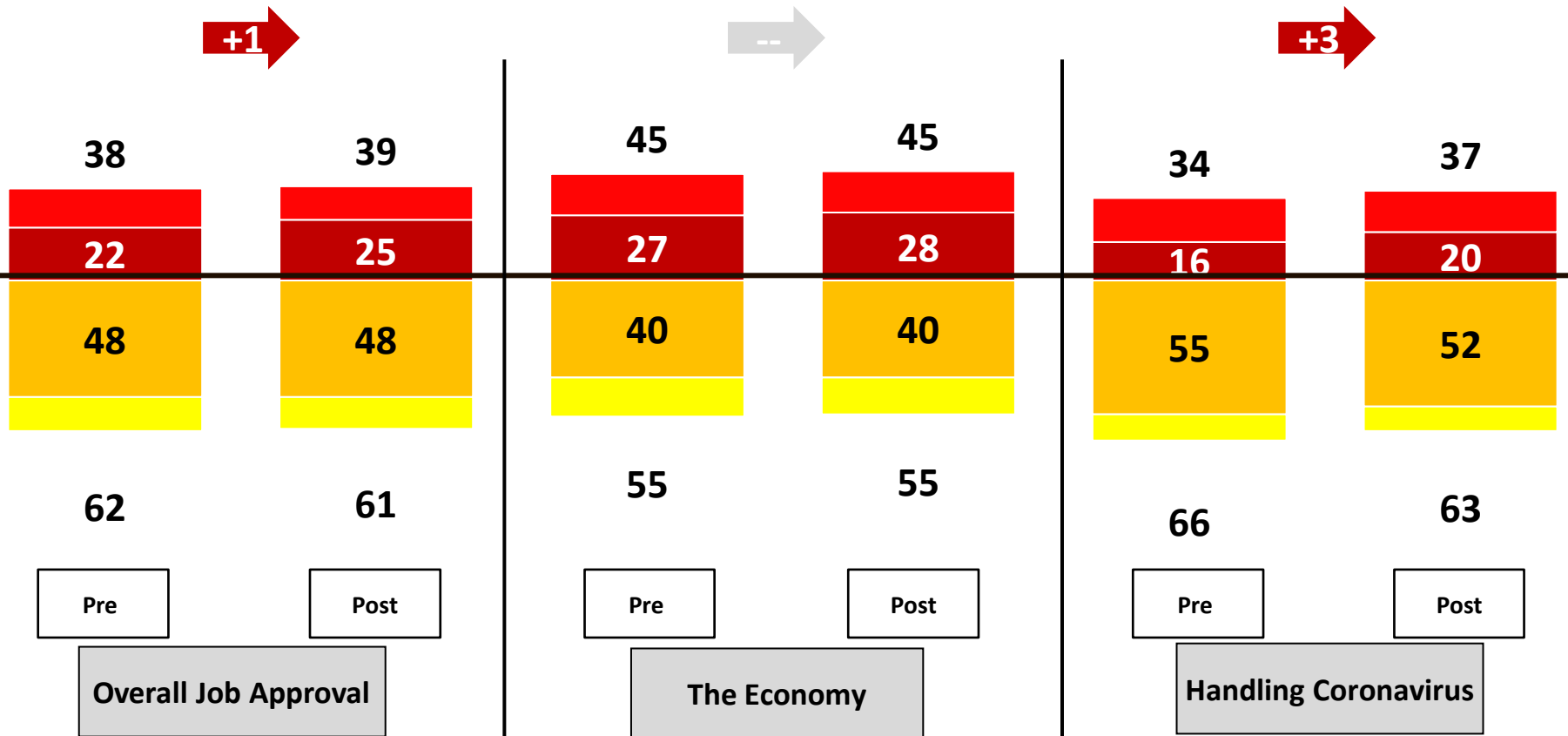
Debate produced no change in Trump's approval - but with important offsetting trends on the economy

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

TRUMP APPROVAL: PRE & POST DEBATE

■ Strong approve

■ Strong disapprove



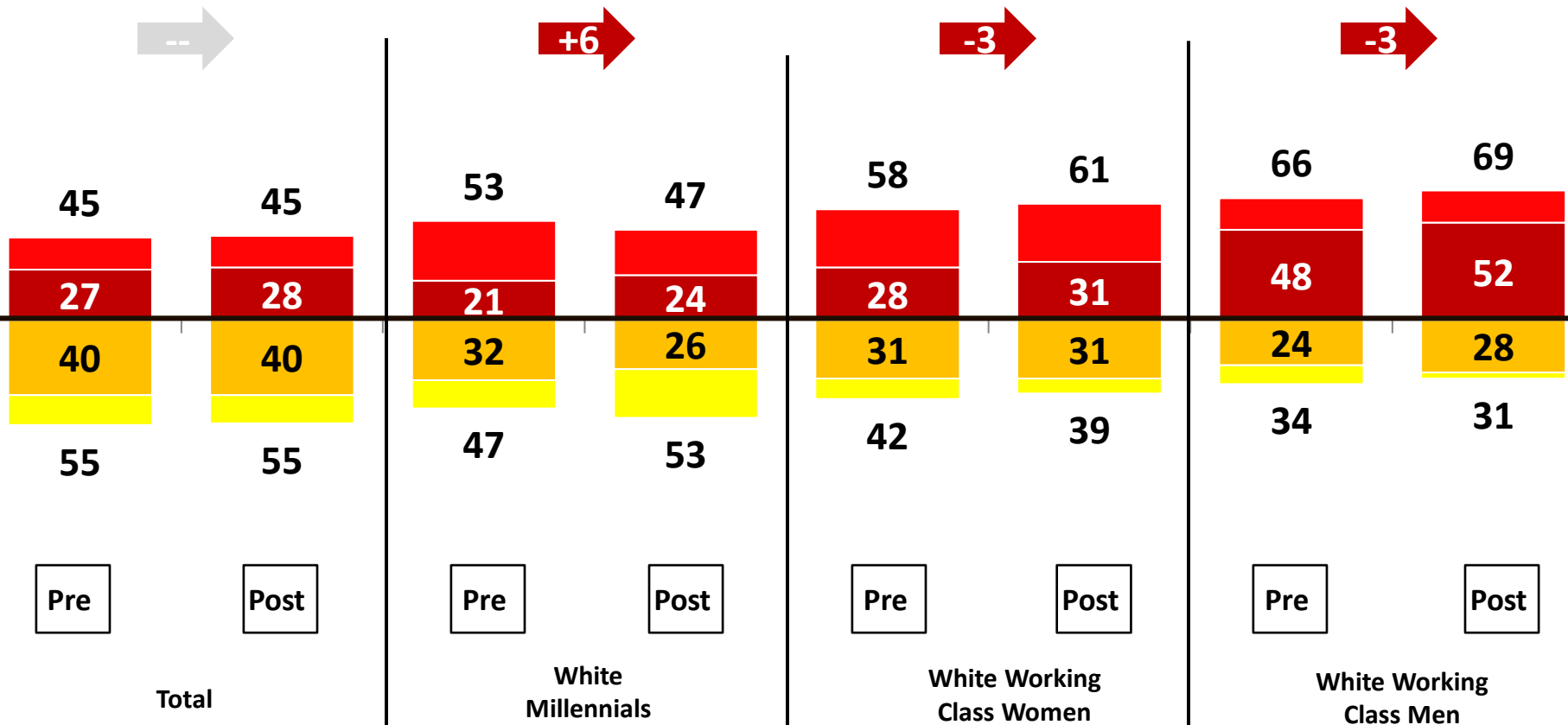
Handling economy unchanged, but down with white millennials and up with white working class

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Donald Trump is handling the economy?

TRUMP ECONOMY APPROVAL: PRE & POST DEBATE

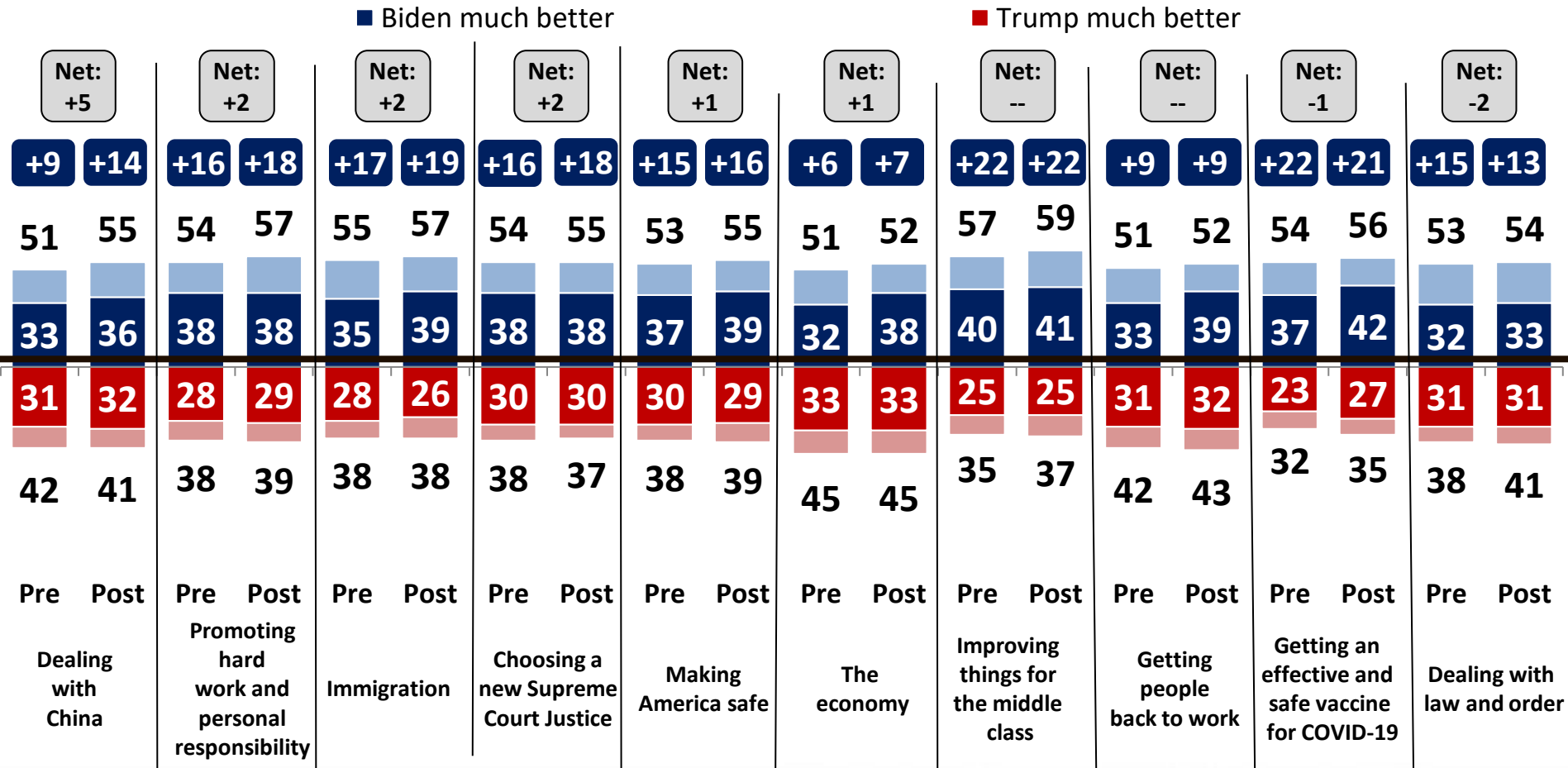
■ Strong approve

■ Strong disapprove



On who's better on issues, unchanged by debate, with Biden making modest gains on China; dominant on middle class and vaccine

Now you will read some issues. For each issue, please say whether you think Joe Biden or Donald Trump would do a better job with handling that issue.



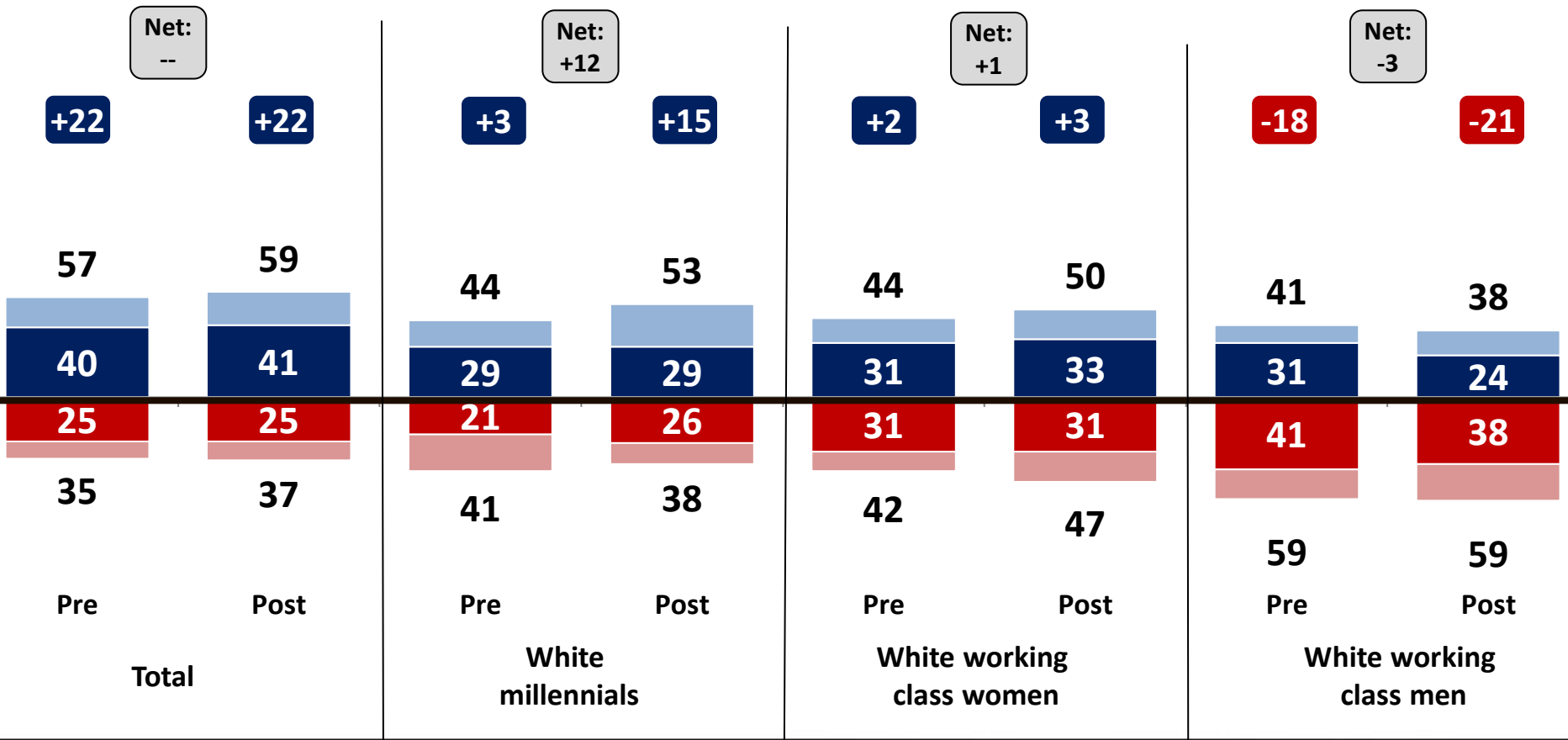
Biden has big gains with white millennials on helping middle class, while white working class remained unchanged

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IMPROVING THINGS FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

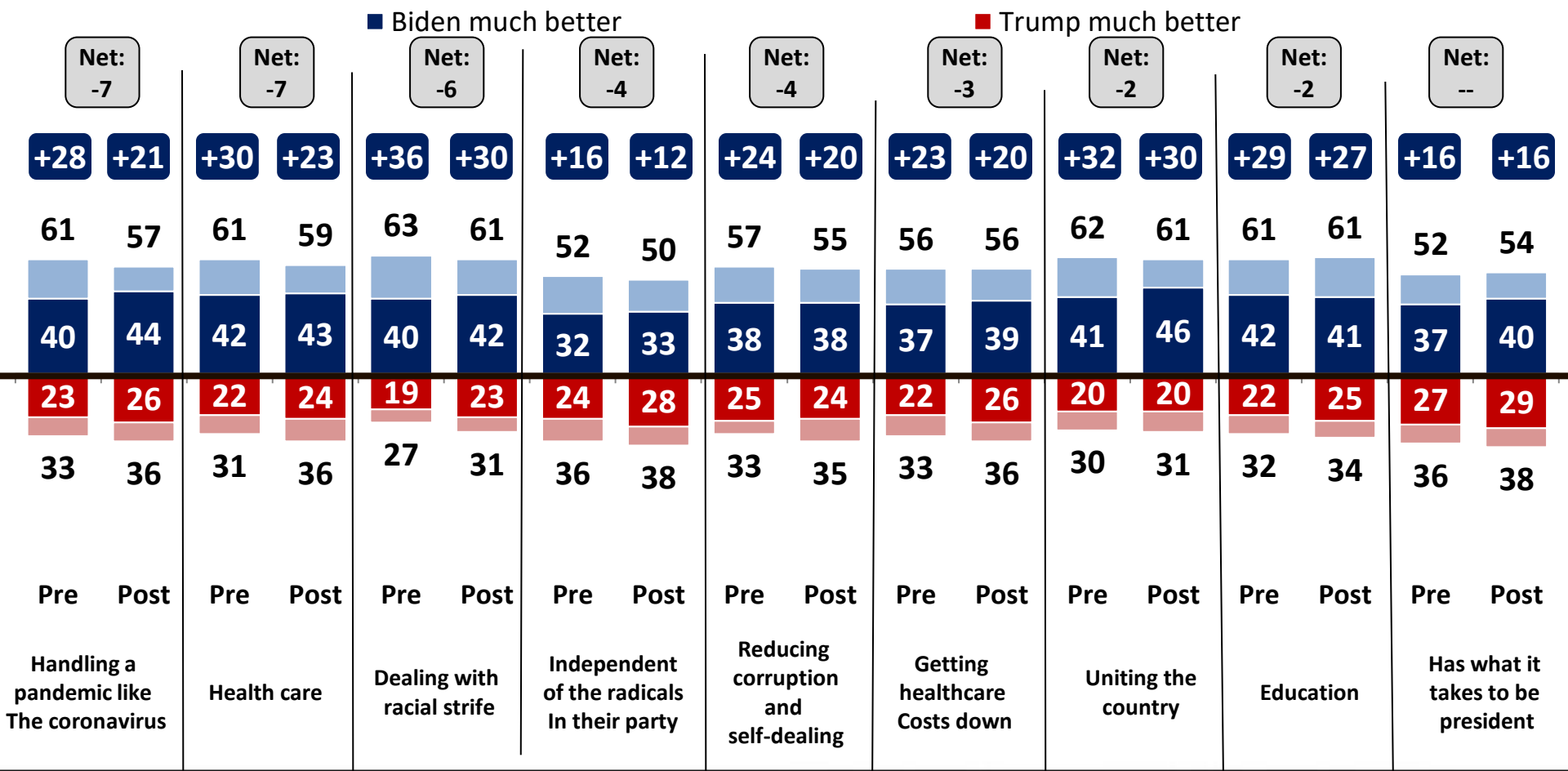
■ Biden much better

■ Trump much better

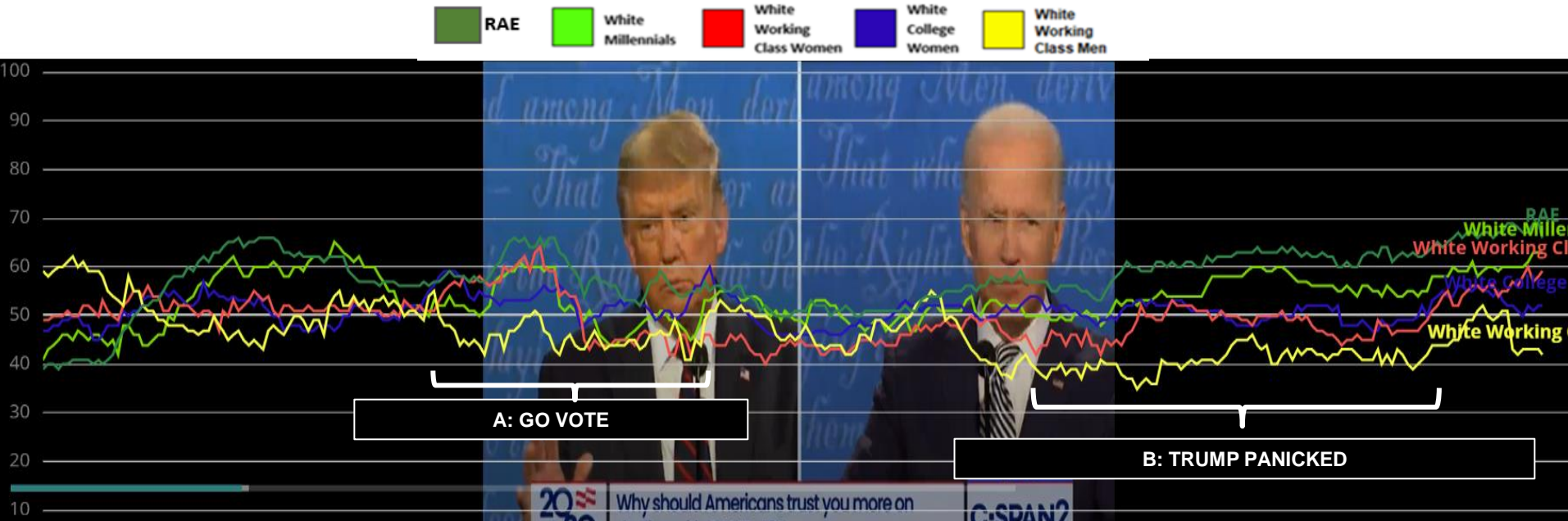


Biden sees biggest drop in health care and handling pandemic, where Trump on attack on closing country

Now you will read some issues. For each issue, please say whether you think Joe Biden or Donald Trump would do a better job with handling that issue.



Sharp rise across the board, regardless of partisanship, when Biden urges everyone to vote. Steady rise among all lines on Trump deceived public, and panicked on COVID.

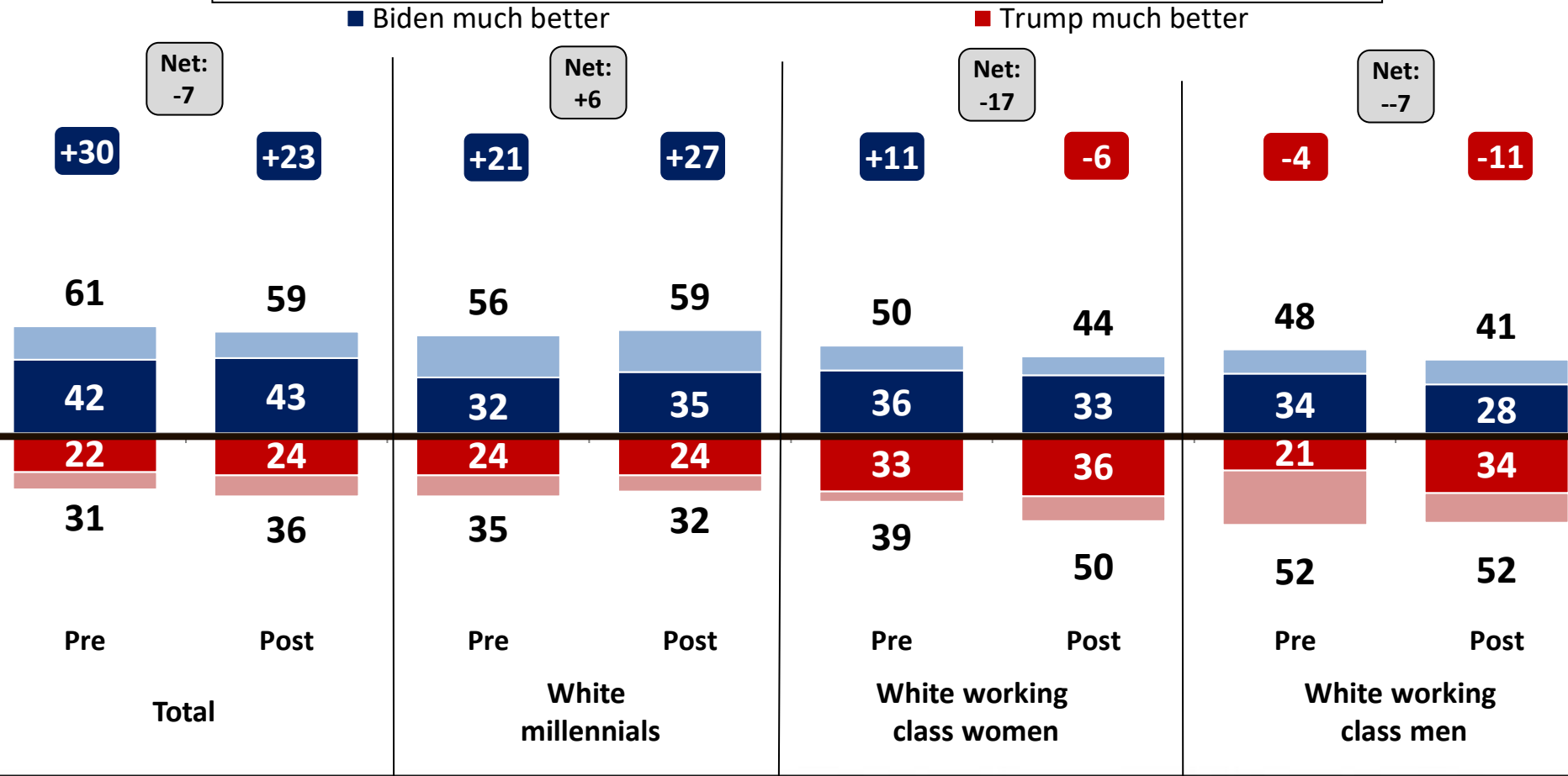


- **[A]** *Whatever position I take on that, that'll become the issue. The issue is the American people should speak. You should go out and vote. You're voting now. Vote and let your Senators know strongly how you feel.. [...] Vote now. [...] Make sure you, in fact, let people know, your Senators. [...] Would you shut up man?*
- **[B]** *The President has no plan. He hasn't laid out anything. He knew all the way back in February how serious this crisis was. He knew it was a deadly disease. What did he do? He's on tape as acknowledging he knew it. He said he didn't tell us or give people a warning of it because he didn't want to panic the American people. You don't panic. He panicked. In addition to that, what did he do? He went in and we were insisting that the people we had in the ground in China should be able to go to Wuhan and determine for themselves how dangerous this was. He did not even ask Xi to do that*

Biden loses on health care driven by the white working class, particularly the women

Now you will read some issues. For each issue, please say whether you think Joe Biden or Donald Trump would do a better job with handling that issue.

HEALTH CARE



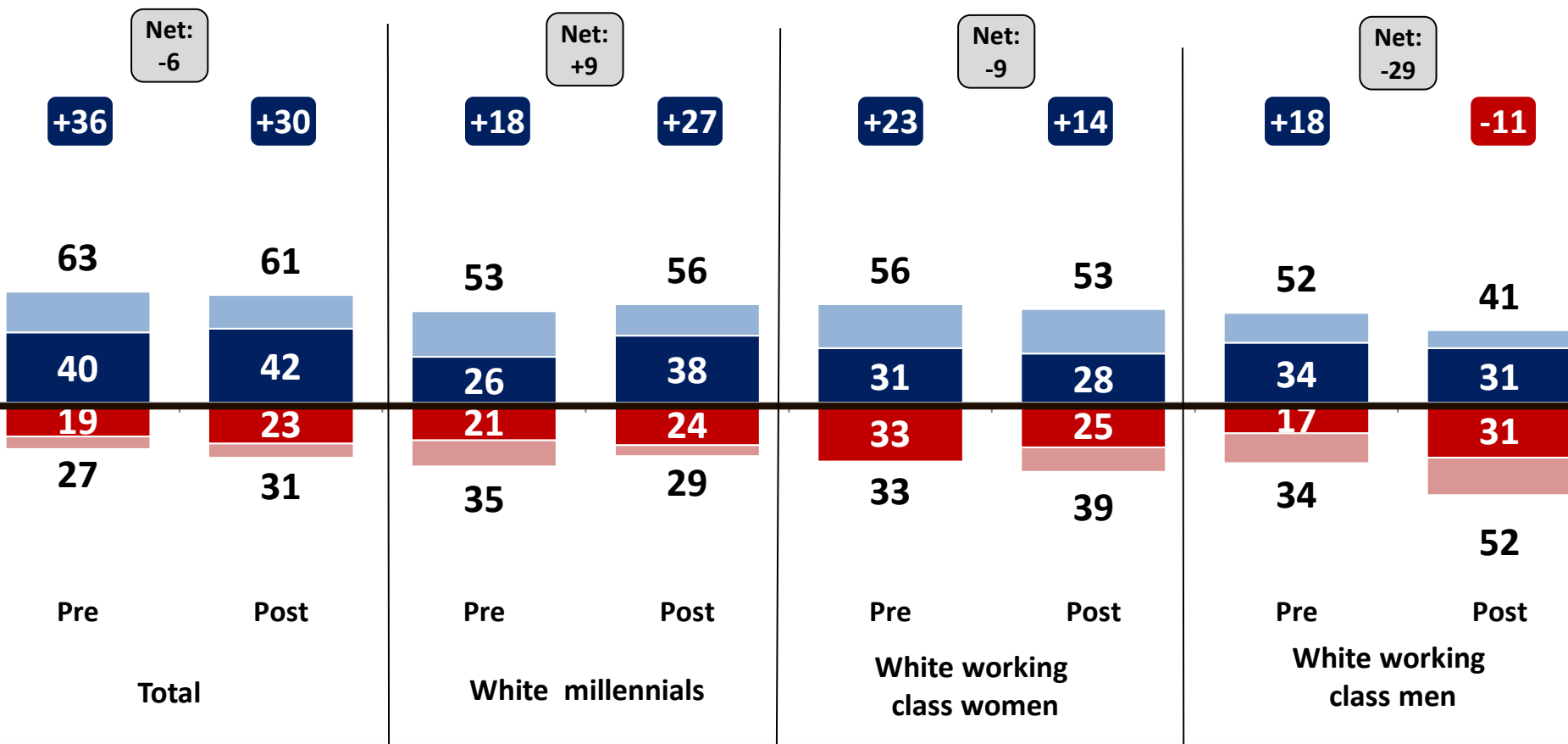
While Biden much more trusted on racial strife, Trump play helped him with white working class, particularly the men

Now you will read some issues. For each issue, please say whether you think Joe Biden or Donald Trump would do a better job with handling that issue.

DEALING WITH RACIAL STRIFE

■ Biden much better

■ Trump much better

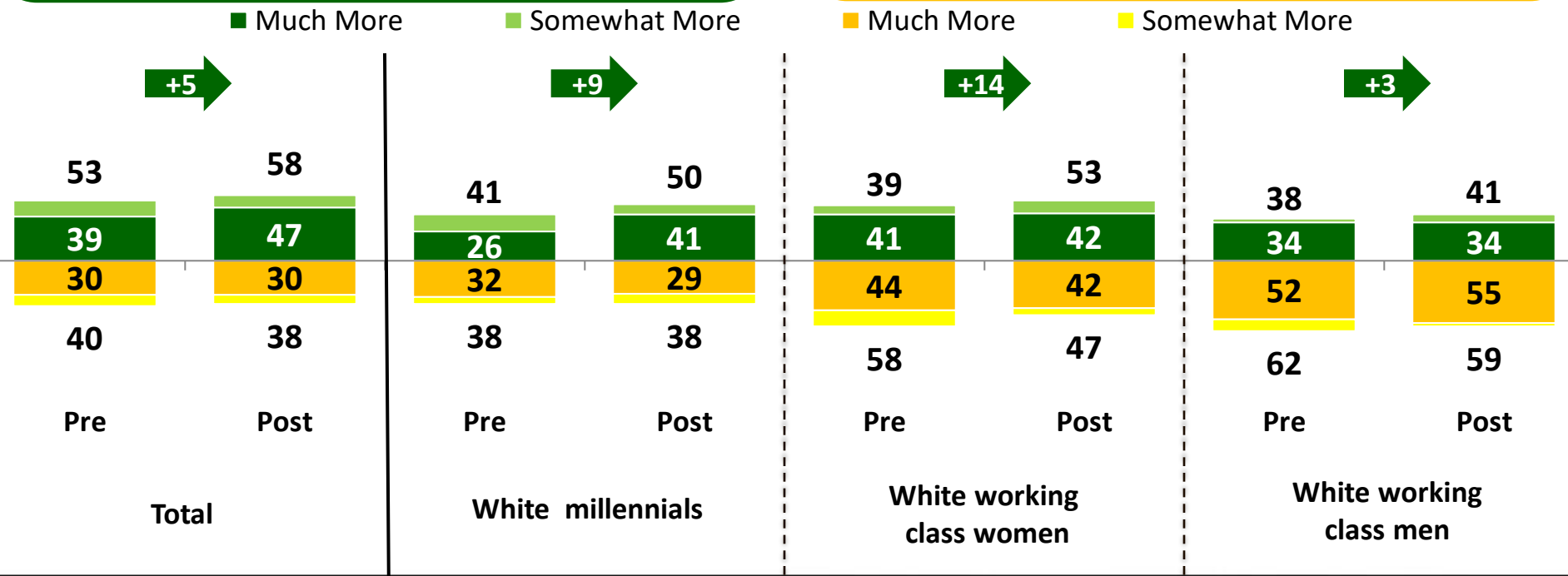


But after debate, Biden wins big the battle for forgotten Americans, especially with the white millennials and white working class men

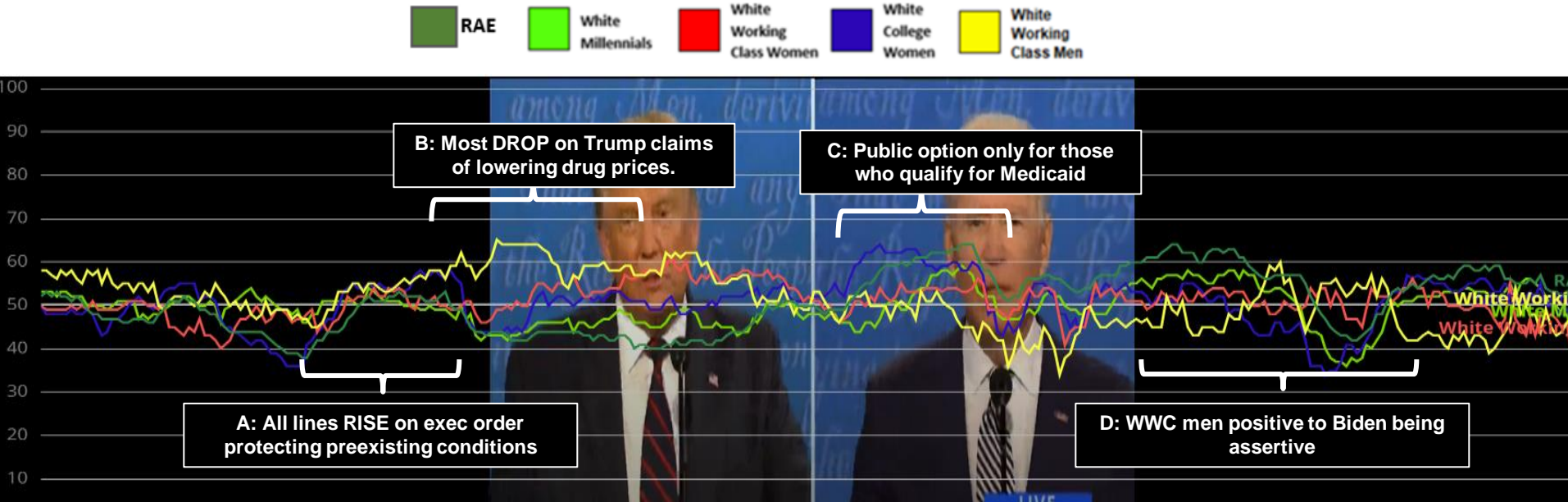
Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Biden is from a middle class town, with working class parents and went to a state university. He cares about what happens to working class communities and farms. He believes in hard work and that personal responsibility should be rewarded. He wants to build back American jobs for the middle class families like he came from, not the wealthy investor class. Trump is a billionaire, inherited his money, went to an Ivy League university, and lived on Fifth Avenue. He shows little sympathy for the struggling working class and mainly worked to enrich his friends.

Trump governed for the forgotten Americans, renegotiated trade agreements to avoid outsourcing, and promoted manufacturing in America. Trump built a great economy, and amidst a global pandemic, he's doing it again with months of record job growth and devastated industries adding back hundreds of thousands of jobs. Biden spent years letting our jobs be outsourced and governing only for the elites, and he is too weak to stand up radical left in his party.



This exchange tells it all – Trump gets credit for “symbolic” executive order on pre-existing conditions, and Trump battling to lower drug costs pushes up white working class lines. Big rise on public option. Biden saying “a lie” produces sharp rise for WWC men.



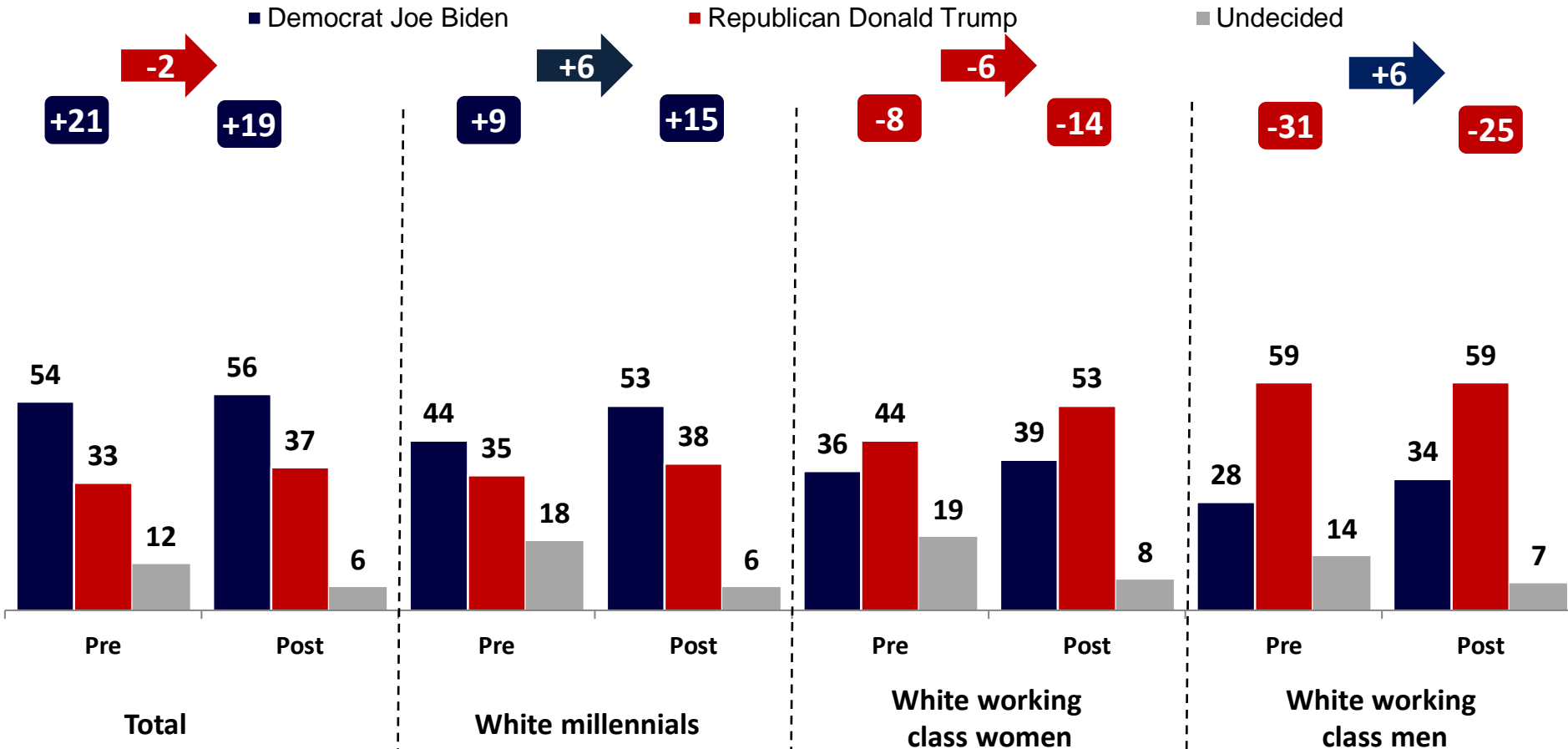
- **[A]** You, in the course of these four years, have never come up with a comprehensive plan to replace Obamacare, and just this last Thursday you signed a largely symbolic Executive Order to protect people with pre-existing conditions five days before this debate. So my question, sir, is what is the Trump healthcare plan?
- **[B]** There's nothing symbolic. I'm cutting drug prices. I'm going with Favored Nations, which no President has the courage to do because you're going against big pharma. Drug prices will be coming down 80 or 90%. You could have done it during your 47 year period in government, but you didn't do it. Nobody's done it. So we're cutting healthcare.
- **[C]** It does not. It's only for those people who are so poor they qualify for Medicaid they can get that free in most States, except Governors who want to deny people who are poor Medicaid. Anyone who qualifies for Medicaid would automatically be enrolled in the public option. The vast majority of the American people would still not be in that option. Number one.
- **[D]** Because here's the deal, here's the deal. The fact is that everything he's saying so far is simply a lie. I'm not here to call out his lies. Everybody knows he's a liar.[...] Mr. President, can you let him finish, sir? No, he doesn't know how to do that. [...] The wrong guy, the wrong night, at the wrong time.



*Rising American Electorate (RAE) refers to voters of color, millennials, and white unmarried women.

The undecided decided last night, with no change in Biden's margin, with changes among white working class men and women offsetting each other

BIDEN VS. TRUMP 2020 PRESIDENTIAL BALLOT



CONTACT US



DEMOCRACY CORPS

1440 G Street. NW
Floor 10
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: +1 202 250 3645

www.democracycorps.com

GREENBERG RESEARCH

1440 G Street NW
Floor 10
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: +1 202 499 6901

www.greenbergresearch.com

