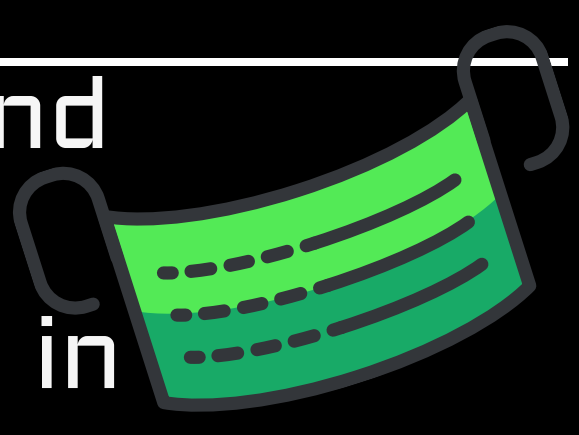
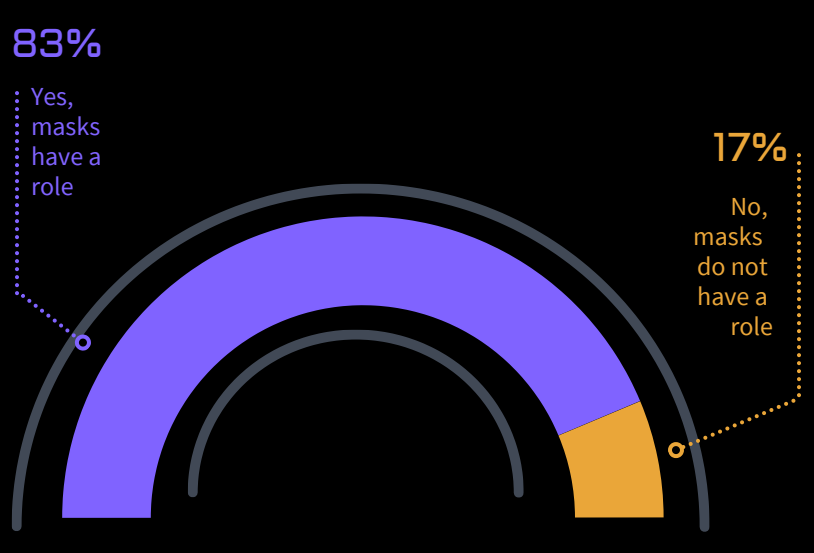
Societal values and mask usage for COVID-19 control in the US



By Courtney Bir &
Nicole Olynk Widmar

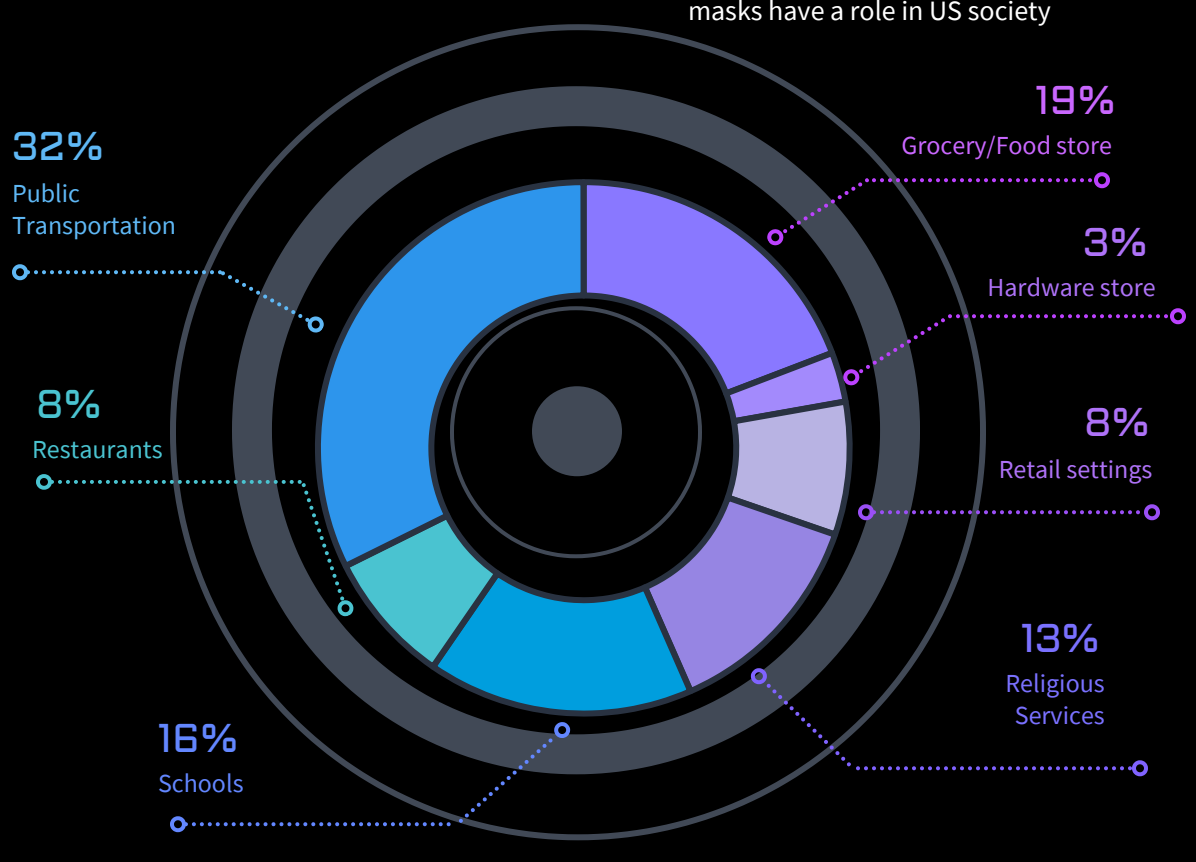
Data collected in June 2020
n= 1,198 U.S. residents, representative by age, sex, region of residence, household income, and education

% of nationally representative sample of US residents that believed masks have a role in US society



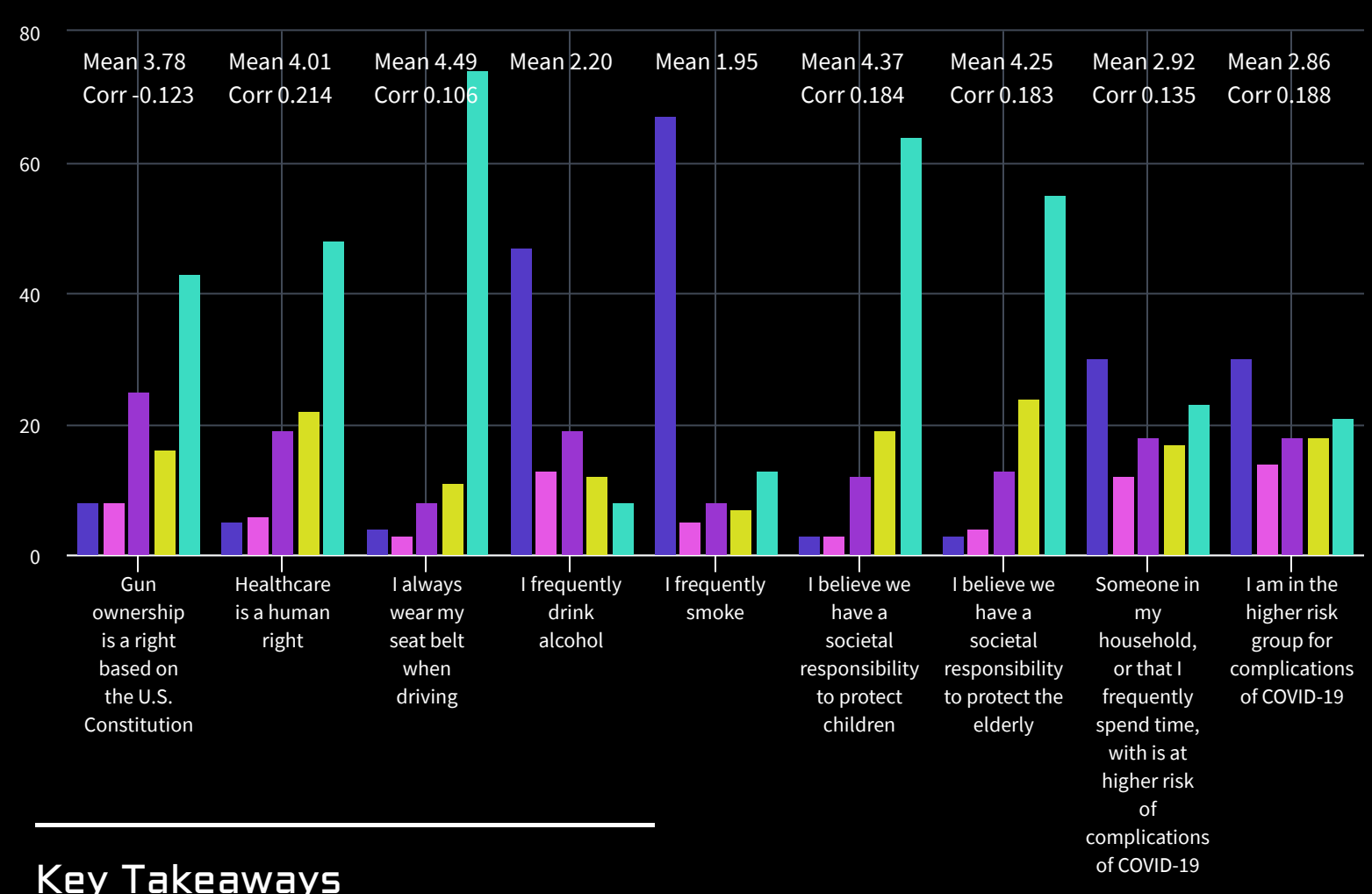
Relative importance of mask wearing by location

Mean preference share estimates reflecting relative importance of mask wearing by those who agreed masks have a role in US society



Agreement with societal value statements and correlation with belief that masks have a place in society (n=1198)

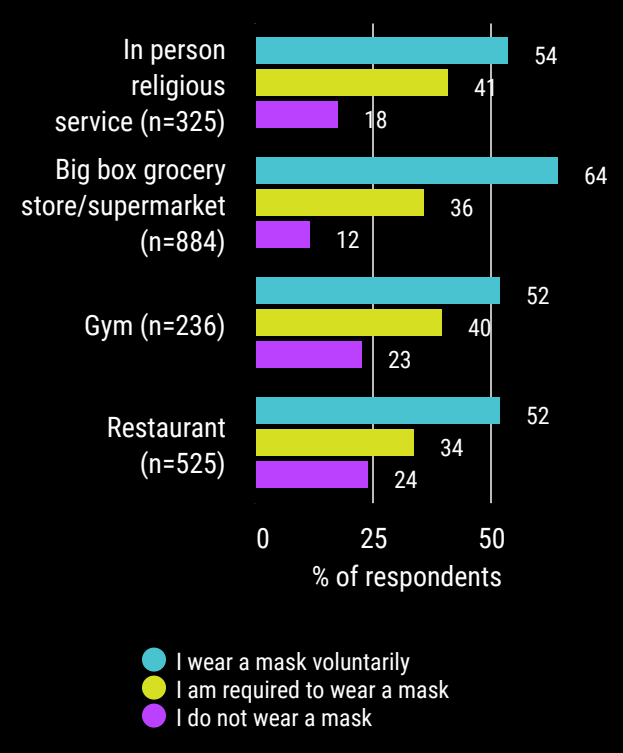
Mean displayed for all value statements
Correlation coefficient displayed only when statistically significant at 5% level



Key Takeaways

- Agreement that masks have a role in U.S. society was not equivalent to consistent mask usage in June 2020.
- Respondents who did not believe masks have a role in U.S. society also perceived social and community pressures to wear one.
- Public health guidance on the importance of mask wearing in public places may not align with public perceptions of the importance of compliance in various locations (i.e. religious gatherings versus schools versus stores).
- Mixed knowledge about mask wearing and whether masks protect the wearer or others around the wearer may be the result of unclear and rapidly evolving understanding of the roles of masks in combating COVID-19. However, lack of understanding and knowledge remains a concern.

Mask usage reported by those visiting particular locations (subset shown for brevity)



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