

# 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer

Trust Amid Insularity  
Germany Report

Edelman  
Trust Institute



# 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer

## METHODOLOGY


### Annual online survey in its 26th year

Fieldwork conducted: Oct 23 – Nov 18, 2025

**28**  
Countries

**33,938**  
Respondents

**1,200+/-**  
Respondents per country\*

Argentina	China	India	Japan	Netherlands	S. Africa	Thailand
Australia	Colombia	Indonesia	Kenya	Nigeria	S. Korea	UAE
Brazil	France	Ireland	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia	Spain	UK
Canada	Germany 	Italy	Mexico	Singapore	Sweden	U.S.

Data collected is representative of the general population across age, gender, and region within each country.\*\*

\*The sample size varies by country, from 1,200 to 1,501.

\*\*Data also representative across nationality in Saudi Arabia and UAE, and race/ethnicity in the UK and U.S.

Margin of error for full general population 28-market global average: +/- 0.7 percentage points.

Margin of error for full general population country averages: +/- 3.3 to 3.7 percentage points (varies by country).

Margin of error is calculated at the 99% confidence level.

### Global averages

Unless otherwise indicated, global averages are composed of all 28 countries surveyed.

### Statistical significance

  Significant change

Indicates a statistically meaningful difference or change in the data that is unlikely to be due to chance or a random fluctuation.

All indicated year-over-year significant changes were determined using a t-test set at a 99%+ confidence level.

### Shortened question text

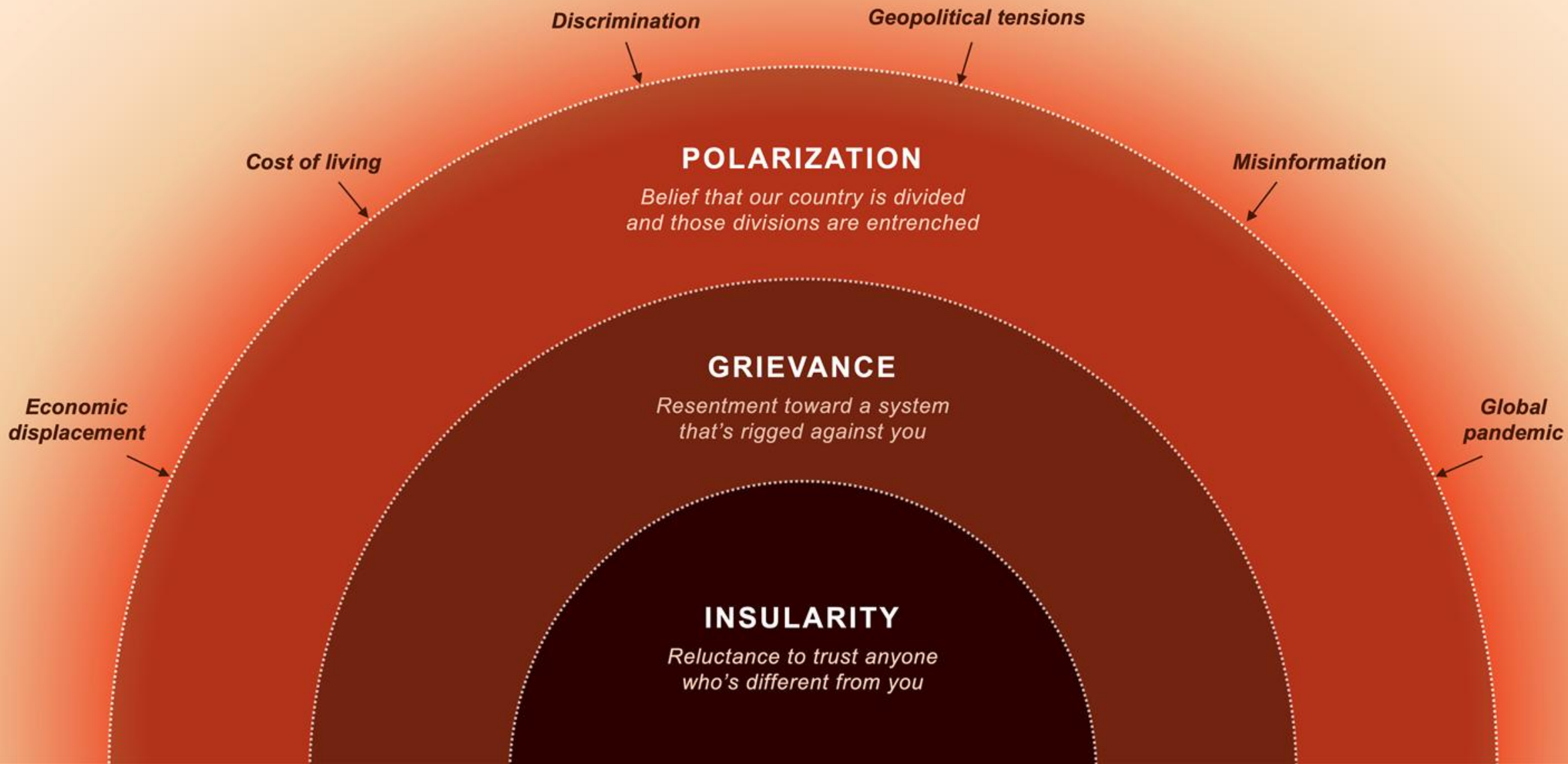
Throughout the report, question text has been edited for readability.

For more details on the margin of error, global averages, country-specific sample information, questions asked to partial sample, or to see the full text for any shortened statements, please see the Technical Appendix.

All contents in this report are the property of the Edelman Trust Institute.



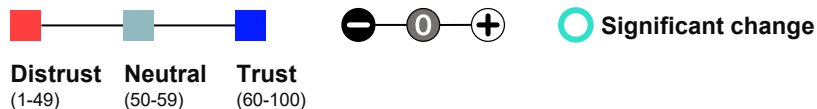
# The Retreat Into Insularity



# Trust Grows in Developing Countries, Stagnates in Developed

## Trust Index

(average percent trust in business, government, media, NGOs)



**2026 Edelman Trust Barometer.** The Trust Index is the average percent trust in business, government, media, and NGOs. TRU\_INS. Below is a list of institutions. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. General population, 28-mkt avg., and by developed and developing avg. Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.

### 2025 General population

<b>56</b>	<b>Global 28</b>
<b>77</b>	China
<b>76</b>	Indonesia
<b>75</b>	India
<b>72</b>	UAE
<b>71</b>	Saudi Arabia
<b>66</b>	Malaysia
<b>66</b>	Thailand
<b>65</b>	Nigeria
<b>65</b>	Singapore
<b>63</b>	Kenya
<b>57</b>	Mexico
<b>57</b>	Netherlands
<b>53</b>	S. Africa
<b>52</b>	Canada
<b>51</b>	Brazil
<b>50</b>	Italy
<b>50</b>	Sweden
<b>49</b>	Australia
<b>49</b>	Colombia
<b>48</b>	Argentina
<b>48</b>	France
<b>48</b>	Ireland
<b>47</b>	U.S.
<b>44</b>	Spain
<b>43</b>	UK
<b>41</b>	Germany
<b>41</b>	S. Korea
<b>37</b>	Japan

### 2026 General population

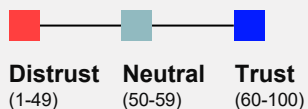
<b>57</b>	<b>Global 28</b>
<b>80</b>	China
<b>80</b>	UAE
<b>74</b>	India
<b>73</b>	Indonesia
<b>73</b>	Saudi Arabia
<b>72</b>	Nigeria
<b>71</b>	Malaysia
<b>68</b>	Kenya
<b>65</b>	Thailand
<b>64</b>	Singapore
<b>58</b>	Netherlands
<b>57</b>	Mexico
<b>56</b>	Brazil
<b>54</b>	Australia
<b>54</b>	S. Africa
<b>52</b>	Canada
<b>52</b>	Sweden
<b>50</b>	Argentina
<b>50</b>	Italy
<b>49</b>	Colombia
<b>47</b>	Ireland
<b>47</b>	U.S.
<b>46</b>	S. Korea
<b>45</b>	Spain
<b>44</b>	Germany
<b>44</b>	UK
<b>42</b>	France
<b>38</b>	Japan

2026		
<b>Developing countries</b>	<b>66</b>	<span style="color: blue; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">+3</span>
<b>Developed countries</b>	<b>49</b>	<span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">+1</span>

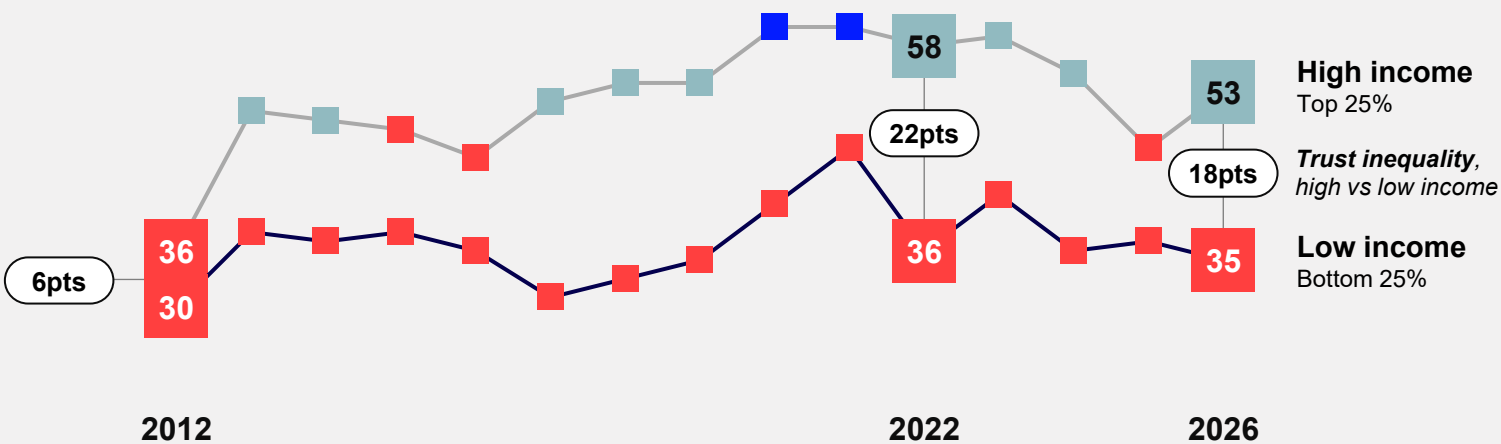


# In Germany, Income-Based Trust Divide Expands Since 2012

## Trust Index in Germany



**Trust Index**  
(average percent trust in business, government, media, NGOs)



### 2026

Top 7 of 28 Countries	High-low income gap
U.S.	29pts
Indonesia	26pts
Nigeria	26pts
France	22pts
Saudi Arabia	21pts
Thailand	20pts
UAE	20pts

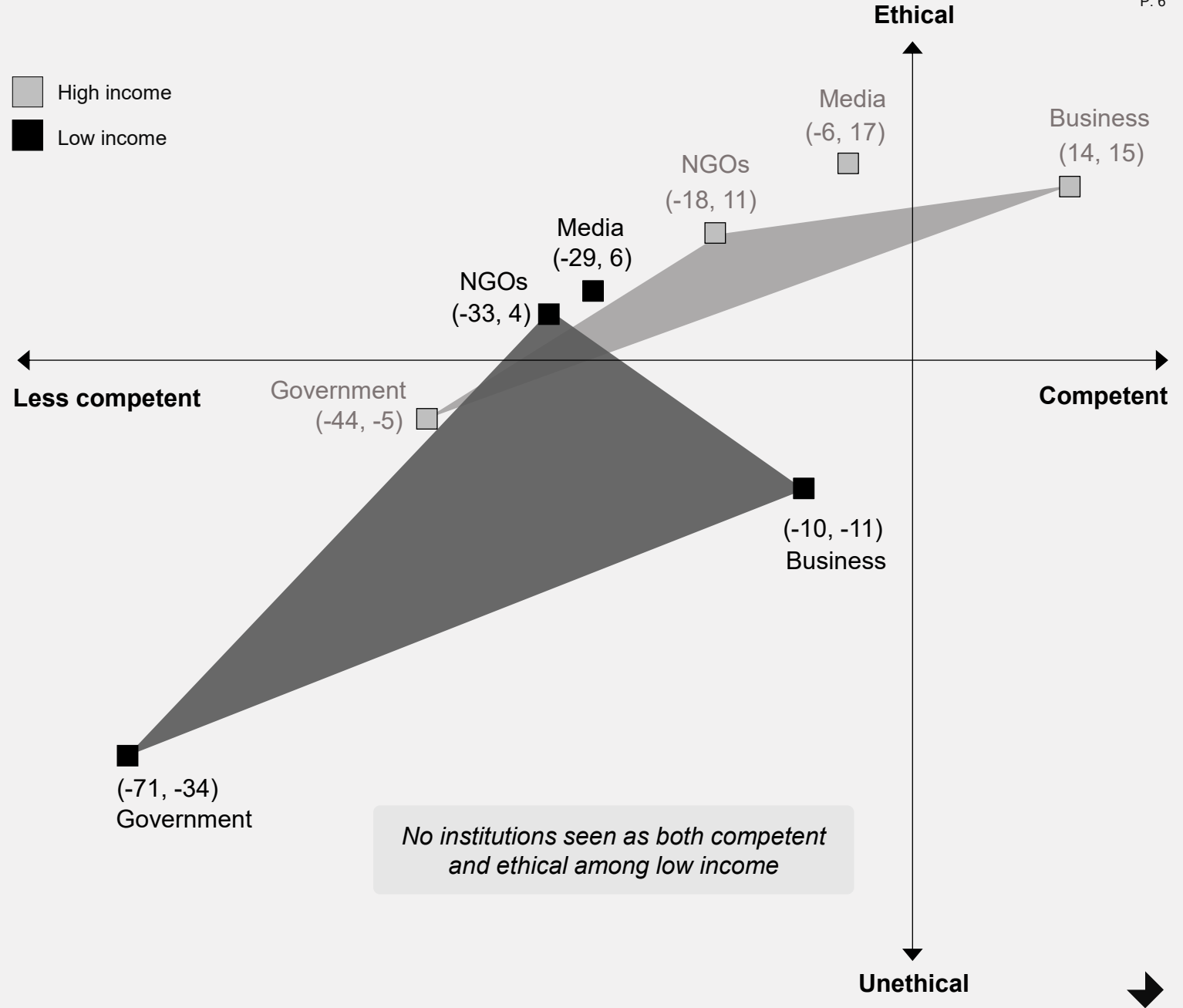



**2026 Edelman Trust Barometer.** The Trust Index is the average percent trust in business, government, media, and NGOs. TRU\_INS. Below is a list of institutions. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. General population, Germany, by income. Income quartiles were determined separately for each country based on the distribution of household incomes among respondents from that country.



# In Germany, High and Low Income Live In Opposing Institutional Realities

(Competence score, net ethical score)

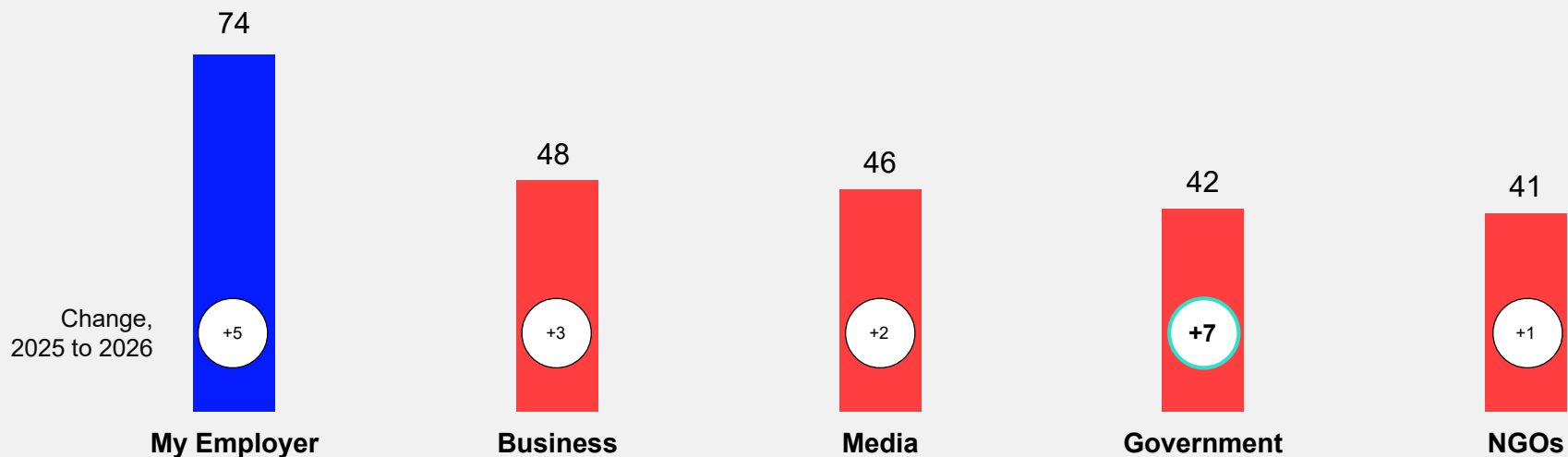
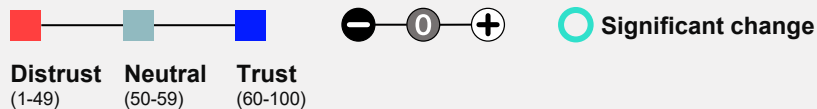


 **2026 Edelman Trust Barometer.** The competence score is a net based on TRU\_3D\_[INS]/1. Media and NGOs were only asked of half the sample. The ethical scores are averages of nets based on [INS]\_PER\_DIM/1-4. Media and NGOs were only asked of half the sample. General population, Germany, by income.

For full details regarding how this data was calculated and plotted, please see the Technical Appendix.

# In Germany, My Employer Only Trusted Institution

In Germany, percent trust

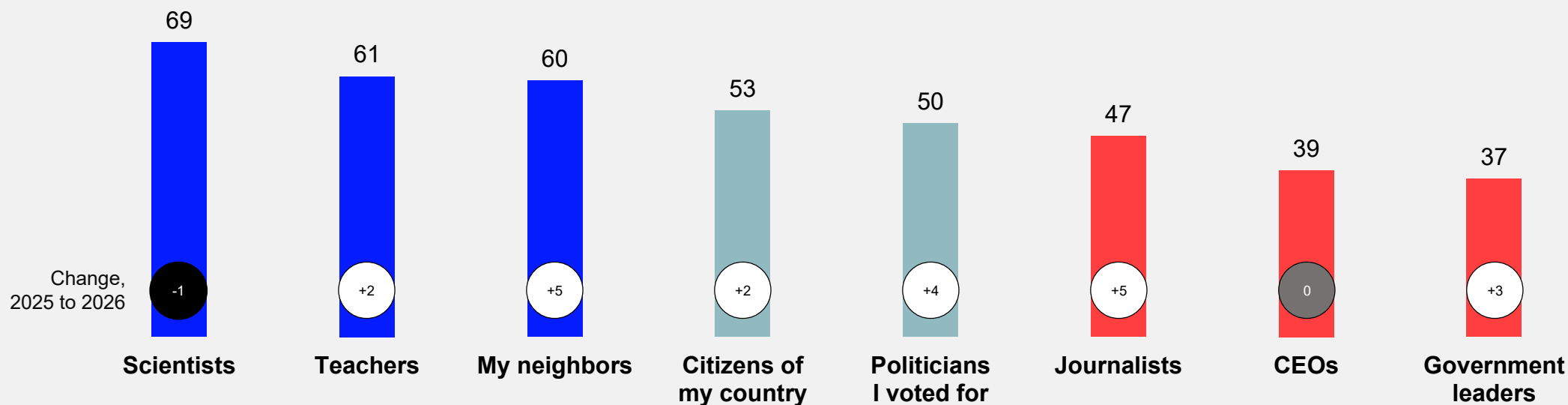
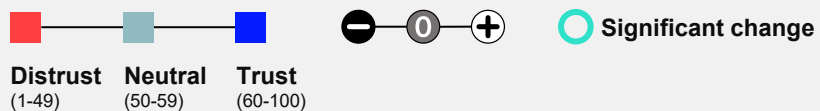


2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU\_INS. Below is a list of institutions. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. General population, Germany. "My employer" only asked to those who are employees of an organization (Q43/1). Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.



# In Germany, Scientists, Teachers, and Neighbors Remain Trusted

In Germany, percent trust



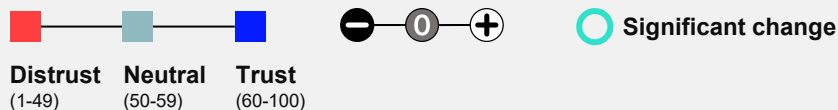
2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU\_PEP. Below is a list of groups of people. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that group of people to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. General population, Germany. Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.



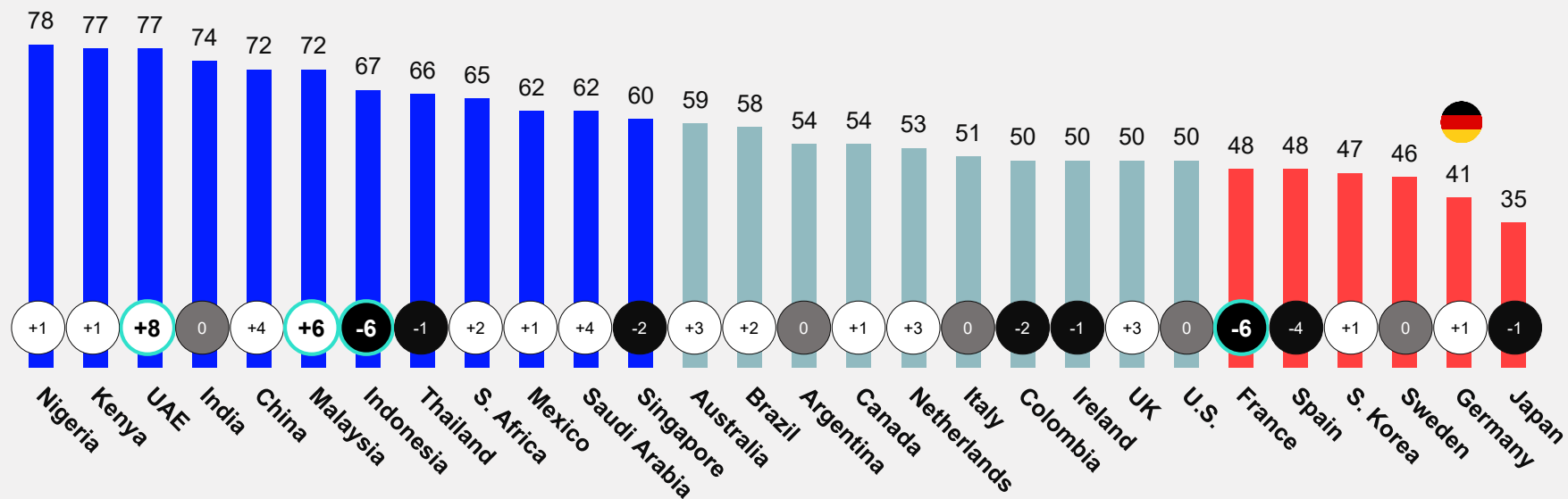
# NGOs Trusted in 12 of 28 Countries Measured; Distrusted in Germany

Percent who say

GLOBAL 28



I trust NGOs to do what is right



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU\_INS. Below is a list of institutions. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. General population, 28-mkt avg. Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.



# As Fears Rise, Trust Goes Local



# In Germany, Less Than 1 in 10 Are Optimistic

Percent who say

GLOBAL 28



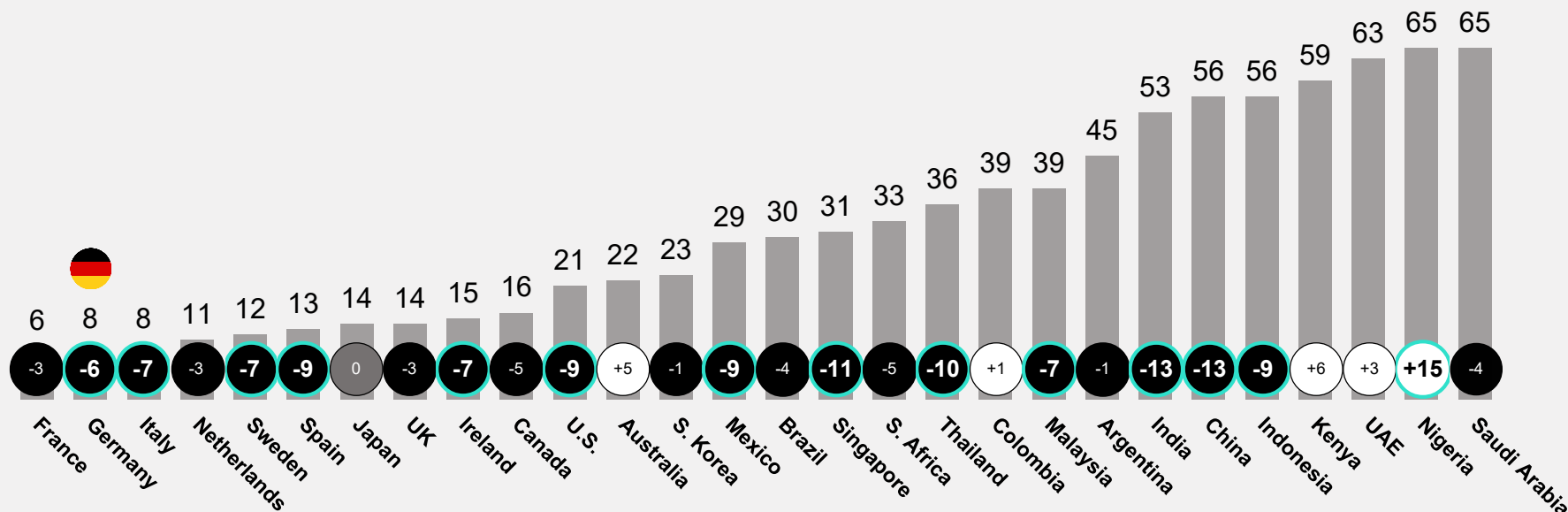
Significant change

Compared to today, the next generation will be better off

ONLY

32%

-4 pts  
Change, 2025 to 2026



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. BET\_FUT. How do you think the state of things in your country will be for the next generation compared to how things are in your country today? 5-point scale; top 2 box, better. Question asked to partial sample. General population, 28-mkt avg. Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.



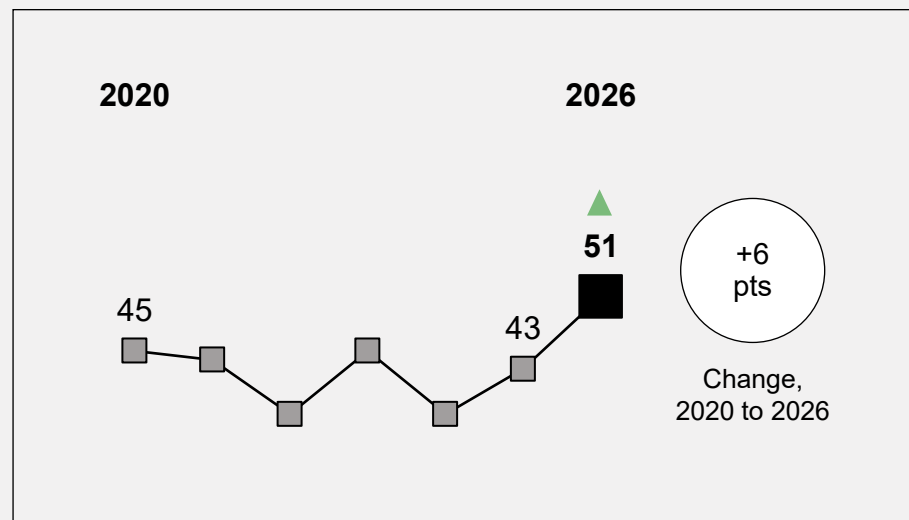
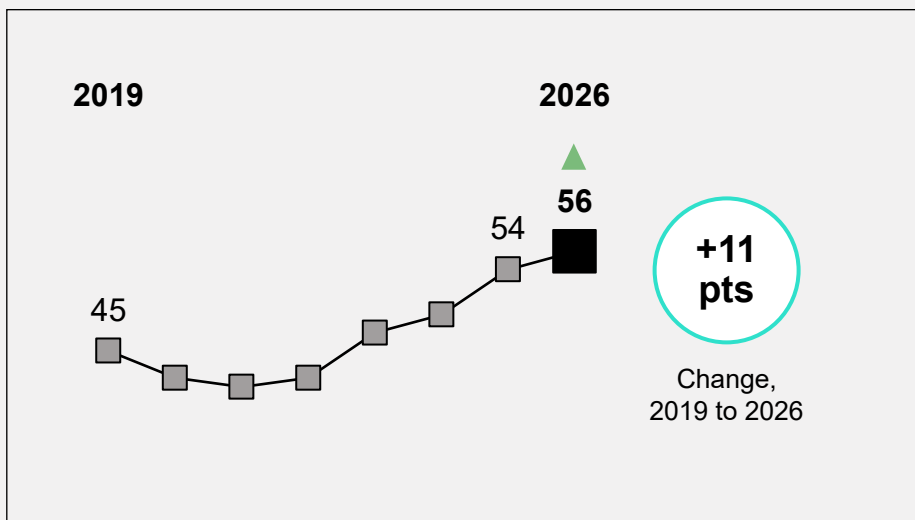
# In Germany, Trade and Recession-Related Job Fears Hit All-Time High

In Germany, percent of employees who say

⊖ 0 ⊕   
 ○ Significant change   
 ▲ ▼ All-time highs and lows

I worry about **international trade and tariff conflicts** hurting the company I work for

I worry about losing my job as a result of a **looming recession**



**2026 Edelman Trust Barometer.** POP\_EMO. Some people say they worry about many things while others say they have few concerns. We are interested in what you worry about. Specifically, how much do you worry about each of the following? 9-point scale; top 4 box, worry. Question asked to partial sample, and these attributes were only asked to those who are employees of an organization (Q43/1). General population, Germany. Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level.



# Global Fear That Foreign Actors Spread Disinformation to Sow Domestic Division Hits All-Time High

Percent who say

GLOBAL 26

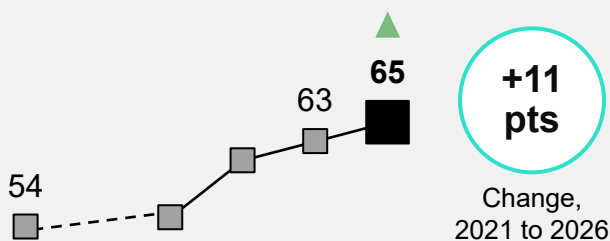


Significant change

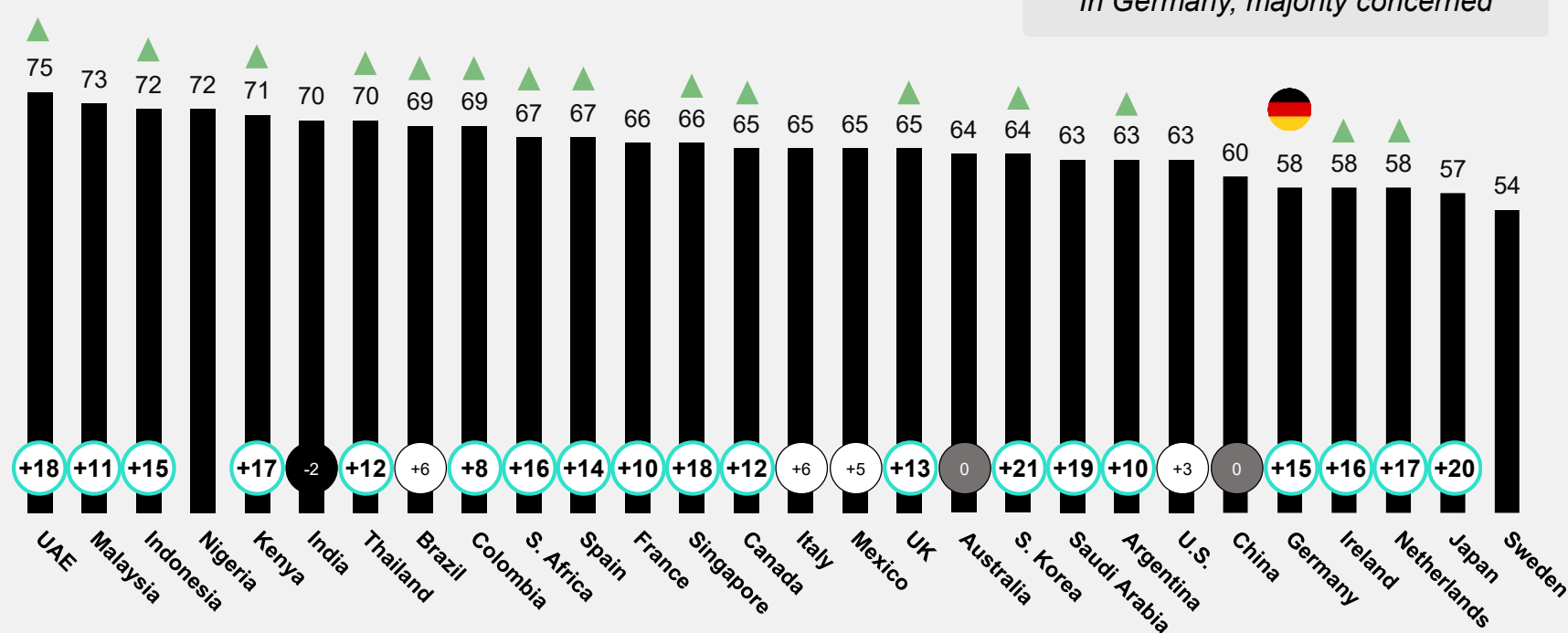
All-time highs and lows

I worry that **other countries purposefully contaminate our media** with falsehoods to inflame our differences

2021 2026



*In Germany, majority concerned*



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. POP\_EMO. Some people say they worry about many things while others say they have few concerns. We are interested in what you worry about. Specifically, how much do you worry about each of the following? 9-point scale; top 4 box, worry. Question asked to partial sample. General population, 26-mkt avg. Year-over-year changes were tested for significance using a t-test set at the 99%+ confidence level. The all-time highs and lows analysis comprised countries with at least five waves of data collection; therefore, Nigeria and Sweden were not eligible for the analysis.



# From “We” to “Me”: Our Shared Institutions Lose, *My* Local Circle Wins

Among those who say recent societal events impacted their trust in people or institutions (95%), percent who say

GLOBAL 27 excl. China

As a result of a major societal event in the past five years...

*% who say they have*

▼ I have <b>lost trust</b> in:	Net change	<i>Lost trust</i>	<i>Gained trust</i>
National government leaders	<b>-16</b>	40	24
Major news organizations	<b>-11</b>	35	24
Foreign business leaders	<b>-6</b>	30	24

*% who say they have*

△ I have <b>gained trust</b> in:	Net change	<i>Lost trust</i>	<i>Gained trust</i>
<b>My</b> neighbors, family, and friends	<b>+11</b>	18	29
<b>My</b> coworkers ( <i>among employees</i> )	<b>+11</b>	20	31
<b>My</b> CEO ( <i>among employees</i> )	<b>+9</b>	21	30

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU\_CNG\_HOW. How did this event impact your level of trust in each of the following? 5-point scale; codes 1-2, lost trust; codes 3-4, gained trust; the “net change” is the difference between those who gained trust minus lost trust. Question only asked to those who say societal events from the past five years have had an impact on their level of trust in other people or institutions (TRU\_EVT = any of r1-8). General population, 27-mkt avg. Data not collected in China. “My coworkers” and “My CEO” were only asked to those who are employees of an organization (Q43/1). For a full explanation of this analysis, please see the Technical Appendix.



Insularity  
Stops  
Progress



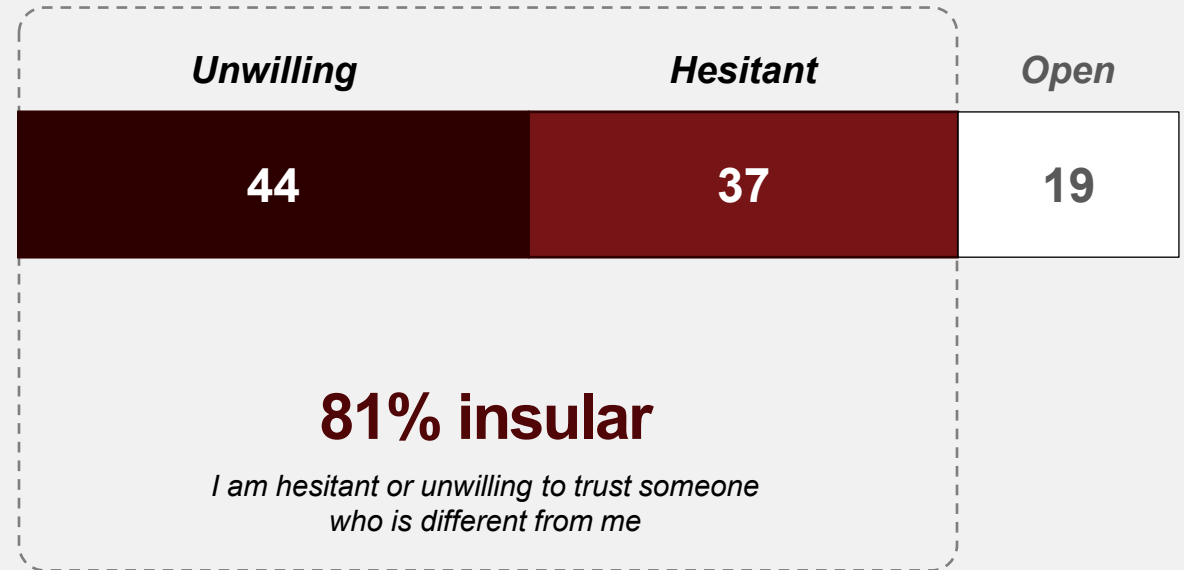
# In Germany, 8 in 10 Have an Insular Mindset

In Germany, on average, percent who say

When it comes to **trusting someone who:**

- Lives by **different core values** than me
- Believes **different facts** and trusts **different sources** than I do
- Wants to address **societal problems differently** than I do
- Has a **different culture, background, or lifestyle** than mine

I am generally ...



# Global Consensus That Insularity Needs To Be Addressed

Percent who say

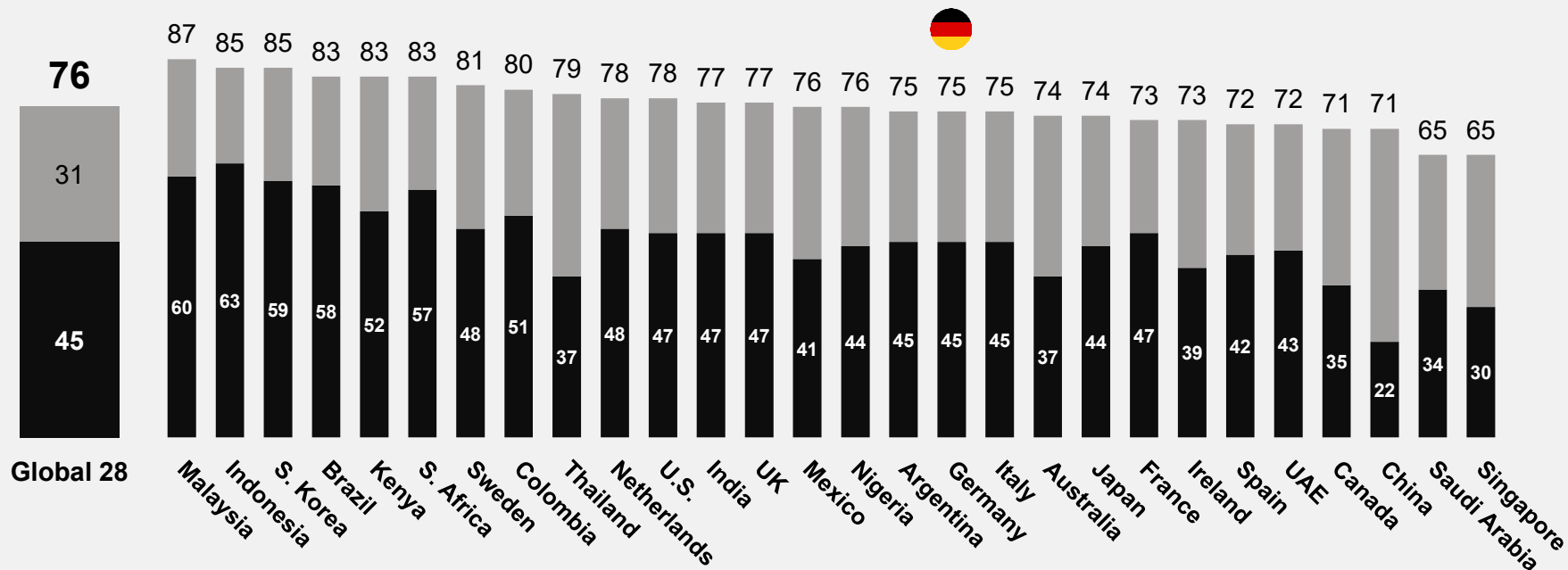
GLOBAL 28

People in my country distrust those with differences so much that they **actively try to make things worse for one another**

This is a moderate problem

This is a large or crisis-level problem

Nearly 1 in 2 in Germany believe this is a large or crisis-level problem



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. DIS\_PRB. To what degree do you think the following is a problem in your country that needs to be addressed? People with different beliefs, experiences, values, or ideas about solving problems distrust each other so much that they actively try to make things worse for one another. 5-point scale; code 3, moderate problem; codes 4-5, large or crisis level problem. Question asked to partial sample. General population, 28-mkt avg. Total percentage for each column is a sum of "This is a large or crisis-level problem" and "this is a moderate problem."



# Trust Brokering: The Response to Insularity



## Trust Brokering

### What

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Trust brokering is a set of practices and behaviors that counters insularity by facilitating trust across difference.

### How

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Rather than trying to change people, trust brokering surfaces the common interests of insulated parties and translates their needs, goals, and realities for one another.

### Who

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A trust broker can be a person, organization, or institution trusted by each stakeholder group facing a common problem.



# Trust Brokering Begins With Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Differences

Among those who already trust someone who differs from them (22%), percent who say

GLOBAL 28

**This is why I currently trust someone who differs from me** in their *values, sources, approaches to societal problems, or their background* (avg):

## Openness

They have an <b>open mind and don't try to change me</b>	49
They are <b>transparent</b> about how they differ from me	46

## Positive experiences

They <b>helped me</b> in the past	24
They <b>defended me</b> when I've been criticized	21

2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. WHY\_CIR\_PEP[1-4]. You indicated that you currently trust [at least one person who differs from you in their values, sources, approaches to societal problems, or their backgrounds]. Why do you trust them, even though you differ on this? Question asked to those who already trust someone who differs from them (TRU\_CIR\_PEP/C5 ANY). General population, 28-mkt avg. Data shown for each attribute is an average across the four dimensions of difference.



# International Trust Brokering Hinges on Long-Term, Local Relationships

In Germany, percent who say

If a company from a **country that I distrust** wanted to operate in my local community, **it could earn my trust** by ...

## *Long-term relationships*

Investing in <b>long-term community projects</b>	46
<b>Hiring</b> people from my community	42

## *Short-term interaction*

Helping my community <b>recover</b> from a crisis	30
<b>Donating</b> to my community's social organizations	26



# Playbook for Trust Brokering in Germany



# Business: Showcase Best Practices for Trust Brokering

In Germany, percent who say

This would be an **effective strategy for business** to facilitate trust building between distrusting groups:

	Germany	Low income	Middle income	High income
Bring employees into the workplace to <b>interact with people who are different</b> than them	73	n/a*	76	71
<b>Partner with unexpected organizations</b> to initiate cross-cultural or cross-political conversations	68	n/a*	72	72



2026 Edelman Trust Barometer. BUS\_BRK. For each of the business actions listed below, please indicate whether you feel it would be an effective strategy or not for actively bridging divides and facilitating trust-building between groups of people who distrust each other on the basis of having different values they live by, facts they rely on, backgrounds they come from, or approaches to solving challenges in society. 5-point scale; codes 3-5, moderately or more effective. Questions asked to partial sample. General population, Germany, and by income. \*Base size is too small to report data for Germany low income (less than n=100).



# NGOs, Government, and Media: Fulfill Your Role in Brokering Trust

In Germany, percent who say

This would be an **effective strategy for this institution** to facilitate trust building between distrusting groups:

NGOs: Translate Between Groups	
Help distrusting groups <b>understand each other</b>	77
Establish <b>local community mediation programs</b>	69

Government: Set the Right Tone	
Require politicians to engage in <b>civil discourse</b>	80
<b>Avoid rhetoric that blames or vilifies</b> particular groups	79

Media: De-Escalate Tensions	
Dedicate <b>equal time and coverage to different viewpoints</b> on big issues	83
<b>Write accurate headlines</b> instead of exaggerated or fear-inducing ones	81



# Vertrauen schaffen in einer fragmentierten Gesellschaft

# 1

## Vertrauen wird lokal und persönlich

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Menschen vertrauen weniger abstrakten Institutionen und mehr ihrem direkten Umfeld.

Für NGOs bedeutet das: Nähe zeigen, Beziehungen stärken und Wirkung vor Ort sichtbar machen.

# 2

## Polarisierung bremst sozialen Fortschritt

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Zunehmende Abschottung und Misstrauen zwischen unterschiedlichen Gruppen erschweren Dialog und Zusammenarbeit.

Ohne gezielte Vertrauensarbeit bleiben viele Initiativen wirkungslos.

# 3

## NGOs sind als Brückenbauer gefragt

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Die Rolle von NGOs entwickelt sich weiter – von reiner Interessenvertretung hin zur aktiven Vermittlung zwischen Perspektiven, Lebensrealitäten und gesellschaftlichen Gruppen.

# 4

## Vertrauen ist der Schlüssel

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Nachhaltiger Impact und stabile Spendenbasis entstehen dort, wo Vertrauen aktiv aufgebaut und gepflegt wird – durch Transparenz, Dialog und nachvollziehbare Ergebnisse.

## Kontakt

**Bärbel Hestert-Vecoli**

Managing Director Corporate Affairs

[Baerbel.HestertVecoli@edelman.com](mailto:Baerbel.HestertVecoli@edelman.com)

[+49 \(0\) 1624682930](tel:+49(0)1624682930)

