

# PolicyInteractive

Public Opinion Research into Relationship of  
Global Warming Perceptions  
and  
Public Policy

Mid-Project Findings Of Interest

January 15, 2009

# Researching Key Drivers for:

- Effective Climate Change Communications
- Climate Responsive Policy & Actions
- Environmentally Friendly Behavior
- Building Ecologically Friendly Majorities
- Linking Knowledge with Behaviors

# Research Ground Rules

- Objectivity
- Open-mindedness – research, not agenda driven
- Professional Standards for Research
- Grounded in Science
- Demographically & Ideologically Representative
- Review by Qualified Outside Researchers
- Critical Self-evaluation
- Transparency
- Retest & Explore Items of Importance

# Primary Findings

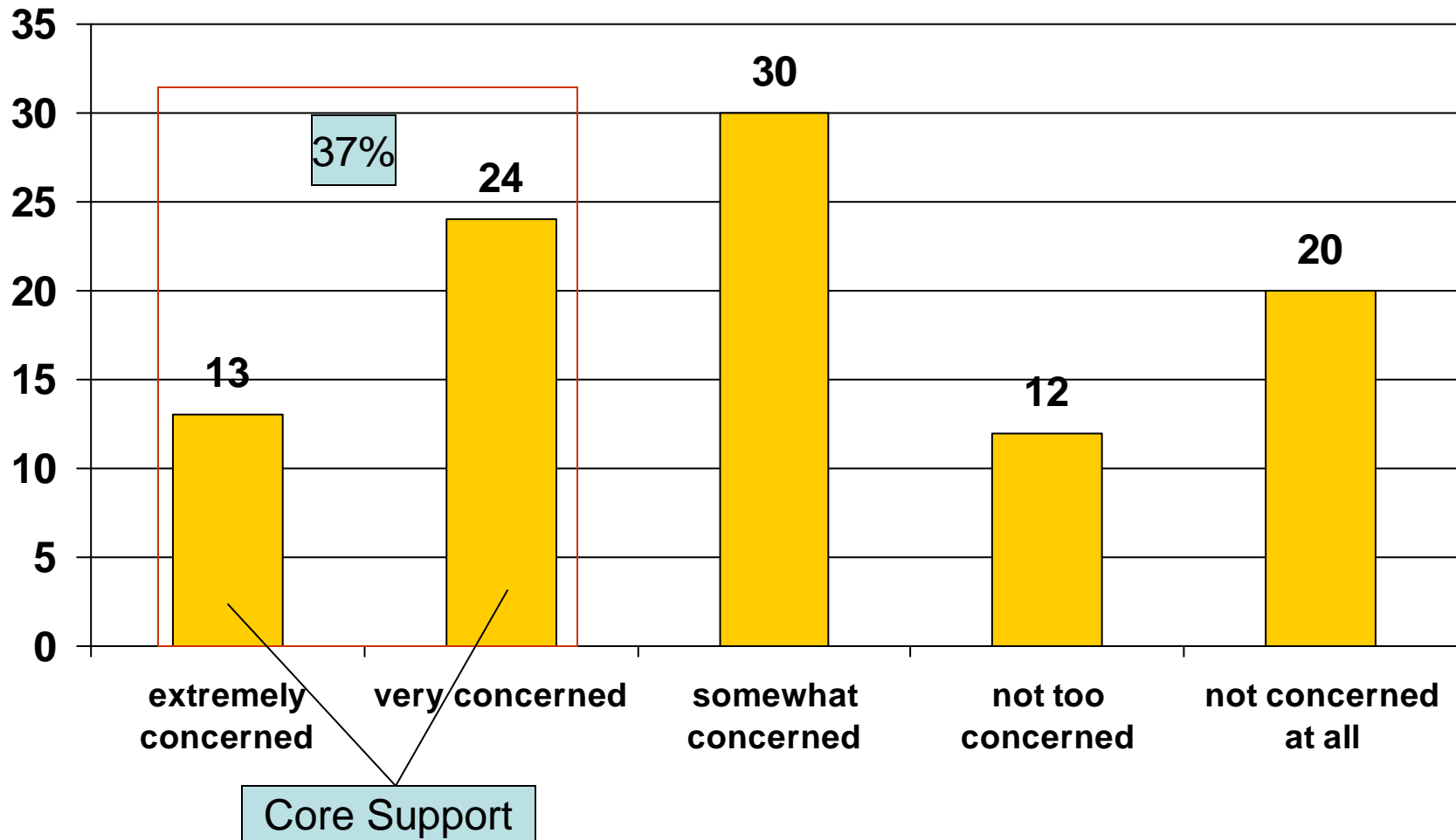
- “Climate Change” remains below critical mass as a public-support policy driver.
- Other social values are identified as climate friendly motivators -- which bridge polarizations.
- Such social value drivers have environmental and social benefits irrespective of climate policy objectives.
- Policymakers may be missing golden opportunity. “A crisis is a terrible thing to waste”
- Translating current findings to policy options requires further development.

“Climate Change” remains  
below critical mass as a  
bullet-proof policy driver.

All results are Oregon-wide unless noted.

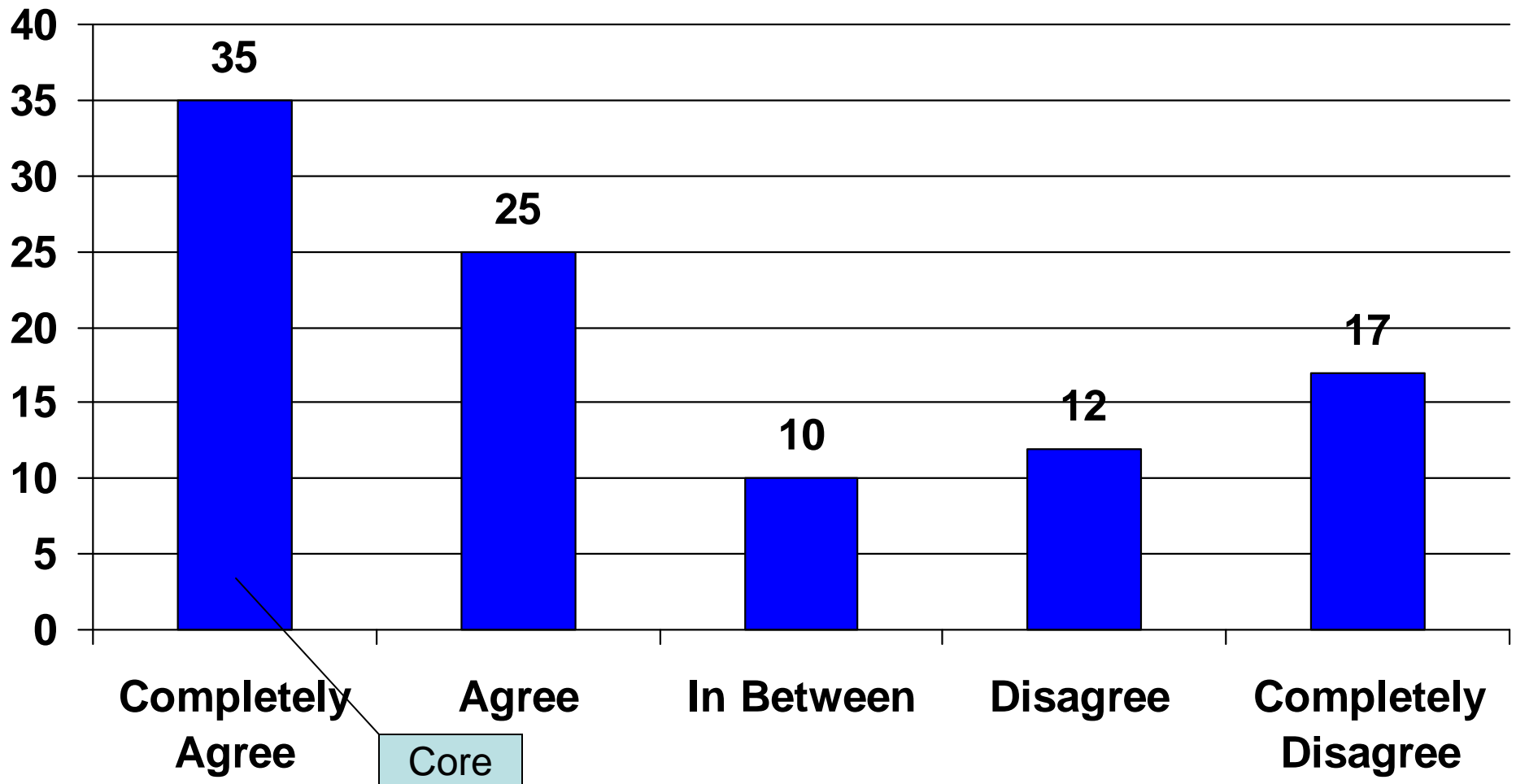
You may have heard that the world's temperature has been rising over the past 100 years. Are you extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not concerned at all?

(CC1T1) (PI April 2008 n=400)



# Global warming threatens life on earth.

V4A (PI November 2008 n=400)

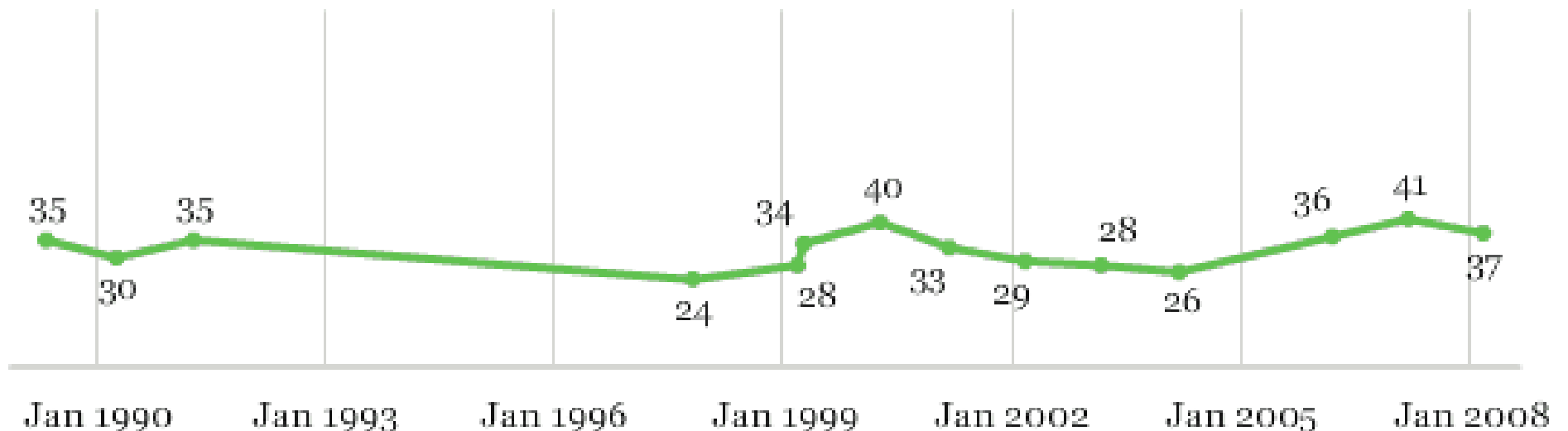


# Do you worry a great deal about global warming? National Gallup Tracking 18 years

*I'm going to read you a list of environmental problems. As I read each one, please tell me if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all. How much do you personally worry about ...*

The "greenhouse effect" or global warming

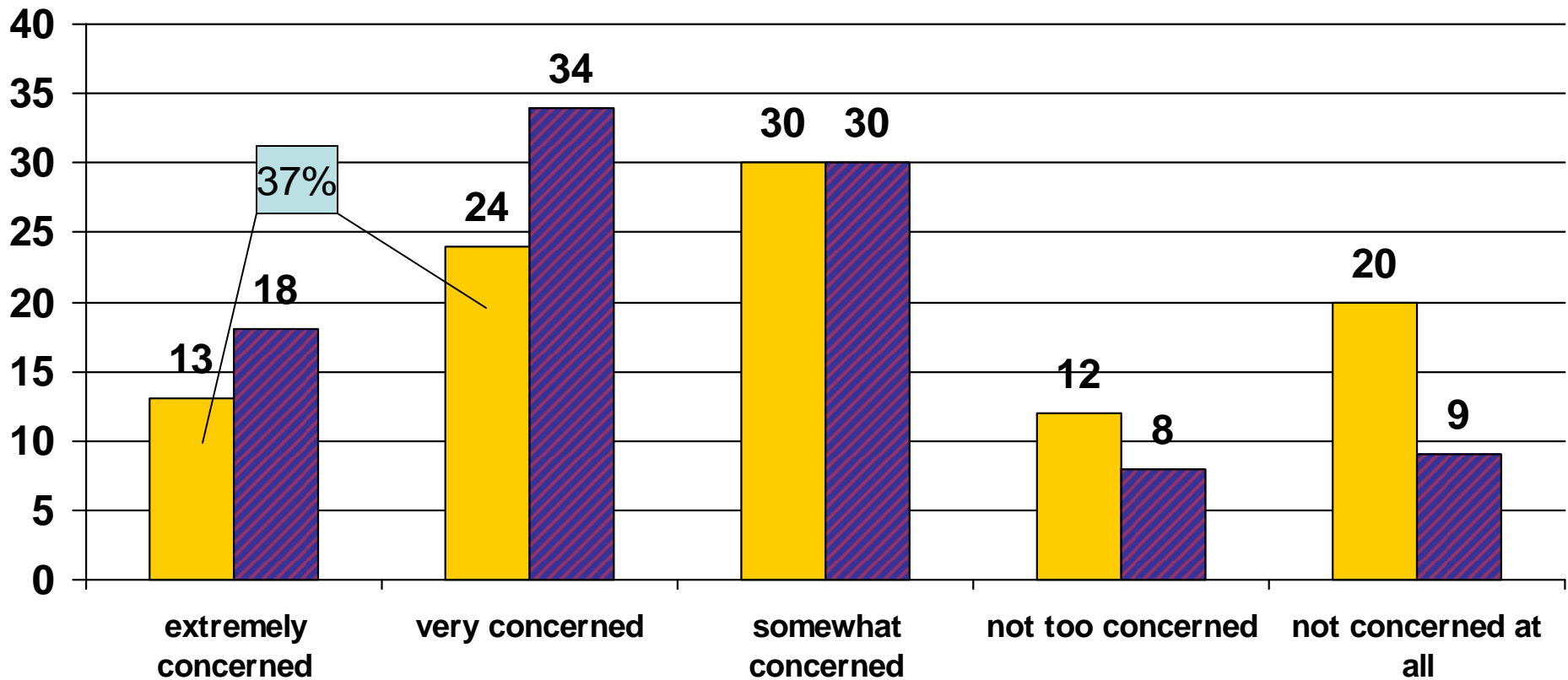
■ % Great deal    Core Support





You may have heard that the world's temperature has been rising over the past 100 years. Are you extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not concerned at all?  
 (Oregon & National Comparison)

■ Oregon Apr. 2008 
 ▨ Nation Apr. 2007

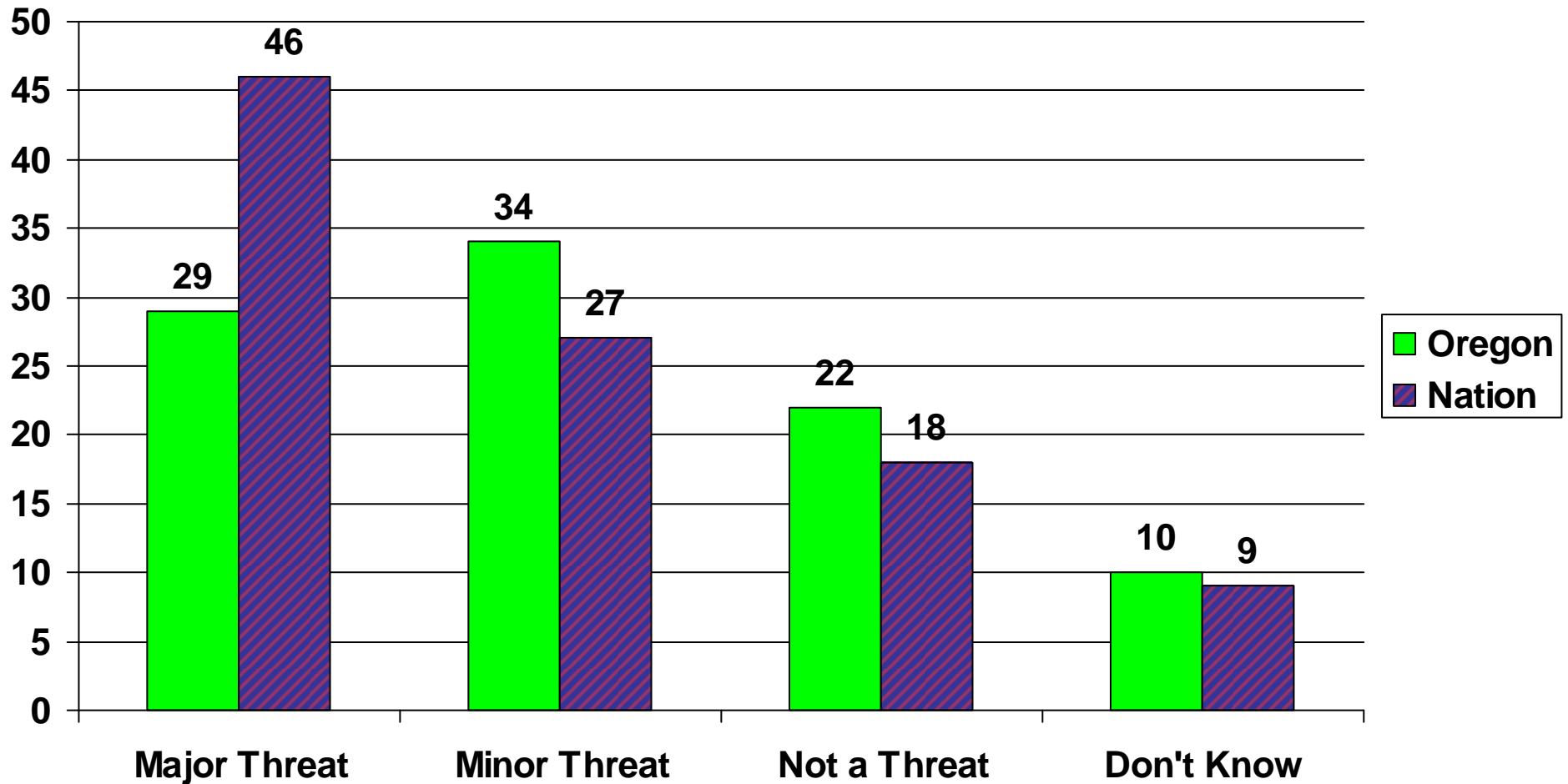


Solid Bars: Oregon: PI/NSDS Poll April 2008

Hatched Bars: USA: ABC/Washington Post/Stanford University April 2007 n = 1002 (diff question: "How important is global warming to you personally?")

# Looking ahead 50 years from today, do you think global warming will be a major threat to human life on earth, a minor threat, or not a threat? (Oregon & USA Compared)

PI in various solid colors April 2008 n=400; Hatched Bars From Princeton Research Assoc. Aug 1 2007 USA n=1002



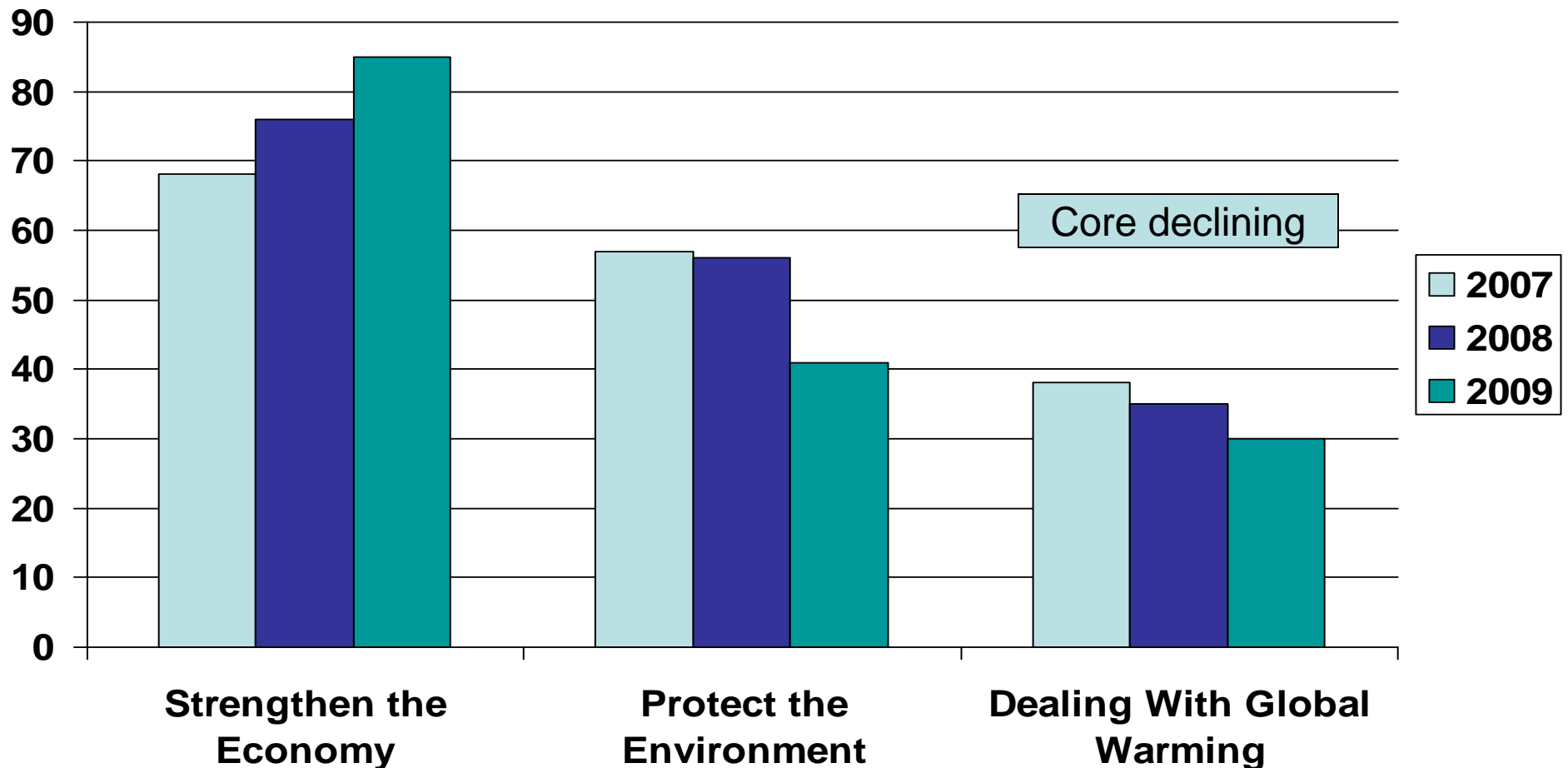
# Latest 2009 Priority Concern

## Priority Concern – Pew Research Center

"I'd like to ask you some questions about priorities for President-elect Obama and Congress this year. As I read from a list, tell me if you think the item that I read should be a top priority, important but lower priority, not too important or should it not be done. Should [see below] be a top priority, important but lower priority, not too important, or should it not be done?"

National - Jan 7-11 n=1503 (asked of half the sample MOE 4%)

[graph shows "top priority" response]



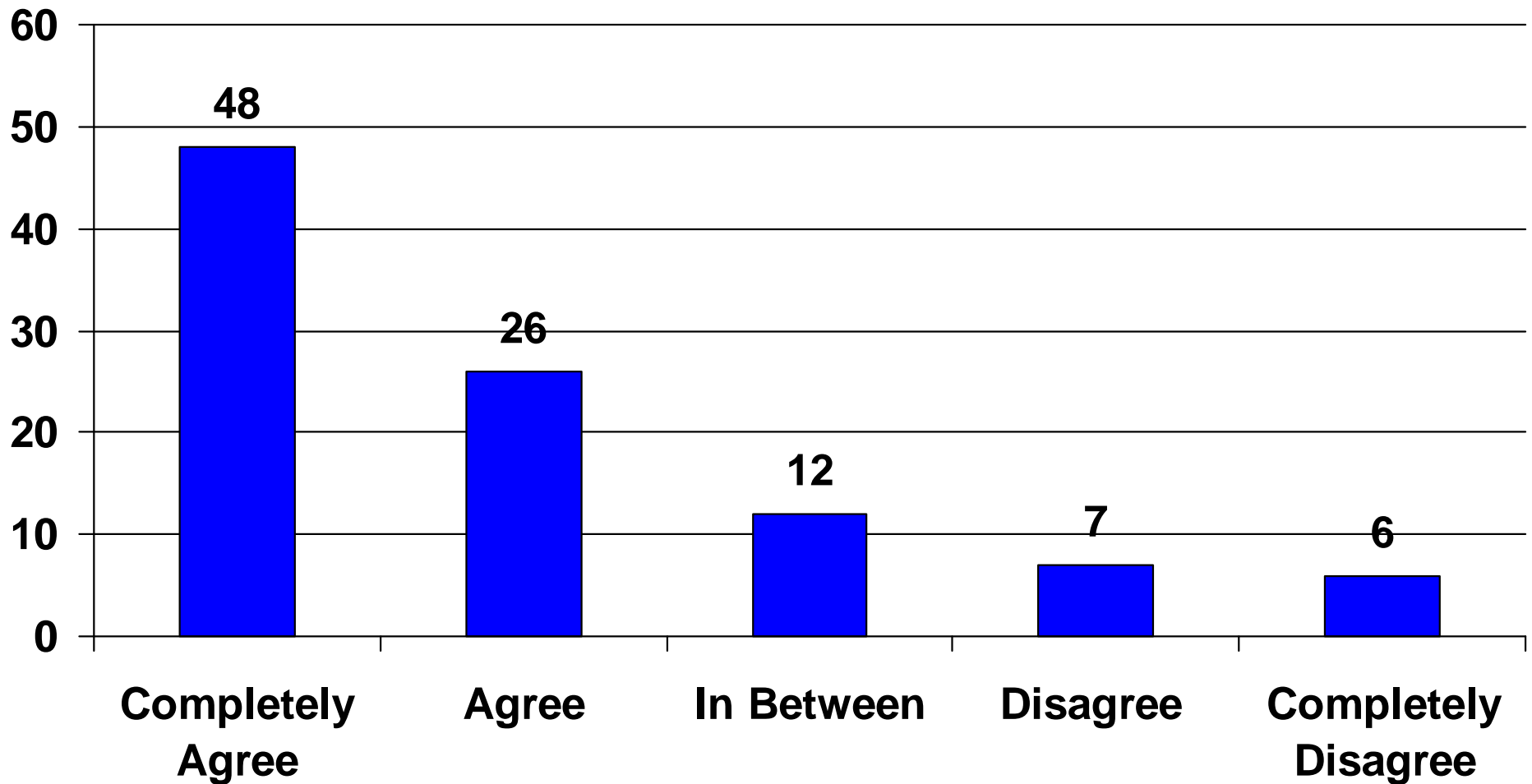
# Where do we find ourselves:

- General lack of movement with “global warming” as a key driver for action or policy.
- Climate Change is declining as a concern.
- Oregon shows less concern with climate than nation as a whole.

# PI Surveying Finds Alternative Climate Friendly Attitudes:

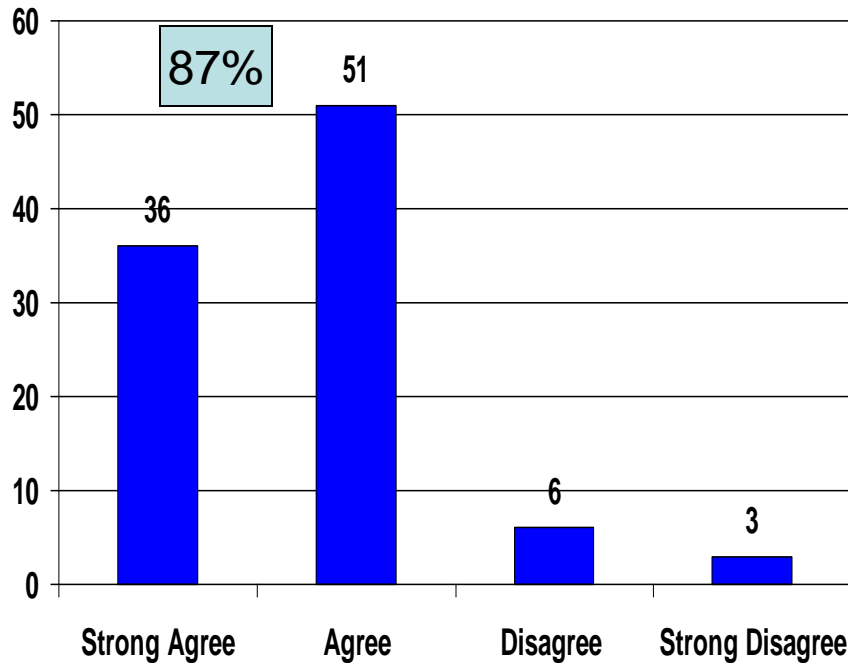
# Our country would be a better place if we all consumed less.

(V1A) (PI November 2008 n=400)



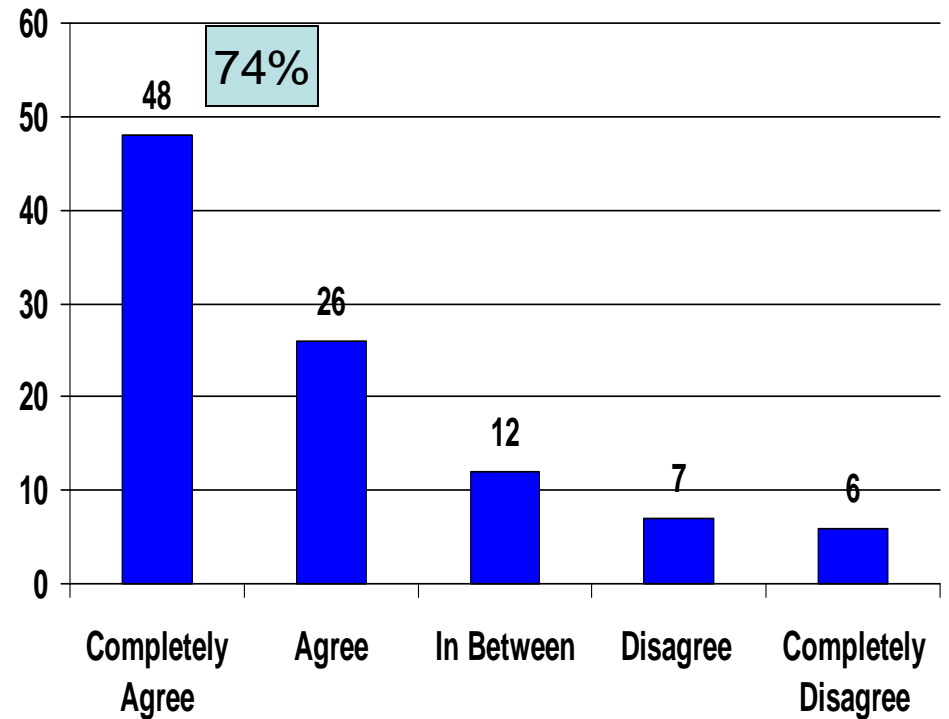
# Our country would be a better place if we all consumed less.

April 2008 n=400



# Our country would be a better place if we all consumed less.

November 2008 n=400



**NOTE: SCALE & TERMINOLOGY VARIATION – APRIL 4 PT. - NOV. 5 PT.**

# Why is “Consume Less” Relevant?

- Consumption x Population = Emissions
- American emits disproportionately; 2 – 10 times other viable national or regional economies.
- America sets “example” for others.
- ‘Reduce Consumption’ disposition embraces non-environmental culture sectors – bridges polarity.
- Population limit tested, but not a current cultural driver.
- Consumption reduction has broader environmental and social benefits.



Compare “issue” relativity:

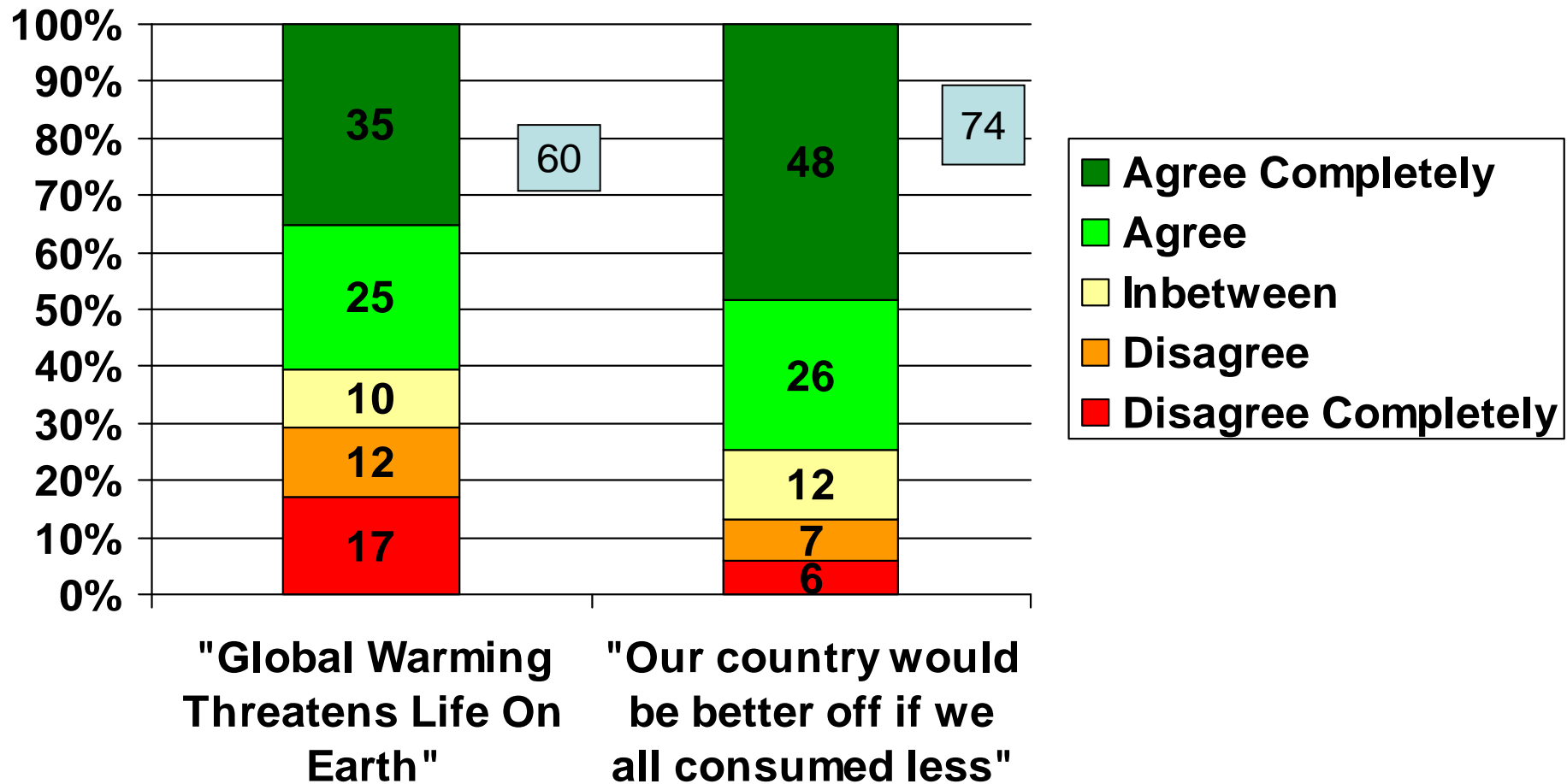
‘Global Warming’

to

‘Better to Consume Less’

# Compare: 'Global Warming Threatens Life On Earth' - 'Country Better Off If We Consume Less'

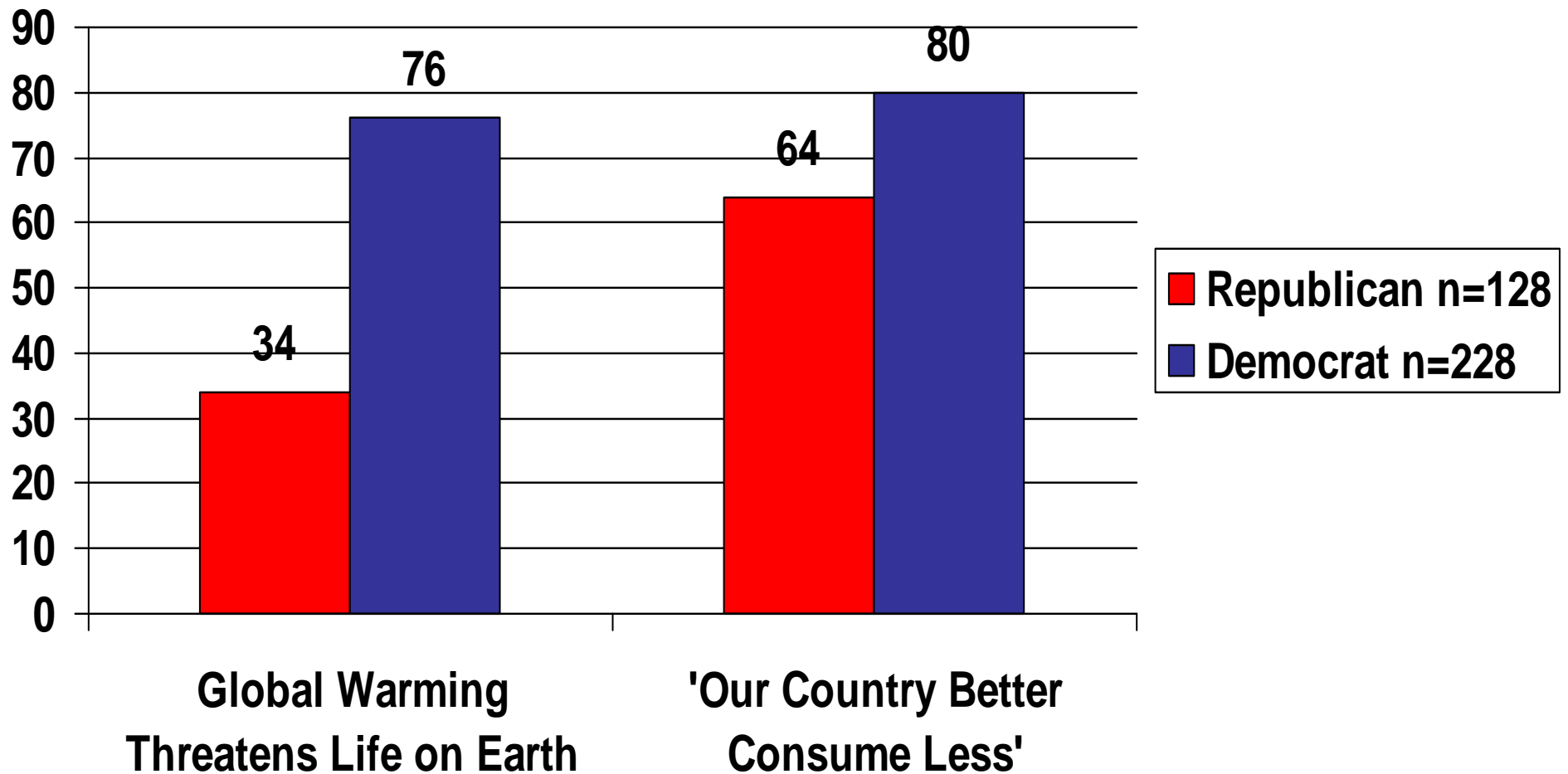
(Compare V1A & V4A) (PI Nov. 2008 n=400)



# Political Party Ideology Comparison

## Compare Global Warming / Consume less

PI November 2008 n=400 V4A/V1A (expressed as % Agreement of Sector)

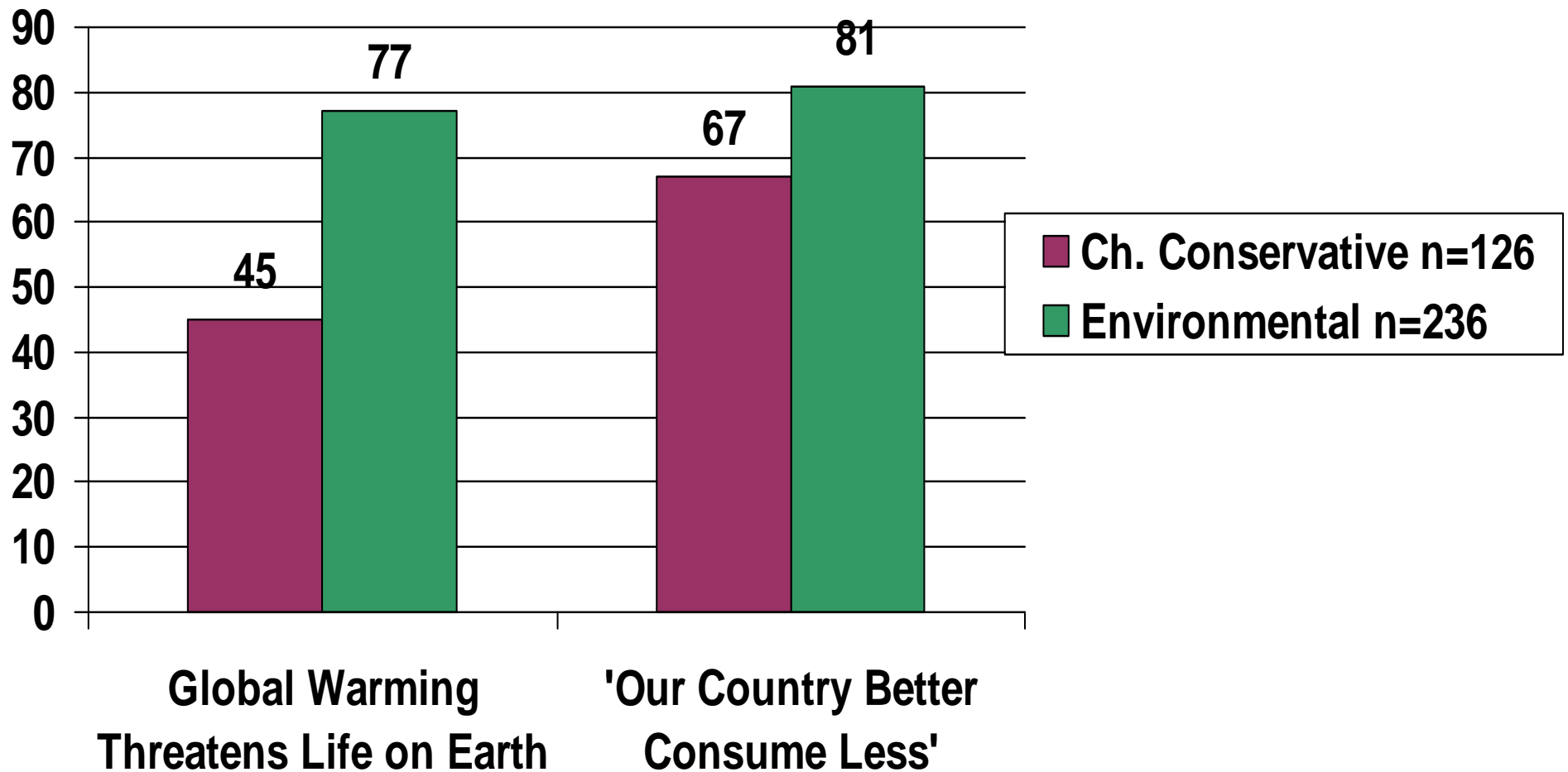


# Cultural Ideology Comparison

## Christian Conservative & Environmentalist

### Compare Global Warming / Consume less

PI November 2008 n=400 V4A/V1A (expressed as % Agreement of Sector)



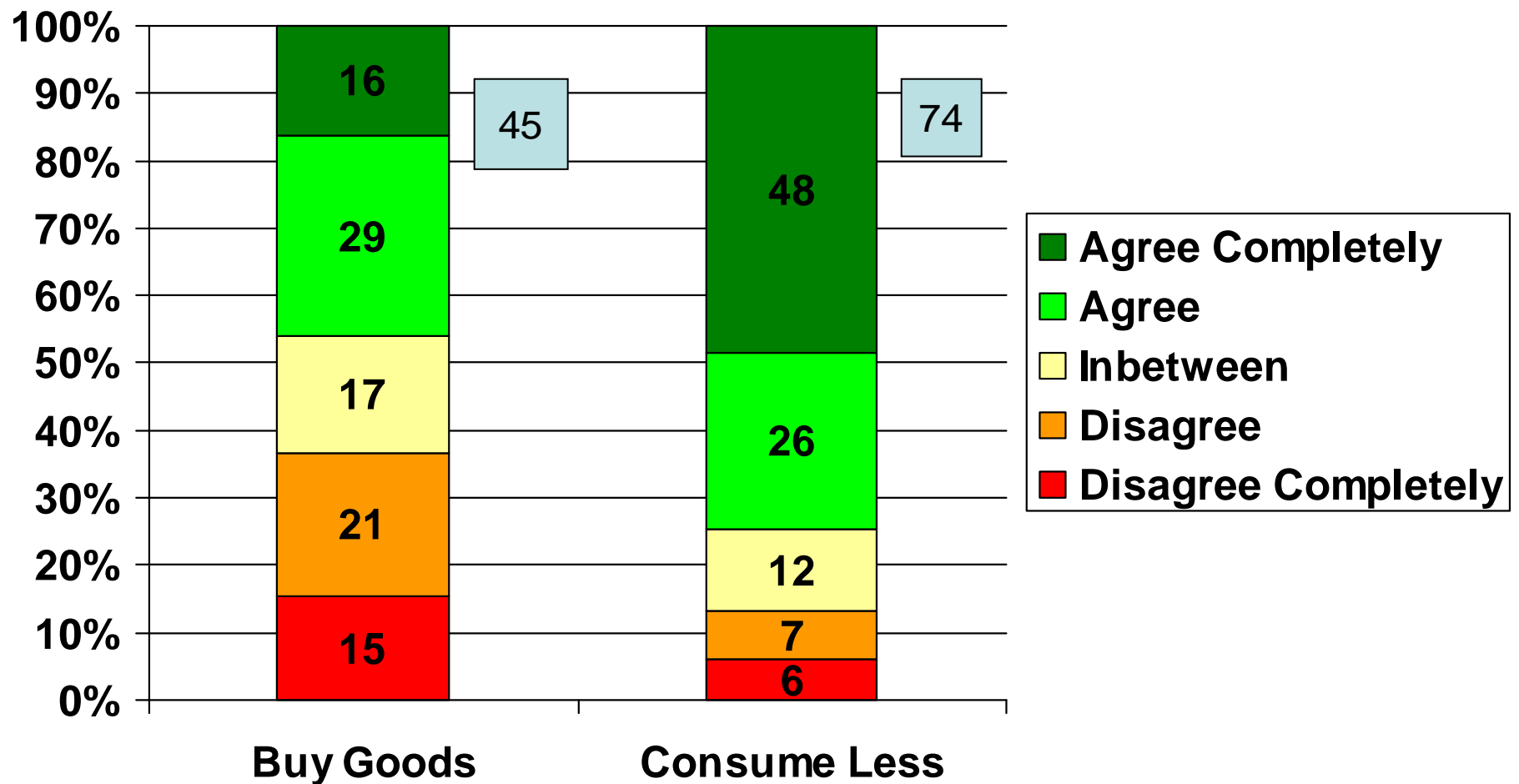
# Test other Competing Values

“Our Country would be a better place if we all consumed less vs. “We need to buy goods for the good of the economy”.

- Addresses relativity: ‘support for economic engine’ / ‘support for “consume less”’

# Compare: “We need to buy goods for the good of the economy” – “Our Country would be better off if we all consumed less”

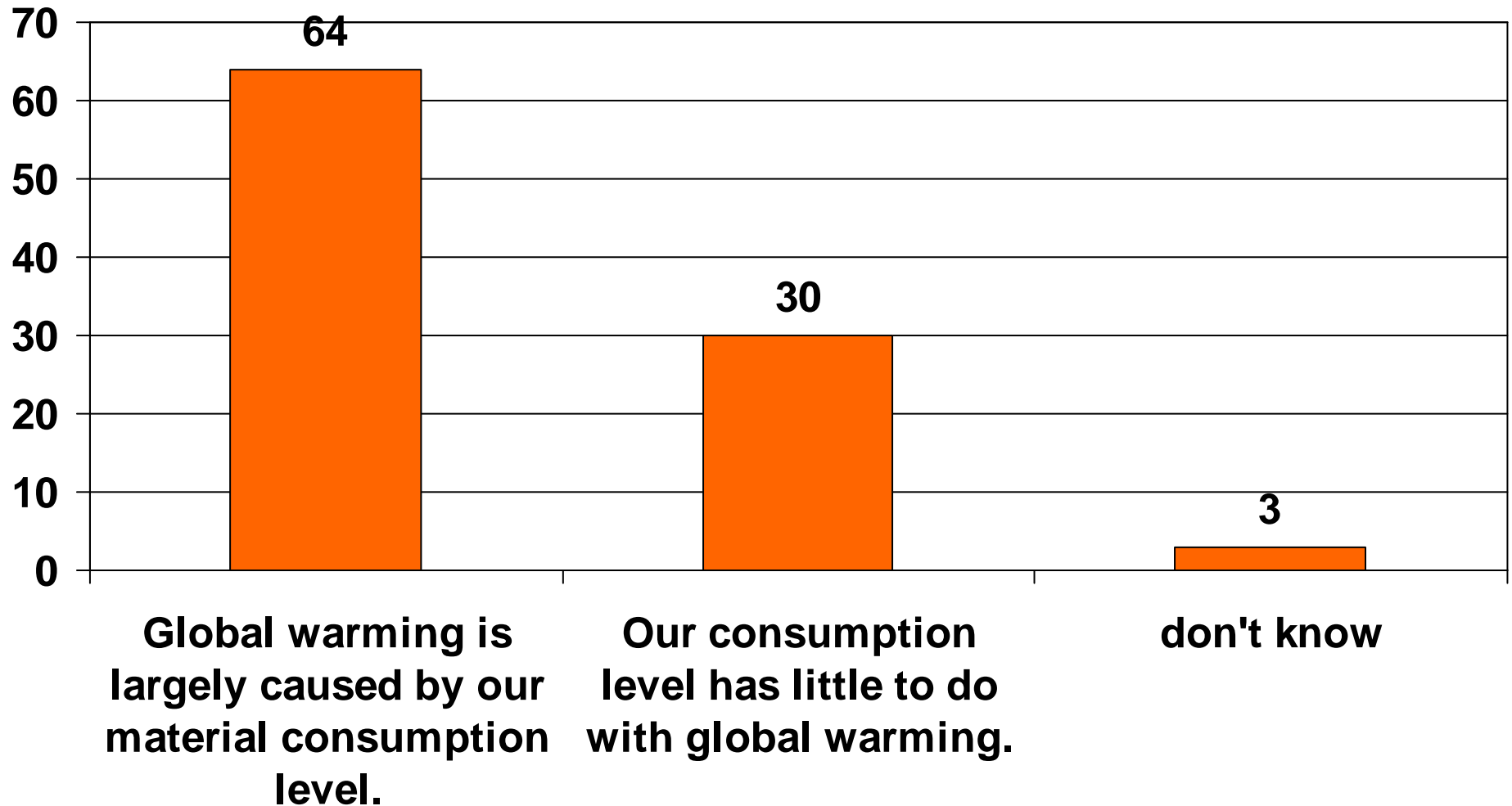
(Compare V1A & V1C)



Does “Consumption” message  
integrate into “Global Warming”?

# Which do you agree with more –

(CC13) (PI Apr.2008 n=400)

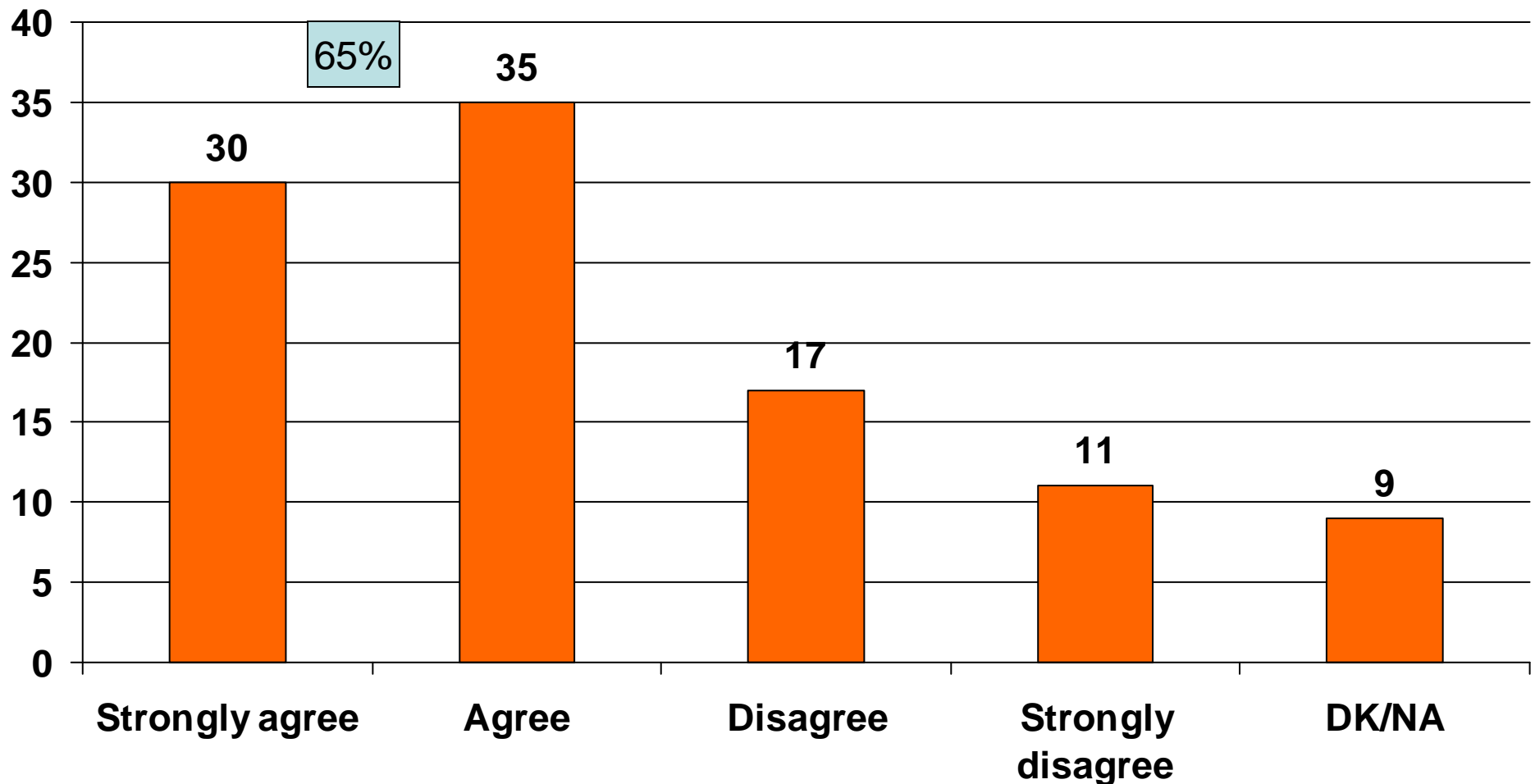




I'm going to read some things we've heard people say about our oil consumption. For each statement, please tell me if you: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

# Our oil consumption contributes to global warming.

C2-5 (survey PI 2 June 2008)

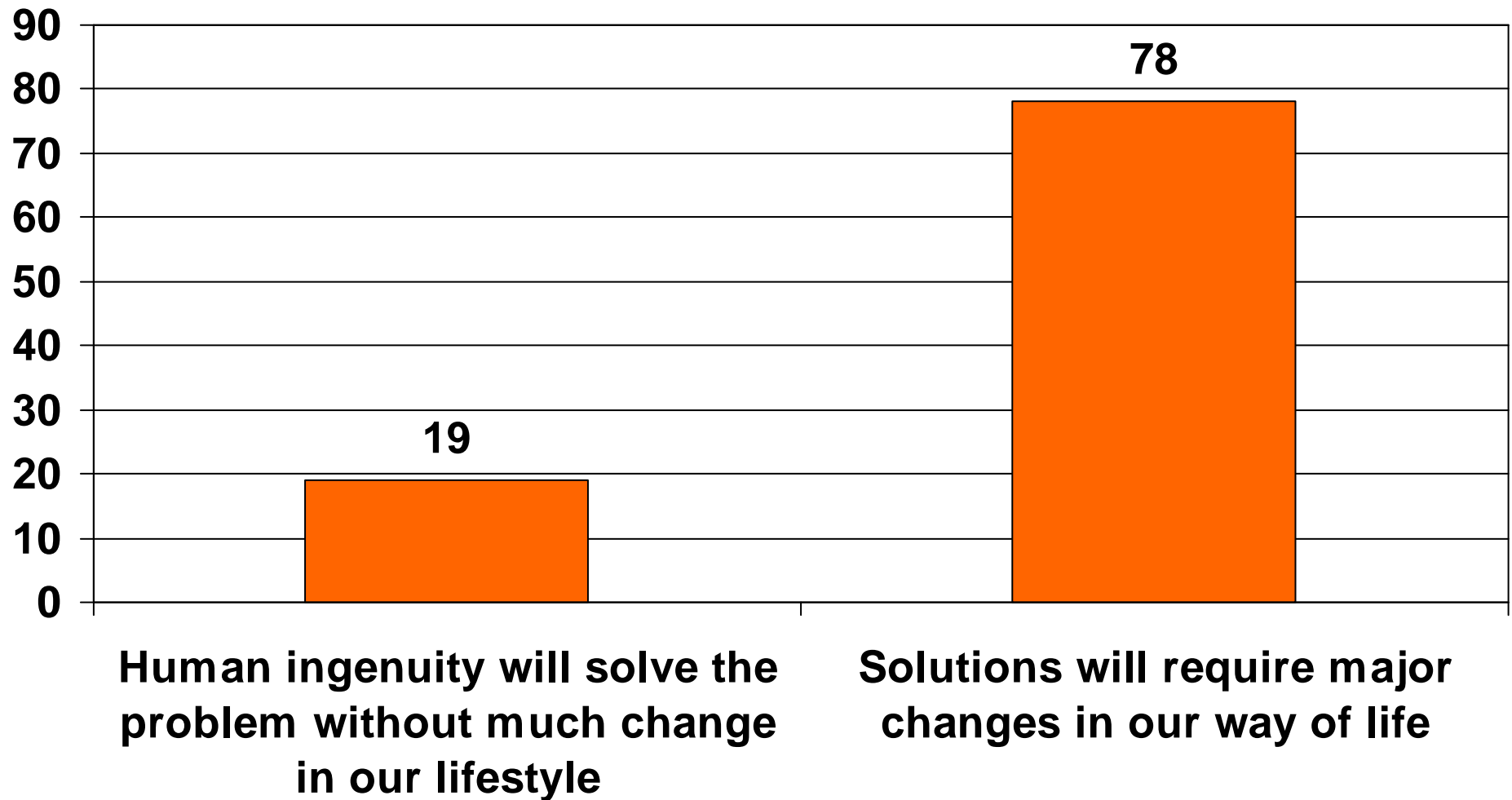


National Environmental Orgs. are putting emphasis on alt. energy projection & technology. This has a place, but...

Oregon public sees 'lifestyle' over 'technology' 4:1 as prime element of solutions.

# About climate change, do you think

CC9 (PI April 2008 n=400)



Cognitive Science strongly suggests that acceptance of a “problem” is reinforced or motivated by belief or perception of the “solution”.

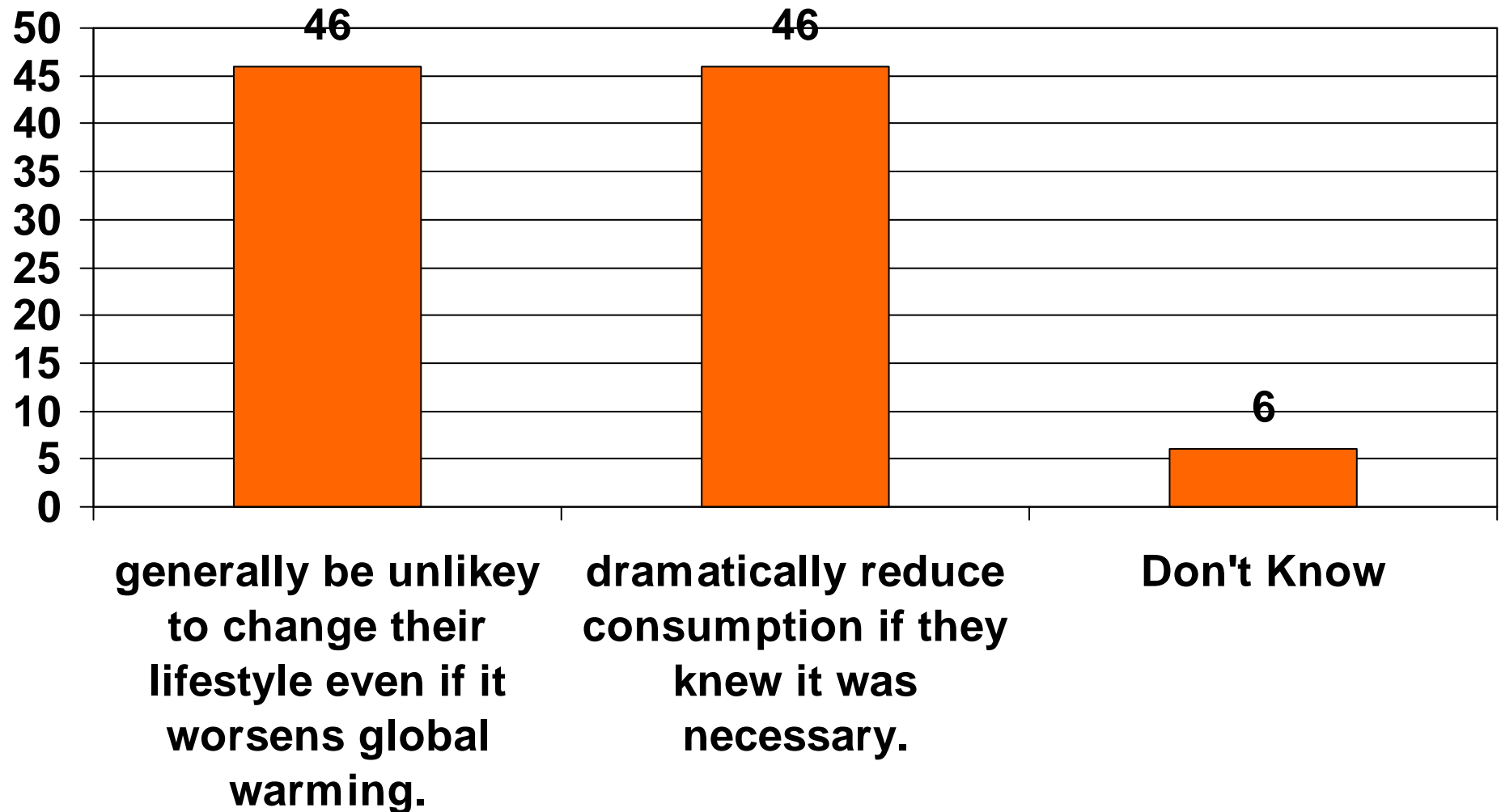
Which comes first, the problem or the solution? Note Yale Cultural Cognition Project findings.

Yet, actionable behavior is  
different than aspiration.

Empirical research suggests  
respondent report of neighbor  
behavior may be more accurate  
cultural predictor than self-  
reported behavior:

# On climate change, do you think most of your neighbors would...

CC10 PI April 2008 n=400



Actionable behavior is problematic, yet expression of behavioral aspiration represents a powerful platform for leadership – if leadership recognizes the opportunity.

Where is “LEADERSHIP” on this?

Leadership is promoting billions of dollars of stimulus to get credit & consumption cranked back up.

Oregon public isn't as supportive of bailout & stimulants as leadership:

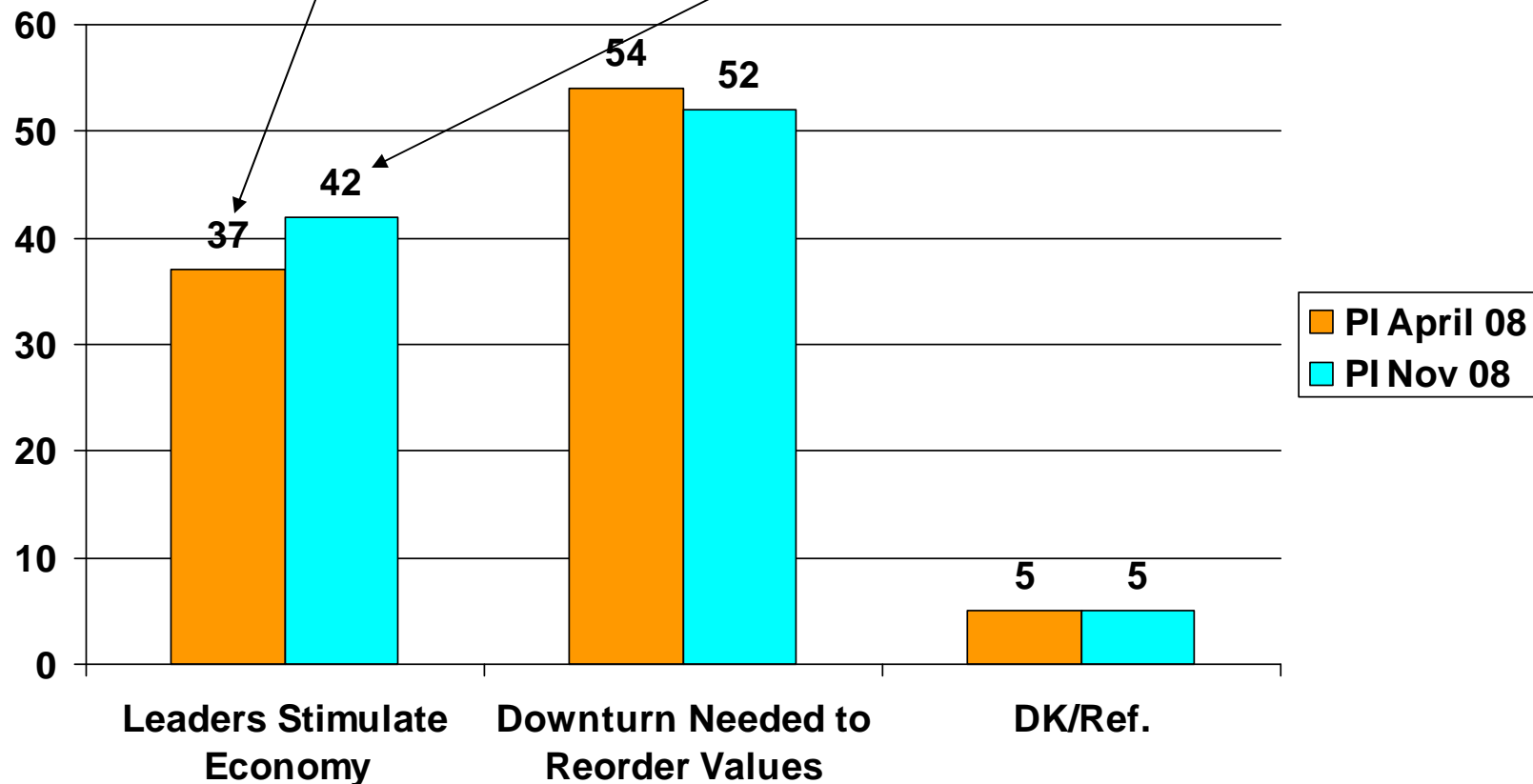


# Compare similar question March & November PI Survey:

A. Our leaders should do everything they can to stimulate...

March: “**growth & development**” / November “**the economy**”.

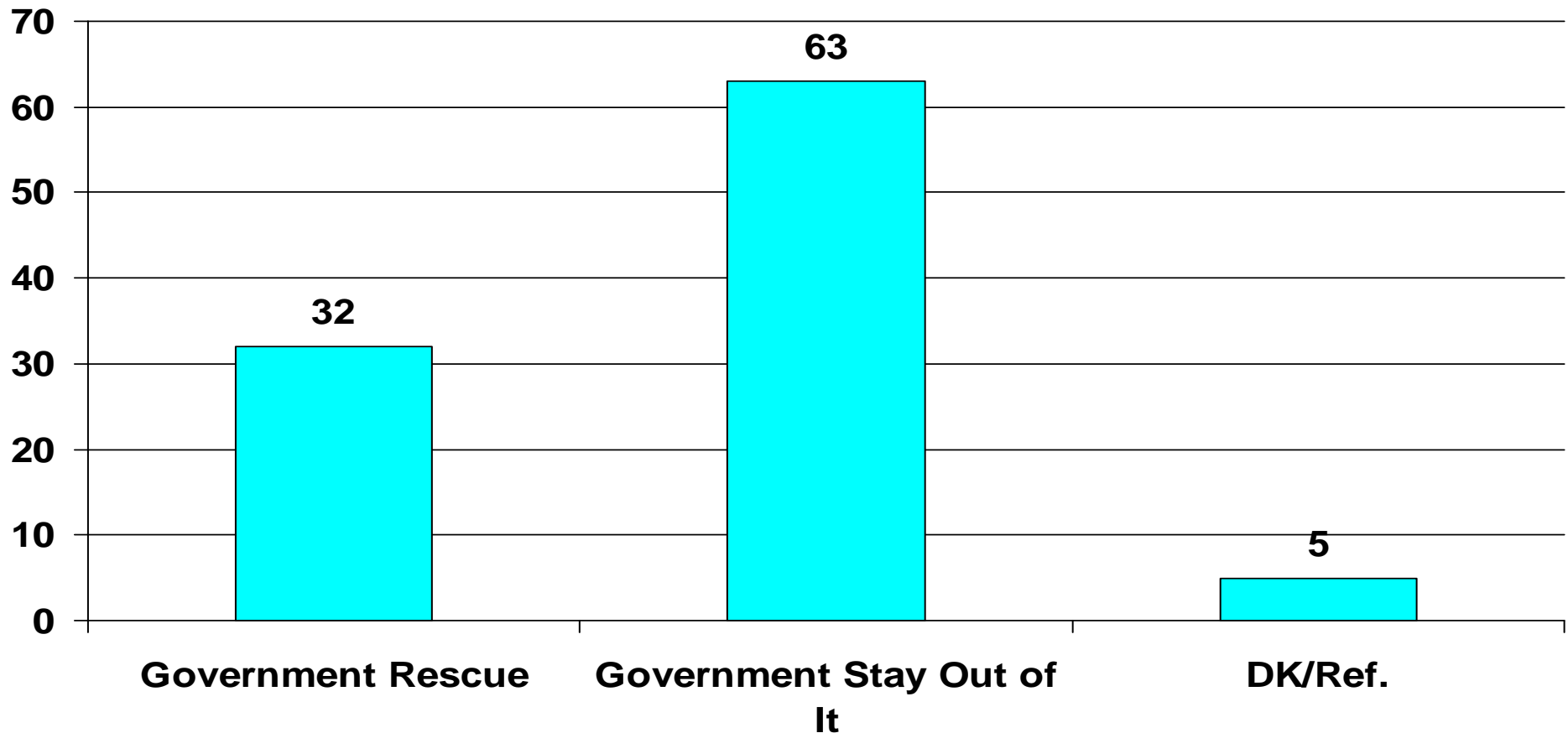
B. This economic downturn may be just what we need to reorder our values. (PI April 2008 n=400; PI November 2008 n=400)



Regarding the recent federal intervention in the credit markets, which of these two statements do you agree with more: [Rotate]

a. I believe governmental rescue of the banking and credit industry is necessary. –OR–

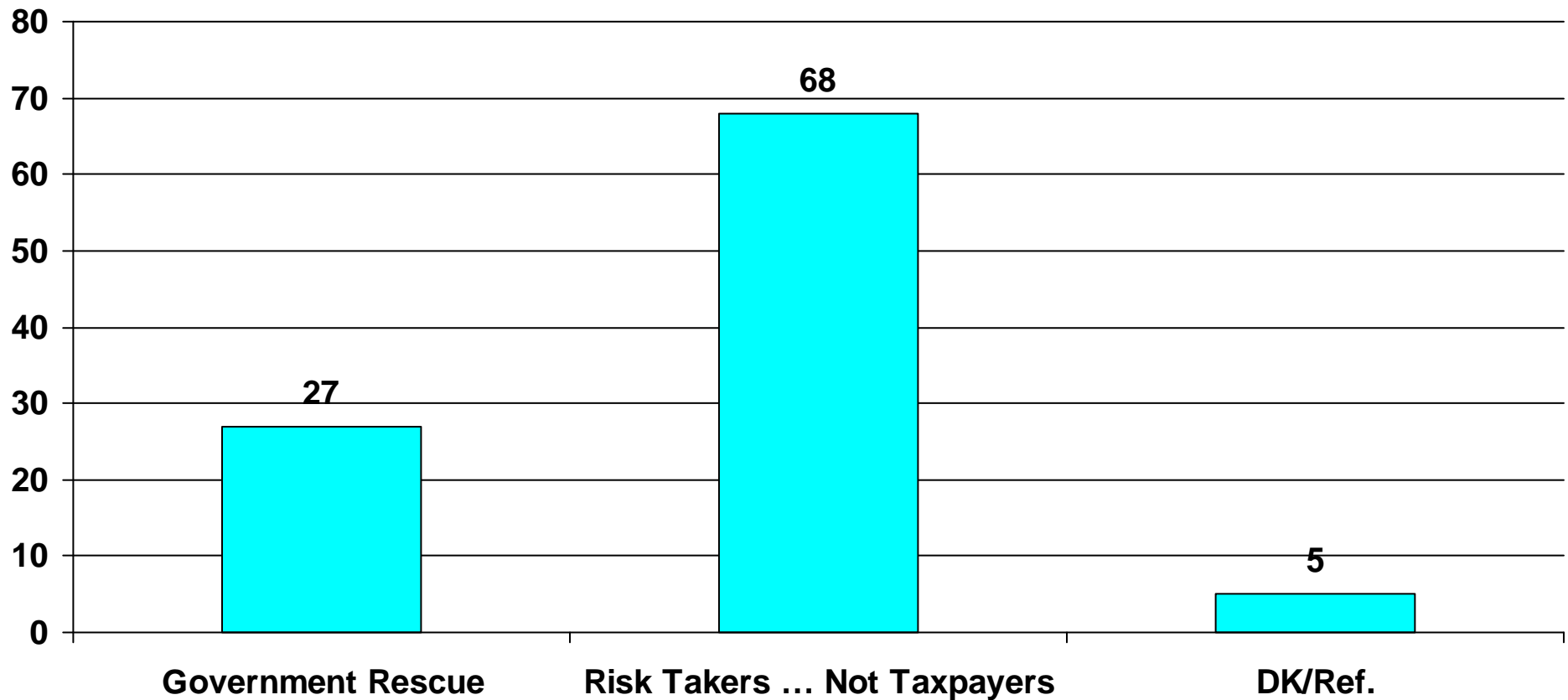
b. I believe investment risk and reward should be borne by risk-takers, **government should stay out of it.** GP2 Split A N = 200



Regarding the recent federal intervention in the credit markets, which of these two statements do you agree with more: [Rotate]

a. I believe governmental rescue of the banking and credit industry is necessary. –OR–

b. I believe investment risk and reward should be borne by risk-takers, **not tax payers**. GP2b Split B N = 200



If “science” is correct, in 200 years this economic downturn will be non-issue compared with climate. Yet leadership fixates on economy.

- Current leaders are heard to compare this economic downturn as worse than “Great Depression”.
- Unemployment in Oregon just reached 9%, 1980 recession was 12%, Great Depression 25%.
- Crisis mentality on economy is driving the new “bubble”, group-think in media and leadership is beating the drums for war-mentality reaction to “crisis”, bailing out the risk-takers, stimulating the consumption through debt.
- Public, meanwhile, sees solutions to economic downturn somewhat differently.

LEADERSHIP MAY BE  
MISSING A KEY  
OPPORTUNITY TO  
LEVERAGE PUBLIC  
SENTIMENT INTO CLIMATE  
FRIENDLY ACTIONS, SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC REFORMS.

# Leadership on this may be stymied by:

- Group-think.
- Perception of cultural dependency on “economic engine” for public revenue.
- Fear of tipping over the apple cart.
- Lack of awareness of public sentiment (support).
- Crisis of the moment transcends big picture.
- For “elites”, consumption lifestyle entitlements raises cognitive resistance.

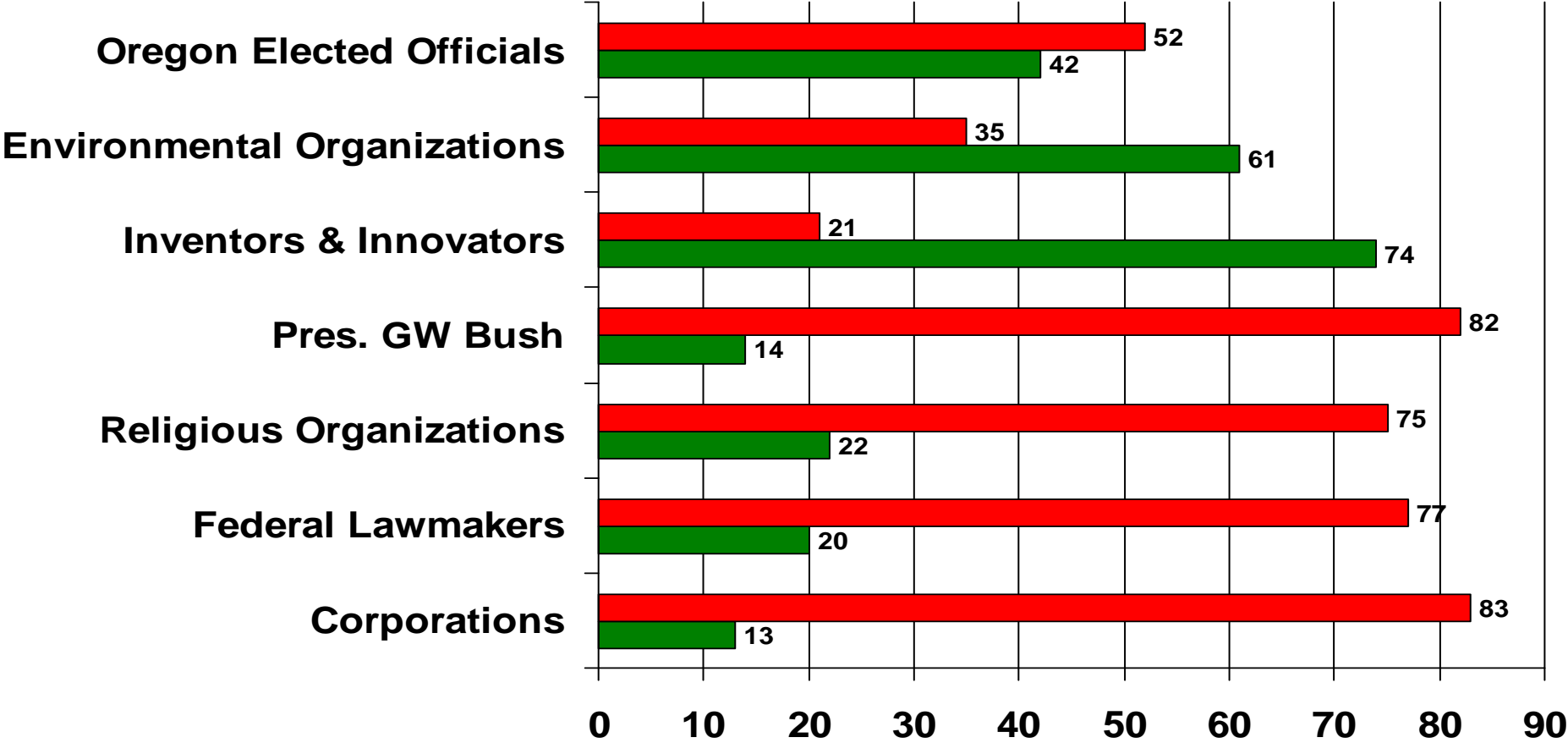
Elected officials generally suffer from lack of public confidence.

Oregon elected leaders not as bad as federal but still not in majority esteem.

Leadership disconnect with public sentiment reinforces public wariness & lack of trust.

# Who do you trust for leadership and solutions to global climate change? [rotate]

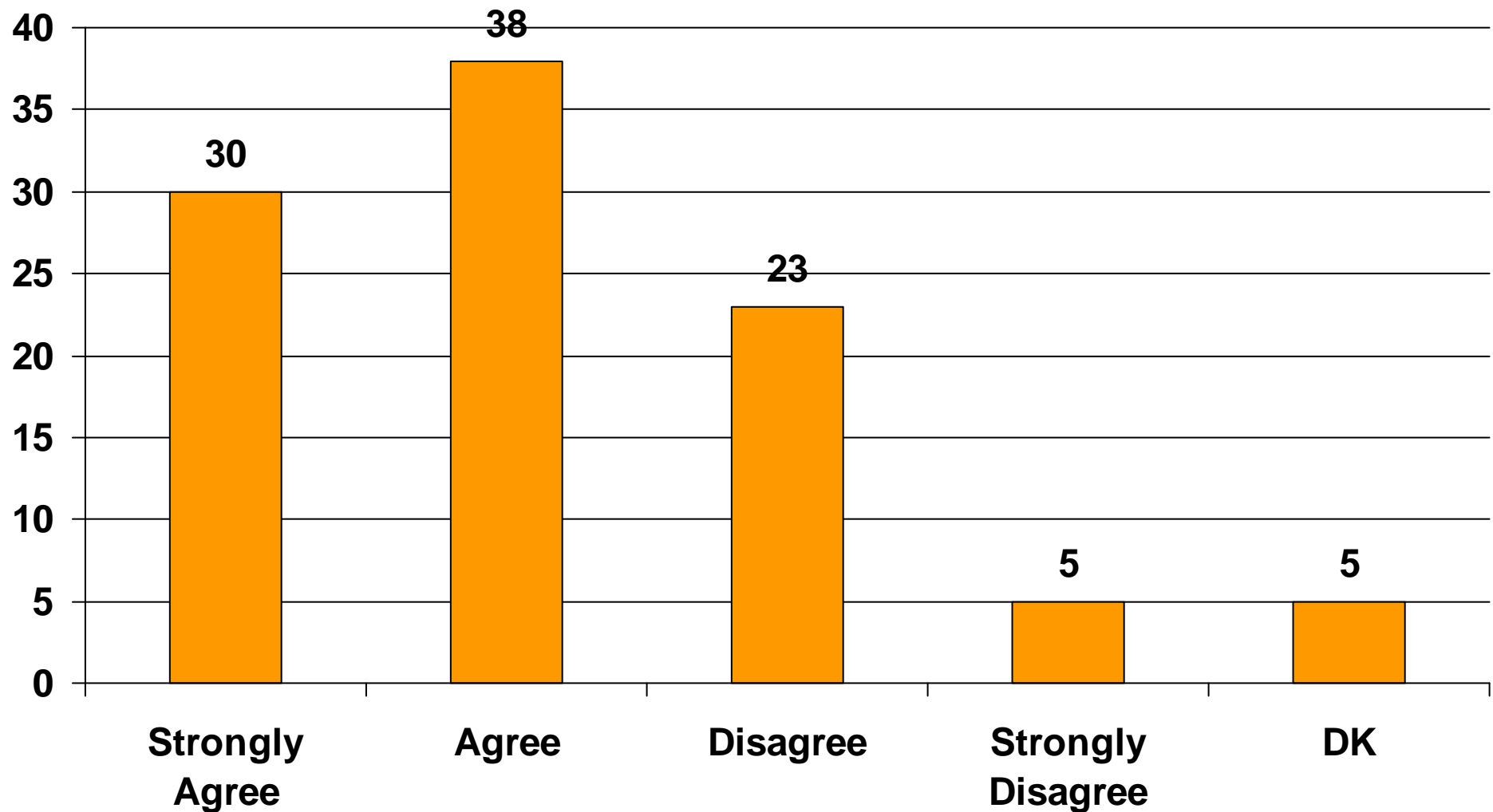
(P1-P8) PI April 2008





# Government is wasteful and inefficient with our taxes and cannot be trusted to make good decisions.

GP5E (PI Nov. 2008 n=400)



Leadership could be more proactive in engaging with the “consume less” predisposition.

Credibility is obtained when message resonates with predispositions.

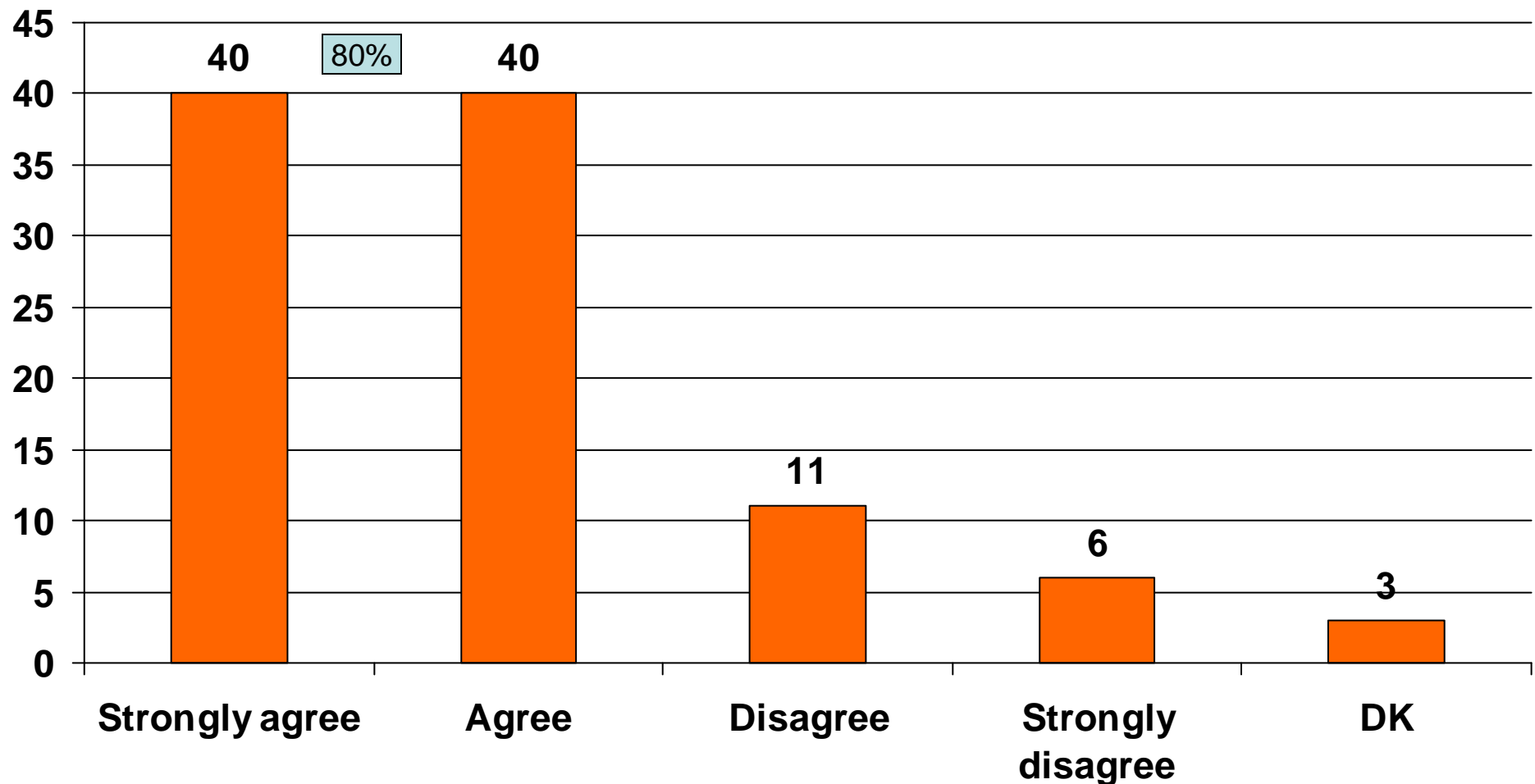
Examples, using recent fuel anxiety as a message frame:

(April 2008 n=400)

I'm going to read some things we've heard people say about our oil consumption. For each statement, please tell me if you: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

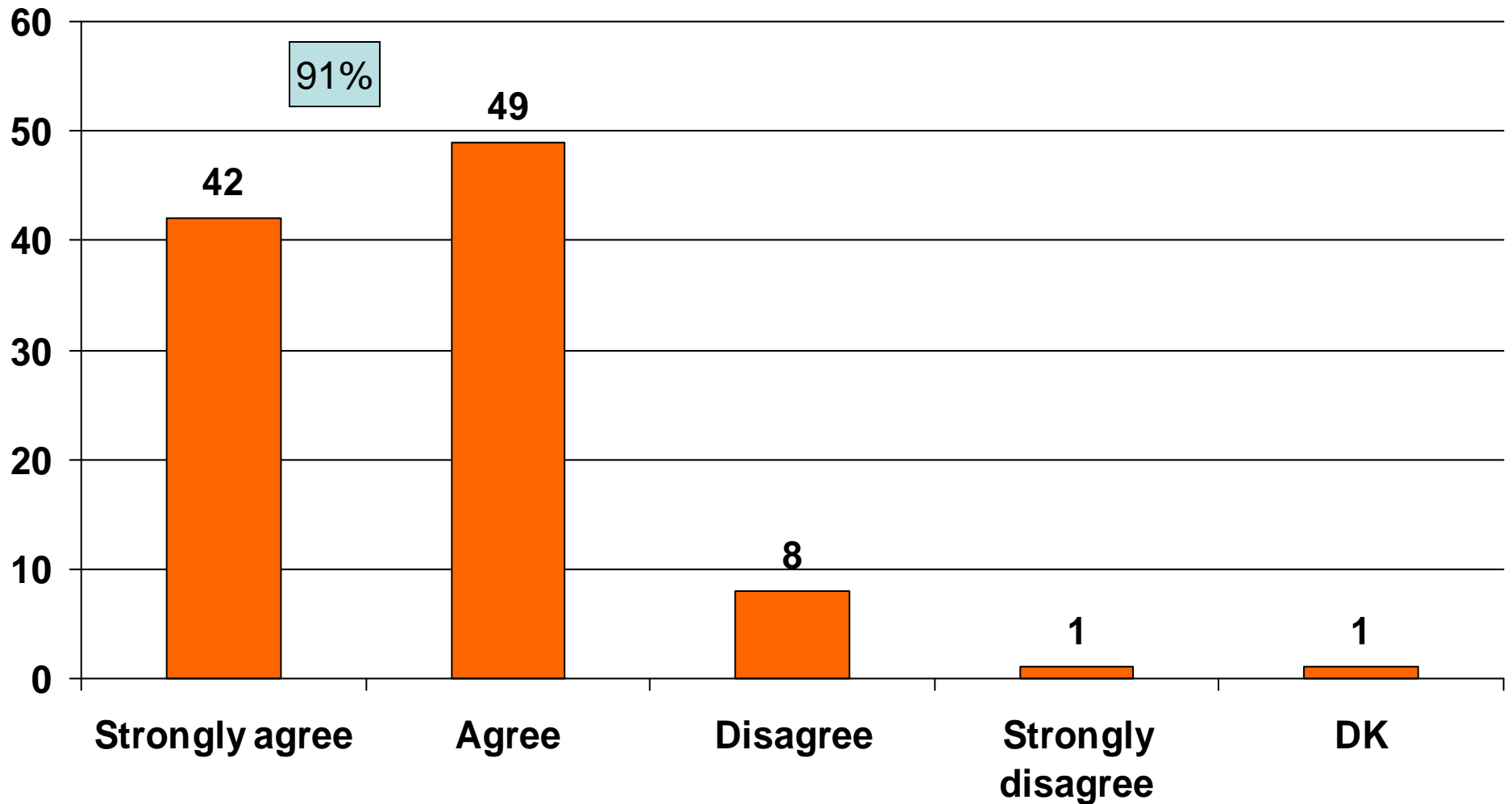
# Our country would be a better place if we consumed less oil. C2-1

PI June 2008 n=400



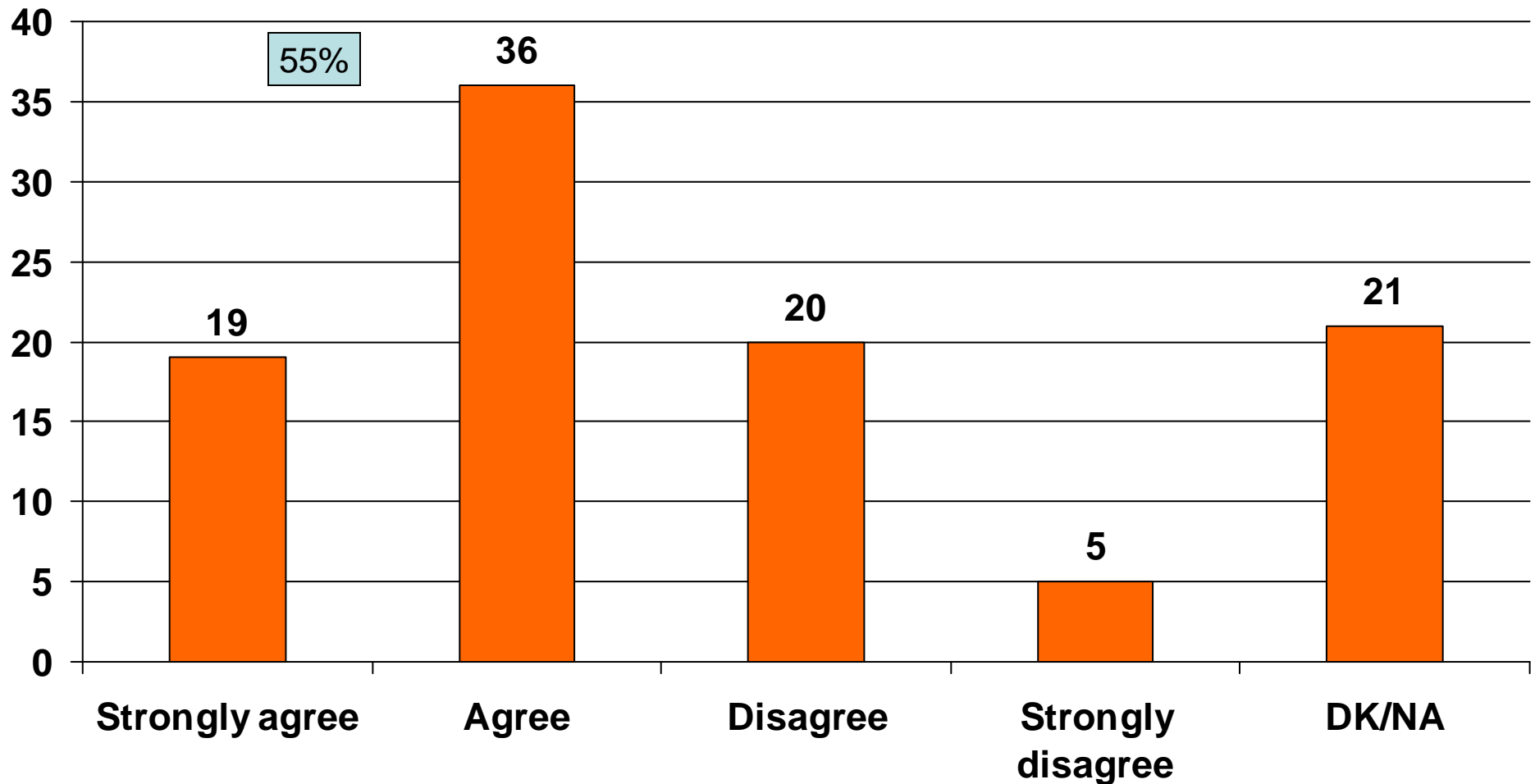
I'm going to read some things we've heard people say about our oil consumption. For each statement, please tell me if you: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

# Driving contributes to pollution. C2-4



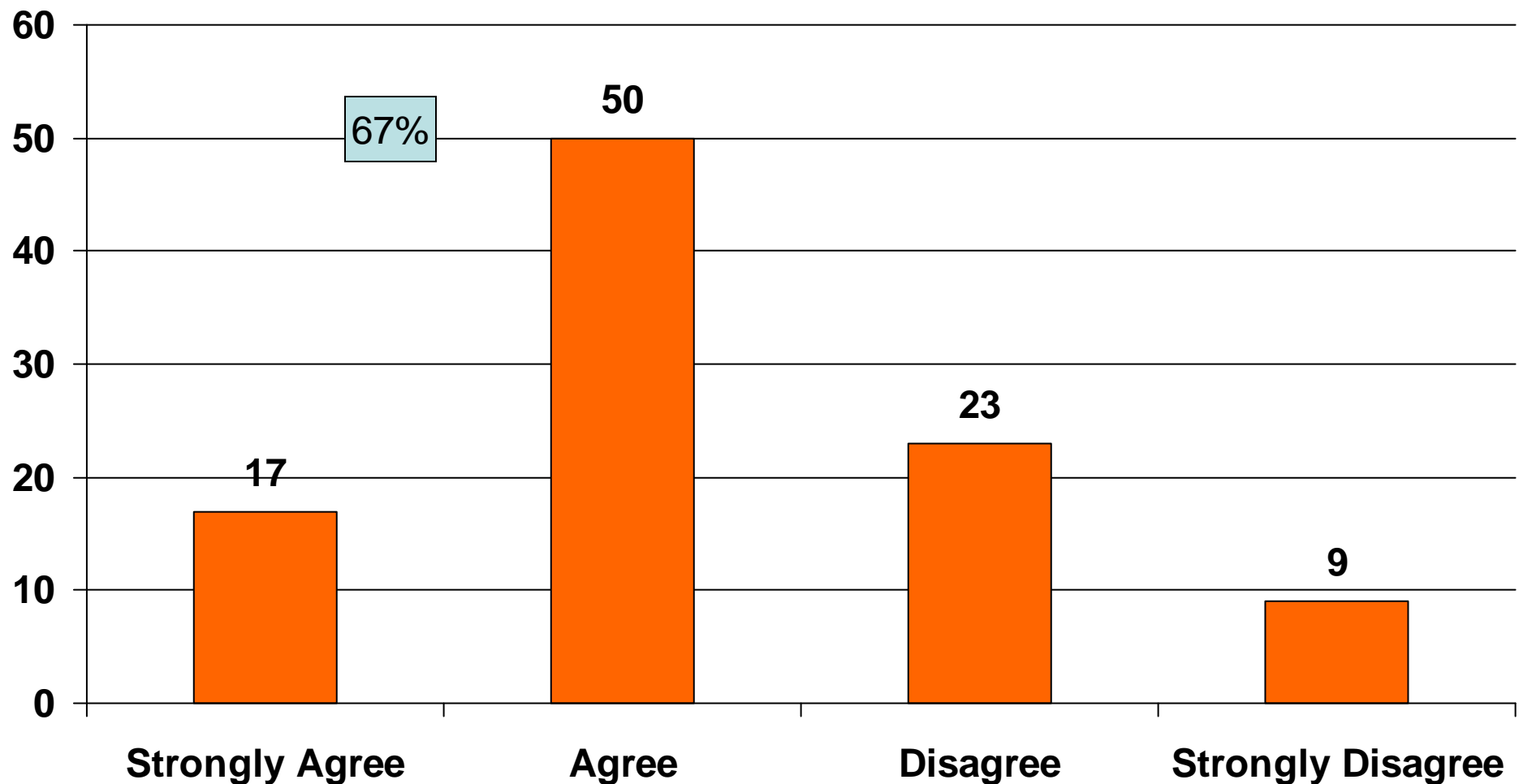
I'm going to read some things we've heard people say about our oil consumption. For each statement, please tell me if you: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

# Terrorism is partly financed by our gasoline purchases.<sup>C2-2</sup>



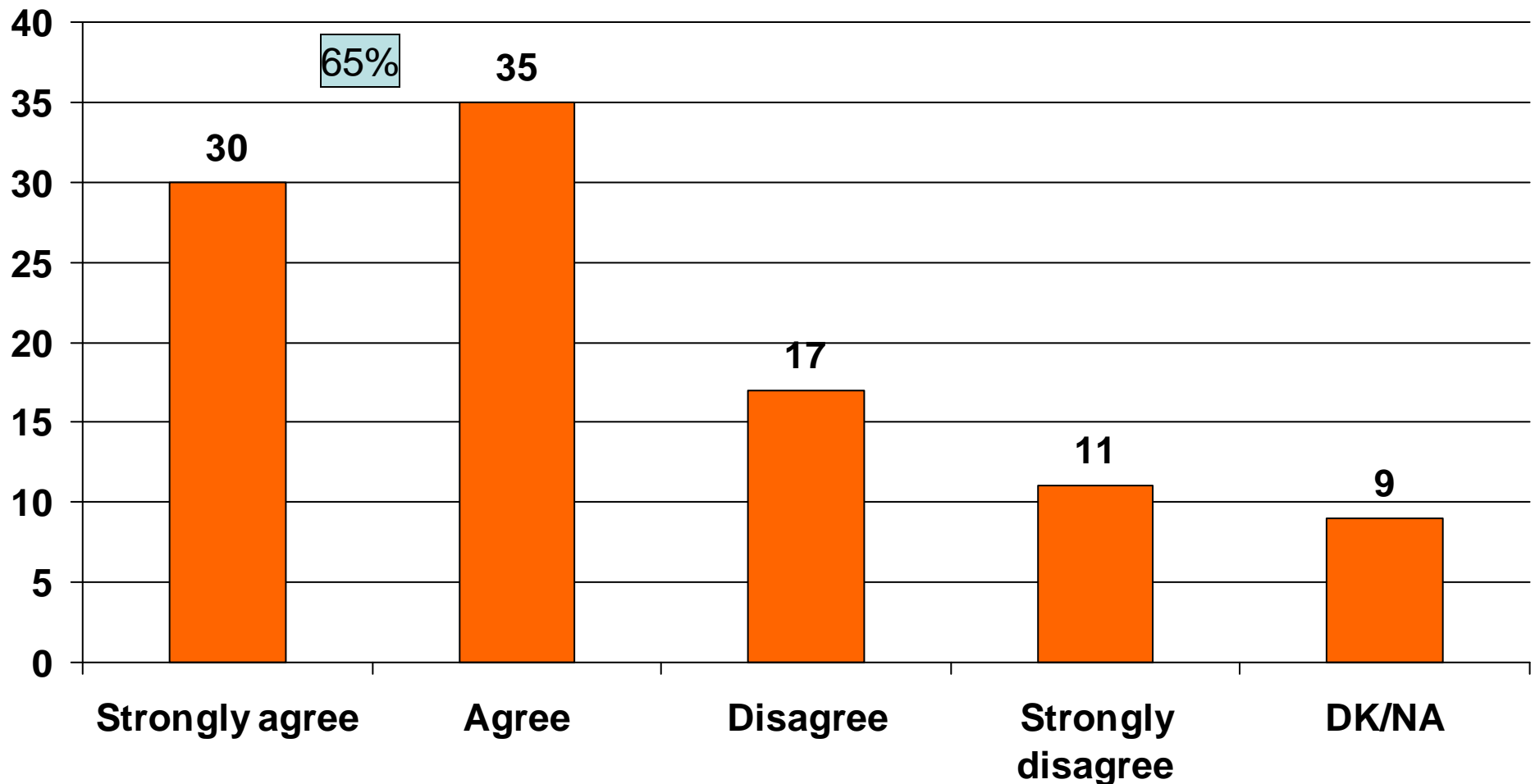
Some people think higher fuel prices could be a good thing, like a blessing in disguise. I'm going to read some reasons people give, and I'd like you to tell me your level of agreement as to why high oil prices may be a good thing:

**It could mean we drive less, live closer to our family and work, and spend less time in traffic.** C5-6 (Survey 2 PI June 2008)



I'm going to read some things we've heard people say about our oil consumption. For each statement, please tell me if you: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

# Our oil consumption contributes to global warming.<sup>C2-5</sup>



Leadership general recognizes the role which values play in the undercurrents of message and policy construction.

Our society has recently experienced seismic force cognitive wake-ups. Does leadership specifically understand the depths of the current opportunity?



Exploring some discoveries  
more deeply

--

What does “consumption” mean; what “values” does the public think we should reorder?

This was researched two ways.

**First, Follow-up Interviews:**

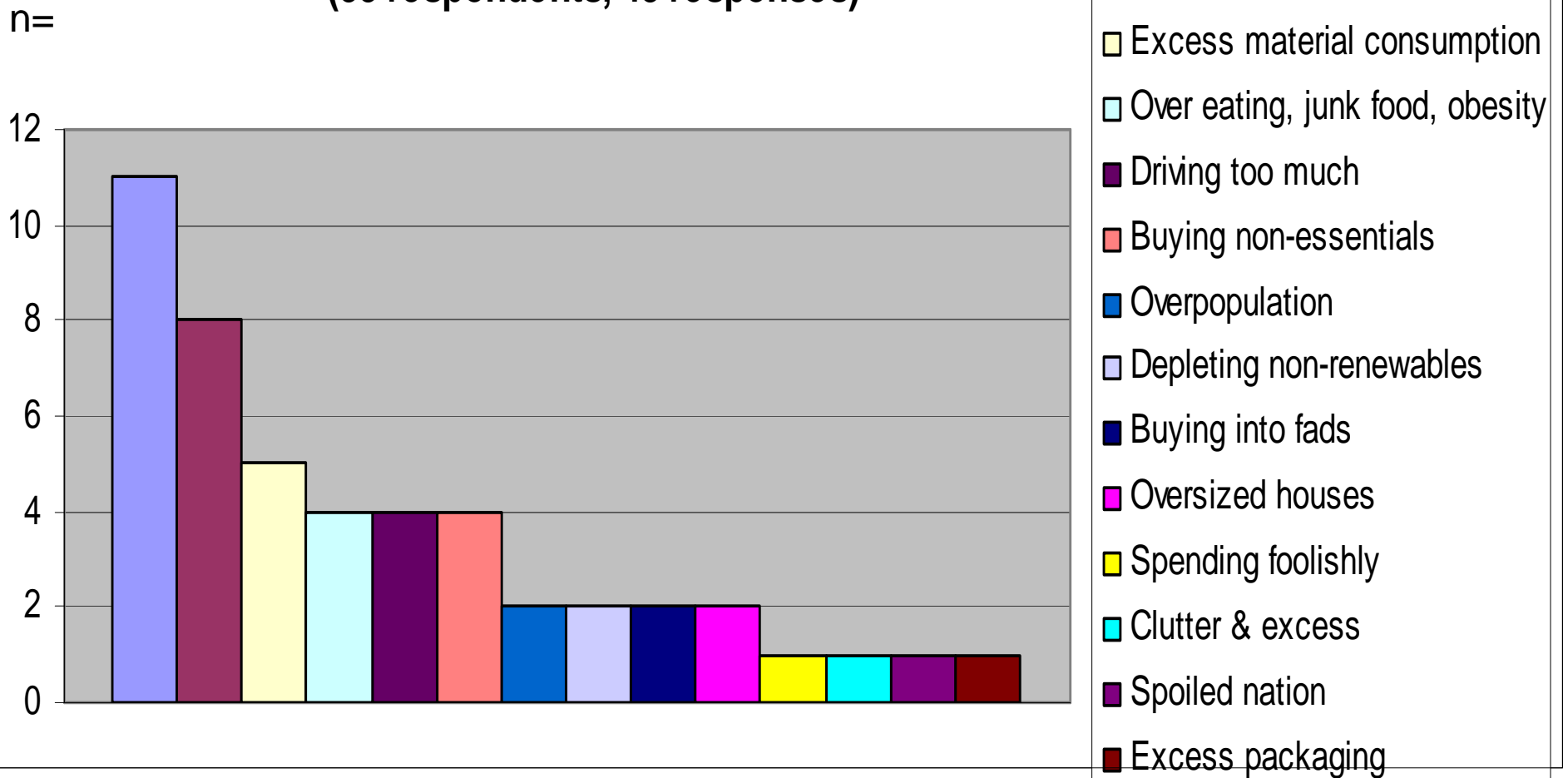
Drawn from a select survey respondent sort (n=400) selection for people who: a) don't have concern for climate change; b) believe environmentalists are extremists; c) agree “our country ...better off if we all consumed less”; d) ‘this economic downturn needed to reorder our values’. Qualitative in-depth personal interviews asked: “what kind of ‘consumption’ are you thinking about?”; “how would our country be better off?”; “does ‘consume less’ include you?” “what kind of values do we need to reorder?”; etc. (n=33) Results:

key methodology points (n=55).

1. These interviews intentionally engaged those strongly identified to right-wing ideology.
2. These interviews not intended to be population representative, rather intended to qualitatively explore a cultural sector predispositions on consumption issues with a group generally identified as unfriendly or ambivalent to environmental concerns.

**C1 Yes or No, “Our Country would be a better place if we all consumed less” → 100% yes compared to 87% in original poll**

**(C2a) What does consume less mean to you?  
(33 respondents, 48 responses)**

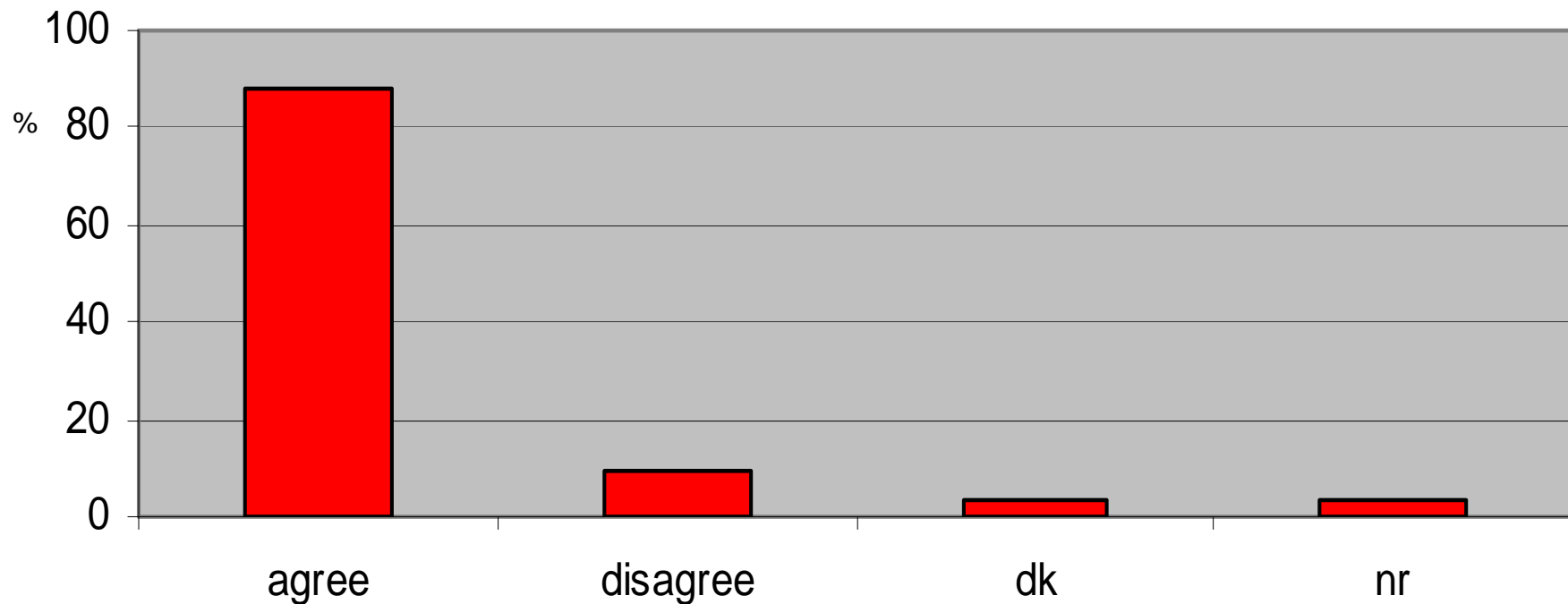


(C3) How do you see our country being a better place if we consume less

	n=
more time w/family & friends	9
less impact on environment	4
fairer distribution of resources	3
less dependency on foreign countries	3
less stress, less competition	2
stop chasing almighty dollar	2
less waste, disposal of garbage	2
save energy	2
better awareness of what we're doing	2
better self esteem	1
better health	1
save money	1
less junk, clutter	1
more appreciation through fewer things	1
virtuous frugality	1
lower trade deficit	1

# Should you yourself reduce consumption?

**(C4) “You said “our country would be better off if we all consumed less’, do you think of yourself as also being able to consume less in ways that would benefit our country?”**



C4a: “What comes to mind in terms of possible actions or decisions on your part to consume less?”

	n=
Drive less	10
Eat less	4
Buy less	5
Walk	3
Awareness/think about actions/prioritize real needs	3
Buy bulk/Avoid packaging	3
Tough question/hard to decide/DK/NA	3
Raise own food/self reliance	2
Buy durable items/things that last	2
Less toys	2
Already do pretty well	2
Sharing with others	2
Buy less expensive car	1
Be content with what I already have	1
No bottled water/make own lunch	1
Live closer to work	1
Shop by mail	1

Respondent comments: **So, which is more important to you, you're feeling that our country would be better off if we consumed less, or our country's economy would be hurt if we all consumed less?**

9 respondents view is that while we might suffer economically in the short term, we'd be better off in the long term : "it isn't an either/or choice, it's a transition..."; "it would be different...people get involved in community"; "economy will take care of self"; "relearning...restructure"; "gradually improve"

- One person expressed thought that people need to have the economic opportunity (be able to make enough money) to decide to consume less.



What “values” does the public think we should reorder?

This question was asked two ways.

## Second, Full Nov. 2008 Survey Respondent Sort

In a full Oregon-wide (n=400) survey, respondents who chose **‘this economic downturn may be just what we need to reorder our values’** were asked: **“Could you please give an example or two of what types of values we need to reorder?”** 208 respondents were asked, 186 responded.

All respondents who selected Option B, "...reorder our values", an open question was asked: **"When you think about our need to reorder our values, which values come to mind?"** (November 08) [186 responses from 34 interviewees distilled to categories w/ some respondents giving more than one "value" response]:

- Consumption, Materialism 37 responses
- Family, (care of, being with) 33 responses
- Fiscal responsibility 31 responses
- Personal Accountability 24 responses
- Community Involvement 19 responses
- "Moral Values" 15 responses
- Tolerance 13 responses
- Greed 13 responses
- Environment, care of 11 responses
- Government Accountability 9 responses
- Religion, Bible, God 9 responses
- 7 other discrete mentions w/ < 8 mentions each.
- 37 ambiguous or non-response.

At project mid-point,  
PolicyInteractive has discovered  
that aversion to consumption is a  
value with meaning and strength.

The strength and details of the  
findings suggest that other  
researchers and policymakers  
should consider the implications.

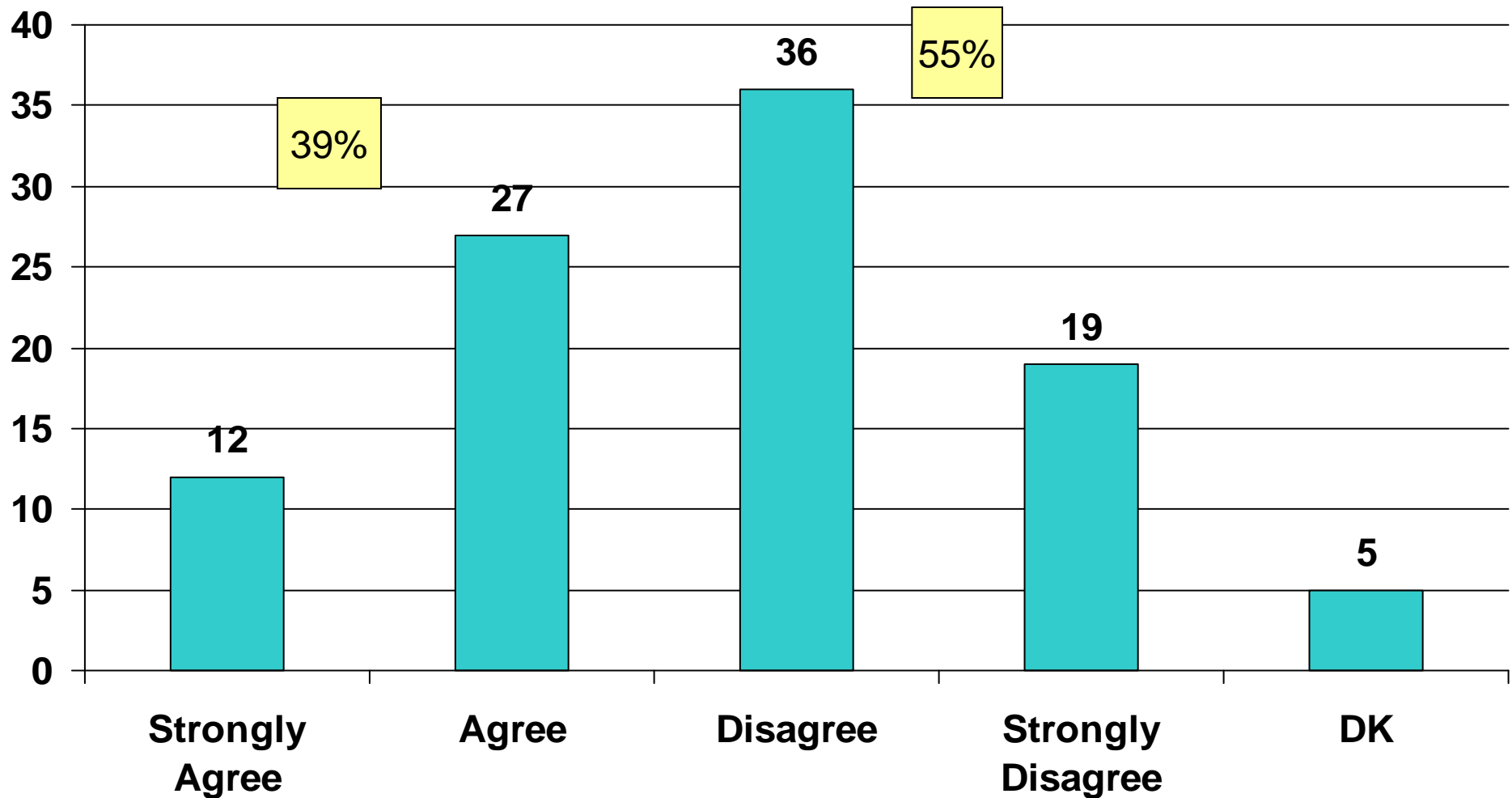
Policy Options For “Consume Less”  
suffer from the same resistance as  
many cost or behavior change  
proposals. More research is  
needed but some early results show  
some promise.

For Example:

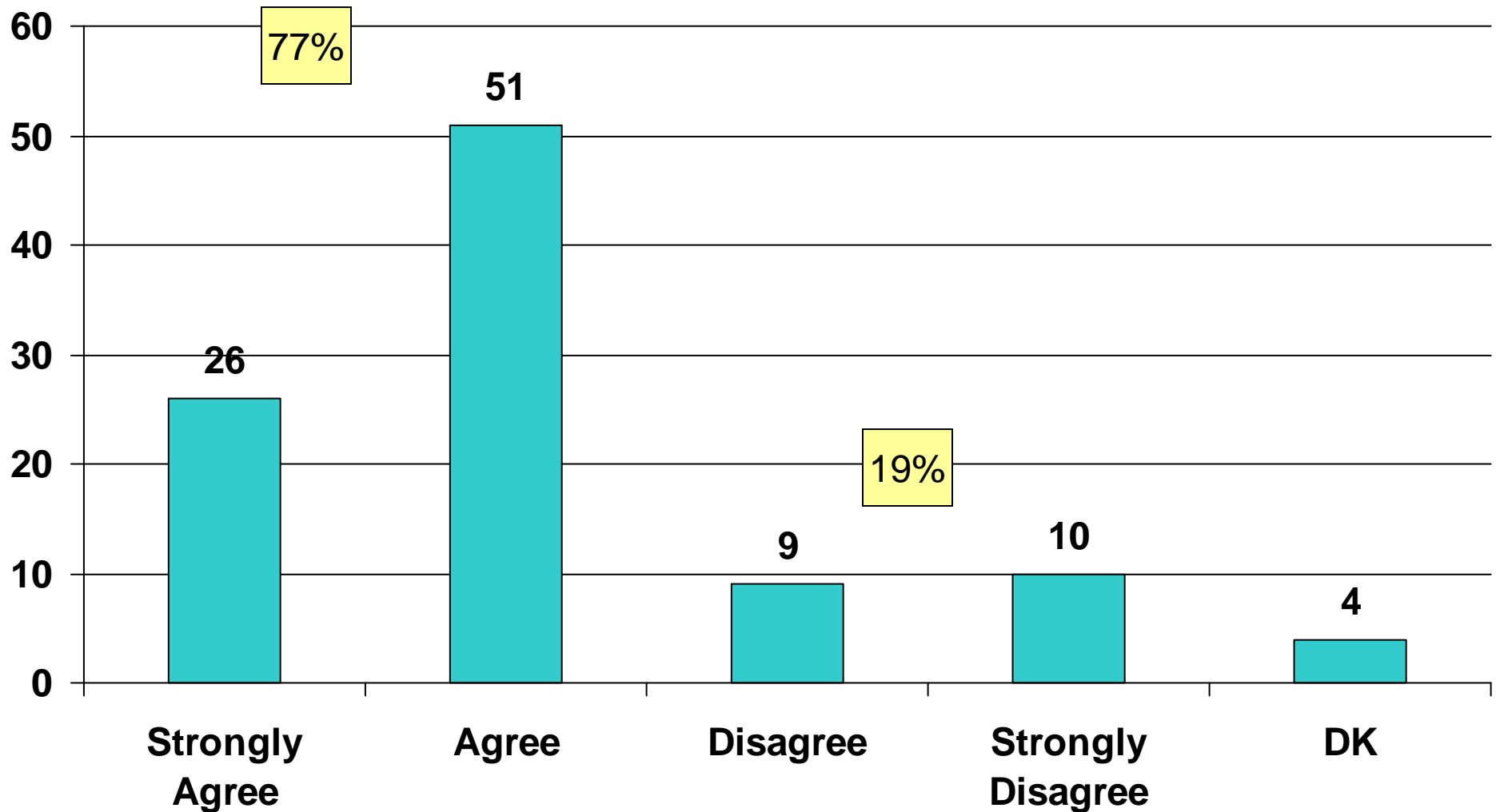
# I wouldn't support any consumption tax under any circumstance.

CT1 PI Nov.2008 n=400

(question organized to address survey acquiescence bias)



I would support a consumption tax on luxuries and energy waste if it was fair to low income people. CT2

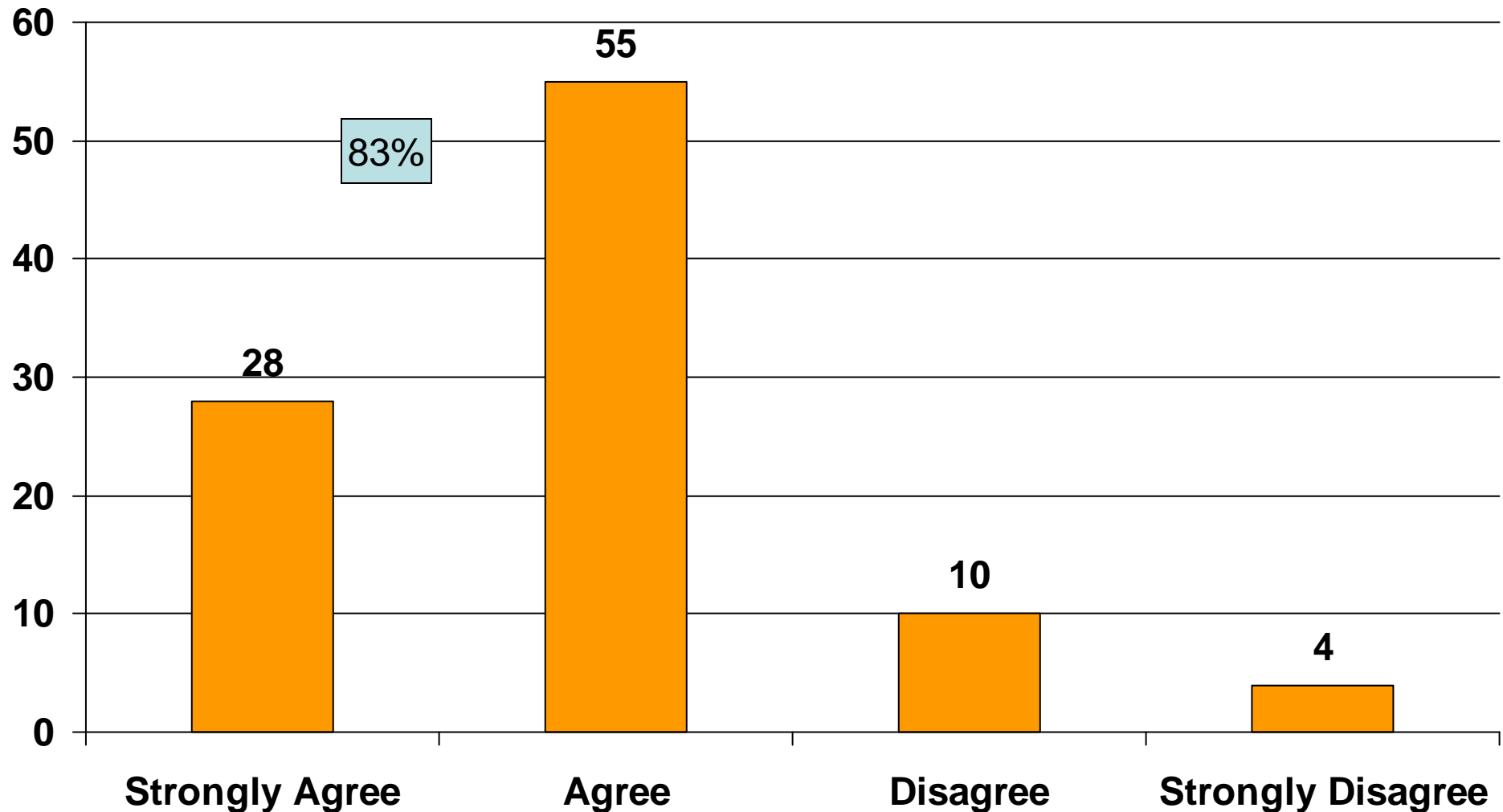


“Sales Tax” proposals have been voted on repeatedly in Oregon, each time defeated.

Maybe public perception of consumption provides an opening to tax certain consumption for purposes of diversifying state revenue.

# I am willing to cut my own consumption level **for the good of the planet.**<sup>GP5G(a)</sup>

PI Nov. 2008 Split A N = 200





# Oregon presents unique challenges & opportunity

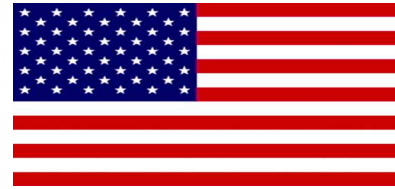
- Oregon less concerned with climate change.
- Oregon perhaps more receptive to 'consumption concerns' driven by social values.
- Cultural Dynamics Strategy & Marketing Ltd UK. identifies Oregon differences:
  - Self directed
  - Caring
  - Beauty
  - Non-acquisitive

# Getting Inside the Heads of Oregonians 2008



Poll 4a November 2008 - Selected Top Line Insights

# Oregon Sample vs. U.S. Base 2004



- Inner Directed 64.3
- Transcender 41.3
- Flexible Individualist 10.3
- Concerned Ethical 7.8
- Transitional 5.0

Source: Poll 4a Policy Initiative 11-08

- Inner Directed 37.5
- Transcender 16.6
- Flexible Individualist 9.2
- Concerned Ethical 5.2
- Transitional 6.2

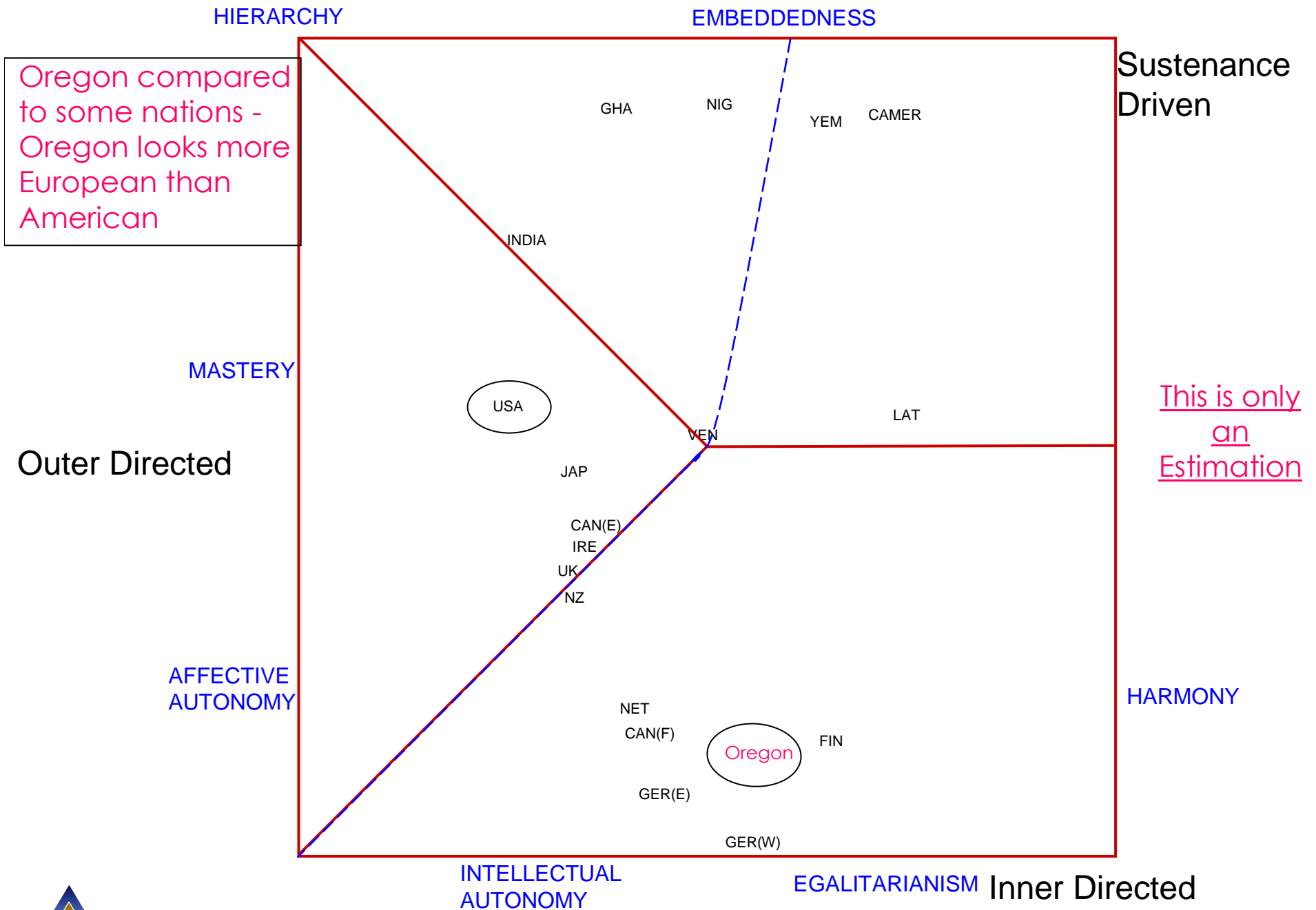
Source: Environics –CDSM 2004

This sample is skewed compared to a “United States”  
base of Maslow Groups or Values Modes

## Likely Inner Directed Values Held by Oregonians – also held by other parts of the world

- United Kingdom
- Inquistiveness
- Need for Beauty
- Equinimity- happy
- Adaptable
- What you see is what you get
- Non-acquisitive
- Worldwide
- Caring
- Benevolent
- Justice
- Global
- Self Direction

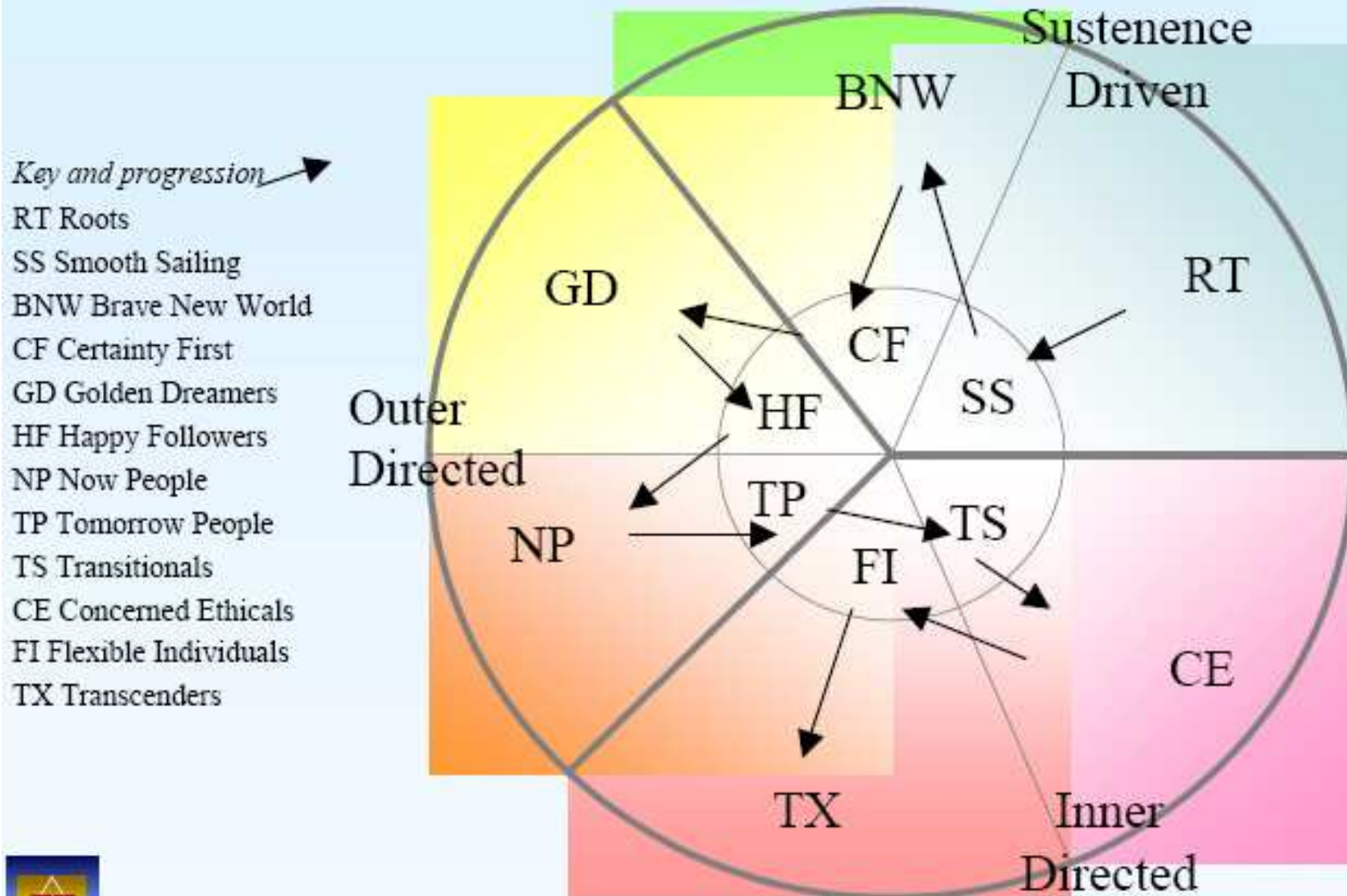




Oregon compared to some nations - Oregon looks more European than American

This is only an Estimation

# The Values Modes Space



# What is ahead for PolicyInteractive:

- Test ‘consumption’ receptiveness among “elites” and policymakers. Seek interactive inputs.
- Pursue depth and stickiness of “consume less” with general public.
- Search for and or encourage research from others.
- Continue probing for other climate friendly motives.
- Explore, apply contemporary “values” research in PI research findings.

# Contributors & Acknowledgments

- Dan Kahan, Director, Yale Cultural Cognition Project
- Pat Dade & Les Higgins, Cultural Dynamics Strategy & Marketing Ltd., U.K.
- Steve Johnson, Northwest Survey & Data Service
- Tim Nesbitt, Governor's Office, State of Oregon
- Thomas Keffer, Ph.D.
- PolicyInteractive Staff
  - Tom Bowerman
  - Ezra Markowitz
  - Stacy Vynne
  - Sam Porter



# PolicyInteractive requests your feedback.

Tom Bowerman, Project Director

PolicyInteractive

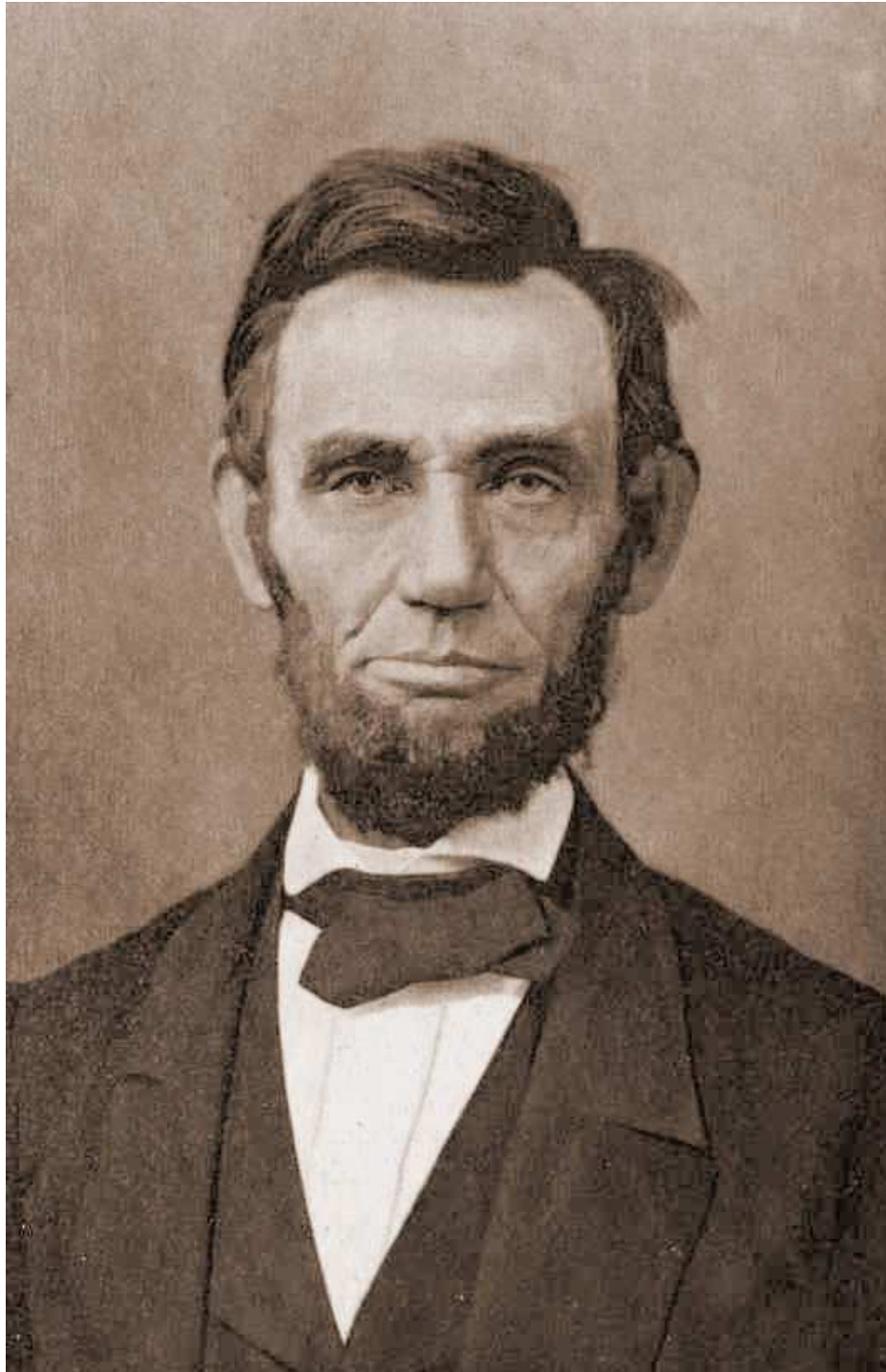
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541 726 7116

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*Member, American Association of Public Opinion Research*



***Public sentiment  
is everything.***

***With public  
sentiment nothing  
can fail. Without it  
nothing  
can succeed. —***

**Abraham Lincoln**