

Sustainability & Economic Growth

Through the lens of public opinion

EPA Webinar
December 11, 2012

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www.policyinteractive.org

PI Surveying

Systematic Methodology

Mixture: theory based, exploratory inquiry, empirical evidence.

Four Domains:

- Culturally mainline topics (tracks with other research)
- PI Focal Topic (minimized to avoid sensitivity priming)
- Values surveying (in proxy formats)
- Demographics

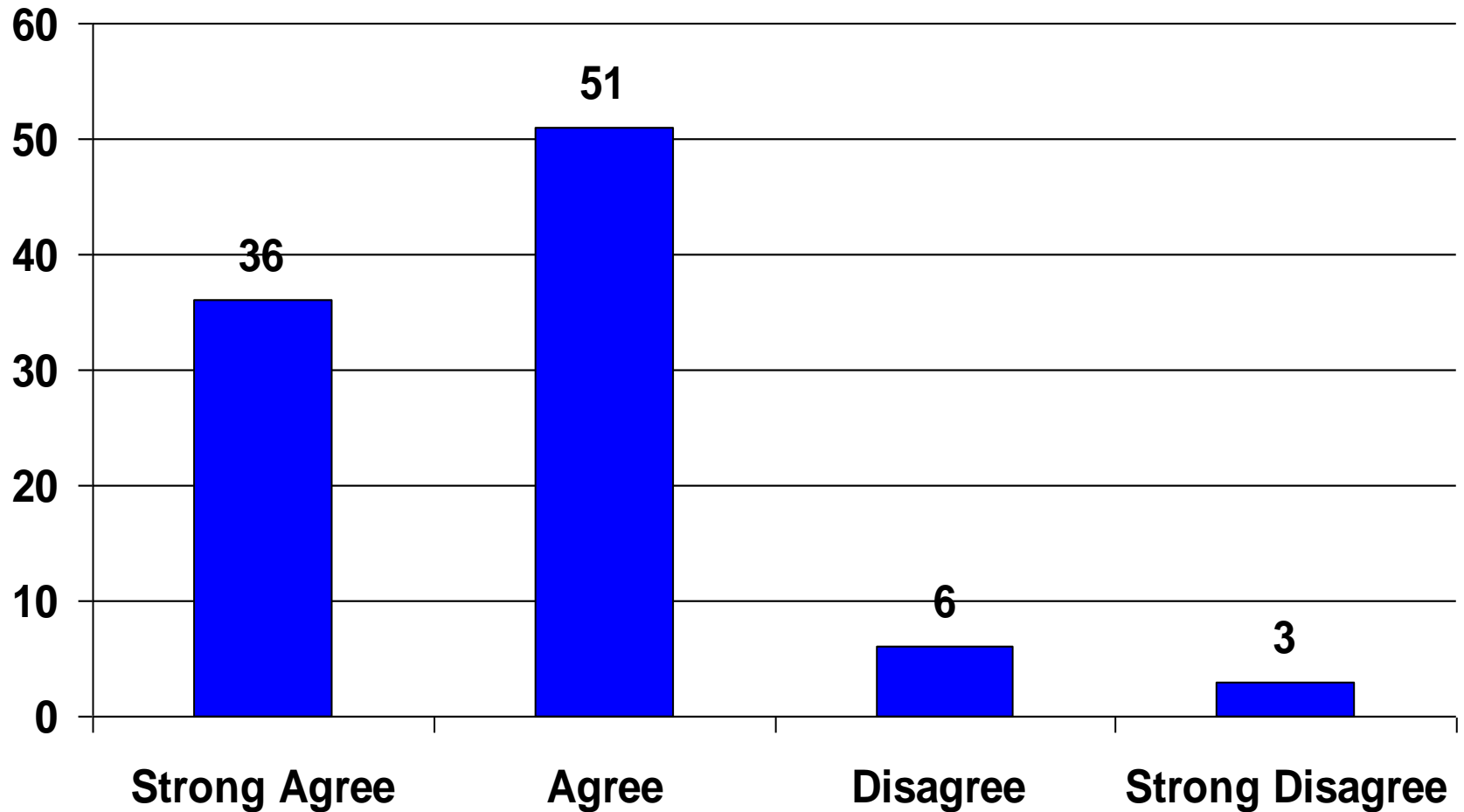
Quality control:

- Peer review, peer journaling
- Bias testing, pre-tests, post-tests,
- Mixed methods: sample surveys, interviews, focus groups, experimental methods.
- Demographic representativeness

Five years: Seven Statistical Sample Surveys, Fifteen Studies, > two thousand discrete items.

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

PI - March 2008 n=400



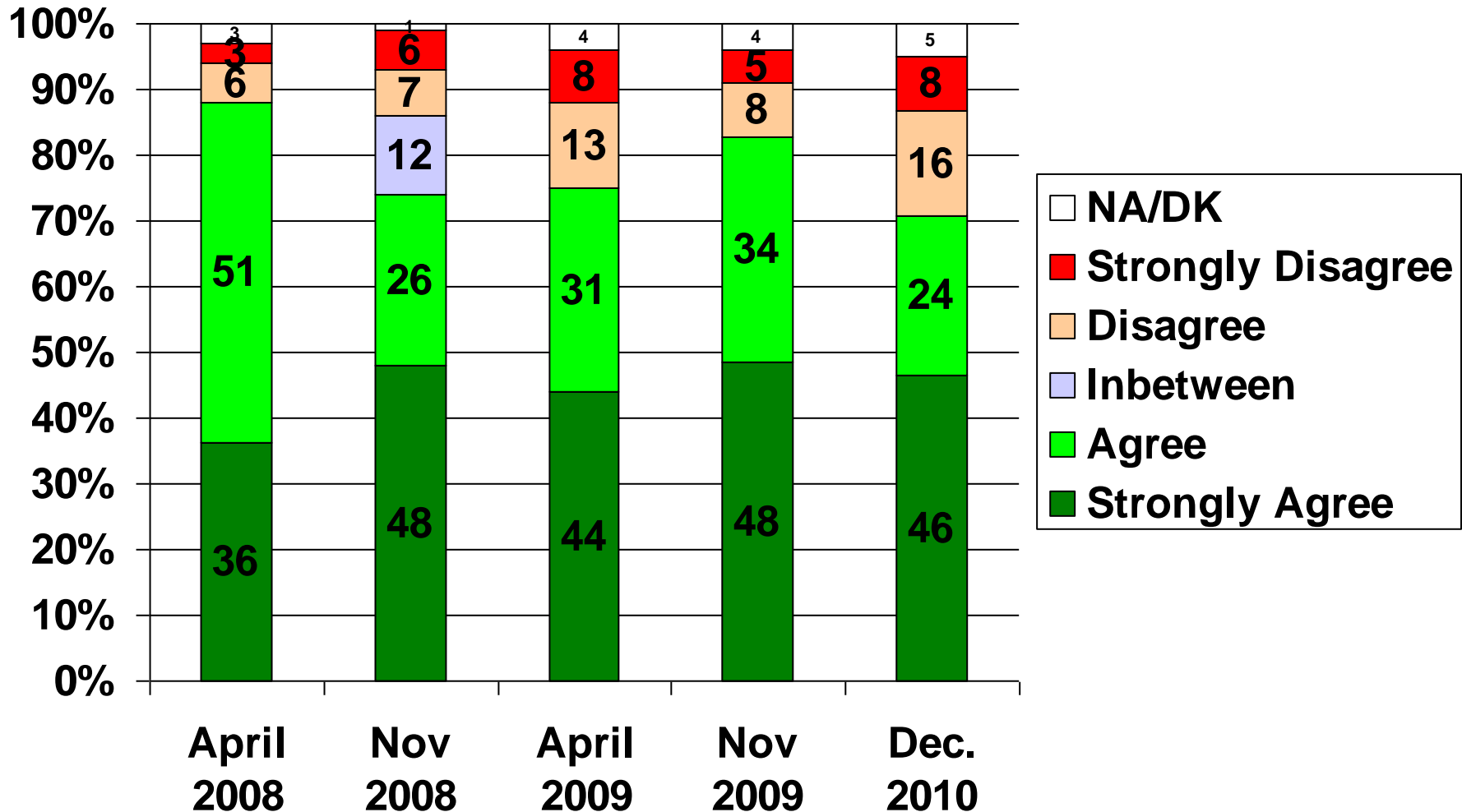
Why does “consumption” count?

IPAT formula:

Impact =
Population x Affluence x Technology

“Our country would be better off if we all consumed less” (PI – 4/08; 11/08; 4/09 12/09 12/10)

n=400+



Results from national survey

Center for American Progress April 2009 (n=1400)

TABLE 1

The 40 ideas that shape American politics

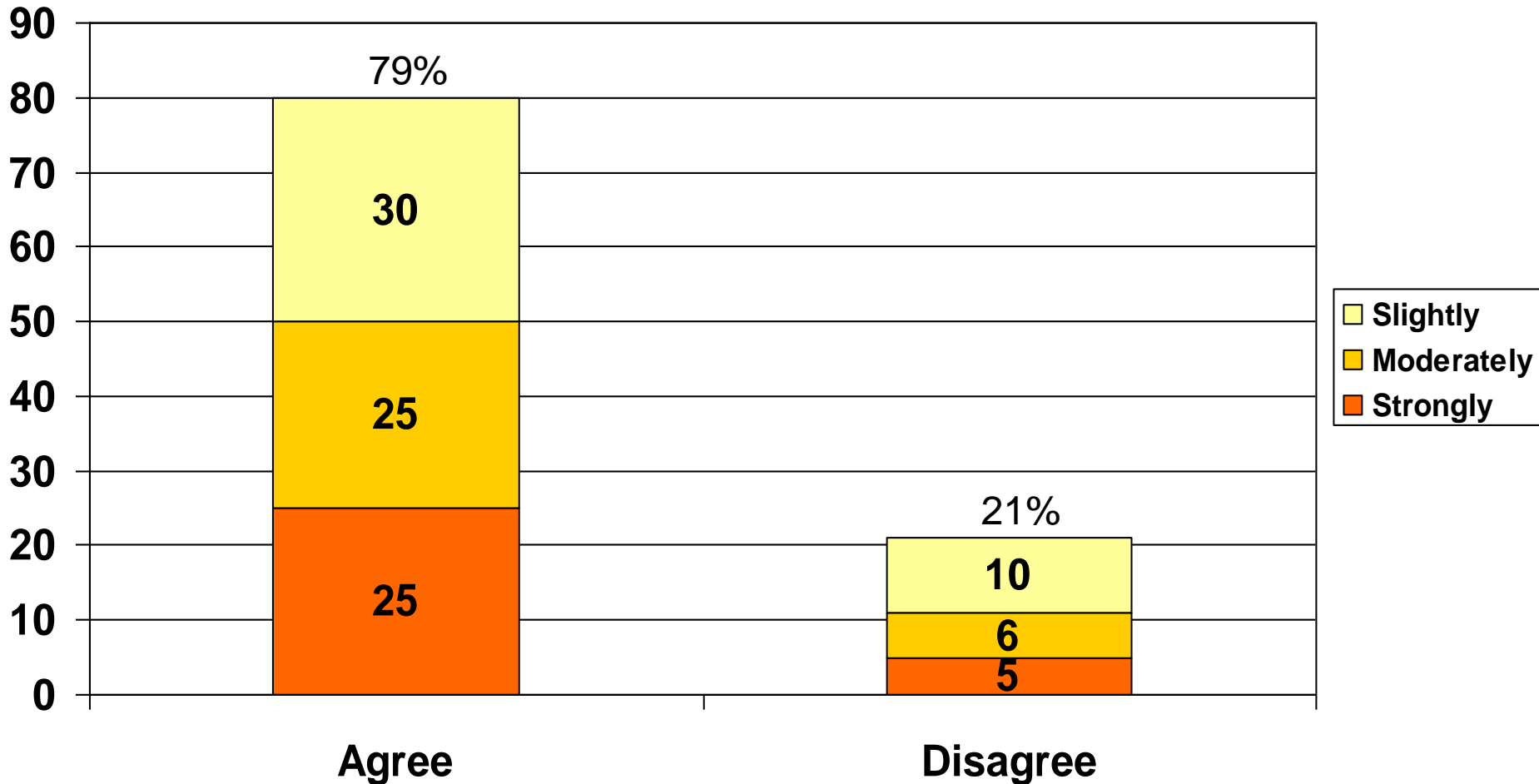
Ranked by % total agreement (dark blue = progressive; light blue = conservative)

| | Strongly agree (9-10) | Total agree (6-10) | Neutral (5) | Total disagree (0-4) | Strongly disagree (0-1) | Don't know/ refused | Mean |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------|
| 1. Americans should adopt a more sustainable lifestyle by conserving energy and consuming fewer goods. | 47 | 80 | 13 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 7.9 |
| 2. Government investments in education, infrastructure, and science are necessary to ensure America's long-term economic growth. | 45 | 79 | 12 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 7.6 |
| 3. America's economic future requires a transformation away from oil, gas, and coal to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. | 44 | 76 | 12 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 7.5 |
| 4. America has taken too large a role in solving the world's problems and should focus more at home. | 41 | 74 | 13 | 13 | 5 | 0 | 7.4 |
| 5. A positive image of America around the world is necessary to achieve our national security goals. | 39 | 73 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 1 | 7.2 |
| 6. Government regulations are necessary to keep businesses in check and protect workers and consumers. | 32 | 73 | 15 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 7.1 |
| 7. Government has a responsibility to provide financial support for the poor, the sick, and the elderly. | 33 | 69 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 0 | 6.9 |
| 8. There should be stronger regulation of sex and violence in popular culture and on the Internet. | 41 | 68 | 14 | 18 | 9 | 1 | 7.0 |
| 9. America's security is best promoted by working through diplomacy, alliances, and international institutions. | 29 | 68 | 20 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 7.0 |
| 10. America must play a leading role in addressing climate change by reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and complying with international agreements on global warming. | 38 | 67 | 12 | 20 | 12 | 1 | 6.8 |

Indicate level of Agreement/Disagreement (6 point scale):

Our country would be better off if we all consumed less.

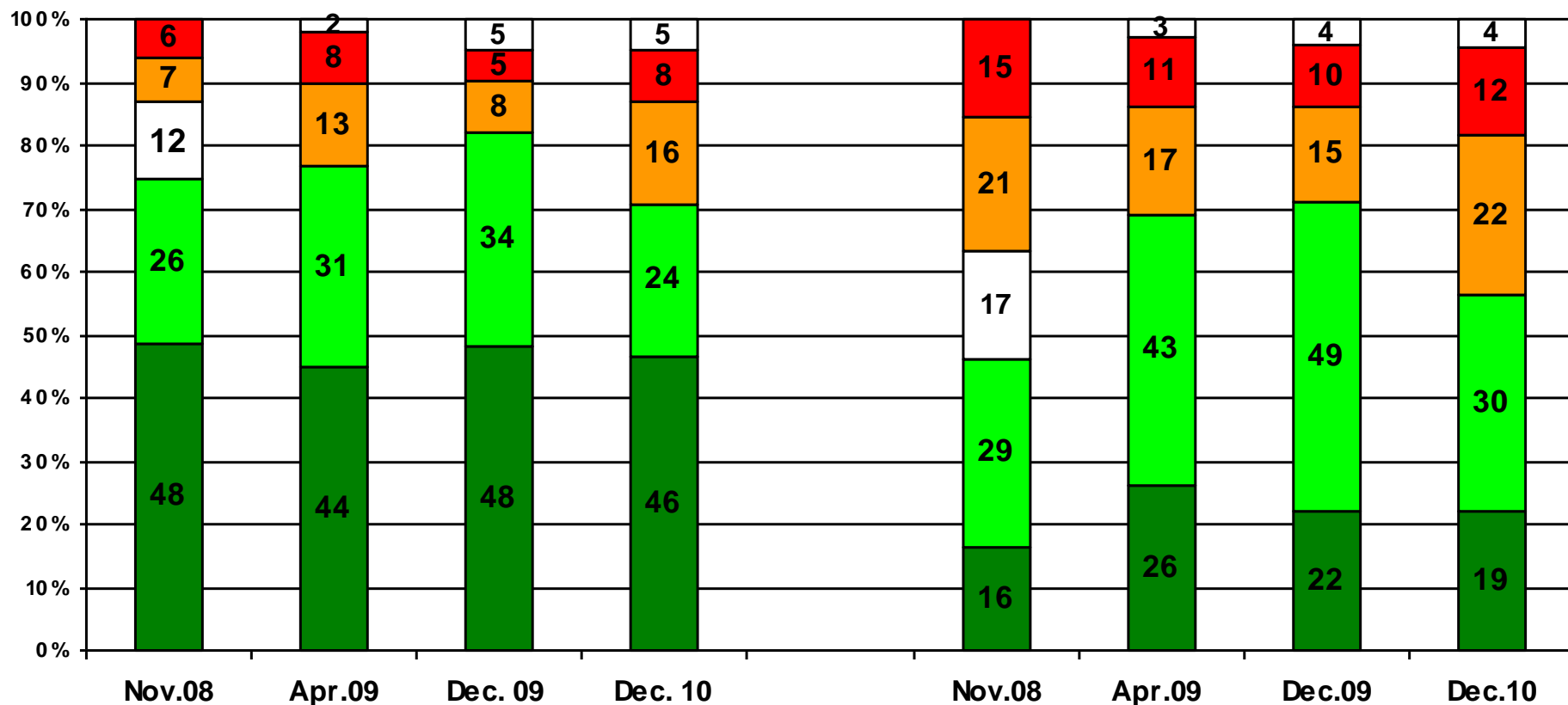
(National Sample N=1500 March 2009 Yale Cultural Cognition Project)



I'll read some statements we sometimes hear people say about the current economic downturn. Please tell me: strongly disagree, moderately disagree, moderately agree or strongly agree with each statement: (compare PI

Nov08/Apr09/Nov09/Dec10)

■ S. Agree
 ■ Mod. Agree
 Inbetween
 ■ M. Disagree
 ■ S. Disagree
 NA/DK/Ref



Our country would be better off if we all consumed less.

We need to buy goods for the good of the economy.

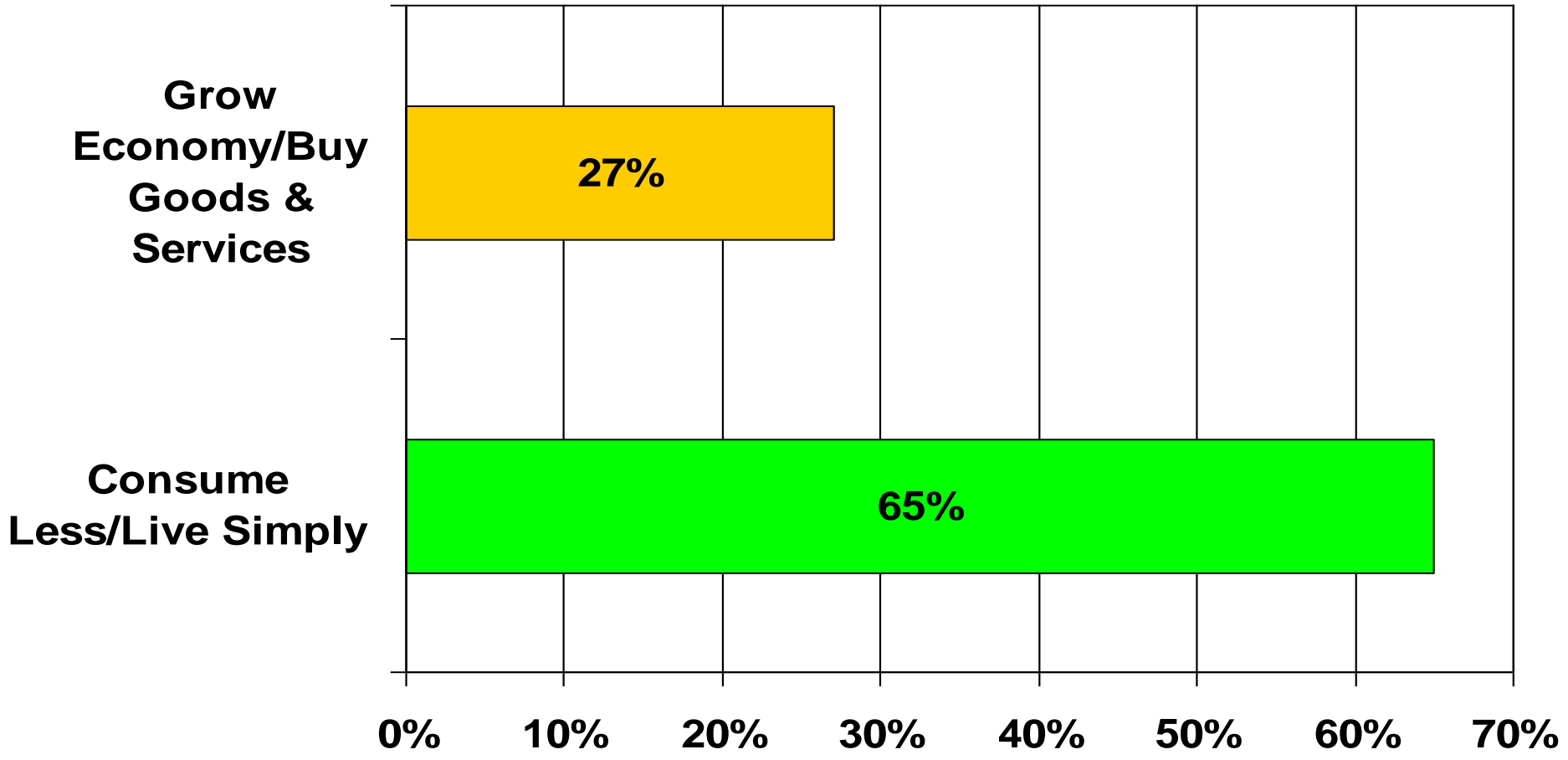
Sometimes tough choices have to be made in balancing economic growth and protecting the environment. Which of these two statements comes closer to your view even if neither represents your view exactly? (rotate choices)

Eugene N=300 DHM & PI Nov 2011 Q4 N=300 random telephone + cell (moe 5.7%)

A. We need to grow the economy by consuming more goods & services.

OR

B. We'll be better off by consuming less and living more simply.



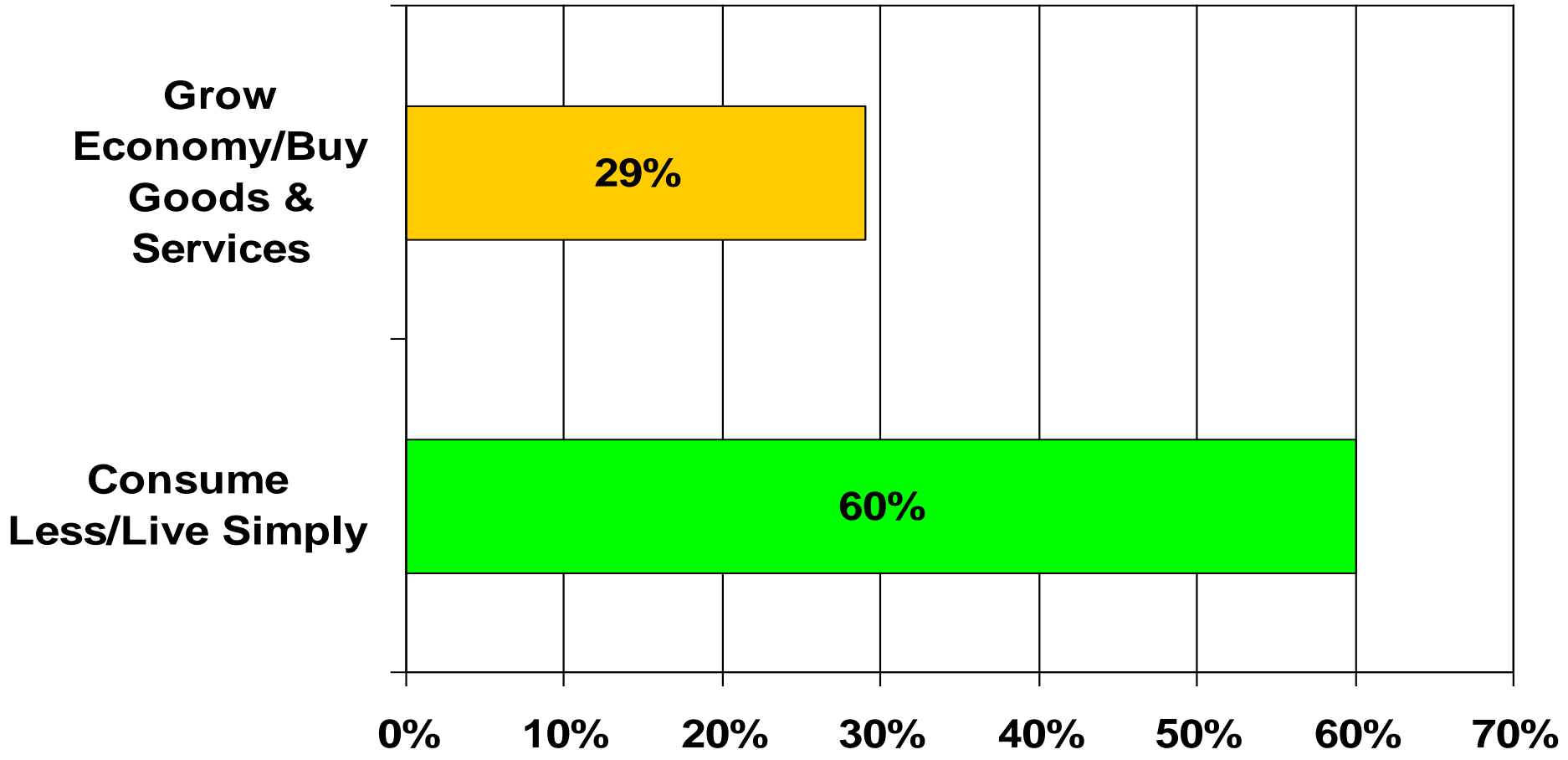
Sometimes tough choices have to be made in balancing economic growth and protecting the environment. Which of these two statements comes closer to your view even if neither represents your view exactly? (rotate choices)

All Oregon RDD land+cell N=500 DHM & PI Nov 2012

A. We need to grow the economy by consuming more goods & services.

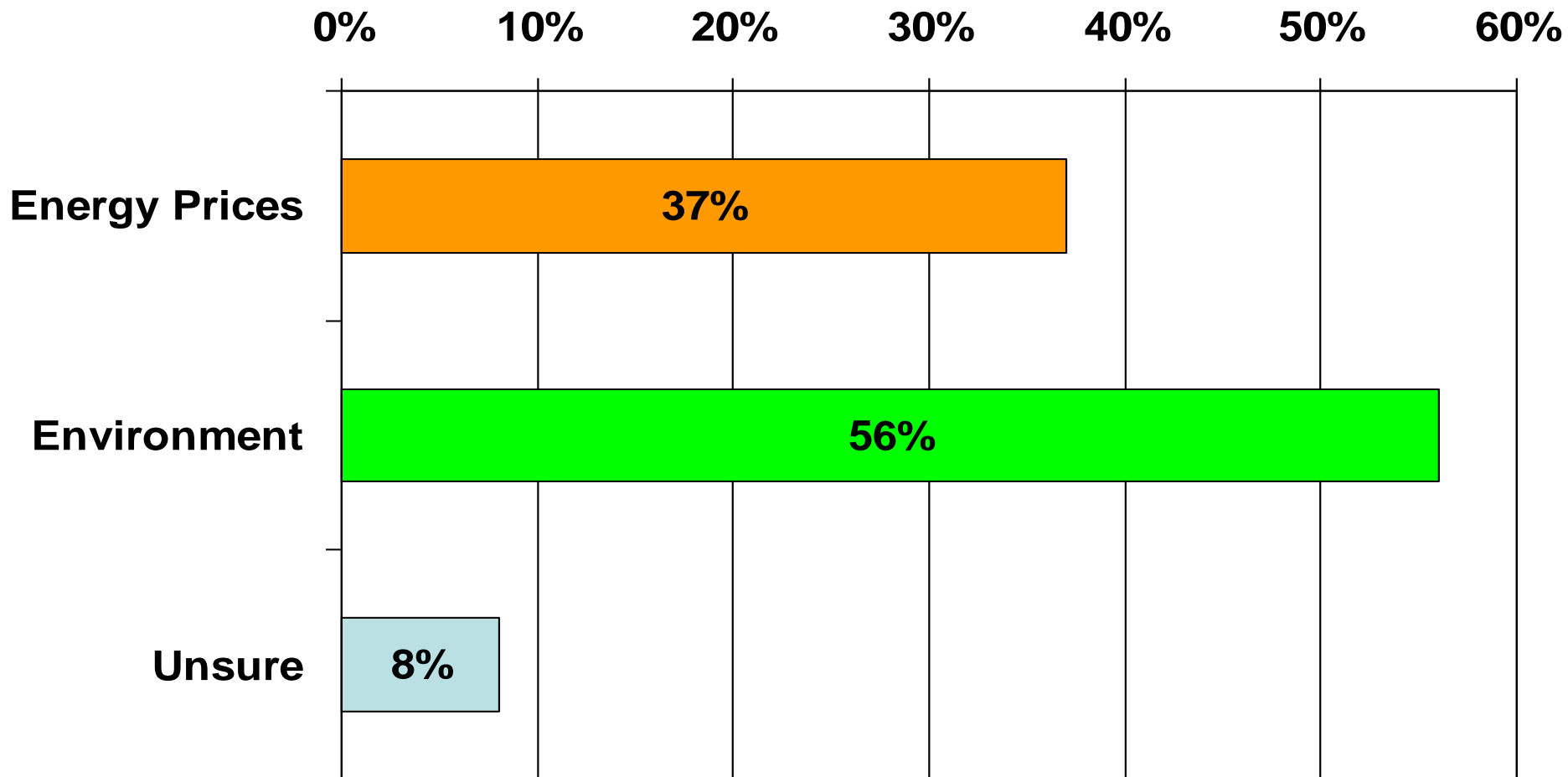
OR

B. We'll be better off by consuming less and living more simply.



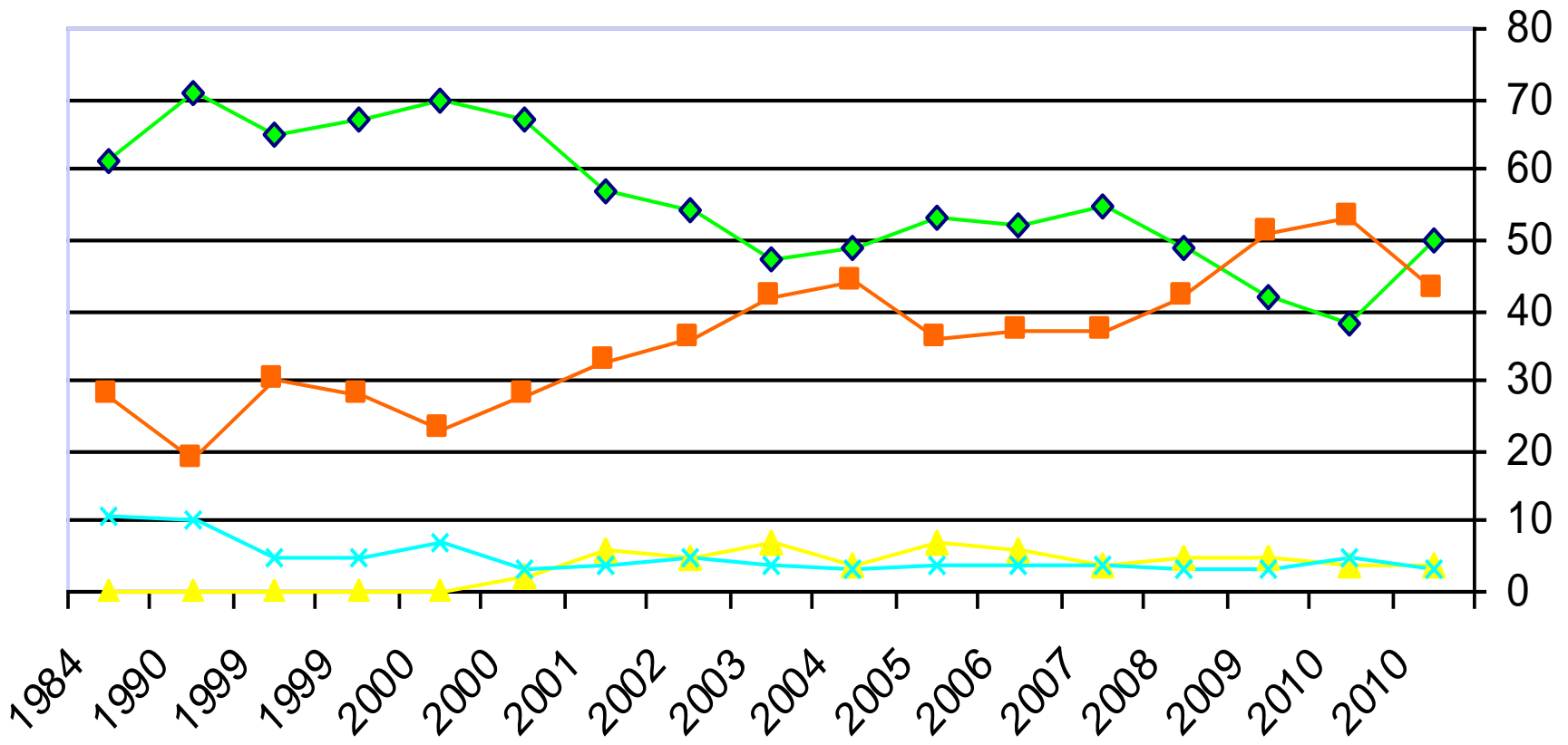
"Right now, which ONE of the following do you think should be the more important priority for U.S. energy policy: keeping energy prices low or protecting the environment?" (rotated)

(Pew Research/National Journal Congressional Connection Poll June 10-13, 2010. N=1,010)



Gallup Polling (tracking 30 years) N=1,000+ adults nationwide. Margin of error ± 4 .. "With which one of these statements about the environment and the economy do you most agree? Protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth. OR, Economic growth should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent." Options rotated (Source: pollingreport.com accessed Oct. 28, 2012)

◆ Environment %
 ■ Economic Growth %
 ▲ Equal %
 × Unsure %

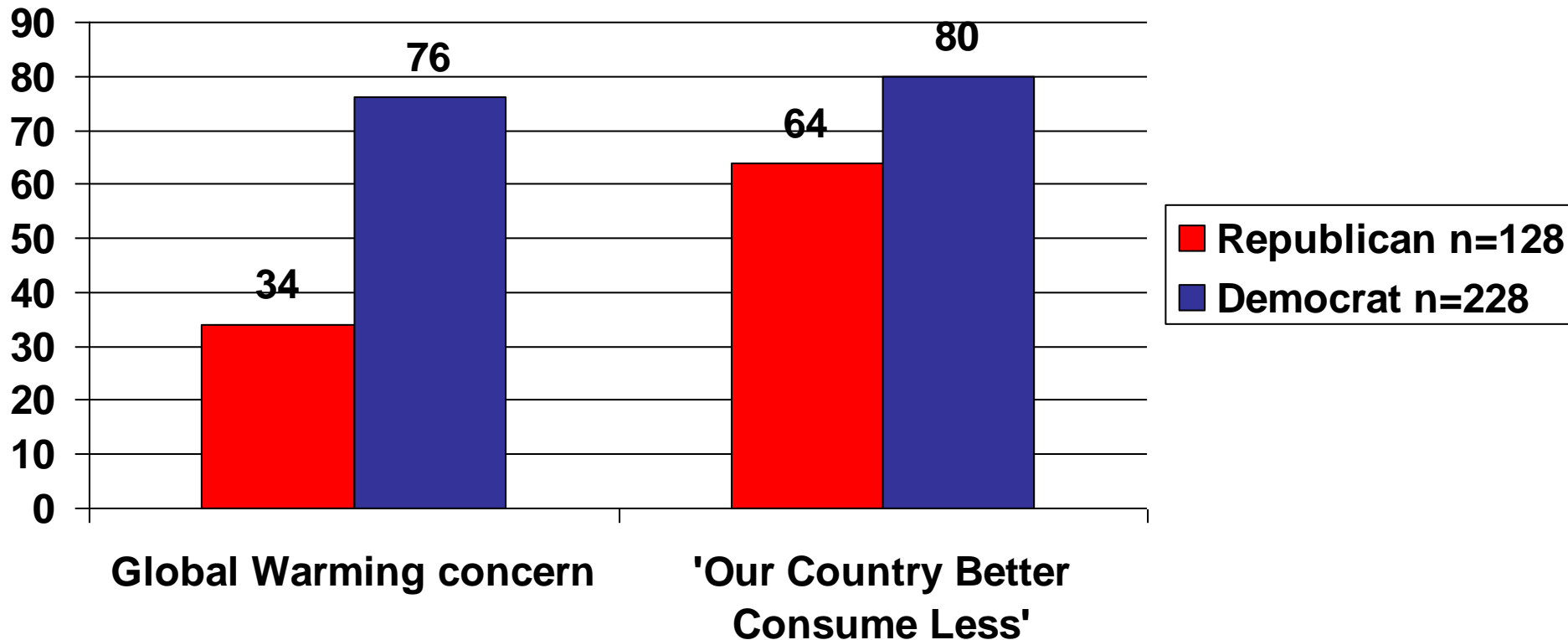


Agreement Which Bridges the Ideological Divides

Political Party Ideology Comparison

Global Warming : Consume Less

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

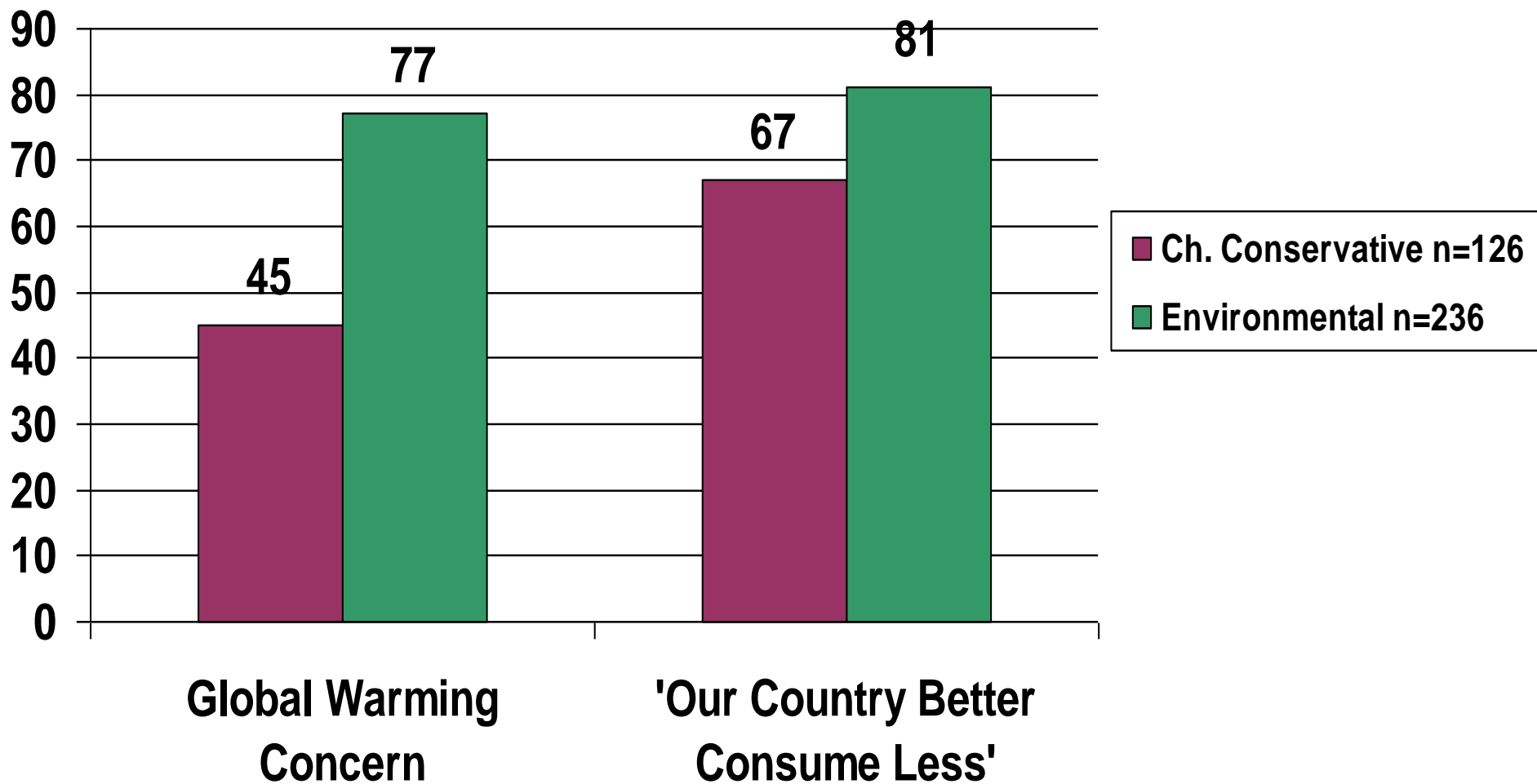


Cultural Ideology Comparison

Christian Conservative & Environmentalist

Compare Global Warming / Consume less

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



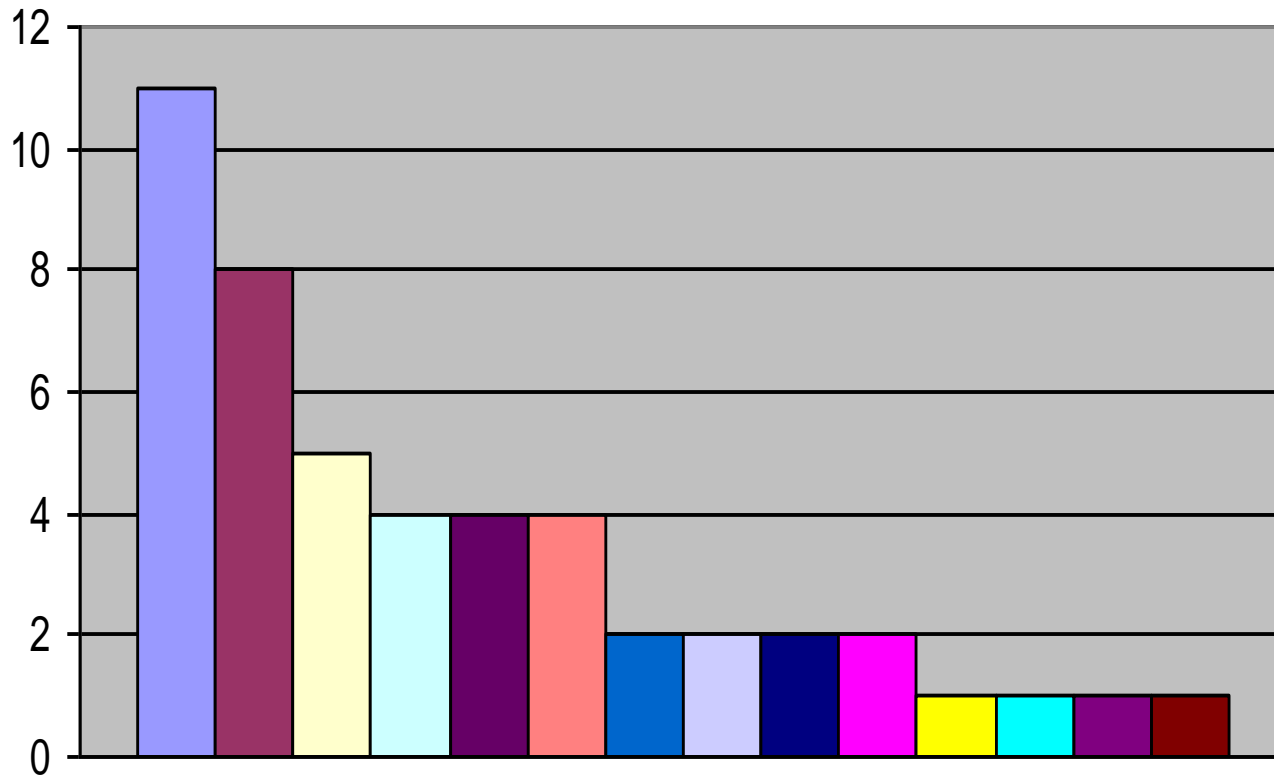
Examining Conservative Views Using Qualitative Interviews N=34

- Structured Interview Text, Trained Interviewers
- Respondents drawn from statistical sample
- Self-reported conservatives
- And screened for (3 out of 4):
 - Think environmentalists are extremists
 - Don't think climate change is much concern
 - Think our country better off if we consumed less.
 - Think this economic downturn helps reorder values.

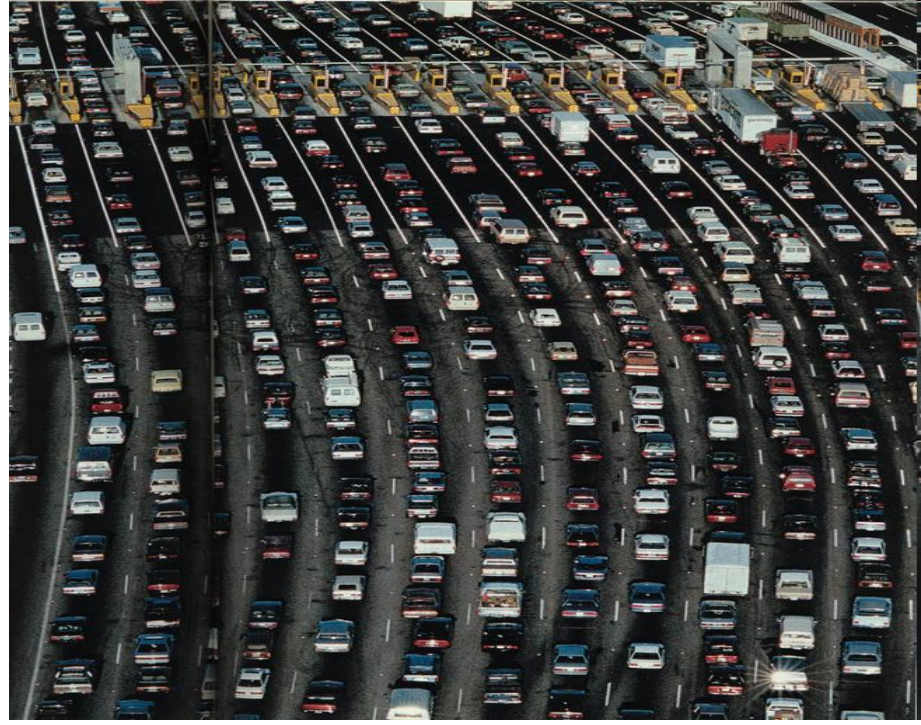
C1 Yes or No, “Our Country would be a better place if we all consumed less” → 100% yes compared to 87% in original survey (PI 3a n=34) [conservative interviews]

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

n=



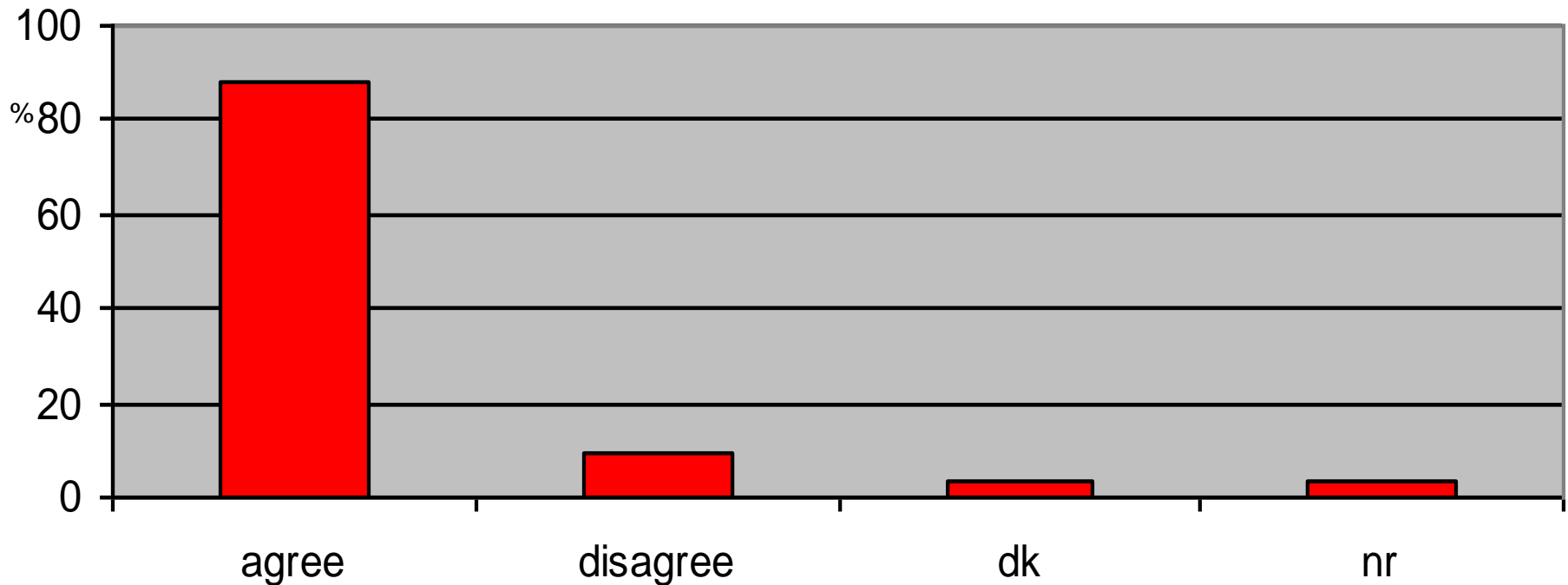
- Fuel & energy waste
- Junk, waste & garbage
- Excess material consumption
- Over eating, junk food, obesity
- Driving too much
- Buying non-essentials
- Overpopulation
- Depleting non-renewables
- Buying into fads
- Oversized houses
- Spending foolishly
- Clutter & excess
- Spoiled nation
- Excess packaging



Should you yourself reduce consumption?

(PI 3a n=34) [conservative interviews]

(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?”

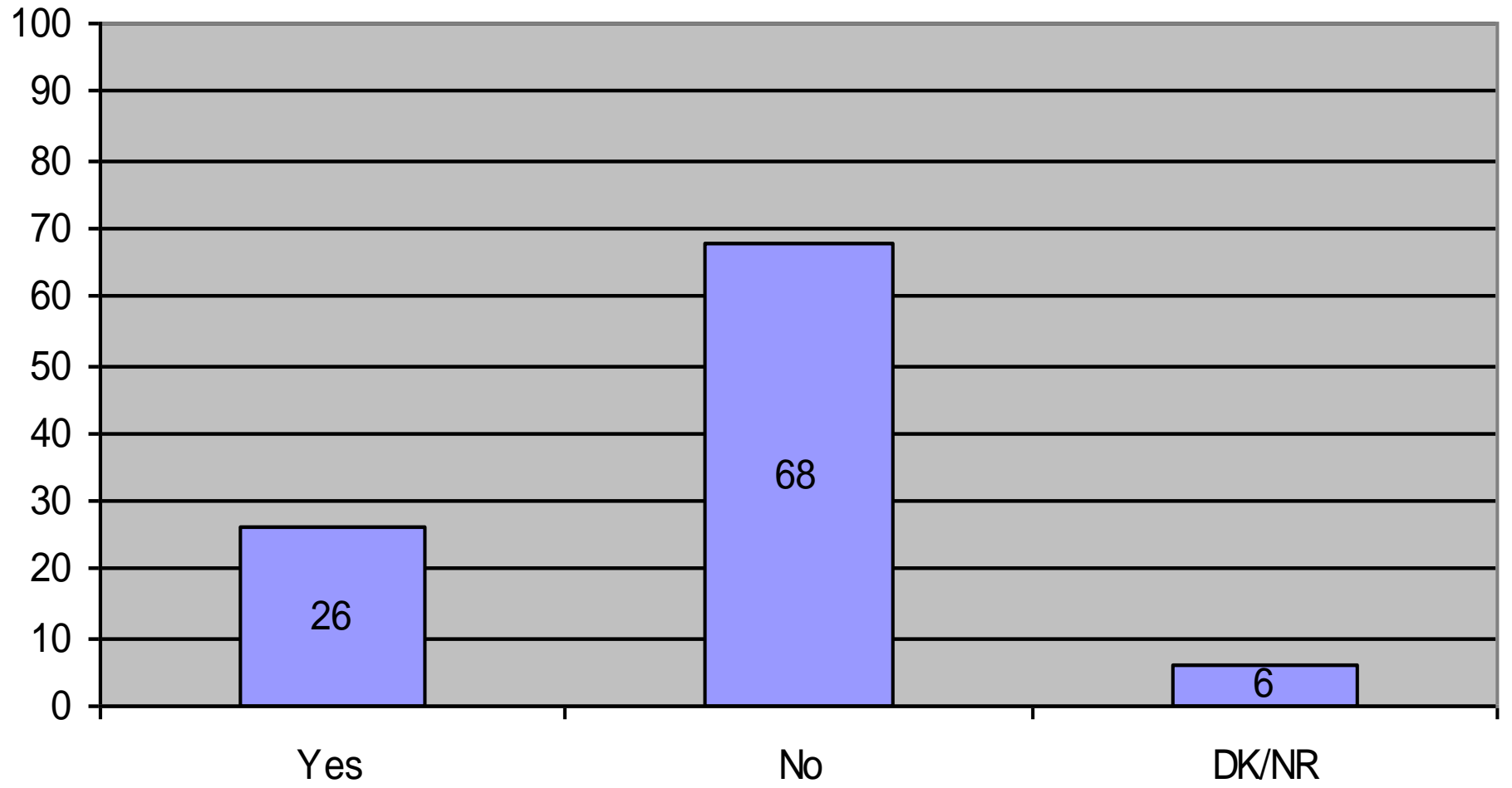


C4a: “What comes to mind in terms of possible actions or decisions on your part to consume less?”

(PI 3a n=34) [conservative interviews]

| | | |
|--|----|-----------|
| Drive less | n= | 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 |

C5 Do you think our country's economic well-being would be hurt if we all consumed less? [PI 3a N=34]

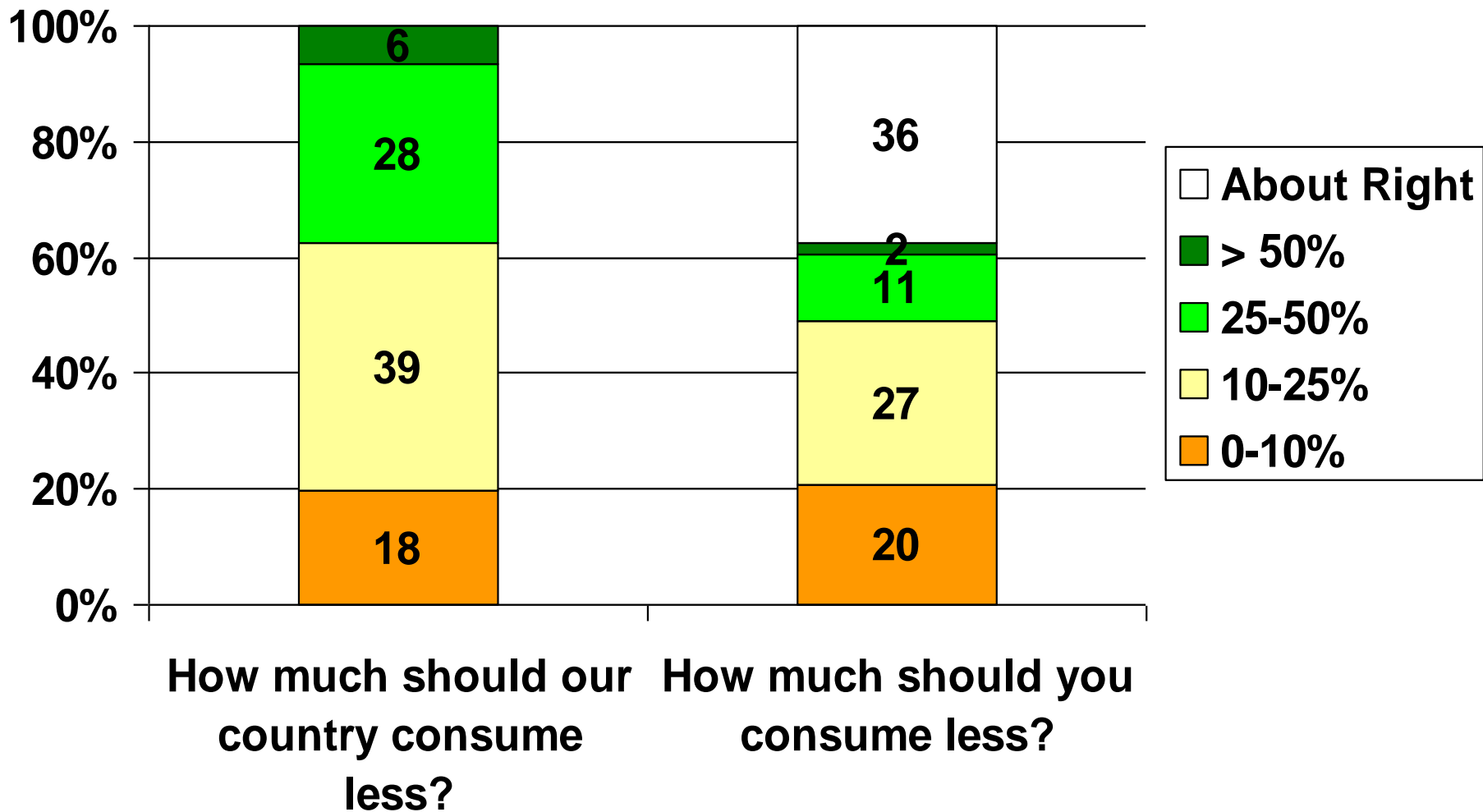


“So, which is more important to you, you’re feeling that our country would be better off if we consumed less, or our country’s economy would be hurt if we all consumed less?” [PI 3a N=34] characteristic response:

- “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 it’s self”;
- “relearning...restructure”
- “...gradually improve”

Translating “consume less” to intended behavior

PI April 2009 n=303 MOE=5.6%



What is important?

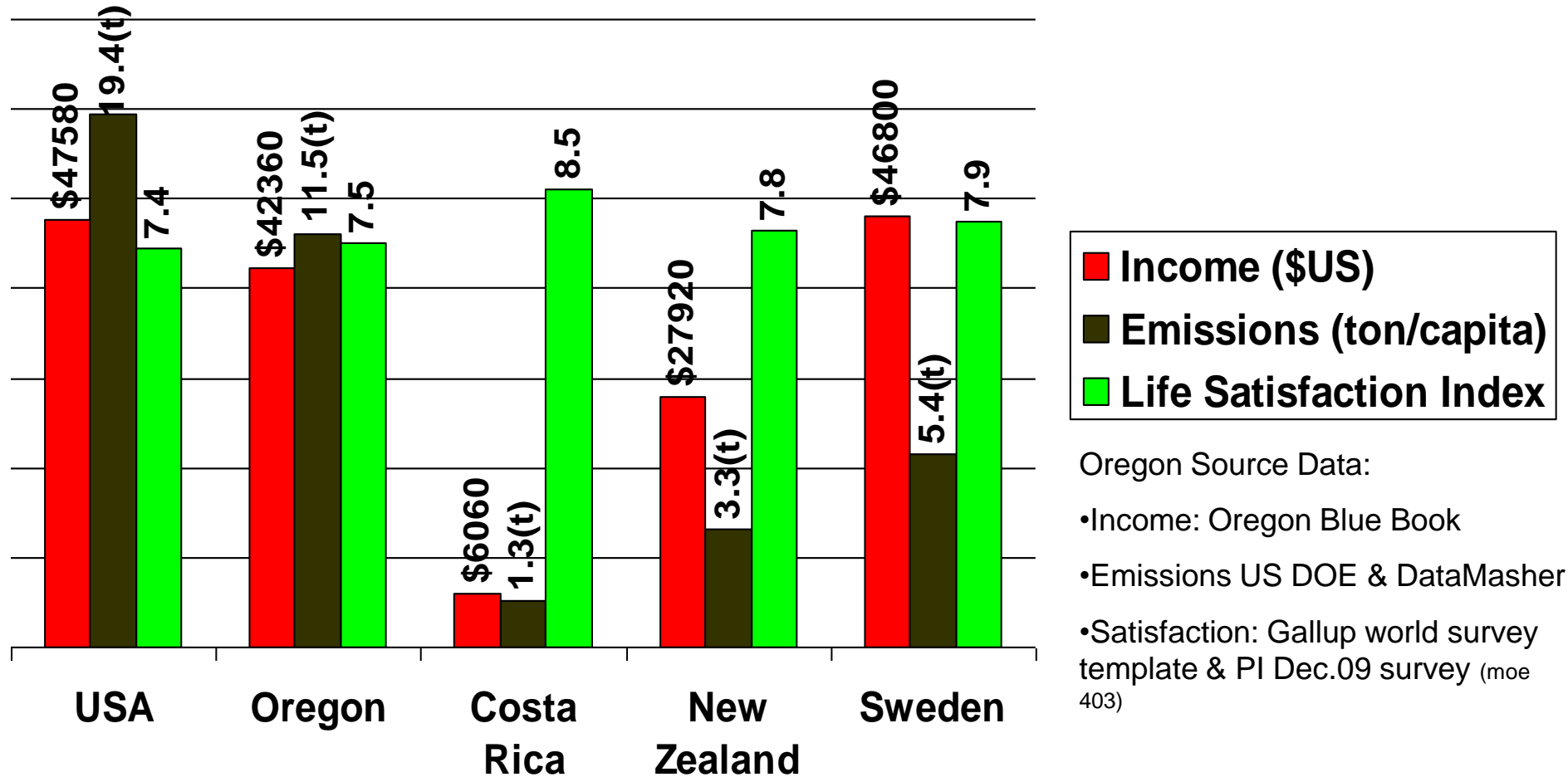
Economic Growth?

Income?

Well-being?

Planet for future generations?

Income/Emissions/Life Satisfaction Four Nations & Oregon Compared



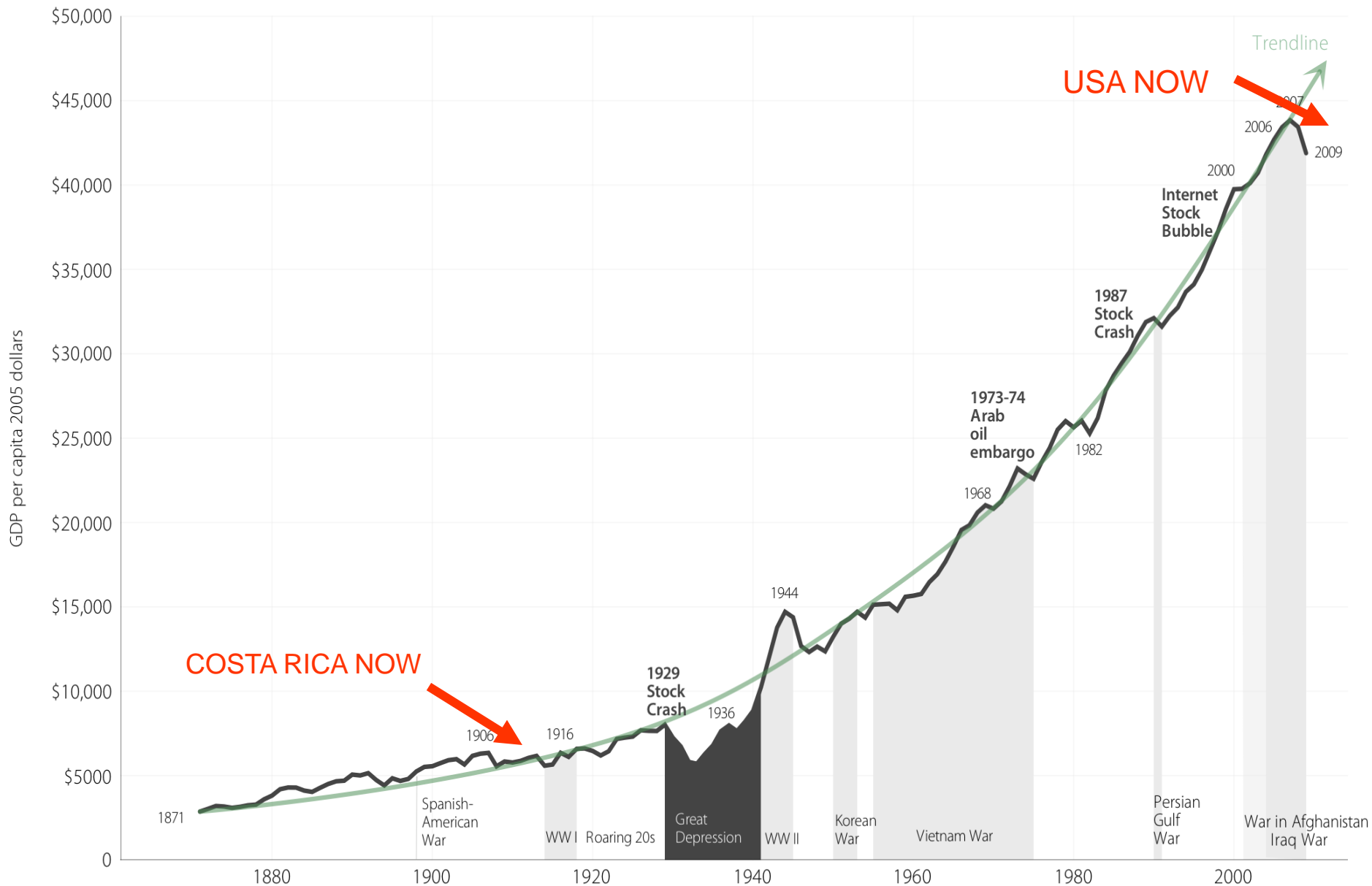
Income: Per Capita World Bank 2008 estimate (Atlas Method)

Emissions: Tons CO2/capita World Resources Institute (Source:Nationmaster)

Life Satisfaction:: Life Satisfaction Index Gallup World Survey 2008(Source: World Database of Happiness)

Long-term real growth in US GDP per capita 1871–2009

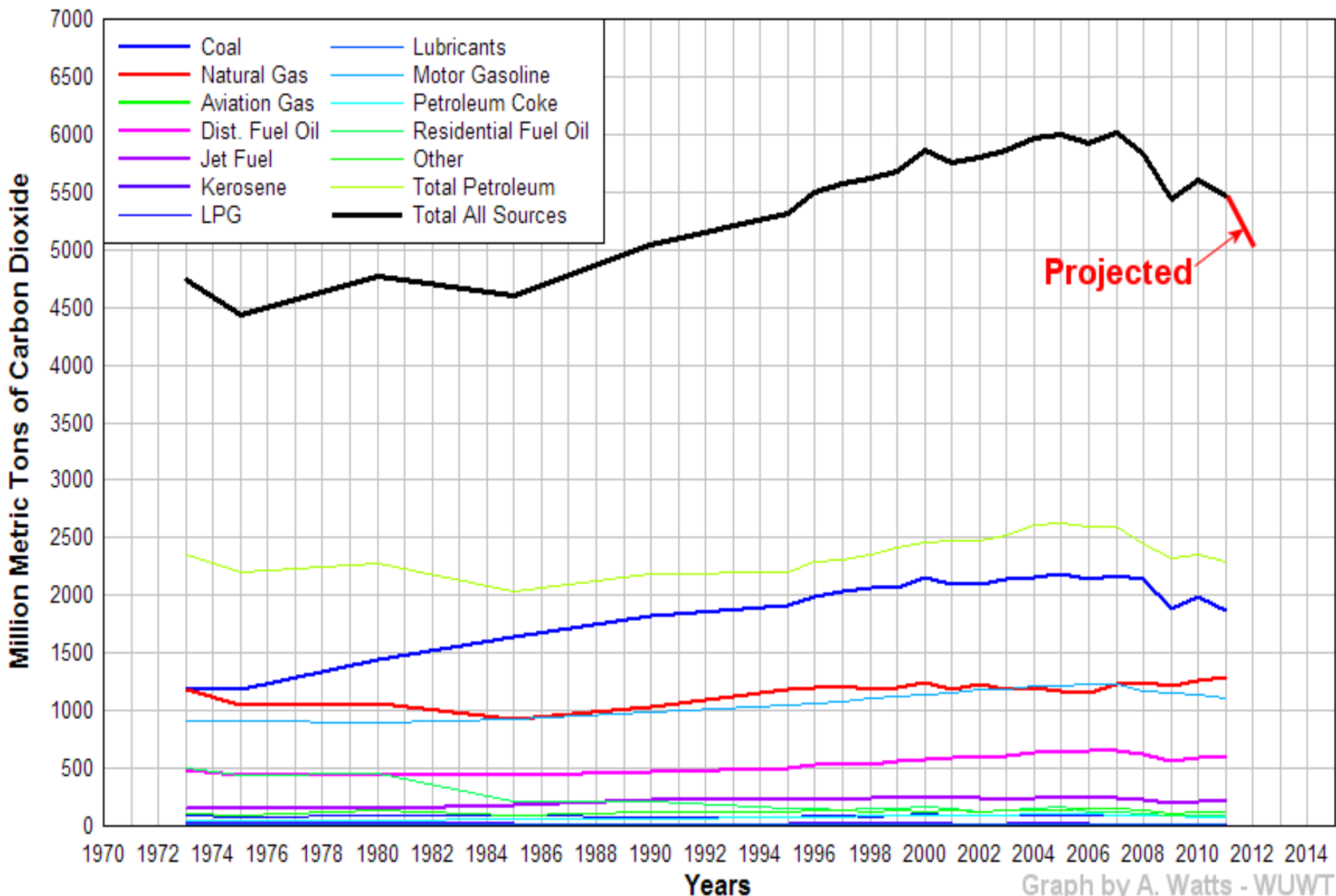
GDP per capita adjusted for inflation using 2005 dollars



Data from MeasuringWorth.com

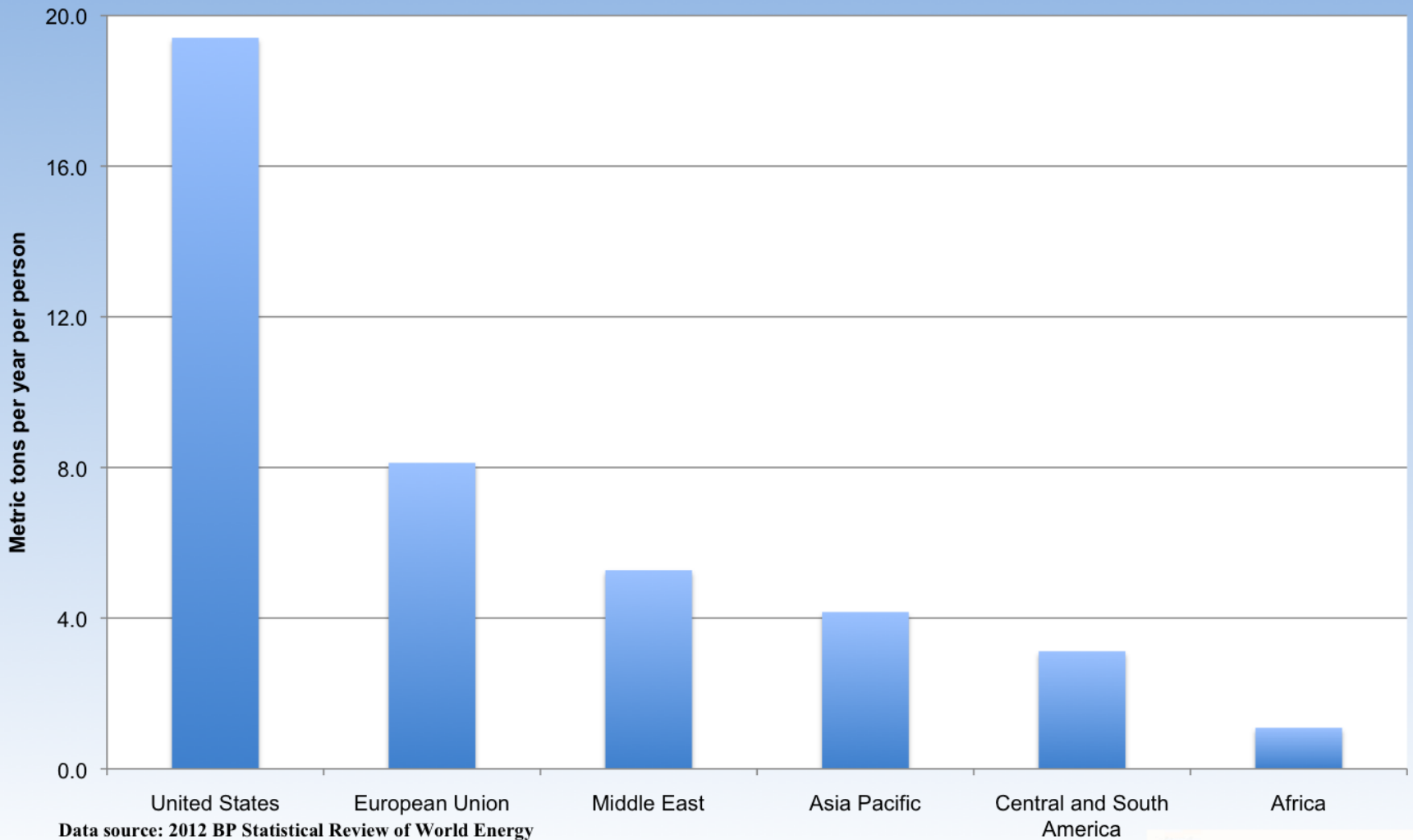
USA Carbon Dioxide Emissions From Energy Consumption by Source

Data from EIA Monthly Energy Review - June 2012



Graph by A. Watts - WUWT

Per Capita CO₂ Emissions



[time check]

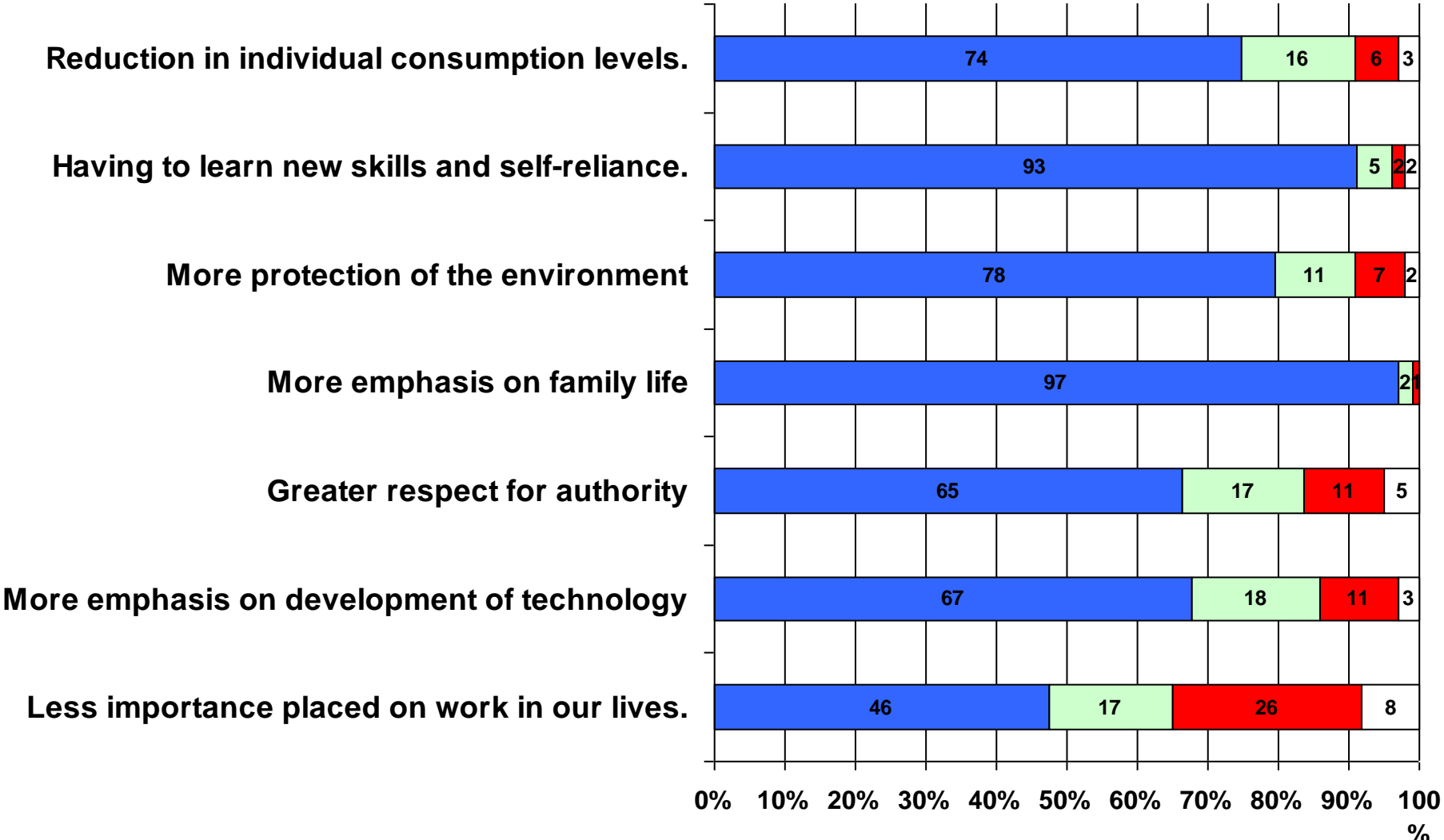
Leveraging Attitude and Nascent Behaviors

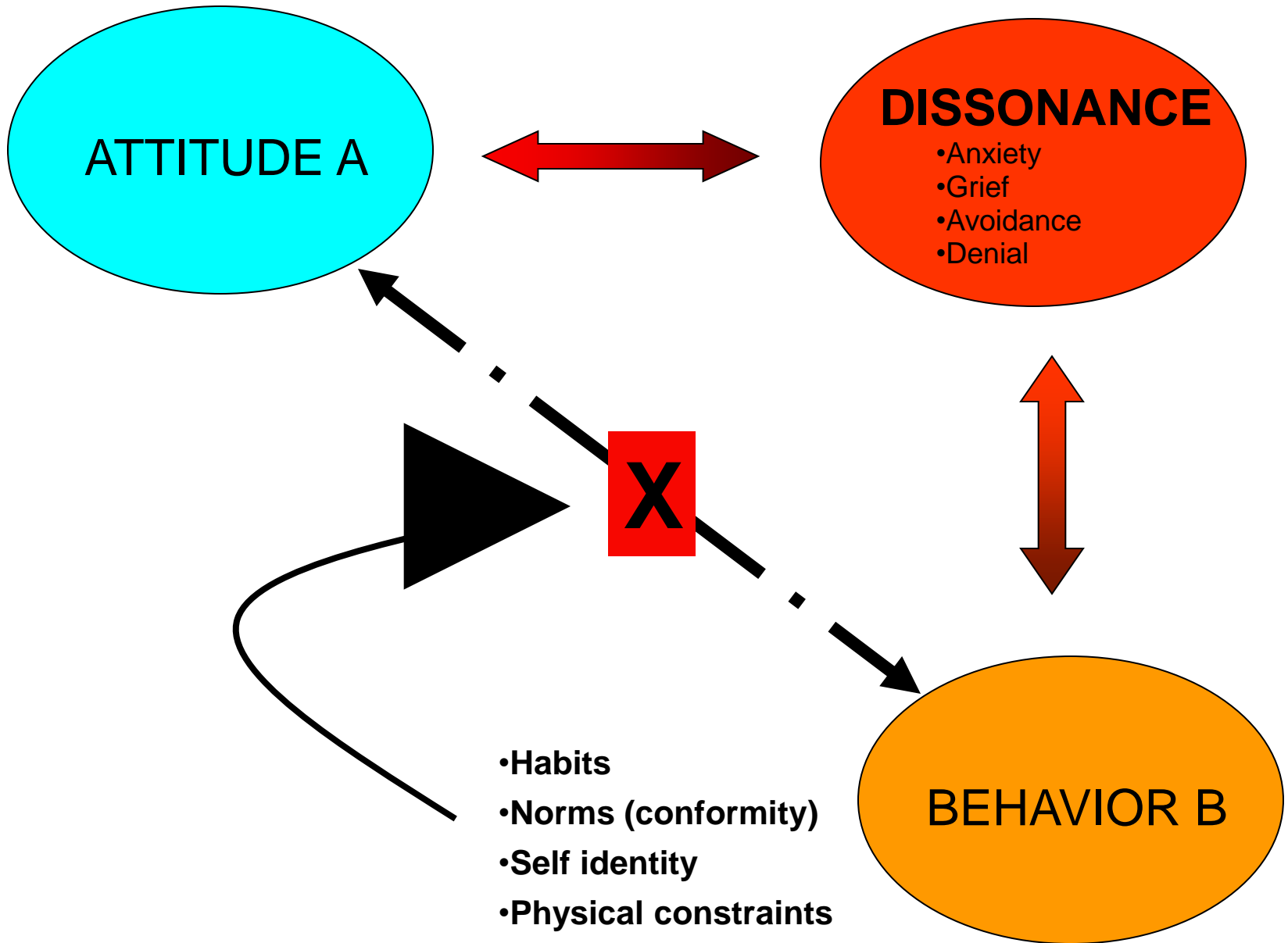
“It is naive to ask consumers to voluntarily downscale, and give up their desires without offering them alternative dreams.”

Tim Jackson, Sustainable Development Commission, U.K.

I'm going to read a list of changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or you don't care one way or the other. [rotate](PI Dec 2009 Q10 403r)

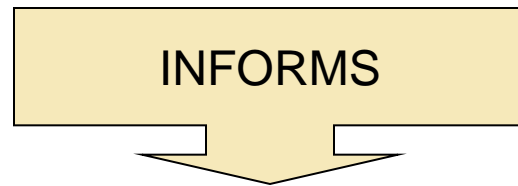
■ Good
 ■ Don't care
 ■ Bad
 N/A



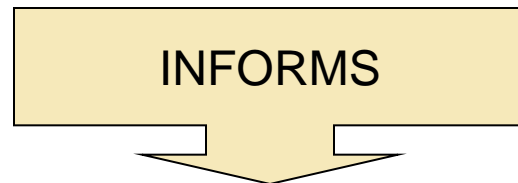


LOCALIZING
COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY
CITY OF EUGENE STUDY
Three Step Process

1. Initial Statistical Sample Survey: (asking)



2. Citizen Focus Groups: (listening)

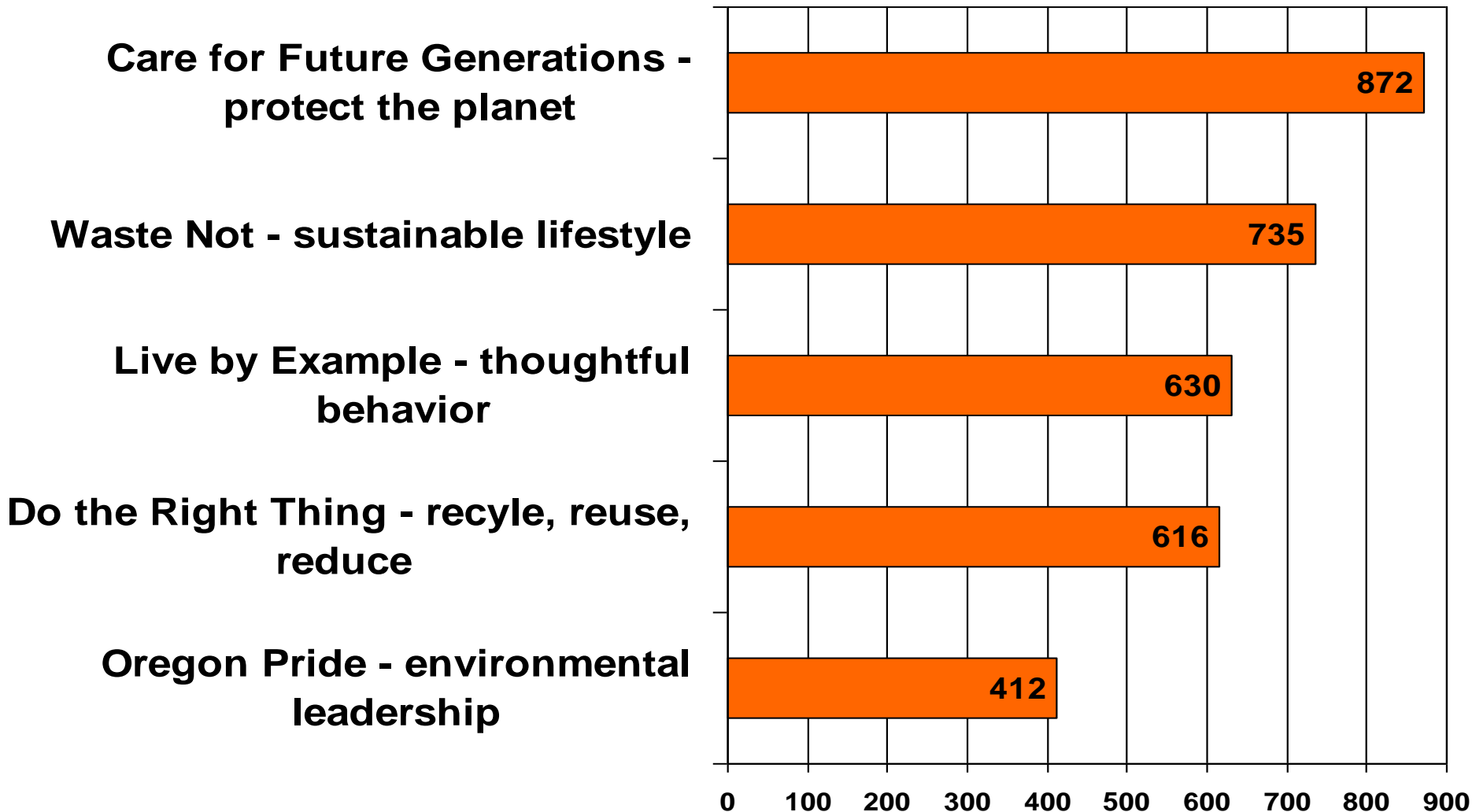


3. On-line Survey: (testing messages)

Testing 5 Message Frames:

Thoughtful Consumption – What moves you the most?

PI Feb 2012 N=692 - 5 votes per person, distribute any way, not required to use all votes
(Full Statements see Appendix 3, full descriptive report on request: info@policyinteractive.org)





***Public sentiment
is everything.***

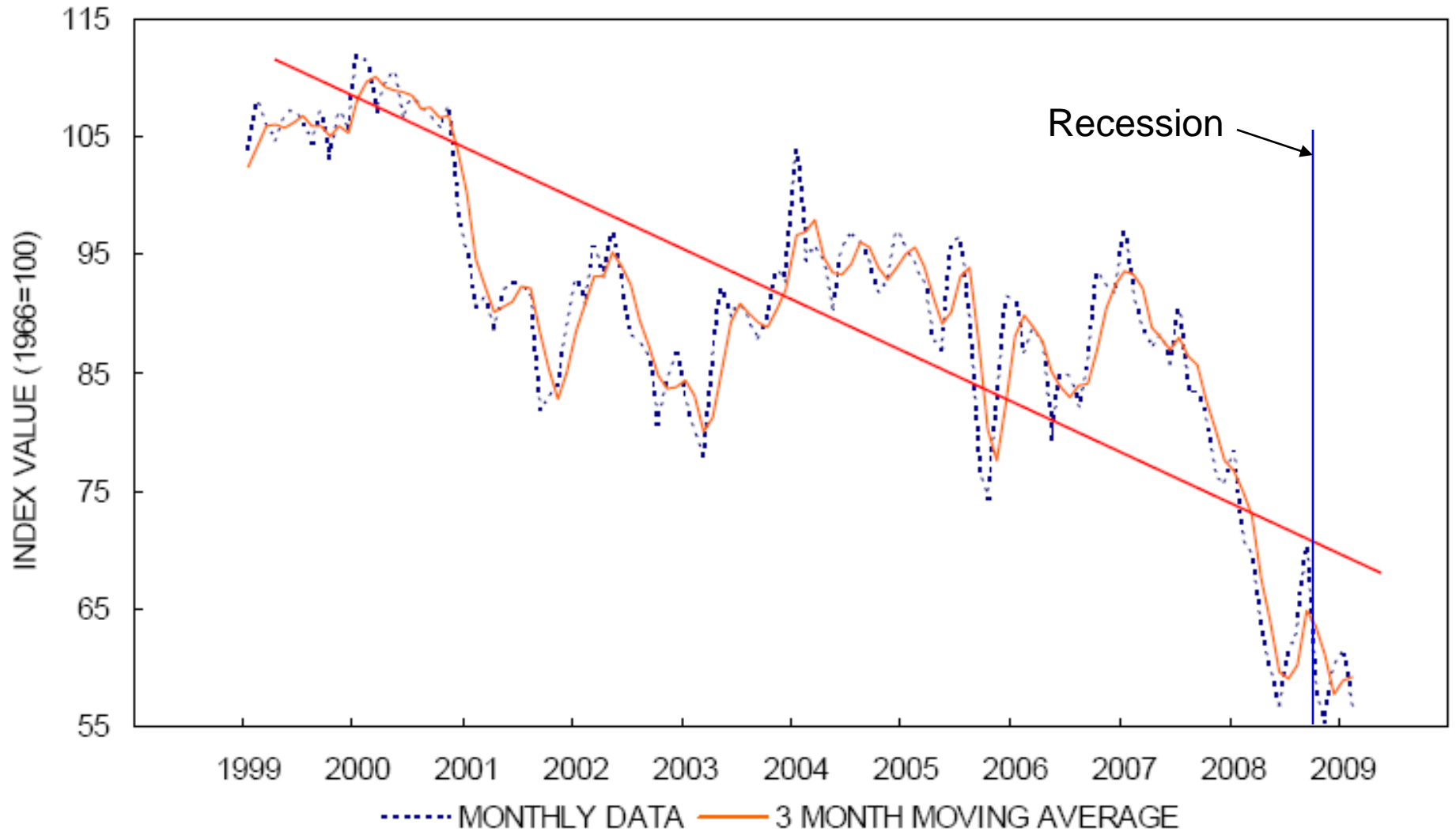
***With public
sentiment nothing
can fail. Without it
nothing
can succeed. —***

Abraham Lincoln

Appendix 1

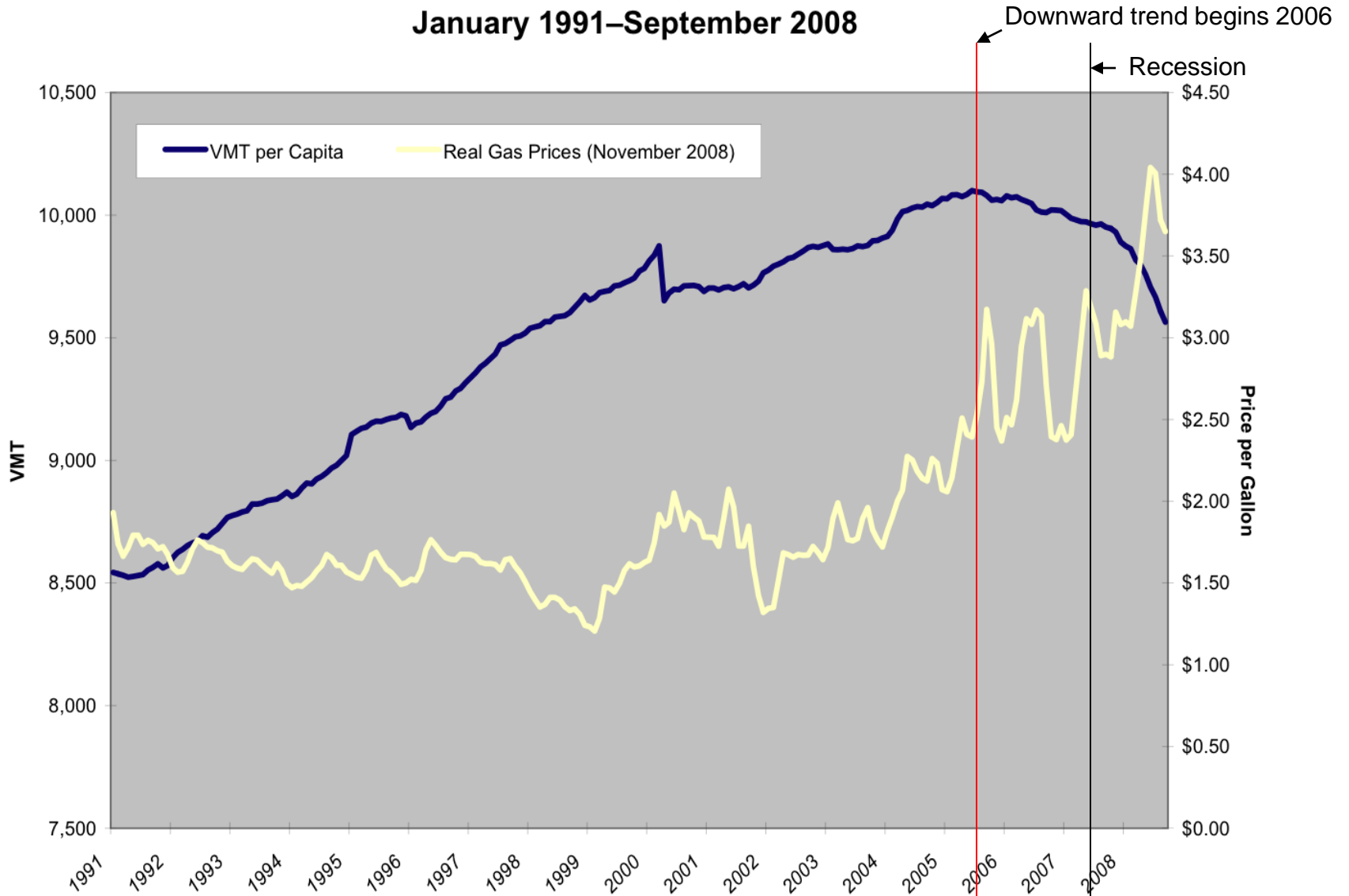
Consumption Decline Metrics

THE INDEX OF CONSUMER SENTIMENT



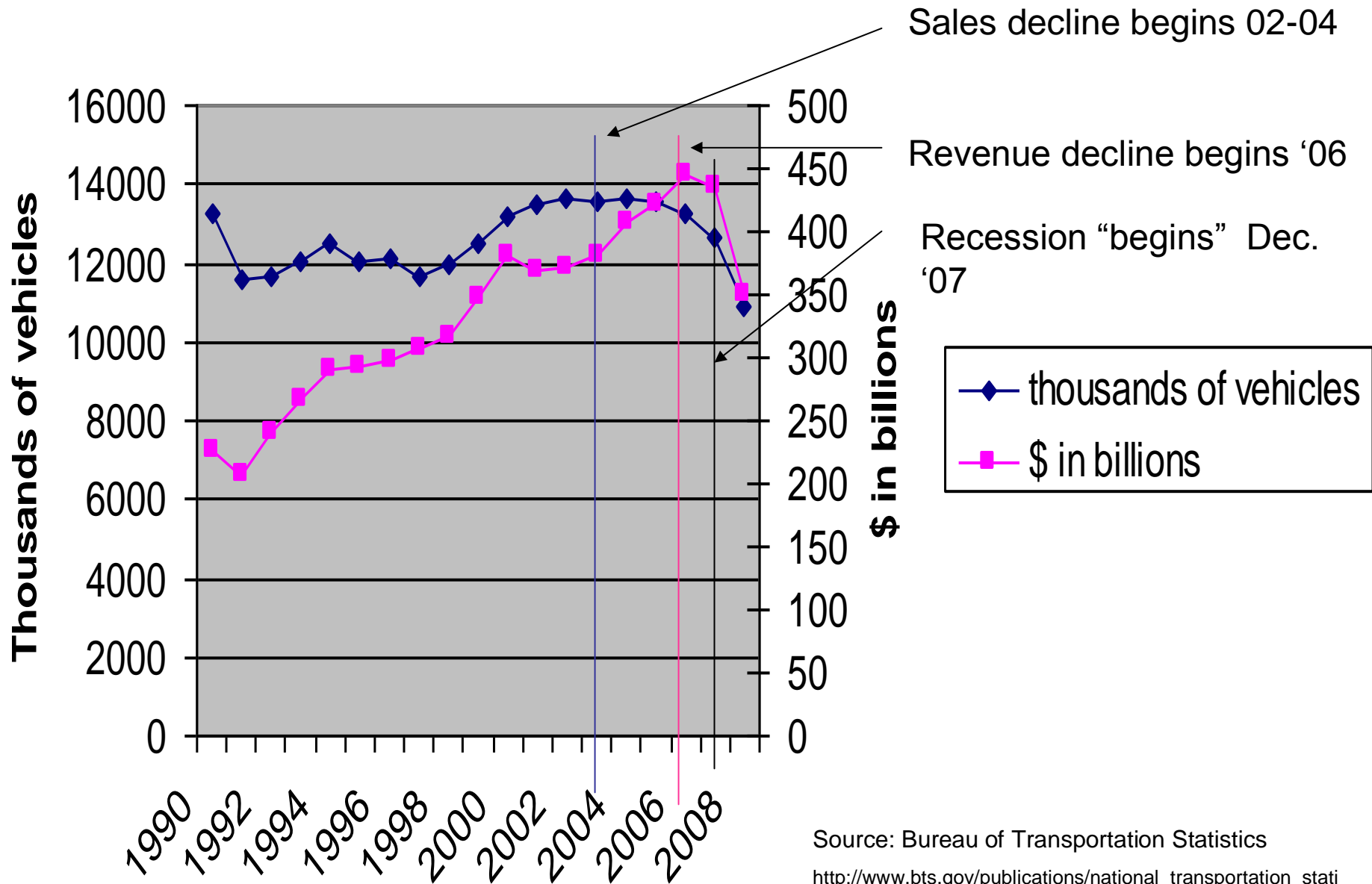
Index of Consumer Sentiment; University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers
(each month, N=1000+)

Figure 1b. U.S. Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Capita, Annualized and Real Gasoline Pump Prices, January 1991–September 2008

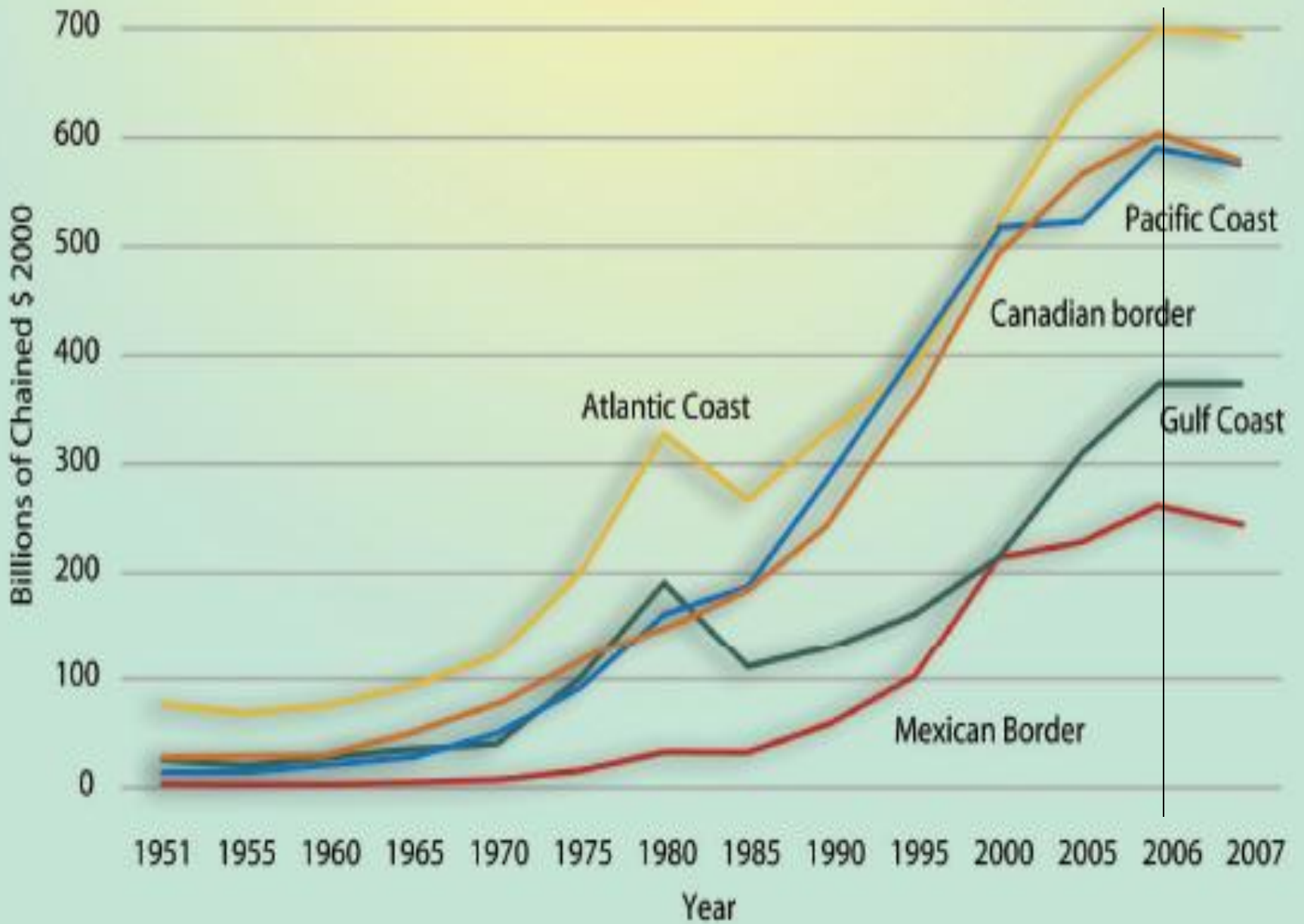


Source: Traffic Volume Trends and Energy Information Administration

New Vehicle Sales



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics
http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/html/table_01_17.html

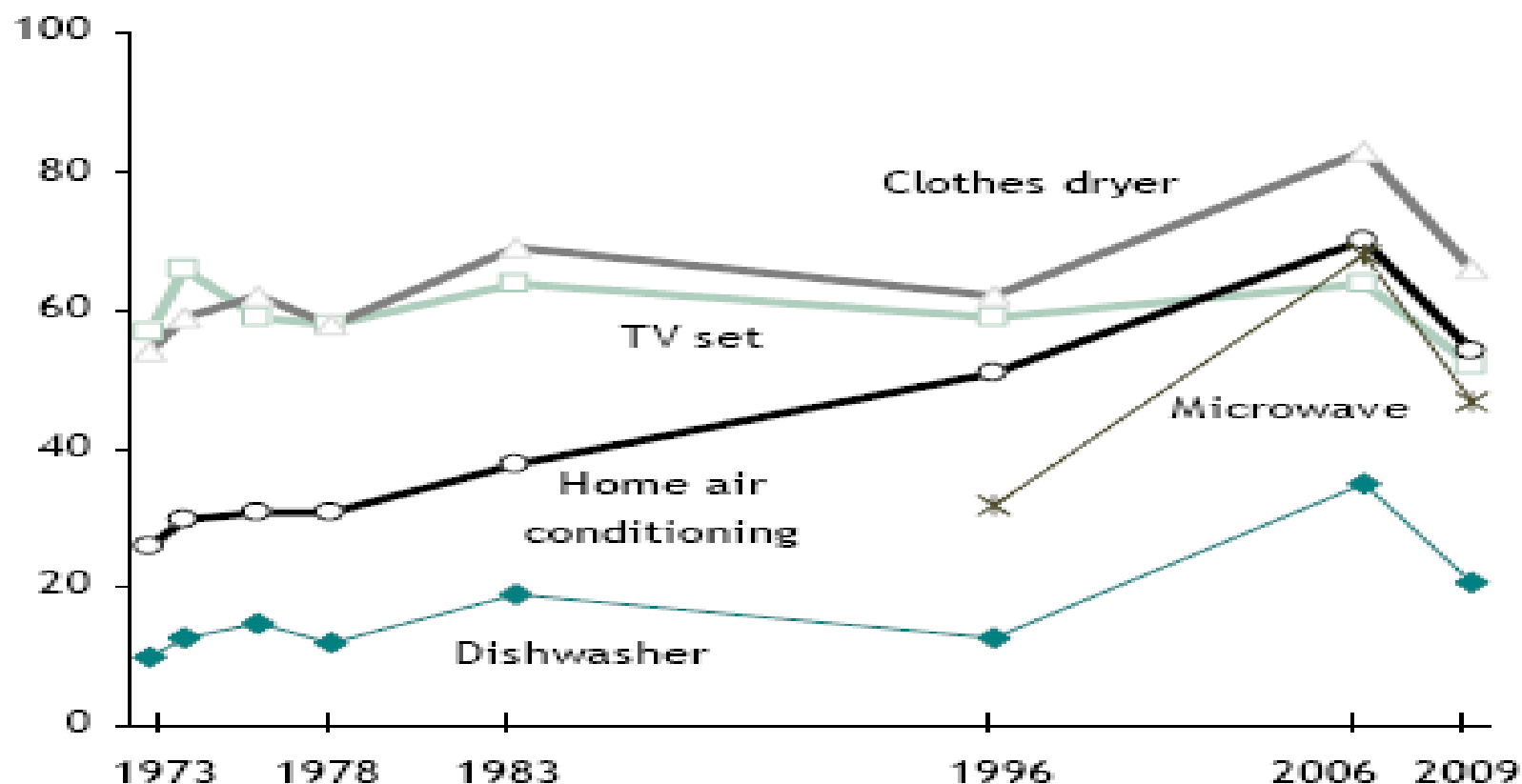


TOTAL US IMPORT FREIGHT VALUE

(US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION)

From Luxury to Necessity—and Back Again

Percent rating each item as a necessity



Question wording: Do you pretty much think of this as a necessity or pretty much think of this as a luxury you could do without?

Source: 1973 to 1983 surveys by Roper; 1996 survey by Washington Post/Kaiser/Harvard; 2006 and 2009 surveys by Pew Research Center.

Appendix 2

Oregon Municipal Survey: Climate &
Consumption

PI&DHM Research Nov. 2011

Results

1. Sometimes tough choices have to be made in balancing economic growth and protecting the environment. Even though most people want to have both protection and growth, which of these two statements comes closer to your view even if neither represents your view exactly. (Rotate statements)

| Response Category | N=300 |
|--|-------|
| A.Economic growth should be given a priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent | 37% |
| A.Protecting the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of slowing economic growth | 56% |
| A.Both/Neither/Can't decide | 6% |
| A.Don't know | 1% |

2. Here is another pair of statements, which comes closest to your view even if neither represents your view exactly? (Rotate statements)

| Response Category | N=300 |
|---|-------|
| A.We need to get the economy growing by consuming more goods and services | 27% |
| A.We'll be better off by consuming less and living more simply | 65% |
| A.Both/Neither/Can't decide | 7% |
| A.Don't know | 1% |

CLIMATE CHANGE ATTITUDES

Here are some views we hear about climate change. For each statement please tell me if you strongly disagree, lean toward disagree, are undecided, lean toward agree, or strongly agree. (Randomize Q6-Q10) (Listed in order of “Strongly Agree”)

| Response Category | Strongly Disagree | Lean toward Disagree | Undecided | Lean toward Agree | Strongly Agree | Don't know |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| 9. Climate change is occurring from human causes like burning fossil fuels. | 5% | 8% | 7% | 24% | 53% | 3% |
| 10. Climate change is occurring and in the long term the impacts will probably be catastrophic. | 8% | 9% | 9% | 30% | 41% | 3% |
| 8. Climate change may be happening but its more from natural causes than human causes. | 36% | 20% | 10% | 18% | 13% | 2% |
| 7. Climate change is very unsettled in scientific evidence. | 42% | 13% | 9% | 20% | 10% | 6% |
| 6. Climate change from human causes is a hoax and not occurring. | 63% | 15% | 6% | 9% | 7% | 1% |

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Now here are views some people have about addressing climate change. For each statement please tell me if you strongly disagree, lean toward disagree, are undecided, lean toward agree, or strongly agree. (Randomize Q11-Q17) (Listed in order of “Strongly Agree”)

| Response Category | Strongly Disagree | Lean toward Disagree | Undecided | Lean toward Agree | Strongly Agree | Don't know |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| 12. Climate change requires much stronger regulations of greenhouse gas emissions. | 5% | 8% | 10% | 24% | 51% | 3% |
| 16. Climate change requires us to entirely rethink our behavior. | 6% | 8% | 5% | 35% | 46% | 0% |
| 15. Climate change impacts and solutions depend on a force greater than humans. | 28% | 20% | 18% | 13% | 17% | 4% |
| 17. Comprehensive global treaties and worldwide laws are the only way to address climate change. | 16% | 21% | 13% | 29% | 16% | 4% |
| 13. With regards to climate change, government should get out of the way and let citizens make their own decisions. | 36% | 23% | 14% | 14% | 11% | 1% |
| 14. An individual is incapable of solving climate change, changing my own actions won't make a difference. | 50% | 24% | 5% | 11% | 9% | 1% |
| 11. Science and human ingenuity will solve climate change with little need to change our way of life. | 44% | 26% | 8% | 14% | 6% | 2% |

BEHAVIORS

I'm going to read from a list of daily choices about activities we do. From this list, tell me if you never, infrequently, often, or always do these things. (Randomize Q18-Q23) (Listed in in order of "Always")

| Response Category | Never | Infrequently | Often | Always | Don't know |
|--|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 19. Recycle as much household waste as the system will accept. | 2% | 4% | 27% | 67% | 0% |
| 23. Reduce winter heating by lowering inside temperatures | 5% | 10% | 40% | 45% | 0% |
| 20. Avoid impulsive buying. | 6% | 22% | 43% | 28% | 1% |
| 22. Reduce driving by walking, biking, riding public transportation and/or staying close to home. | 12% | 22% | 43% | 21% | 2% |
| 18. Choose food that has been grown locally and grown in season. | 4% | 23% | 52% | 20% | 1% |
| 21. Consider the environmental impact before making purchases. | 13% | 25% | 43% | 18% | 1% |

BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Here is a list of statements we hear people say about making certain lifestyle choices. For each statement as it applies to you, please tell me if you strongly disagree, lean toward disagree, don't know, lean toward agree, or strongly agree with each. (Randomize Q24-Q35) (Listed in order of "Strongly Agree")

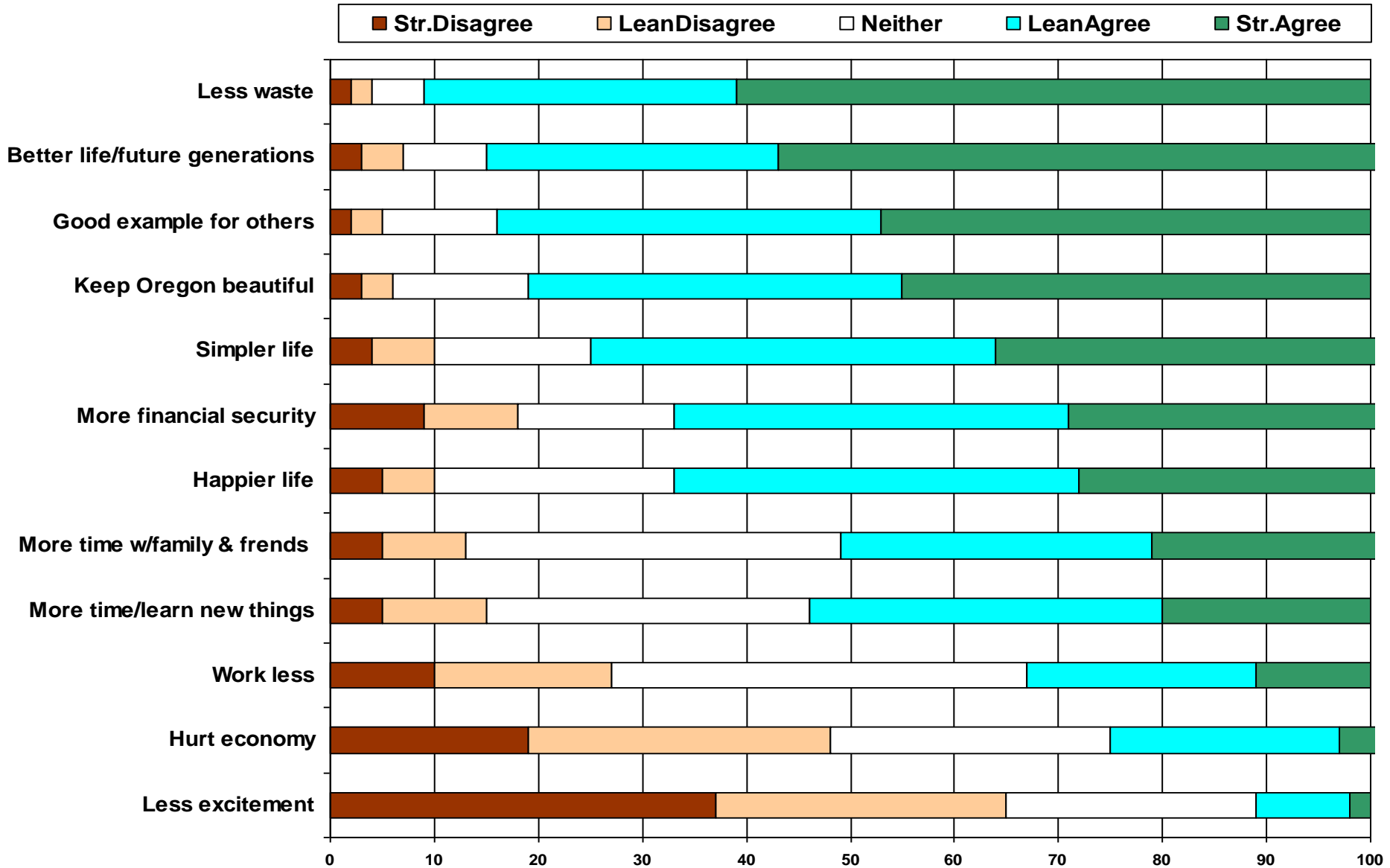
| Response Category | Strongly Disagree | Lean toward Disagree | Lean toward Agree | Strongly Agree | Don't know |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 35. I could be doing more to help the environment. | 5% | 6% | 46% | 38% | 5% |
| 26. Riding the bus isn't convenient; it takes too long, is expensive or doesn't fit my needs. | 19% | 17% | 24% | 33% | 6% |
| 31. I can't afford the costs of more efficient cars and appliances. | 26% | 18% | 26% | 23% | 7% |
| 27. I wouldn't feel safe riding a bicycle. | 53% | 15% | 9% | 20% | 4% |
| 34. I feel guilty about not doing more to improve the environment. | 22% | 21% | 33% | 17% | 6% |
| 32. There are too many choices; it's difficult to know what's right or not. | 33% | 26% | 20% | 14% | 7% |
| 29. Fuel efficient cars don't fit the needs of the life I live. | 55% | 22% | 5% | 11% | 7% |
| 33. Green buying seems like a lot of sales hype. | 34% | 26% | 22% | 10% | 8% |
| 30. I need a big vehicle for the type of life I live. | 66% | 16% | 6% | 10% | 2% |
| 28. Life is here to be enjoyed here and now, not fretting over the future. | 49% | 21% | 12% | 9% | 8% |
| 24. My personal actions really make little difference in impacting the environment. | 49% | 27% | 13% | 6% | 5% |
| 25. My life is just too busy and complicated to take actions like recycling, preparing whole foods, or traveling by bicycle | 61% | 24% | 9% | 5% | 1% |

Appendix 3

Select Examples from Eugene Opt-in Survey on
Sustainability Message Testing

To some people the term “Thoughtful Consumption” means some or all of the following:

-Purchase only what you need, -Share items with others, -Purchase second-hand when possible, -Purchase locally when possible, -Carefully consider the environmental impacts of purchases. Given this definition, how strongly do you agree or disagree on the scale below that “thoughtful consumption would lead to each of the following:



Eugene Message Frame Test

Q7. From focus groups of citizens we have heard five different reasons people give for being more thoughtful about the things they buy. These reasons are each summarized in the table below. We'd like your opinion about the relative strength of each of these statements. (Choices Rotate)

Instruction: You have five votes to apply to the statements below. Each vote indicates a level of strength. You may distribute the votes anyway you wish. Simply enter the number of votes you assign to any single statement until your total reaches five. They may be relocated if you reconsider. For example, your scores in the boxes might indicate a “3”, “1” and “1”, meaning the “3” box is considerably stronger to you than the others.

Eugene Opt-In Message Frame Survey Test Results (PolicyInteractive Feb/Mar 2012 N=692 non-statistical sample survey)

| Results shown in order: Aggregated EWEB + City Employee (in bold font); EWEB Residential Customer; City Employee. (shown in descending order, items randomized in survey) | Assign 5 Votes in Boxes Below |
|---|--|
| Future Generations: We all have a responsibility to pass this place on to the next generation in at least as good a condition as we inherited it ourselves. Both our leaders and we our selves must do more to protect this planet for future generations. | 872 527 345 |
| Waste Not: Waste is a bad thing, and it is a by-product of thoughtless consumption. It is important to reduce the amount of waste we create by shifting behaviors to a more sustainable lifestyle and living more simply. | 735 480 255 |
| Live by Example: Each and every one of us is a teacher by how we act. We need to set a good example for each other and our children by considerate and thoughtful behavior as it applies to care of the earth and equitable sharing of resources. | 630 401 229 |
| Do the Right Thing: I feel better about myself when I know I'm doing the right thing. Recycling, being careful to reuse things, and making purchases with thoughtfulness about consequences gives a sense of self-satisfaction. | 616 352 264 |
| Oregon Pride: Oregon is a special place which has attracted people who care for the land and natural resources. We have long been a leader in green practices and we can leverage this reputation to set an example for other states. We need to continue to build on our leadership through smart environmental behavior. | 412 265 147 |