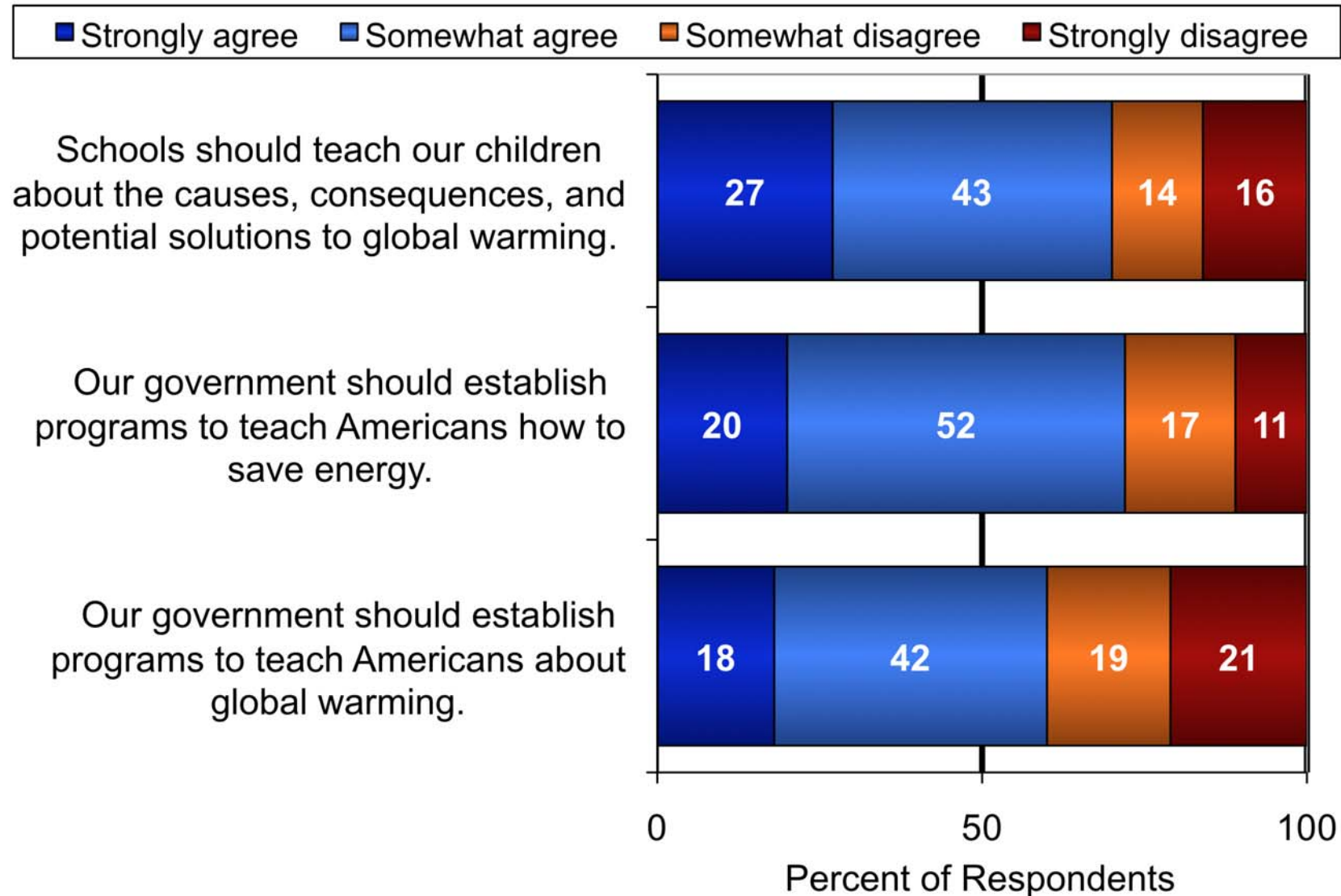


Climate Change in the American Mind

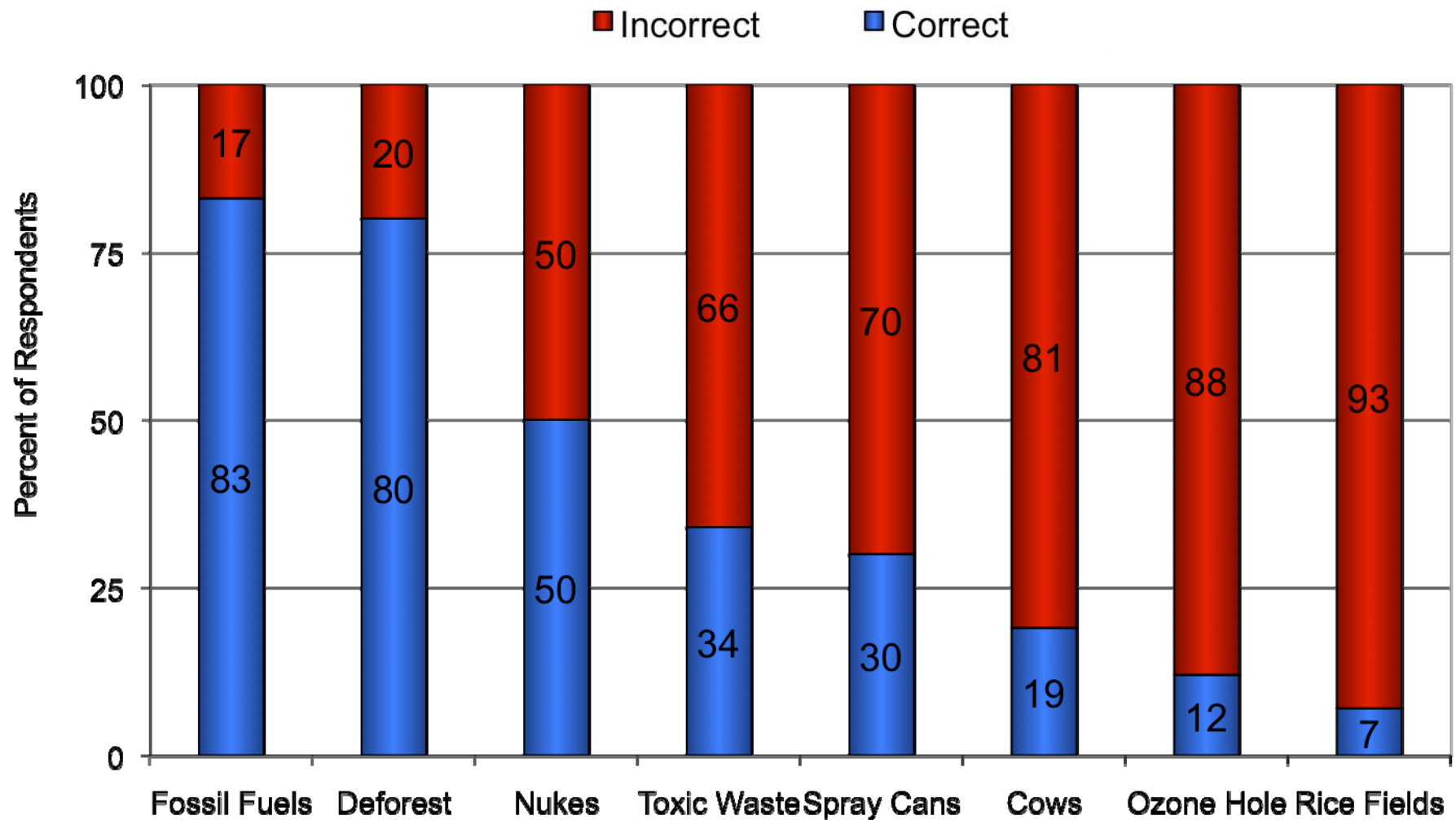


Anthony Leiserowitz, Ph.D.
Director, Yale Project on Climate Change

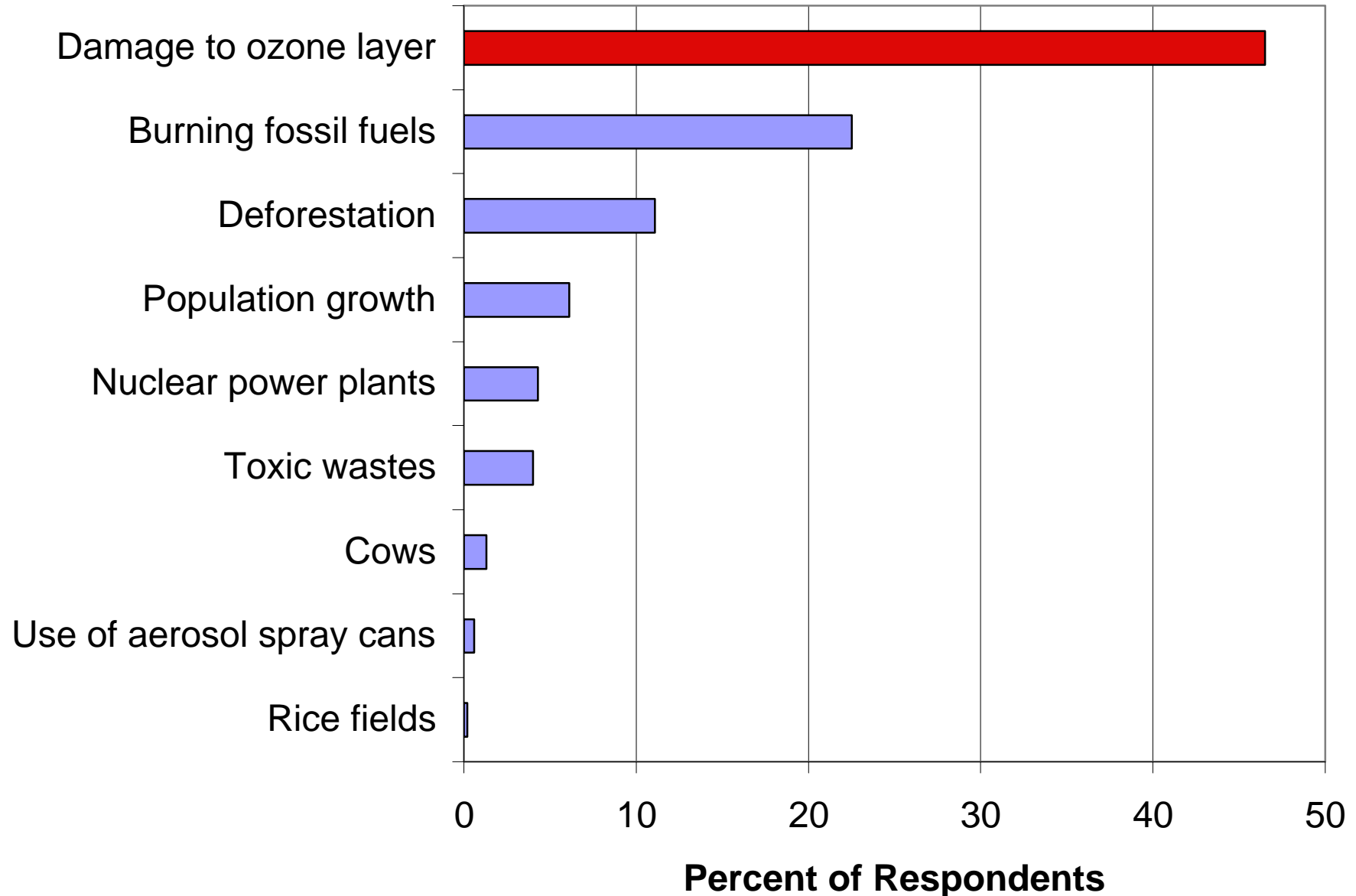
Public Support for Climate and Energy Education



Knowledge: Which of the following directly contributes to global warming?

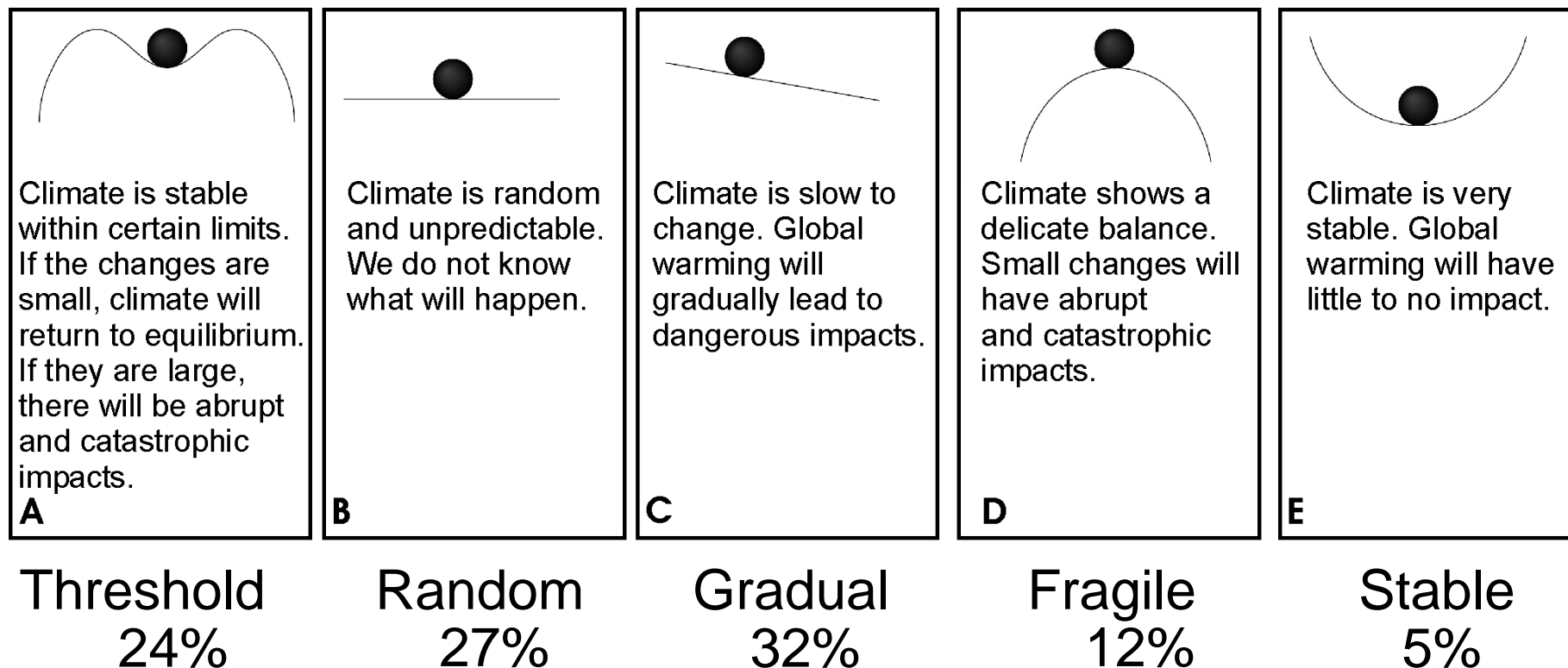


Which contributes most to global warming?

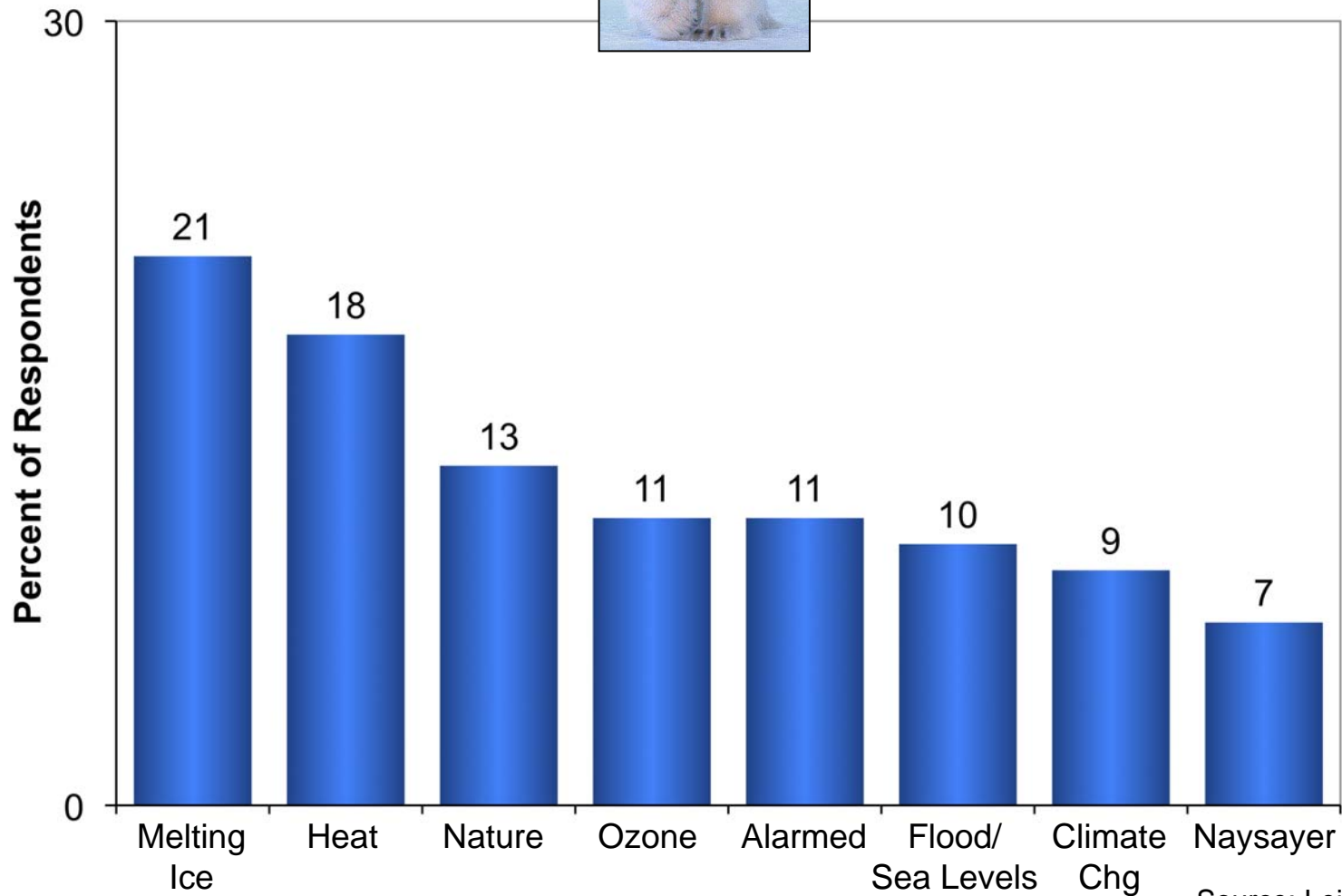
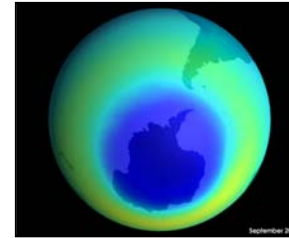


Conceptual Models of Climate Change

Which one of the five pictures below best represents your understanding of how the climate system works?

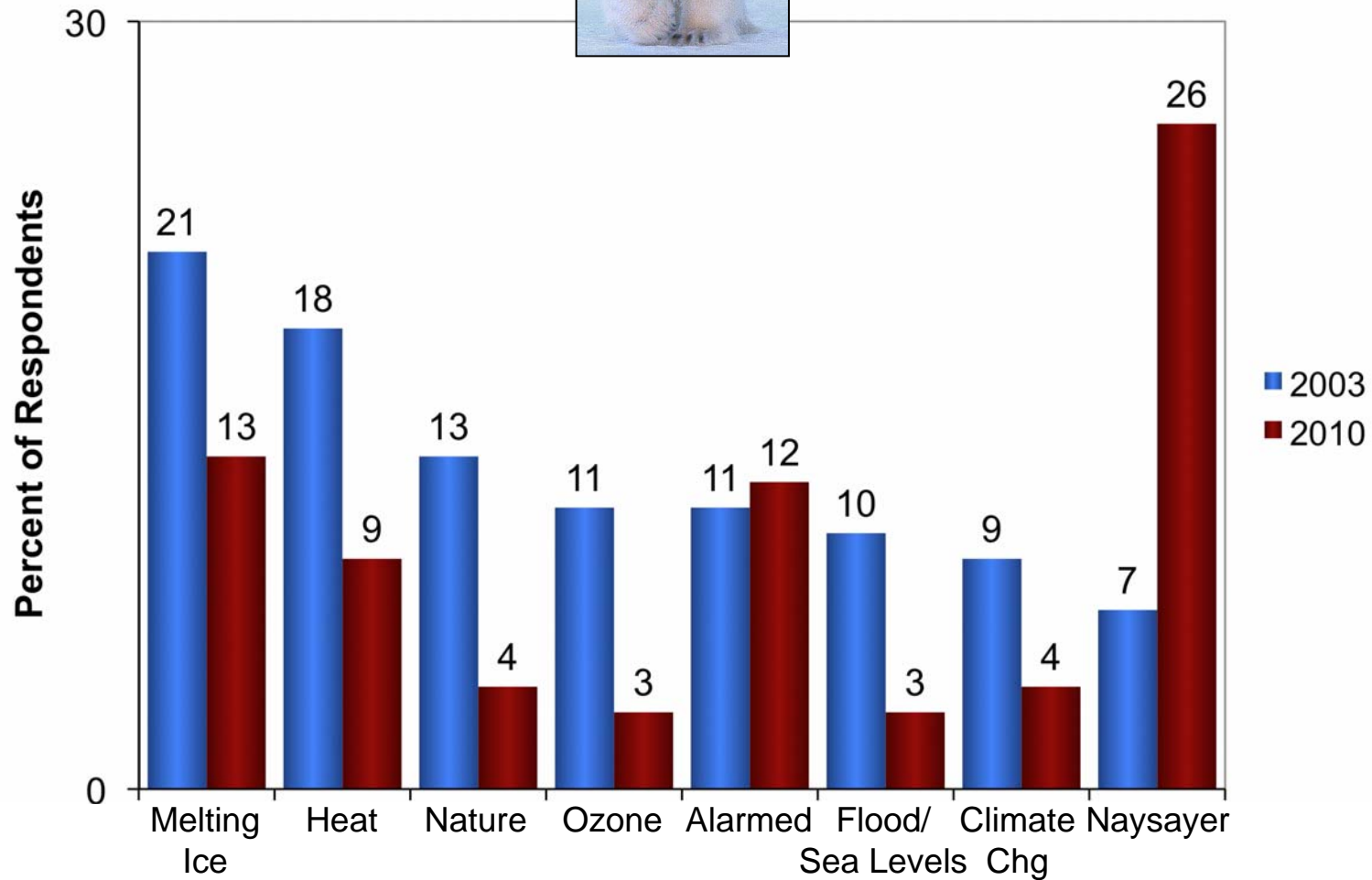
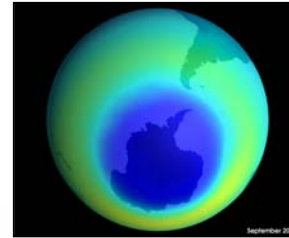


American Images of Global Warming



Source: Leiserowitz, 2003

American Images of Global Warming



Source: Leiserowitz, 2003, 2010

Global Warming's “Six Americas”

Figure 1: Proportion of the U.S. adult population in the Six Americas

Proportion represented by area

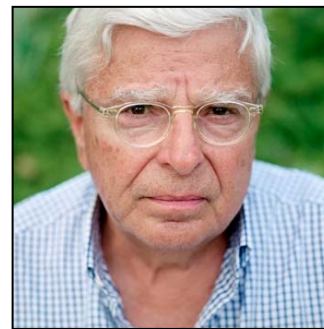
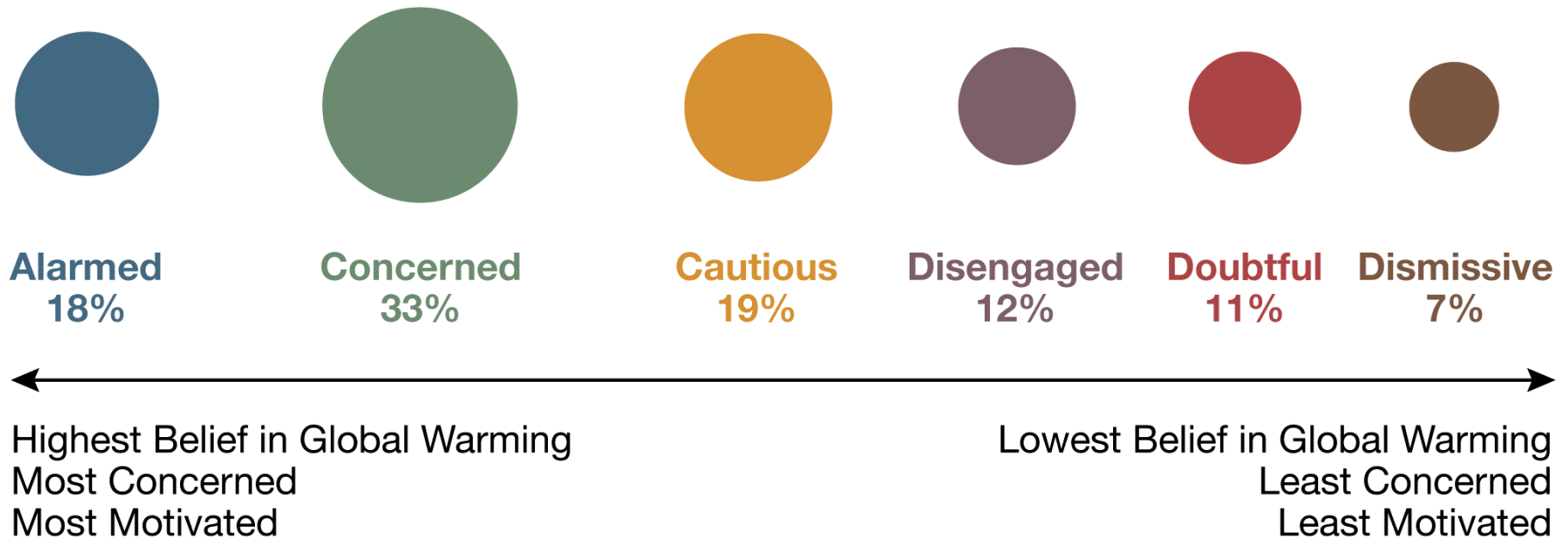
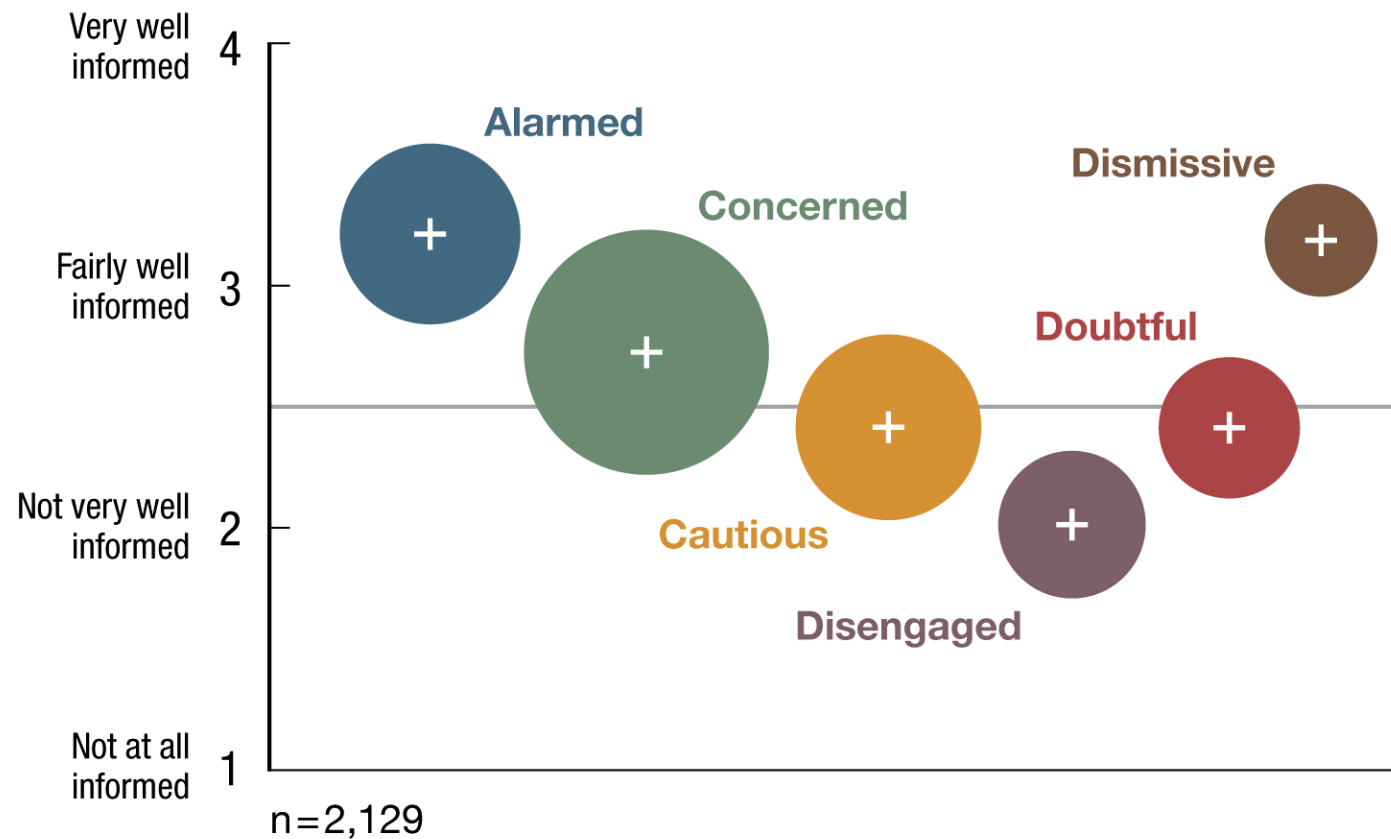


Figure 7: Self-assessed knowledge

Personally, do you think that you are well informed or not about ...

- ... the different causes of global warming
- ... the different consequences of global warming
- ... ways in which we can reduce global warming.

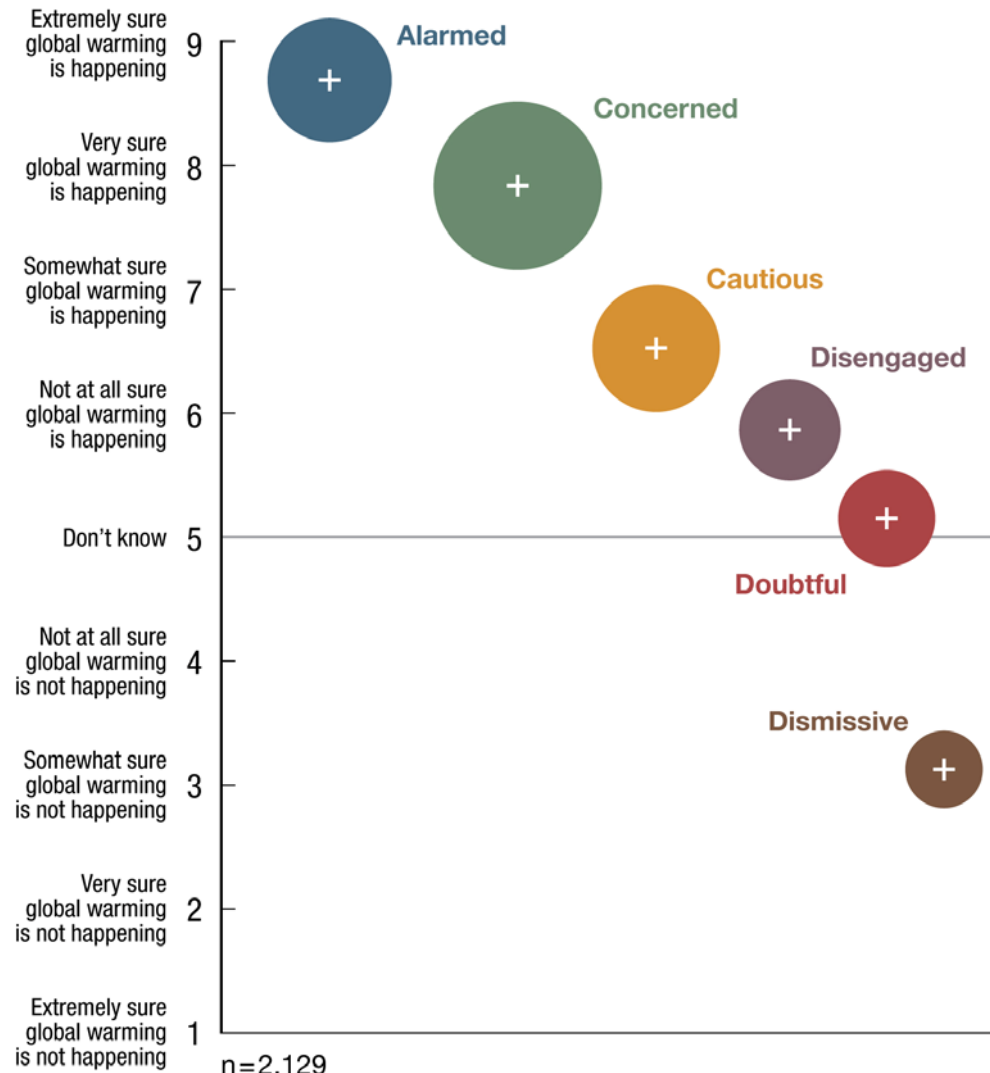
Results shown below are the average of the three responses.



Source: Leiserowitz, Maibach & Roser-Renouf (Yale, 2009)

Figure 2: Certainty of belief in the reality of global warming

*Do you think that global warming is happening?
How sure are you that global warming is happening? or
How sure are you that global warming is not happening?*

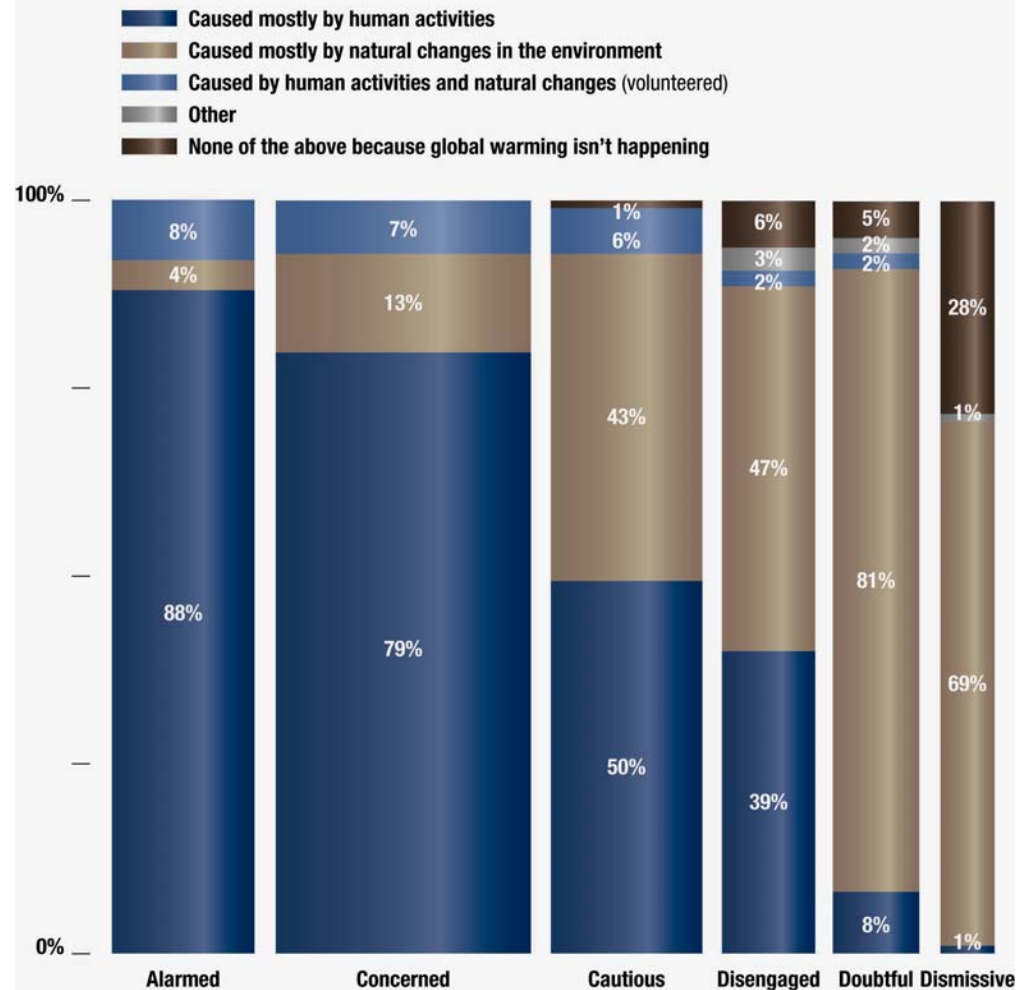


Source: Leiserowitz, Maibach & Roser-Renouf (Yale, 2009)

Figure 8: Beliefs regarding the causes of global warming

If global warming is happening, do you think it is:

- Caused mostly by human activities
- Caused mostly by natural changes in the environment
- Other (Please specify)
- None of the above because global warming isn't happening



n=2,129

Note: In this figure (and all subsequent figures with columns), the column width accurately represents the proportion of the American public in each segment.

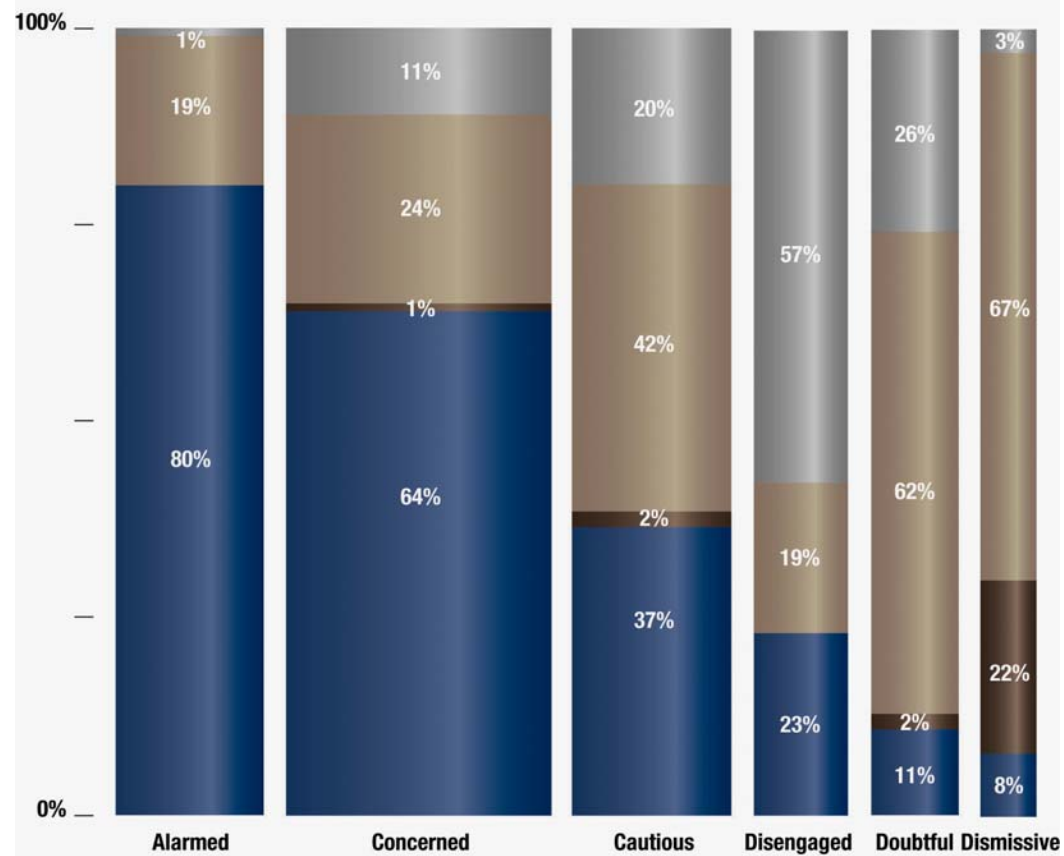
Source: Leiserowitz, Maibach & Roser-Renouf (Yale, 2009)

Figure 9: Beliefs about the scientific consensus

Which comes closer to your own view?

- *Most scientists think global warming is happening*
- *Most scientists think global warming is not happening*
- *There is a lot of disagreement among scientists about whether or not global warming is happening*
- *Don't know enough to say*

Most scientists think global warming is happening
Most scientists think global warming is not happening
There is a lot of disagreement
Don't know enough to say

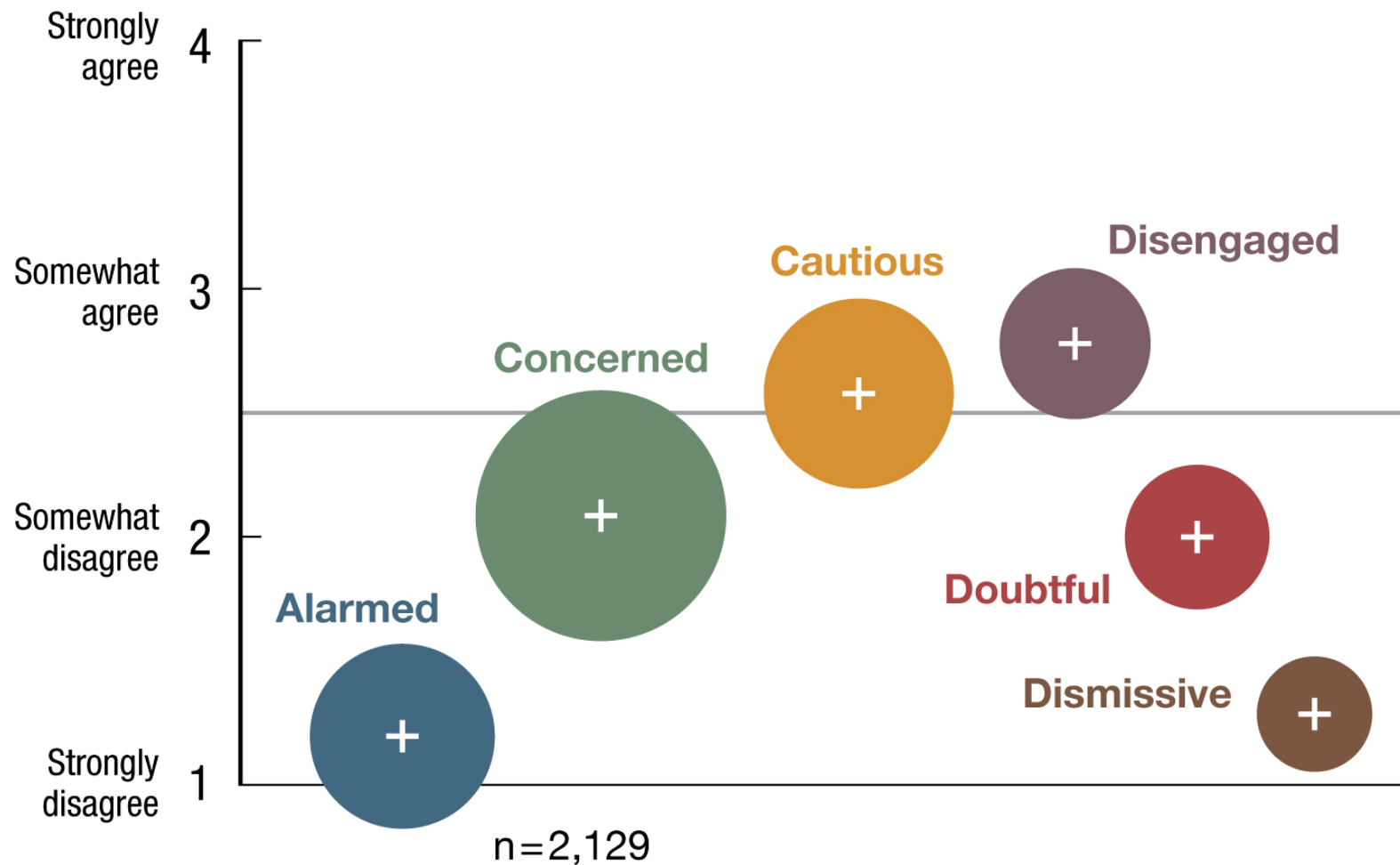


n=2,129

Source: Leiserowitz, Maibach & Roser-Renouf (Yale, 2009)

Figure 5: Attitudinal certainty

"I could easily change my mind about global warming."



Source: Leiserowitz, Maibach & Roser-Renouf (Yale, 2009)

Summary

- Public understanding of the causes, consequences, and potential solutions remains limited. Many continue to use inappropriate mental models to think about the issue.
- There are six distinct “Americas” that each respond differently to the climate issue – know your audience.
- Some groups need to understand the basic facts of climate science, others have already accepted those facts and want to know more about the solutions.
- Large majorities of Americans support programs to teach children and adults about climate change and energy.
- Improving climate literacy is more important now than ever.

For more information:



research.yale.edu/environment/climate/

The online Six Americas survey:

<http://uw.kqed.org/climatesurvey/index-kqed.php>

or

<http://apps.facebook.com/climatesurvey/>