

Communicating About Climate Change



Are They Talking About Climate or Weather?



People like to talk about conditions that affect their lives. Climate and weather are two of those conditions. Put a C next to all the things people say that have to do with climate. Put a W next to all the things people say that have to do with weather.

- ___ A. "What shall I wear today?"
- ___ B. "What equipment do I need for the camping trip next summer?"
- ___ C. "It has rained on my birthday for the past three years."
- ___ D. "We just got three feet of snow in March. So much for global warming!"
- ___ E. "I wonder when I should plant the tomato seeds in my garden?"
- ___ F. "Our state has experienced the worst drought since records began more than 120 years ago."
- ___ G. "News flash! The drought in California has ended with the first significant storm this year dumping more than 10 inches of rain in many locations and filling most of the reservoirs to pre-drought conditions."
- ___ H. "We can't get low-cost flood insurance for our house anymore. The insurance company says this area is too great a risk."

Explain your thinking. What rule or reasoning did you use to decide if a statement is related to climate or weather?

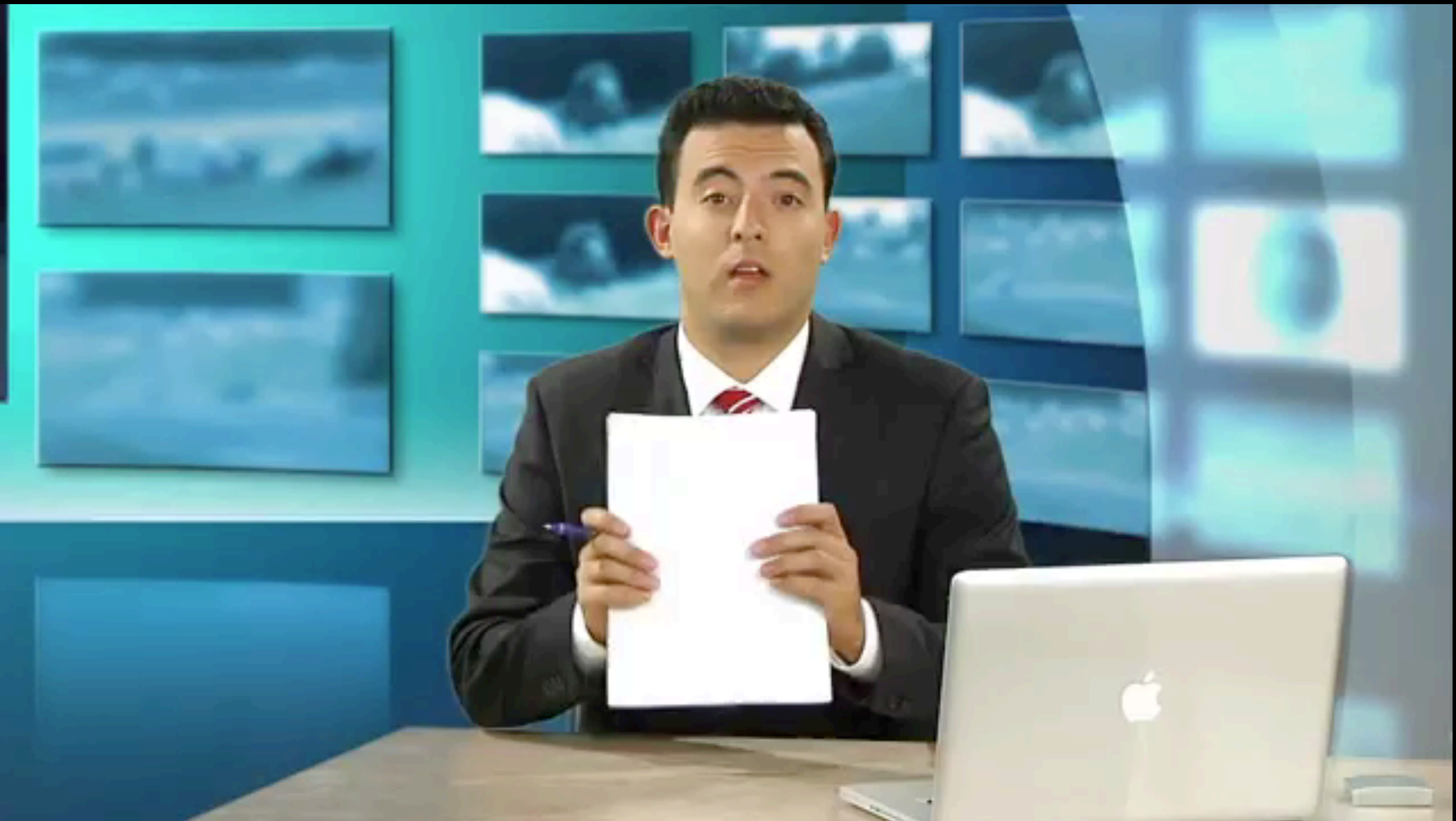
- The best answer is that B, E, F and H are related to climate
- *Weather* and *climate* are used interchangeably in common language.
- Scientists define *climate* as the prevailing weather conditions in an area over an extended period of time (decades to millions of years).
- The IPCC uses a minimum of 30 years to define *climate*.
- A popular saying is 'Climate is what you expect. Weather is what you get.'

- *Weather* is the short term (e.g. hour-to-hour, day-to-day) conditions of a particular area.
- Extreme events can occur that differ from the typical weather patterns in an area, but those are considered *weather events*.

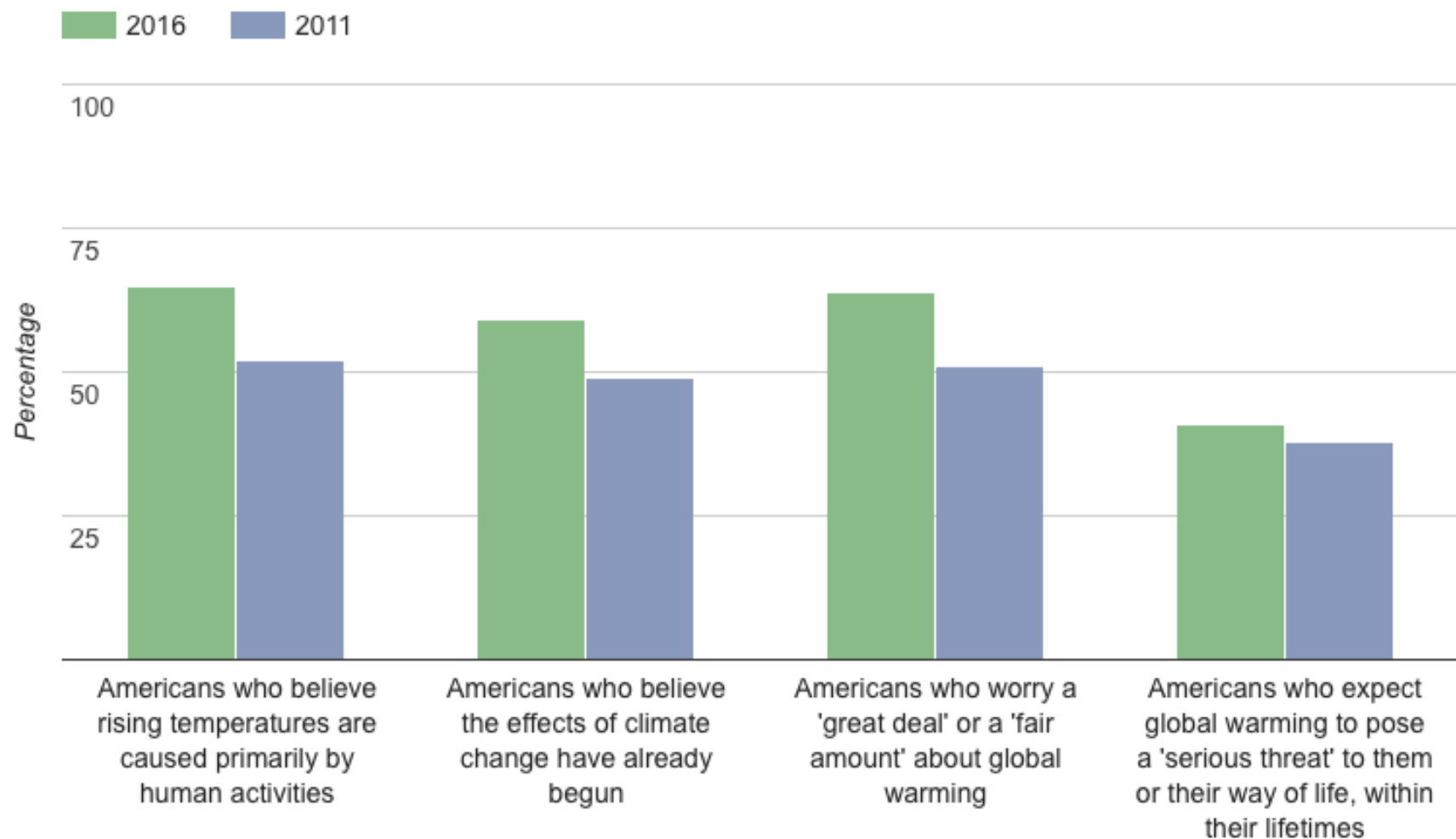
BBC



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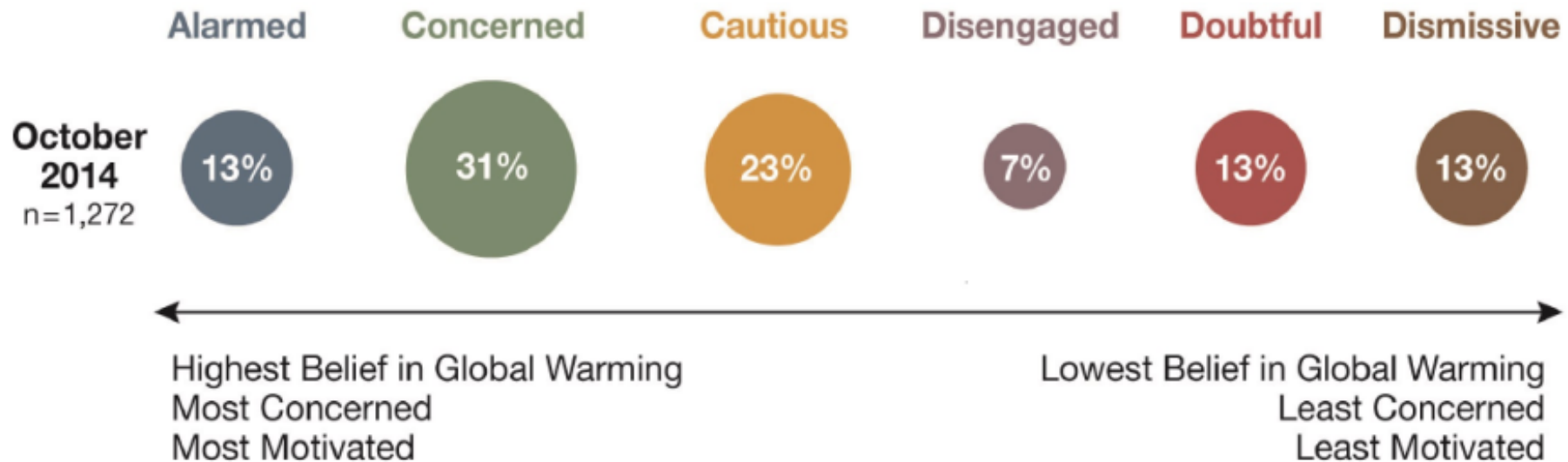


What do Americans Think About Climate Change?



6 Americas

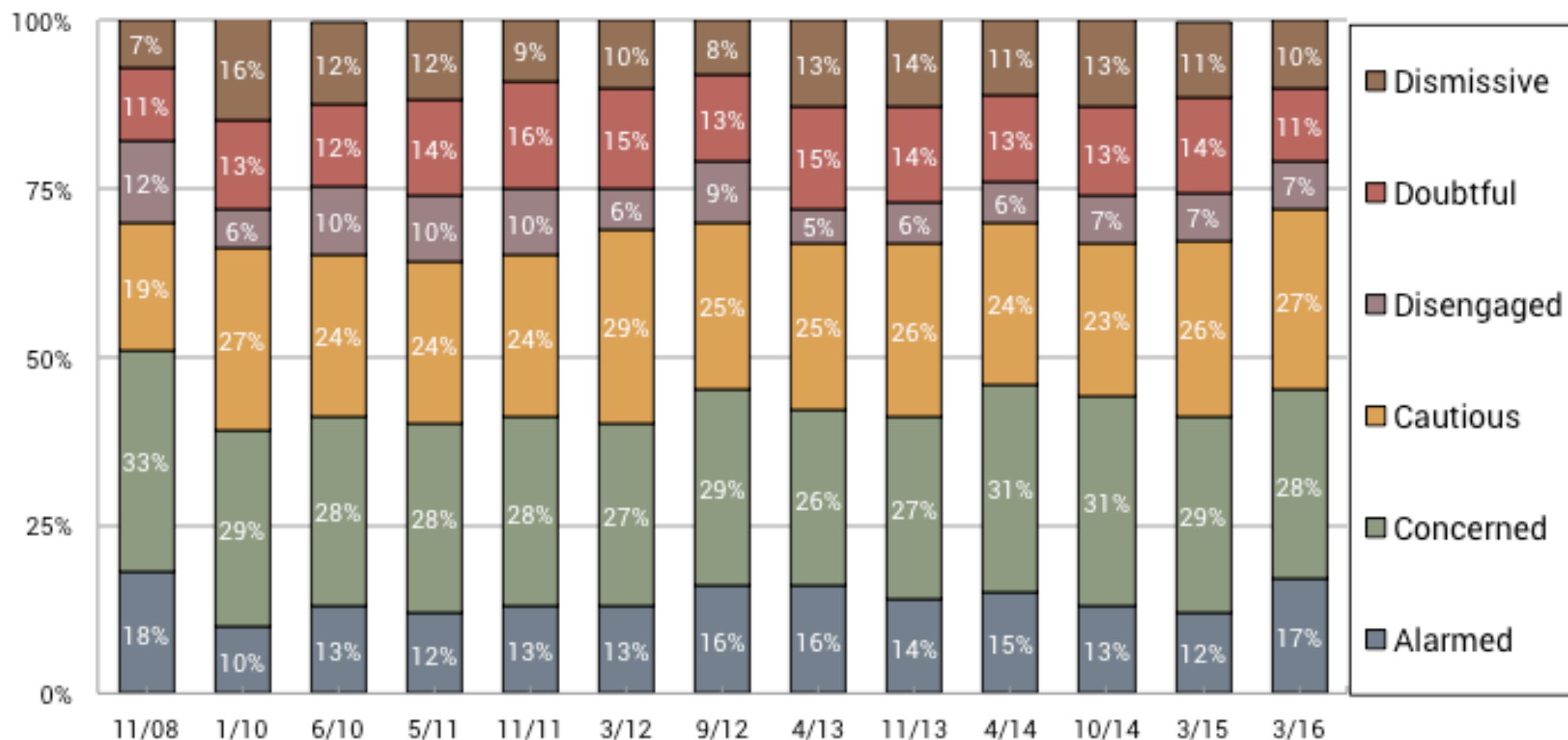
The Six Americas Audience Segments



Proportion represented by area

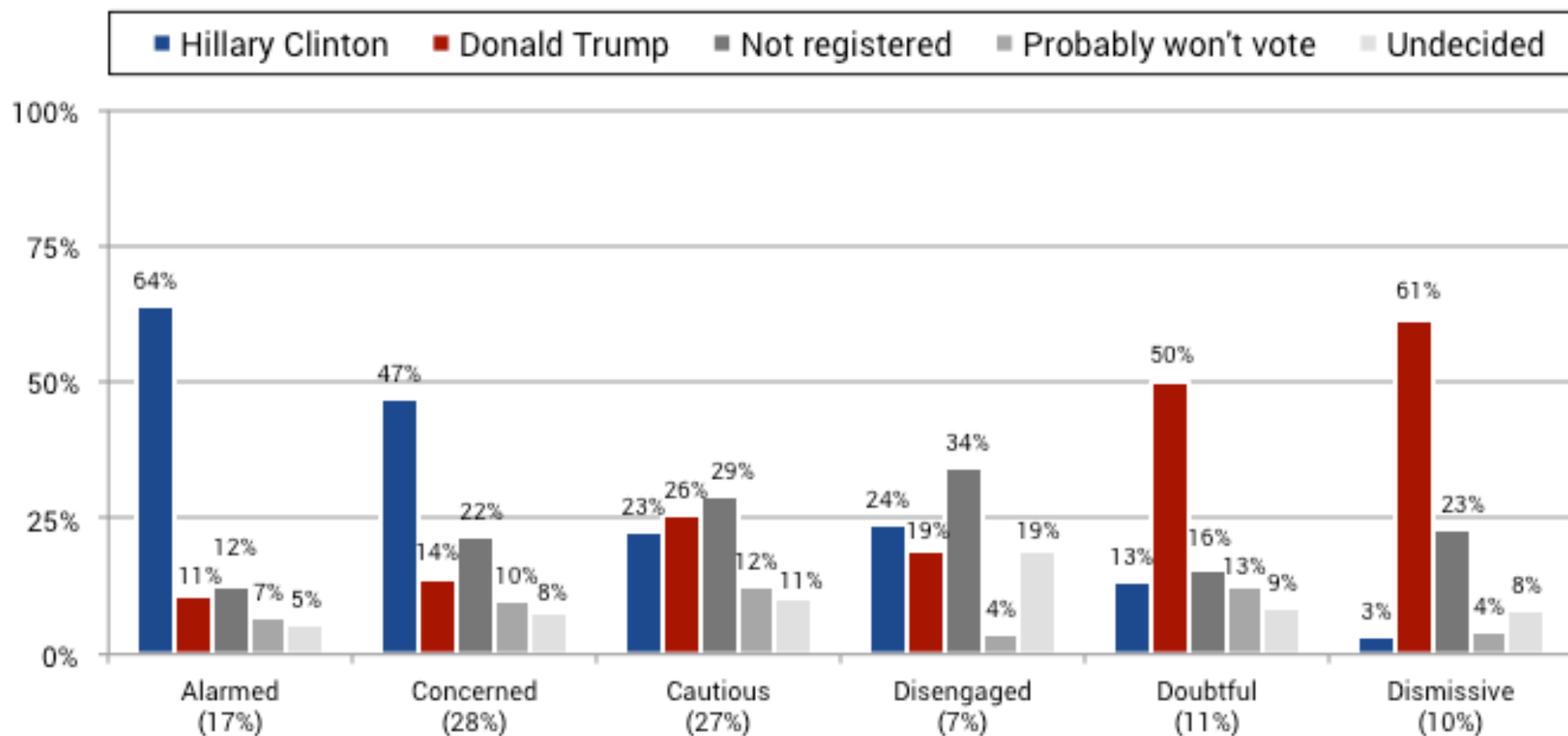
Source: Yale / George Mason University

Six Americas Segments, 2008 - 2016



Base: Americans 18+.

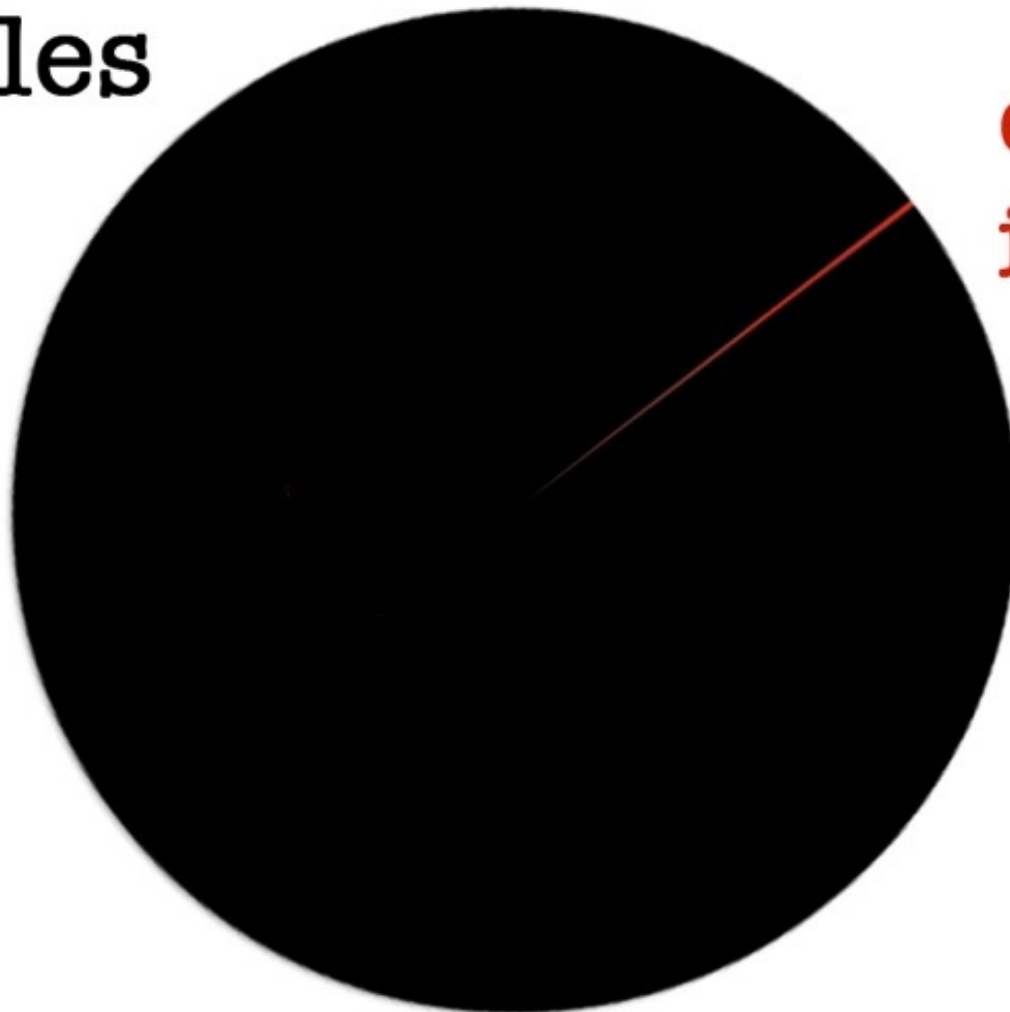
Presidential Vote Preference By Six Americas Segment



If the November 2016 presidential election were held today, and the candidates were Hillary Clinton (Democrat) and Donald Trump (Republican), who would you vote for? [Order of candidate names randomized]

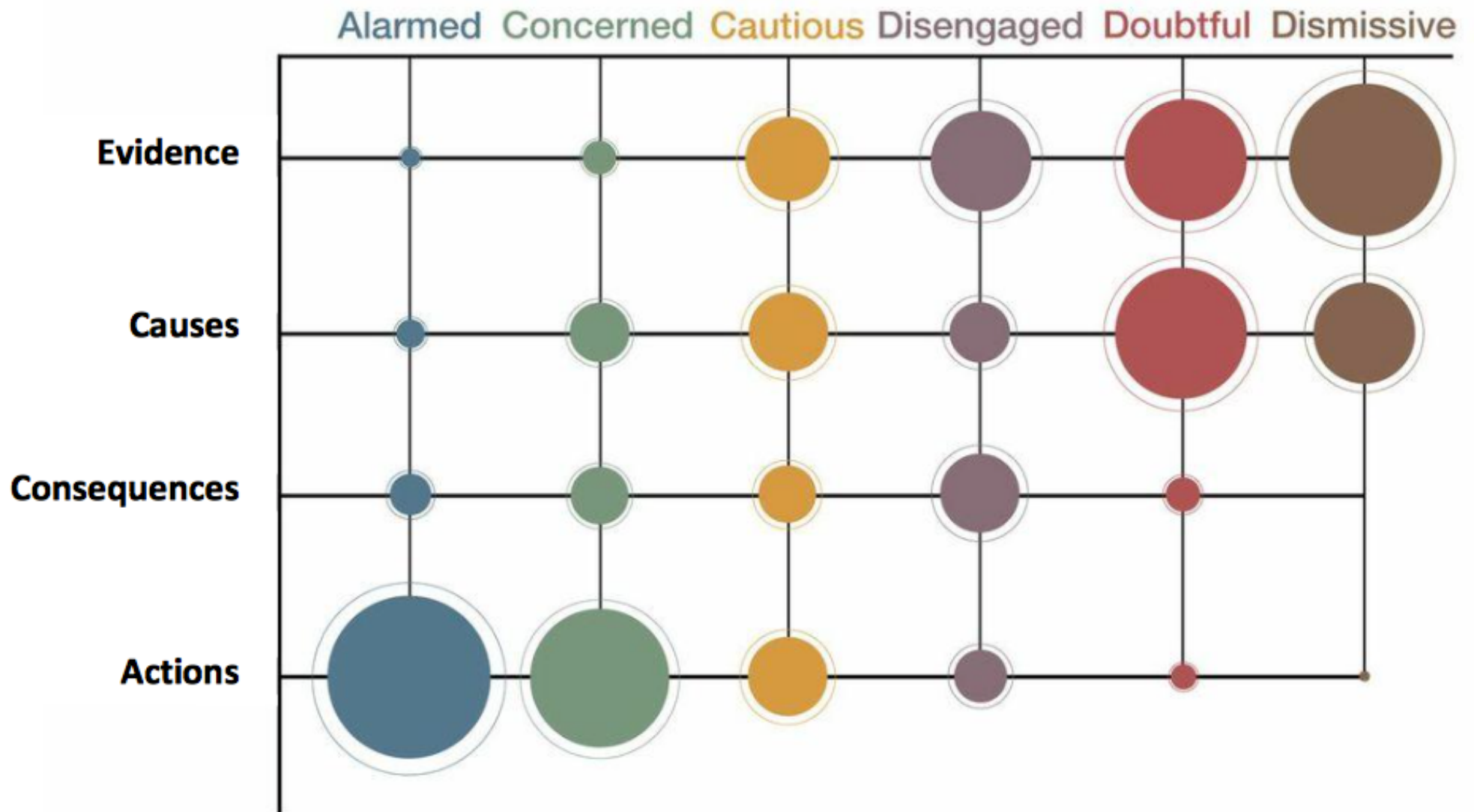
Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,204). March, 2016.

Of 13,950
peer-reviewed
CLIMATE CHANGE
articles



only 24 deny
it's happening.

Figure 5: Nature of the one question respondents would most like to pose to a climate scientist

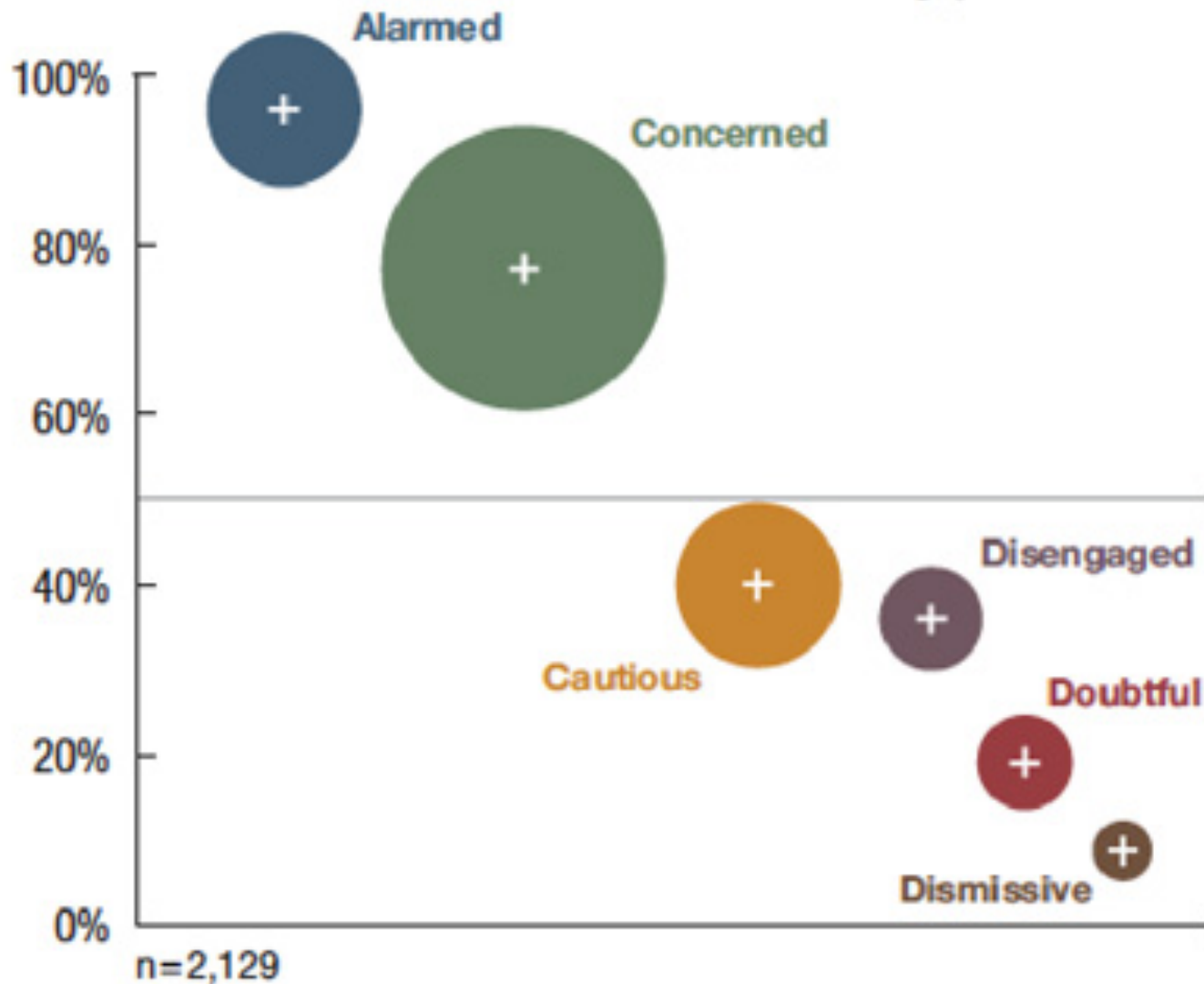


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The **5** most important things to know about climate change:

- 1) It's **real**
- 2) It's **bad**
- 3) It's **us**
- 4) **Scientists agree**
- 5) **There's hope**

Figure 25: Proportion intending to engage in consumer activism over coming year



Note: Percentages show the proportion who intend to (1) reward companies that are taking steps to reduce global warming by buying their products; or (2) punish companies that are opposing steps to reduce global warming by NOT buying their products; or (3) both of these actions.



You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them.

Wangari Maathai

Personal Climate Action Plan

Goal: create a personal plan for yourself related to climate mitigation (reducing your greenhouse gas footprint), and climate adaptation (preparing for the impacts of climate change)

- Modeled after what cities, states, countries have done
- Have a buddy system with another class member to review your progress on your plan monthly, or bimonthly, etc.
- Share your plan and brainstorm ideas at the last session on 1/17

Steps to Create Plan

- 1) After each class, consider if there is some aspect you would want to include in your personal plan. For example, after the section on national impacts, you may want to consider joining an organization working on climate change at a national level (350.org, Citizens Climate Lobby, etc.)
- 2) Personal Mitigation: Additionally, after calculating your carbon footprint for 1/17 class, develop a set of steps you want to take to reduce your footprint. (Ex., I will drive 5% less for the next 3 months. I will investigate putting a heat pump in my house.)

Steps to Create Plan

- **Personal Adaptation:** After the January 10th class that describes local impacts of climate change (and also considering national, international impacts), consider where you are most vulnerable to climate change impacts, and what steps you could take to prepare (putting together emergency supply kit, learning to grow vegetables, etc.)

