

Print Media Coverage of Climate Change: why environmental organizations should care, and what they can do to achieve greater coverage

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MA Thesis Defense Presentation

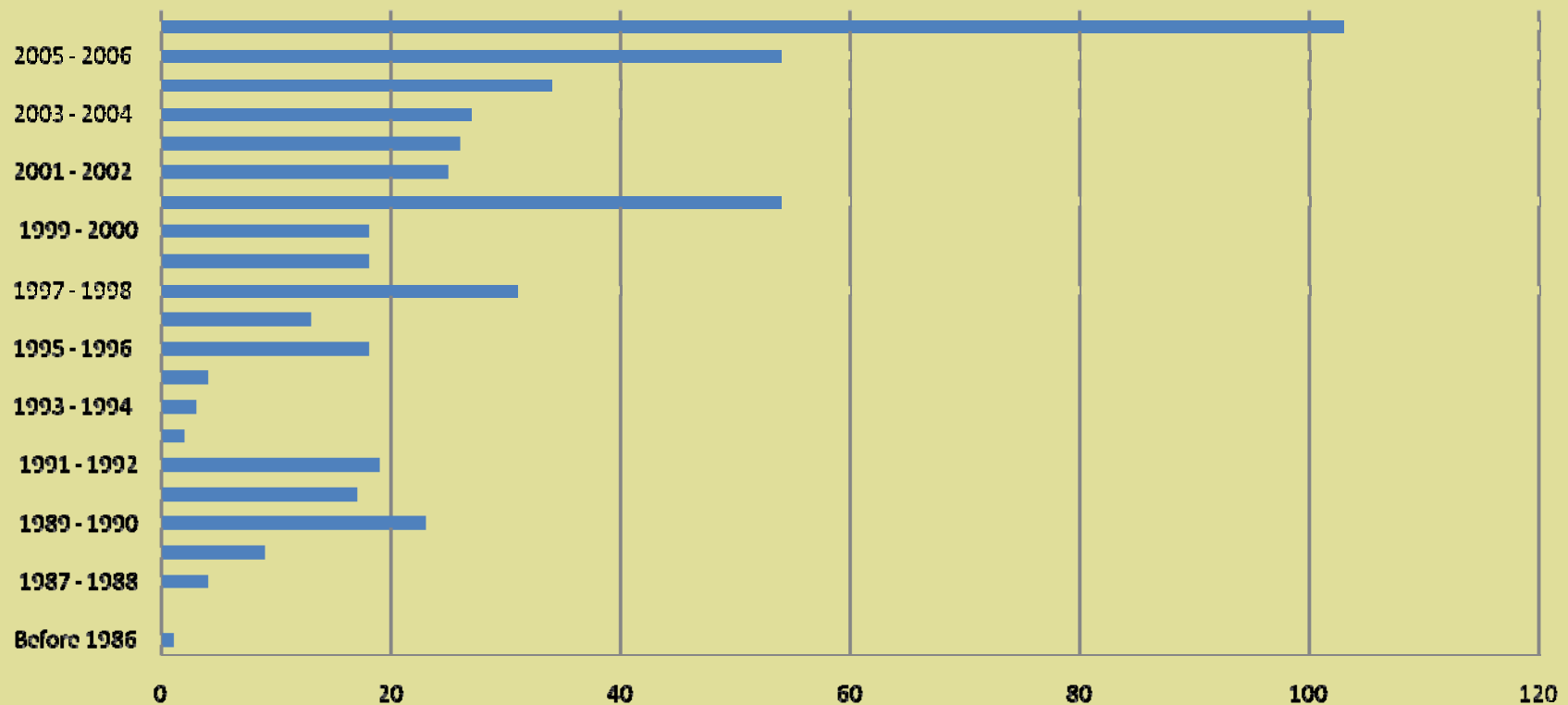
April 11th, 2008

Introduction

- ❑ The environmental movement seeks to educate people about environmental issues. It can do so more effectively by using more tools – including the mass media.
- ❑ Environmental organizations have a unique leadership role within the environmental movement.
- ❑ By pitching research results and activist events in more media-friendly ways, the environmental movement can effect greater media coverage.

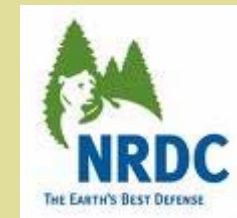
Media attention relating to climate change is increasing over time

Number of Climate Change-Related Articles Published by Year



Research Methods

- Interviews with environmental organizations' media experts.



- Print media analysis

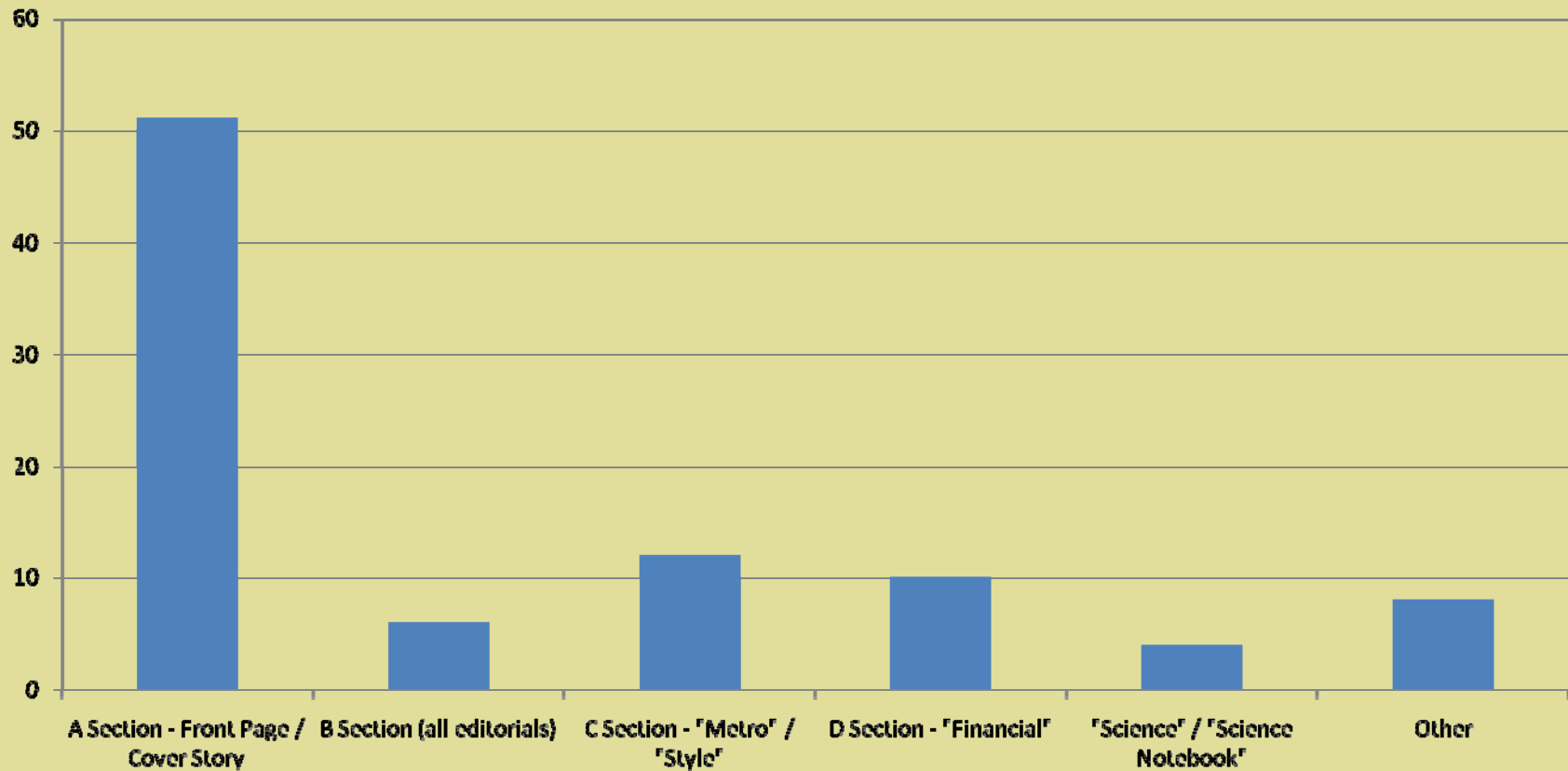


Basic article information

- Average median age of article readership = 46.5 years old
- Average median household income of readership = \$93,875
- Readership Percentage Male:Female = 63:37
- Total current circulation of all publications = 3,183,654
(Source: the "media kit" sections of each publication's website)
- Of the 92 different articles I coded and analyzed, many articles were written by the same people.
 - Juliet Eilperin, J. Freedom du Lac, David A. Fahrenthold
(*Washington Post*)
 - Felicity Barringer (*New York Times*)
 - Bret Schulte (*U.S. News and World Report*)

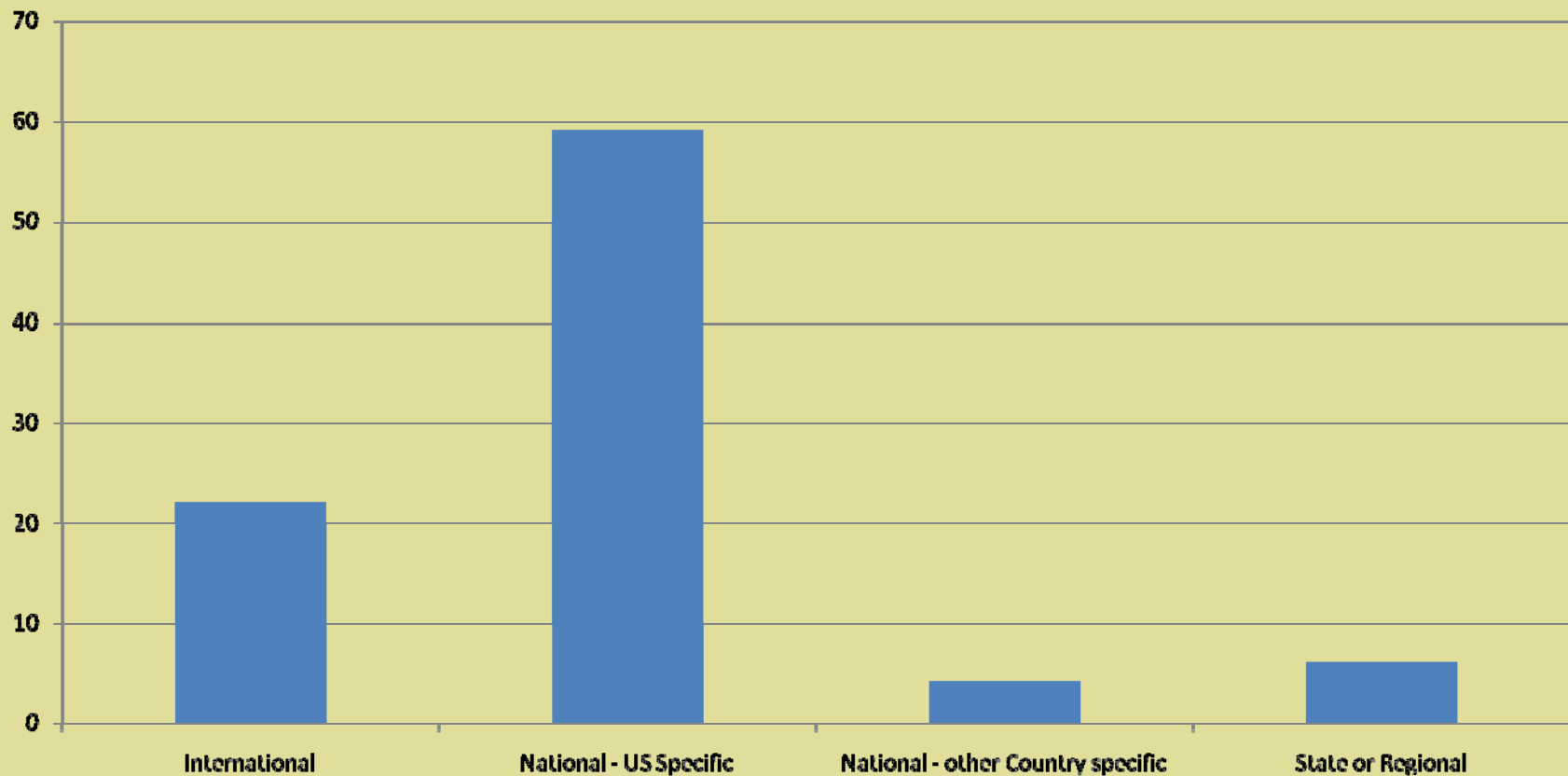
Articles most frequently appeared in front page sections

Where Each Article Appeared



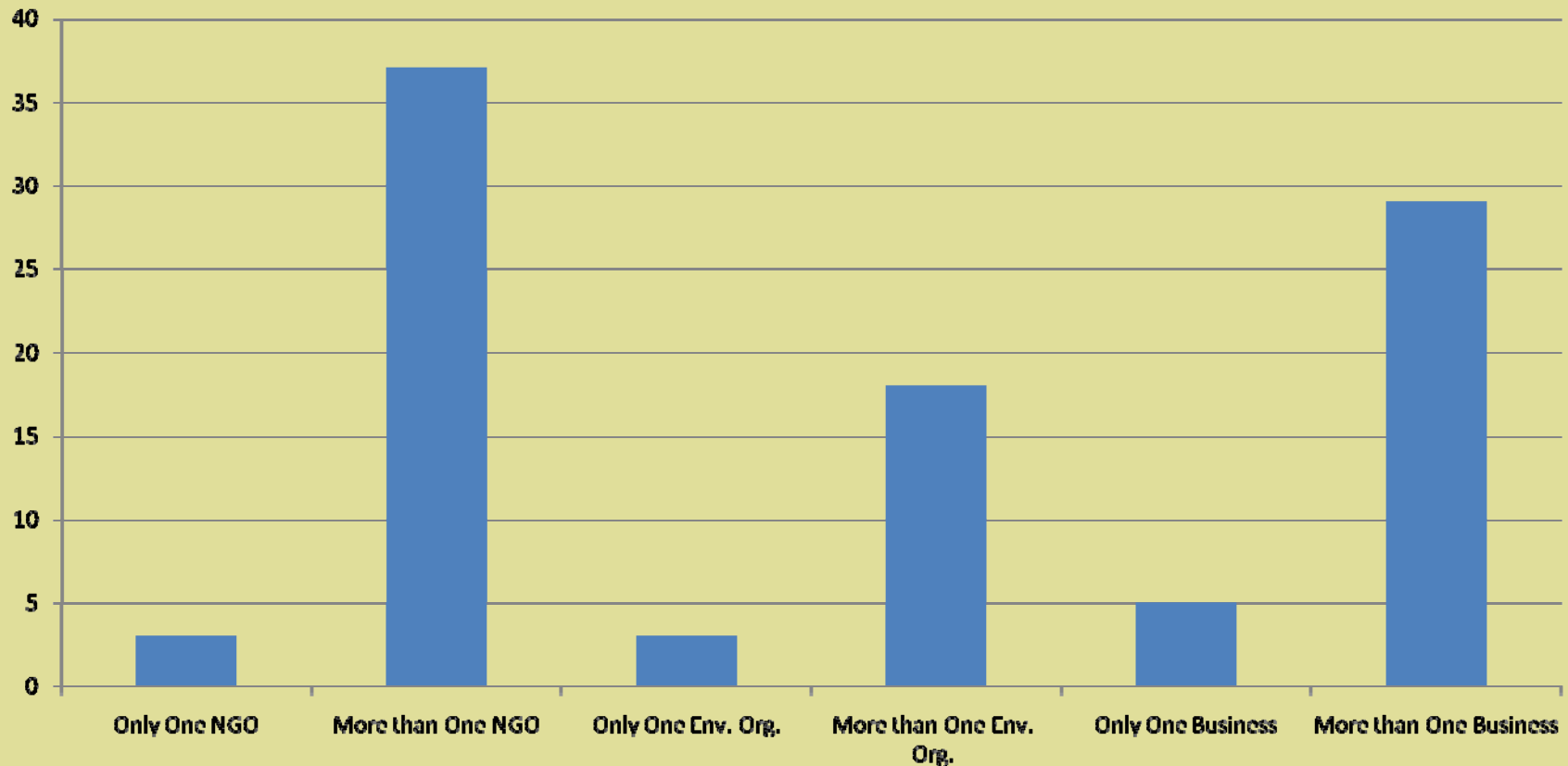
Media coverage tends to be nationally-specific

Geographic Focus of Article Content



Environmental organizations are mentioned interchangeably

How Many Stakeholders of a Certain Group Were Mentioned



Politicians are most frequently mentioned as helping

Individuals Mentioned as Actively Helping to Solve Climate Change



Politicians are most frequently mentioned as hurting

Parties Mentioned as Halting Progress Related to Climate Change

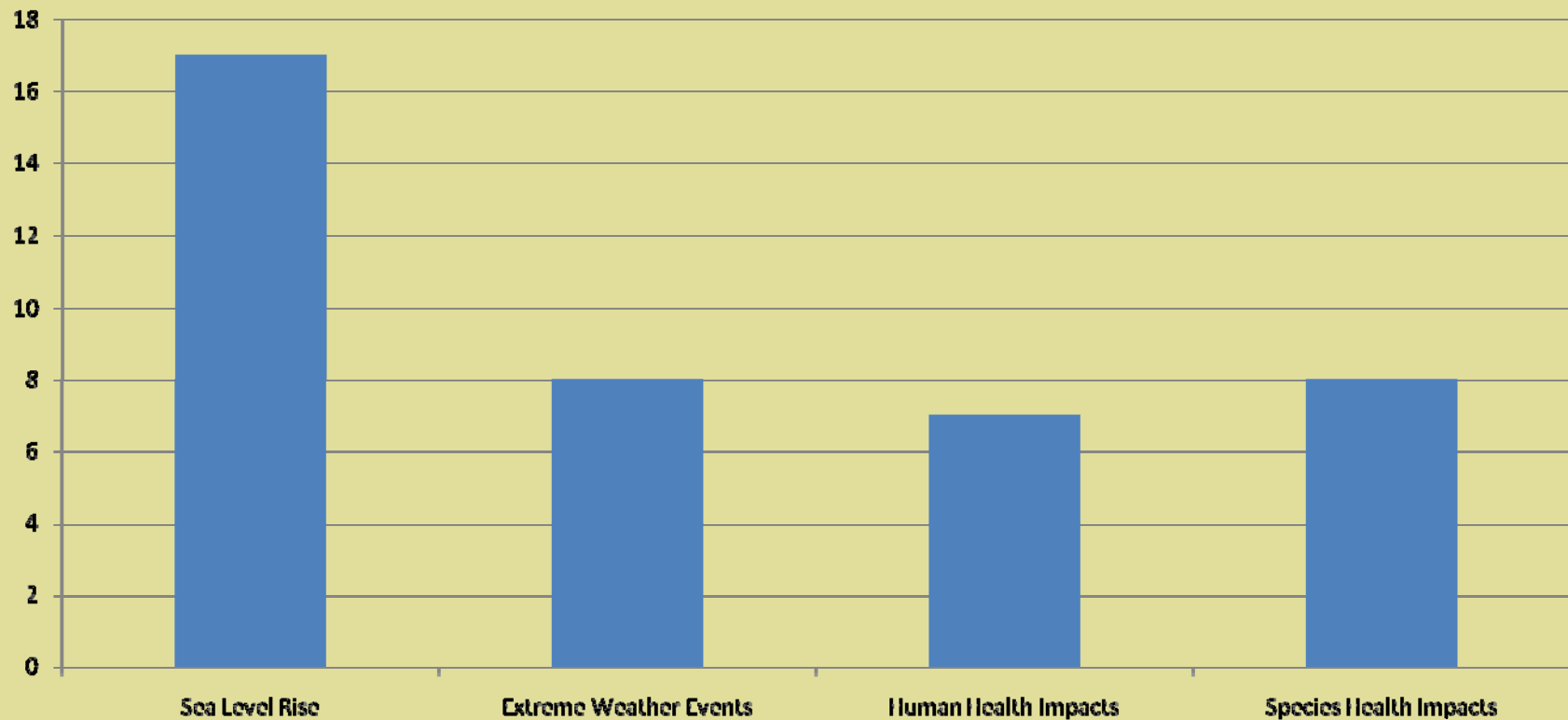


Articles mention results of and solutions to climate change

- Number of articles that mentioned specific results of climate change: 38
- Number of articles that mentioned specific solutions to climate change: 87
 - 50 of those 87 articles mentioned policy specific solutions.

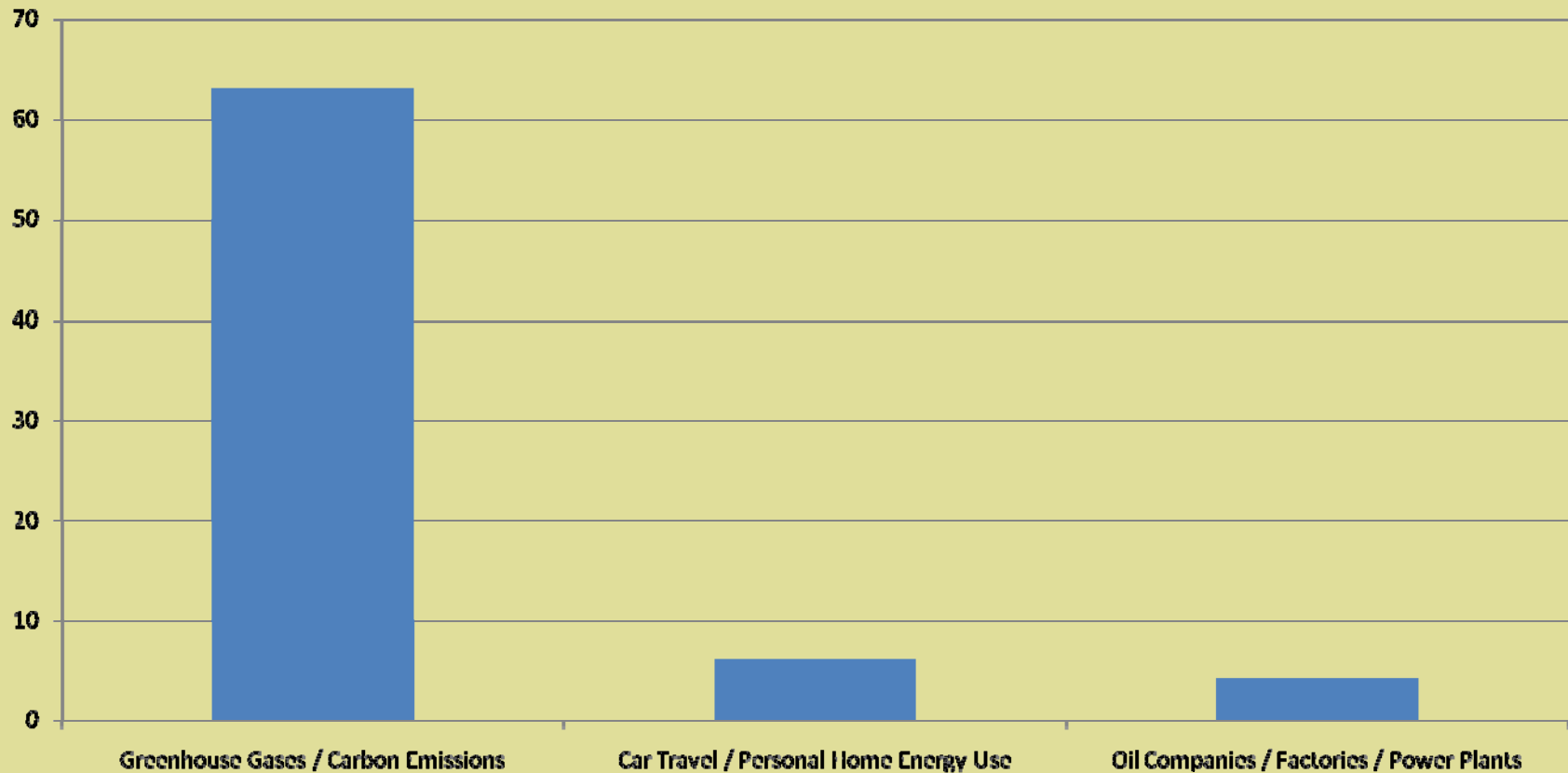
Results of climate change are personally tangible

**Specific Results of Climate Change
Mentioned in Article**

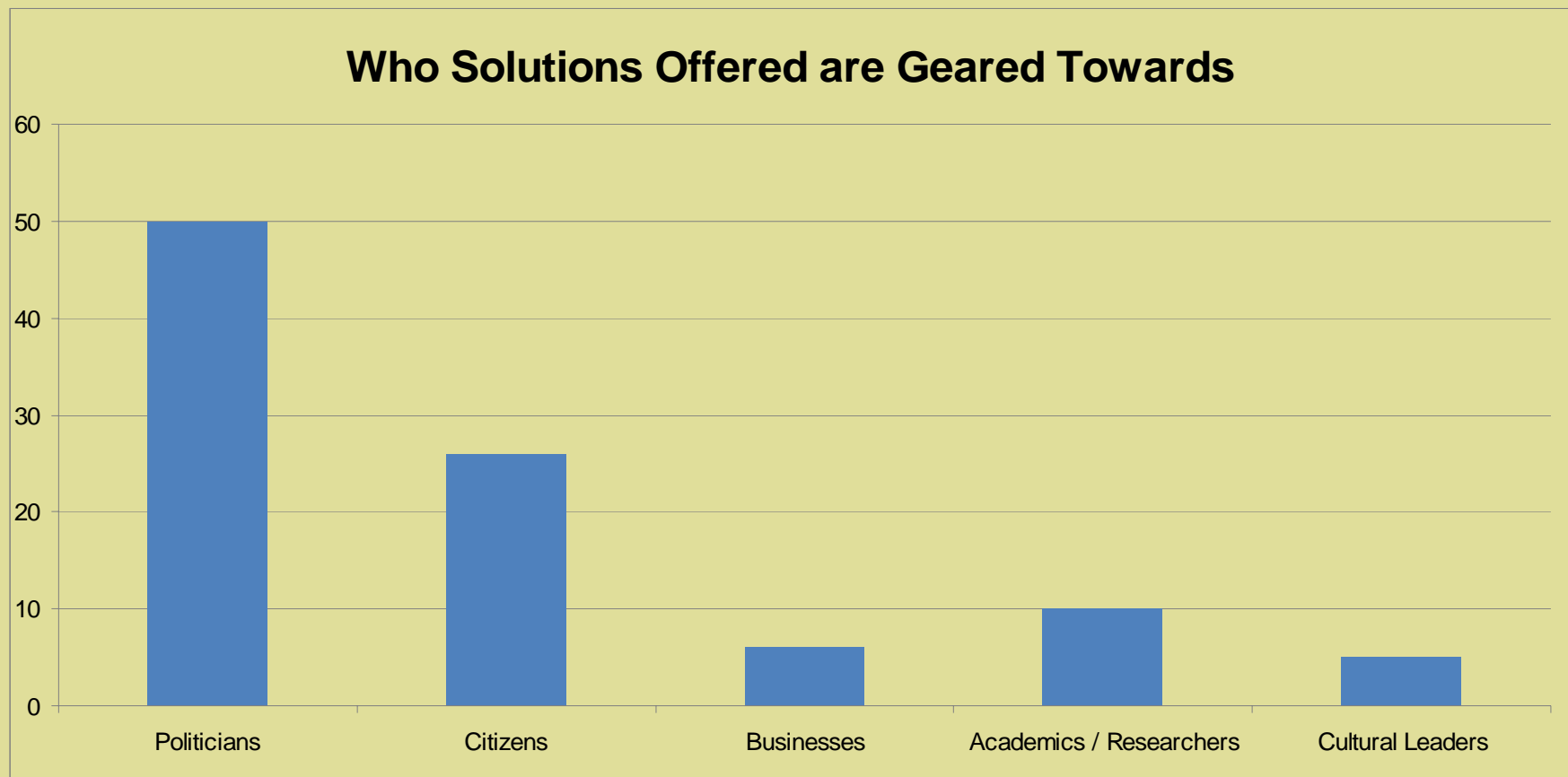


Behaviors responsible for climate change are portrayed vaguely

Behaviors Responsible for Climate Change



Many solutions are offered – primarily towards politicians



Recommendations

- ❑ Develop relationships with a small cadre of media practitioners.
- ❑ Environmental organizations should work together more often.
- ❑ Talk about climate change in nationally-specific ways.
- ❑ Focus on politics and policy – not science.
- ❑ Provide and highlight as many solutions as possible.
- ❑ Complexity should not be avoided.

Limitations

- ❑ The publications I examined have a certain audience.
- ❑ Print media as proxy for all mass media?
- ❑ Climate change as proxy for all environmental issues?

Acknowledgements

- Simone Pulver (Thesis Advisor)
- Darrell West (Thesis Reader)
- Nate Kommers (Thesis Reader)

- Brown University CES faculty and students.

- Thank you for coming! Any questions?