

Attitudes towards Climate Change and the Just Transition

An Overview of Survey Results



**PRESIDENTIAL
CLIMATE COMMISSION**
TOWARDS A JUST TRANSITION

Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES)
Research Division, HSRC

PCC Webinar Launch Event



Context of the Survey



- **Filling knowledge gaps:** Lack of representative data on public awareness, beliefs and behaviour relating to climate change, just transition
- In response, the PCC aimed to survey:

Climate change

- Awareness of climate change.
- Perceptions of climate change as a potential threat to lives and livelihoods.
- Responsibility for addressing the problem.

Just transition

- Awareness of the transition in response to climate change, including familiarity with the term “just transition”.
- Perceived impact of transition on peoples’ lives and livelihoods.
- Support for policy measures in the just transition.
- Inclusive decision-making processes around the transition and trust in different institutions.



Survey methodology



South Africa Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) series conducted **annually by HSRC since 2003**

- Nationally representative: 16+ years, private residence;
- **Select** 3,500 households (randomly stratified)
- Realisation rate achieved around 80%; : **3,103 respondents**
- Data benchmarked/weighted to mid-year population estimates.
- **Mode:** collected **by face-to-face interview**
- Strict **ethical protocols; Quality control:** close fieldwork monitoring, back-checking

PCC module: conceptually grounded, and draws on previously fielded survey items

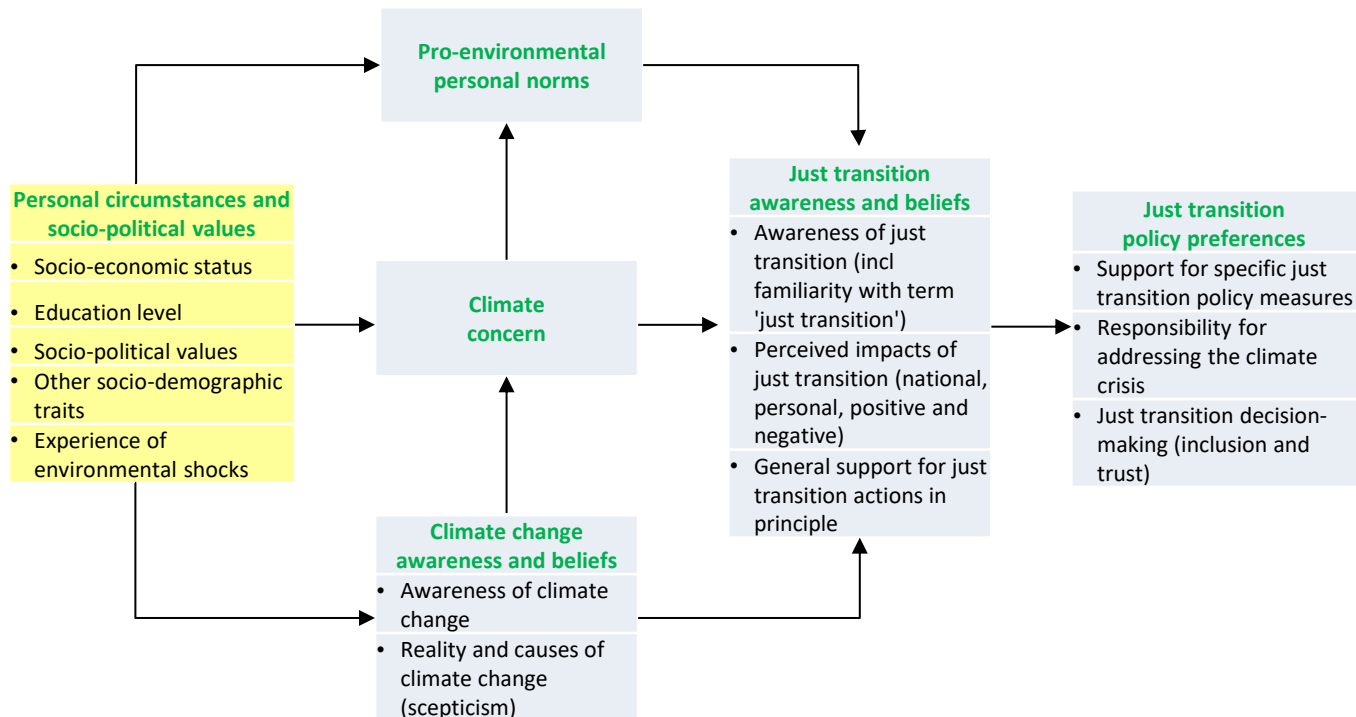
2023 Sample 43 147 625	
Composition	
Male	45 %
Female	55 %
16-24 years	14 %
25-34 years	22 %
35-44 years	21 %
45-54 years	16 %
65+ years	26 %
Black African	79 %
Coloured	9 %
Indian/Asian	3 %
White	9 %
Urban	71 %
Rural farms	3 %
Trad auth areas	26 %
Western Cape	13 %
Eastern Cape	10 %
Northern Cape	2 %
Free State	5 %
KwaZulu-Natal	18 %
North West	7 %
Gauteng	29 %
Mpumalanga	8 %
Limpopo	9 %



Conceptual model informing survey module



- **Stern's Value-Belief-Norm model (2000)** used as conceptual basis



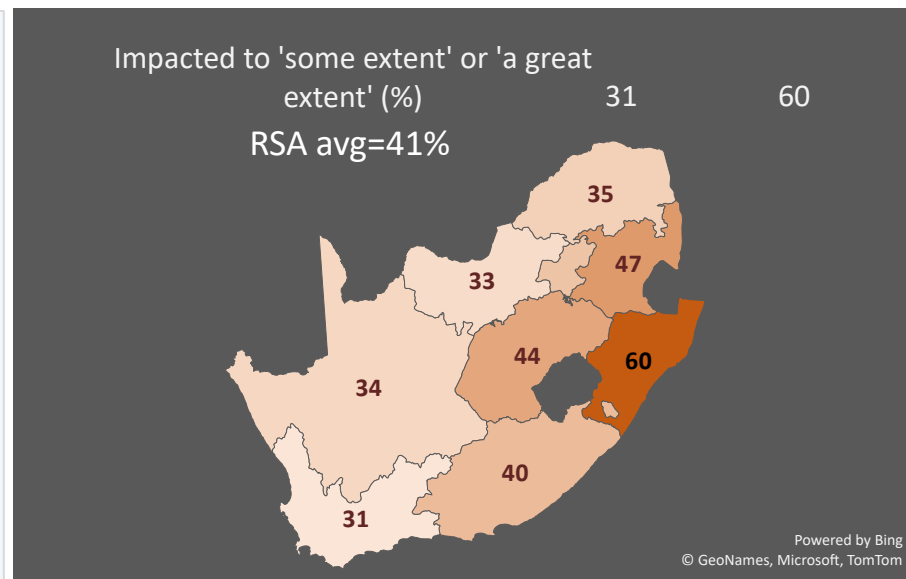
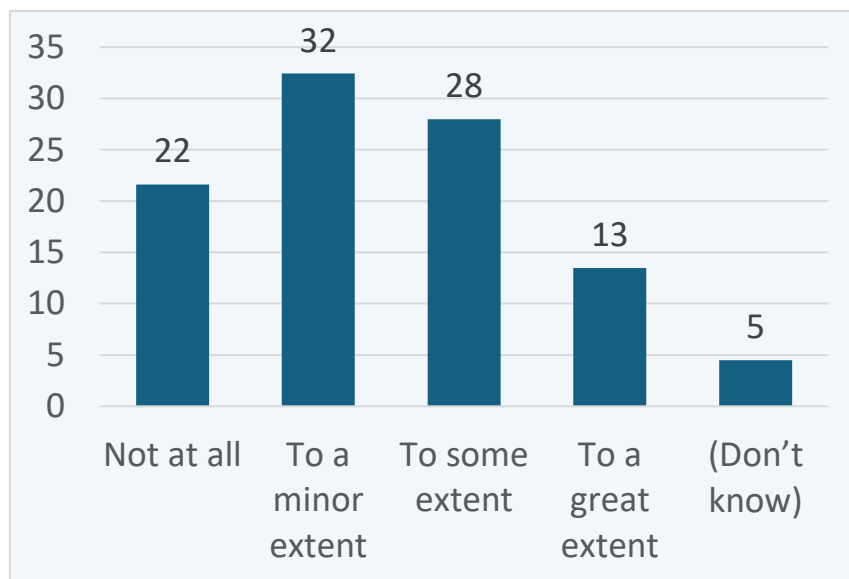
- **Premise:** Human values together with beliefs regarding climate change, climate change concern and feelings of personal responsibility drive Just Transition awareness and approval which in turn has a bearing on Just Transition acceptance and support for policy preferences.



Experience of extreme weather events



To what extent have extreme weather events (such as floods, big storms, droughts, heatwaves) affected you and your family over the past 10 years?



Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), 2023

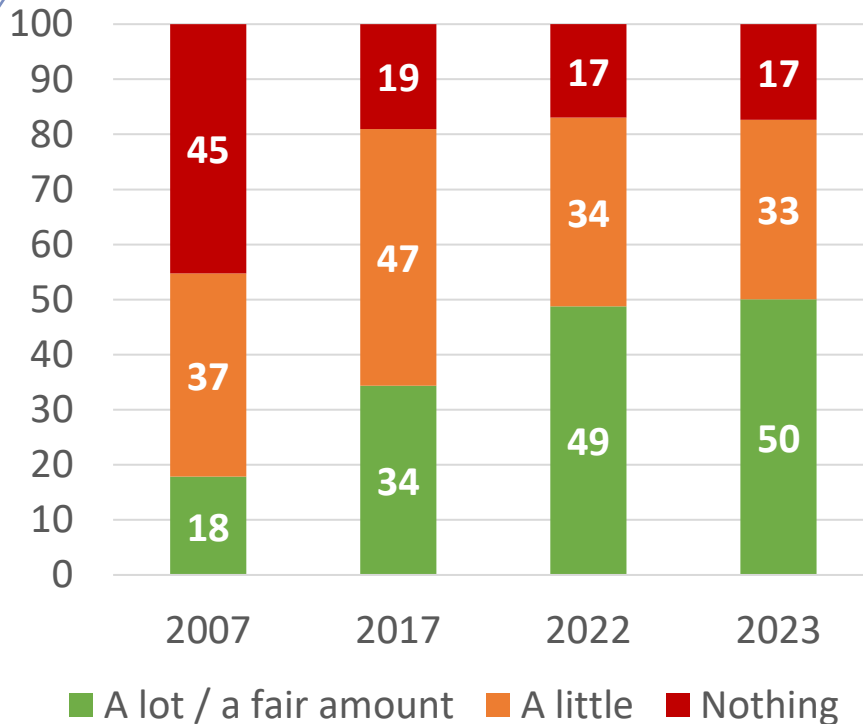
- **Acknowledgment of extreme weather effects most common among residents of KZN and those with high asset ownership status**
- **This variable is one of the most significant predictors of awareness, concern of climate change. Less likely to be climate sceptics if affected.**
- **Significantly more likely to have pro-environmental norms if affected.**



Climate change awareness



How much, if anything, would you say you know about climate change?



PREDICTORS OF AWARENESS

Environmental factors

- Being **affected by extreme weather events** strengthens awareness [***]

Other factors

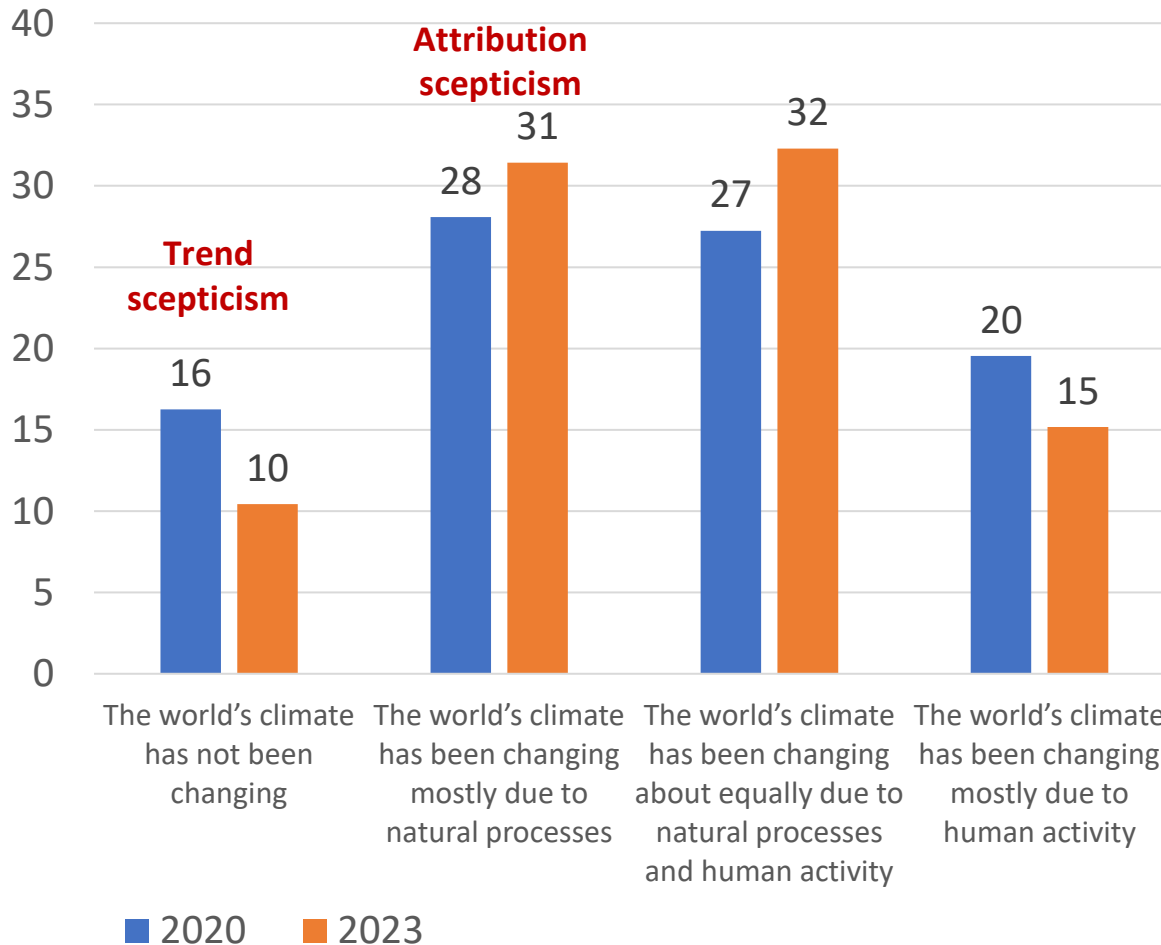
- **Class:** Higher among the better educated, higher occupation levels, white adults
- **Spatial:** KZN, FS residents (vs WC)

- **Substantive changes since 2007**
- **Know 'a lot /a fair amount'** about climate change: rose from 18% to 50%
- **Never heard of the term:** Dramatic fall from 45% to 17%
- South Africans are **far more aware of climate change than a decade ago**



Climate change scepticism

There has been a lot of discussion about the world's climate and the idea that it has been changing in recent years. Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion?



PREDICTORS OF SCEPTICISM

Environmental factors

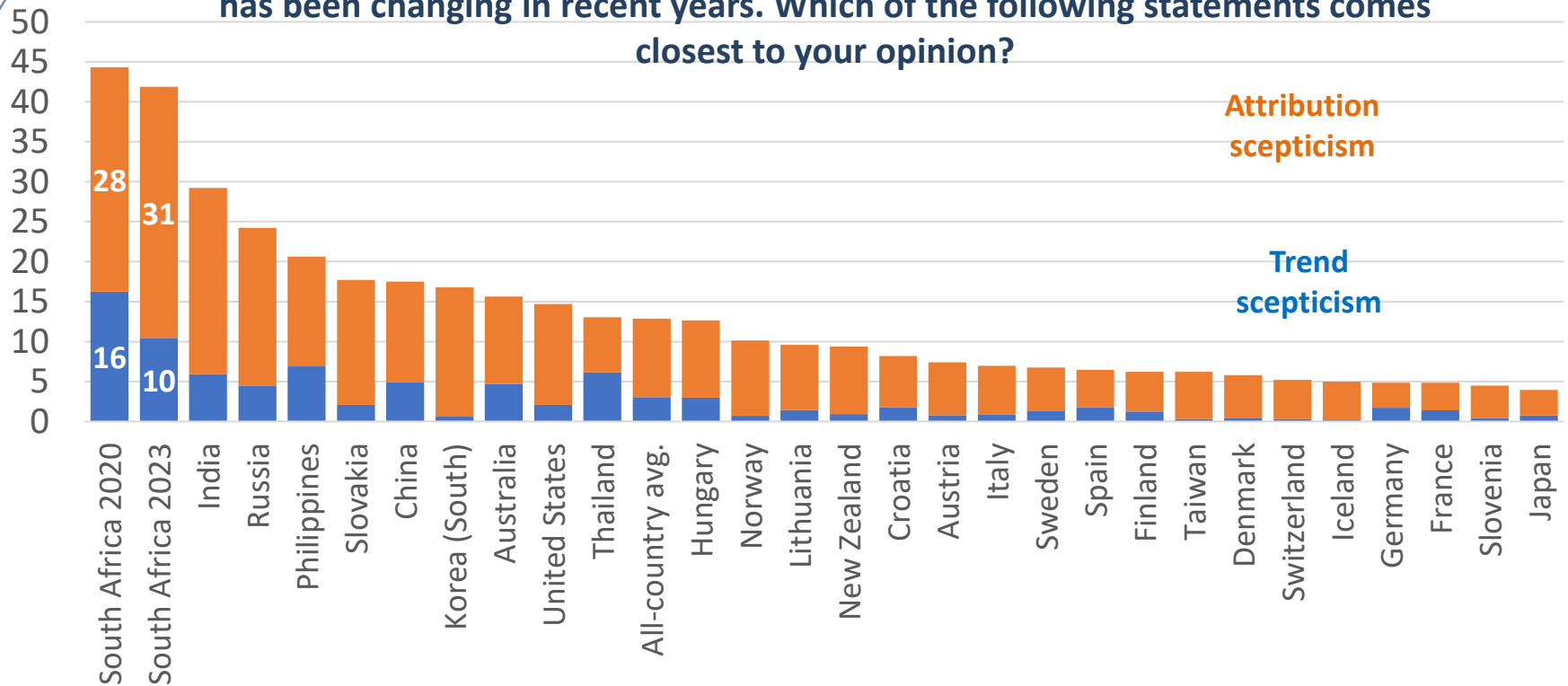
- **Lower climate awareness** associated with higher scepticism [***]
- Less **affected by extreme weather events** associated with higher scepticism [***]



Climate change skepticism in comparative perspective



There has been a lot of discussion about the world's climate and the idea that it has been changing in recent years. Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion?



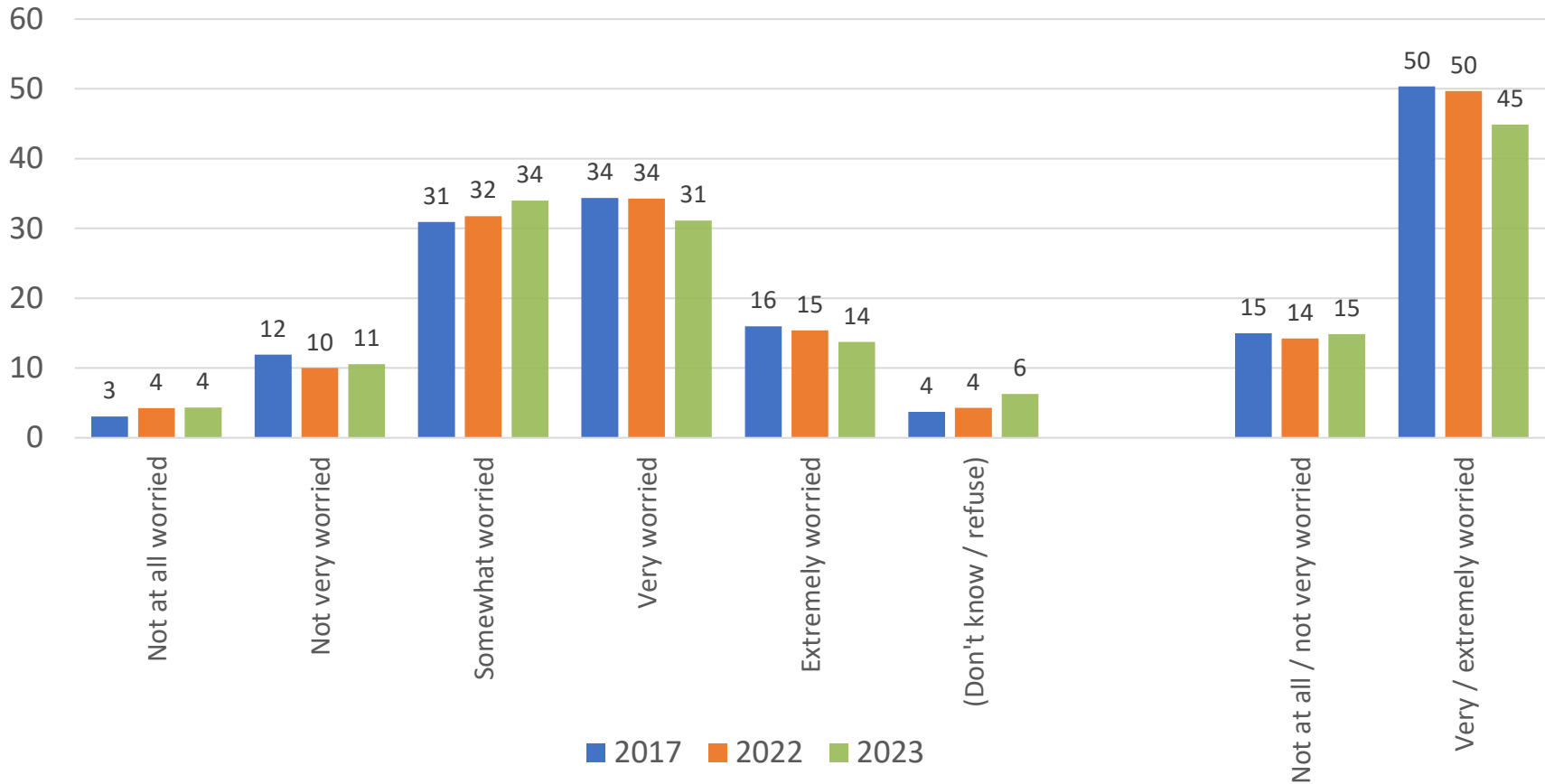
- The world's climate has been changing mostly due to natural processes
- The world's climate has not been changing



Climate concern



How worried are you about climate change?



Predictors of higher climate concern

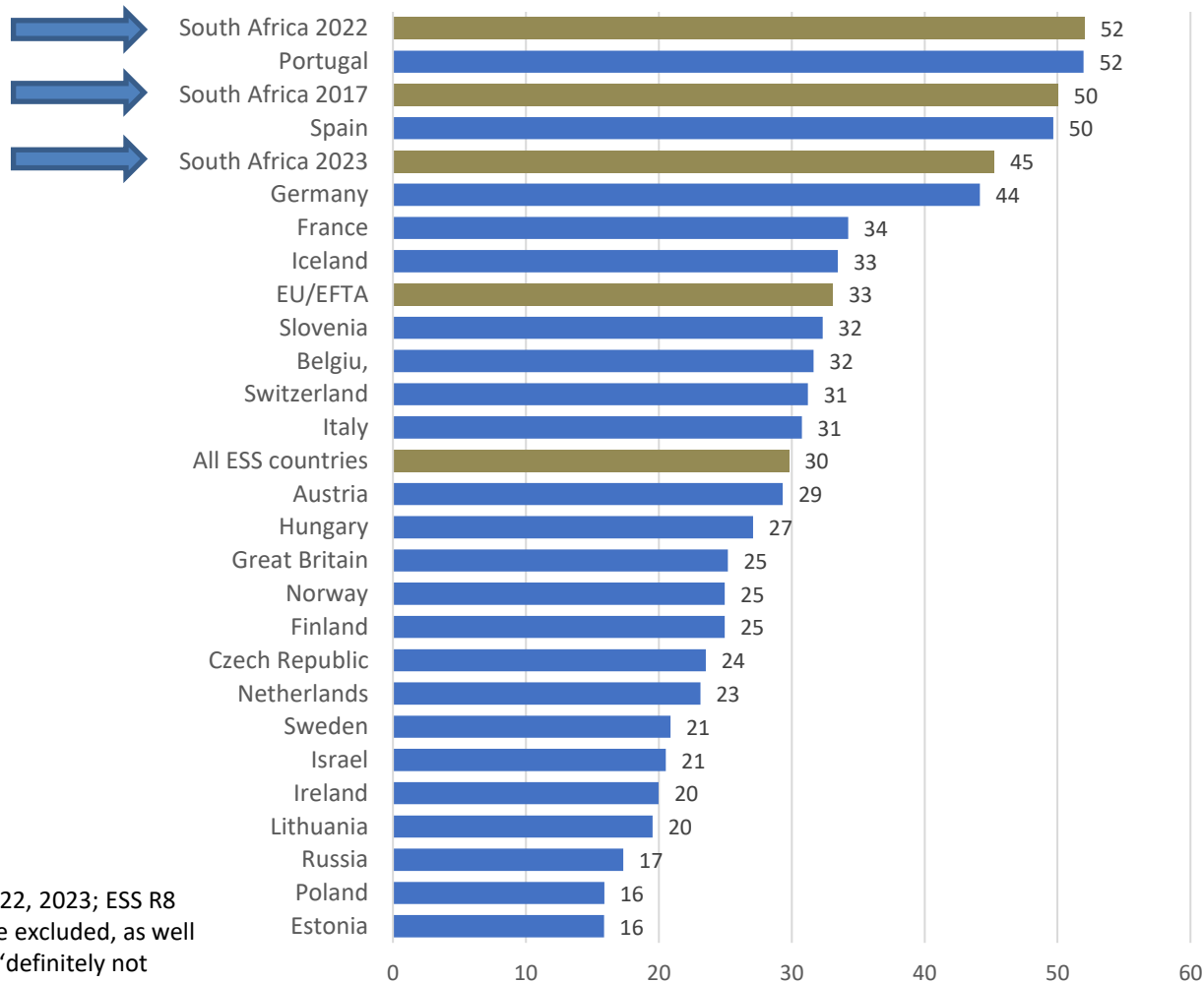
- Higher climate awareness; being more affected by extreme weather events; Lower climate scepticism



Climate change concern in relative perspective



How worried are you about climate change? (among climate change believers)

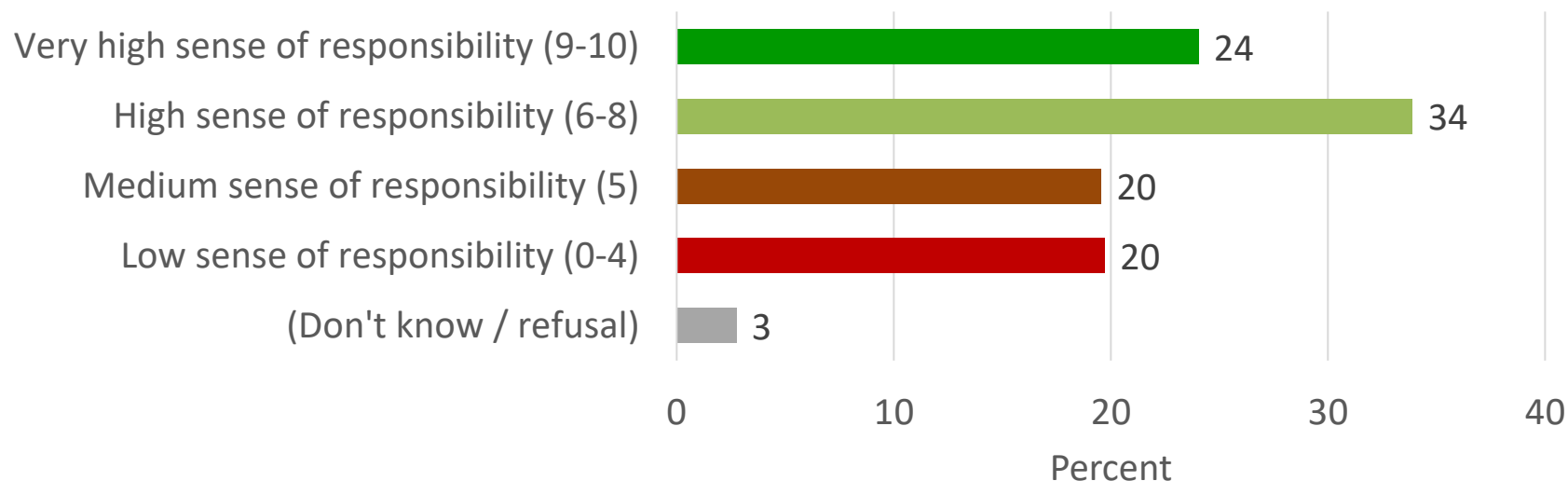


Source: SASAS 2017, 2022, 2023; ESS R8
Note: item-nonresponse excluded, as well as those saying climate 'definitely not changing'



Pro-environmental personal norms

To what extent do you feel you have a personal responsibility to try and protect the environment? (0-10 scale)

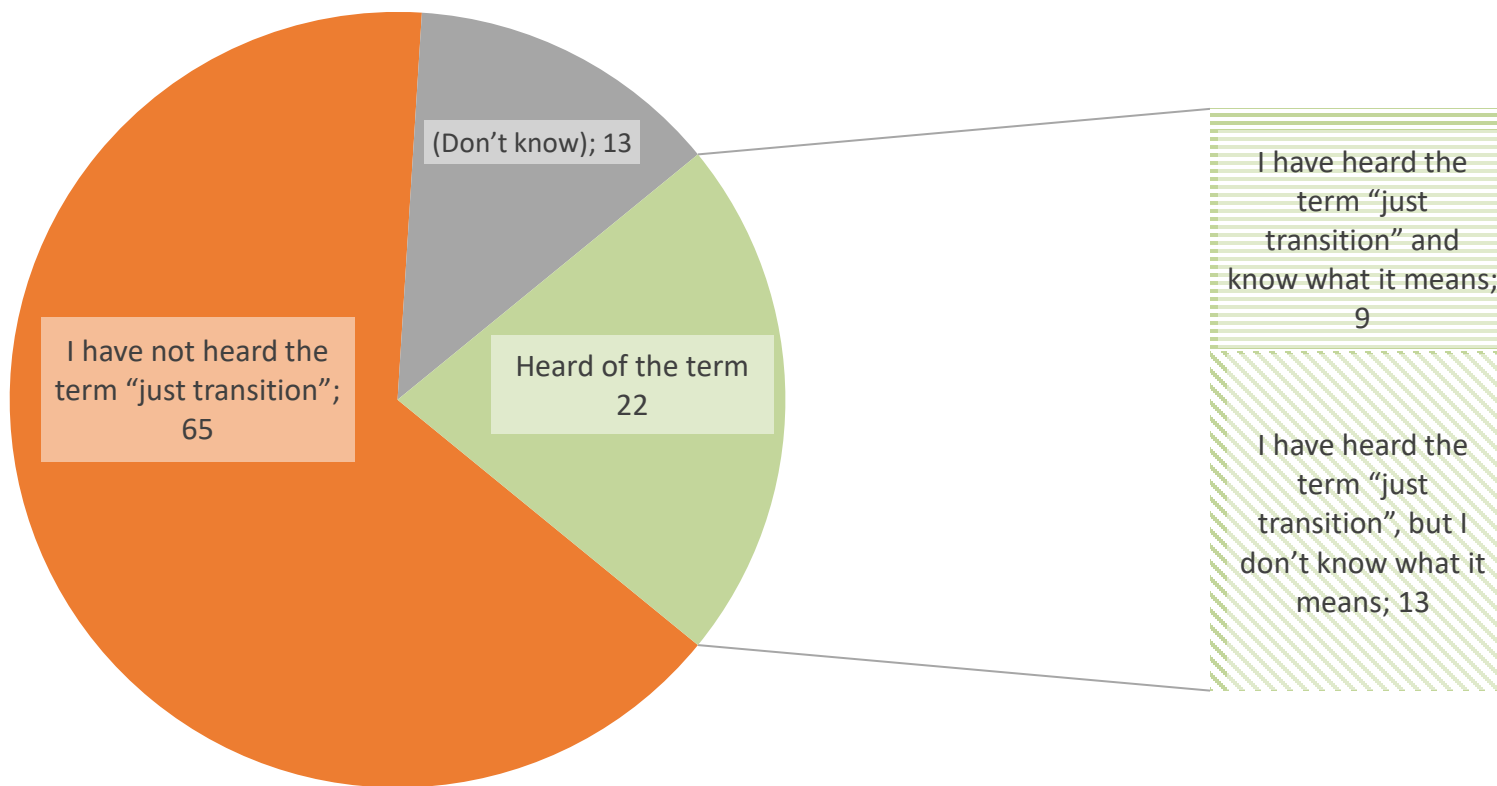


- **Personal norms:** reflect feelings of moral obligation /responsibility to perform or refrain from specific actions to contribute to the solution of a perceived collective problem.
- **Survey:** focuses on personal norms regarding climate change mitigation, in order to slow or prevent climate change, and not adaptation, as that will not address the problem itself.
- **Top half of scale (pro-environmental): 49%;** midpoint = 19%; bottom half = 31% (mean on scale = 5.46 out of 10)
- Predictors: Higher **climate concern** associated with stronger pro-environmental norms, as well as being more **affected by extreme weather events**



“Just Transition” Familiarity with the term

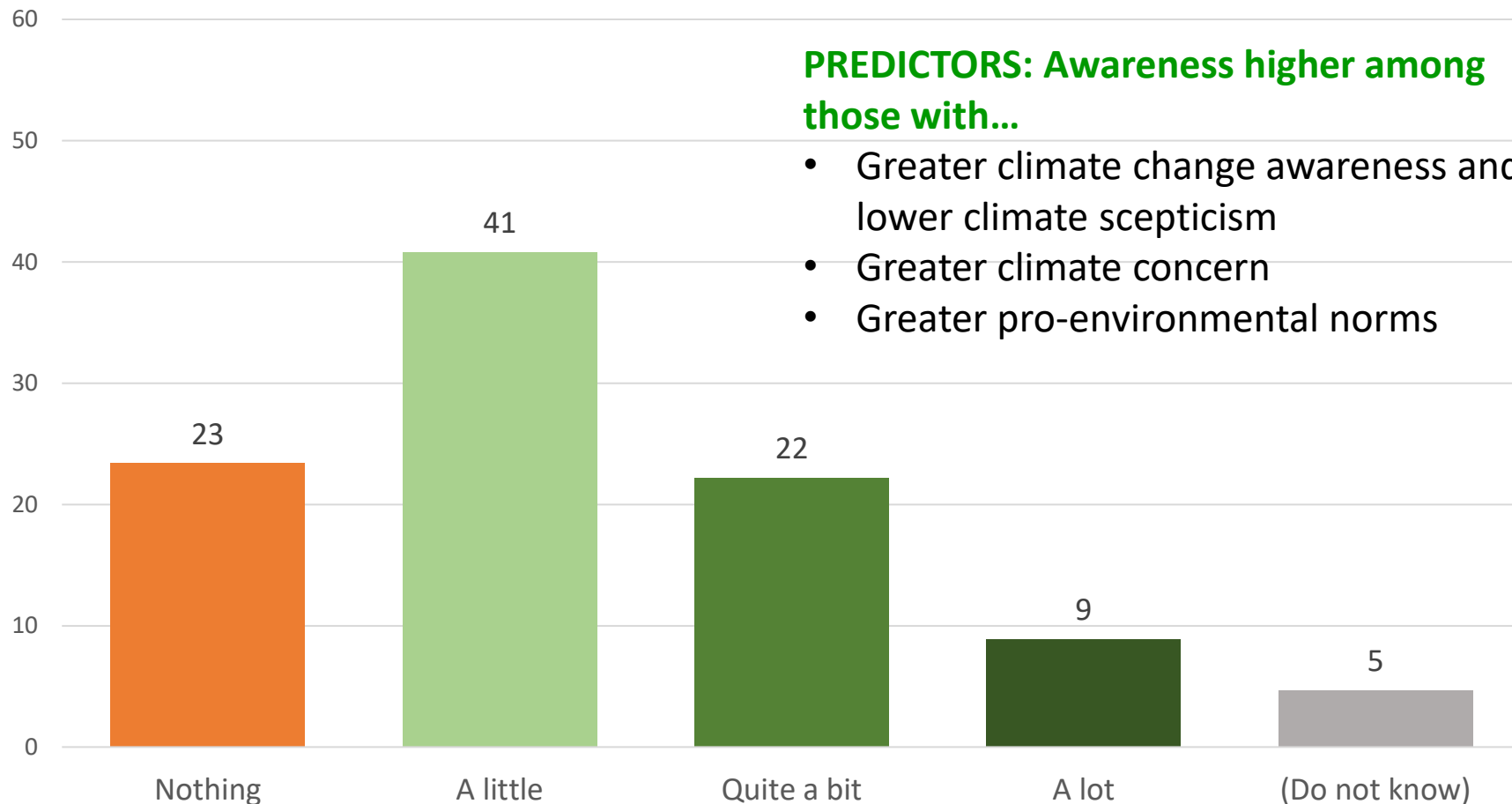
Have you heard of the term "just transition"?





Awareness of just energy transition

Most of South Africa's electricity currently comes from coal. There are now actions being taken to change from coal power to other sources of energy (like solar and wind). How much have you read or heard about these actions?



PREDICTORS: Awareness higher among those with...

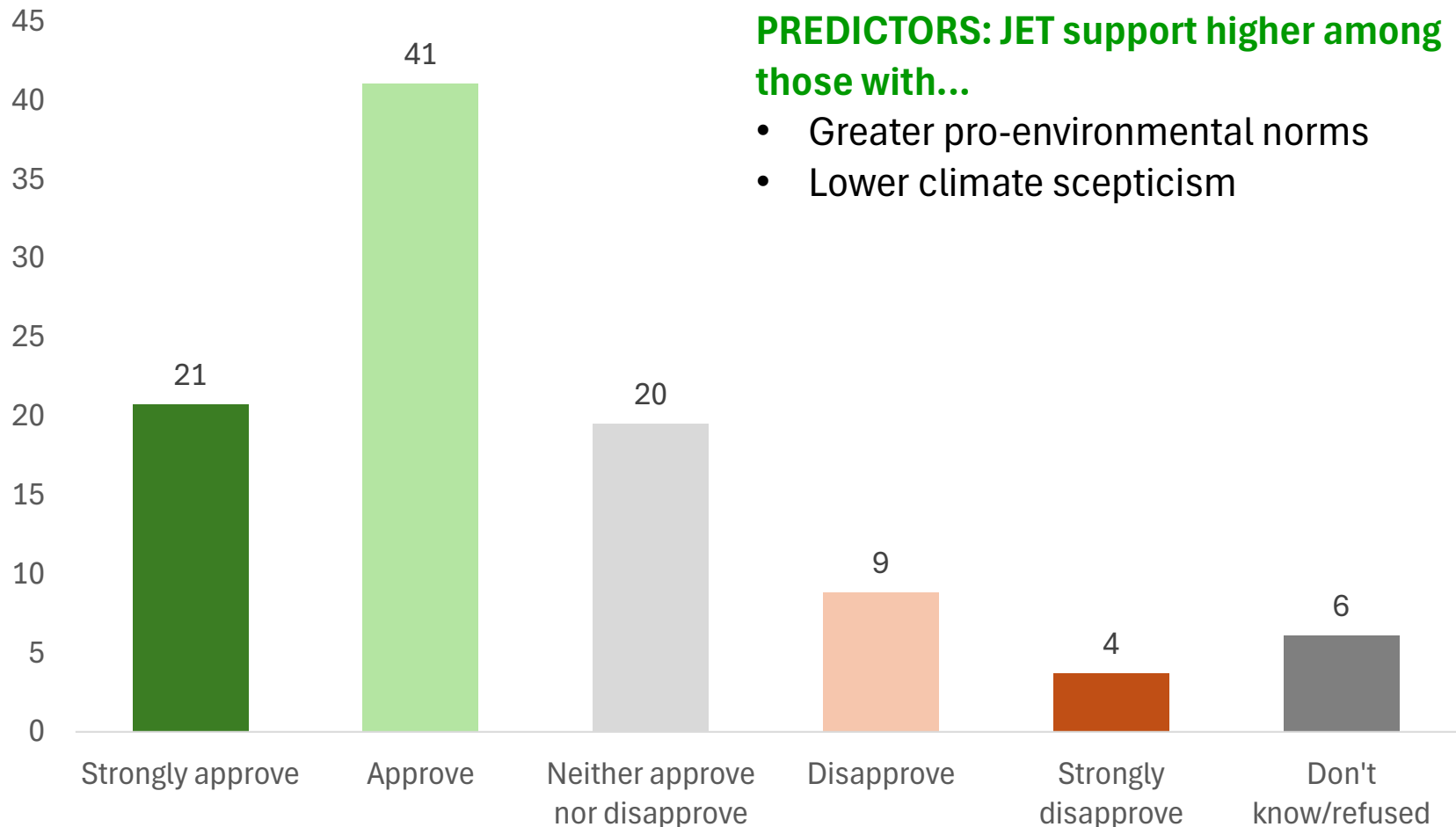
- Greater climate change awareness and lower climate scepticism
- Greater climate concern
- Greater pro-environmental norms



Support for the just energy transition in principle



To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the actions being taken to change from coal to other sources of energy (like solar and wind)?



PREDICTORS: JET support higher among those with...

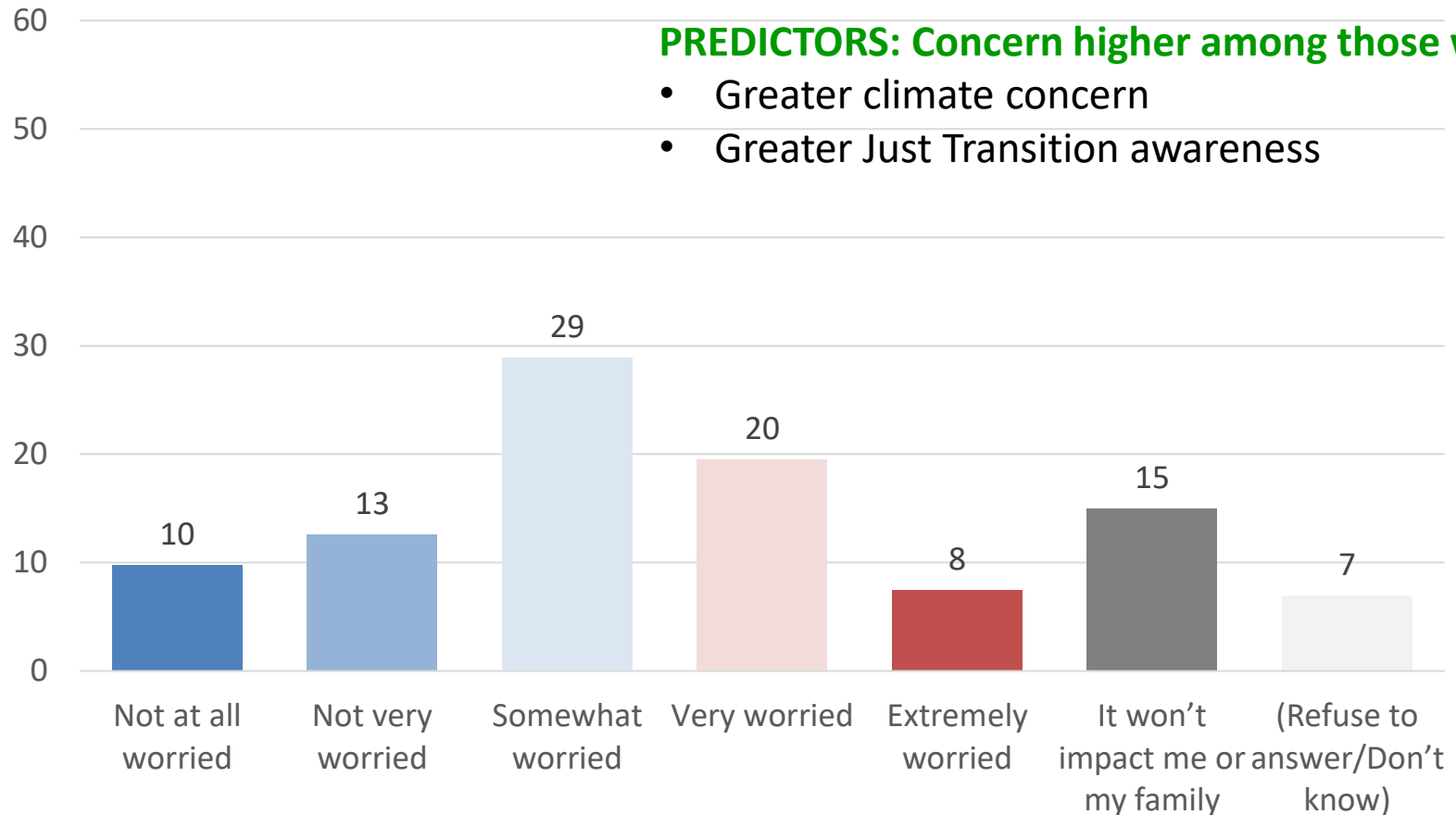
- Greater pro-environmental norms
- Lower climate scepticism



Concern over personal **negative** impacts of the just energy transition



How worried are you that **you and your family** will be negatively affected by the change from coal to other energy sources (like solar and wind)?



PREDICTORS: Concern higher among those with...

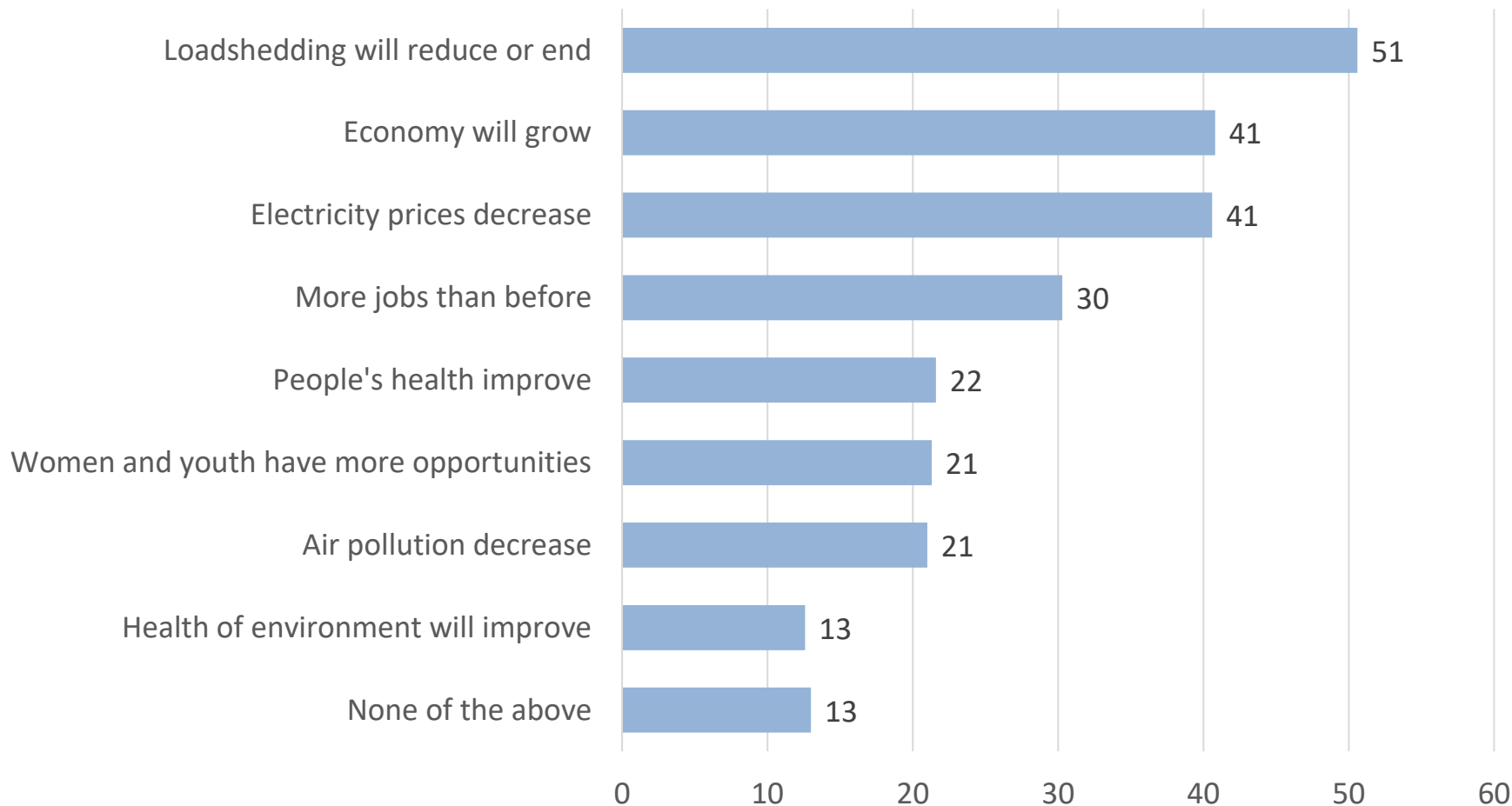
- Greater climate concern
- Greater Just Transition awareness



Perceived positive impacts of the just energy transition



Which of the following positive impacts do you believe will happen in South Africa because of the shift from coal power to other energy sources (like solar and wind)?

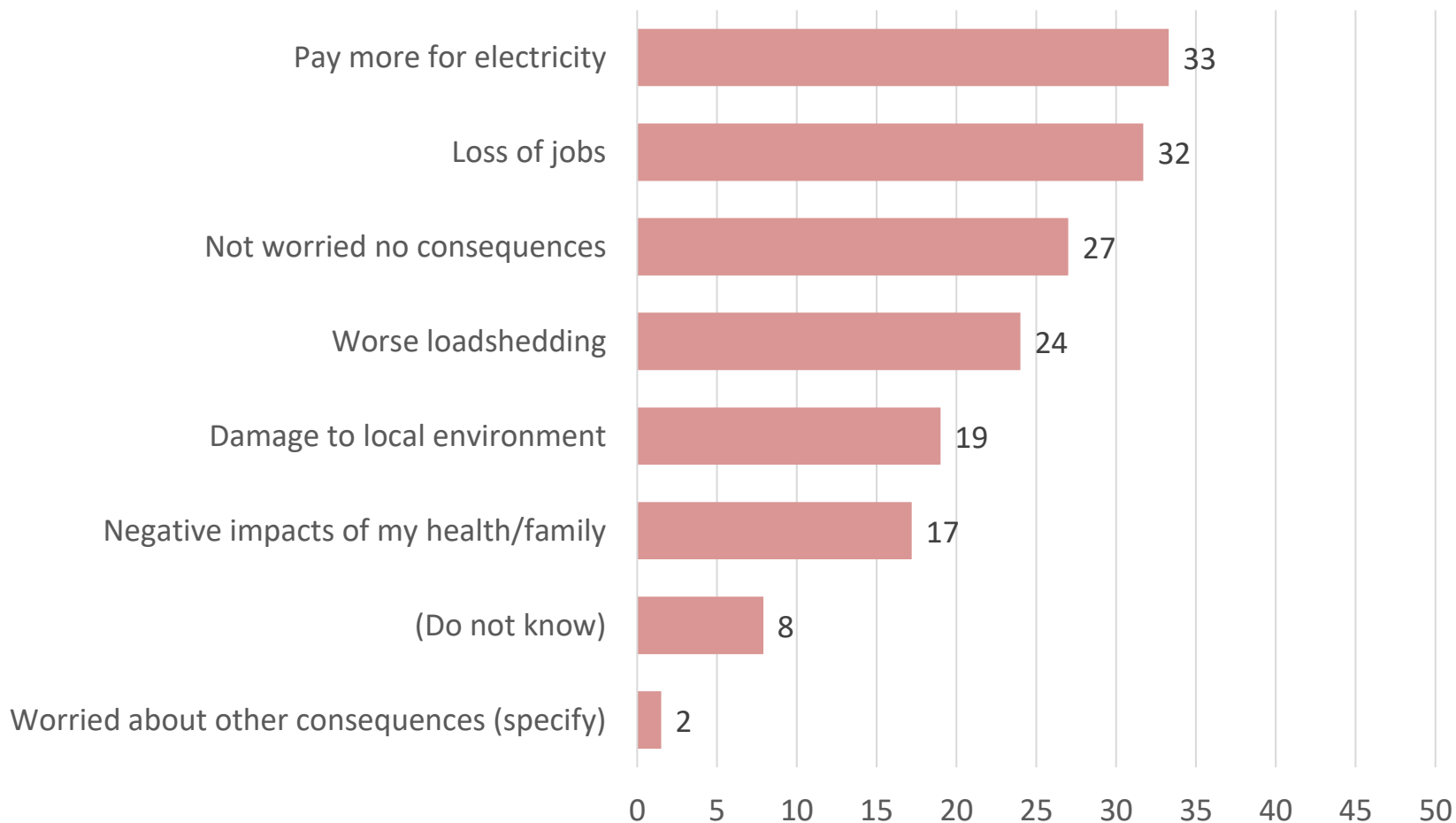




Perceived personal negative impacts of the just energy transition



Are you worried about any of the following happening to **you or your family** because of the change from coal power to other forms of energy (like solar and wind)?





Support for policy measures in the just energy transition

As South Africa moves from coal power to other energy sources like solar and wind, workers in the coal industry will lose their jobs, but new jobs will be created in other sectors.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies should be implemented to help address these potential impacts?

	POLICY SUPPORT					
	Training & skills programmes for workers who lose jobs	Short-term financial help to workers who lose jobs and can't find new ones right away	Help women, youth and vulnerable groups find jobs	Support local businesses & create job opportunities in affected areas	Improve education to help people find jobs in new sectors	Create BIG that all South Africans would receive
Agree	74	70	76	77	78	70
Neutral	18	18	15	15	15	17
Disagree	5	9	7	6	6	11
(Don't know / refuse)	3	3	2	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Predictors of great support for JET-related social policies

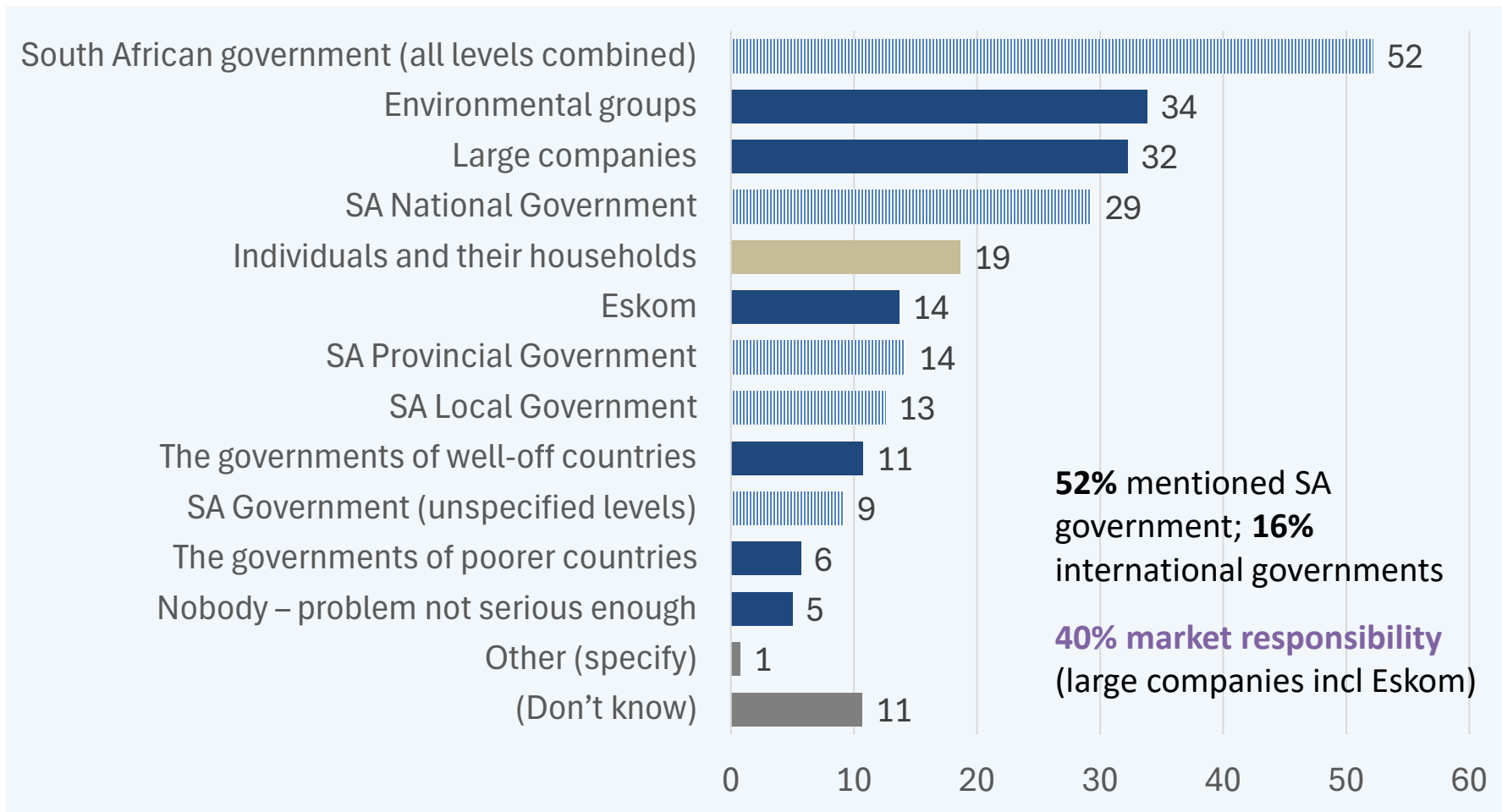
- Lower levels of **climate scepticism and worry about personal JET impacts**; Greater **sense of personal responsibility for climate action and support for JET actions in principle**



Primary responsibility for addressing climate crisis



Who do you think bears the most responsibility for preventing climate change from getting worse? (multiple response – select up to 3) (%)





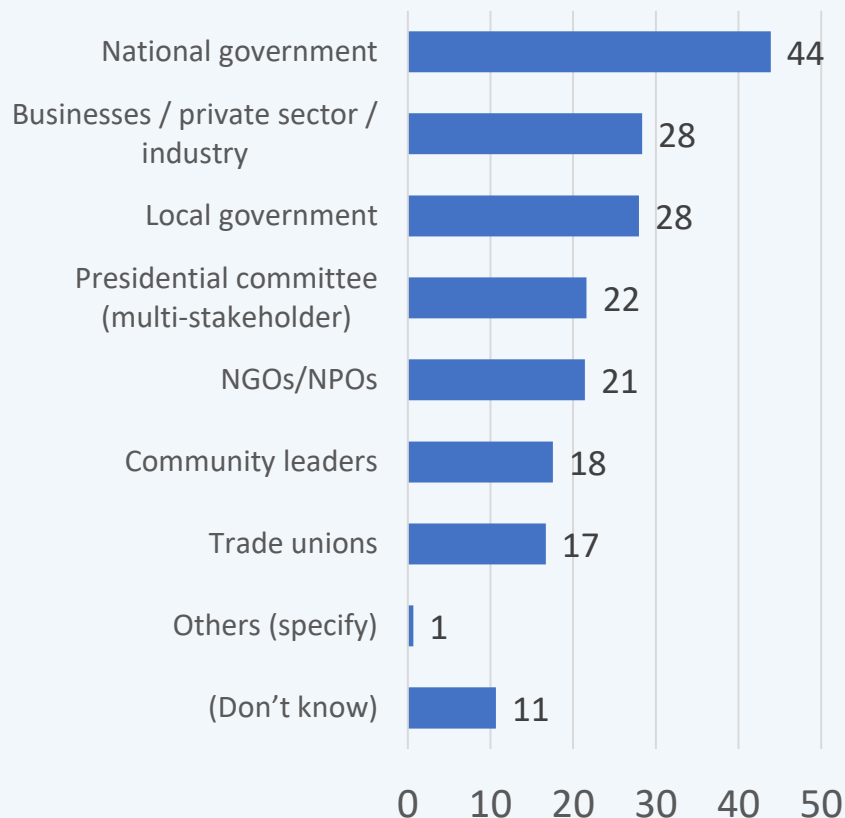
Just transition decision-making



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Which of the following groups should be involved in decisions about the change from coal to other energy sources (like solar and wind)? (multiple response) (% mentioning each)

Who should be involved (%)



Who do you MOST trust to manage this change from coal to other energy sources (like solar and wind)? (%)

Most trusted to manage JET (%)

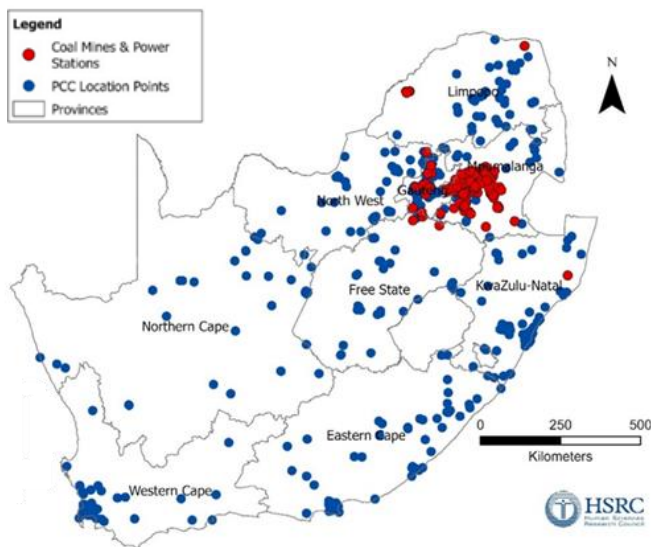




Spatial analysis: Proximity to coals mines or coal-fired power stations



- **Spatial analysis** revealed that proximity to coal mines or coal-fired power stations...
 - ...had no significant effect on climate concern, personal pro-environmental norms, or concerns about personal JET impacts, BUT...
 - ...was moderately associated with higher climate change awareness and lower climate scepticism, and stronger support for Just Energy Transition (JET) actions in principle and specific policies.
- **Location matters, but impact is relatively small:** Influence decreased when controlling for socio-demographic factors, and overall explanatory power of the effect of proximity was limited.



Independent variable used in regression analysis: Distance in kilometres from area of residence (SAL centroid) to the nearest coal mine or coal-fired power station	Model with spatial independent variable only		With additional socio-demographic and other predictor variables	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Dependent variables:				
Climate change awareness (0=low knowledge; 100=high knowledge)	-0.0006	**	-0.0004	*
Climate change scepticism (0=no scepticism; 100=high scepticism)	0.0006	*	0.0003	n.s.
Climate concern (0=no concern; 100=extreme concern)	0.0002	n.s.	0.0006	n.s.
Personal pro-environmental norms (0=no sense of responsibility; 100=strong sense of responsibility)	0.0000	n.s.	0.0002	n.s.
JET awareness: How much have you read or heard about JET (0=nothing; 100=a lot)	0.0000	n.s.	0.0002	n.s.
Support for JET-related actions (0=strong opposition; 100=strong support)	-0.0006	**	-0.0005	*
JET concern: Worry that self and family will be negatively affected by JET (0=no concern; 100=very high concern)	0.0003	n.s.	0.0002	n.s.
JET policy support index (0=low support; 100=high support)	-0.0012	***	-0.0098	***



Conclusion



Conceptual model

- In-depth survey analysis provided **confirmatory evidence that the conceptual model largely holds**

Climate change measures

- **Climate change awareness increasing**, driven by experiences of extreme weather events and socio-demographics
- **Climate concern is broad-based** in the country
 - Informed by awareness: higher awareness associated with greater concern
 - Lower climate scepticism associated with higher concern
 - Higher concern among those **affected by extreme weather events**
- South Africans display **moderate personal pro-environmental ethic**
 - **Higher climate concern** associated with stronger pro-environmental norms
 - Being **affected by extreme weather events** strengthens pro-envt'al norms
 - As **social media usage** increased, pro-environmental norms increased



Conclusion



Just energy transition measures

- **Circumscribed awareness** (incl. JT term), but supported in principle
 - Higher among those with **higher climate knowledge, climate concern** and **pro-environmental norms**; also higher among those with higher news media usage
 - Lower among those with **higher climate scepticism**
- **High expectations of personal and national benefits**; environmental gains subsidiary for now
- **Many worry about adverse personal impacts**, including cost and reliability of energy supply; job / income loss
 - Higher concern about personal negative impacts among those with **greater climate concern and Just Transition awareness**; lower concerns among those with **greater media usage and in rural areas**.



Conclusion



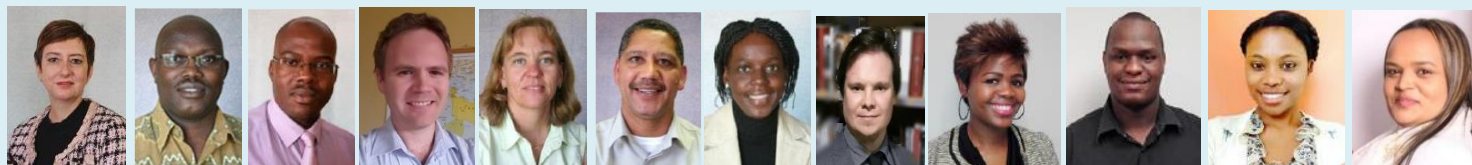
Just energy transition measures

- **Support for Just Energy Transition in principle**
 - Higher among those with **stronger pro-environmental norms**; Lower among those with **higher climate scepticism**
- **Resolute social policy support** to offset adverse JET impacts
 - Greater sense of **personal responsibility for climate action and support for JET actions in principle** increased support for specific JET-related social policies
 - Greater **climate scepticism and worry about personal JET impacts** reduces support for policy.
- **Recognition of role for multiple stakeholders** in just transition decision-making, but government predominates
- **Role of the spatial**: proximity to coal mines and power stations has a modest effect on awareness and support for Just Transition actions.



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thank you

English
Afrikaans
Ndebele
Xhosa
Zulu
Sepedi
Sesotho
Setswana
Xitsonga
SiSwati
Tshivenda
Nama

Thank you
Dankie
Ngiyathokoza
Enkosi
Ngiyabonga
Ke a leboga
Ke a leboha
Ke a leboga
Ndzi khense ngopfu
Ngiyabonga
Ndi a livhuwa
Gangans

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