

# Asian Public Opinion on Climate Change & Its Policy Implications

**So Young Kim**

Assistant Professor

Graduate Program in Science & Technology Policy

KAIST

APPAM Conference: “Environmental Policy: A Multinational  
Conference on Policy Analysis and Teaching Methods”

June 11-13, Seoul, Korea



# Key Research Questions and Findings

## Research Questions

- How aware Asians are of the problem?
- How concerned are Asians about the problem?
- How supportive are Asians of various policy actions to address climate change?

## Key Findings

- Asians' awareness of the problem is generally low.
- Asians are the least supportive of certain policy actions (e.g., alternative energy development, energy cost increase).
- There exist significant intra-regional differences in the level of awareness and concern about climate change.

# Climate Change as a Key Environmental Policy Issue

- Climate change as a focal point in recent environmental policy debates
  - Kyoto Protocol (effected in 2005)
  - Nobel Prize Award to IPCC & Al Gore (2007)
  - Earth Hour (2008)
- Americans naming climate change as the single biggest environmental problem (CBS Poll)
  - 16% (2006) → 33% (2007)



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IPCC honoured with the  
2007 Nobel Peace Prize





EARTH HOUR



Thursday June 11th, 2009

A project managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland

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## International Polls Find Robust Global Support For Increased Efforts to Address Climate Change

December 5, 2007

[Full Report \(PDF\)](#)



An analysis by WorldPublicOpinion.org of recent international polls reveals strong support around the world for decisive action to reduce the emission of climate-changing gases.

*(UN photo)*

Representatives from nearly 190 countries are gathered on the Indonesian island of Bali this week and next for a UN conference that will launch negotiations for a treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. On the agenda is how to forge new international agreements designed to reduce or mitigate green-house gas emissions.

## Related Studies

[World Publics Say Oil Needs to Be Replaced as Energy Source](#)

[Most Would Pay Higher Energy Bills to Address Climate Change Says Global Poll](#)

[Developed and Developing Countries Agree: Action Needed on Global Warming](#)

[Poll Finds Worldwide Agreement That Climate Change is a Threat](#)

[World Publics Willing to Bear Costs of Combating Climate Change](#)

[Current Energy Use Seen to Threaten Environment, Economy, Peace](#)

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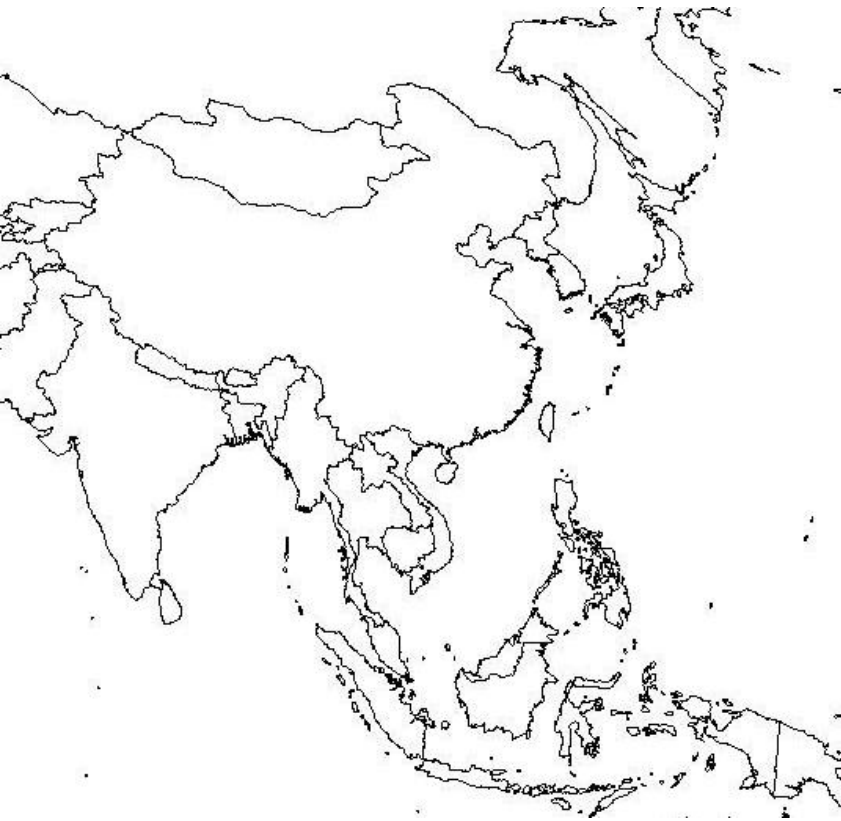
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# Asia as a Key Region for Global Governance of Climate Change



- Asia contains some of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases
  - China overtaking the US as the largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2006
  - Four Asian nations among the top ten CO<sub>2</sub> emitters in 2008
- Asia is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change effects
  - Economic costs of climate change effects in Southeast Asia projected to be 6.7% of GDP in 2100, compared to the global average of 2.6% (Asian Development Bank)

# Data & Method

- Data

- Cross-national polls (2006-2007)

- Method

- Cross-regional & intra-regional comparisons of four types of survey questions on climate change (19 questions from 7 polls)

Poll	Full Name	Field Dates	# of Nations	Sample Size
Pew May 2006	2006 Pew Global Attitudes Project Poll	April-May 2006	15	16,710
Pew May 2007	2007 Pew Global Attitudes Project Poll	April-May 2007	47	45,239
GlobeScan 2005	2005 GlobeScan Poll	Oct 2005-Jan 2006	30	33,237
CCGA 2007	2007 Chicago Council on Global Affairs Poll	June 2006-May 2007	18	21,818
BBC July 2006	2006 BBC/Globescan/PIPA Poll	June-July 2006	19	19,579
BBC Dec 2006	2007 Winter, BBC/GlobeScan/PIPA Poll	Nov-Dec 2006	25	26,381
BBC Sept 2007	2007 Fall, BBC/GlobeScan/PIPA Poll	June-July 2007	21	22,182

# Types of Survey Questions/Statements on Climate Change (examples)

## Awareness/Concern

- Have you heard of global warming or climate change?
- Is climate change a serious problem?
- Are you concerned that energy use is causing climate change?

## Support for Policy Actions

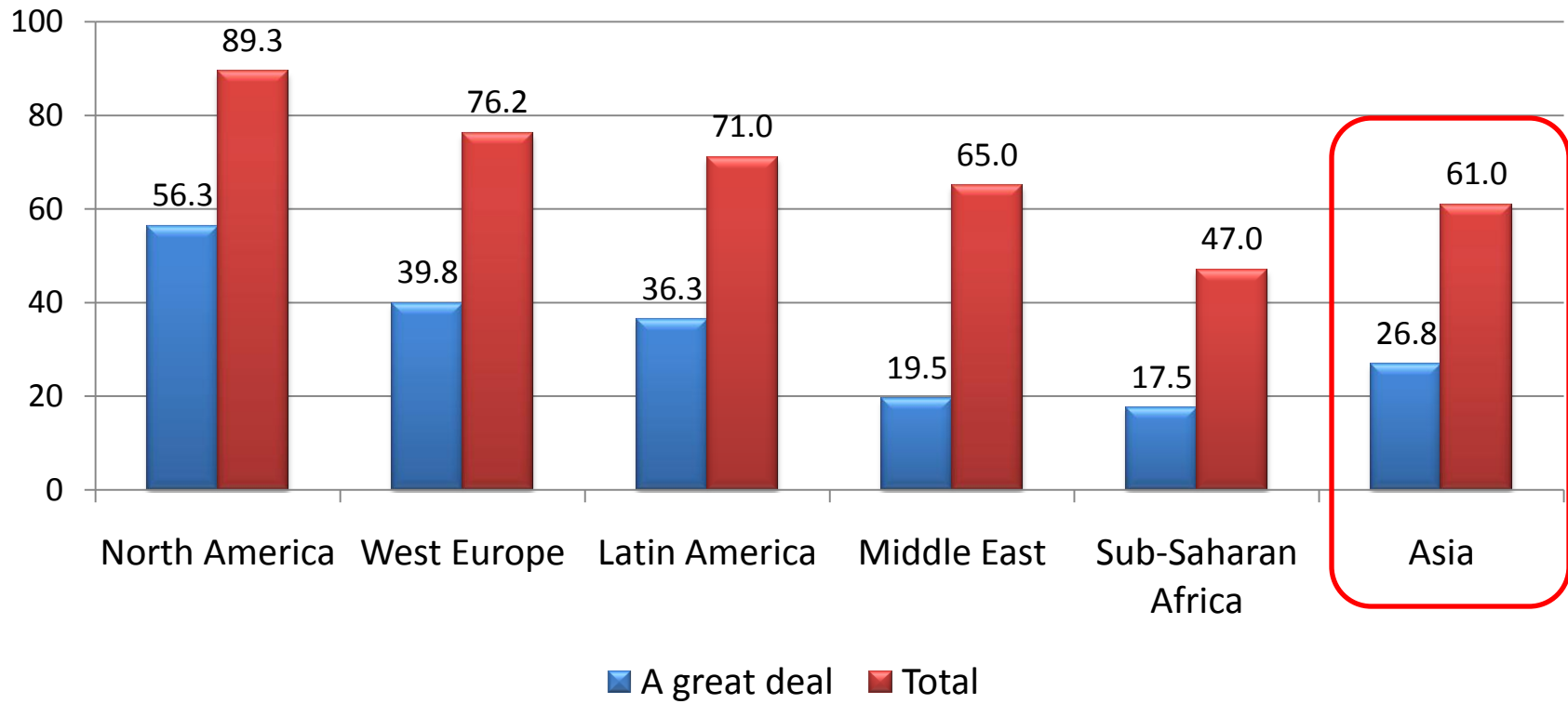
- It is necessary to take major steps to address climate change
- Individuals definitely need to change lifestyle to reduce climate change gases

## Views of Domestic & International Policy

- Do you support tax incentives for alternative energy development?
- Less-wealthy countries should cut emissions
- Wealthy countries should give assistance

# Cross-regional Findings: Awareness

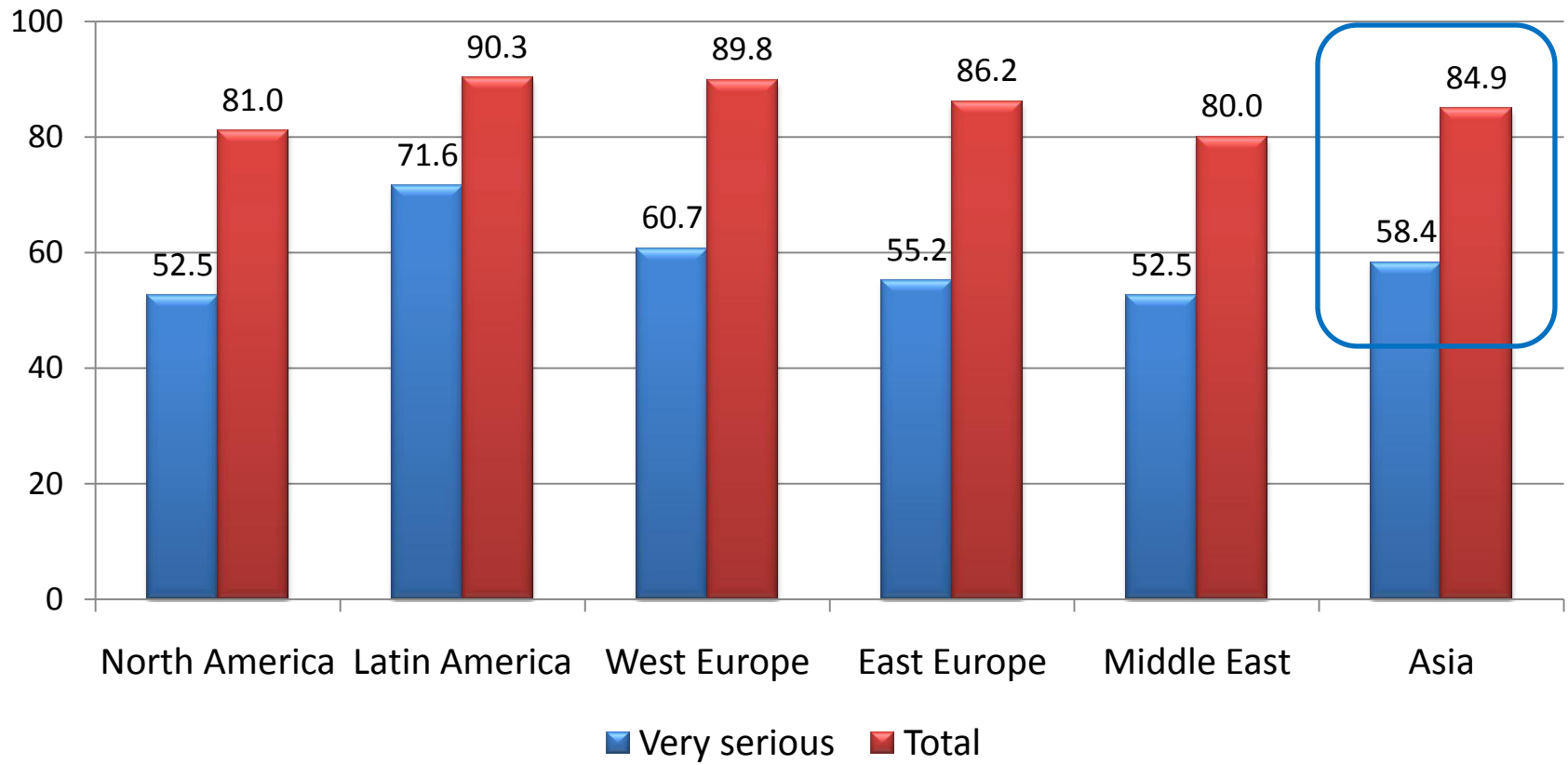
Heard or read about global warming or climate change  
(BBC Sept 2007)



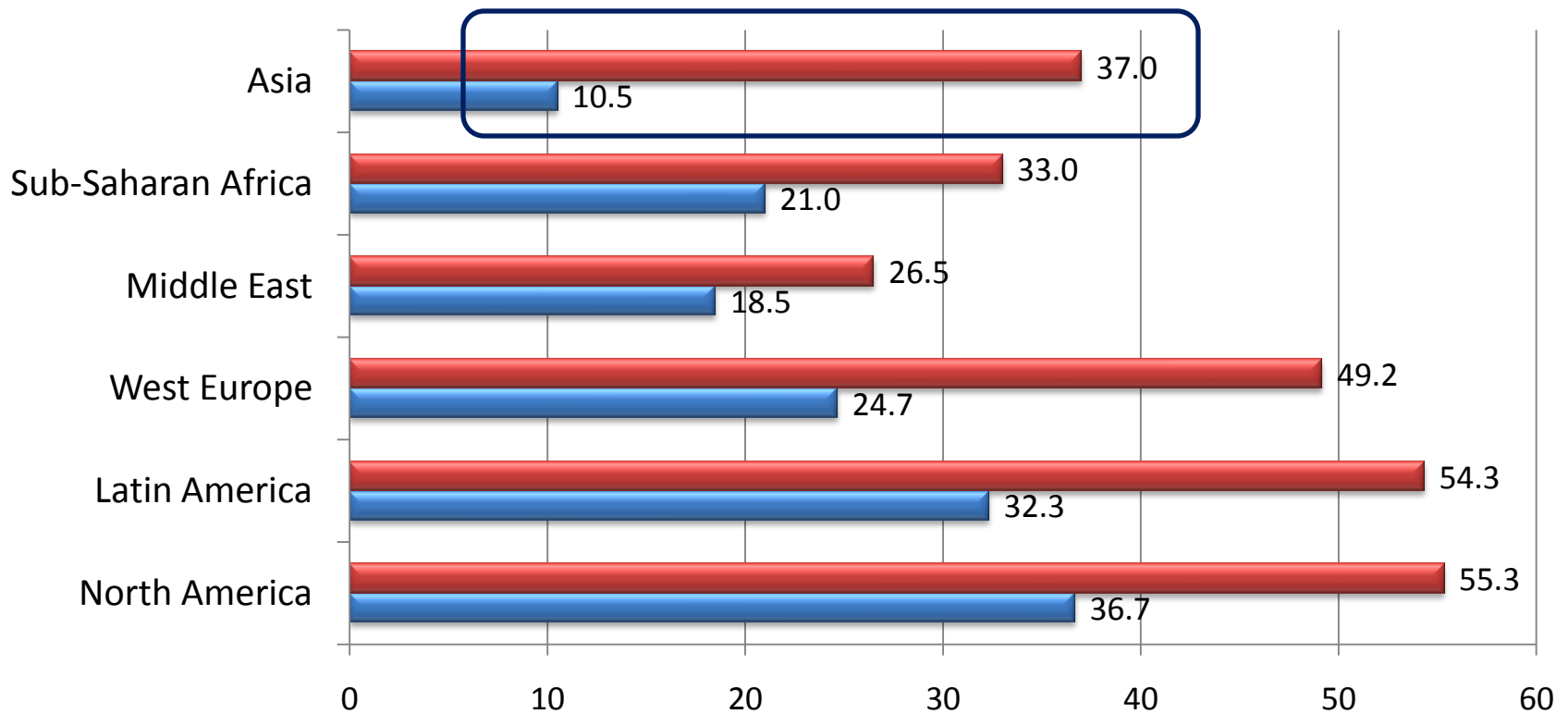


# Cross-regional Findings: Concern

Global warming is a \_\_\_\_\_ problem (Pew May 2007)

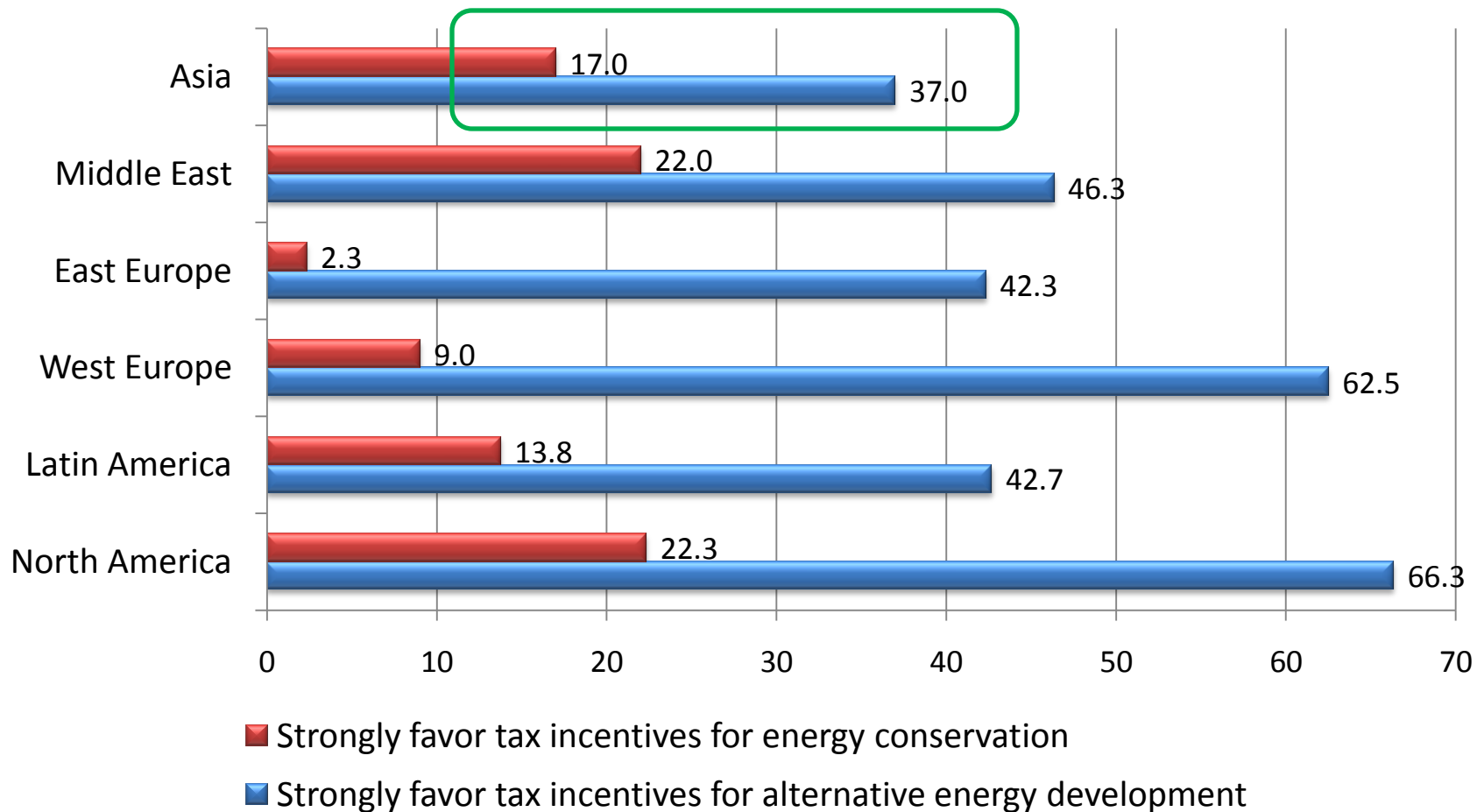


# Cross-regional Findings: Support

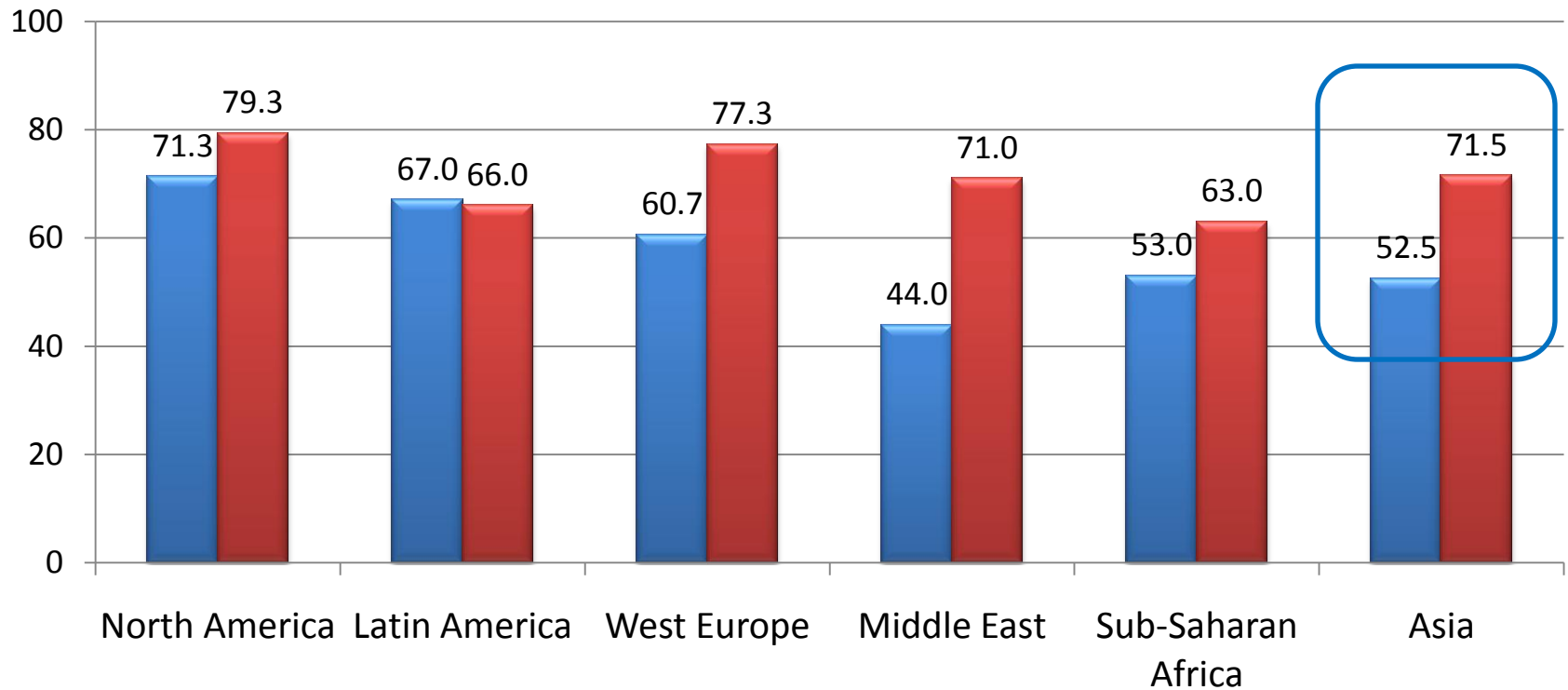


- Individuals definitely need to change lifestyle to reduce climate changing gases
- Energy cost will definitely need to increase

# Cross-regional Findings: Policy Views I



# Cross-regional Findings: Policy Views II



- Less-wealthy countries should cut emissions (BBC Sept 2007)
- Wealthy countries should give assistance (BBC Sept 2007)

## Some Intra-regional Findings

- The levels of awareness and concern about climate change are higher in East Asia than in Southeast Asia.
  - Exception: Bangladesh (vulnerability factor?)
- Chinese are the most supportive of the need for rich countries' financial/technological assistance in climate change mitigation, while Indians are the least supportive of such a proposal.
- Chinese are the most supportive of unconditional raise in energy tax to deal with climate change effects, while South Koreans are more supportive of energy tax if earmarked for alternative energy development.

# Preliminary Causal Analysis for Intra-Regional Variations

Pew May 2007 Poll	<i>Global Warming - Very Serious</i>	<i>Global Warming - Somewhat Serious</i>
<i>Economic Affluence</i>		
GDP per capita	0.714	0.168
Energy use per capita	0.167	0.216
<i>Vulnerability</i>		
CO2 emissions per capita	0.167	0.216
CO2 damage (% of GNI)	-0.667	0.874*
Arable land (% of land area)	0.286	0.238
Forest area (% of land area)	-0.563	-0.012
<i>Political Regime</i>		
(Absence of) Political rights	-0.639	0.346
(Absence of) Civil liberties	-0.724*	0.420
Polity score	0.635	-0.380

# Policy Implications

Greater reluctance to take up the costs of adjustment for climate change among Asians imply a significant hurdle for implementing climate change policies.

Such reluctance may be due to generally low levels of awareness and concern about climate change among Asians.

Intra-regional differences in Asians' perceptions of climate change problems may become a barrier to establishing a common framework for devising regional policy measures.