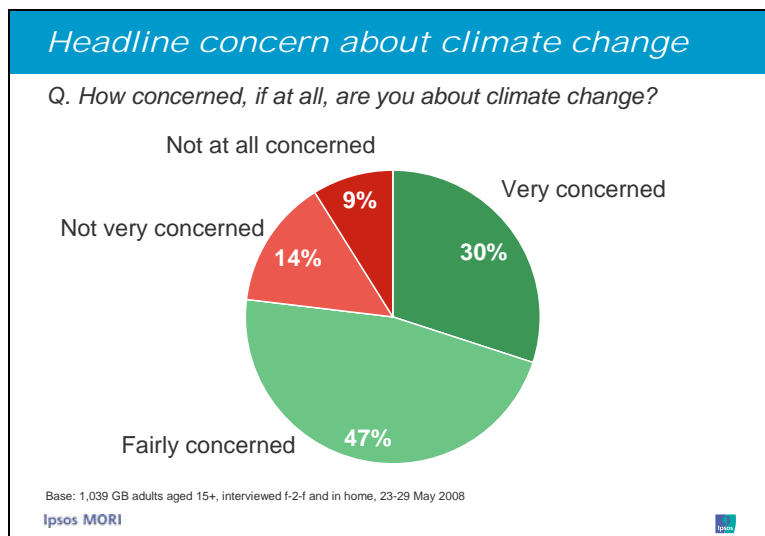
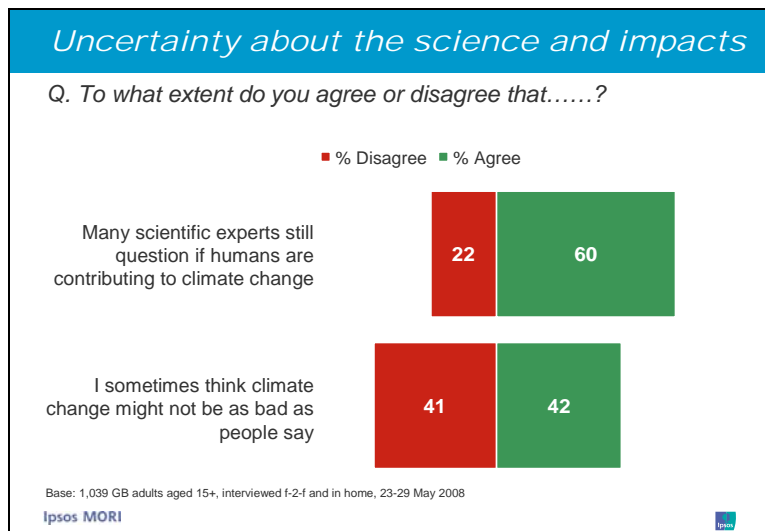


Public attitudes to climate change, 2008: concerned but still unconvinced

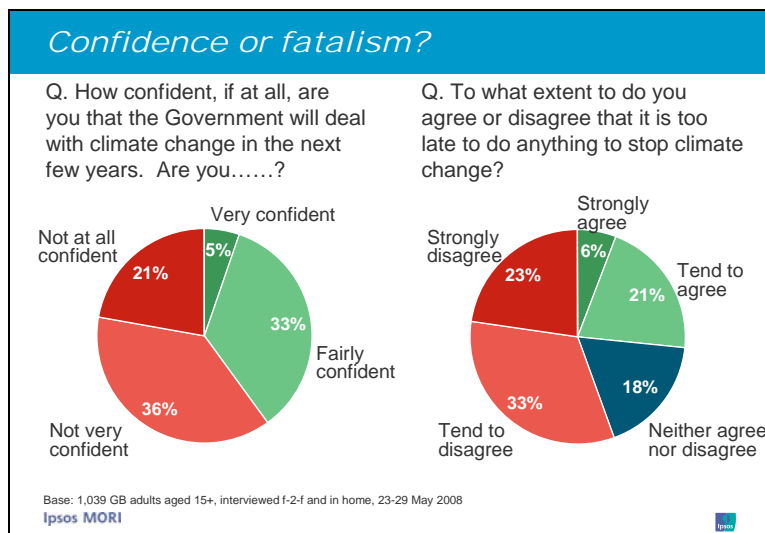
In the battle for hearts and minds, a majority of the British public remain concerned about climate change – 30% say they are “very concerned” and a further 47% “fairly concerned” – while a significant minority of almost one in four (23%) are not.



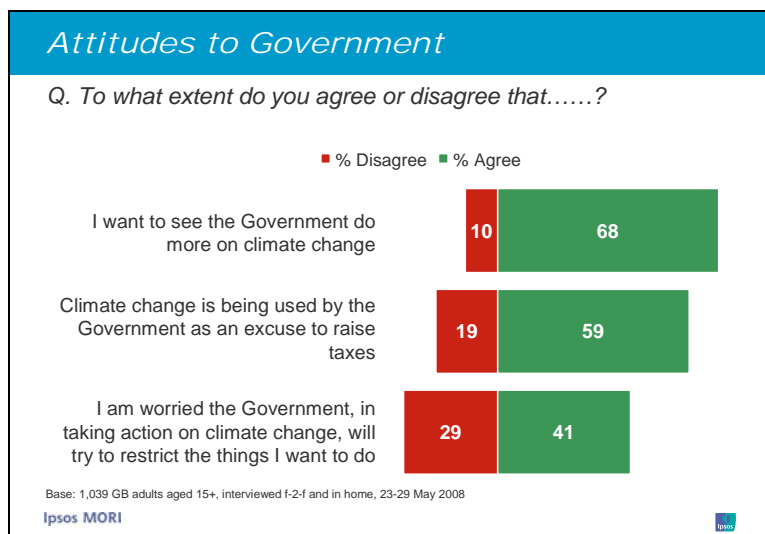
There does, however, remain uncertainty about both the science and the potential impacts. For example, as many as 60% agree that many scientific experts still question if humans are contributing to climate change, a figure largely unchanged from 2007 (56%) and in contrast to the position reached by the Fourth Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007). Approaching half (42%) say they sometimes think climate change might not be as bad as people say.



Turning to attitudes towards the role of Government, only around one in three (38%) are confident the Government will take the steps necessary to tackle climate change, compared to 57% who are not. There is even less confidence in international leaders taking action (36% confident vs. 61% not confident). This pessimism does not, though, appear to reflect a wider fatalist outlook among the public – only 6% strongly agree it is too late to do anything to tackle climate change, while a further 21% tend to agree.



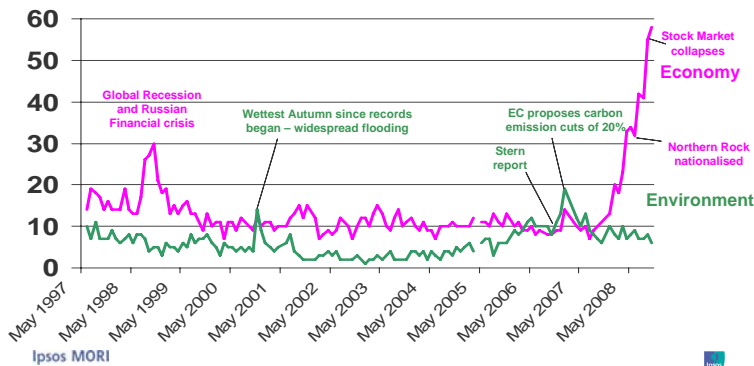
Government faces a series of challenges to set out its climate change credentials to the public. On the one hand there is strong support for Government to do more – 68% back this. However, at the same time the public are cynical about the Government’s motivations and a majority (59%) think the Government is using the climate change agenda to raise taxes. The research also finds the public themselves caught in two minds: despite large numbers backing more Government action, two in five (41%) acknowledge that they are worried this might lead to restrictions on the things they want to do.



The current economic pessimism is having an impact on concerns about the environment more broadly. Parallel data from the Ipsos MORI Political Monitor shows concern about the economy rocketing while the environment has flat lined: in the latest monthly figures for October, 58% say the economy is one of the key issues facing the country compared to 6% who cite the environment.

Economy vs. environment

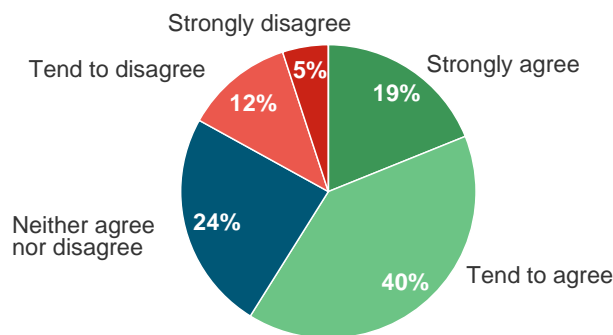
Q What do you see as the main/other important issues facing Britain today?



In spite of economic pessimism, the research finds strong support (59%) for investment in renewables in the UK, *even if* this increases prices for consumers. Given recent increases and reports of more rises to come, the strength of backing is perhaps surprising and may hint at a broader public desire for greater national self sufficiency on the energy agenda in response to volatile global oil and gas markets.

Strong backing for renewables

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should invest now in renewable energy even if it increases the price of energy bills?

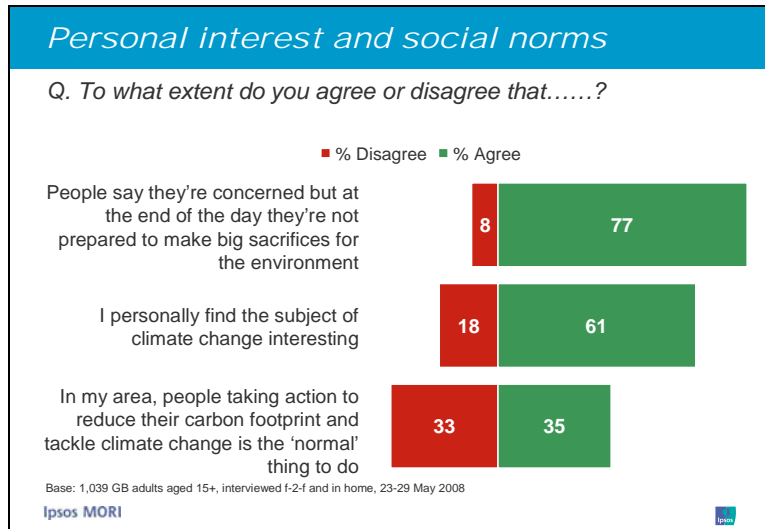


Base: 1,039 GB adults aged 15+, interviewed f-2-f and in home, 23-29 May 2008
Ipsos MORI

Turning to individual and societal responses to climate change, the research does not support suggestions of a consumer revolution. While approaching two thirds (61%) say they personally find the subject of climate change interesting, over three quarters (77%) are pessimistic about the likelihood of others responding -

agreeing with the statement “people say they’re concerned but at the end of the day they’re not prepared to make big sacrifices for the environment”.

Only few consider individual action on climate change a “normal” thing in their neighbourhood – just 4% strongly agree it is socially normalised, while a further 31% tentatively agree (35% in total).

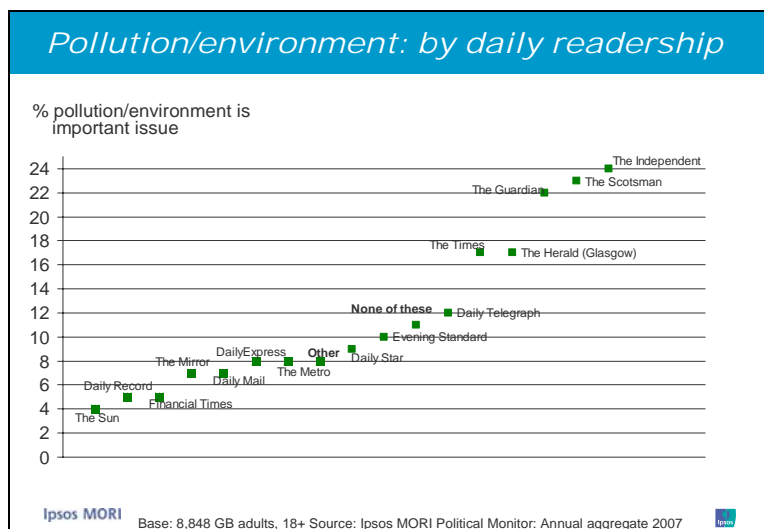


Households do not appear convinced of the need for significant changes in behaviour – around one in four (26%) judge their personal responsibility involves small steps like recycling and turning off lights at home, but nothing else. Almost half (47%) accept the need to go further and look at transport patterns and purchasing decisions, but only 13% think this should involve significant and radical lifestyle changes.



Finally, the research reveals some differences in opinion within the British public. Those in social class AB, in affluent households, and also those with a university educated/professional qualification background all tend to be more concerned about climate change, back more government intervention and acknowledge a greater need for individual responsibility.

Newspaper readership is also strongly implicated, with broadsheet readers – particularly those who read The Guardian, The Independent and The Times – significantly more likely to cite the environment as a key issue facing the country compared to those who read the mid market and tabloid press.



In conclusion, concern about climate change remains high, many seem genuinely interested in the subject and, on renewables, a majority want more investment even if energy prices rise. But other findings will make for more difficult reading for the Government in terms of the cynicism around Government intervention and the fact that individual action on climate change is not considered the socially normal thing to do. The public also clearly want to hear more about the “climate science”.

The current mood towards green taxation will possibly be the most concerning to the Government. Green taxes shouldn't be as unpopular - they're backed by the public in principle and other research shows them considered favourable to income and council tax. But the public aren't buying it right now and see them as an additional, stealth tax that disappears into a black hole. They're asking the question: where is the money going. If green taxes are to work the links need to be clearly demonstrable.

Results in full

Q1. How concerned, if at all, are you about climate change?

Base: All adults aged 15+ (1,039)

	%
Very concerned	30
Fairly concerned	47
Not very concerned	14
Not at all concerned	9

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that...?

Base: All adults aged 15+ (1,039)

	%	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
Many scientific experts still question if humans are contributing to climate change	%	15	45	18	15	7
I sometimes think climate change might not be as bad as people say	%	7	35	17	27	14
I personally find the subject of climate change interesting	%	19	42	20	12	6
I think it is too late to do anything to stop climate change	%	6	21	18	33	23
I want to see the government do more on climate change	%	31	37	22	8	2
Climate change is being used by the government as an excuse to raise taxes	%	25	34	23	13	6
I am worried the government, in taking action on climate change will try to restrict the things I want to do	%	10	31	30	21	8
In my area, people taking action to reduce their carbon footprint and tackle climate change is the 'normal' thing to do	%	4	31	32	25	8
People say they're concerned but at the end of the day they're not prepared to make big sacrifices for the environment	%	25	52	16	7	1
We should invest now in renewable energy even if it increases the price of energy bills	%	19	40	24	12	5

Q3. **Thinking about what is reasonable to expect people to do to tackle climate change, which one of the following statements best describes your opinion?**

Base: All adults aged 15+ (1,039)

	%
Individuals should not be expected to do anything, it is not their responsibility	4
Individuals should be expected to do things like recycling and turning lights off at home but no more	26
Individuals should be expected to do things like recycling and turning lights off at home as well as going further on some bigger actions eg in terms of what products they buy, how much they pay for things, and how much they drive and fly	47
Individuals should be expected to do make significant and radical changes to their lifestyle in terms of the products they buy, how much they pay for things and how much they drive and fly	13
There is no need to take any action – climate change is natural/humans are not having that much impact	6
Don't know	5

Ipsos MORI interviewed 1,039 British adults 15+. Fieldwork was conducted Face to Face and in home, 23 – 29 May 2008. Data are weighted to the known national population profile. An '*' indicates a finding of less than 0.5%, but greater than zero. Where percentages do not add up to exactly 100% this may be due to rounding error or exclusion of 'don't know' responses.

- ENDS -

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