

Massey College in Toronto



*Public Perceptions on Politics and Emotion:  
The Paradox of the Rational Imperative*

THE GLOBE AND MAIL 



March 17, 2010

# Methodology

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This survey was conducted March 5-9, 2010 using EKOS' unique hybrid internet-telephone research panel, *Probit*. This panel is randomly recruited from the general population, meaning that, the only way to be included in *Probit* is through random selection. Unlike opt-in internet-only research panels, *Probit* supports confidence intervals and error testing.

- In total, a random sample of 1,420 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey.
- A sample of this size provides a margin of error of +/- 2.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as regions).

# Outline

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- 1.0 Introductory Comments / Research Issues**
- 2.0 The Impacts and Balance of Reason and Emotion on Politics**
- 3.0 Positive and Negative Uses of Emotion**
- 4.0 Comparing the Leaders on IQ/EQ**
- 5.0 Most and Least Desirable Emotion**
- 6.0 Conclusions and Implications**

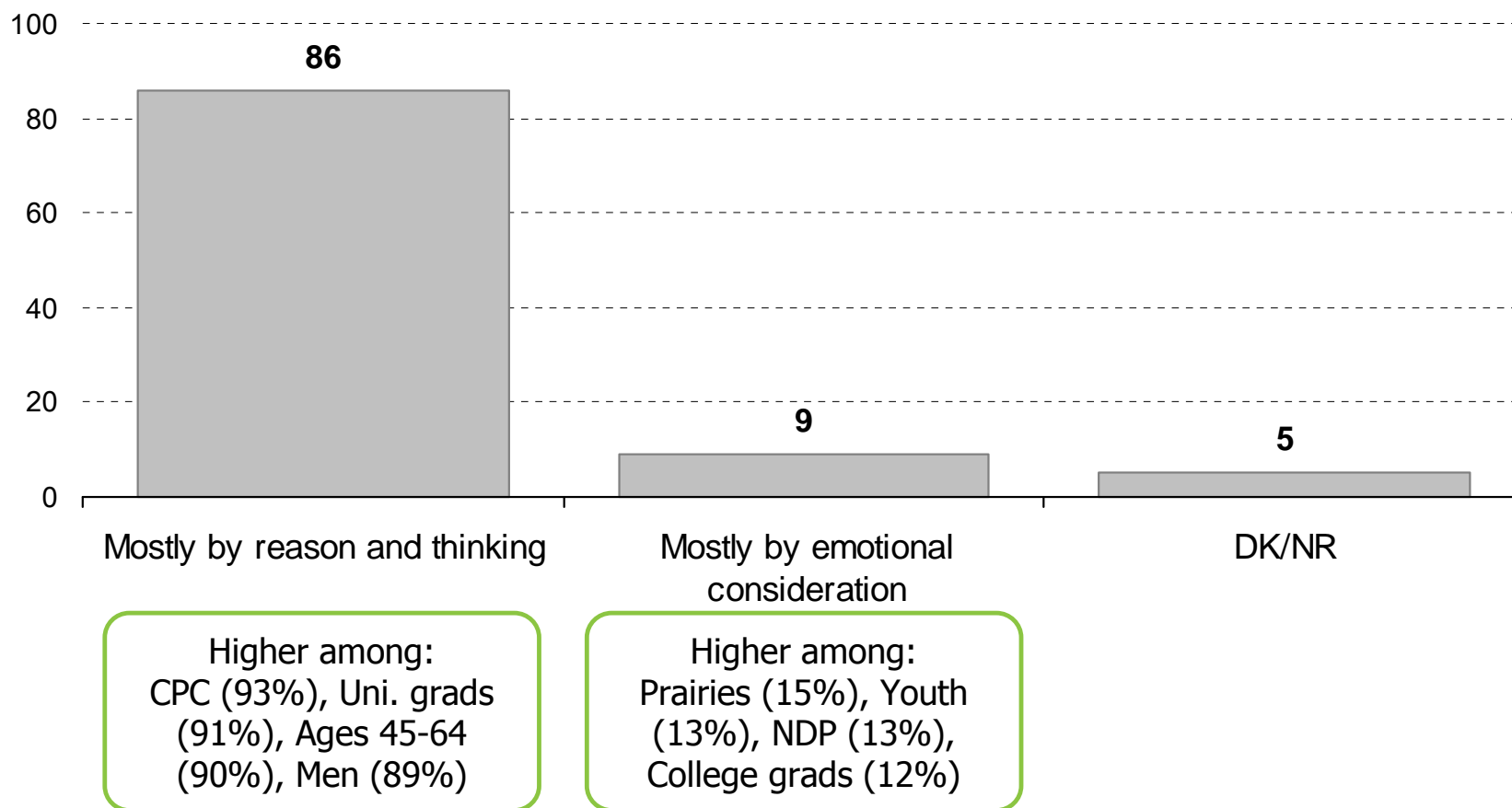
## 2.0 The Impacts and Balance of Reason and Emotion on Politics

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# Reason vs. Emotion: Personal voting decisions

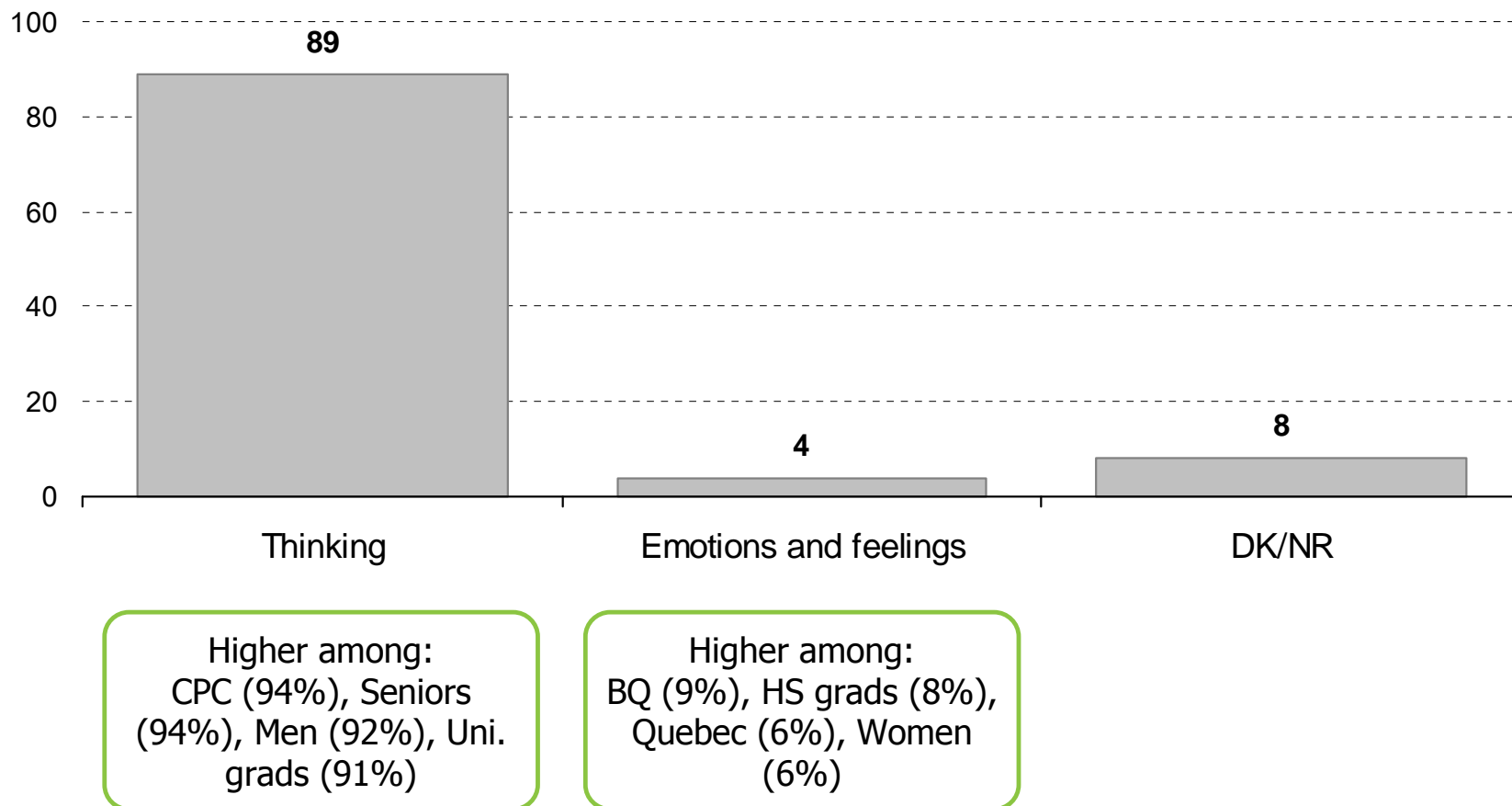
**Q:** When you make your final choice in the ballot booth, do you think it is influenced:



# Reason vs. Emotion: Impact on quality of politics

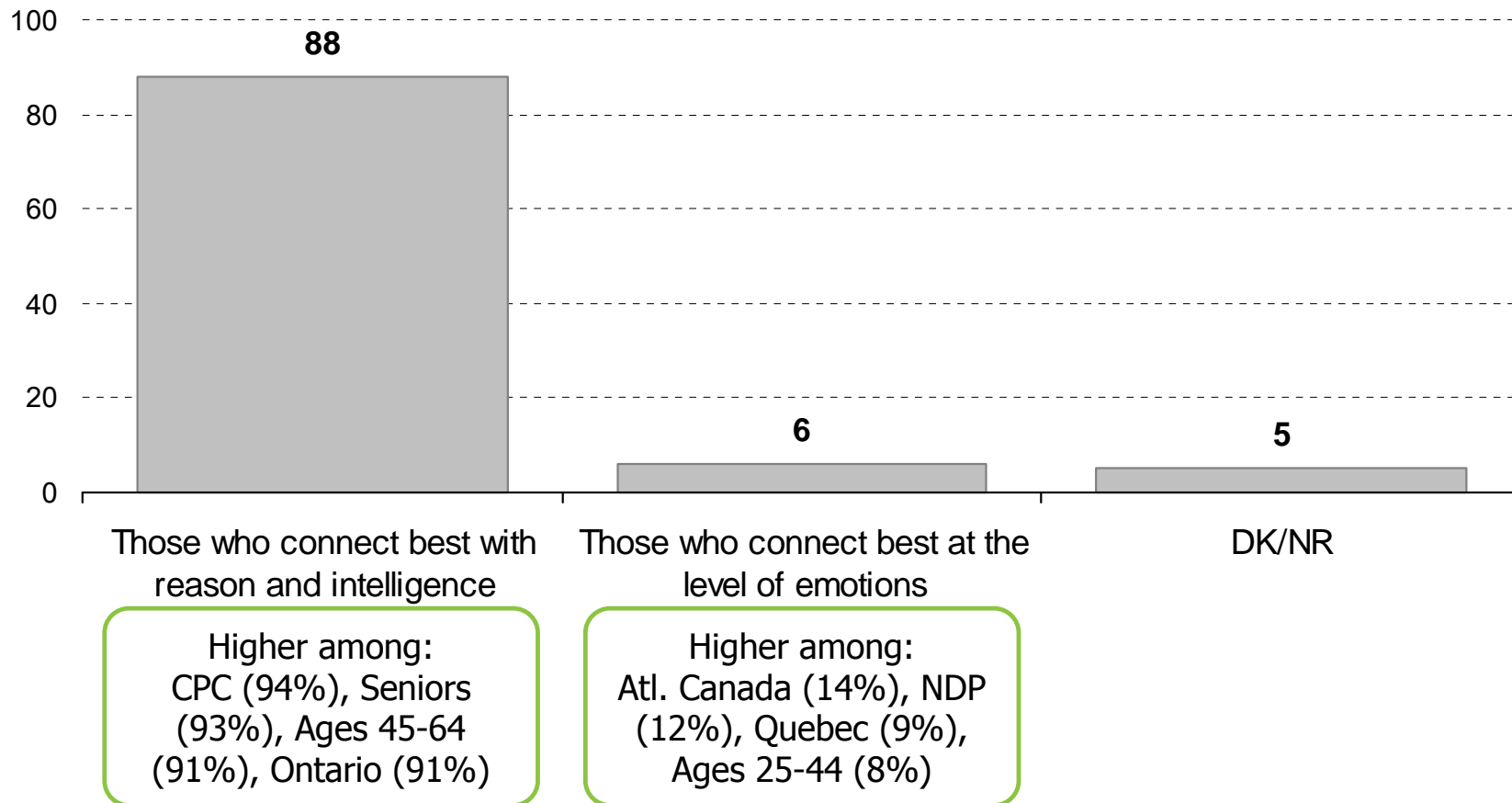
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*Q: Do you believe that politics would produce better results if voters put more emphasis on thinking or more emphasis on emotions and feelings?*



# Reason vs. Emotion: Strongest connection to voters?

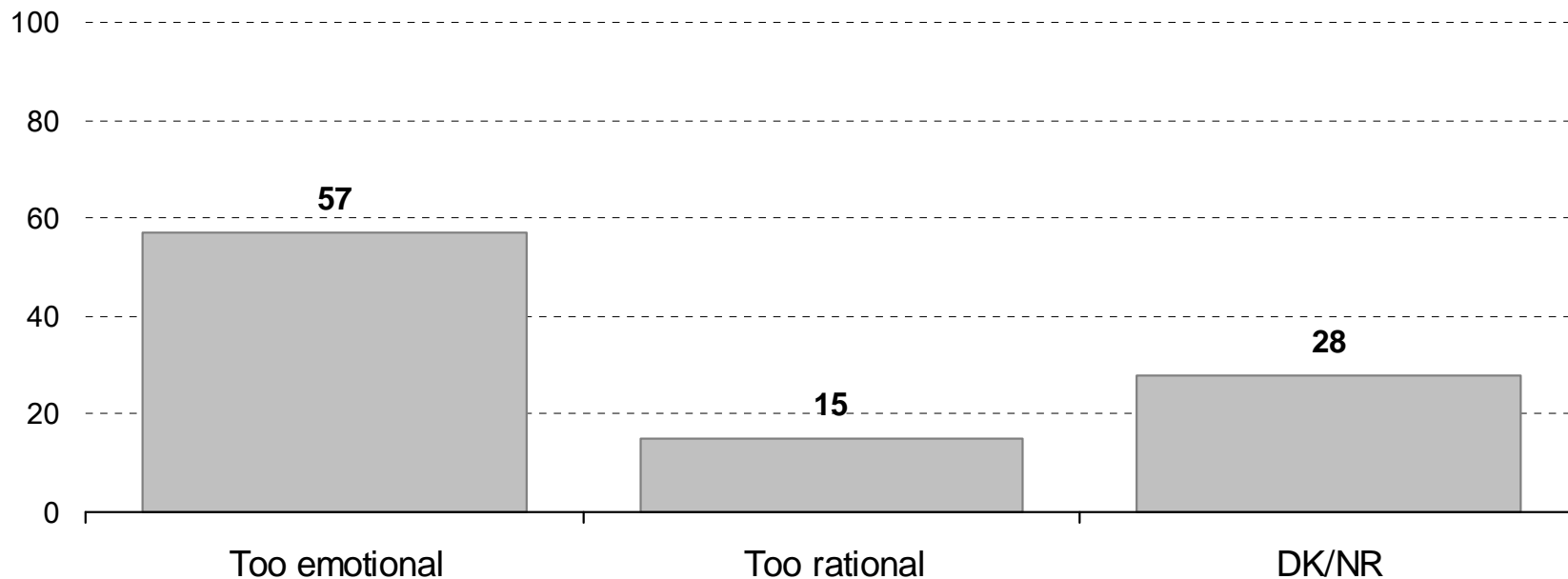
**Q:** Do you prefer political leaders who connect with you best at the level of emotions and feelings or those who connect best with their reason and intelligence?



# Reason vs. Emotion: Proper balance?

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*Q: Overall, are Canadian federal politics too emotional or too rational?*



Higher among:  
Prairies (71%), Men  
(69%), Uni. grads (65%),  
Ontario (63%), CPC (62%)

Higher among:  
Quebec (28%), HS  
(25%), GP (25%)



## 3.0 Positive and Negative uses of Emotion

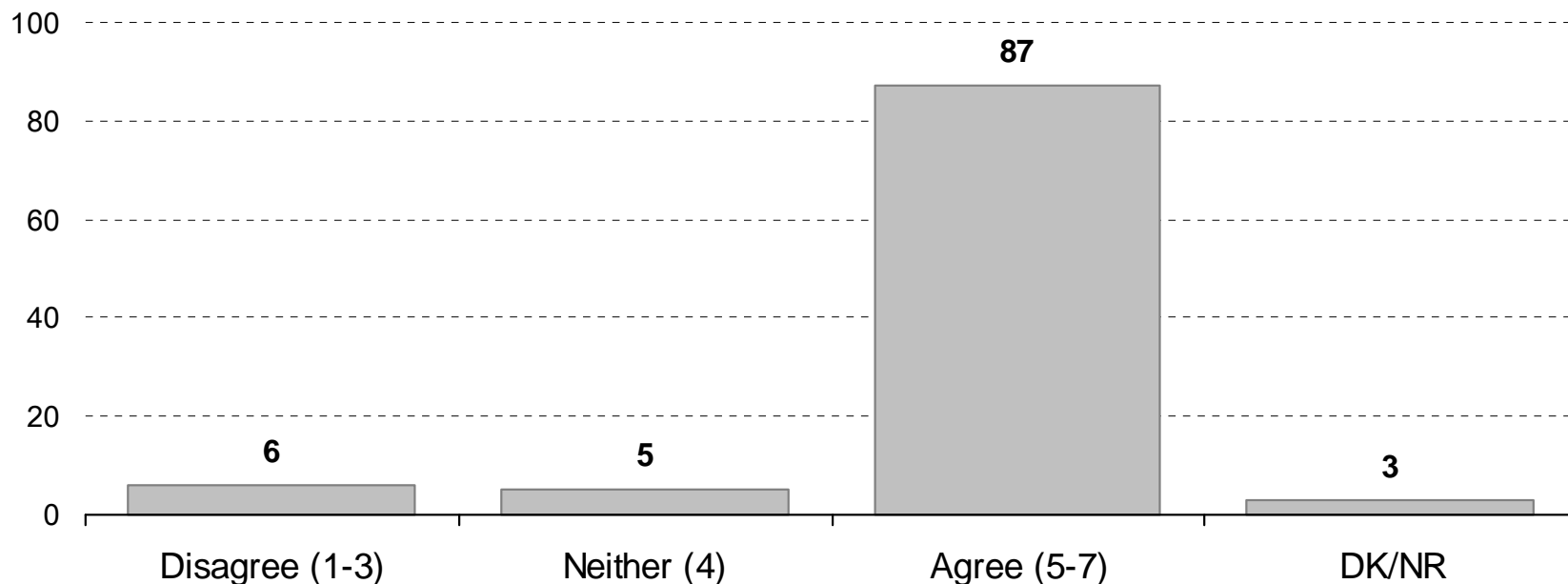
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# Perceived emotional manipulation by politicians

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please use a 7-point scale where 1 means strongly disagree, 7 means strongly agree and the mid-point 4 means neither agree nor disagree.

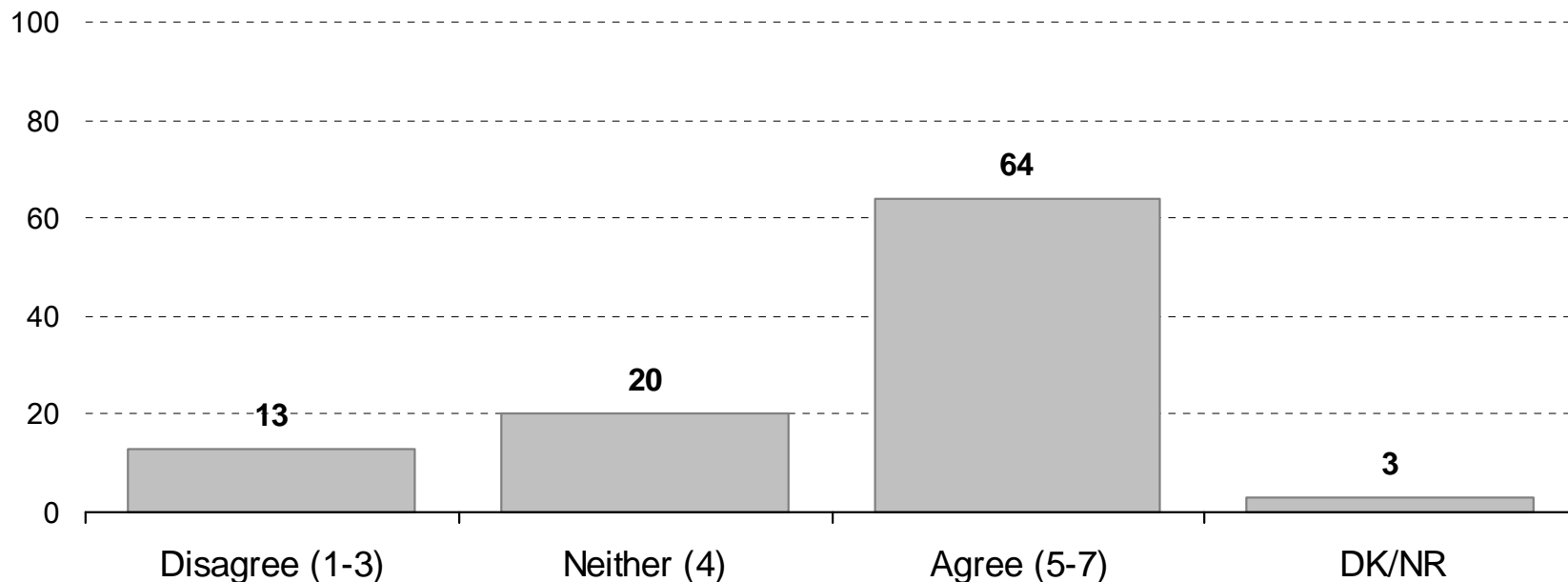
**Q:** Political parties and their operatives exploit and manipulate emotions of voters in order to advance their own interests.



Higher among:  
Men (89%), Uni. grads  
(89%)

# Impact of expressions of patriotism among politicians

*Q: During the recent Winter Olympics, I found the enthusiastic expression of patriotism and pride from our political leaders to be a very positive thing.*

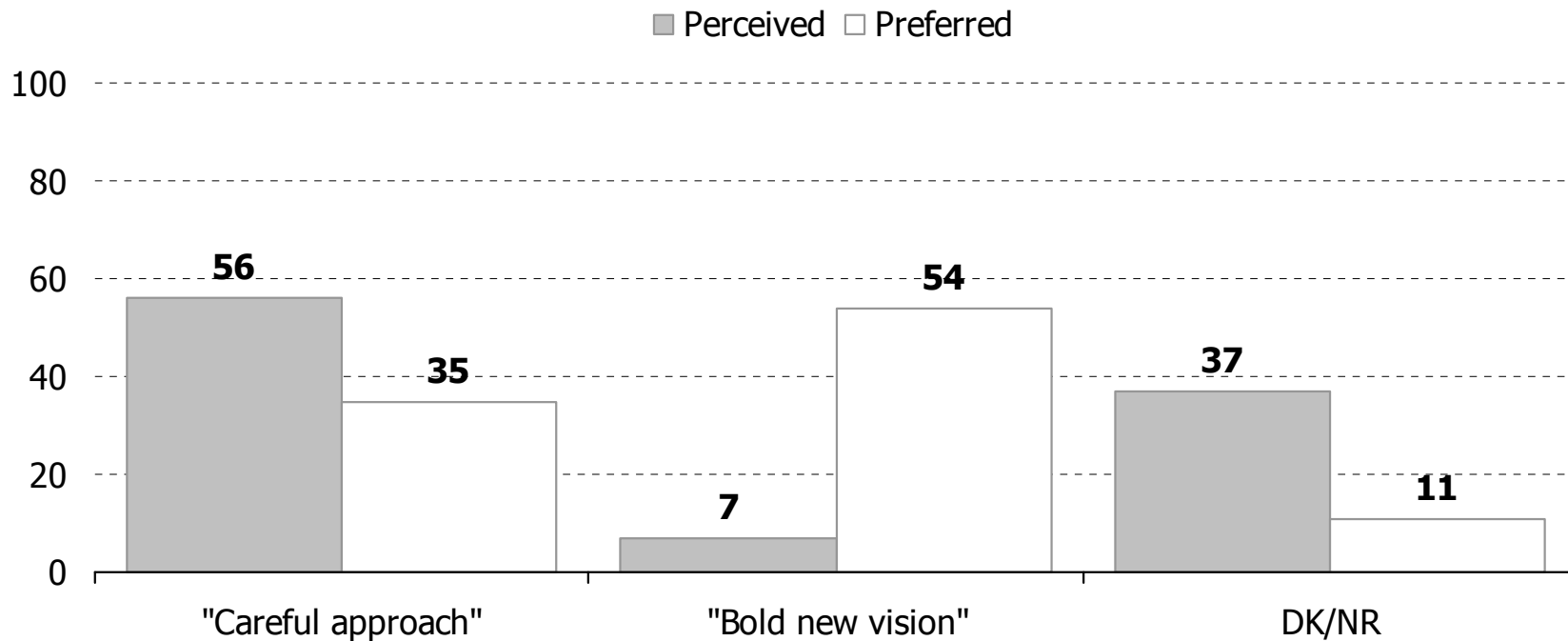


Higher among:  
GP (20%), NDP (18%),  
Ages 45-64 (15%)

Higher among:  
CPC (80%), Alberta  
(78%), Seniors (78%),  
College grads (70%)

# Perceived vs. preferred government approach

**Q:** Which of the following *BEST* describes the way the Government of Canada is *CURRENTLY* operating? And which way would you *PREFER* the Government of Canada to operate? 1) Following a careful, steady-as-she-goes approach, or 2) Providing a bold new vision for the future of the country.



Preferred among:  
CPC (60%), Seniors (43%)

Preferred among:  
LPC (67%), NDP (66%),  
BQ (65%), GP (63%),  
Ages 25-44 (60%)

## 4.0 Comparing the Leaders on IQ/EQ

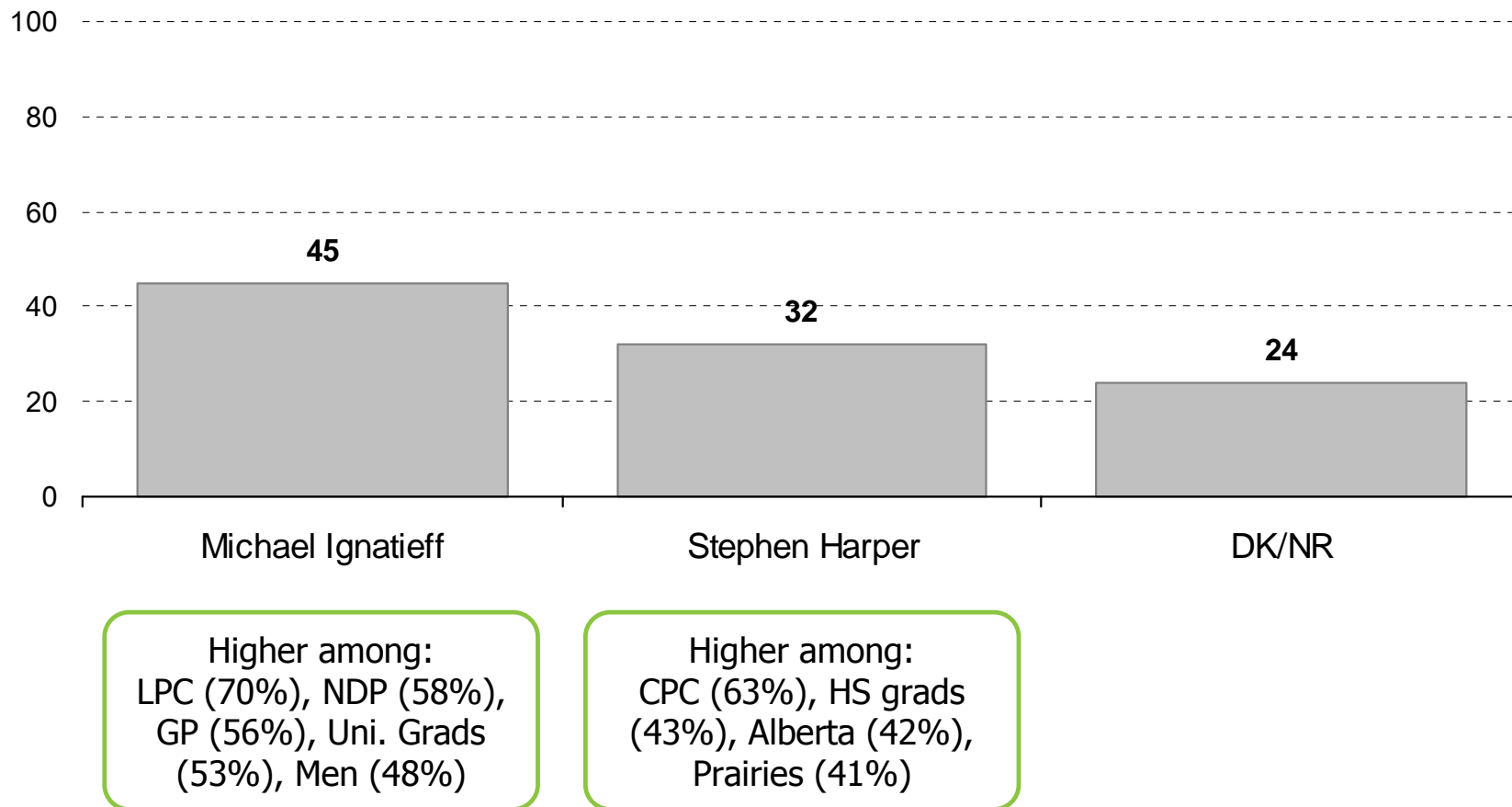
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# Perceived intelligence of leaders

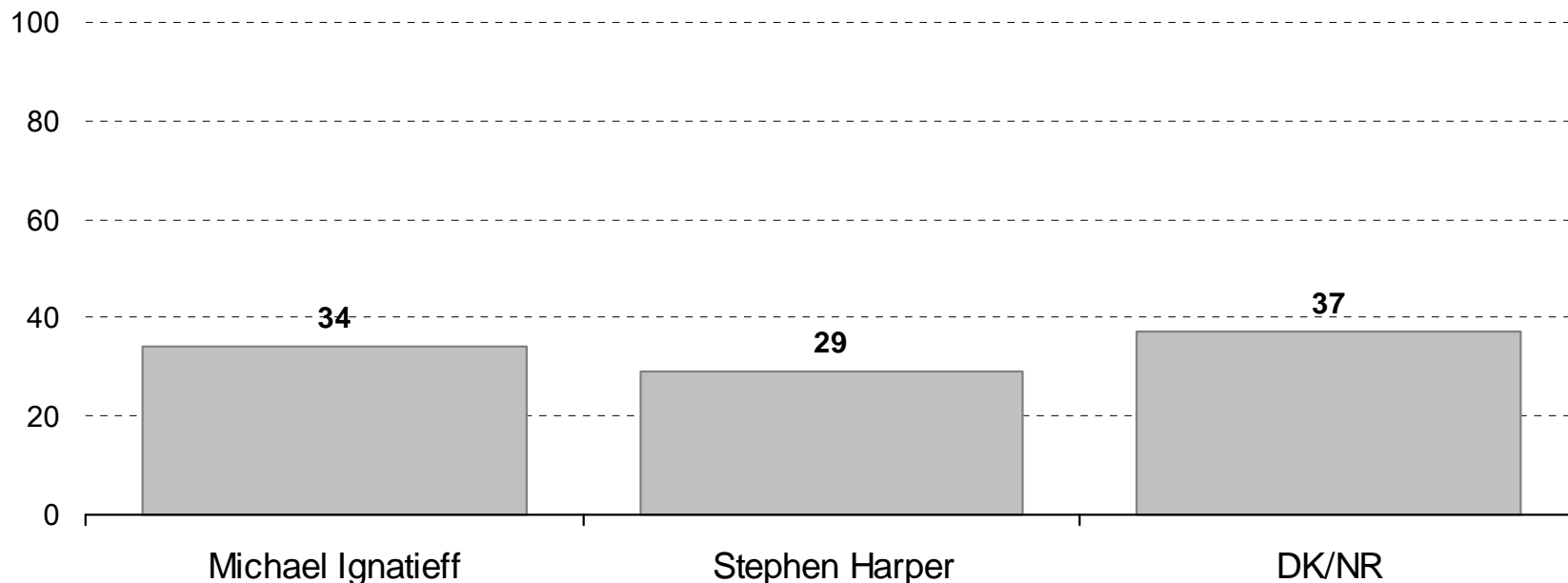
*We all know about the notion of intelligence, measured by IQ. Others have spoken of the equal importance of good emotional capacity, measured by EQ.*

**Q:** *Thinking about the current Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, and the current leader of the Official Opposition, Michael Ignatieff, who do you think has the better intelligence quotient?*



# Perceived emotional balance of politicians

**Q:** Thinking about the current Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, and the current leader of the Official Opposition, Michael Ignatieff, who do you think has the better emotional quotient?



Higher among:  
LPC (50%), NDP (49%),  
Uni. grads (39%), Ages  
25-44 (38%)

Higher among:  
CPC (52%), Alberta (45%),  
ES grads (36%), Ages 45-  
64 (34%), Men (32%)

## 5.0 Most and Least Desirable Emotion

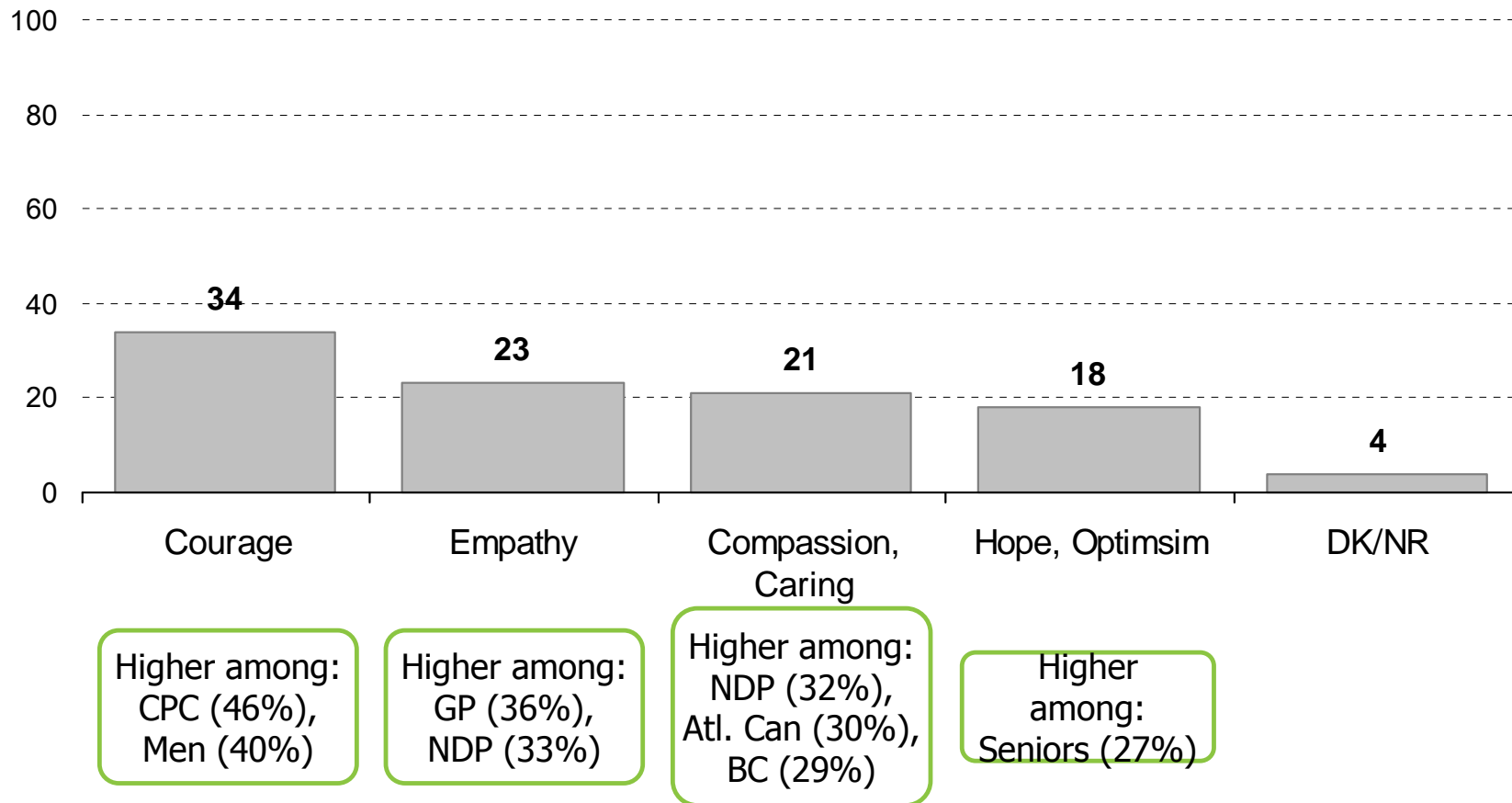
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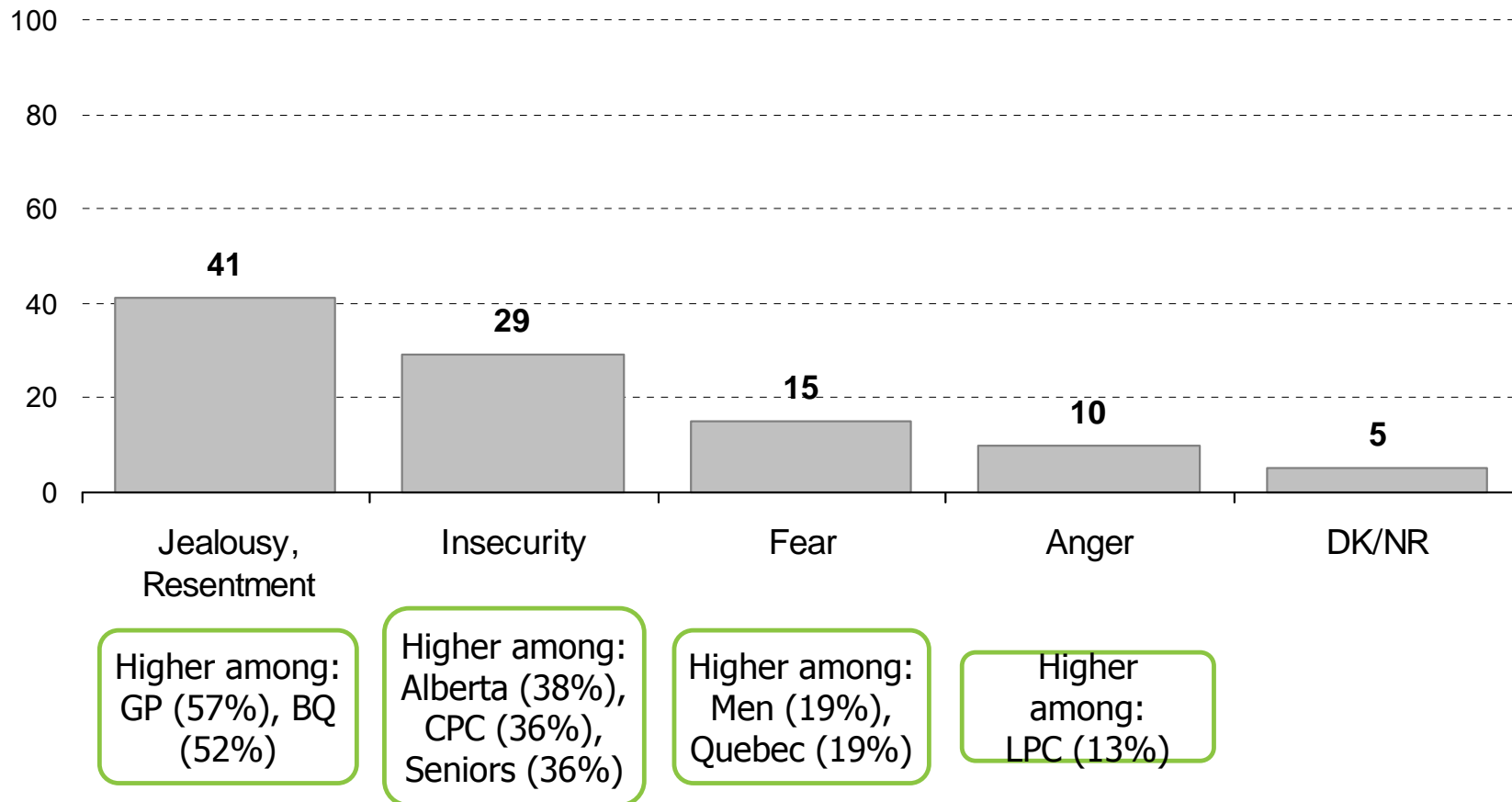
# Preferred emotion of politicians

*Q: Which of the following emotions would you **most** like to see in a politician?*



# Least preferred emotion of politicians

**Q:** Which of the following emotions would you **least** like to see in a politician?



# 6.0 Conclusions and Implications

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# Conclusions

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- Strong surface lean to reason over emotion
- Emotions seen as source of
  - Manipulation
  - Faulty decision-making
- Positive emotions diminished by demographics and recent history
- Preference for a more rational politics is more rooted in the relative urgency of more reason vs. more emotion
- Michael Ignatieff judged both more intelligent and (slightly) better EQ
- So why is Steven Harper the PM and perceived better leader?
- Solving some of the puzzle lies in
  - Disentangling ends/means
  - Disentangling which emotions
  - Breaking Down social divisions
    - Generation / gender

# Public Guidance

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- Public Guidance

- Emotional life of a country should not be limited by irrational choices or strategies.
- Demand for authenticity and balance
- Shift from focus on negative to positive? Will anticipate and solve looking generational storm

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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*Frank Graves, President  
EKOS Research Associates  
p. 613.235.7215  
e. [fgraves@ekos.com](mailto:fgraves@ekos.com)*