

Public Ecology: Opinions from the Field - Conversations with Amazon-Pire Participants

Photo credit: Envirofoto



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Scott's Introductory Lecture Slide

1. Introduction

2. Overall question: what is the future of Amazon forests under climate change?

3. Themes:

a. How do we integrate ecology with biogeochemistry?

b. How do ecosystems vary with climate, from high-altitude cloud forest to lowland rainforest?

c. How can science contribute to conservation?

4. Sites (Wayqecha, Tambopata Reserve)

5. Group Projects!

Critical reflections on practice: the changing roles of three physical geographers carrying out research in a developing country

Jayalaxshmi Mistry*, Andrea Berardi** and Matthew Simpson[†]

“To start from scratch.... was a new field for us, and we argued whether it was right for us, as trained physical geographers, to go down this road. What did we know about this? How much work would it involve for us in terms of individual scholarship? What credibility would we have with our colleagues both in Guyana and the UK? We were concerned and worried about the effect that might have on our reputations as well as our chances for any future funding from that body or any other.”

~(Mistry et al. 2009, 87)

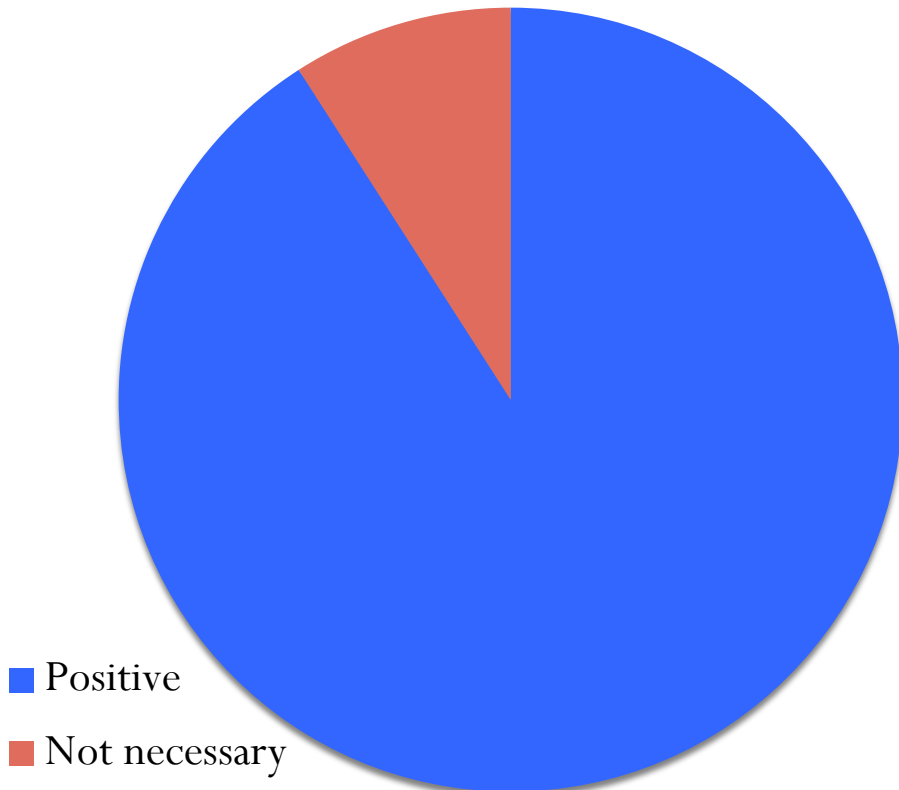
Public Ecology +

- Public Ecology +: a philosophy and practice of ecology that intends to educate the public and/or influence policy and decision making on environmental issues.

New contract for science (Lubchenco 1998)

Public Ecology (Robertson & Hull 2001)

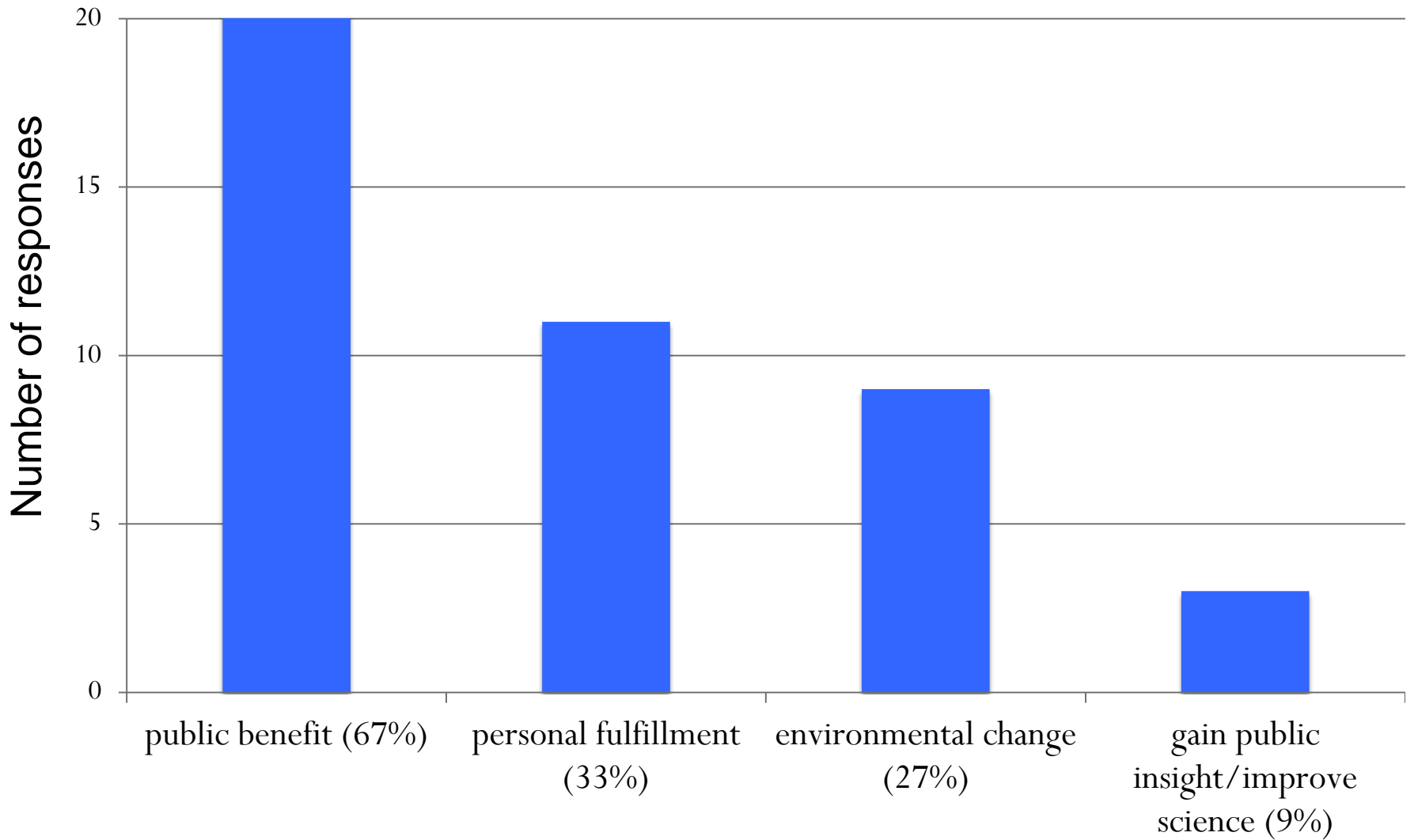
General Thoughts



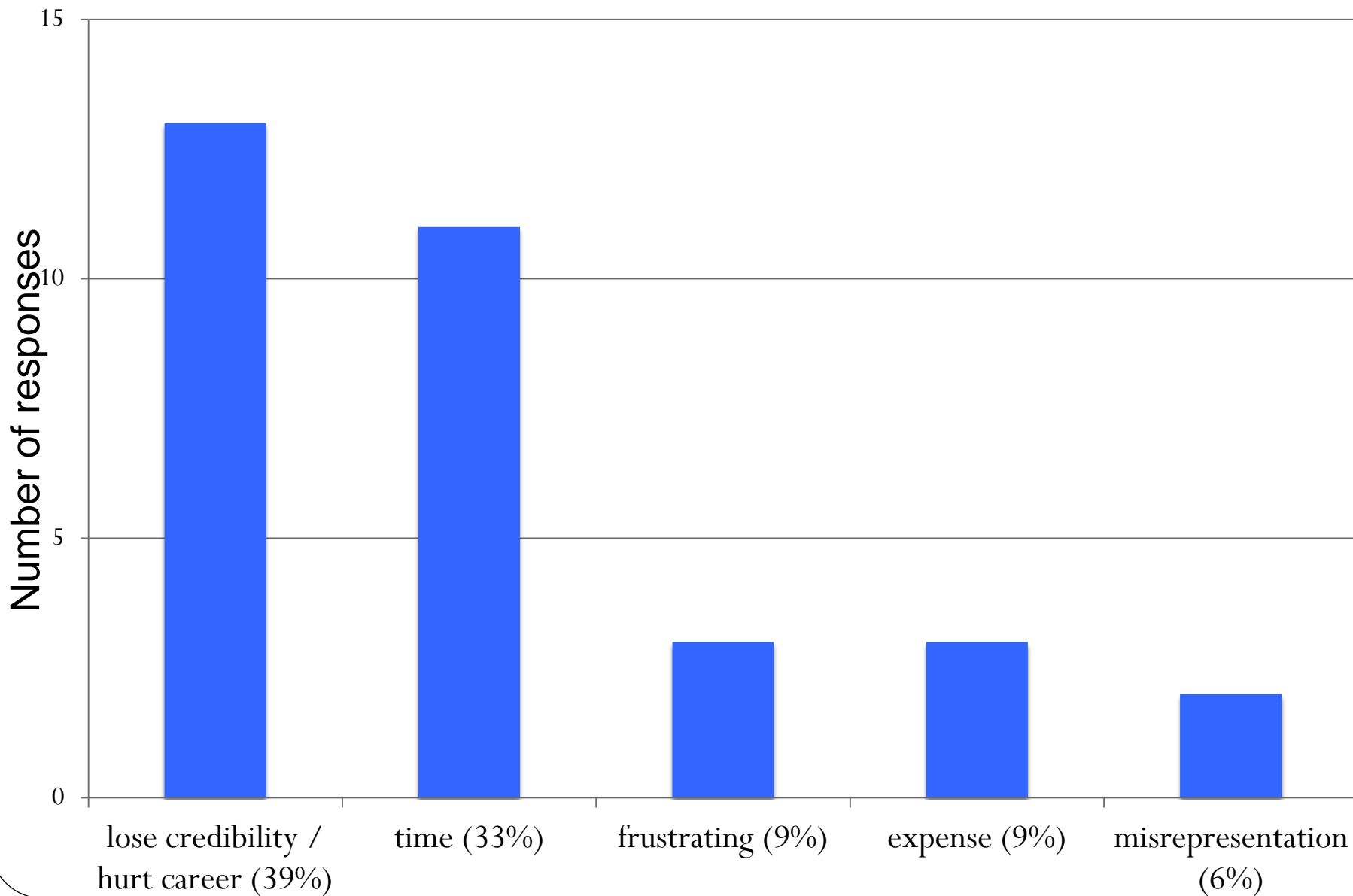
Positive (91%): difficult but important, a responsibility, more interested in engaging with the public than policymakers

Not necessary (9%): science is operating as it should, could be used as political tool

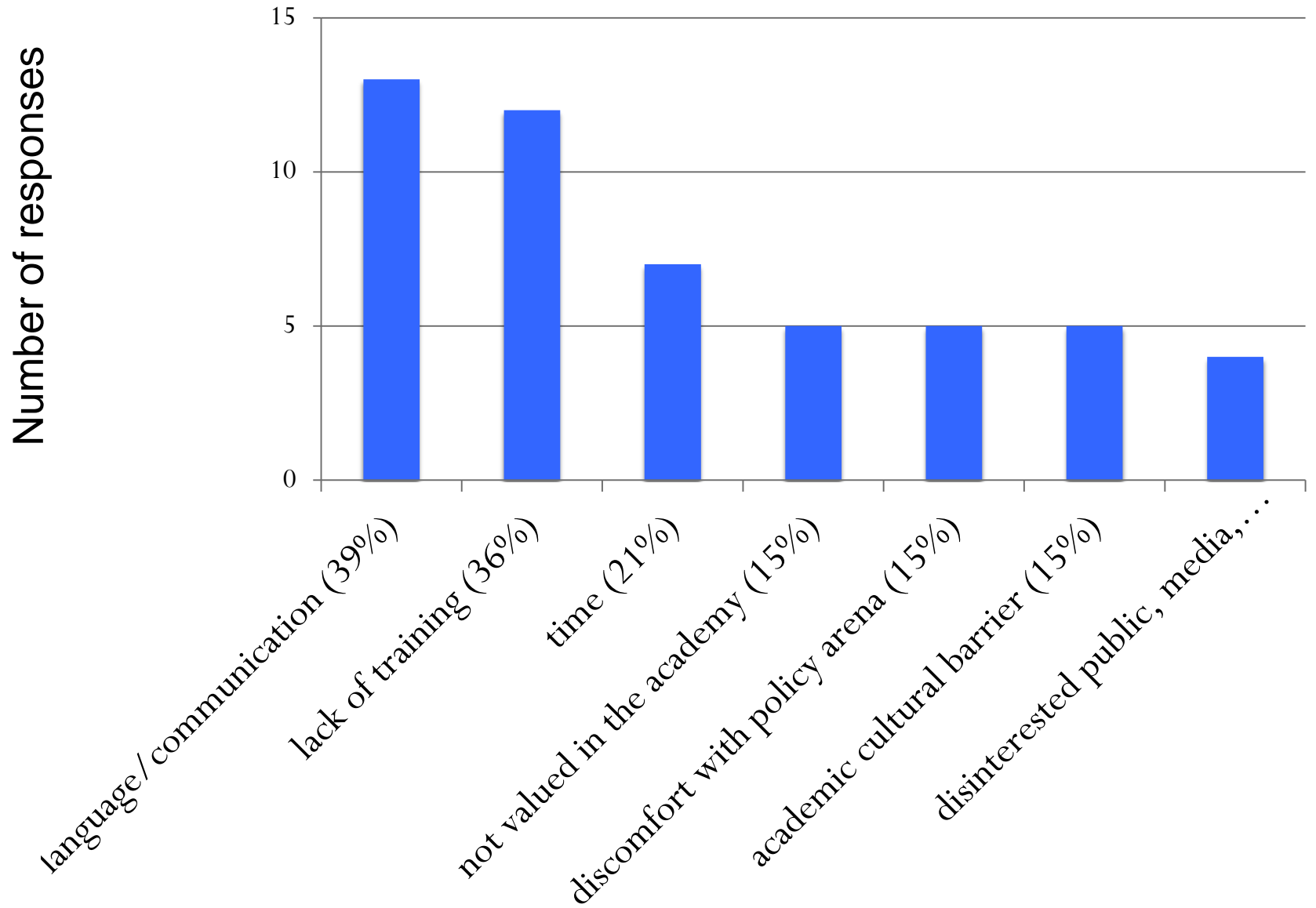
Benefits



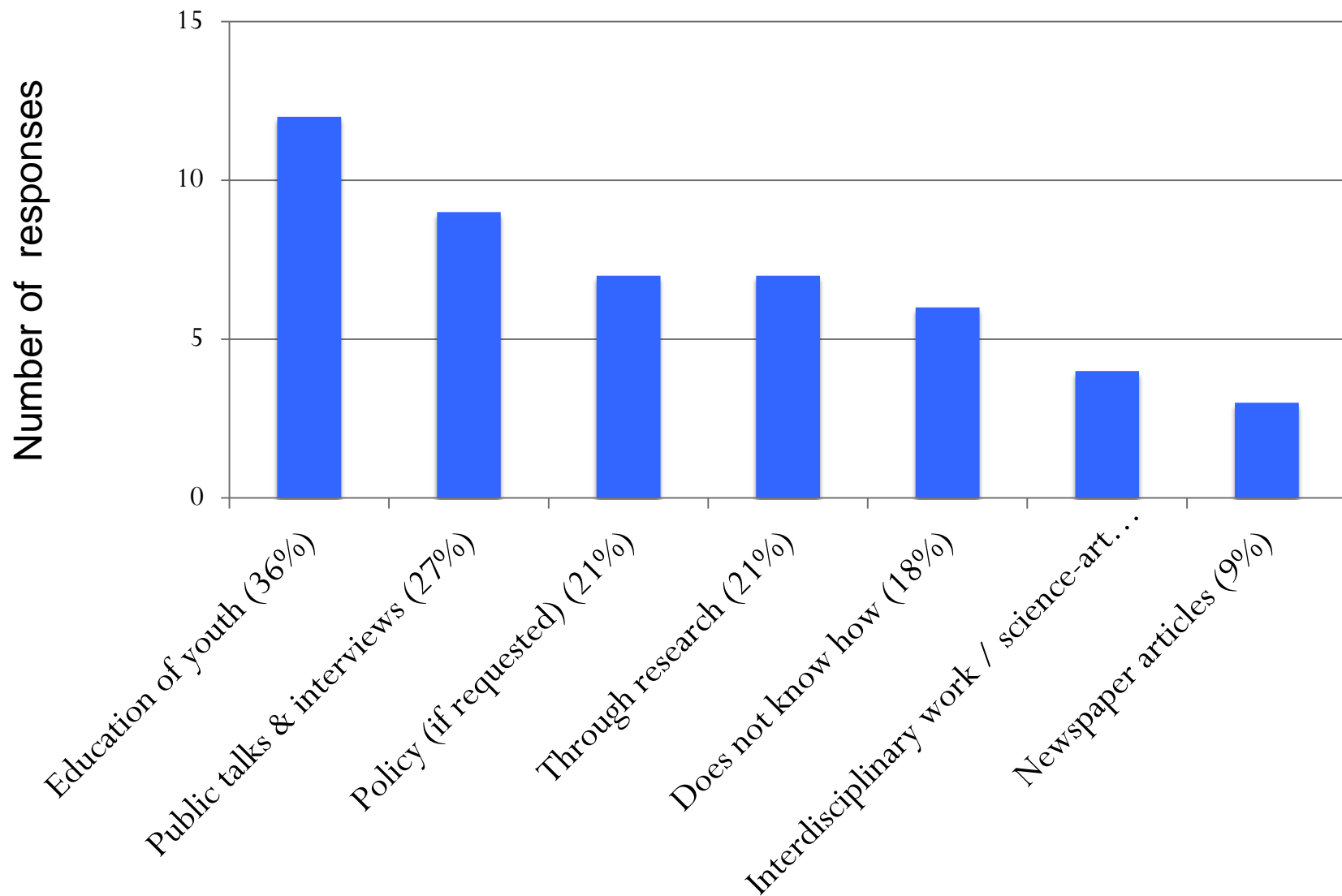
Costs



Barriers



Engagement



Conclusions

- No real difference with respect to academic position.
- Greater interest in engaging through public education than policy.
- Translation - intermediary to translate science to the public and policy makers – e.g. journalists, artists, etc.
- Fear of being targeted and having our credibility called into question.
- Significant interest in PE but lack of training. It is also made more difficult due to time constraints associated with normal academic obligations.

Future Directions

- Opinion piece on reactions to concept of Public Ecology +
 - Anonymous, but let us know if you want to remove your interview from the sample.
- Possible web site to open discussion to a wider audience.
 - Space to share information and resources
 - might provide support for those interested in doing PE