

PUBLIC RESPONSE TO TERRORISM IN AMERICA



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START ▶▶

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR THE
STUDY OF TERRORISM AND RESPONSES TO TERRORISM

A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE OF THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
BASED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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4 PRESENTATION TOPICS

- Study Methods
- What Americans Have Done to Get Ready
- What Motivates Americans to Take Action
- Steps to Increased Public Readiness

STUDY METHODS

THE SAMPLE

- Statistically Representative Sample
- All Households in America (N = 3,300)
- Selected So Could Generalize To:
 - *Different Areas:* Nation as a whole & to New York City, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.
 - *Different Groups:* Everyone & Whites, Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian & Pacific Islanders

DATA COLLECTION

- **Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews**
 - Pre-tested Questionnaire
 - Trained Interviewers
 - Done in English & Spanish
- **Length:**
 - Averaged 46 Minutes Long per Interview
 - Gift Certificate Incentive
- **When:**
 - April 2007 through February 2008

ACTIONS EXAMINED

■ Preparedness:

- Developed emergency plans, stockpiled supplies, purchased things to make them safer, learned more about terrorism, duplicated important documents, become more vigilant

■ Avoidance:

- Reduced plane travel, train travel, & use of public transportation, changed mail handling, avoided certain cities, tall buildings, & national landmarks

***WHAT HAVE
AMERICANS DONE?***

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

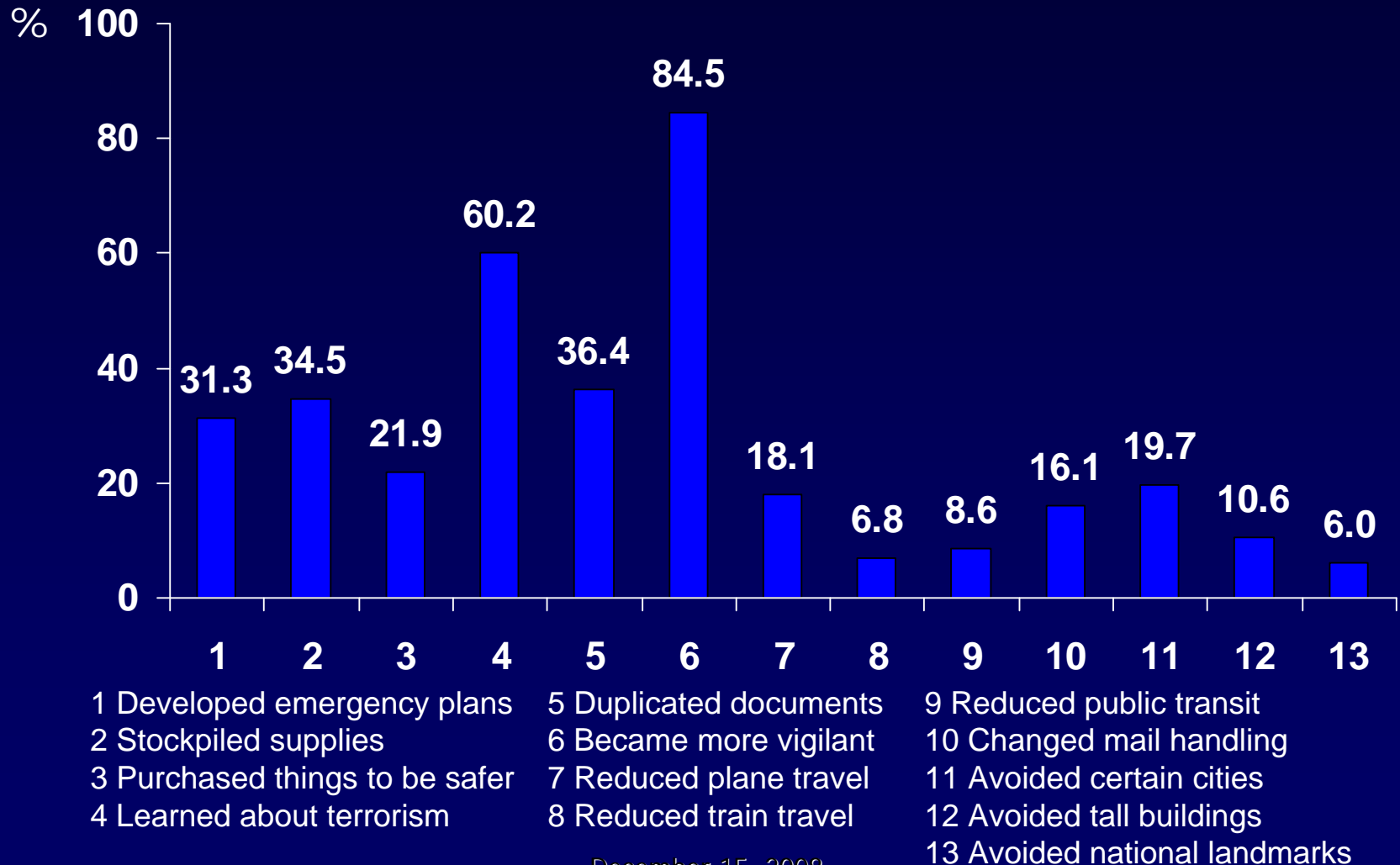
- **Some are Getting Ready, Most are Not:**
 - No real differences between area of country or racial & ethnic groups
- **Among Those Getting Ready:**
 - Terrorism is the least likely reason to do it
- **We Aren't Going to Read Every Number, but Here They Are.....**

THE BIG PICTURE

- **The State of Preparedness & Avoidance Action-taking in America:**
 - Location: nation as a whole
 - Group: all groups together (everyone)
 - Reason: any reason including terrorism

PROFILE OF THE NATION

(weighted sample: $n = 3,300$; for any reason)

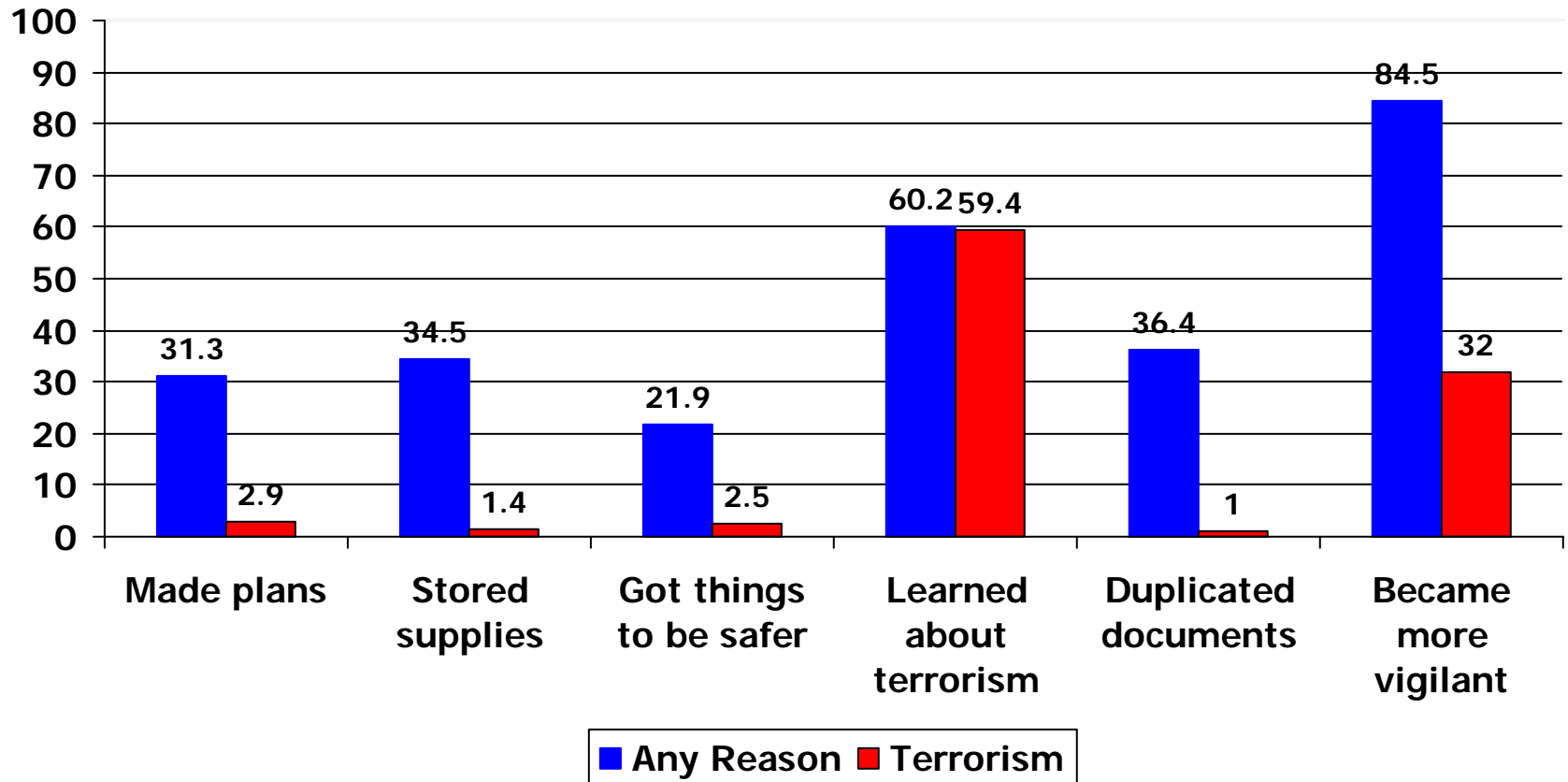


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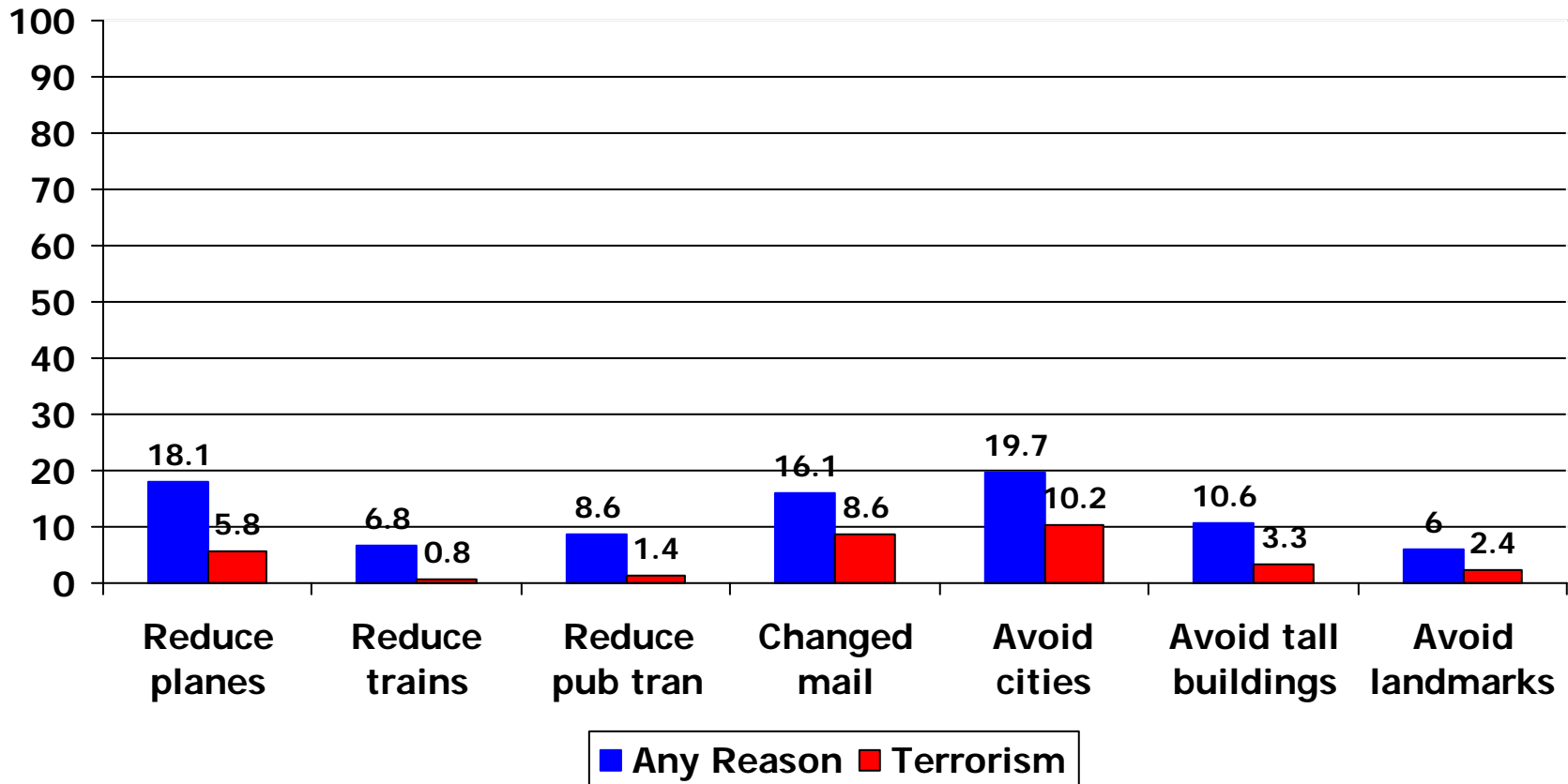
PREPAREDNESS BASIS:

Any Reason vs. Terrorism

(weighted sample, n = 3,300)



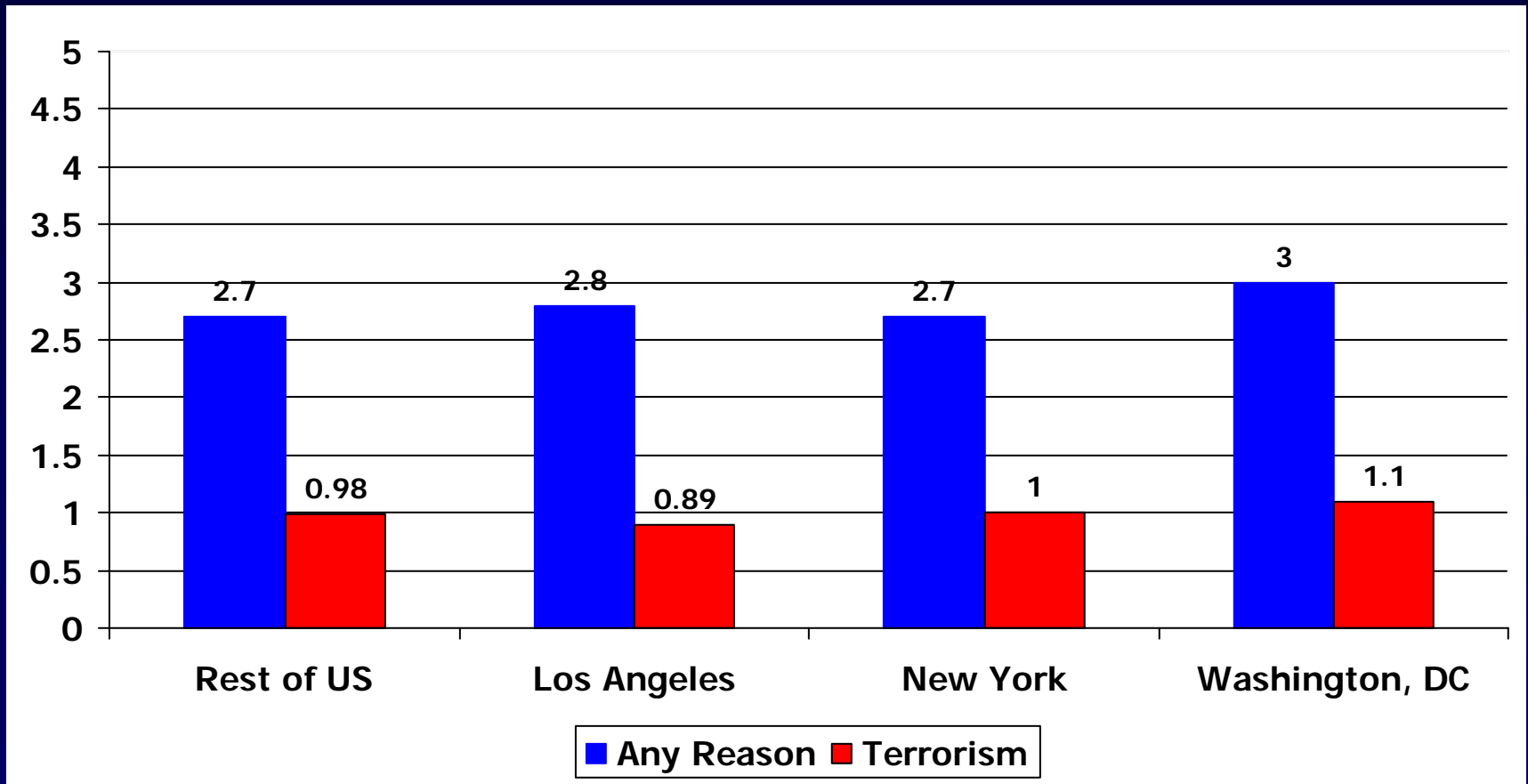
AVOIDANCE BASIS: Any Reason vs. Terrorism (weighted sample, n = 3,300)



PREPAREDNESS BY AREA:

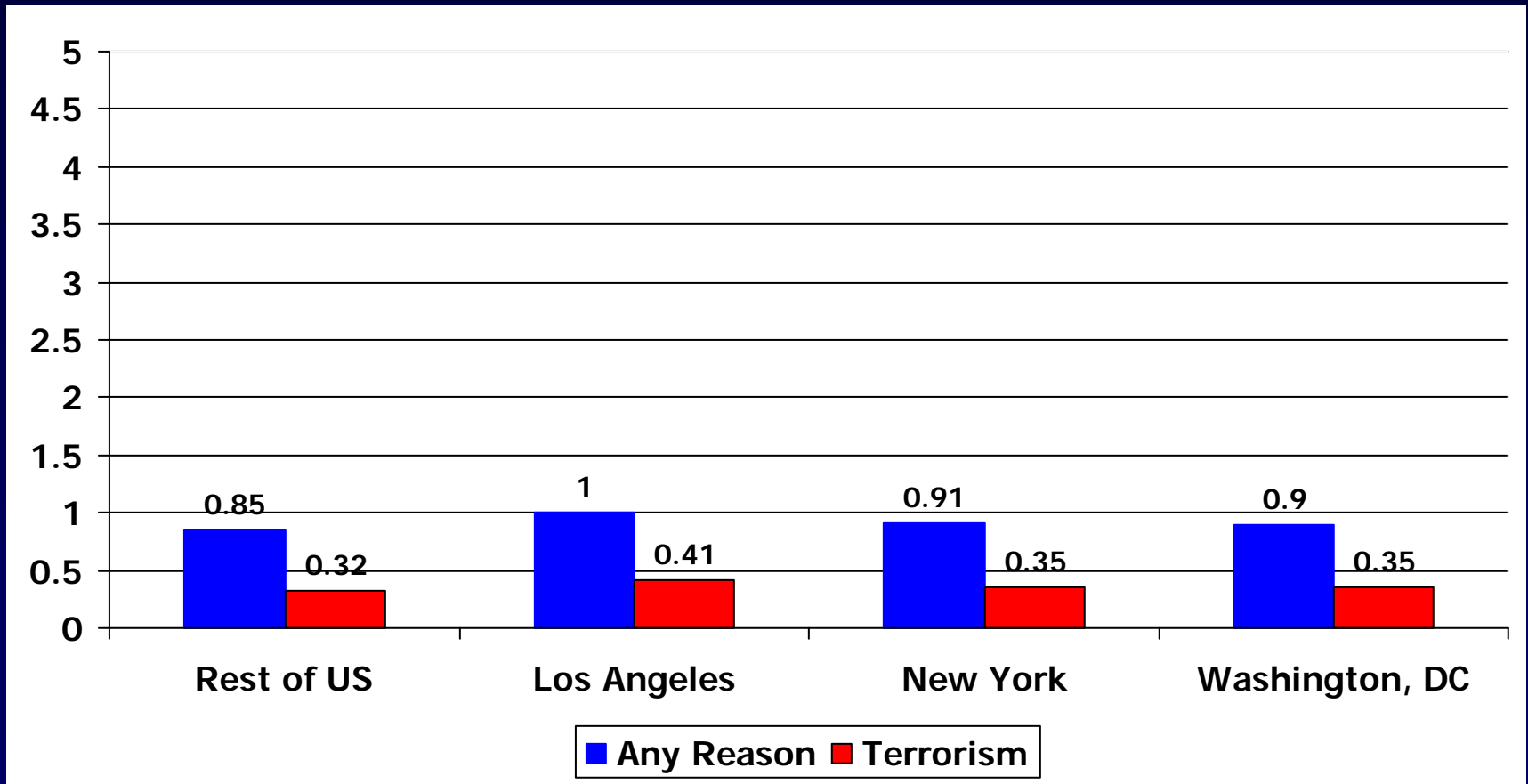
Any Reason¹ vs. Terrorism²

(weighted sample, n = 3,300)



¹p = .46; ²p < .001

AVOIDANCE BY AREA: ***Any Reason¹ vs. Terrorism²*** ***(weighted sample, n = 3,300)***

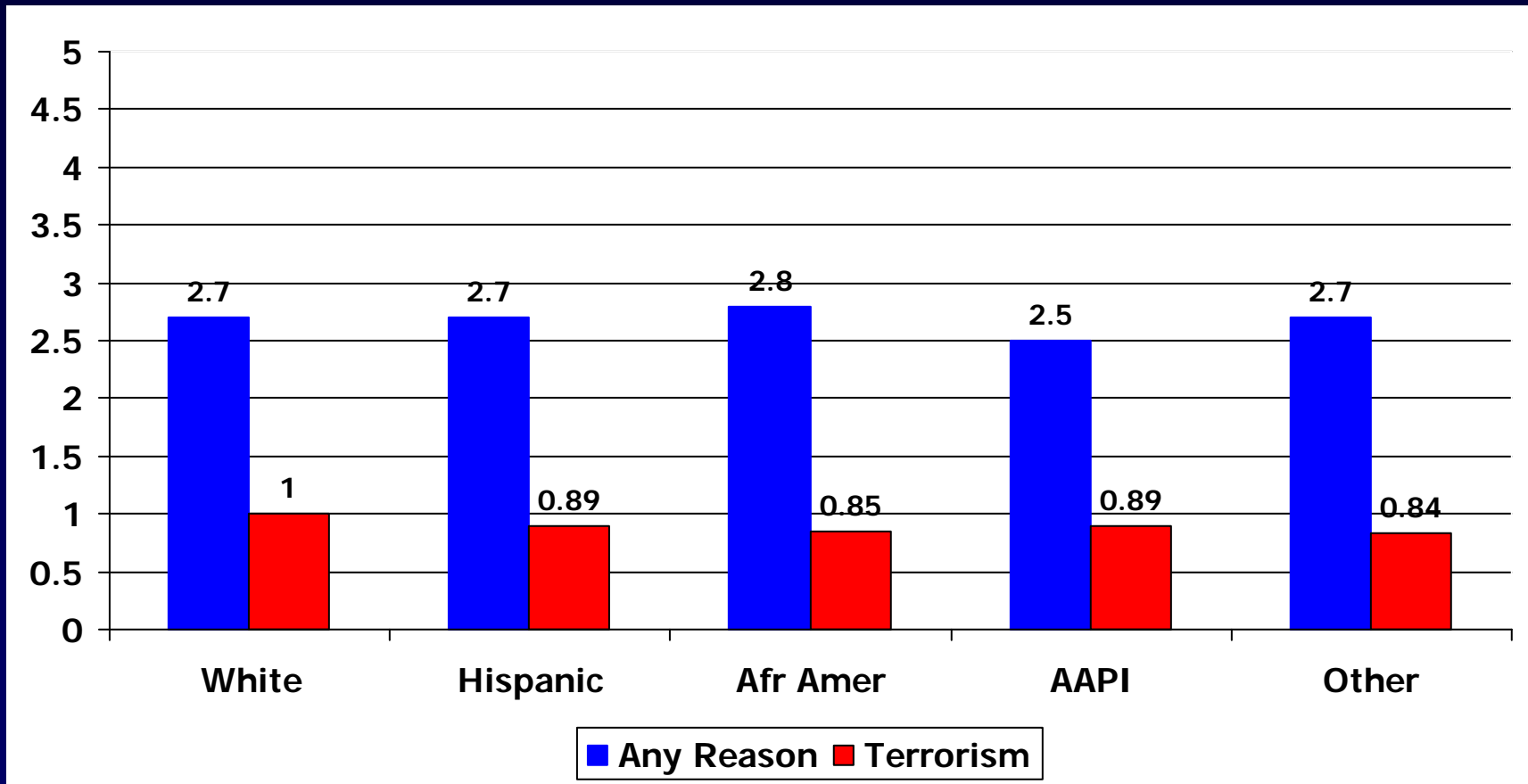


¹p = .69; ²p = .68

PREPAREDNESS BY GROUP:

Any Reason¹ vs. Terrorism²

(weighted sample, n = 3,300)

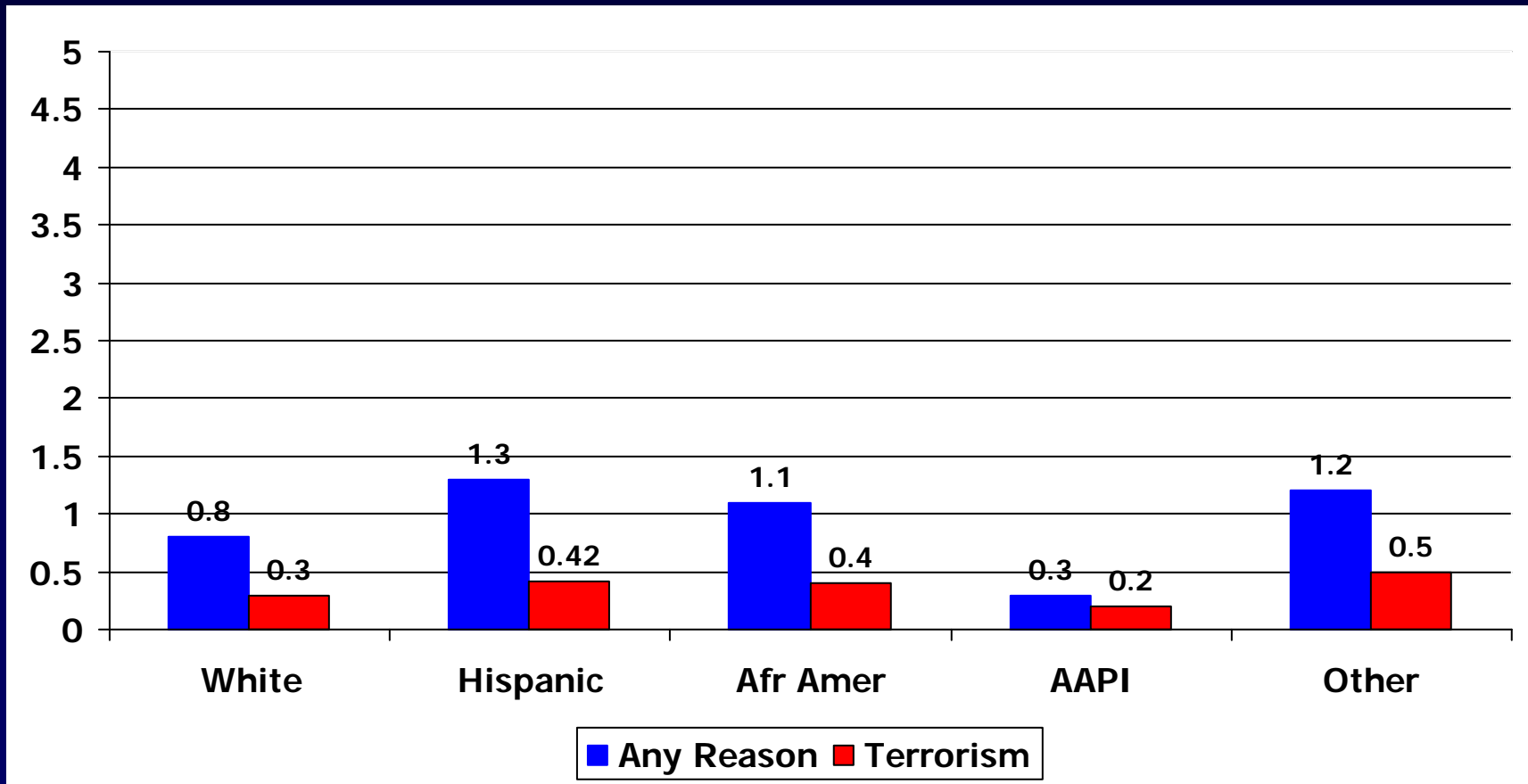


¹p = .58; ²p = .00

AVOIDANCE BY GROUP:

Any Reason¹ vs. Terrorism²

(weighted sample, n = 3,300)



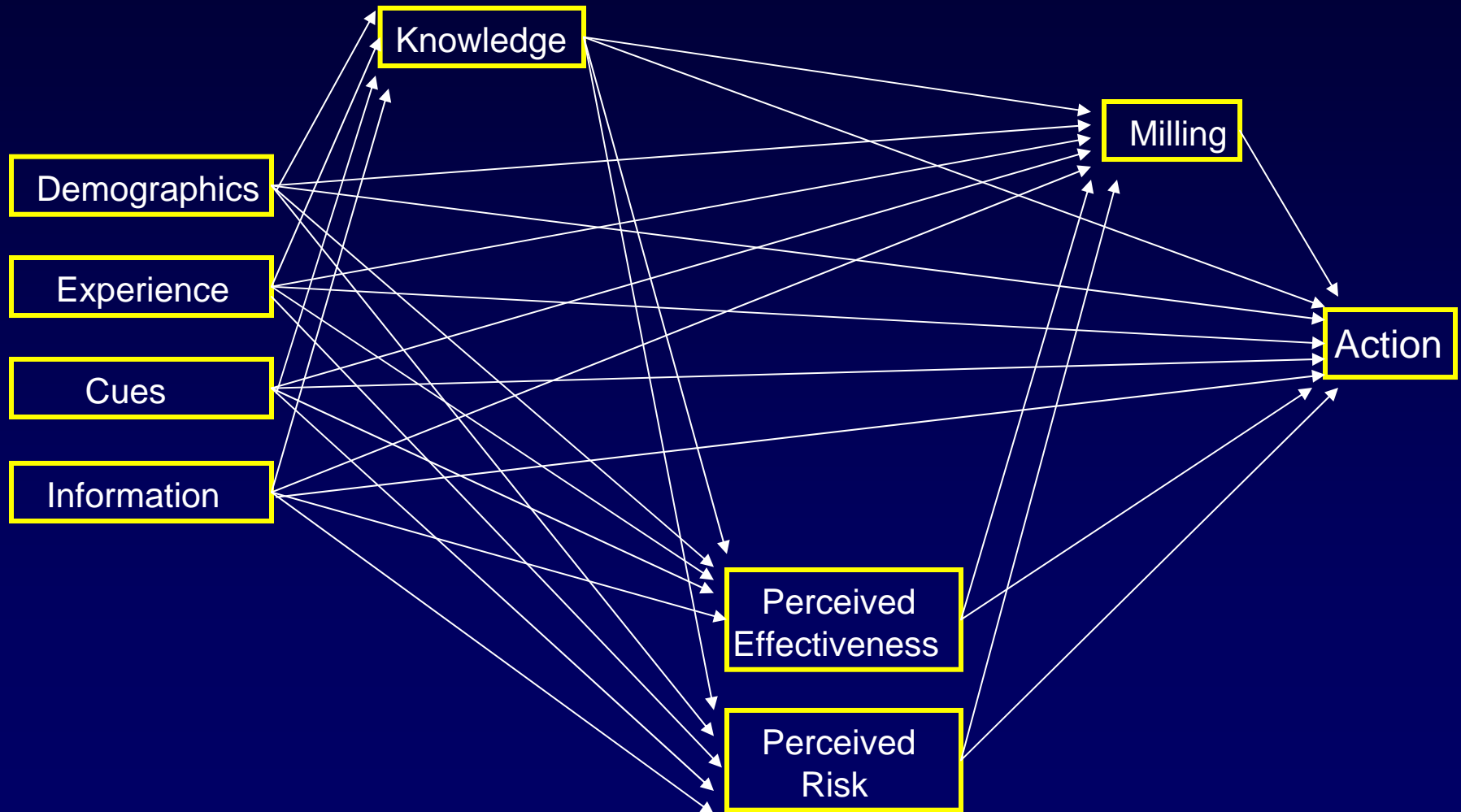
¹p = .00; ²p = .002

***WHAT MOTIVATES
AMERICANS TO TAKE
ACTION?***

APPROACH USED

- Tested Every Appropriate Hypothesis
- Performed Simple & Complicated (Model Based) Statistical Analyses
- Analyzed the Data Separately for Each:
 - Geographical area
 - Racial & ethnic group
 - Hazard, e.g., any reason vs. terrorism

AN EXAMPLE MODEL



RESULTS

■ **Consistent Results** (*rare*) **Across:**

- GROUPS: Hispanics, African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Anglos
- AREAS: New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., the Nation
- REASON GIVEN: Terrorism, any reason

■ **Strong** (*as good as it gets*) **Findings:**

- High explained variance (41-48%) in preparedness activities done for any reason

■ **Here are the Major Findings.....**

2 "INFORMATION" TYPES DRIVE PUBLIC ACTION

■ Information "Received":

- 1. Multiple **SOURCES**
- 2. Multiple communication **CHANNELS**
- 3. Content breadth about **ACTIONS TO TAKE**
and how they **CUT LOSSES**

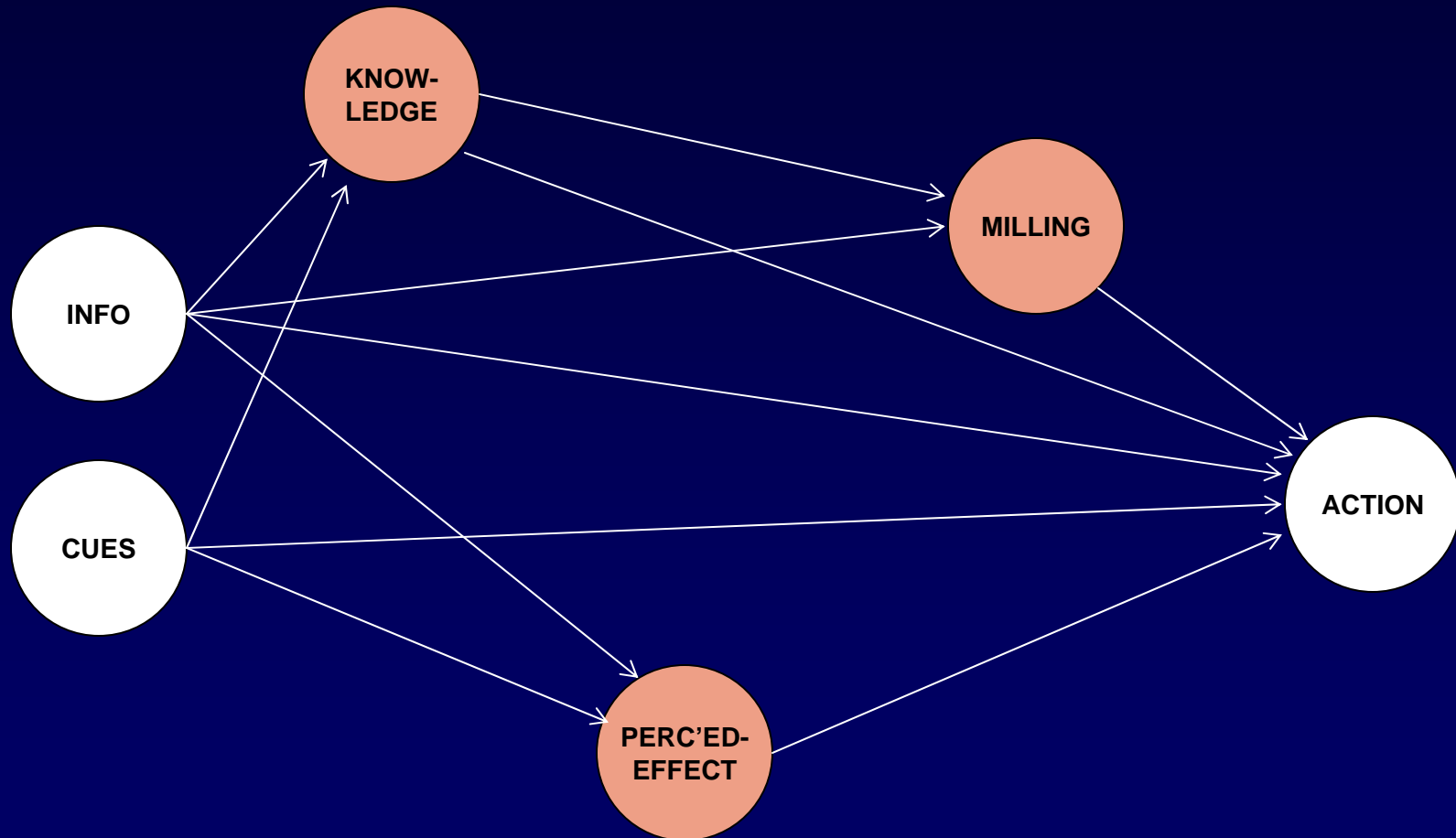
■ Information "Observed":

- 5. **CUES** (seeing others get ready)

& INFORMATION DRIVES ACTION IN 2 WAYS

- **DIRECTLY Motivates Readiness &**
- **INDIRECTLY Motivates Readiness** (by first increasing other factors that, in turn, also increase readiness):
 - *Knowledge*: What's known about actions
 - *Perceived Effectiveness*: How they cut losses
 - *Milling*: Talking about & seeking information about actions

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS



"GOOD NEWS"

THE INFORMATION TO ACTION RELATIONSHIP

■ Is Pliable:

- Able to be molded by policy & programs

■ And Linear:

- More information in = more actions happen
- Less information in = less actions happen

OTHER THINGS DON'T MATTER MUCH

■ **Many Other Things Aren't:**

- Statistically significantly related to readiness

■ **Others Things Are, But:**

- Effects aren't real (go away when other factors are controlled)
- Little predictive value & should be ignored

■ **Examples Include:**

- Perceived risk & demographics

***STEPS TO A BETTER
READYED PUBLIC BASED ON
THE FINDINGS***

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE

- **Information is the KEY Factor that Motivates the Public to Get Ready:**
 - It works *everywhere* & for *everyone*
 - Mainstream Americans & racial/minorities
 - Across the country & in different cities
 - ***The Information Imperative:** richer fields of information, e.g., sources, channels, breadth, yield more public readiness actions*

10 STEPS TO A BETTER READYED PUBLIC

- **STEP 1**: All information campaigns are not equal. Use *research-based approaches* to make them most effective.
- **STEP 2**: *Stop using risk probabilities (codes)* to motivate public action. It doesn't help.
- **STEP 3**: *Work with partners* not alone. More partners=more sources=more public action.

10 STEPS (cont'd)

- **STEP 4:** Stop different groups from providing different messages. *Branded (the same) repetitive messages* work best.
- **Step 5:** Distribute the same information over *different channels*. People act when they get the same information different ways.
- **STEP 6:** It works best to *communicate over the long-haul* & not just for a day or week.

10 STEPS (cont'd)

- **STEP 7:** The most effective information *tells people exactly what to do to get ready*, and where to find out more about how to do it.
- **STEP 8:** Talk about risk in a particular way. People are more likely to act based on information about *how readiness actions cut losses* in case something happens.

10 STEPS (cont'd)

- **STEP 9**: Position *visible cues* for people to see, e.g. readiness actions by others. Get public readiness out of the closet & in the streets. “Monkey see, monkey do” applies.
- **STEP 10**: Encourage people to *talk about getting ready* with each other. People are more likely to act after talking with others.

MORE DATA/INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON LINE:

■ Three Items Available On-Line:

- Descriptive Report
- Questionnaire
- Study Specifications

■ Go to:

http://www.ph.ucla.edu/sciprc/3_projects.htm

■ Scroll-down to “Disasters”