

Images Of Aging

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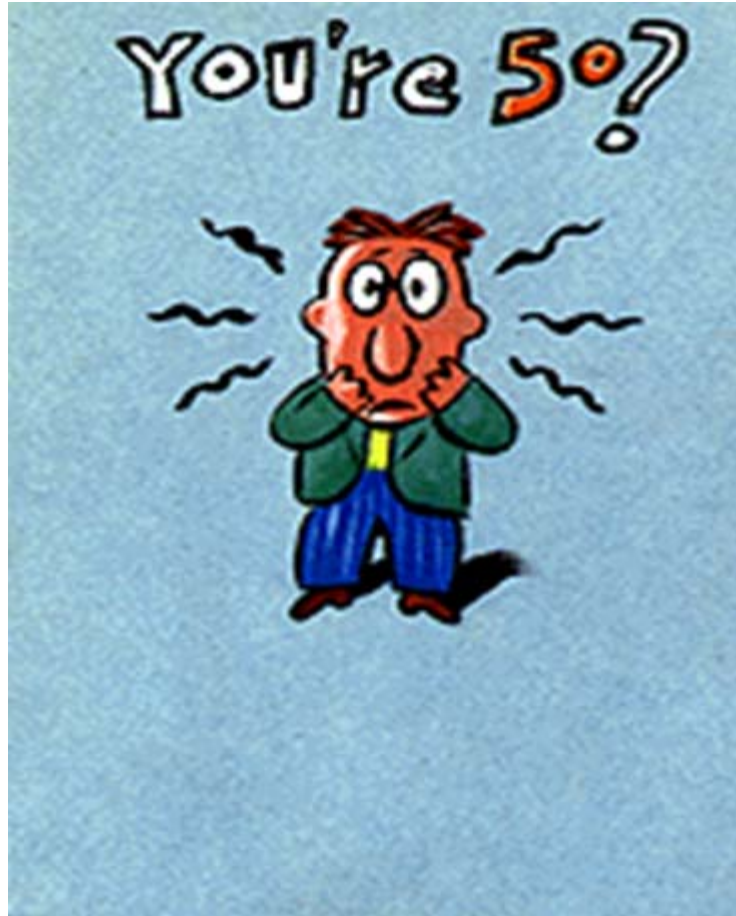
Montreal, Quebec, May 2006

http://www.aarp.org/rgcenter/general/images_aging.pdf

Dread of Aging?



Anxiety Over Aging?



....but you look so life-like

Celebration of Aging?



Background

- **Fielded in late 2004.**
- **Replicates 1994 survey(some replication of 1974 items).**
- **RDD with Hispanic and African-American oversamples. N=1,200 for general sample. Subgroup n (general + oversamples) for Hispanics =318, African Americans =314. Data collected by FGI, Inc.**
- **Covers Knowledge of Aging, Anxiety about Aging, Intergenerational Conflict, and Life Satisfaction.**



Knowledge Index

#correct (out of 25)	<u>1994</u>	<u>2004</u>
<u>13 or less correct</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>50%</u>
0 to 9	9	8
10	7	7
11	9	11
12	13	11
13	13	14
<u>14 or more correct</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>50%</u>
14	13	15
15	14	12
16	10	10
17	6	6
18 to 15	7	7
Mean	13.4	13.4



2/3 or more respondents answered correctly:

- **Physical strength declines w/ age (T) (97%)**
- **It's impossible for older people to learn (F) (89%)**
- **All five sense decline w/ age (T) (81%)**
- **Older people react more slowly than younger people (T) (79%)**
- **The majority of older people are senile (F) (72%)**
- **The majority of older people say they are miserable (F) (69%)**
- **Older people tend to be pretty much alike (F) (69%)**
- **The majority of older people have no capacity for sex (F) (68%)**



A majority answered correctly:

- Older workers aren't as effective as younger workers (F) (61%)
- Older people take longer to learn something new (T) (57%)
- The majority of older people cannot adapt to change (F) (53%)



Less than half were correct regarding.....

- The majority of older people are below the poverty line (F) (36%)
- The majority of older people say they are seldom bored (T) (36%)
- Medical personnel give lower priority to older people (T) (33%)
- The majority of older people are seldom angry or irritated (T) (31%)
- The majority of older people say they are lonely (F) (27%)



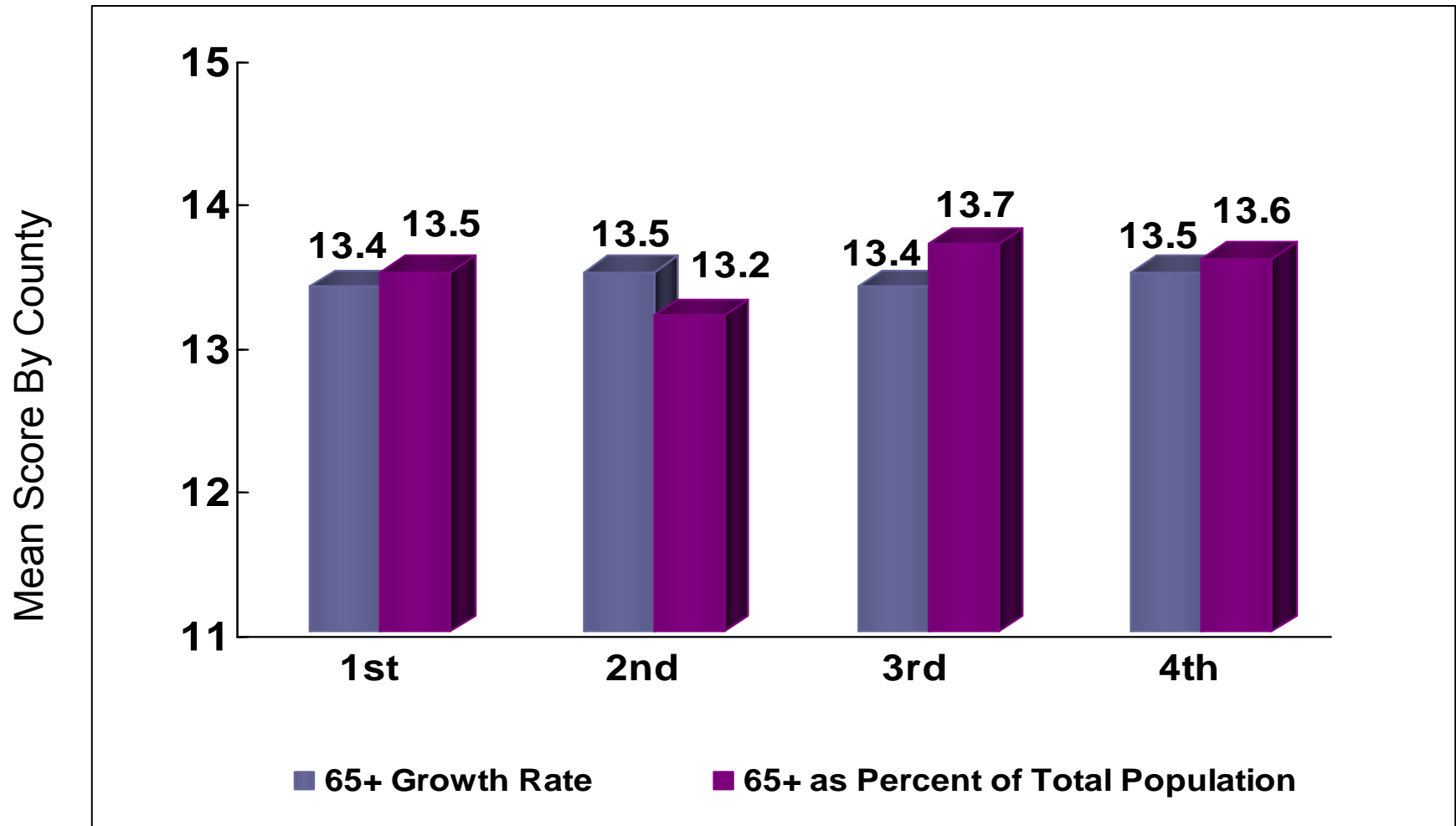
“Low” Knowledge About Aging

More Common Among:

- ❑ Low income (best predictor in 2004)**
- ❑ Low education (best predictor in 1994)**
- ❑ African Americans and Hispanics**
- ❑ More problems experienced in life**
- ❑ “High” anxiety about aging process**

Knowledge of Aging

Knowledge Index (among those 18-64) by Demographic Quartiles





Reasons Men Become “Old” (mean=63) At...

AGE 60 OR OLDER:

- Ability to work / contribute (18%)
- Health reasons / health deteriorates (18%)
- Declining capabilities (12%)

UNDER AGE 60:

- Ability to work / contribute (13%)
- Look older / wrinkles / bald / grey (10%)
- Declining capabilities (9%)



Reasons Women Become “Old”(mean=63)At...

AGE 60 OR OLDER:

- Health reasons / health deteriorates (18%)
- Ability to work / contribute (11%)
- Declining capabilities (10%)

UNDER AGE 60:

- Number of children / childbearing ends (13%)
- Look older / wrinkles / bald / grey (11%)
- Responsibilities of life / youth ends (11%)



Attitudes / Anxieties About Aging

- 96% I enjoy talking with older people
- 80% I have become more content over the years
- 70% Thinking about dying doesn't bother me
- 69% I'll enjoy sex not matter how old (1994 - 76%)
- 69% I'll always have plenty of friends to talk to (1994 - 75%)
- 69% Will worry more about health with age (1994 - 65%)
- 63% Will worry more about money with age
- 59% Worry about getting around on my own (1994 - 64%)
- 59% Best to forget we're getting older
- 57% Worry others will make my decisions for me
- 52% More anxious about the future
- 48% Fear financial dependence on children
- 27% Always worried about gray hairs (1994 - 22%)

Positive Attitudes

Anxieties



Serious Problems *Attributed To* Older Persons



	61%	Not enough medical care
	59%	Not enough money to live on
> Half	54%	Poor health
<hr/>		
	49%	Loneliness
	46%	Fear of crime (NOTE: 70% in 1994)
	43%	Not having family members nearby
	41%	Not feeling needed
	39%	Not enough job opportunities
	37%	Transportation to stores, doctors, etc.
	37%	No control over every day life decisions
> One-third	35%	Poor housing
<hr/>		
	20%	Not enough to do to keep busy
	20%	Not enough education



Serious Problems *Experienced By* Older Persons



- 16% Not enough medical care
- 21% Not enough money to live on
- 15% Poor health

- 13% Loneliness
- 19% Fear of crime (NOTE: 37% in 1994)
- 13% Not having family members nearby
- 7% Not feeling needed
- 13% Not enough job opportunities
- 6% Transportation to stores, doctors, etc.
- 6% No control over every day life decisions
- 7% Poor housing

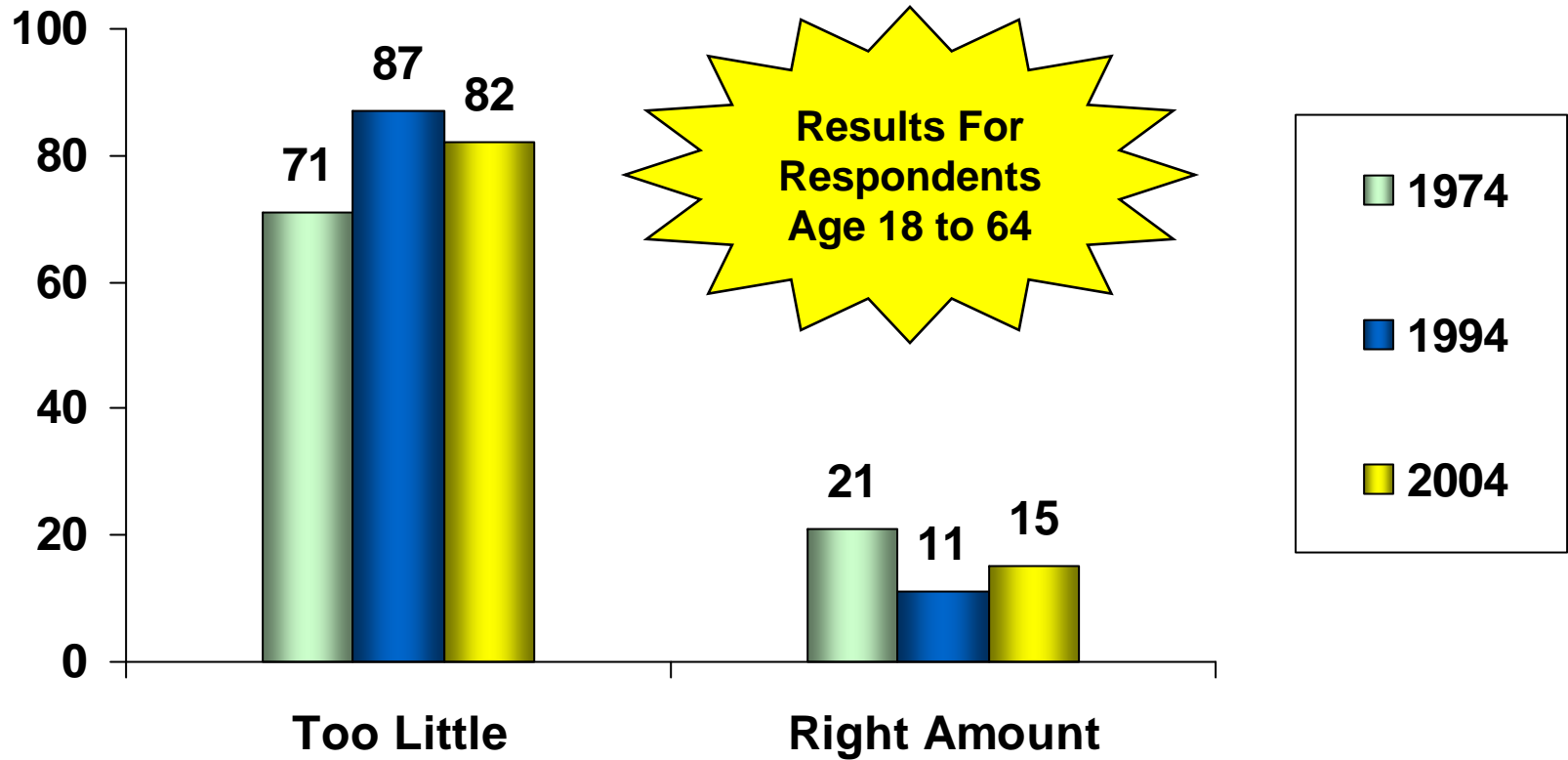
- 6% Not enough to do to keep busy
- 8% Not enough education

**Results
Among Older
Persons**



Respect Received

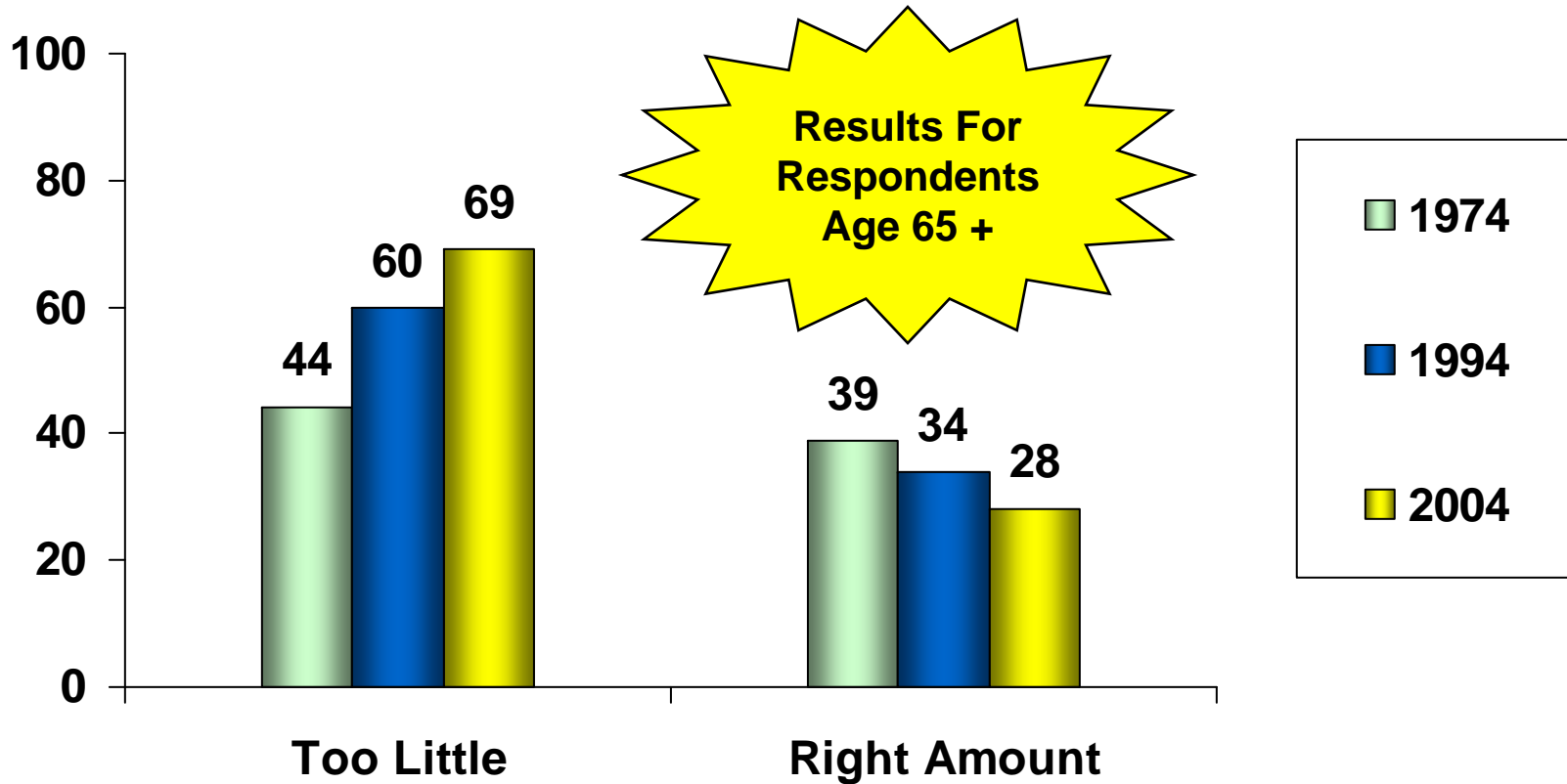
Respect Older People Get From Younger People





Respect Received (Continued)

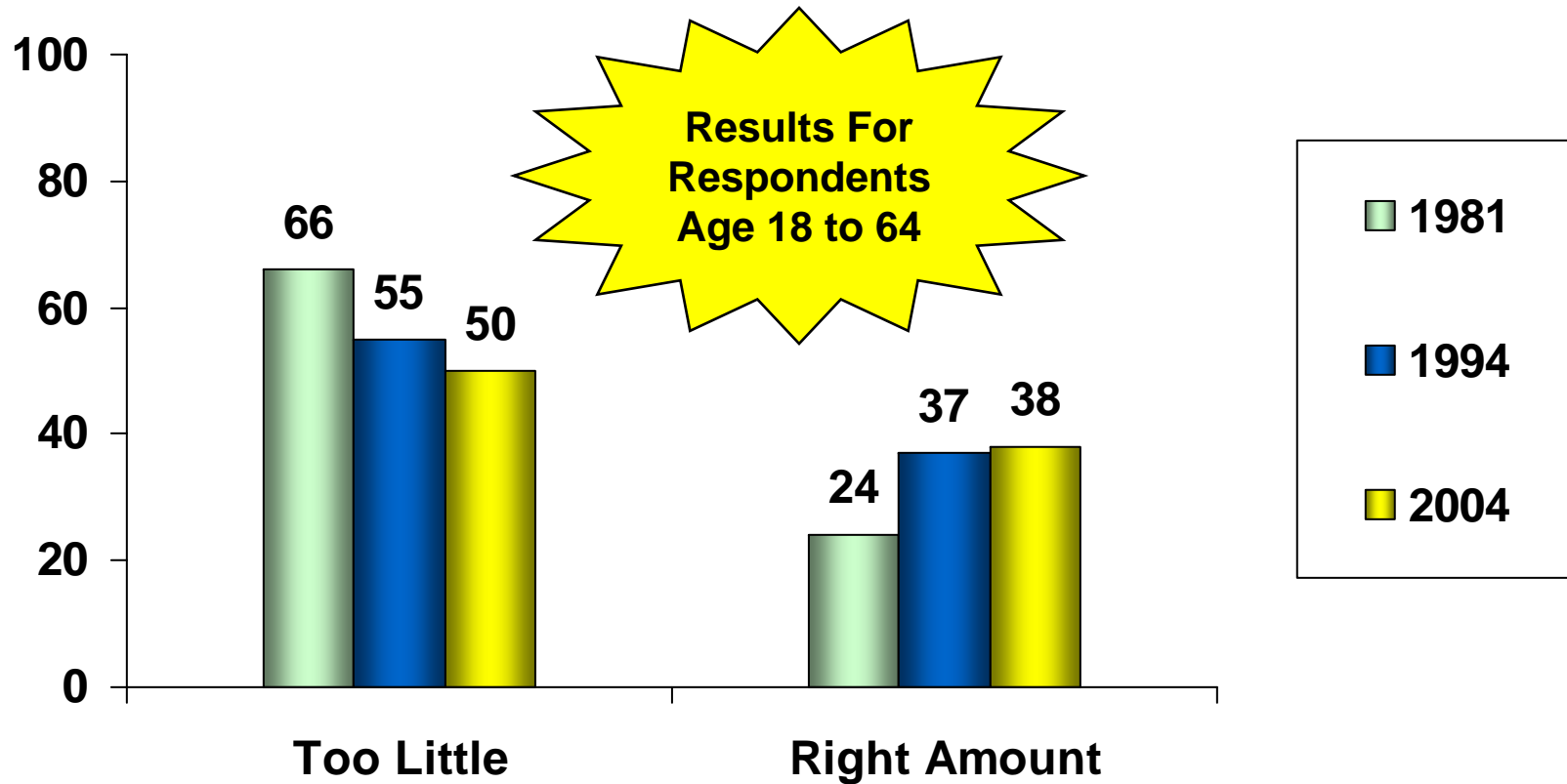
Respect Older People Get From Younger People





Influence

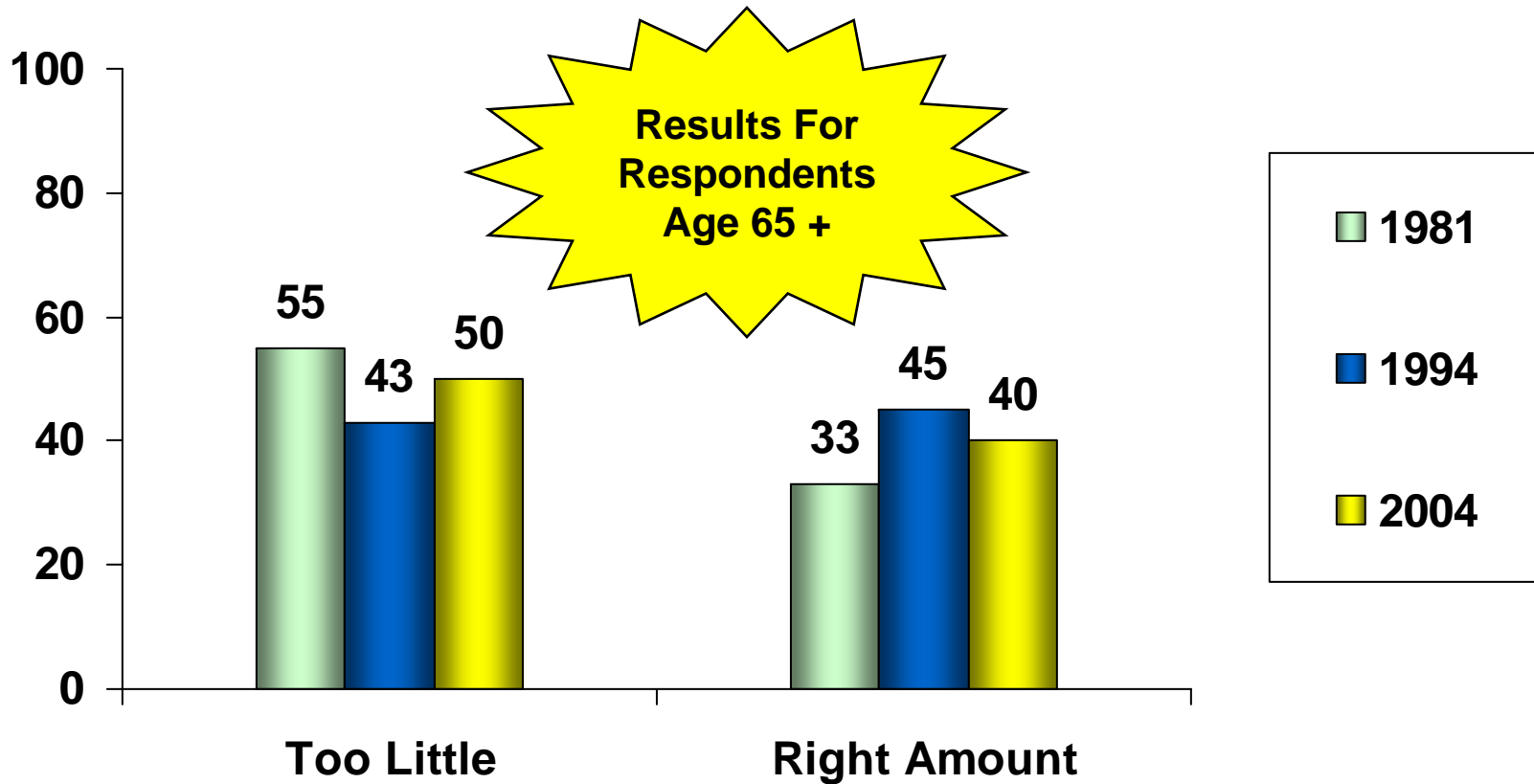
Influence Exerted By Retired Older Persons





Influence (Continued)

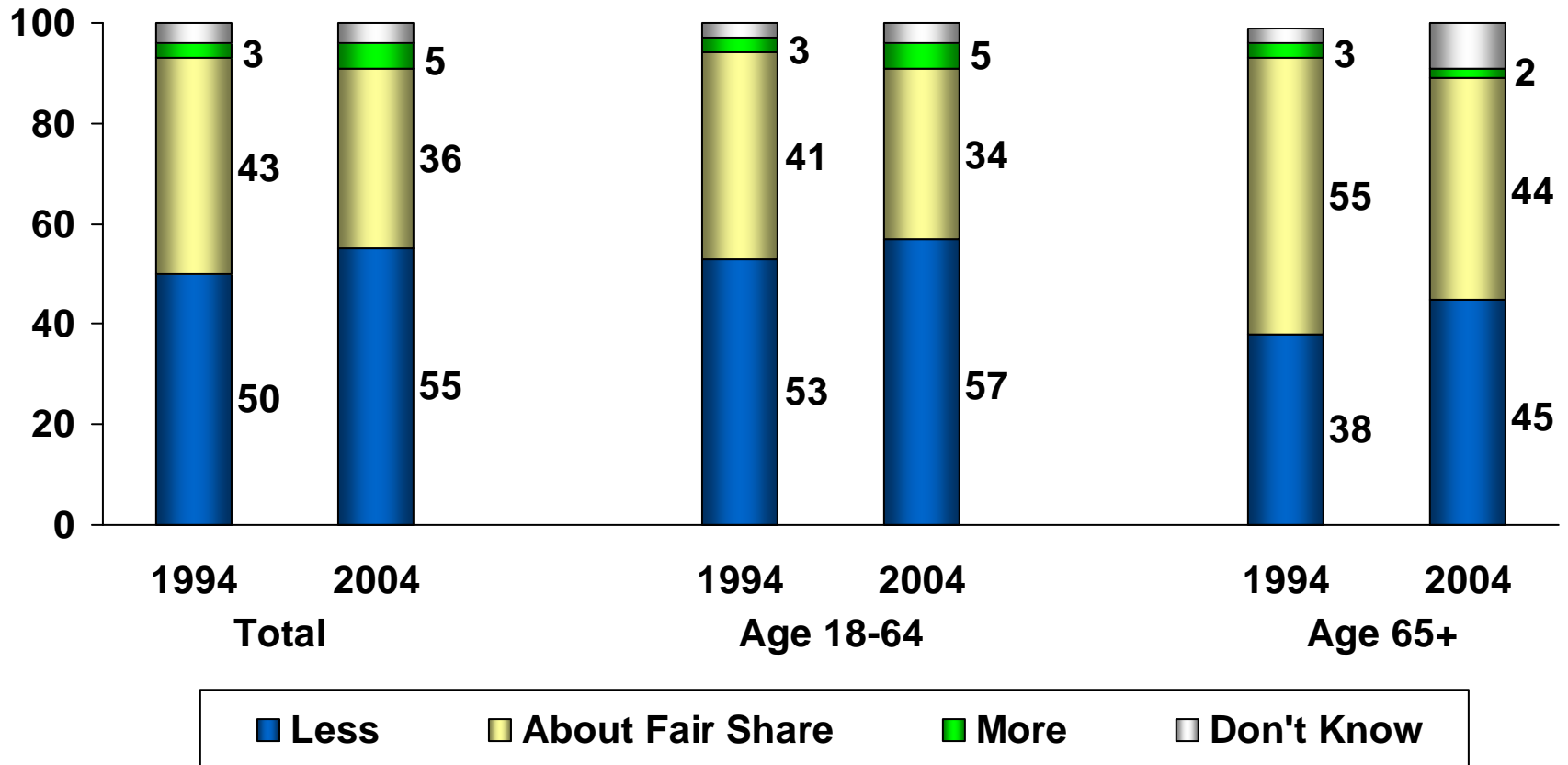
Influence Exerted By Retired Older Persons





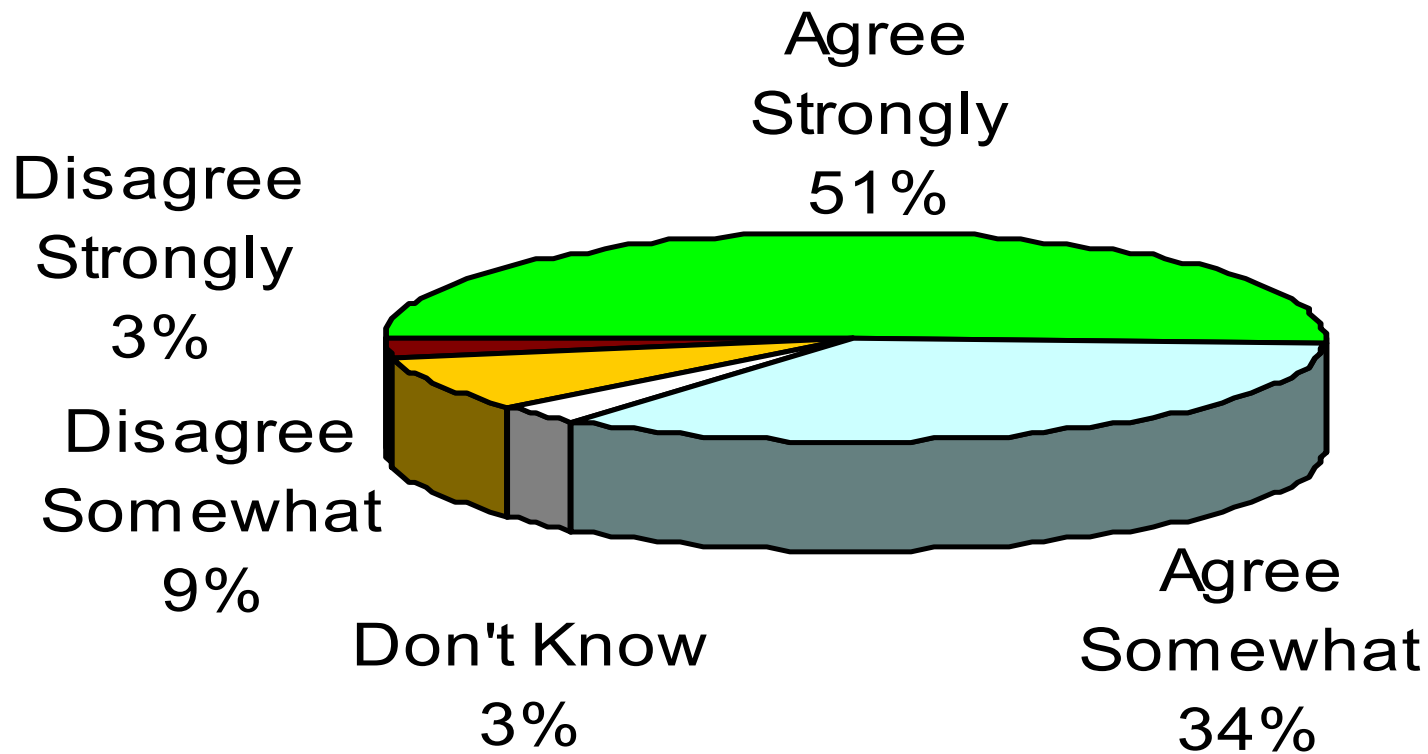
Share Of Local Benefits

Perception Of Share Of Local Government Benefits Allocated To Older Persons



Older Persons in the Community- Benefits vs. Costs

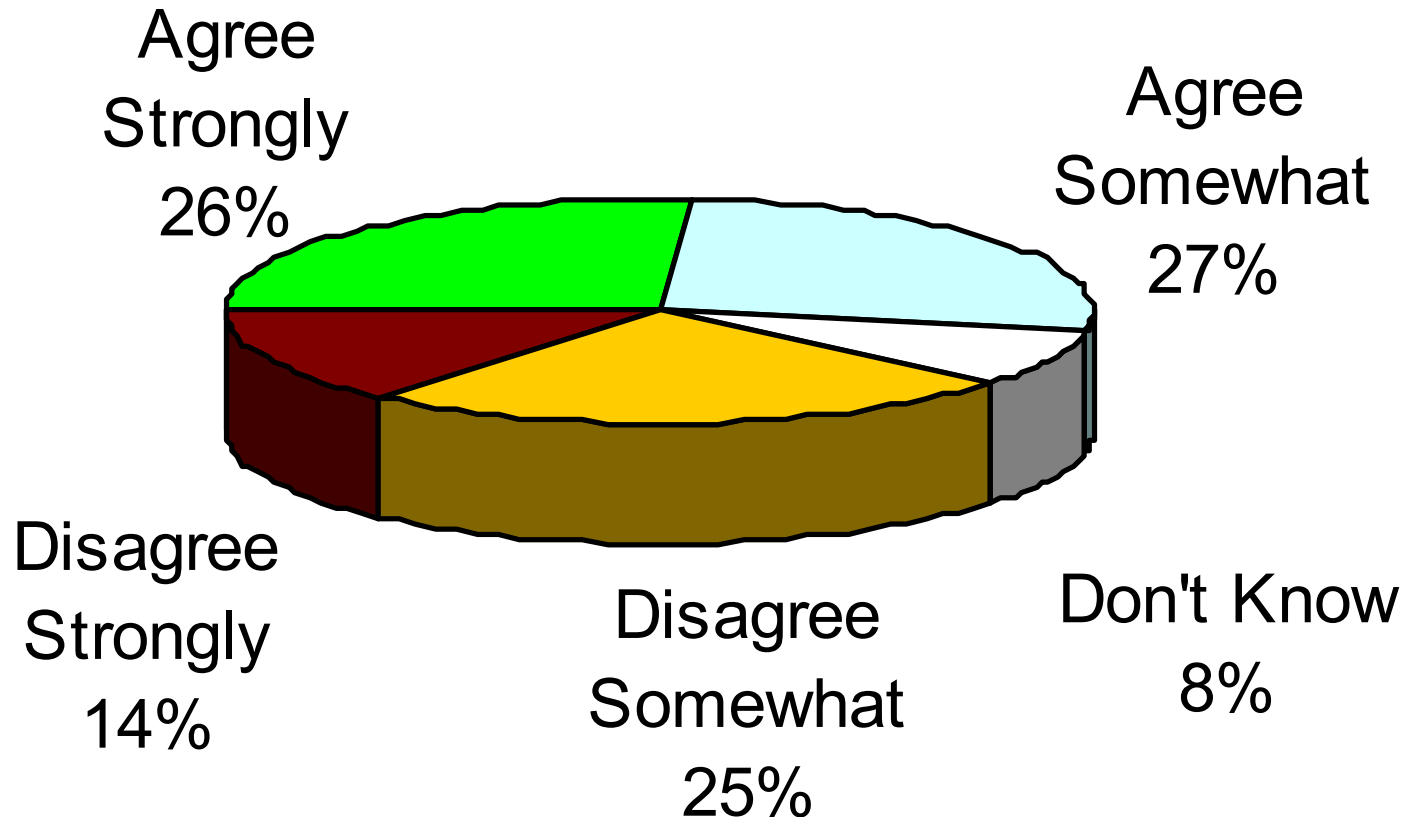
“Older residents generally help to improve the quality of life in my community.”
(Total agree = 85% in 2004, compared to 86% in 1994)



Older Persons in the Community- Benefits vs. Costs

“Older persons in my community tend to oppose paying for local public services which do not directly benefit them.”

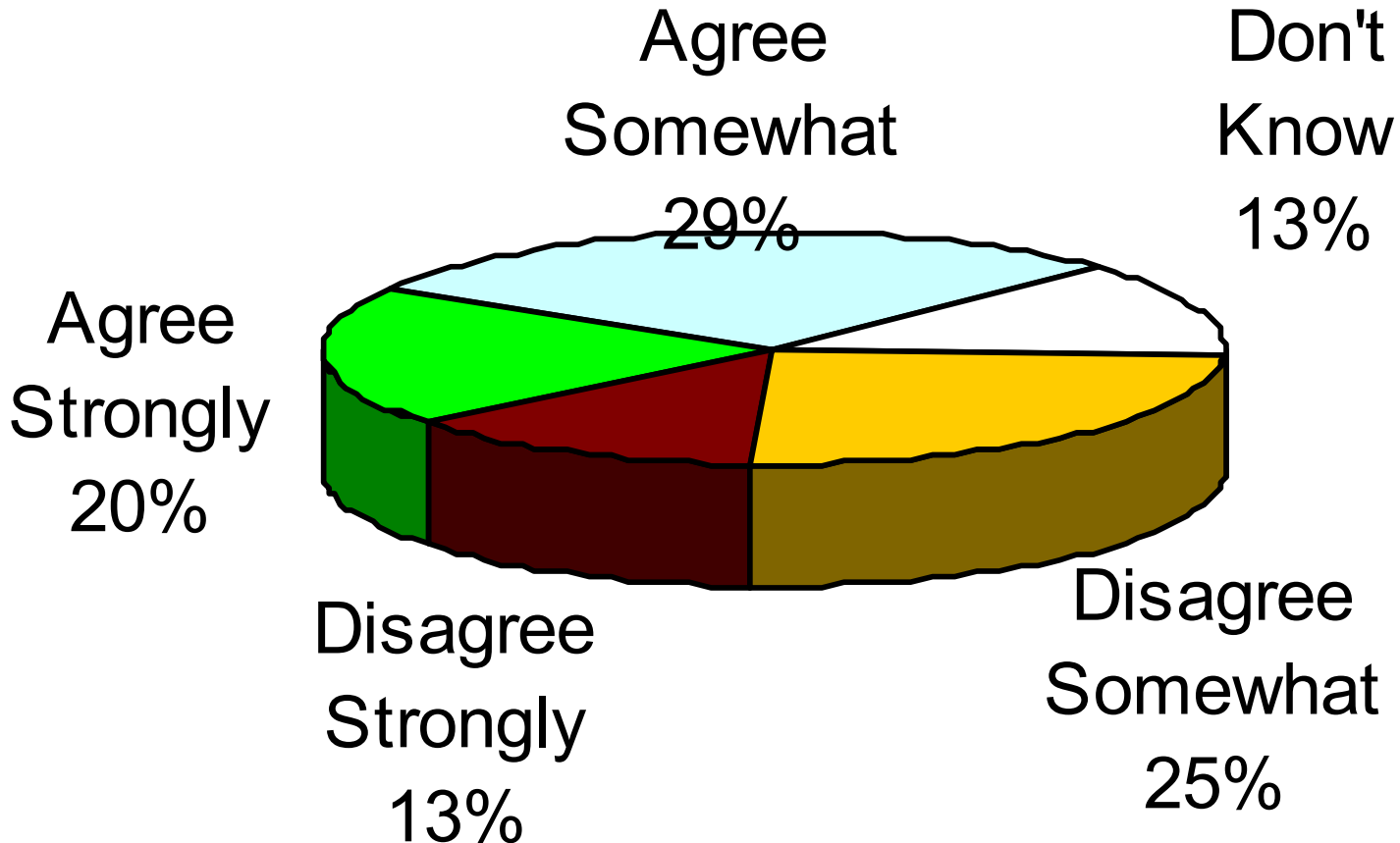
(Total agree = 53% in 2004,
compared to 53% in 1994)



Older Persons in the Community- Benefits vs. Costs

“The economic benefits older residents bring to my community make up for the amount local government spends on them.”

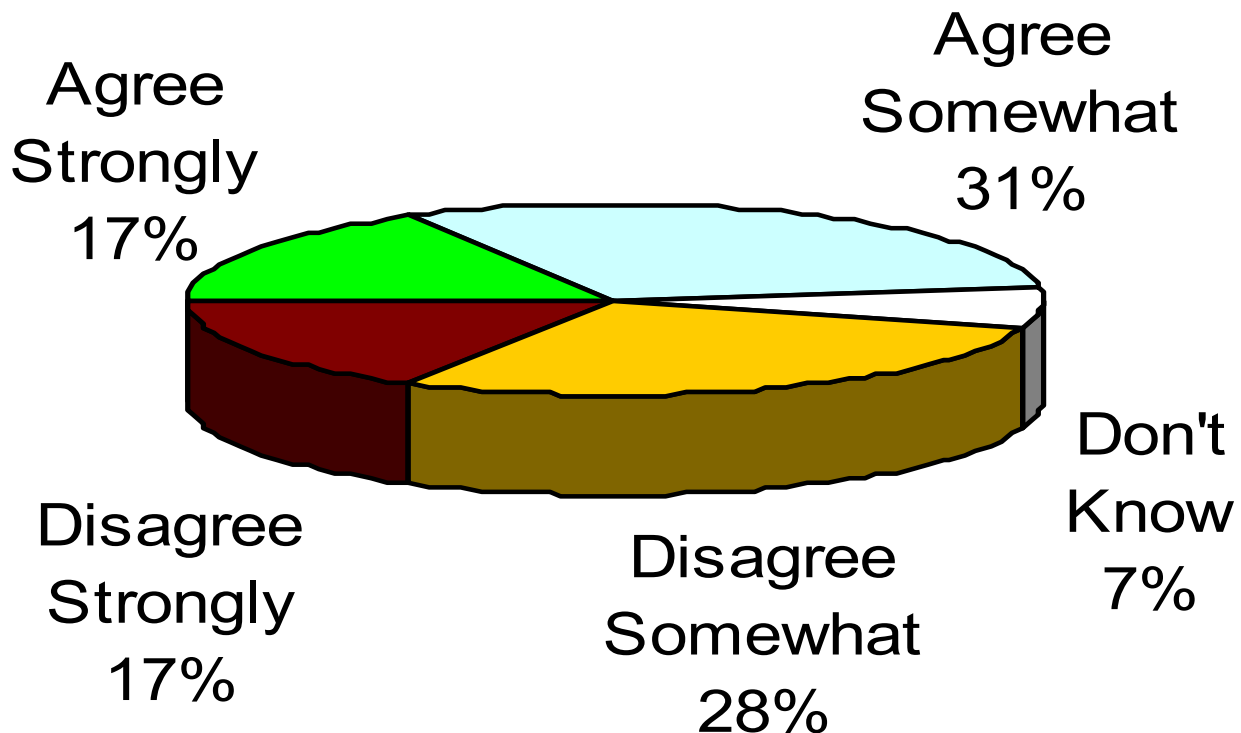
(Total agree = 49% in 2004,
compared to 50% in 1994)



Older Persons in the Community- Benefits vs. Costs

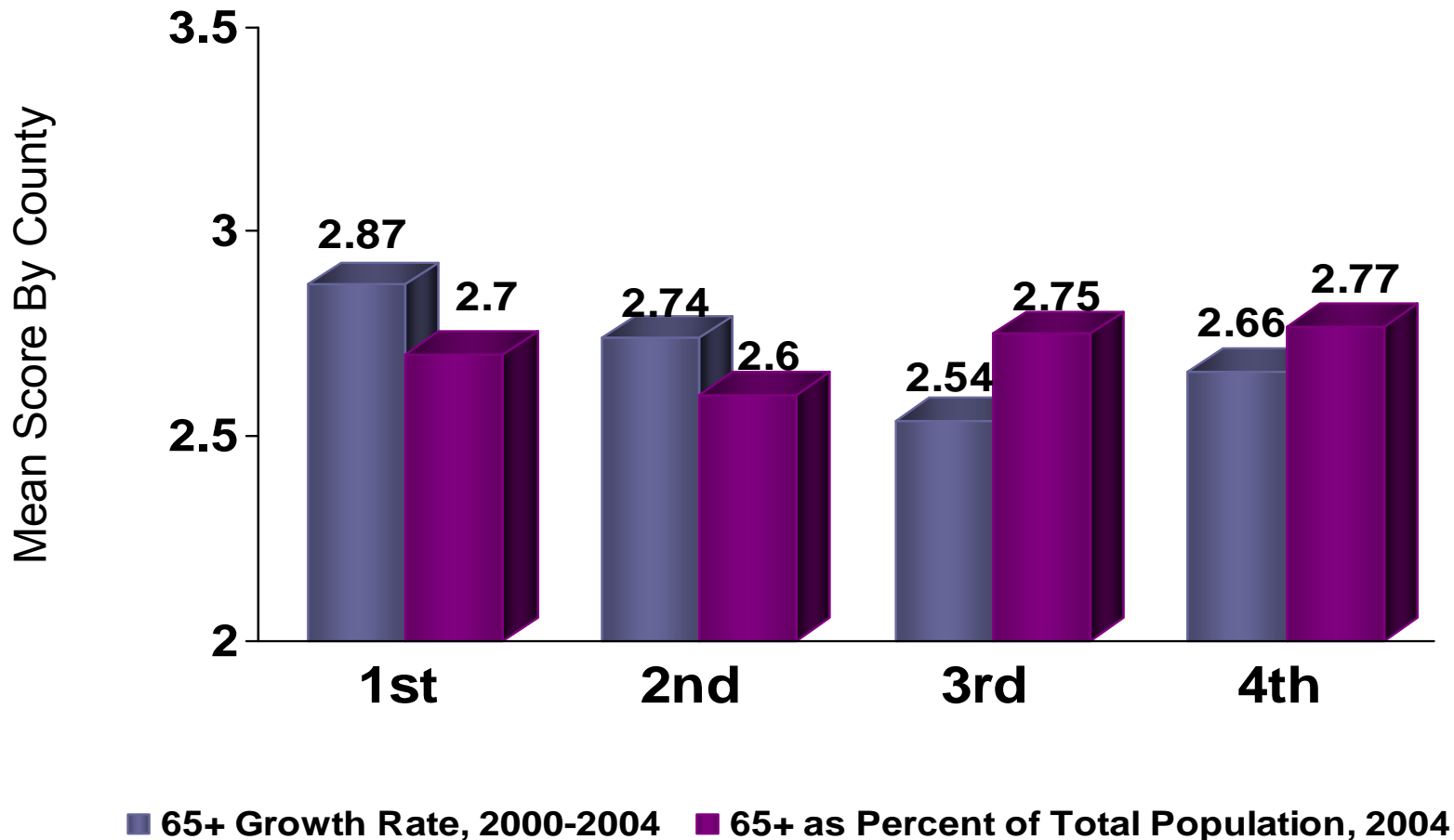
“When older persons support policies that benefit themselves, this creates conflict with younger residents.”

(Total agree = 48% in 2004,
compared to 49% in 1994)



Intergenerational Conflict

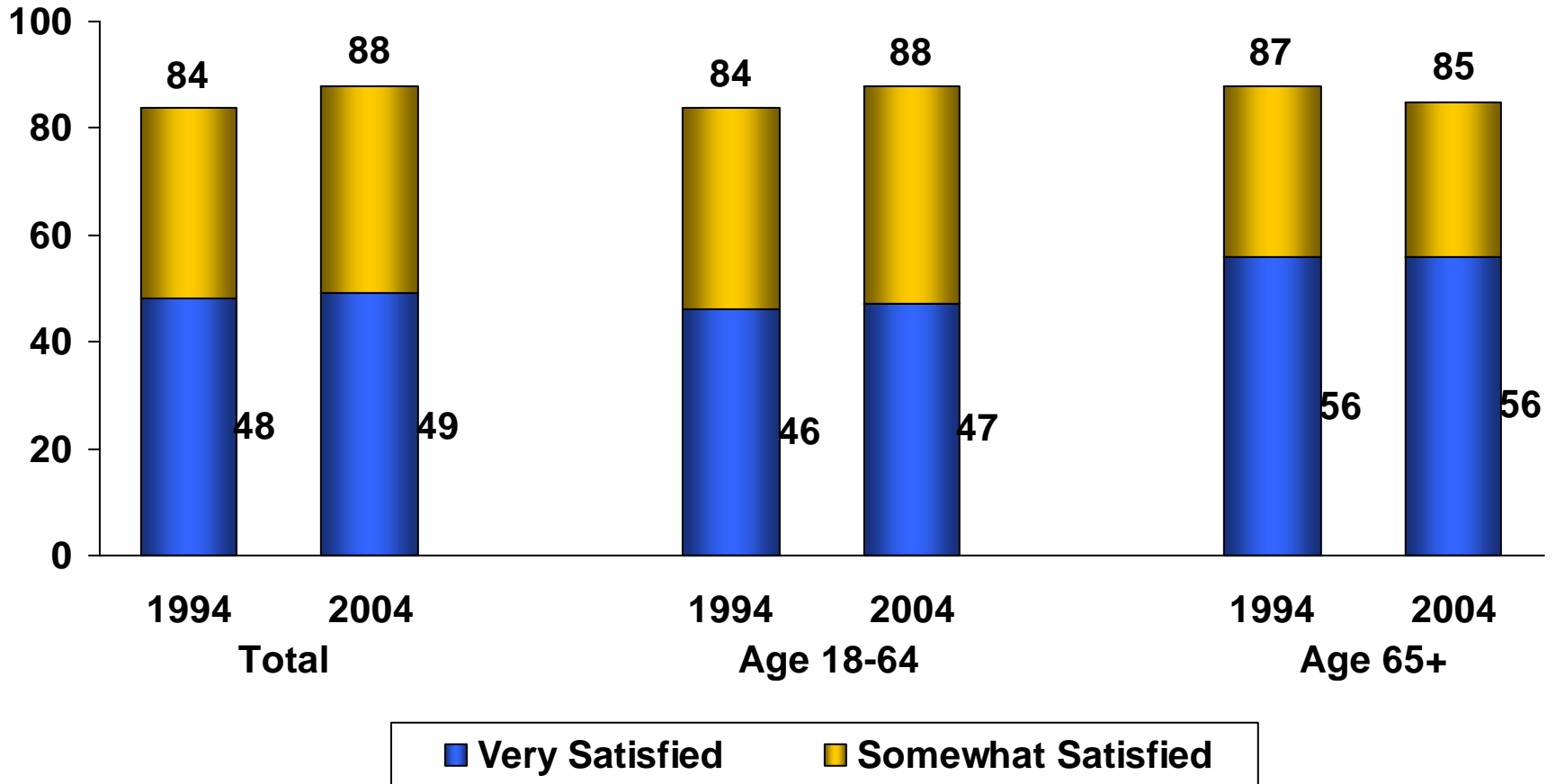
Community Intergenerational Conflict Index
(among those 18-64) By Demographic Quartiles





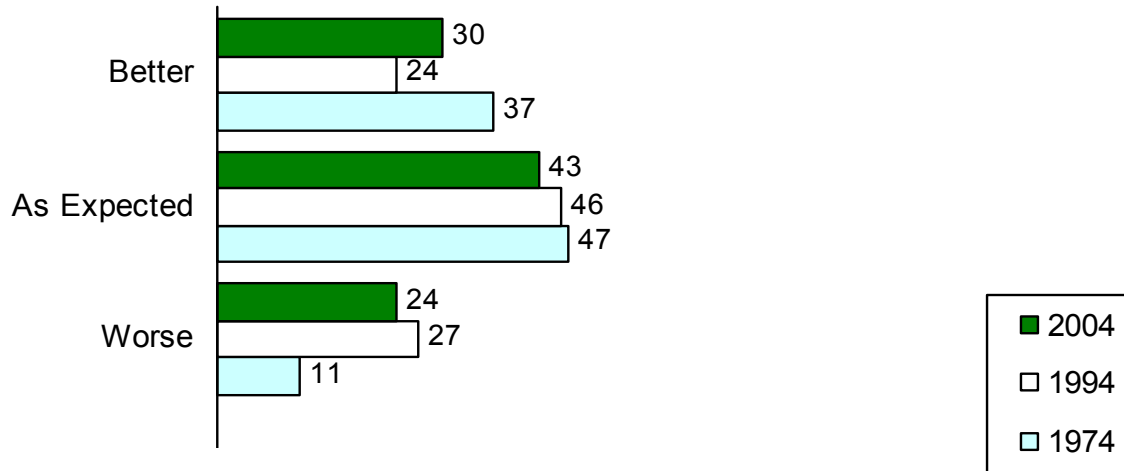
Life Satisfaction

Satisfied "With Your Life As A Whole These Days"

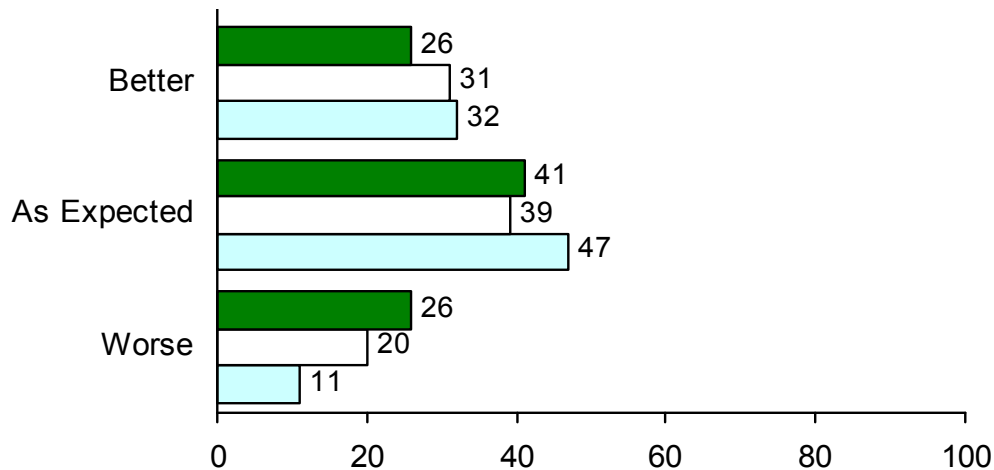


Growing Older, Are Things Better, Worse, or About As You Expected?

Respondents Age 18-64:



Respondents Age 65+:





Implications.....

- **Americans are fairly knowledgeable, but there are still many troublesome misconceptions**
- **Significant relationships exist between knowledge, anxiety, life experiences and socio-economic status**
- **The actual situation for older persons is much better than perceived**
- **Little “intergenerational conflict” exists**

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