

WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST WORKPLACE

July 2008

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Demographic Background

Objective:

To understand working women's perceptions, attitudes and experiences of their role in the workplace

Respondent Profile:

Working women

Aged 15 – 59 years

Nationalities:

Local, Arab Expats, Western Expats, Asians Expats

Country of Residence:

GCC: UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain

Levant: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan

North Africa: Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia

Methodology:

Online data collection between the 4th and 22nd of June 2008. A total of 2,602 women were recruited, 1,515 of which were working. Given the objective of this study, the report will focus on working women only

Summary (1/4)

- Although women work as long as their male colleagues and have the same or even higher levels of ambition, most still feel their chances of being promoted are considerably lower than their male counterparts and that they receive lower compensation. Having said that, it is worth noting that there are considerable number of women in senior posts
- Most women prefer to work as long as males. This is especially true for Westerners & Asians. GCC Arabs prefer to retire before their male colleagues
- Most women (except Westerners) feel they have a lower chance of being promoted than their male colleagues especially for GCC Nationals and Asians
- All nationalities, especially Westerners, feel they get treated as equals to their male colleagues
- Satisfaction with recognition programme is moderate to low for the majority indicating that companies are not able to provide satisfactory schemes for recognition. A fair number of respondents also said that their male colleagues got more recognition or that recognition itself was non existent
- Respondents also said that rewards and recognition are dependent on performance and not gender

Summary (2/4)

- **Most women agree that they do not enjoy special benefits / preferential treatment at the work place. Asians and Westerners feel more strongly about the lack of benefits than other nationalities. GCC Nationals however enjoy slightly higher special benefits than other nationalities**
- **Most women feel employers should provide them with special benefits especially since they are responsible for the general well being of the family unit. If this is done, 8 out of every 10 women believe this would have a positive impact on the longevity of their career**
- **Majority of women said they are able to get between 1 and 2 months of maternity leave. Only 23% of women have asked their companies for flexible timings or to work from home. Of this, almost half got a negative response. Westerners had far more success in this regard with over half being granted more flexible arrangements**
- **Paid maternity leave, family health insurance (which in many countries is required by law) and training were the benefits most often given to female employees. Of all the nationalities surveyed GCC nationals were given the most training opportunities and Asians the least**

Summary (3/4)

- Higher salary and long term career growth opportunities were selected by working women as the most desirable benefits. Flexible hours and family health insurance were also regarded as important
- Top motivators for women to change jobs are higher pay, better career advancement opportunities and gaining more senior positions
- On the whole, respondents feel they have an average to poor chance of career development & growth prospects at their current jobs. It is therefore not surprising that they would be willing to leave for better paying jobs with better career prospects
- 43% of women felt gender had not affected their career. Likewise, most women felt that having children did not have an impact on career. However, it is worth noting that quite a few women also believe it has negatively impacted their careers. This was more noticeable amongst Westerners
- Interestingly, two-thirds of those interviewed believe that having more children will adversely affect their careers. Again, this concern was more pronounced amongst Westerners and least amongst GCC nationals

Summary (4/4)

- Most women feel that their marital life has not been impacted by their career choices. This was especially true amongst Asians
- Fulfilment of their life ambition, financial responsibility and monetary independence were select by women as their main reasons to work
- Some interesting differences emerged in terms of nationality with GCC nationals feeling it was less to do with financial responsibility and more to do with achieving something in life while Westerners rated monetary independence as their main motivator to work. Generally, Arabs felt far more strongly that they work to satisfy their ambition rather than due to financial responsibility whereas the reverse was true for Westerners and Asians
- In conclusion, even though women feel their earnings are less than their male counterparts and husbands, they feel they are generally as ambitious if not more so than their male counterparts, are also willing to work at least as long as their male counterparts and said that given a choice, an overwhelming 72% would prefer to work. A further 14% would at least work until their children are settled
- Every employee faces some obstacles in their work environment. If more is done to enhance career development, promote those deserving to higher positions and bring salaries on par with male colleagues as well as offer deserving women greater flexibility to facilitate them to manage their familial responsibilities, it would result in lower turnover of female staff and longer working life

Women...

Proportion Working & Level of Seniority

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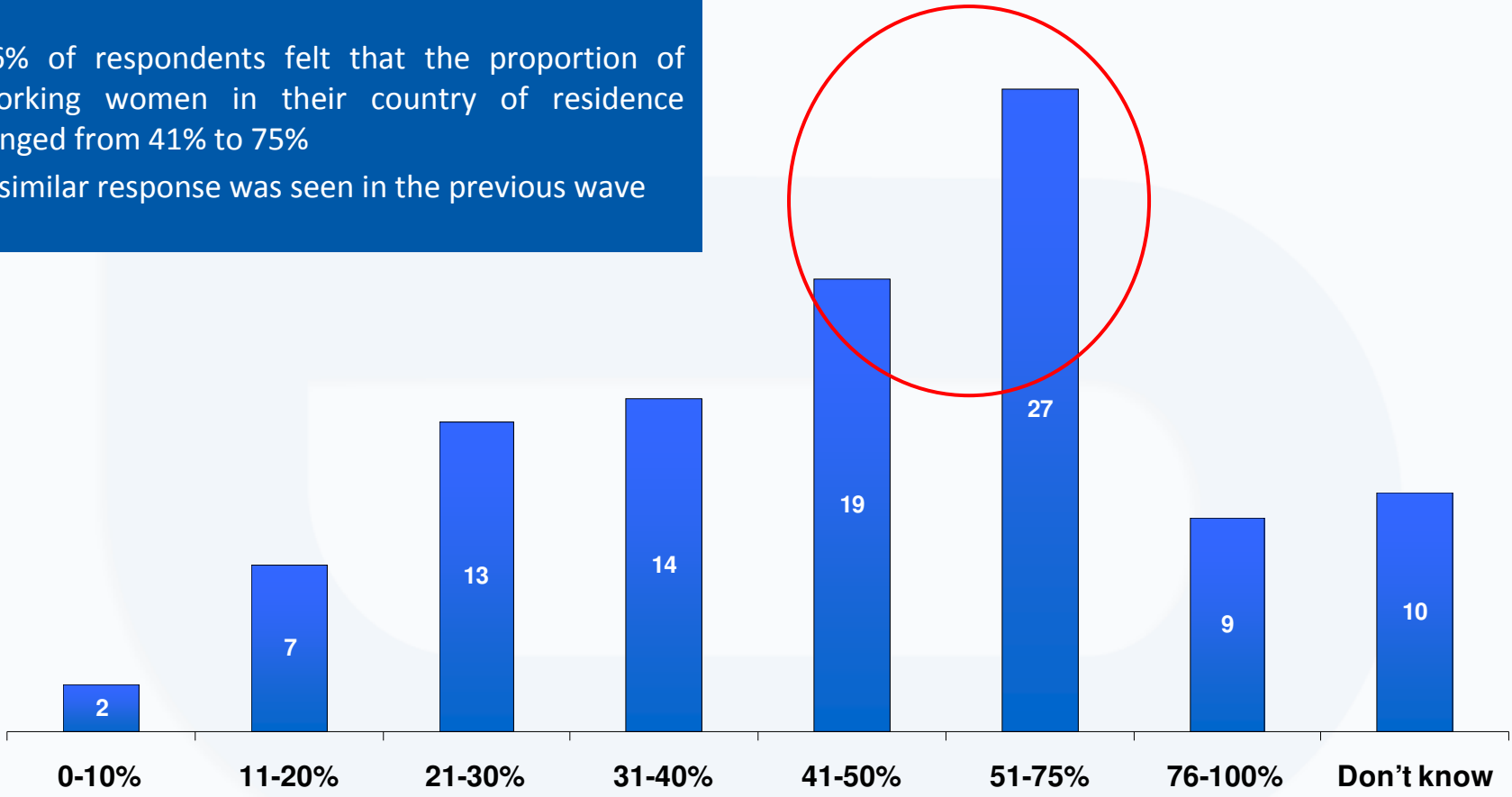
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Q. In your opinion, what percentage of the women in your country of residence work currently?

Almost Half of Those Interviewed Felt a Large Proportion of Women in Their Country of Residence Worked

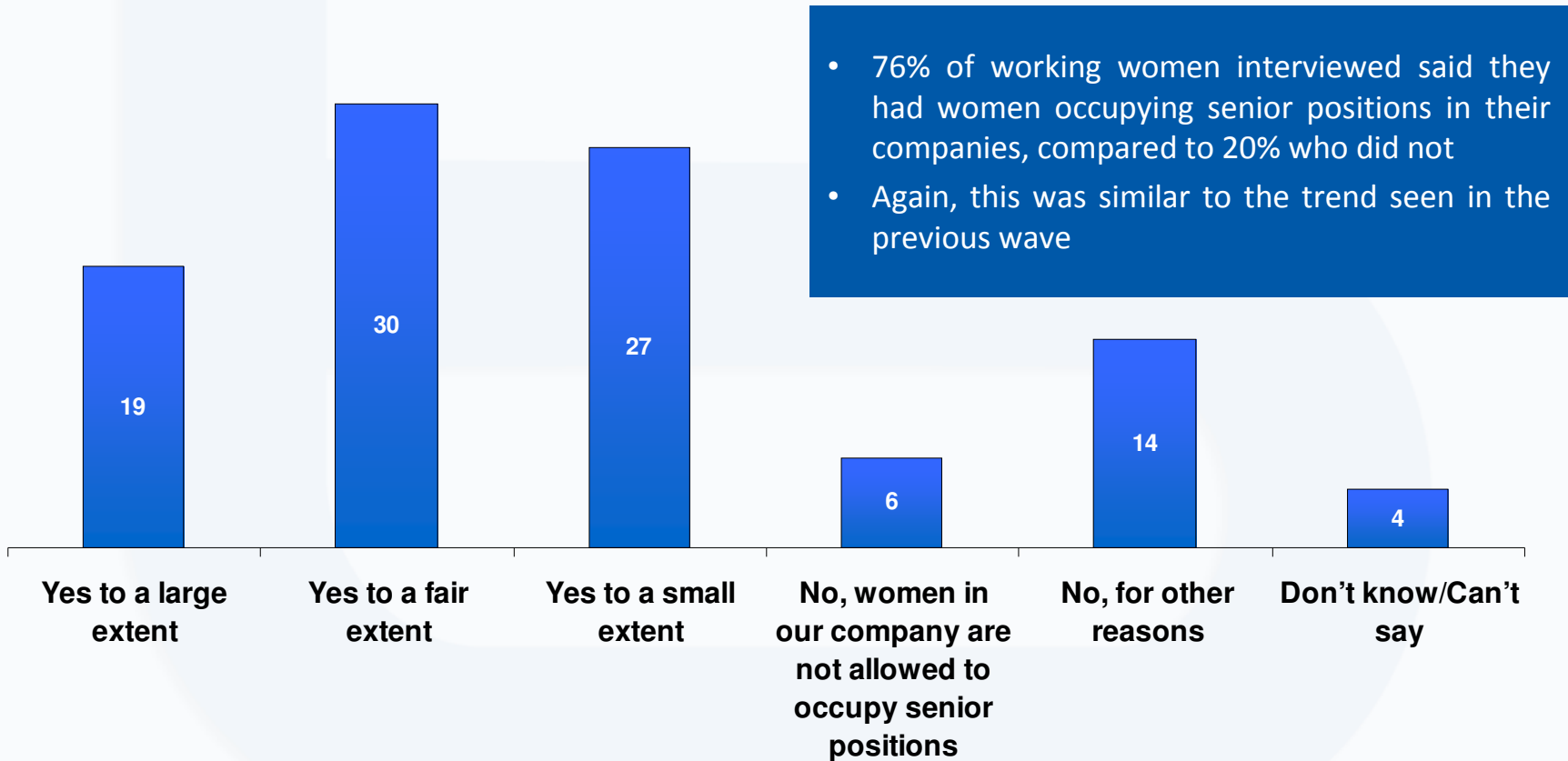
- 46% of respondents felt that the proportion of working women in their country of residence ranged from 41% to 75%
- A similar response was seen in the previous wave



Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. Are there women in the senior ranks of your company?

The Majority of Those Interviewed Worked In Companies Where Women Occupied Senior Ranks



Working Women...

Experiences and Compensation Compared to Spouses & Male Colleagues

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Q. How do your earnings compare to those of your partner?

43% of Working Women Earned Less Than Their Partners

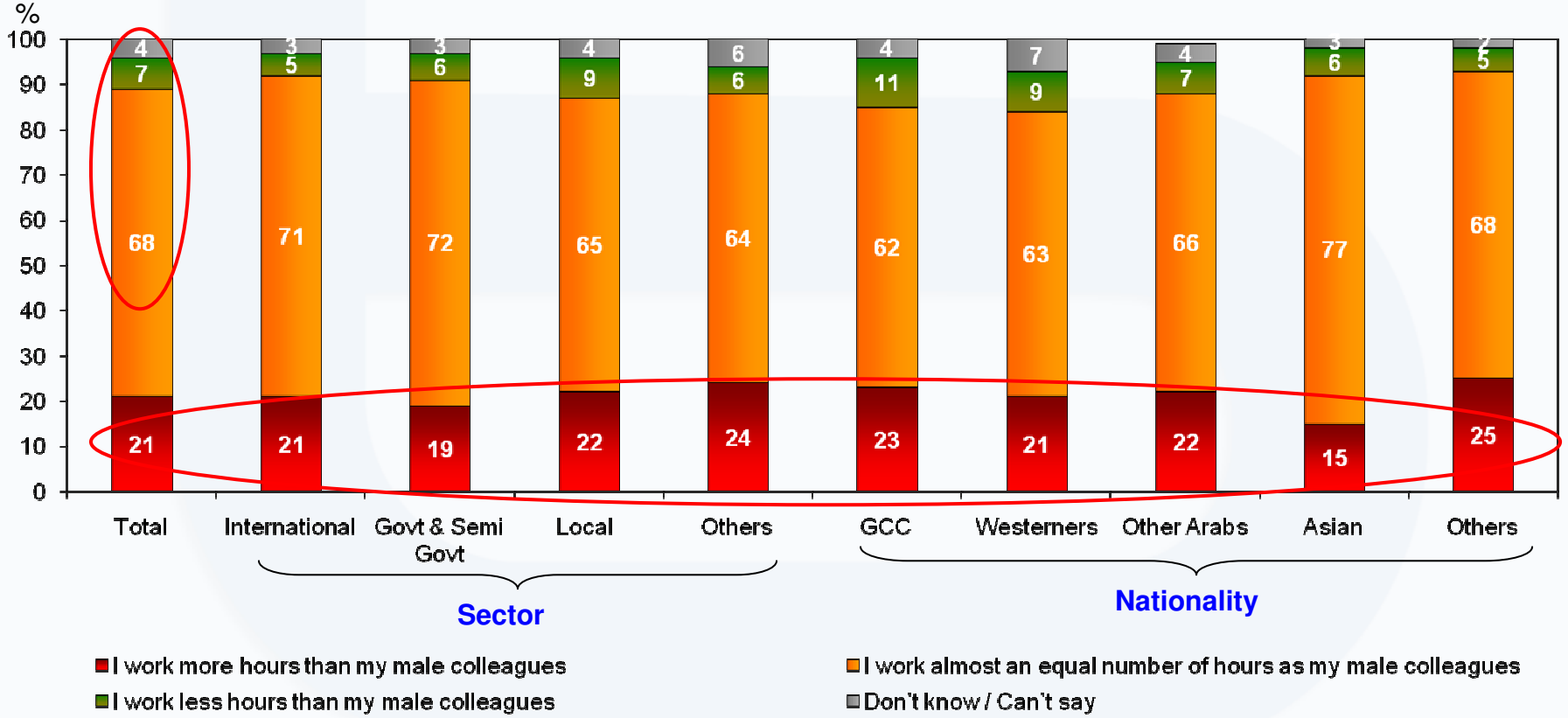


- However, it is encouraging to note that 14% also said they earned more than their spouses and another 15% said they had equal earnings

Q. How do your work timings compare to those of your male colleagues?

Over Two-Thirds (68%) of Women Interviewed Felt They Worked the Same Number of Hours as Their Male Colleagues

- Across all sectors and nationalities women felt they worked similar number of hours to their male counterparts
- Interestingly, approximately one-fifth of those interviewed actually felt they worked more than their male colleagues. This feeling was least marked among Asians

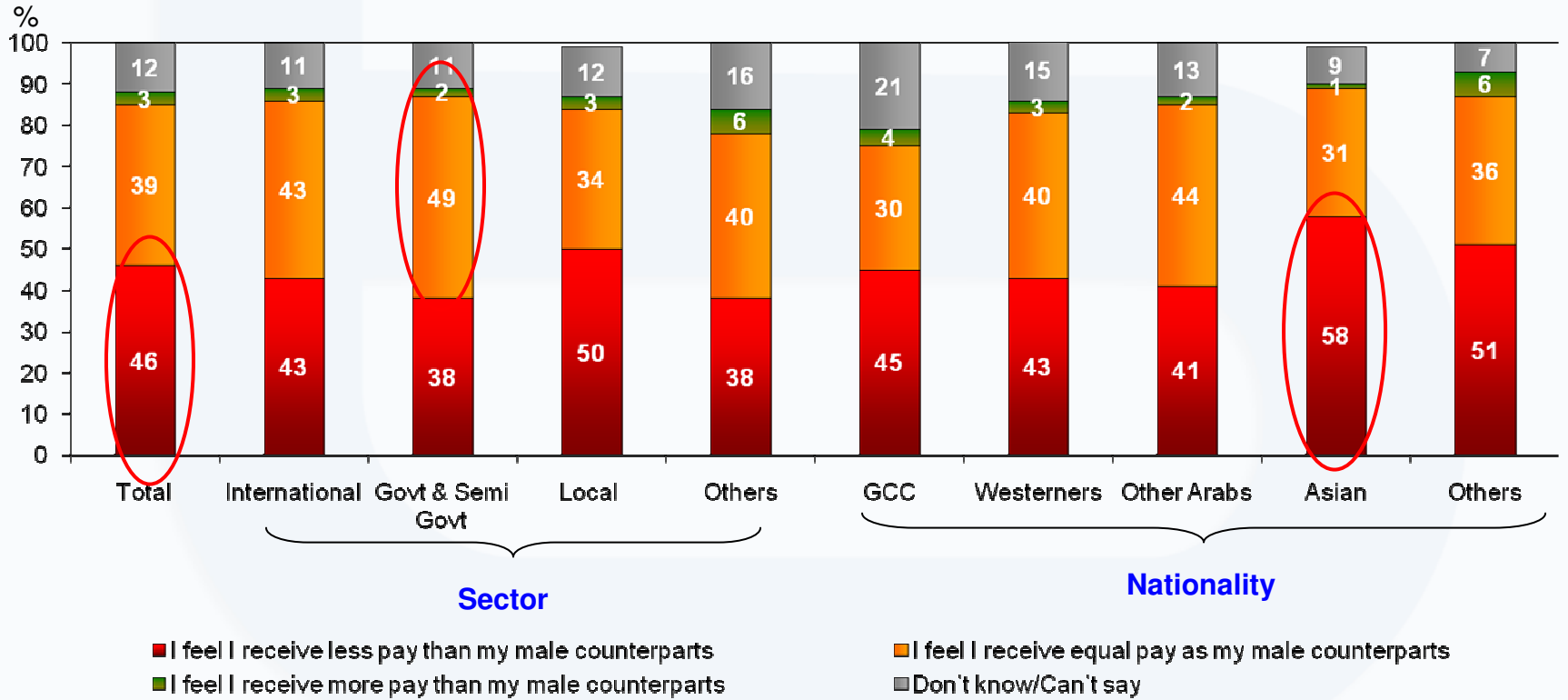


Base: Those who are working – N=1515

Q. How do you feel your compensation package compares to those of your male colleagues in a similar position?

When Asked, 46% of Women Said They Were Paid Less Than Their Male Colleagues. This Was Particularly Accentuated Among Asians (58%)

- Results suggest that Government and Semi Government jobs are best in terms of pay equality, with 49% of women working in this sector saying they earned equal pay to their male counterparts

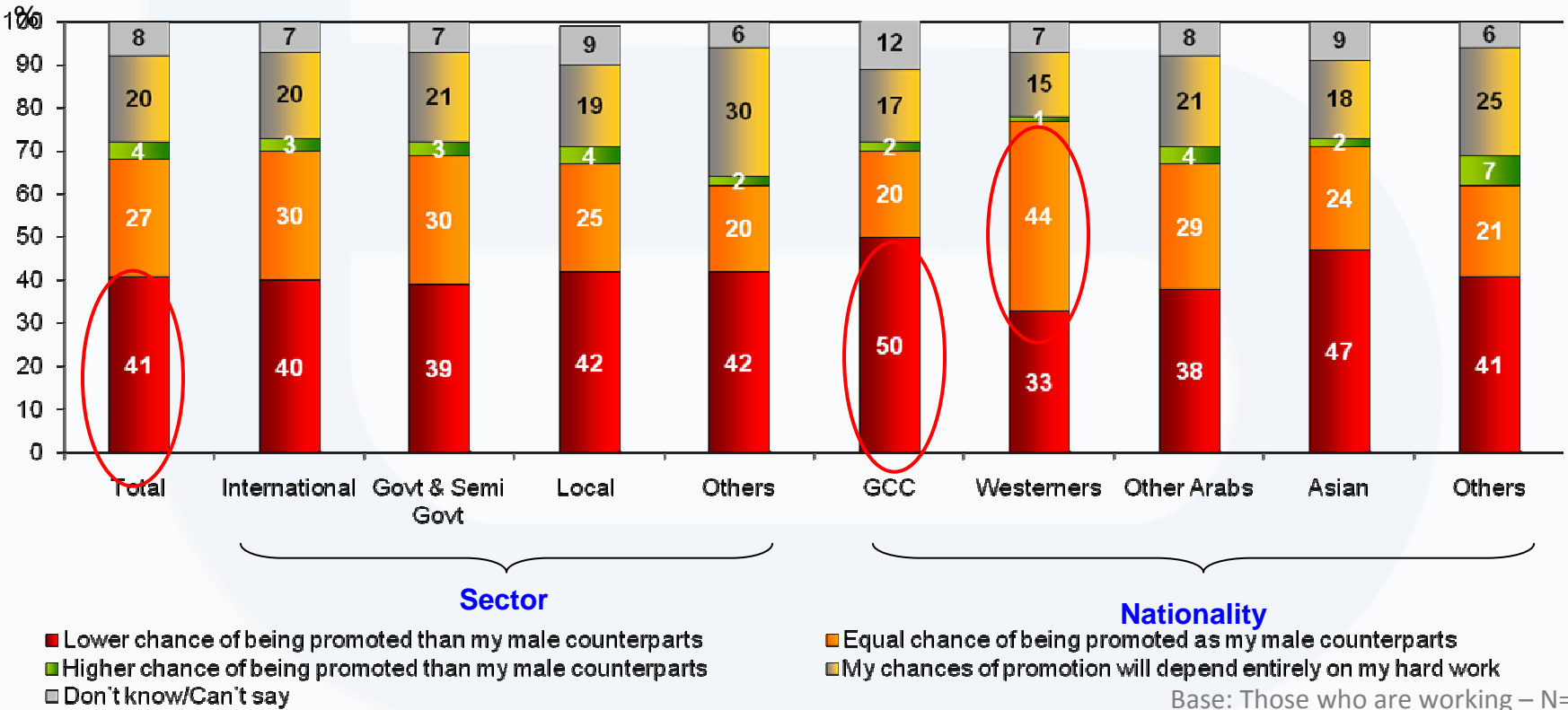


Base: Those who are working – N=1515

Q. What do you feel about your chances of promotion compared to those of your male colleagues in a similar position?

41% of Women Interviewed Felt They Had a Lower Chance of Being Promoted while 51% Felt their Gender will Not adversely Impact their Career Progression

- Western women, more than other nationalities, rated their chances of promotion as being the same as those of their male colleagues. In contrast, GCC nationals and Asians felt that had the lowest chances of being promoted
- These figures were not very dissimilar from the previous wave

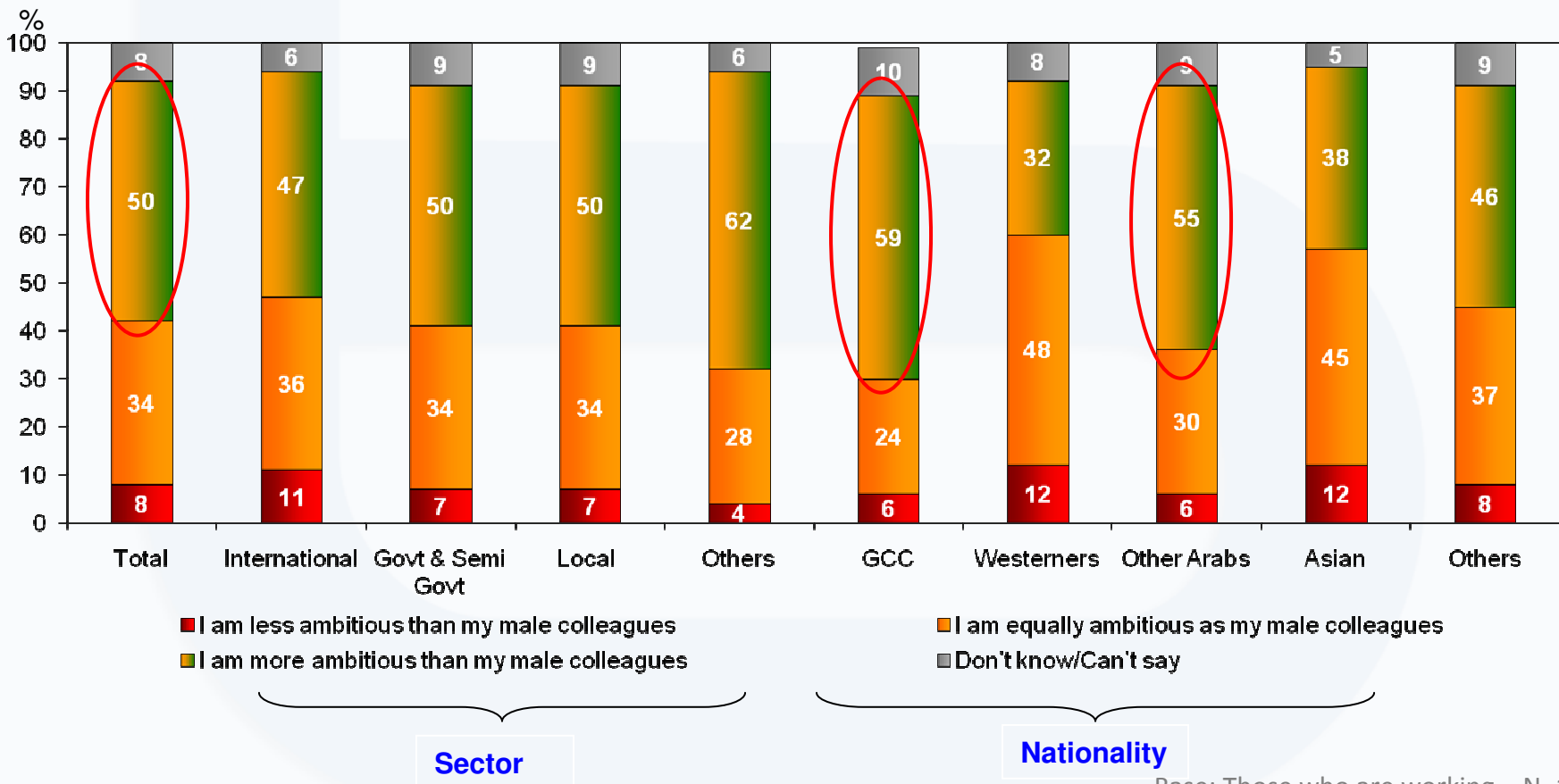


Base: Those who are working – N=1515

Q. How would you compare your level of career ambition to those of your male colleagues?

Half the Women Interviewed Said They Were More Ambitious Than Their Male Colleagues

- Female ambition was especially evident among Arab women

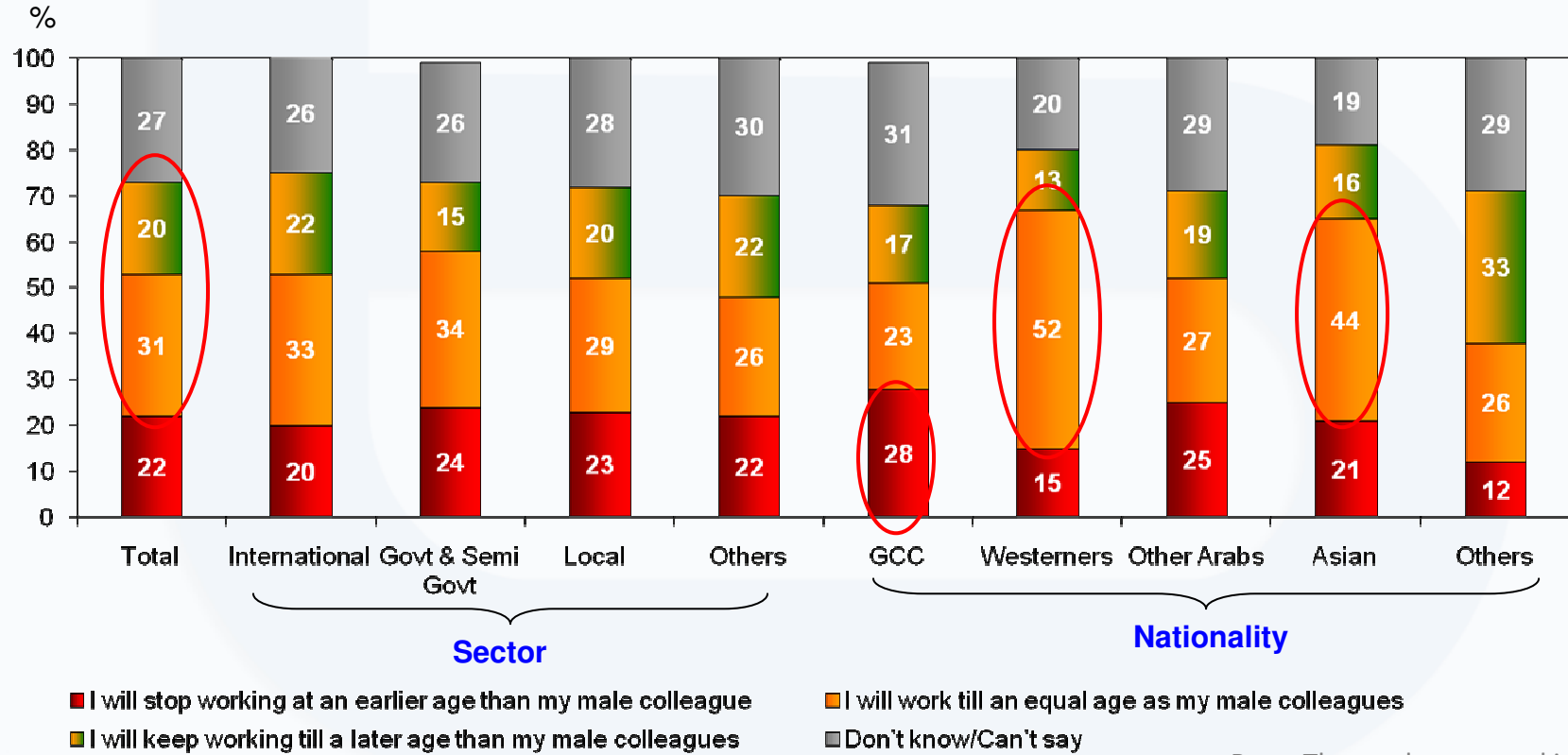


Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. How long do you envisage yourself working as compared to your male colleagues?

51% of Women Interviewed Said They Envisioned Working Until An Equal (31%) or Later Age (20%) Than Their Male Colleagues

- Westerners and Asian women were most likely to feel they would work as long as men
- GCC Arabs, on the other hand, were more likely to stop working at an earlier age than their male counterparts. A larger proportion of these women were also unsure of how long they would work for

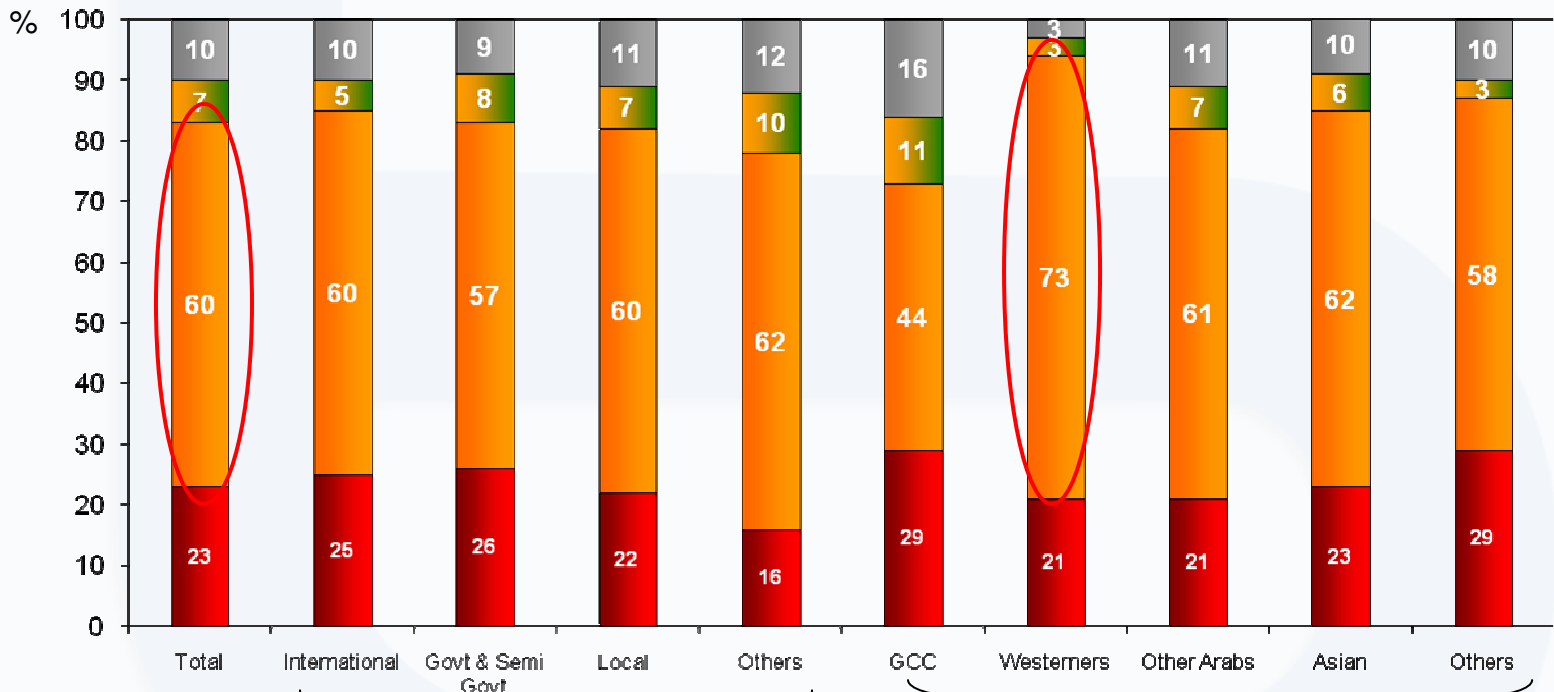


Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. Do you feel you are being treated fairly as compared to your male colleagues?

When Asked, 60% of Women Felt They Were Treated Fairly As Compared to Their Male Counterparts

- This sense of fairness was most evident among Western women, where 73% said they were fairly treated
- % of those who felt they were unfairly treated rose slightly since the previous wave



- I am treated unfairly and my male colleagues get a better treatment than me
- I am treated fairly and my male colleagues get an equal treatment as me
- I am treated preferentially and I get a better treatment than my male colleagues
- Don't know/Can't say

Working Women...

Level of Appreciation & Perceived Recognition

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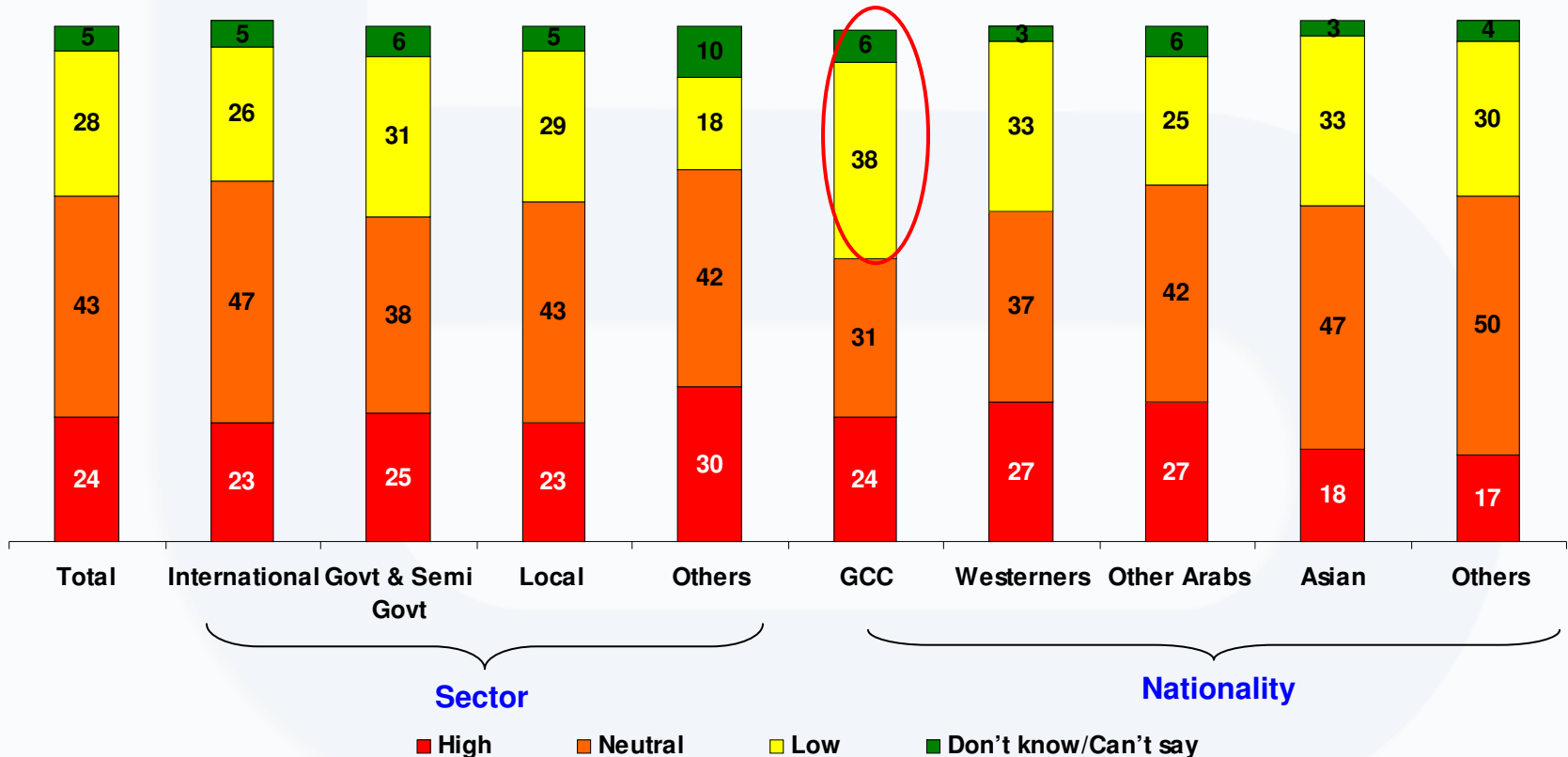
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Q: How would you rate your satisfaction with the recognition that you receive for achieving good work in your company?

The Largest Proportion Of Women Were Indifferent Or Dissatisfied With Recognition Received

- GCC Nationals tended to be most dissatisfied

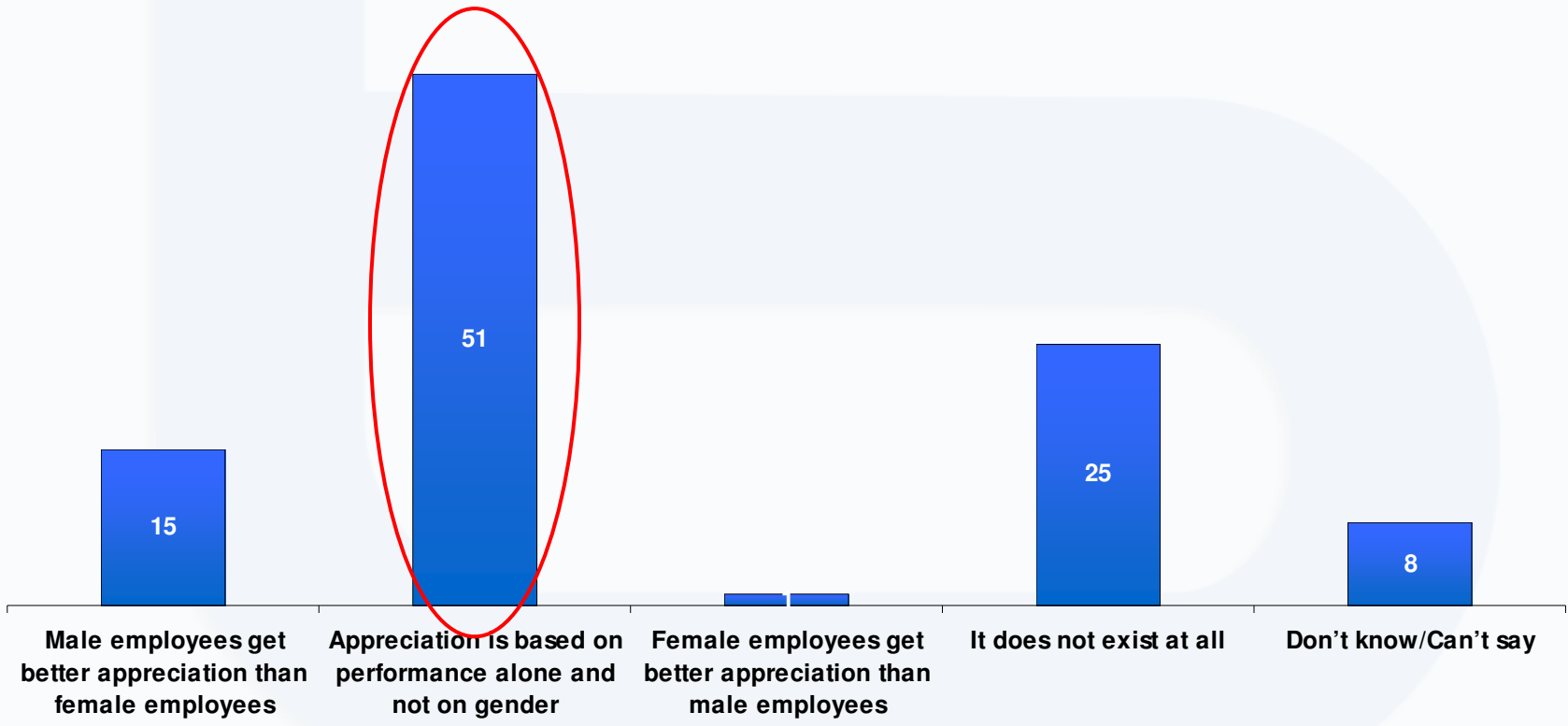


Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. What do you feel about the system of appreciating, recognising or rewarding employees in your company?

Half of Female Respondents Felt Appreciation Was Based on Performance Alone and Not on Gender

- Unfortunately, one-quarter also said recognition did not exist at all



Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Working Women...

Preferential Treatment?

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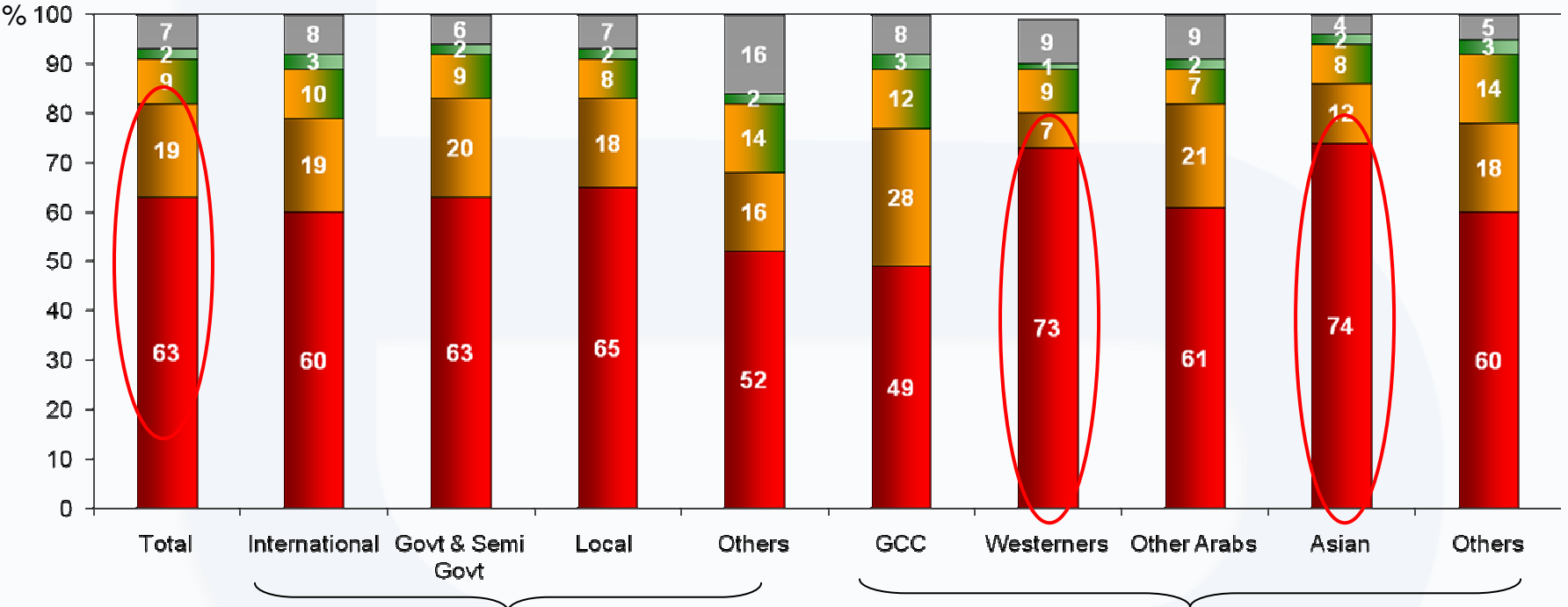
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Q. Does your current employer provide any preferential treatment or special benefits for women employees?

63% of Women Said Their Company Did Not Provide Any Preferential Treatment or Special Benefits for Female Employees

- This feeling was particularly strong among Asians & Westerners

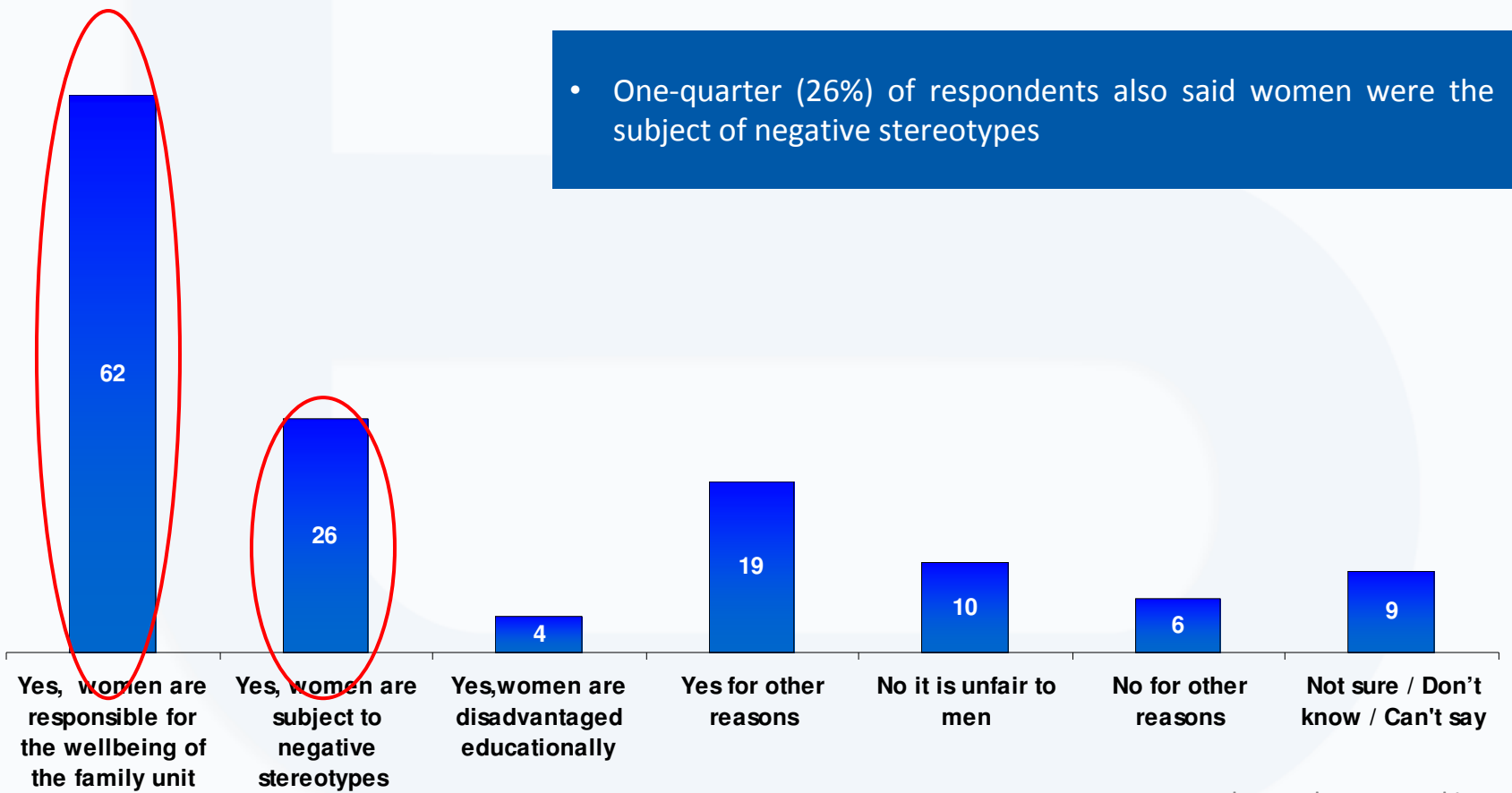


■ There are no special benefits for women employees
■ There are very few special benefits for women employees
■ There are some special benefits for women employees
■ There are many special benefits for women employees
■ Don't know/Can't say

Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. Do you believe employers should provide any preferential treatment or special benefits for women employees?

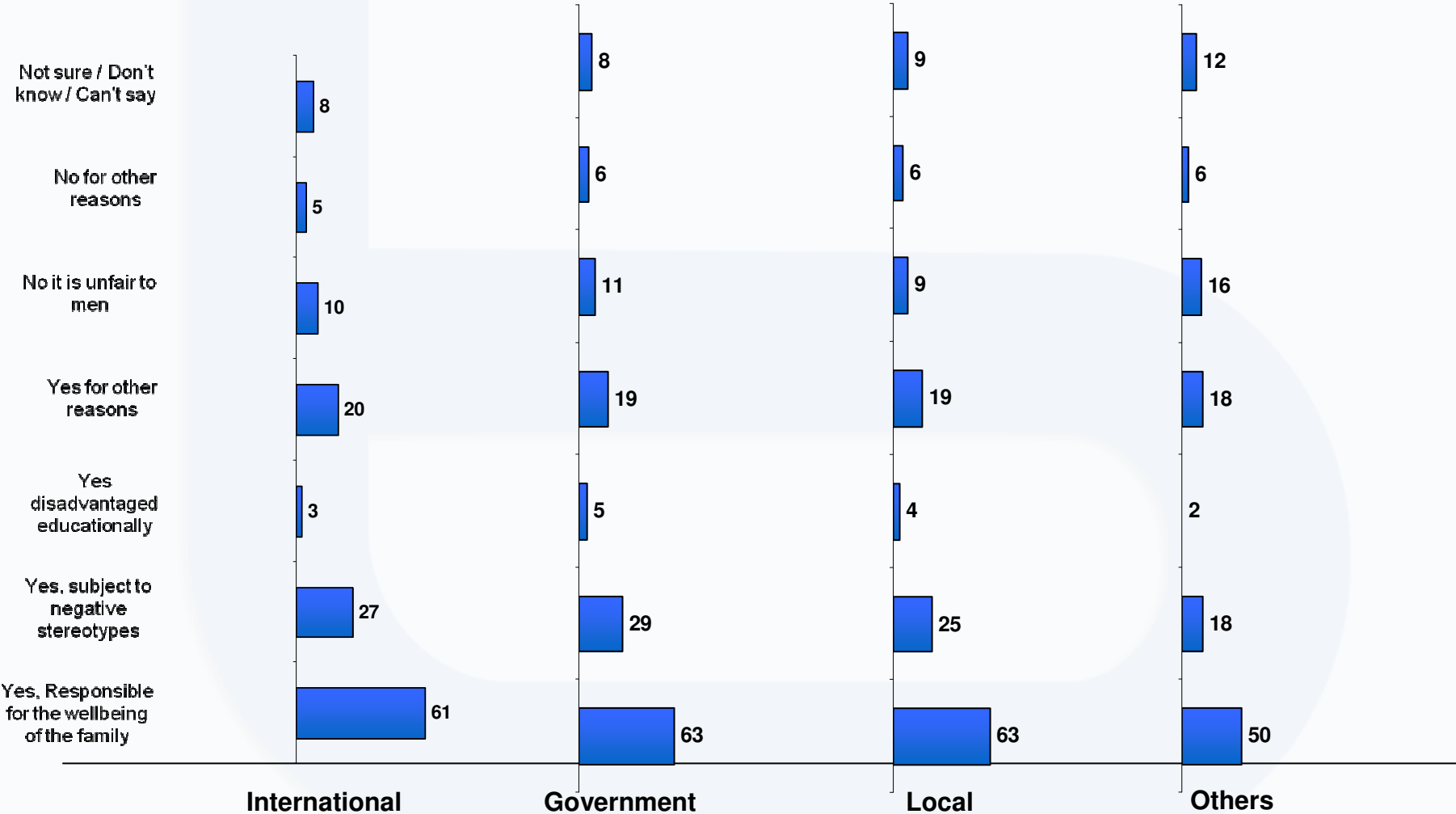
62% of Those Interviewed Felt Women Should Be Given Special Benefits As They Are Responsible for the Wellbeing of the Family Unit



- One-quarter (26%) of respondents also said women were the subject of negative stereotypes

Q. Do you believe employers should provide any preferential treatment or special benefits for women employees?

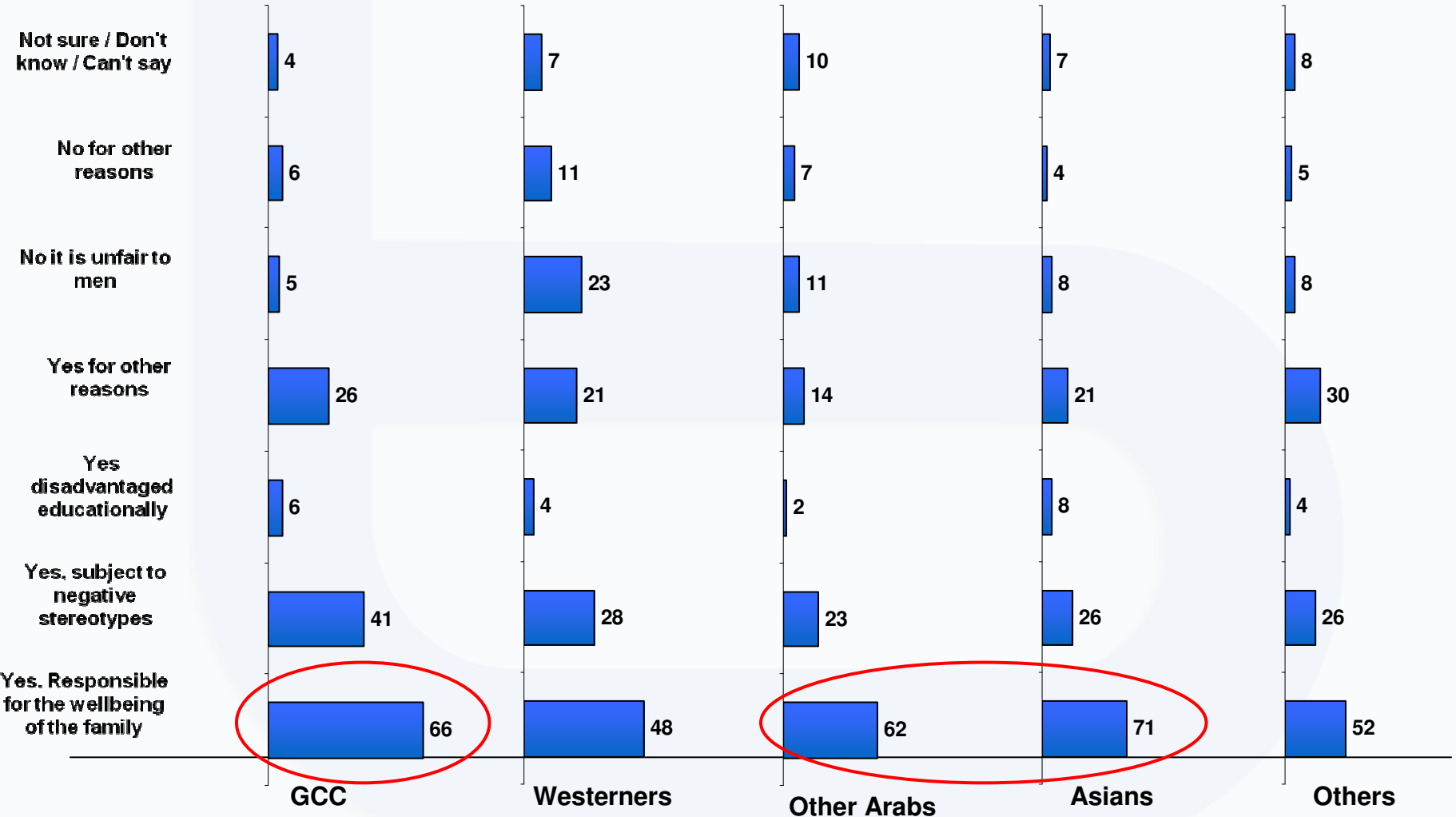
Preferential Treatment Expectations - Sector



Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. Do you believe employers should provide any preferential treatment or special benefits for women employees?

Arab and Asian Women Were Most Likely to Believe Women Should be Given Preferential Treatment



Working Women...

Maternity Leave, Benefits & Flexible Working Hours

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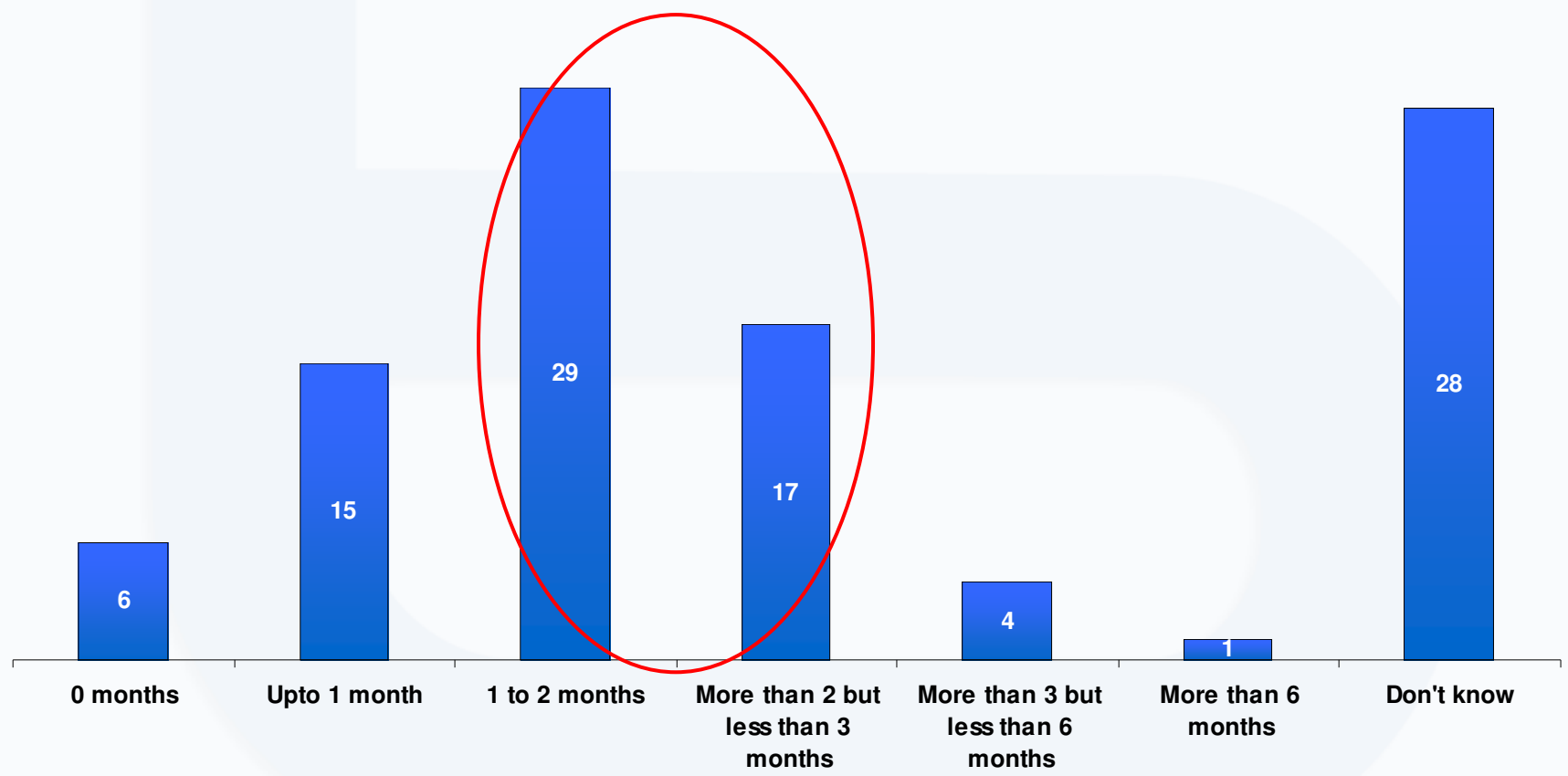
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Q. How many months of maternity leave are you able to get at your company?

46% of Women Were Allowed to Take Between 1 and 3 Months of Maternity Leave

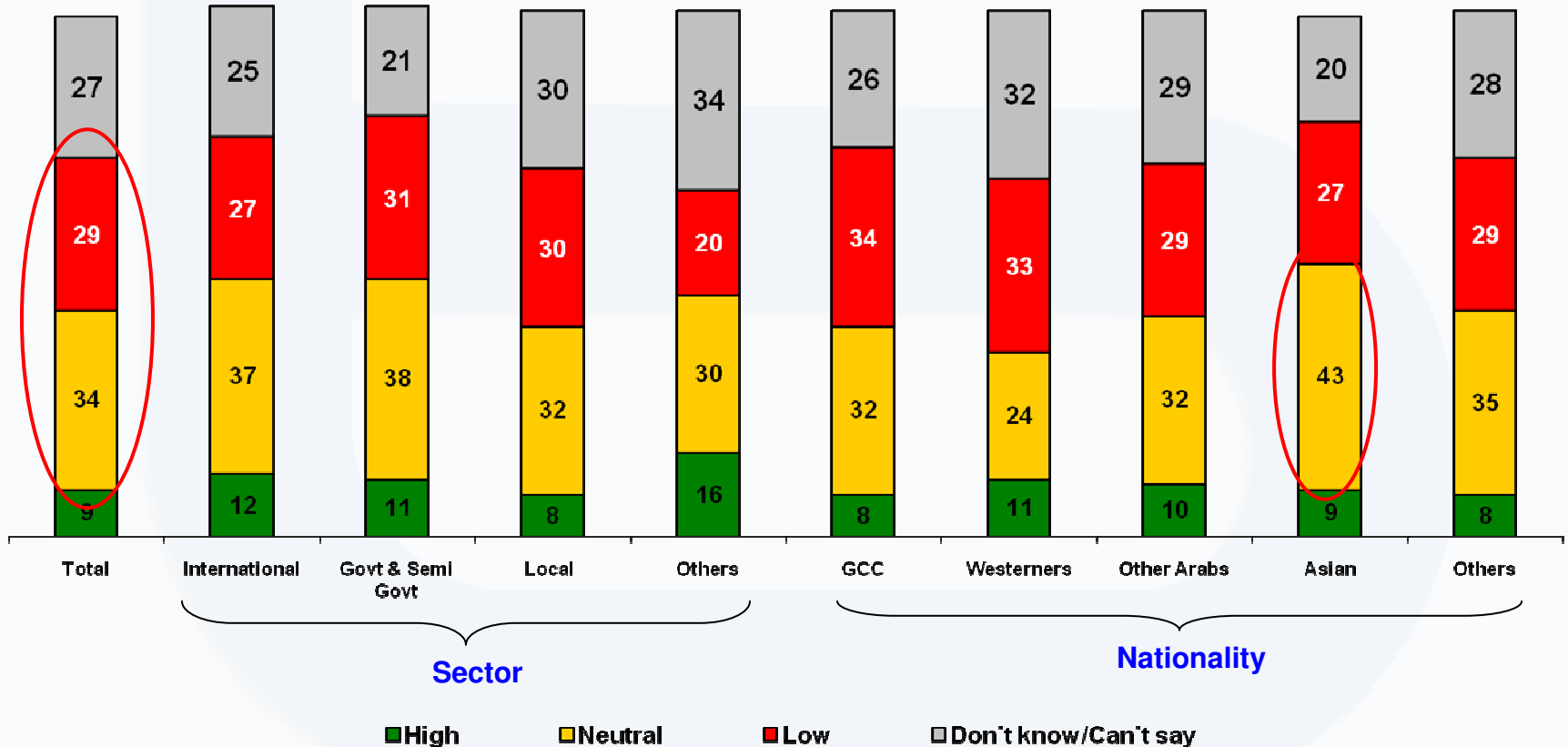
- Surprisingly, over one-fourth (28%) of respondents were unsure of how long they could they off



Q: How would you rate your satisfaction with the maternity leave and benefits available in your current job?

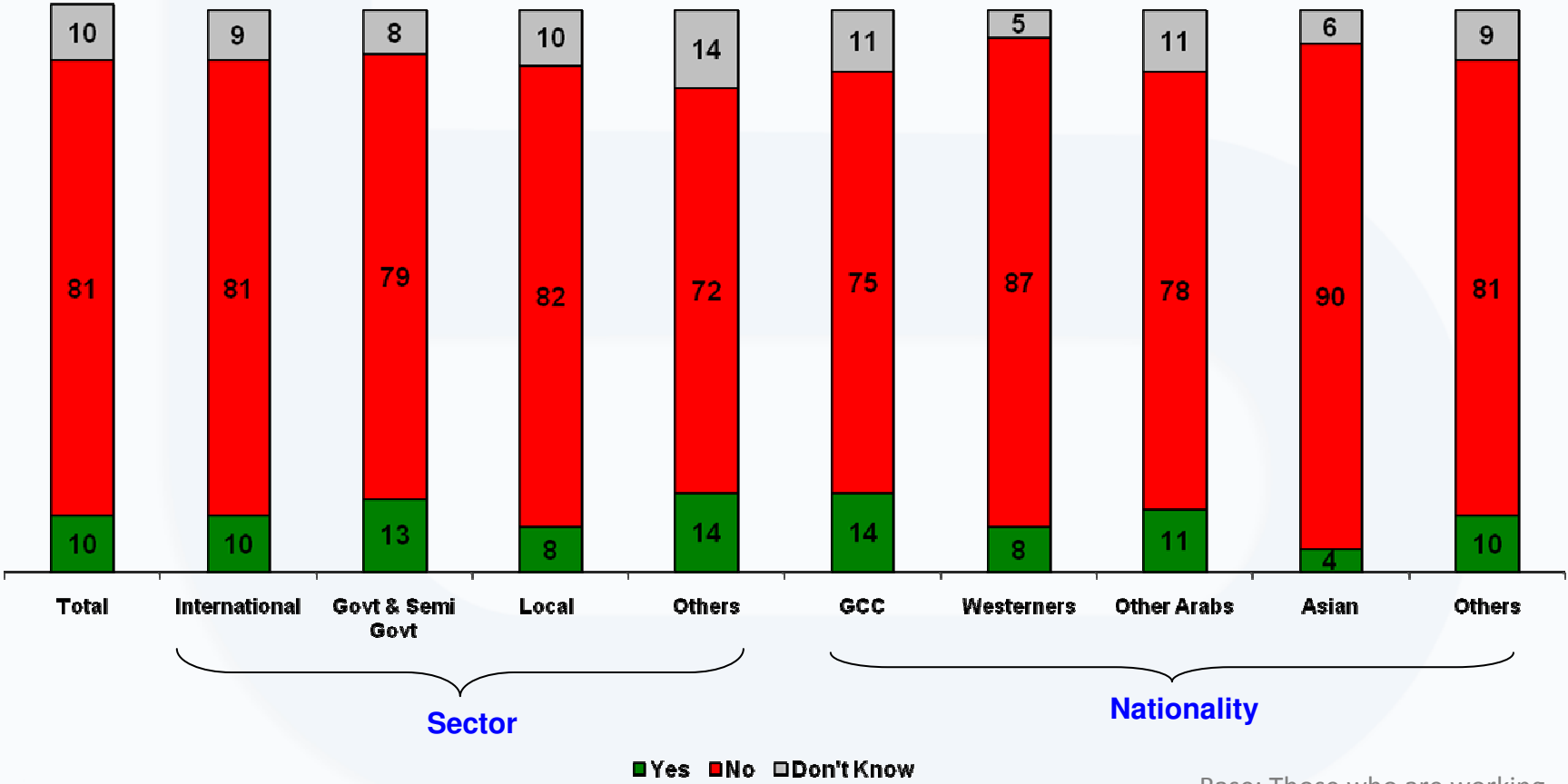
Most Women Interviewed Were Either Indifferent or Dissatisfied With The Maternity Leave and Benefits Offered By Their Companies

- Indifference was highest among Asians (43%)



Q. Does your current employer provide any day care facilities for children of women employees?

The Vast Majority of Women Worked in Companies Which Did Not Provide Day Care Facilities

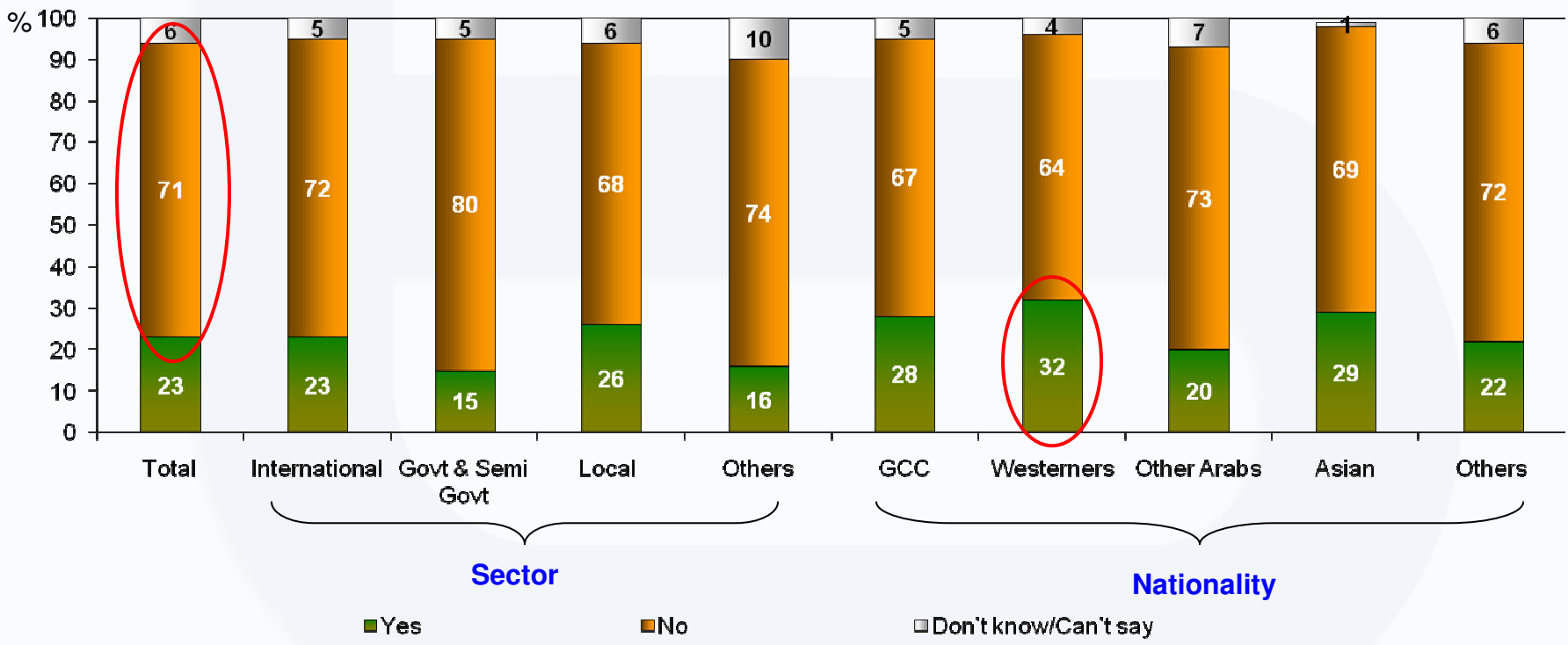


Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. Have you ever approached your company regarding your working on a flexible timing or working from home?

When Asked, Most Women Said They Had Not Approached Their Company Regarding Flexible Working Arrangements

- Western women were most likely to have done so (32%)

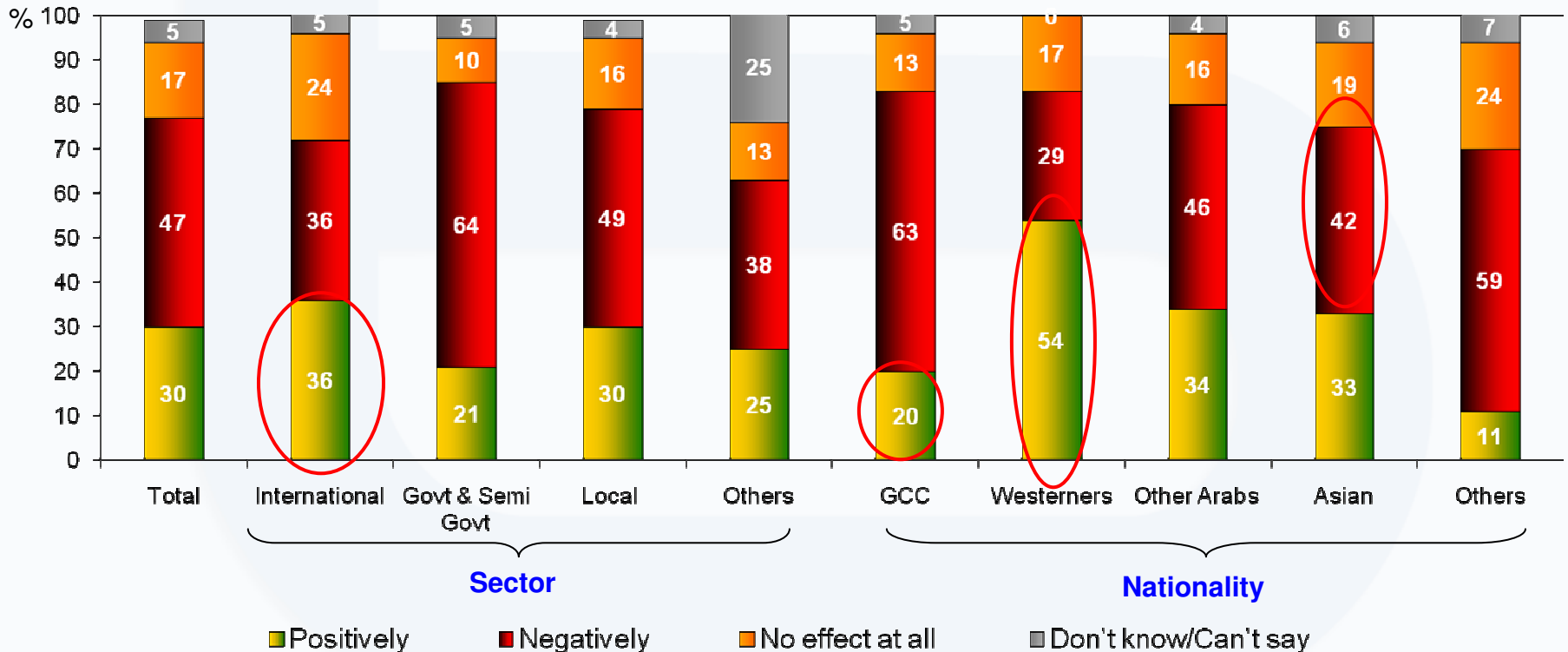


Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. What response did you get from your company regarding flexible timing or working from home?

Western Women Appear to Be Most Successful In Getting a Positive Response From Their Company

- GCC women and those working in Government organisations, on the other hand, seem to be the least likely to get a positive response to requests for a flexible arrangement
- International companies seem to be the most flexible



Current Benefits Offered

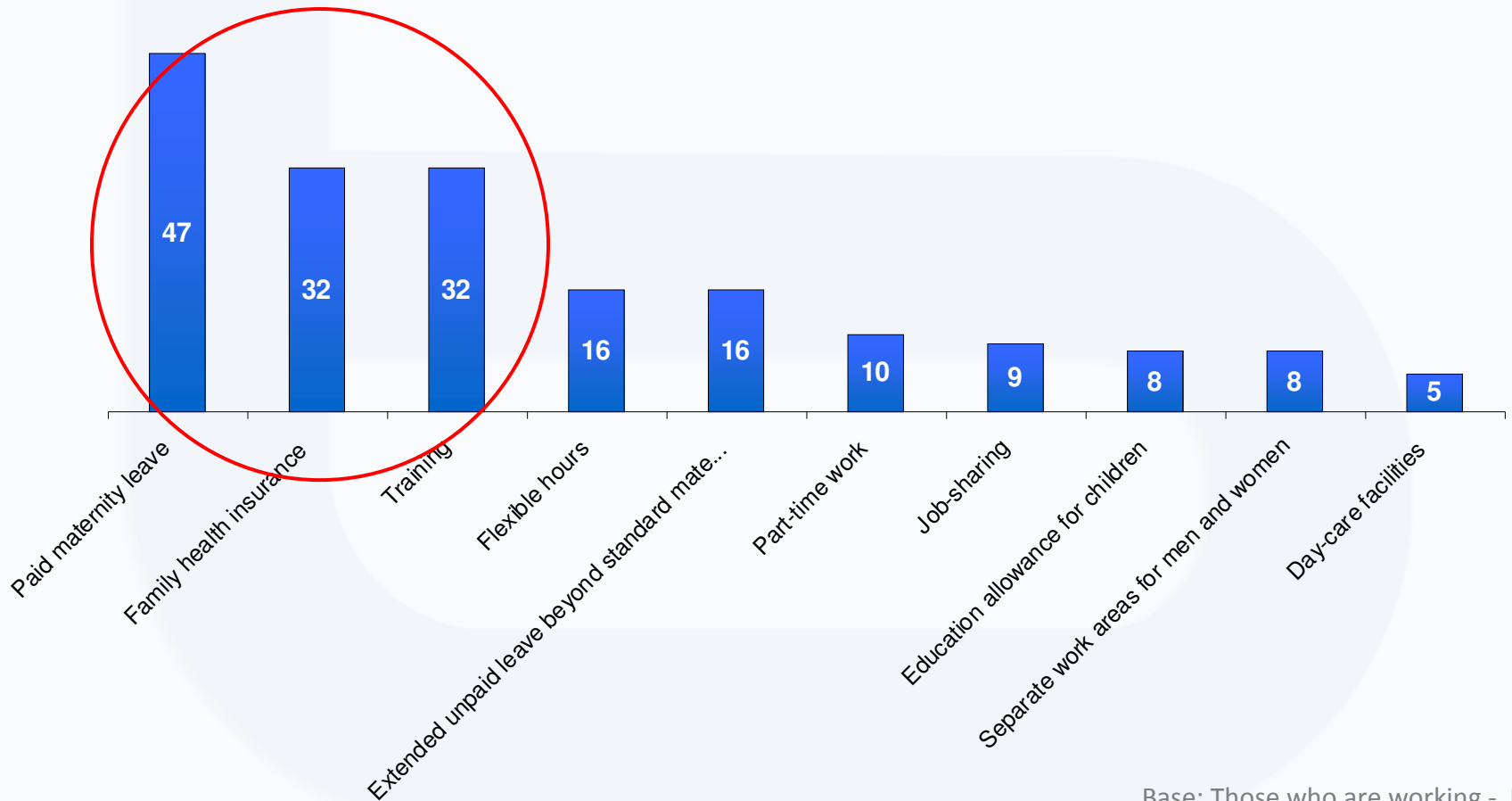
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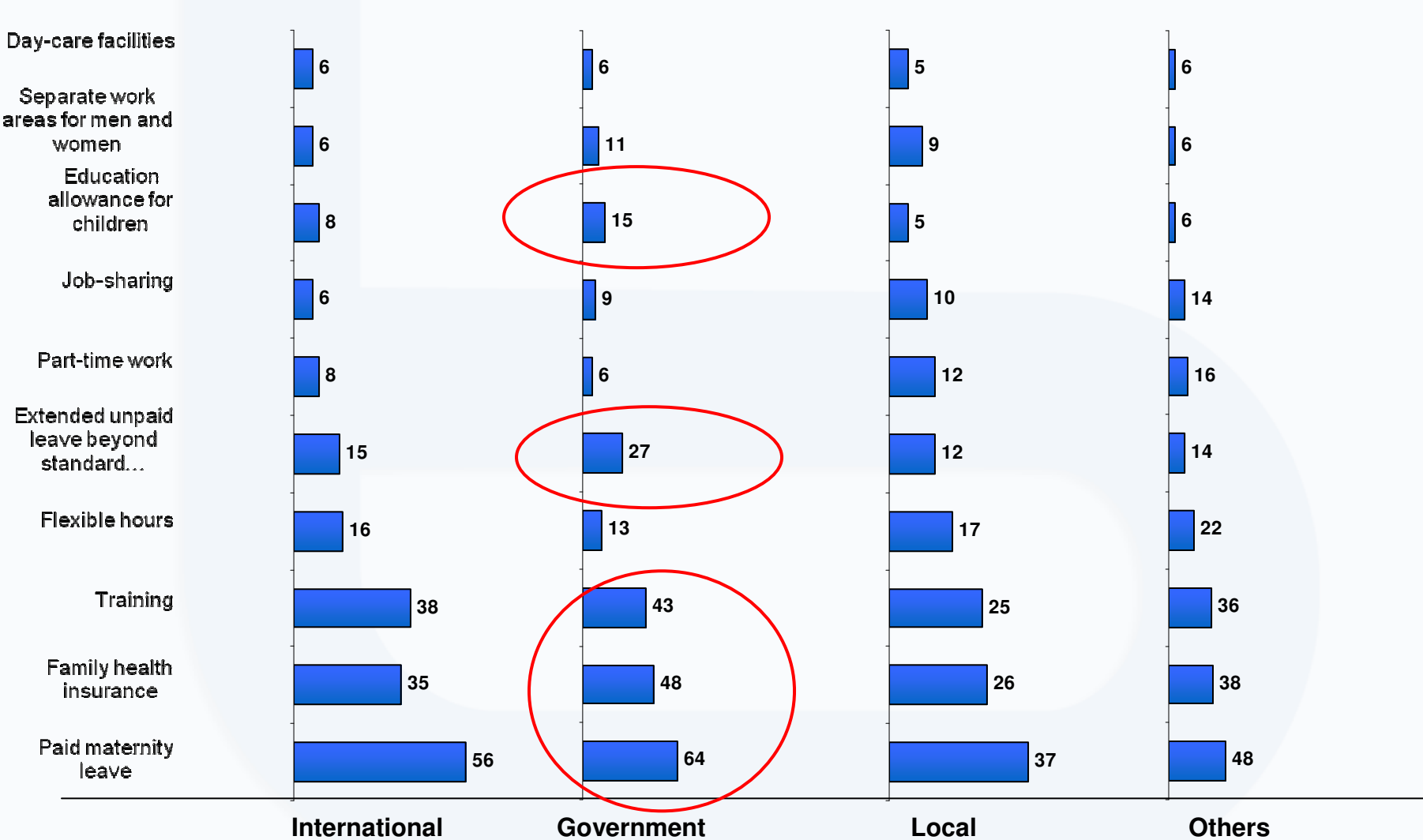
Q. Does your company offer any of the below for working women?

Paid Maternity Leave, Family Health Insurance and Training Were The Most Commonly Offered Benefits



Q. Does your company offer any of the below for working women?

The Government Sector Appears To Offer the Most Benefits

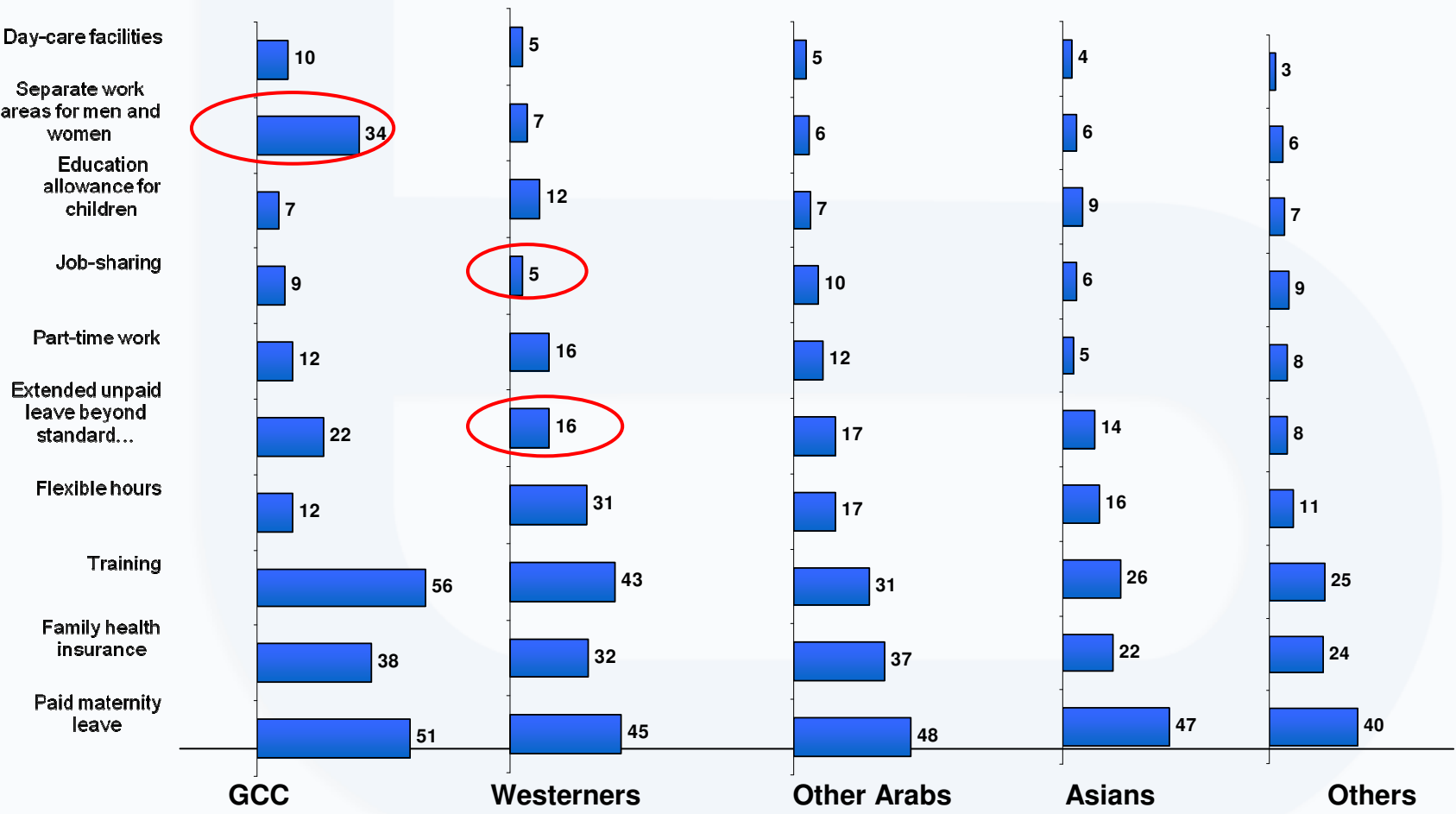


Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. Does your company offer any of the below for working women?

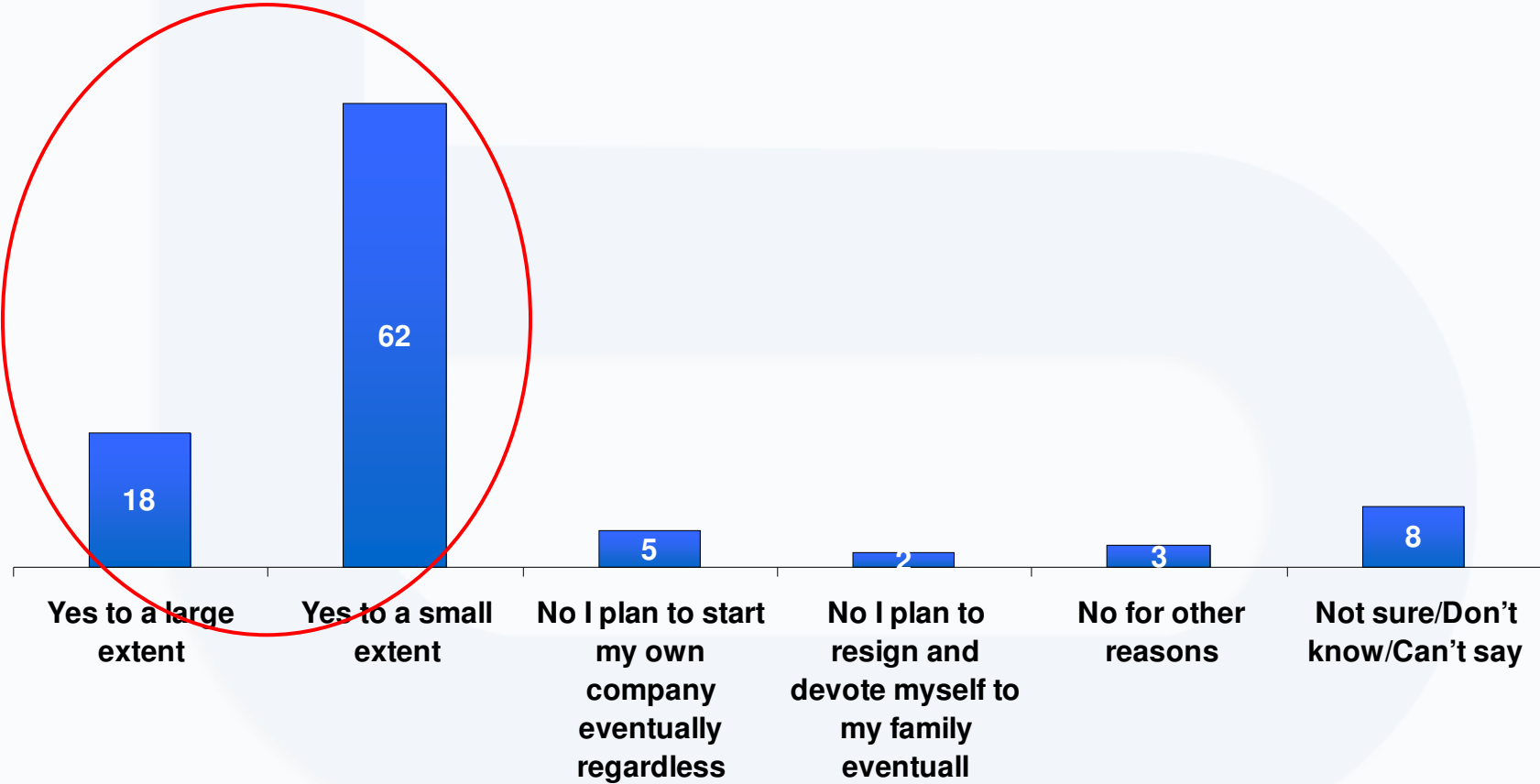
Western Women Generally Seem To Have The Most Flexible Conditions

- A large proportion of companies offer GCC women separate work areas for men and women



Q. If employers provided more benefits for working women, do you believe it would extend your working life as a female employee?

80% of Women Believe That More Benefits Would Extend Their Working Life



Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Working Women...

Impact of Various Issues on Career Prospects

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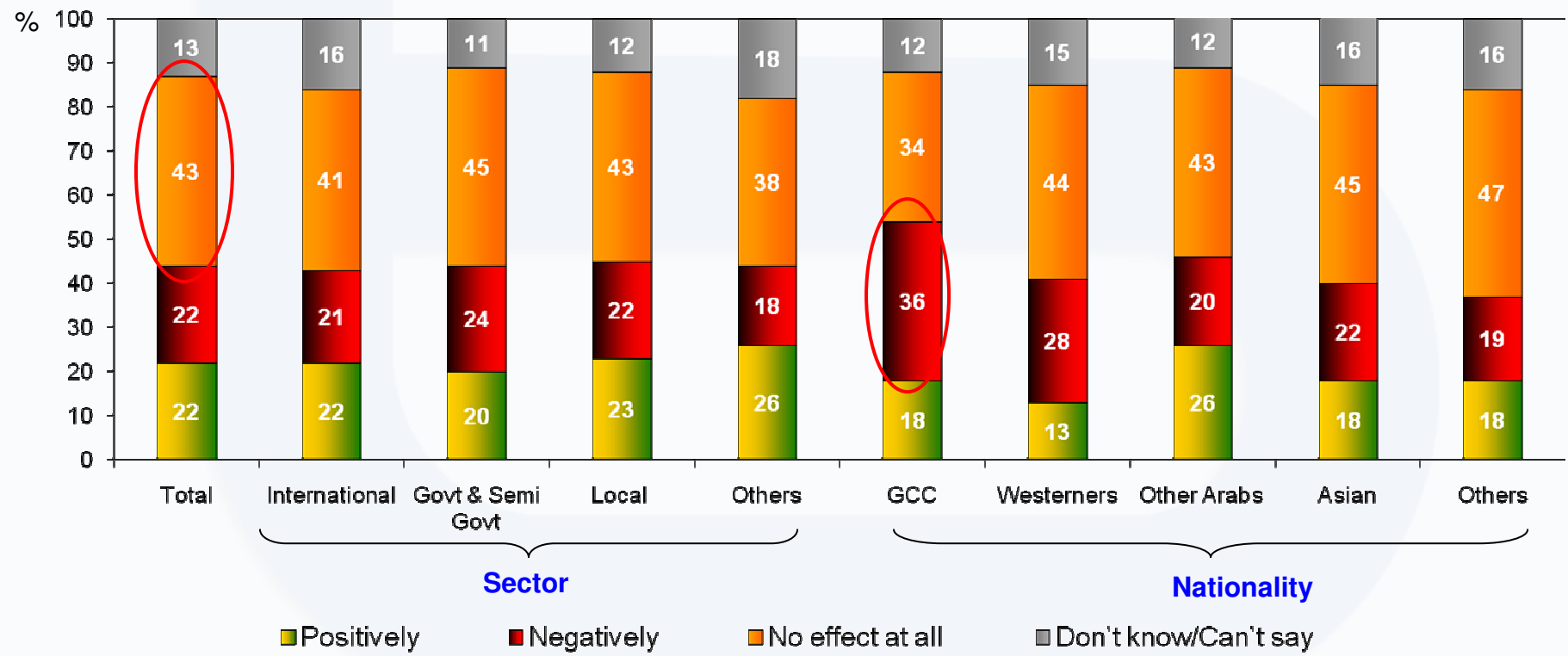
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Q. In what way has your gender affected your career prospects?

The Largest Proportion of Women Stated Their Gender Has Not Affected Their Career Prospects

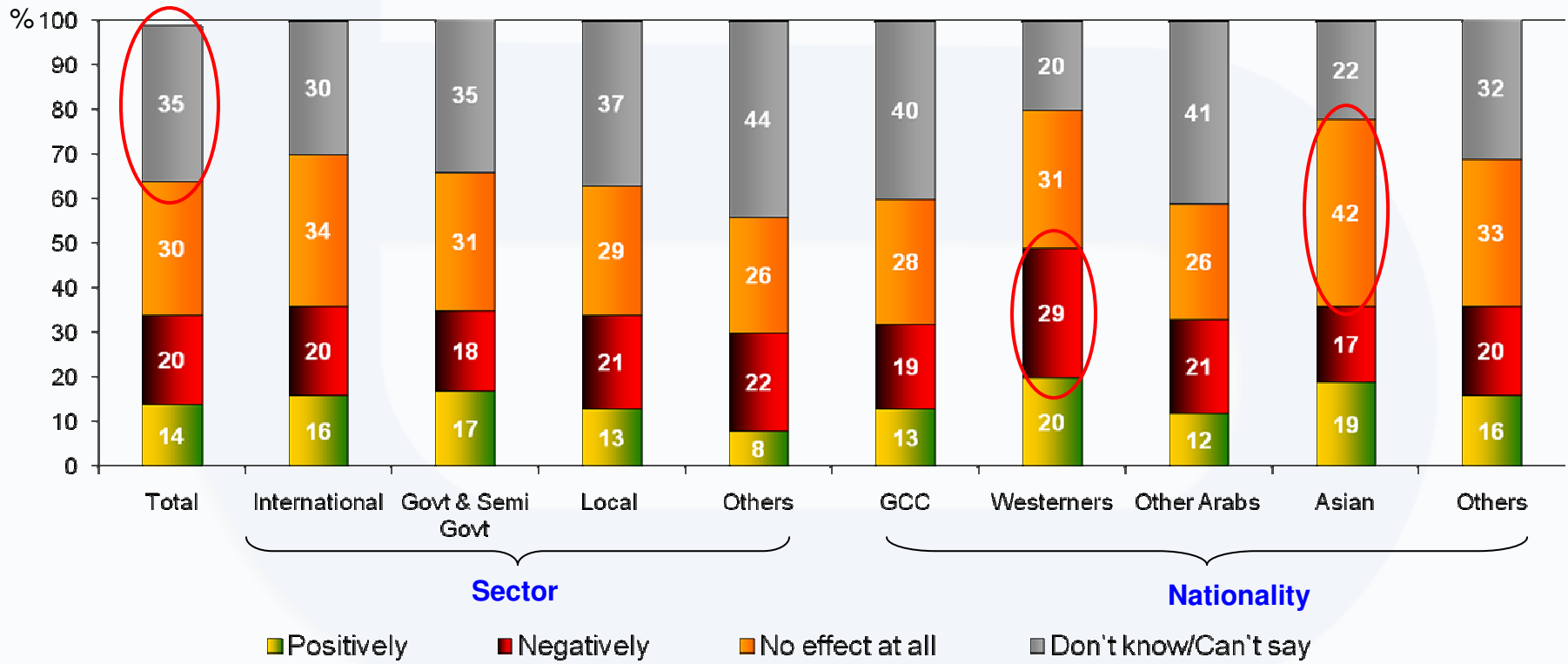
- Across all nationalities, GCC women were most likely to feel their gender has had a negative impact on their prospects (36%)



Q. In what way has your marital life been affected by your career choices?

35% of Women Were Unsure of the Impact of Their Career Choices on Their Marriage

- Across nationalities, Western women were the most likely to report their career choices had a negative impact on their marriage (29%), while Asians were the least likely to feel their choices had an impact on their relationship

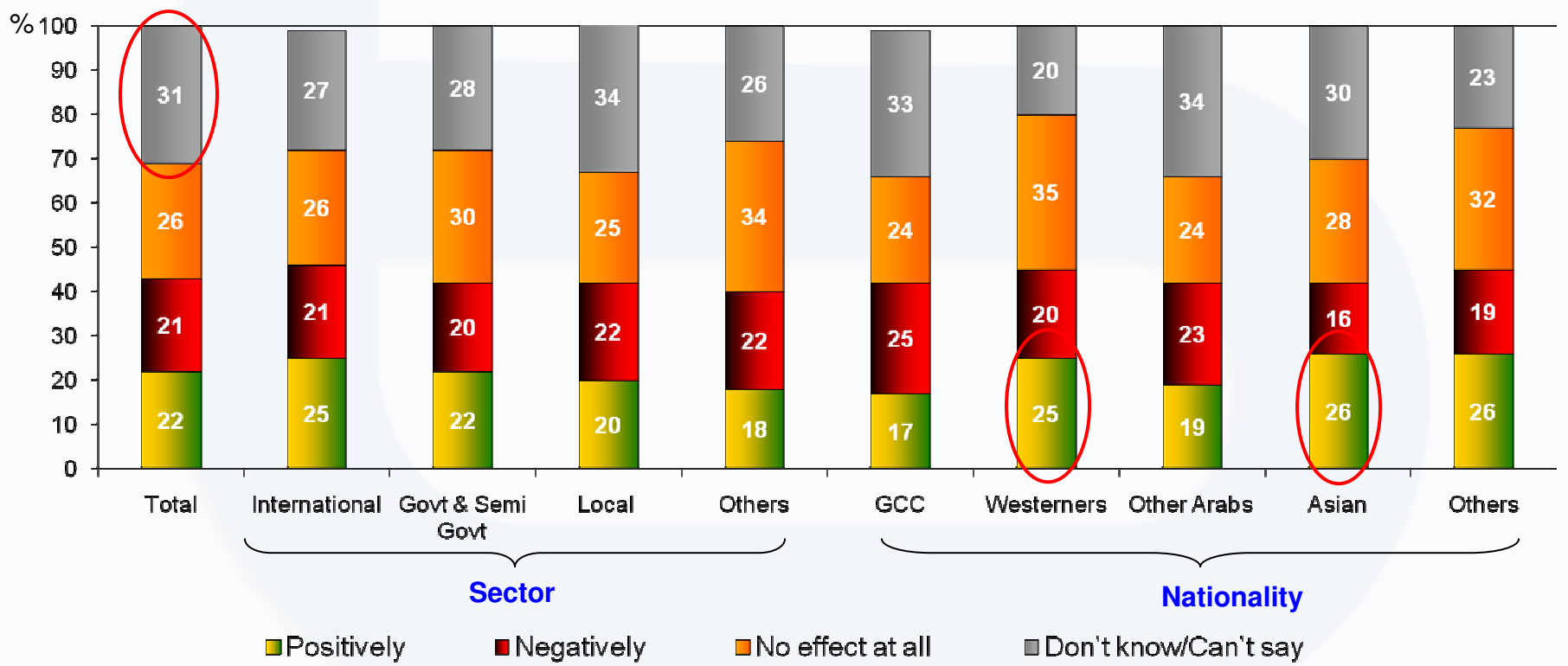


Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. In what way do you expect your future marital life to be affected by your career choices?

The Largest Proportion of Women Were Unsure of How Their Career Choices Will Affect Their Marriage in the Future

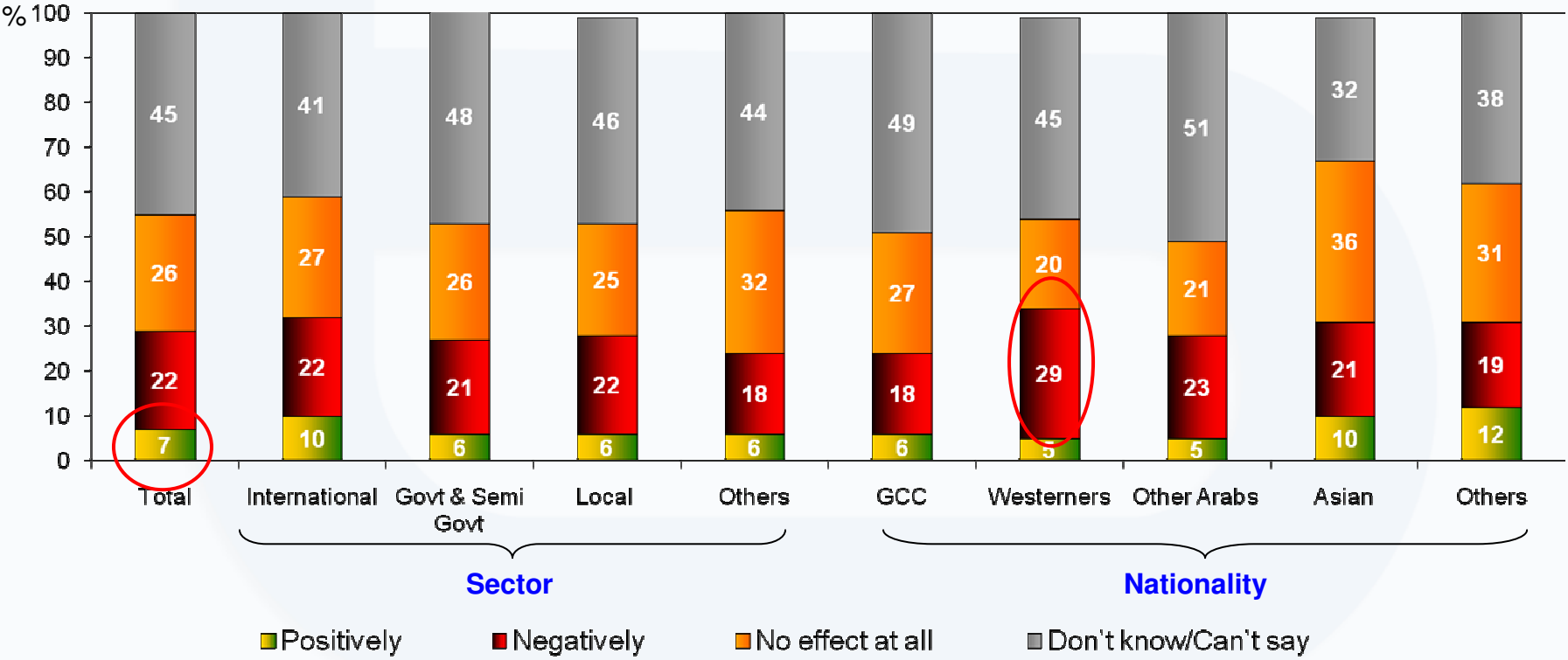
- Across the various nationality groups, Western and Asian women felt most positive about the impact their choices will have on their future relationships



Q. In what way has your choice to have children affected your career prospects?

Very Few Women Felt That Their Decision To Have Children Had a Positive Impact on Their Career Prospects

- Western women were most likely to feel that their decision to have children had a negative impact on their career prospects
- Across all groups, most women were unsure of the impact this decision has had on their career

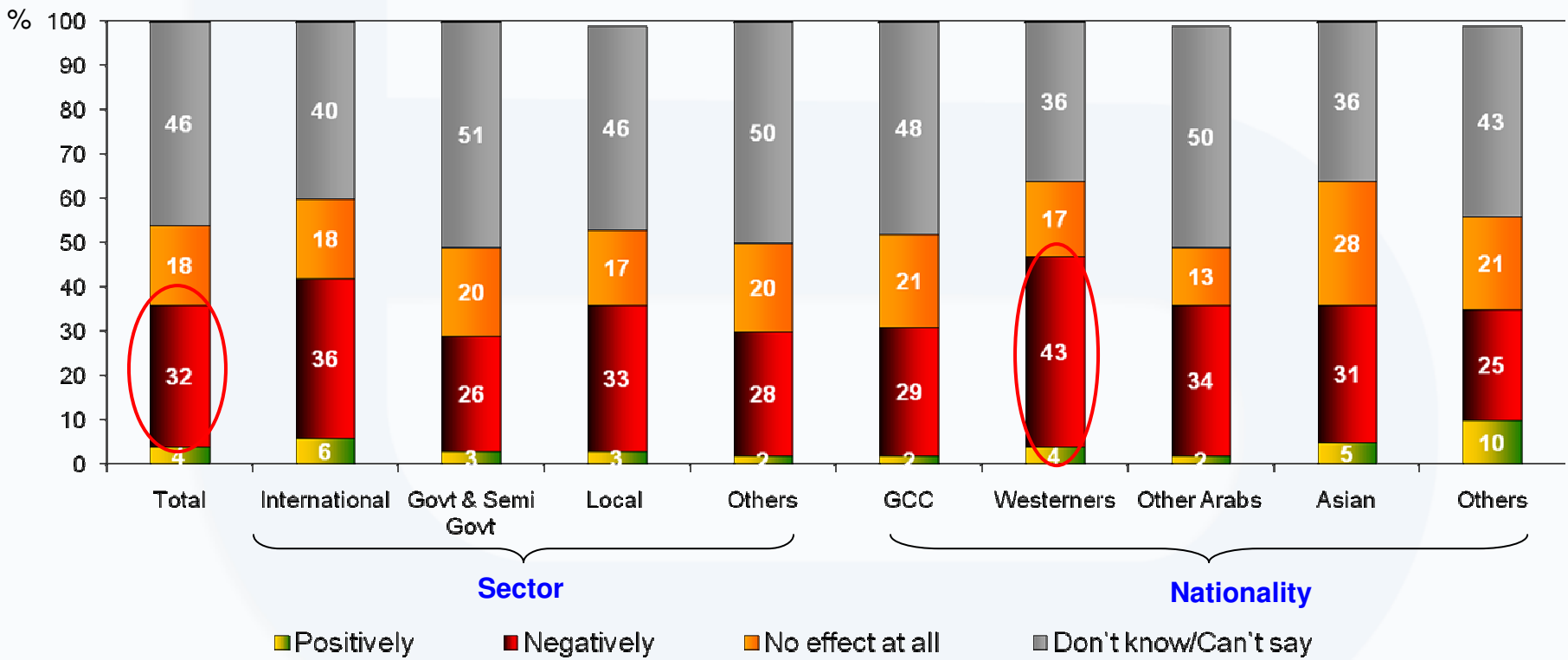


Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. In what way will your choice to have more children affect your career prospects?

When Asked In An Hypothetical Scenario, 32% of Women Expected Their Decision To Have Children To Have a Negative Impact on Their Career Prospects

- Again, this negative expectation was most accentuated among Western women (43%)
- Across the board, most working women were uncertain of the potential impact of their decision to have more children on their career



Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Women...

Reasons for Working

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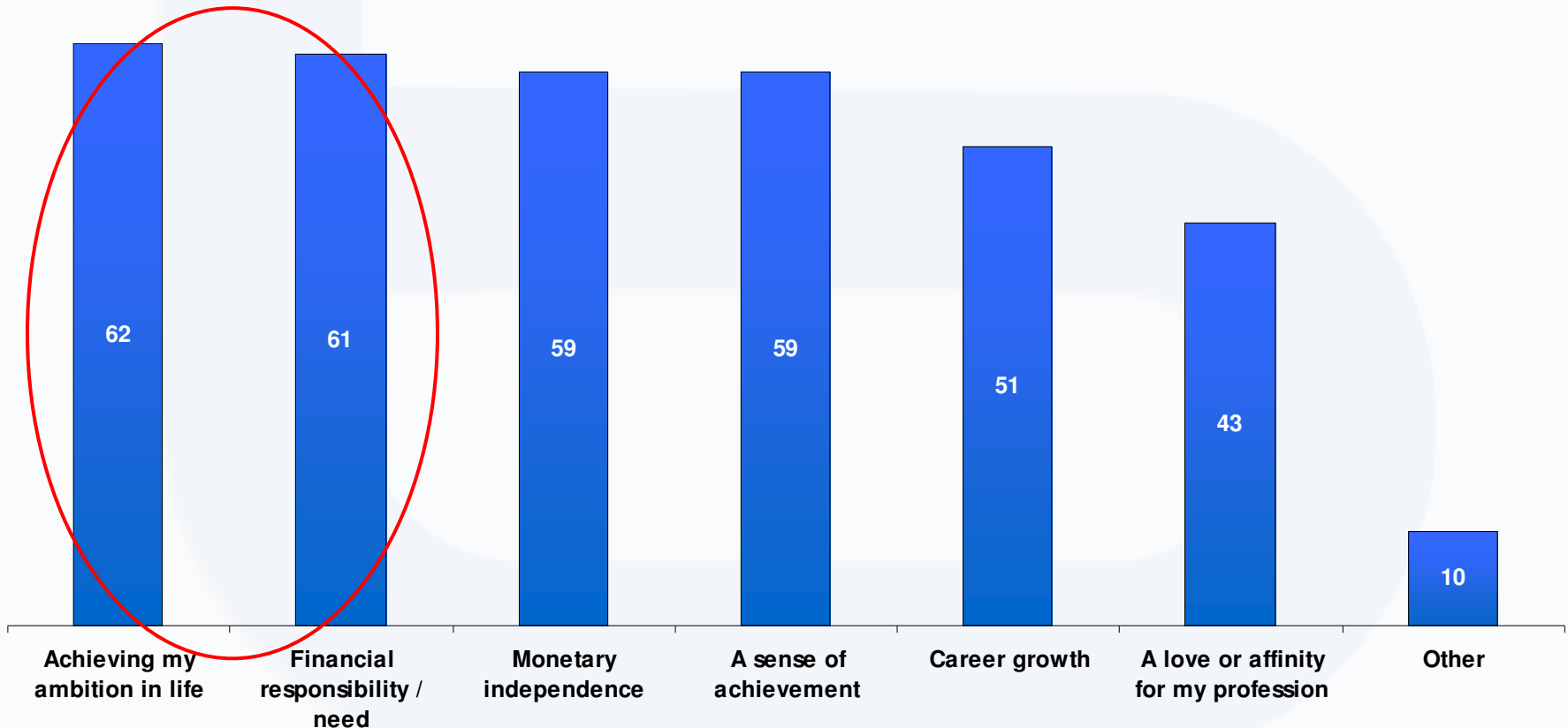
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Q. Which of the following are the main reasons for you to work?

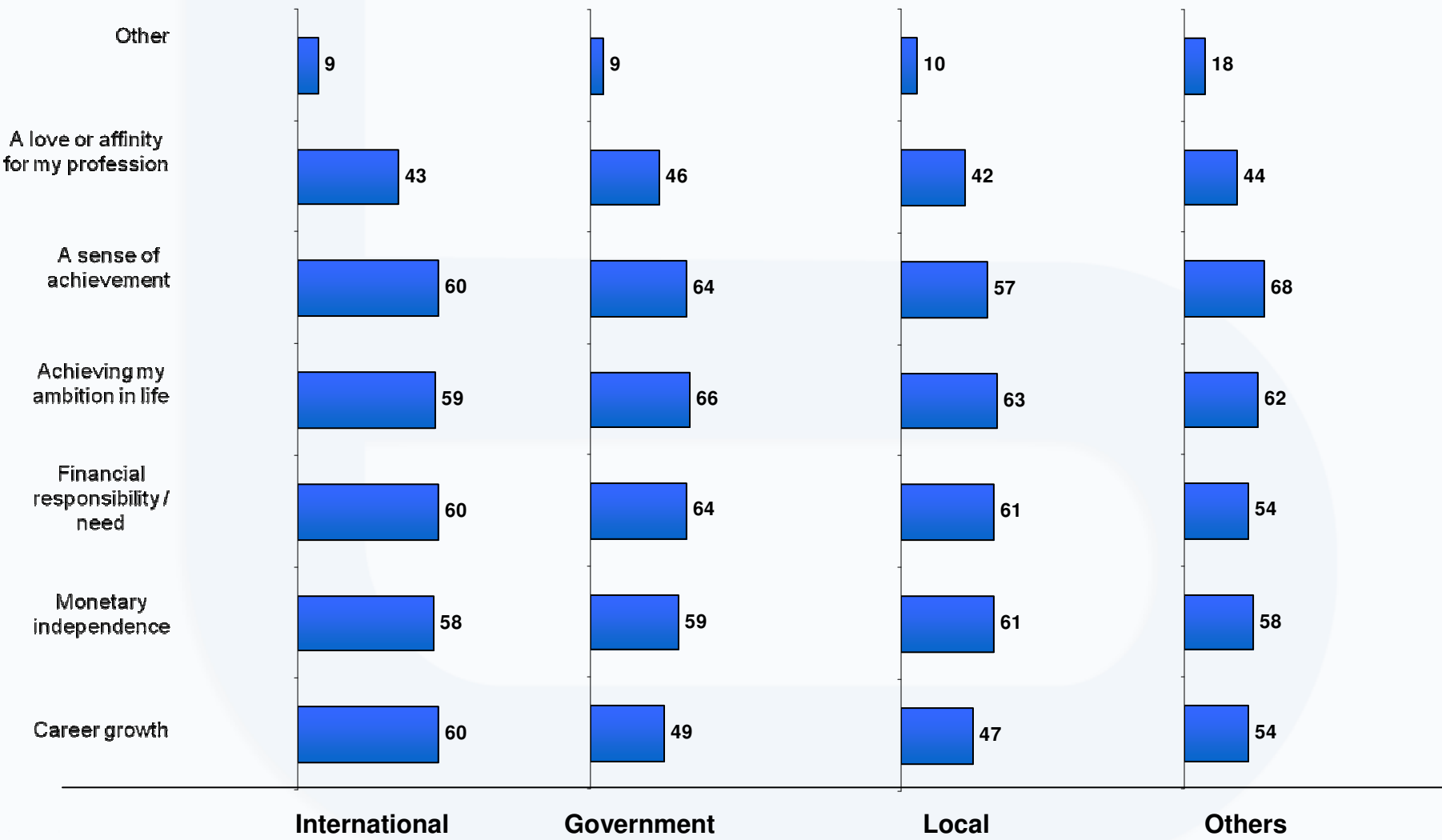
Working Women Rated 'Achieving Their Life Ambitions' and 'Financial Responsibility/Need' As The Main Reasons For Their Decision To Work

- Monetary independence and sense of achievement were also important factors



Reasons for Working - Sector

Q. Which of the following are the main reasons for you to work?



Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. Which of the following are the main reasons for you to work?

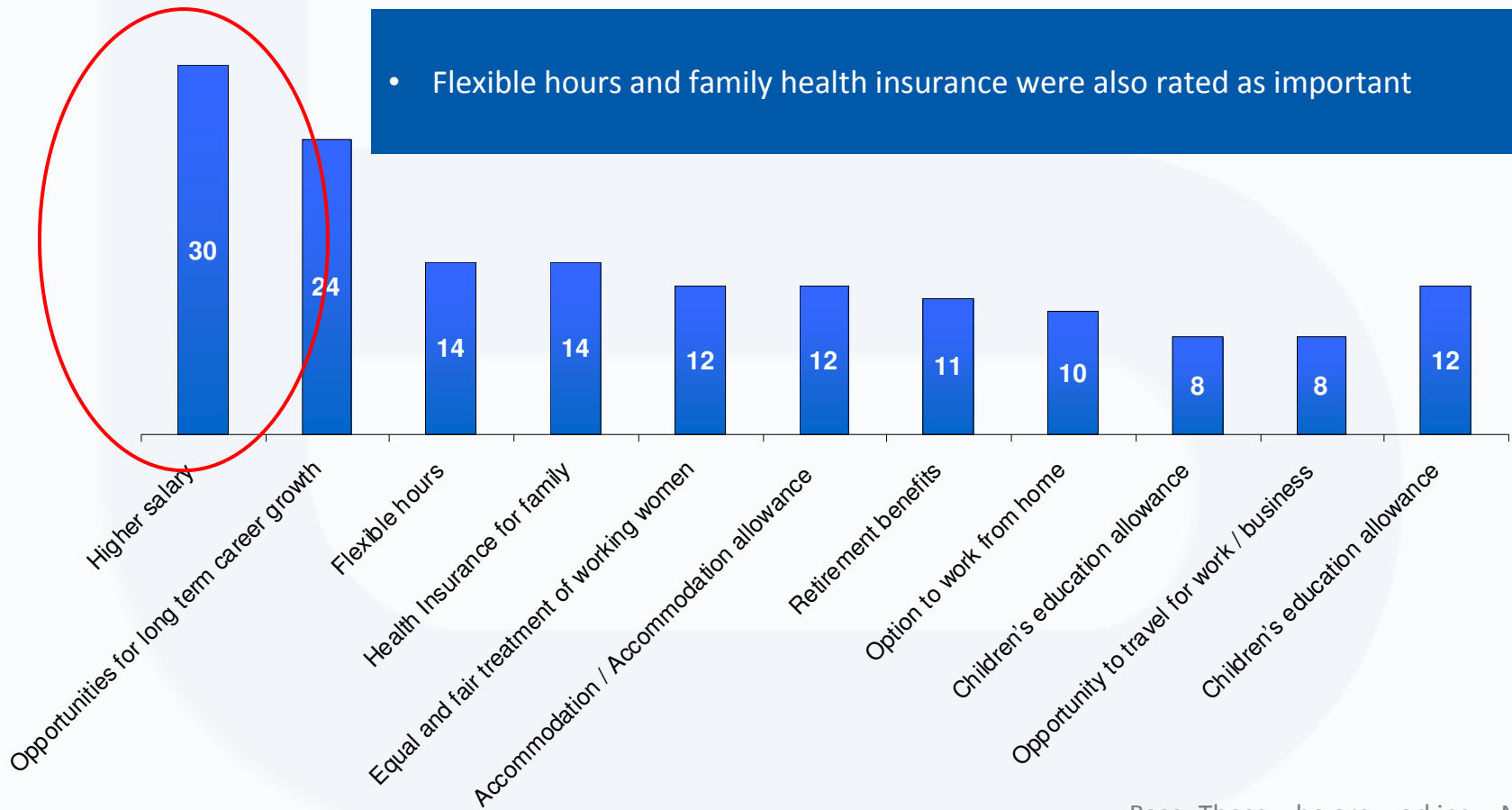
While Sense of Achievement Was Most Important Among GCC Women, Monetary Independence Was Regarded as More Crucial Among Westerners



Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. Out of the following benefits, which three would you list as being most important to you as a working woman?

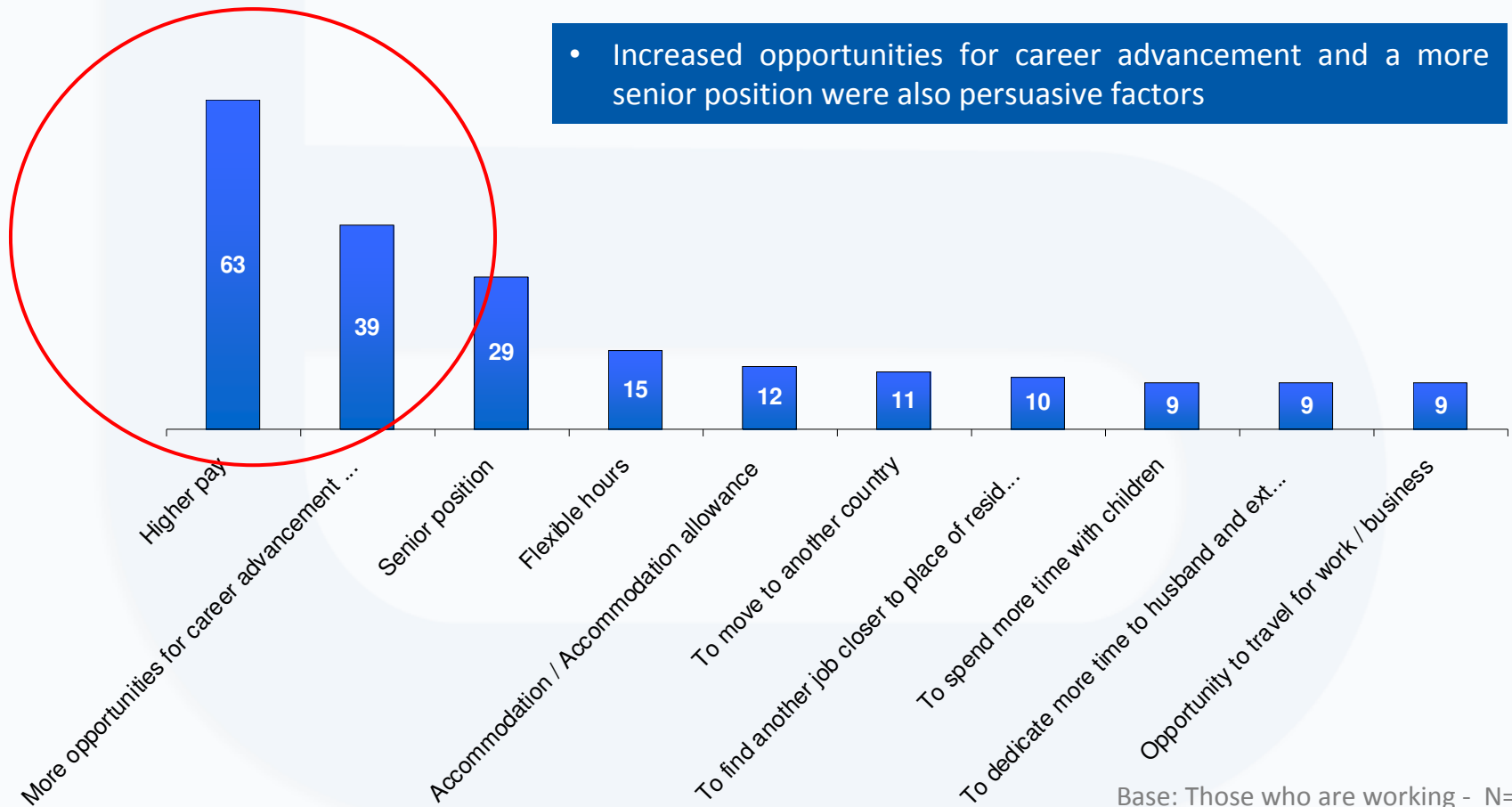
Higher Salaries and Opportunities for Long Term Career Growth Were Regarded By Working Women As The Most Important Benefits



• Flexible hours and family health insurance were also rated as important

Q. Please indicate the three most important reasons that might influence you to leave your job and accept another job at this stage?

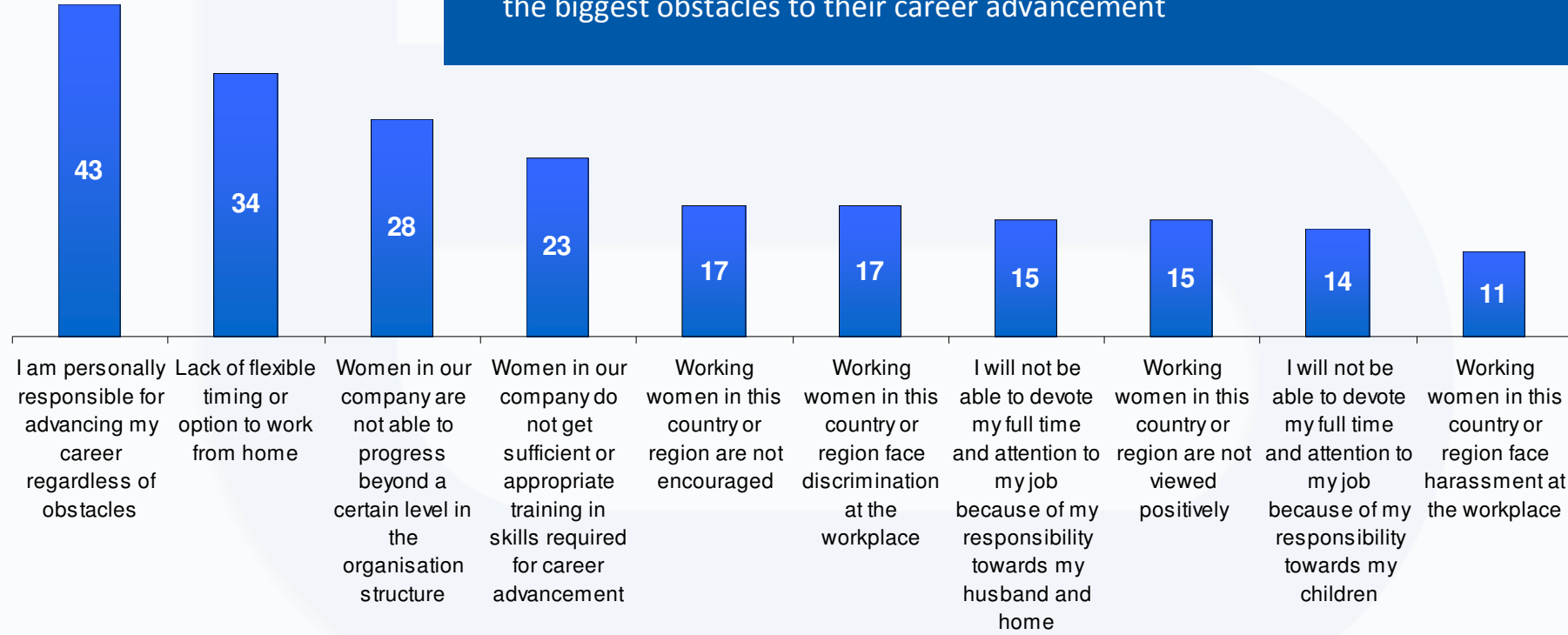
Better Pay Was Clearly The Most Important Factor Which May Influence Women To Switch Jobs



Q. Which of the following obstacles do you think you face in advancing your career?

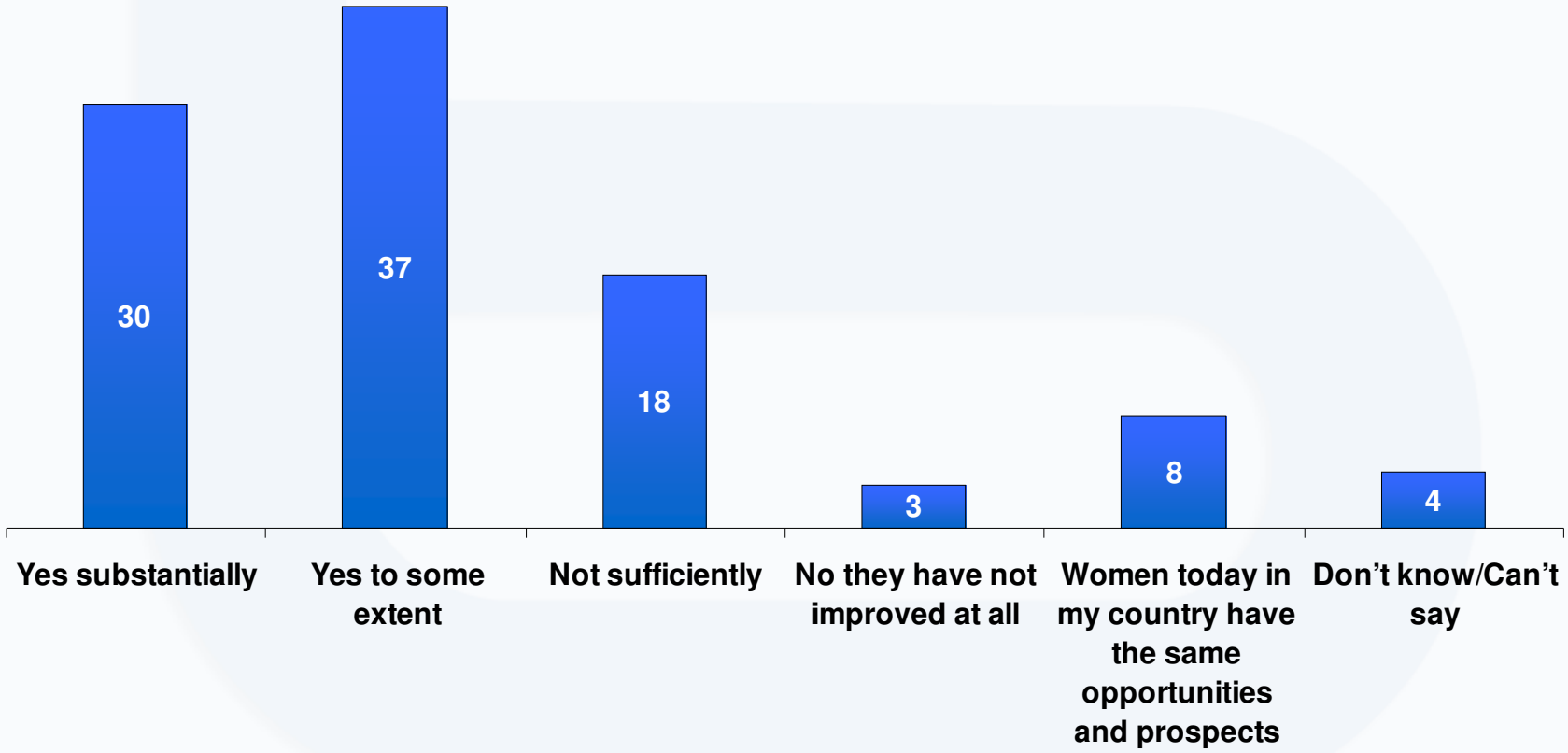
The Largest Proportion (43%) of Women Took Responsibility for Their Career Advancement, Regardless of Obstacles

- When asked, lack of flexible timing (34%) followed by inability to progress beyond a certain position (28%) and lack of proper skill training (23%) were chosen out as the biggest obstacles to their career advancement



Q. Do you believe prospects have generally improved for working women in your country of residence?

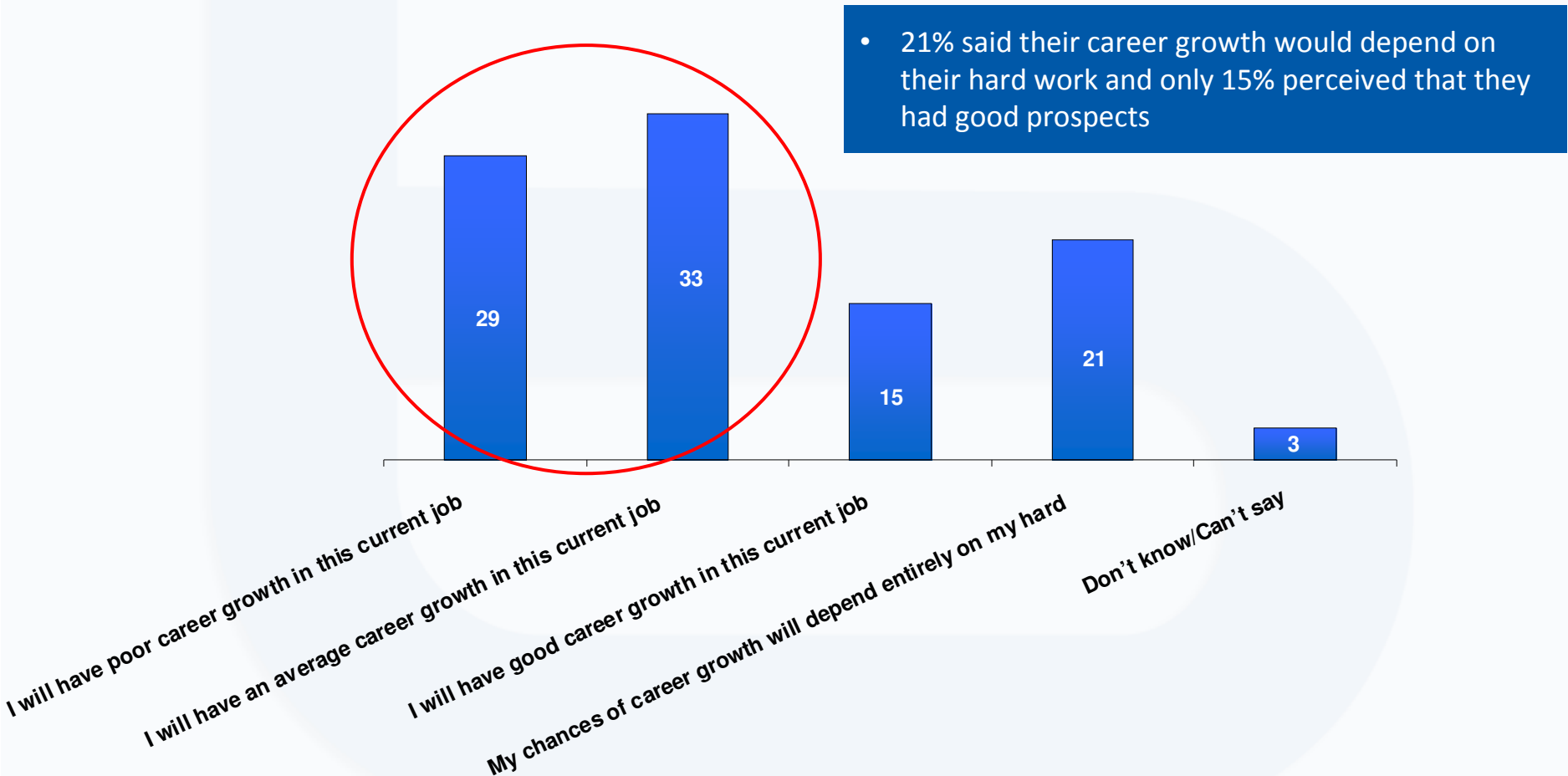
Two-Thirds of Women (67%) Felt The Prospects for Working Women In Their Country of Residence Had Generally Improved



Base: Those who are working - N=1515

Q. How optimistic are you about your future career development and growth prospects?

Most Women Were Not Particularly Optimistic Regarding Their Career Prospects, With 29% and 33% Expecting Poor and Average Growth, Respectively



Appendix

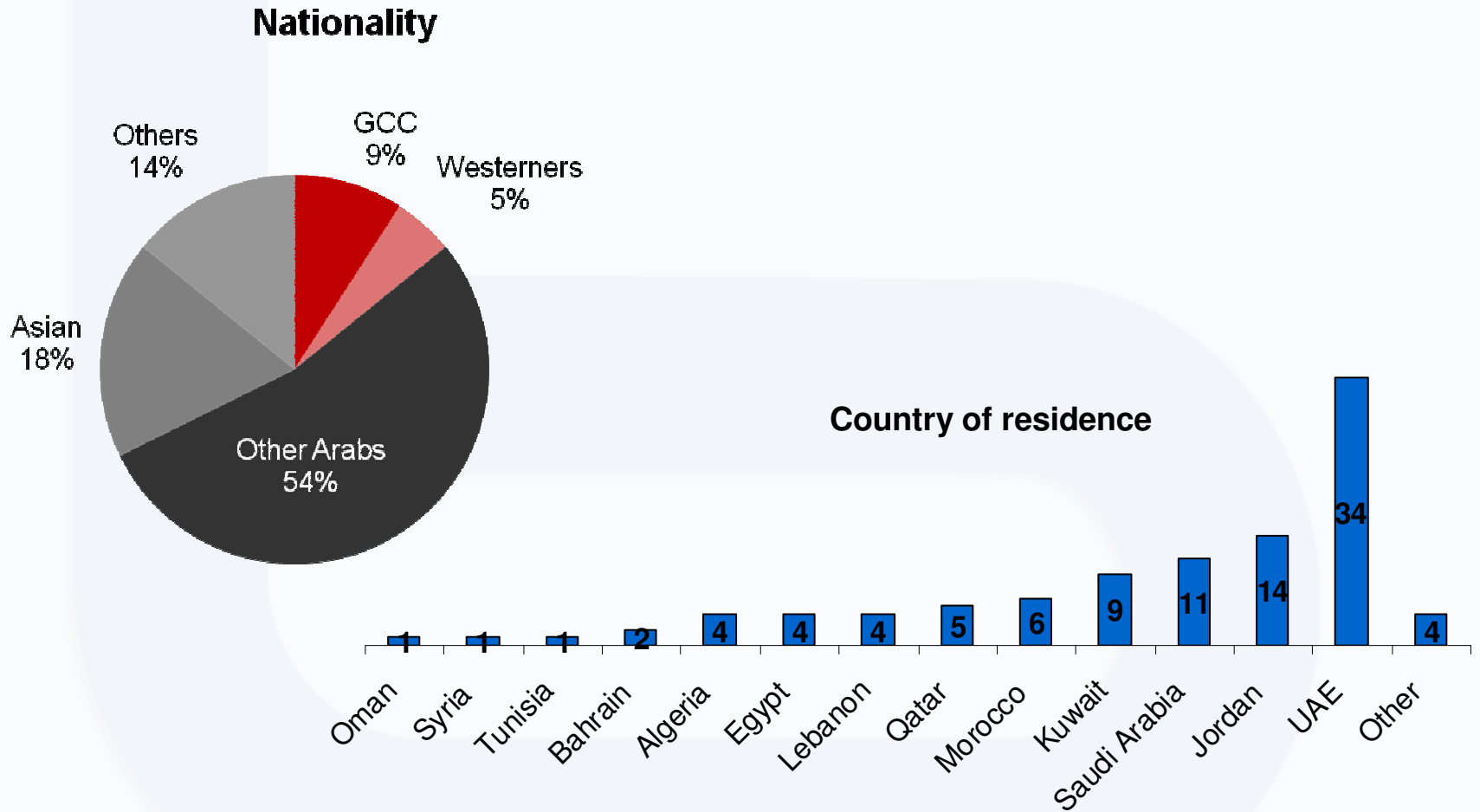
Respondents Profile...

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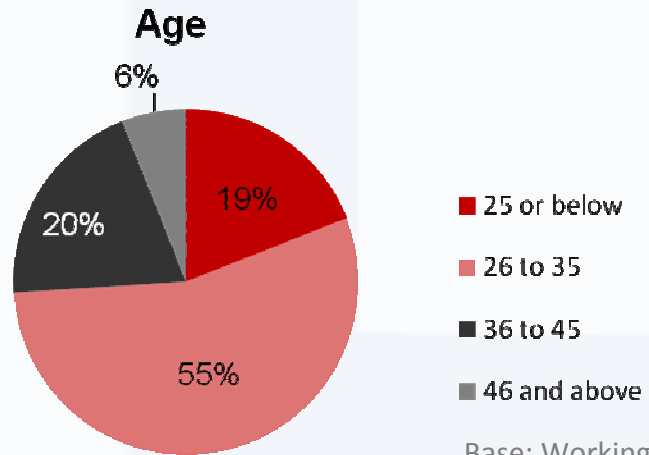
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Respondent profile – Country

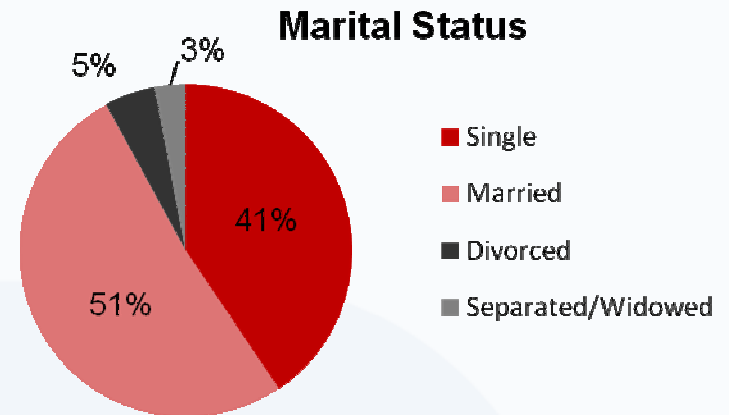


Respondent profile – Personal



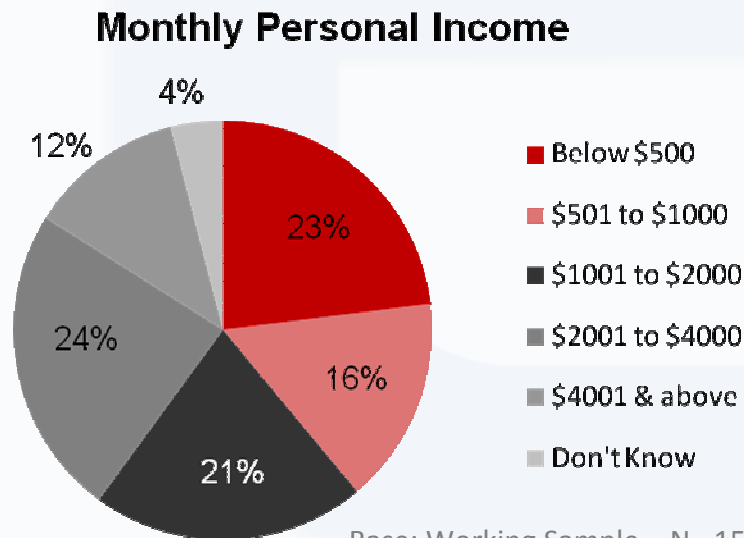
- 25 or below
- 26 to 35
- 36 to 45
- 46 and above

Base: Working Sample – N= 1515



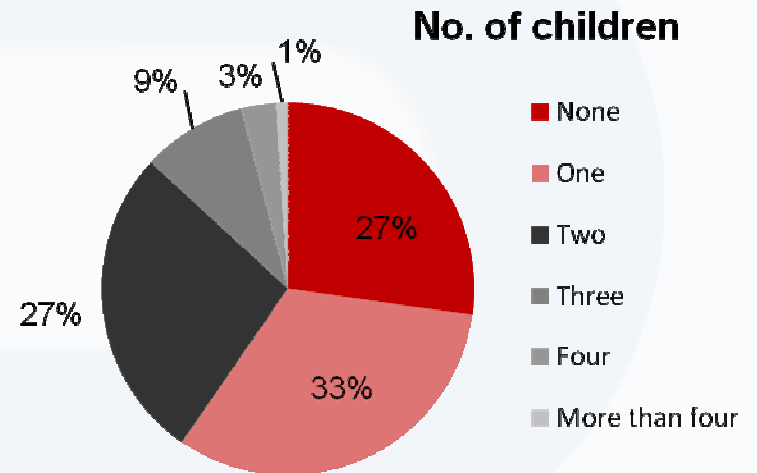
- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Separated/Widowed

Base: Working Sample – N= 1515



- Below \$500
- \$501 to \$1000
- \$1001 to \$2000
- \$2001 to \$4000
- \$4001 & above
- Don't Know

Base: Working Sample – N= 1515

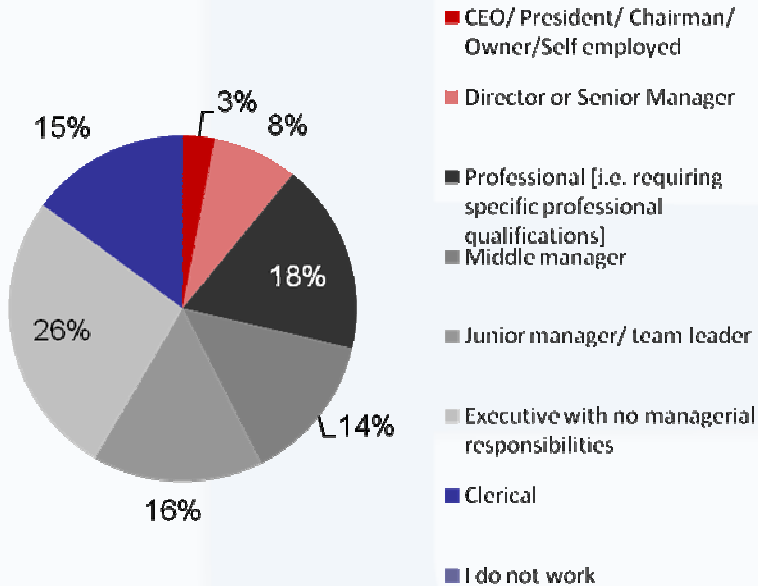


- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- More than four

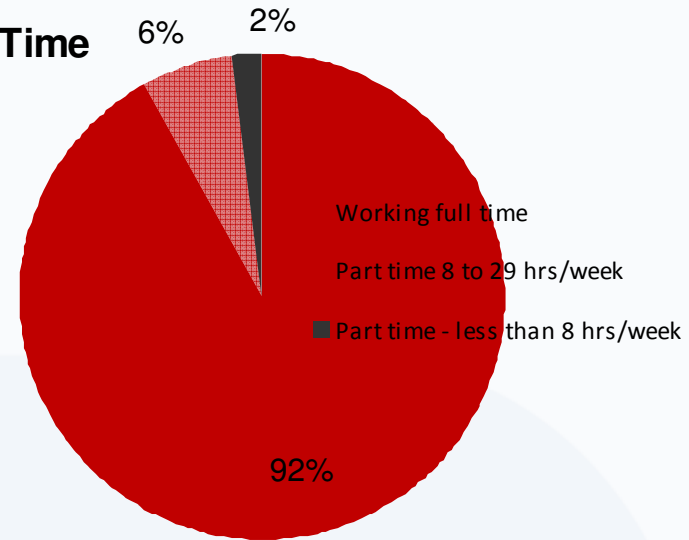
Base: Those who are married/separated/widowed – N= 901

Respondent profile - Organizational

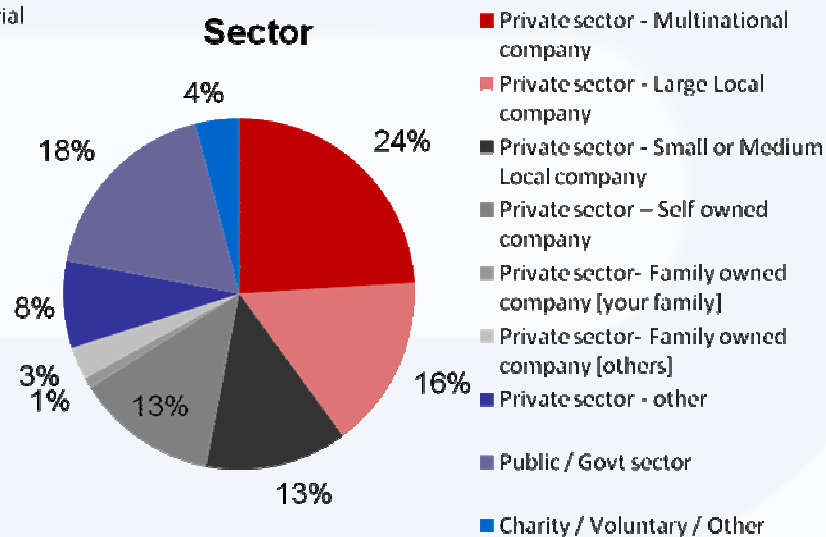
Level at work



Working Time



Sector



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