



2023 Study

**KIDS AND A CAREER.**

**CAN EVERYONE HAVE BOTH?**

**Work-family balance.  
A comparison of men and women.**

**iu**  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY OF  
APPLIED SCIENCES



# “CHILDREN AFFECT CAREERS.” – PARTICULARLY FOR WOMEN.

**MEN OR WOMEN? WHOSE CAREER TAKES A BACK SEAT WHEN CHILDREN AND FAMILY COME INTO THE PICTURE?\* THE LATEST STUDY BY IU INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES OFFERS AN INSIGHT.**



**This is the second part of the representative IU study dealing with gender equality and parity in the workplace.** The first part, “Work and career. Equal opportunities for all?” showed that similar things are important for working men and women. These included earning potential, job security and team spirit amongst colleagues.

But what happens to the careers of men and women when children come into the picture? **For women, parenthood is twice as likely to change their career goals than it is for men.**

**In addition, mothers are more than twice as likely to take parental leave than fathers.** When a woman takes parental leave, 78.3% of the time she does it alone. Since 2007, men have had the same right to parental leave as women.

Despite this, only 4.4% of women and 23.2% of men say that they shared parental leave equally with their partner.

**Inequalities and disparity can also be seen in the share of caregiving and housework:** many women say that they take on the majority of the childcare and housework. **30.2% of women even say: I do everything when it comes to caregiving.** What’s interesting is that men rate the division of care and housework as “equally shared” more often than women.

**How did these gender differences come about?** IU experts Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig and Prof. Dr Malte Martensen discuss this and more on page 14.

“Children affect careers – this is often the case. Reasons for this include parents realigning their priorities and developing new soft skills that can be brought into the workplace. Since, more often than not, women still tend to be the ones that take parental leave, they benefit from these changes the most.”



**Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig**  
Chancellor of IU International University of Applied Sciences and Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

\*Although gender requires more than a binary classification into female and male, the data currently available for such an analysis is limited. In general, the numbers are too small to allow a statistically significant breakdown by additional variables. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, gender is considered in a binary system.





# CONTENTS

## 04 **FOUR IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS.**

Kids and a career. Can everyone have both?

## 05 **CAREER GOALS VS. FAMILY.**

The impact of parenthood on work life.

## 08 **WHO CARES?**

Who looks after the children and the household.

## 15 **IS PARENTAL LEAVE JUST FOR MOTHERS?**

Share and reputation of parental leave.

## 18 **ABOUT THE STUDY.**

Facts about the study participants.

## 19 **IMPRINT**



**KIDS AND A CAREER. CAN EVERYONE HAVE BOTH?**

# FOUR IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS.

**CHILDREN ARE MORE OFTEN A REASON FOR WOMEN TO CHANGE THEIR CAREER GOALS.**

**19.4%**

of the women surveyed say that they have changed their career goals since becoming a parent.

Of the men surveyed,

**11.3%**

agree.

**FLEXIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE IS IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE.**

**95.3%**

of all those surveyed consider flexibility in work arrangements to be quite important to very important.

**CAREGIVING AND HOUSEWORK? MANY WORKING WOMEN SAY: "I DO MORE."**

**71.0%**

of working women with children at home say that they take on most, if not all, of the caregiving.

**54.4%**

of working women in a relationship say they do all or most of the household work themselves.

**WOMEN ARE FAR MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY TO TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE.**

**71.3%**

of working women with children have taken parental leave.

**28.3%**

of working men with children have taken parental leave.

Due to rounding off, there could be marginal deviations in the results.

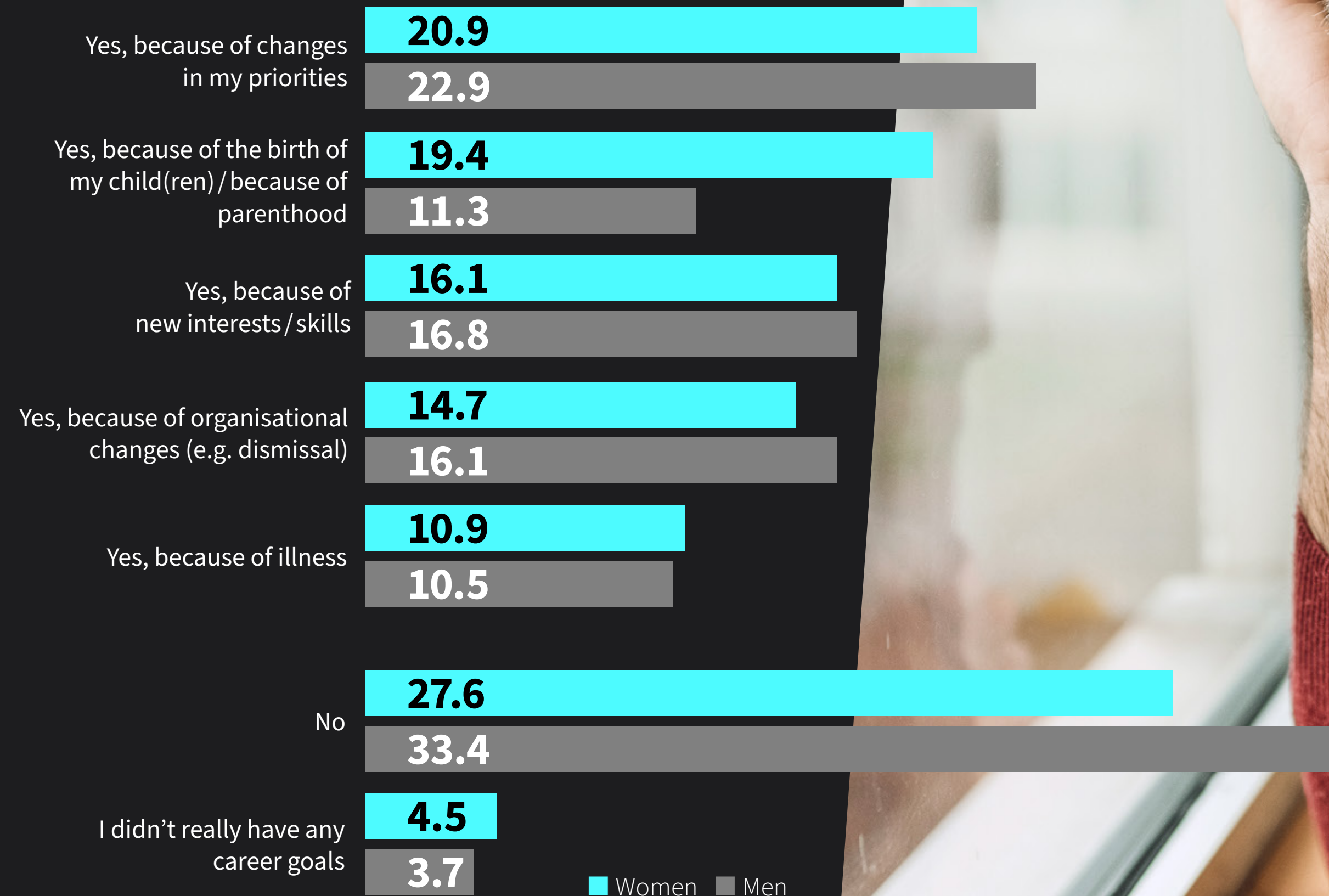


## THE IMPACT OF PARENTHOOD ON WORK LIFE.

# CAREER GOALS VS. FAMILY.

Our goals and paths tend to change during our working lives. 72.4% of the women and 66.6% of the men surveyed also experienced a turning point in their careers. **What stands out is that, for women, the birth of a child or becoming a parent is the second most common reason (19.4%) for reorienting their professional goals; men cite this reason much less frequently (11.3%).**

**Was there a point in your career when you realigned your professional goals?** In %: excerpts from survey answers



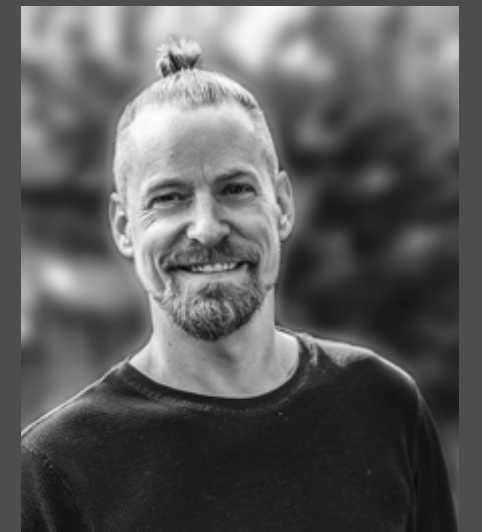


# PARENTHOOD CHANGES THINGS. NEW EMPHASIS ON TIME AND MONEY.

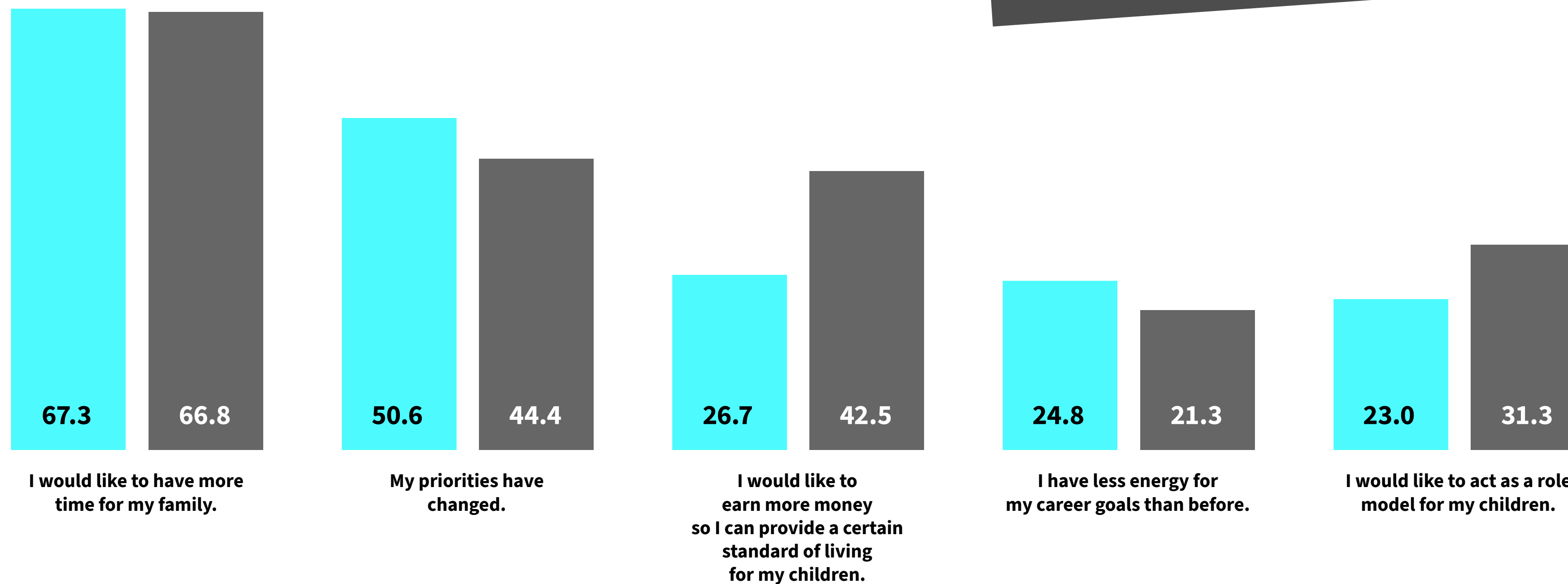
Having more time for family is the most frequently cited reason by women and men for adjusting professional goals after becoming a parent. Many also say that children and parenthood have changed their priorities.

**The biggest difference between the genders is money: for 42.5% of men, parenthood increases the importance of earnings so they can provide a certain standard of living for their children.** Only 26.7% of working women say this.

“**Parenthood often solidifies the stereotypical gender roles that didn’t even come into the equation before starting a family. Fathers want to earn more money, women rethink their career goals. Societal pressure, structures and clichés reinforce these individual tendencies and behaviours, which are still reflected in employment rates and career paths even years later.**”



**Prof. Dr Malte Martensen**  
MBA Programme Director and  
Professor of Human Resources  
Management and Organisations  
at IU International University  
of Applied Sciences



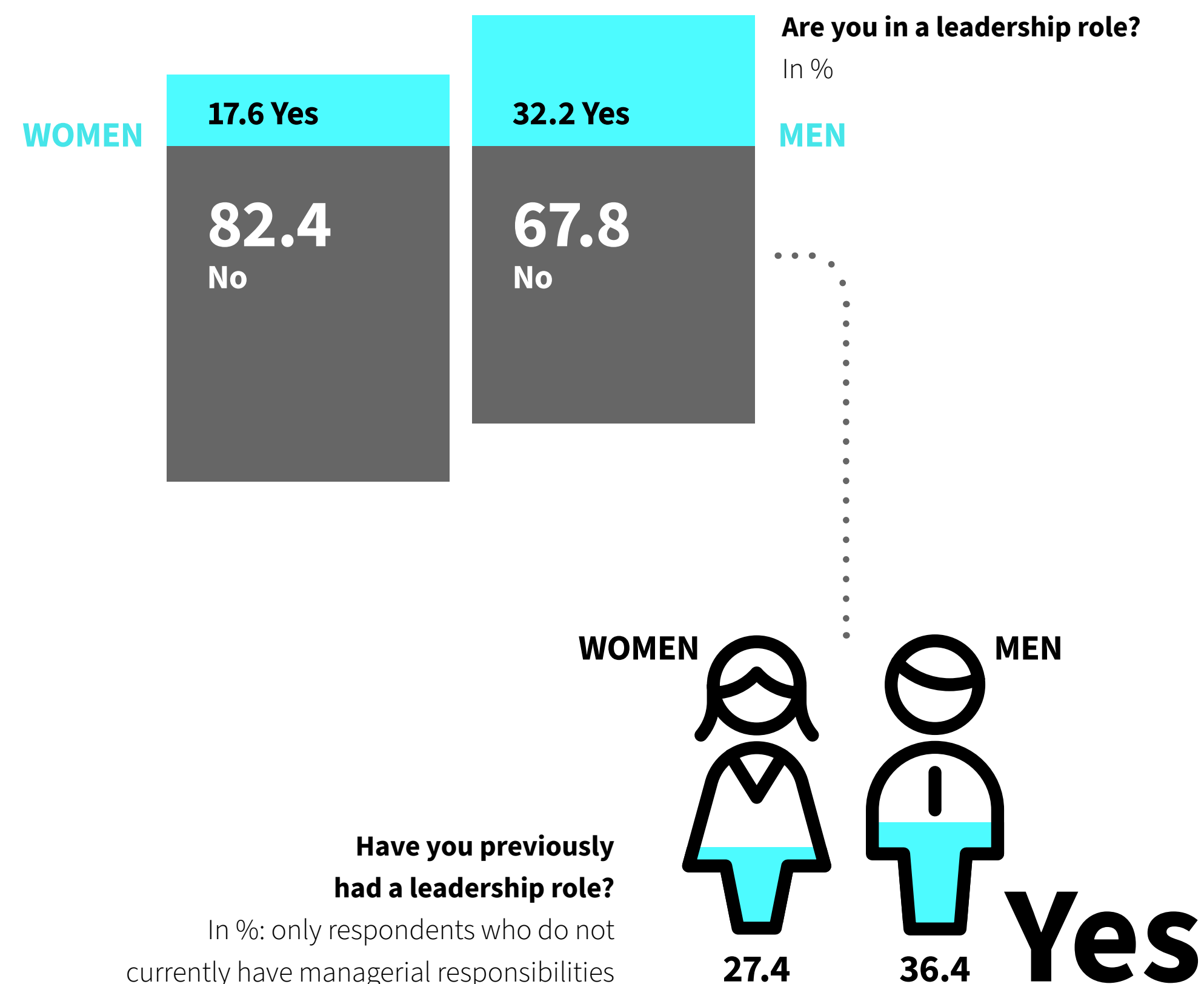
**Why have your career goals changed after becoming a parent?** In %: only respondents who changed their career goals after becoming a parent; top 5 answers

■ Women ■ Men

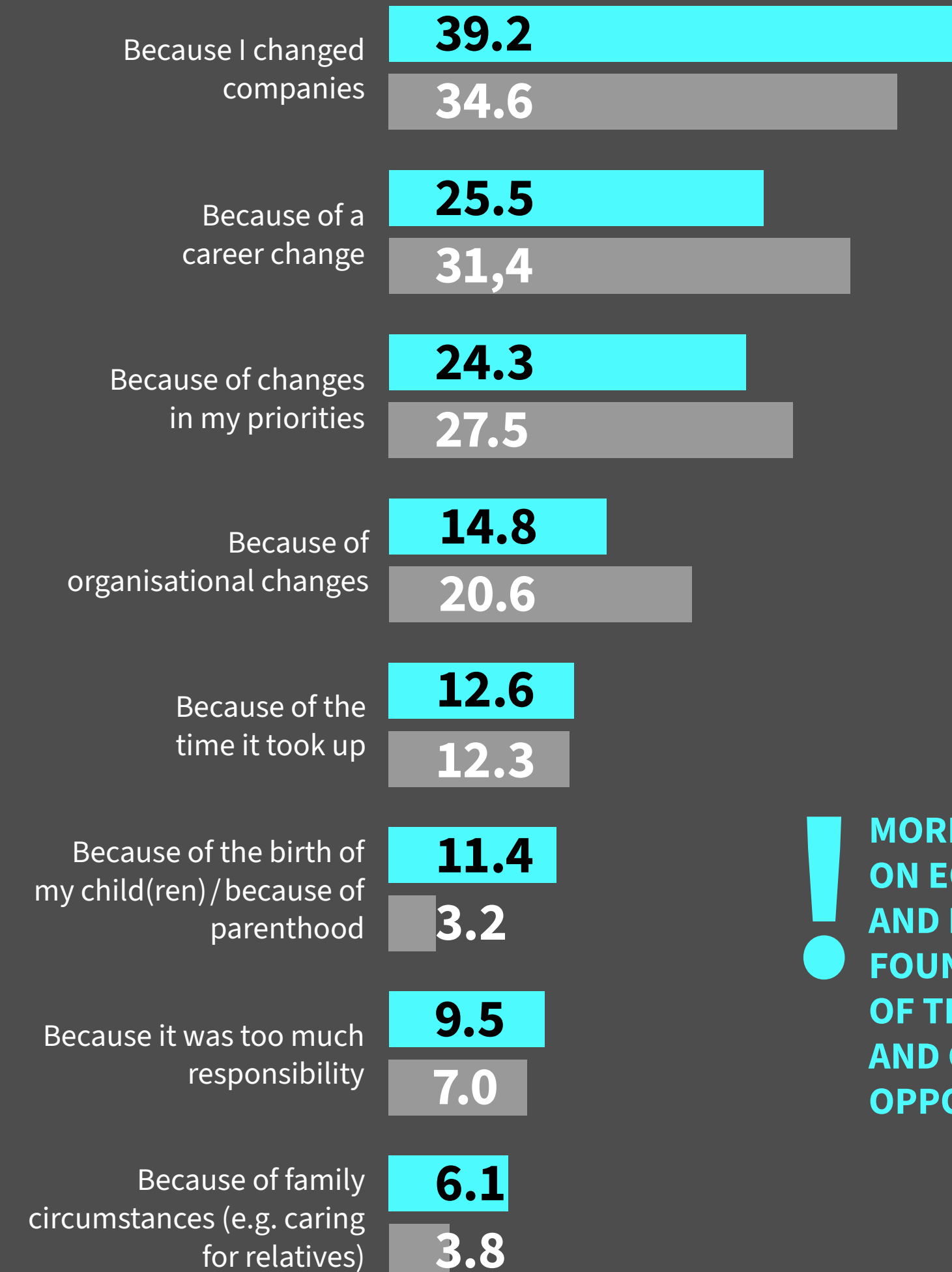


# DO KIDS INTERRUPT CAREERS? IT'S MORE LIKELY FOR WOMEN THAN MEN.

27.4% of women and 36.4% of men who do not currently have managerial responsibility have held a leadership role in the past. However, because of professional and/or private reasons this is no longer the case. **What is remarkable about this is that for 11.4% of women the birth of their child(ren) or parenthood plays a crucial role. Only 3.2% of men cited this reason.**



## NO MORE MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES – WHY? A COMPARISON OF MEN AND WOMEN



**! MORE FACTS AND FIGURES ON EQUALITY IN CAREER AND LEADERSHIP CAN BE FOUND IN THE FIRST PART OF THE IU STUDY: “WORK AND CAREER. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL?”.**

### Why do you not currently have managerial responsibilities?

In %: only respondents who do not currently have managerial responsibilities, but were in a leadership role in the past; top 8 answers

■ Women ■ Men



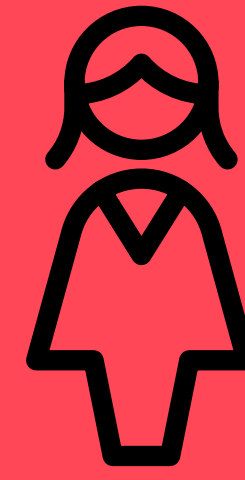
WHO LOOKS AFTER THE CHILDREN AND THE HOUSEHOLD.

## WHO CARES?



**SURVEYED MEN:**  
Flexibility in work arrangements is very important to quite important to me.

**94.9%**



**SURVEYED WOMEN:**  
Flexibility in work arrangements is very important to quite important to me.

**95.7%**

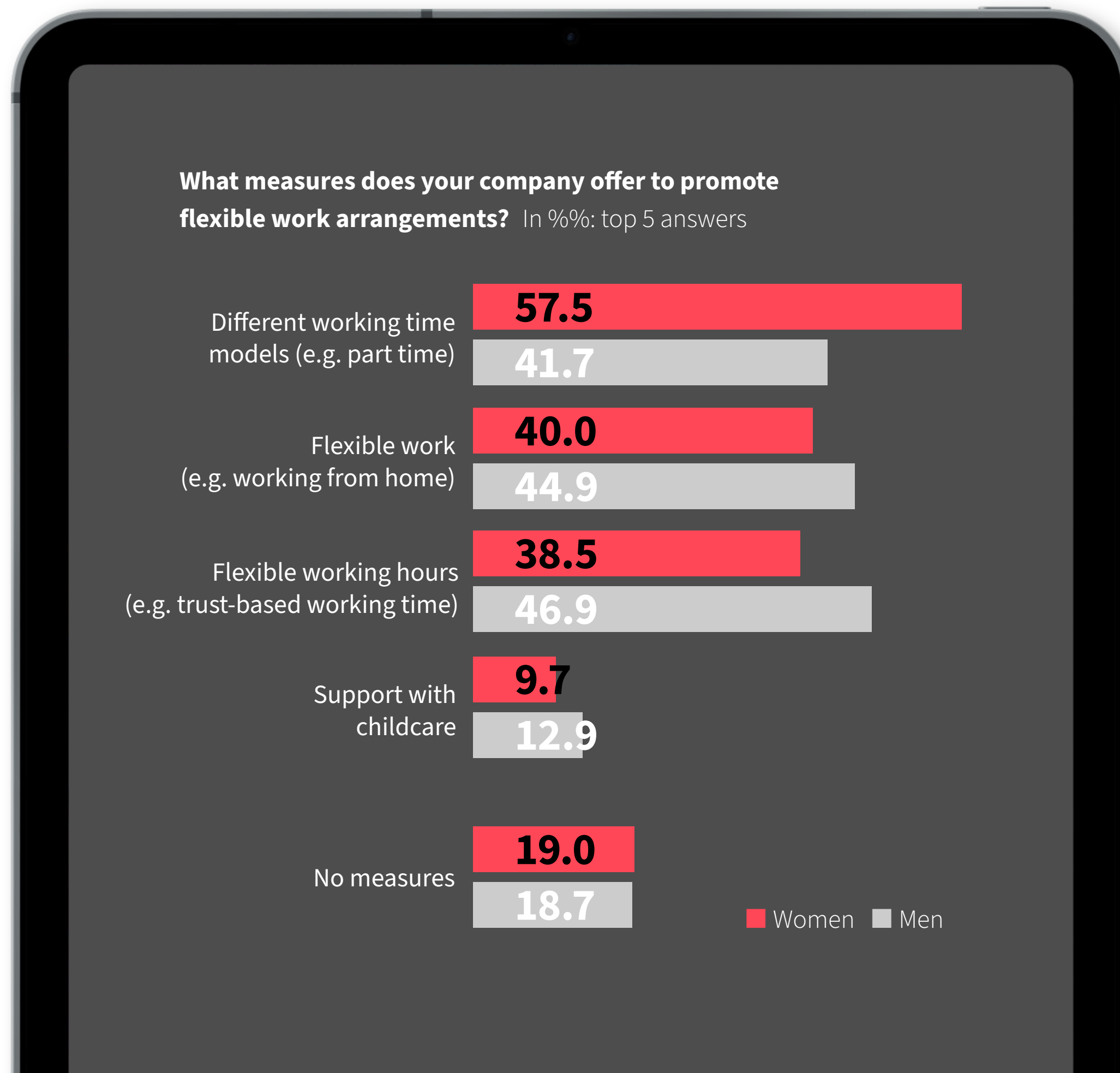
**Family, friends, leisure activities, etc. require flexibility – work too. So it is no wonder that flexibility is very important to quite important for 95.3% of all surveyed workers.** What are companies doing to be more flexible and family-friendly?

**How important is flexibility to you in terms of work arrangements?** Only respondents who answered “Very important”, “Important” and “Quite important” on scale of 1 to 6



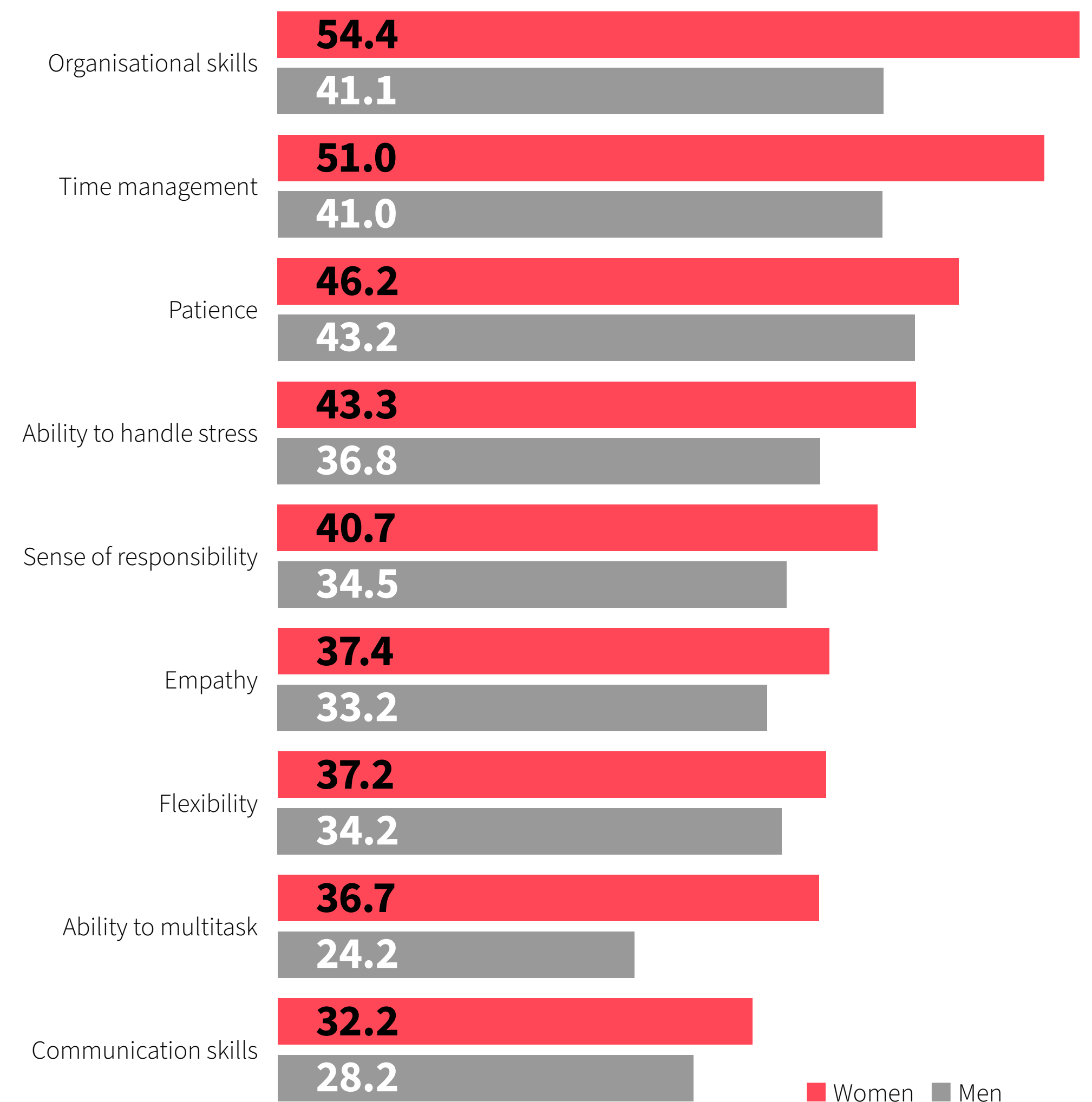
# COMPANIES OFFER FLEXIBLE WORKING. BUT CHILDCARE? PERHAPS NOT.

More than 4 out of 5 respondents say that their company offers a certain degree of flexibility with work arrangements. Women primarily mention the possibility of flexible working hour models, men most often mention flexible working hours and forms of work. **Support with childcare is available to only 9.7% of female and 12.9% of male employees.**



# SIDE NOTE: HOW COMPANIES BENEFIT FROM WORKING PARENTS.

**To what extent do you think working parents can bring their parenting skills into everyday work?** In %: top 9 answers





# “WOMEN OFTEN RATE THE SKILLS GAINED THROUGH PARENTHOOD...”

... more highly and ascribe them more value but, ultimately, these skills can only be used effectively if there is enough time for work and career in addition to family obligations.”

**Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig**

Chancellor of IU International University of Applied Sciences  
and Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship





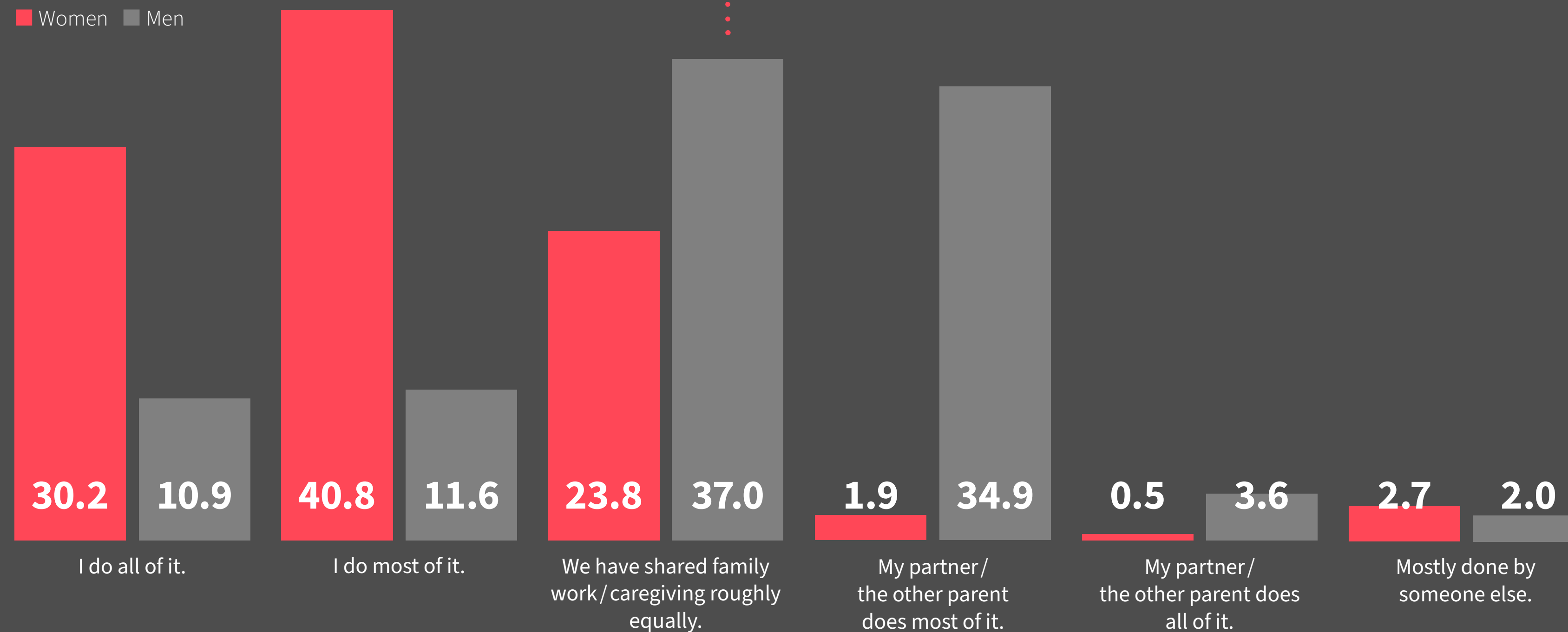
## MANY WOMEN SAY: “CAREGIVING? I DO MOST OF IT.”

71% of the women surveyed stated that they take on most, if not all, of the caregiving. More than a third fewer men say this at 22.5%. For 23.8% of women and 37% of men, caregiving is shared equally with their partner.

In comparison: 38.5% of men say their partner does most or all of the caring for their family.

How do you share the family work/caregiving (e.g. childcare) with your partner or your child(ren)’s other parent? In %: only respondents who have children or where children live in their household

■ Women ■ Men



**GENDER DIFFERENCE:  
SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER WOMEN  
THAN MEN FEEL THAT CARING  
FOR THE FAMILY IS SHARED  
“EQUALLY”.**



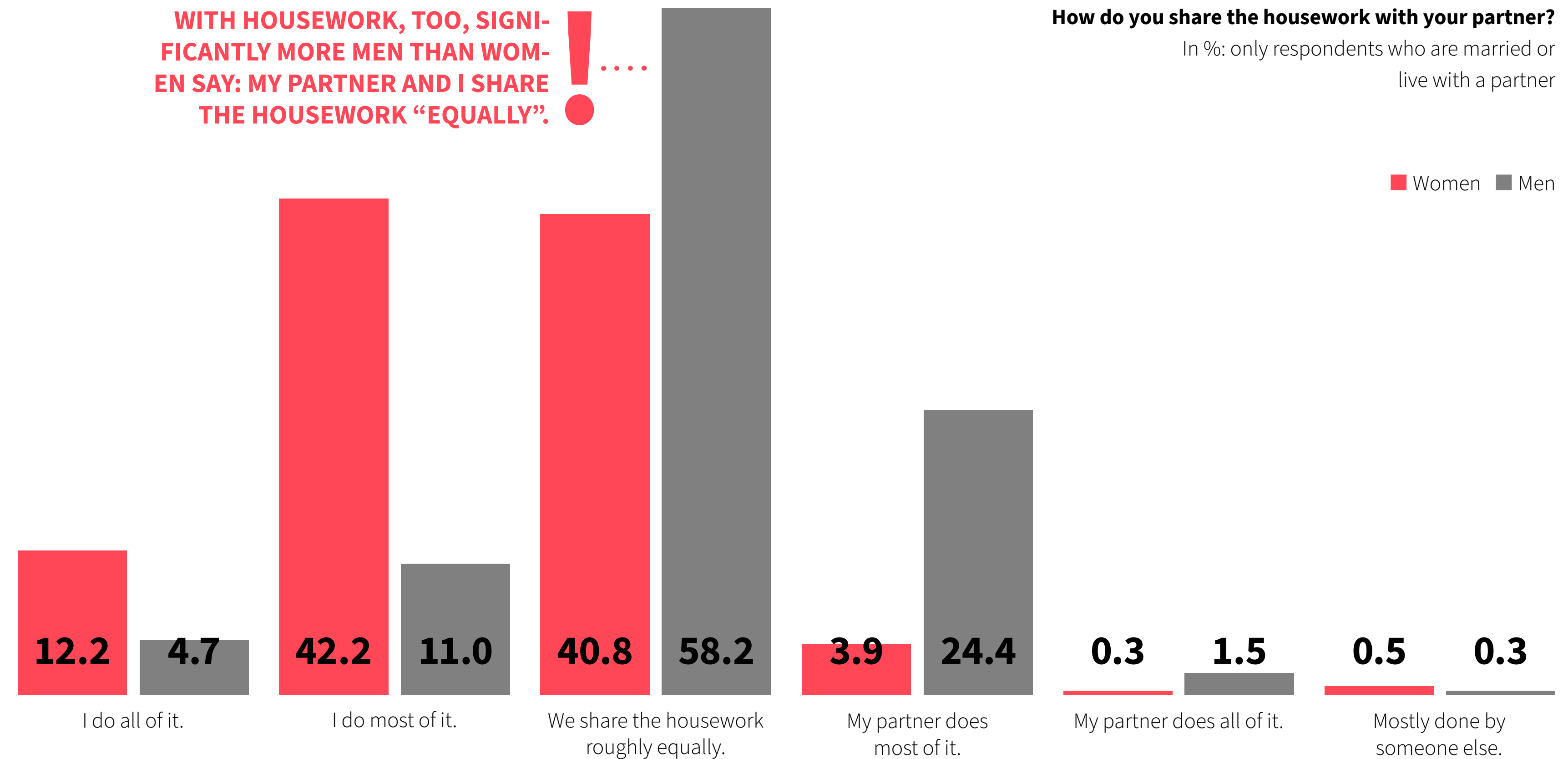


## AND THE HOUSEWORK? “I DO THAT TOO”, SAY WOMEN.

Female respondents who are married or in a relationship say they do 54.4% of the housework themselves or mostly by themselves. Only 15.7% of men say this.

40.8% of women and 58.2% of men say that they share housework equally with their partner.

WITH HOUSEWORK, TOO, SIGNIFICANTLY MORE MEN THAN WOMEN SAY: MY PARTNER AND I SHARE THE HOUSEWORK “EQUALLY”.



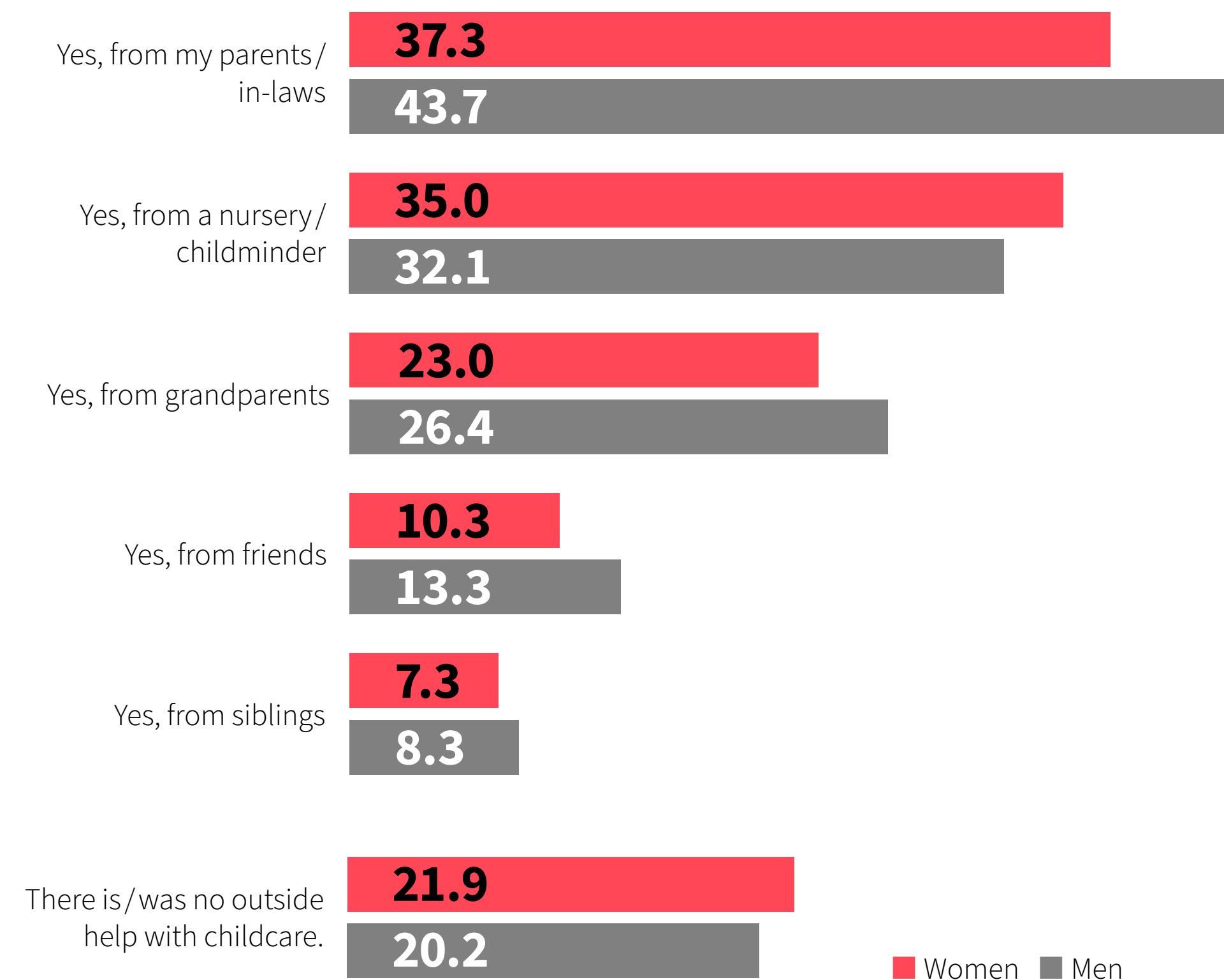


# CHILDCARE. HELP OR NO HELP?

**Just over 20% of men and women with children say they look after or have looked after their children without any help.**

Where help is available, it is mainly from parents or in-laws and/or from a nursery or childminder.

**Did you or do you and your partner receive any outside help with childcare?** In %: only respondents who have children; top 6 answers



**Although some parents consciously choose to care for their children themselves and not send them to nursery, the limited choice of childcare options is still an obstacle to equal opportunities and particularly hinders working parents in developing their full potential.”**



**Prof. Dr. Alexandra Wuttig**  
Chancellor of IU International University of Applied Sciences  
and Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship



# IS THIS FAIR?

**Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig and Prof. Dr Malte Martensen discuss the results of the IU study and ask: what does equality look like in reality – and how can it be achieved?**

**Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig**  
Chancellor of IU International University of Applied Sciences and Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship



**Prof. Dr Malte Martensen**  
MBA Programme Director and Professor of Human Resources Management and Organisations at IU International University of Applied Sciences

**Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig:** Let's discuss the compatibility of children and careers and how equal rights can be achieved in Germany. One point that I'd like to bring up is about parity in parental leave. Even though they are legally able to, men still rarely take parental leave. Companies are also responsible for this and should provide incentives. One idea would be for women and men to have a higher chance of being promoted if they take parental leave.

**Prof. Dr Malte Martensen:** Additionally, we should also look at political policies such as those implemented in countries like Sweden. There, one in two fathers takes parental leave, although often for shorter periods than mothers. Politicians support this through tax and monetary incentives. However, there is still more to be done to promote equal partnerships. Alternative civil partnerships such as the civil solidarity pact in France can also contribute to equality.

**Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig:** Absolutely! And we should empower women financially, too. More education about financial independence and the importance of part-time work is needed. At the same time, I think the idea of a gender equality ministry, like the one that exists in Norway, is promising. "Equality is happiness", and it is in the interest of all genders to promote more freedom and equality. A political department that examines the impact of laws on equality and makes recommendations could also be effective.

**Prof. Dr Malte Martensen:** These are good suggestions. It is up to politicians, businesses and society as a whole to create structures that enable individual lifestyles. Childcare services play a crucial role here. The fact that there are still far too few options primarily disadvantages women. So, we have to invest massively in the training of educational staff and in the expansion of childcare facilities.

**Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig:** That's right, and we have to overcome the mindset of distinguishing between paid work and caregiving. The latter is often under-appreciated, despite having enormous societal value. We need to bring about cultural change and push for actual family-friendly workplaces. The software company SAP is setting a good example by giving fathers six weeks of paid leave after the birth of a child. You can see that German companies can also play a pioneering role here. And, of course, managers play a key role and must act as role models.

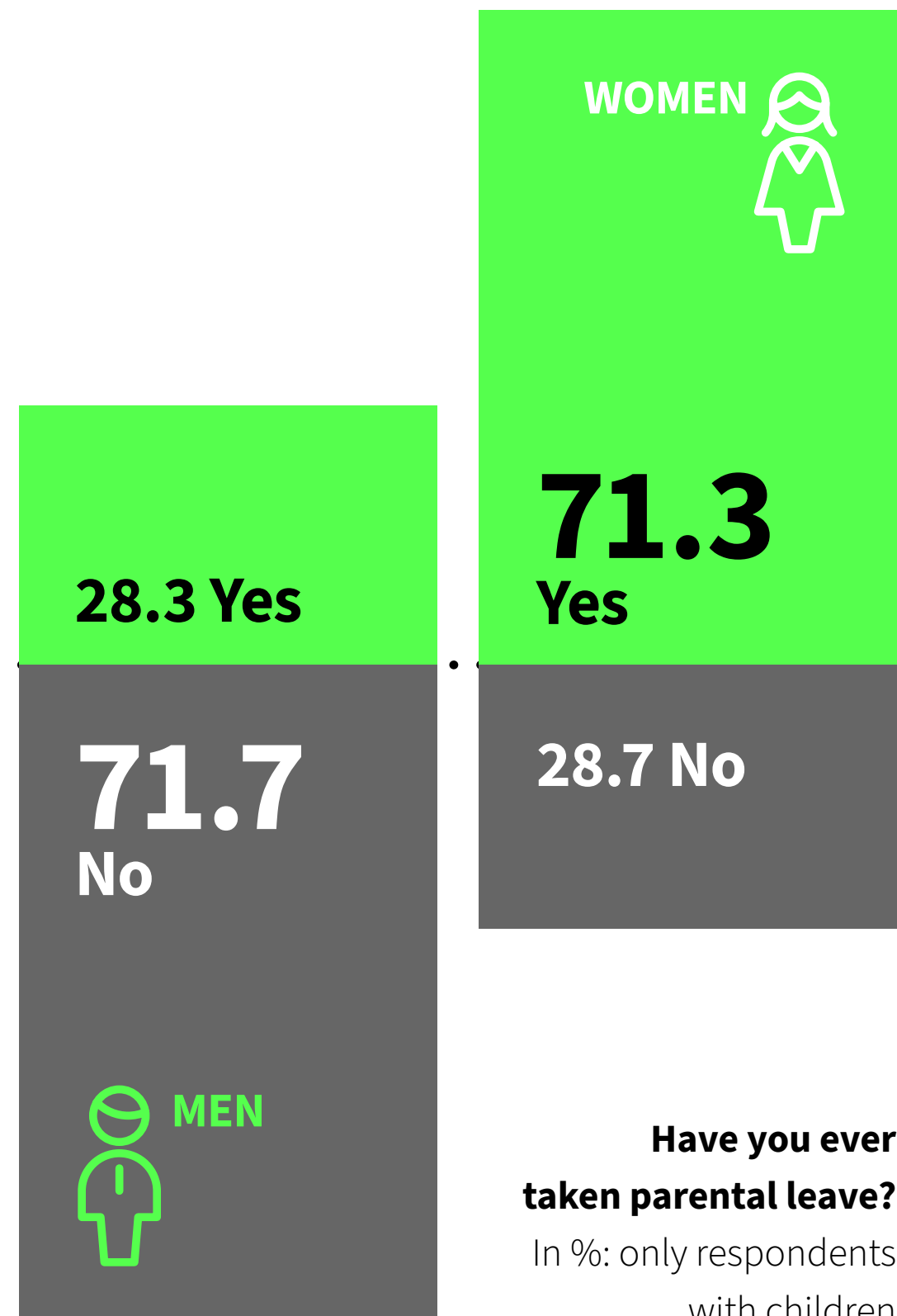
**Prof. Dr Malte Martensen:** Definitely. Being able to balance children and a career is a goal that is important to all of us. Finally, an appeal at an individual level: men need to get more involved. Women should stand up for their rights. And children should be allowed to continue to be children without their needs being neglected in our society. After all, they are the most important investment in the future of our society.



SHARE AND REPUTATION OF PARENTAL LEAVE.

# IS PARENTAL LEAVE JUST FOR MOTHERS?

Women are more than twice as likely to take parental leave than men: 71.3% of women vs. 28.3% of men with a child /with children have taken parental leave at least once.



Have you ever taken parental leave?  
In %: only respondents with children







Yes, money is a factor, but there's a lot more to it, too. In particular, there is no justification for the glaring gap in the provision of childcare, which is almost always made up for by women. But it is also true that both mothers and fathers should have more confidence in themselves and stand up for their rights and those of their children. This is the only way to change corporate culture and social structures in favour of actual family-friendly workplaces.”

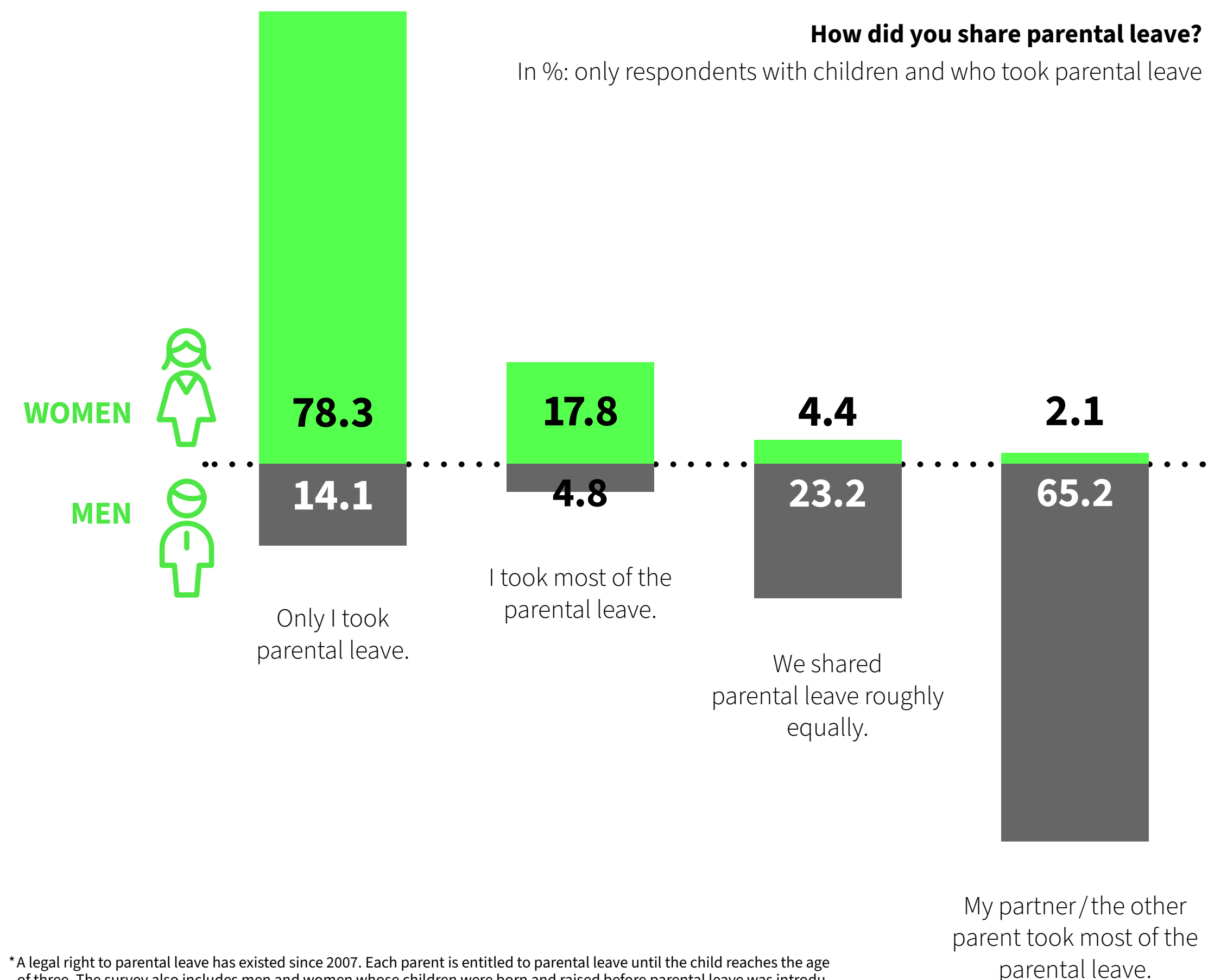


**Prof. Dr. Malte Martensen**

MBA Programme Director and Professor  
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## PARENTAL LEAVE: MOSTLY A WOMAN'S THING IN GERMANY.

Each parent is entitled to up to 36 months of parental leave per child, and the parental leave can be shared between the parents, used one after the other or in parallel. \*  
**However, the IU study shows that 96.1% of women and only 18.9% of men were either the only ones to take parental leave or the ones to take the majority of it.**

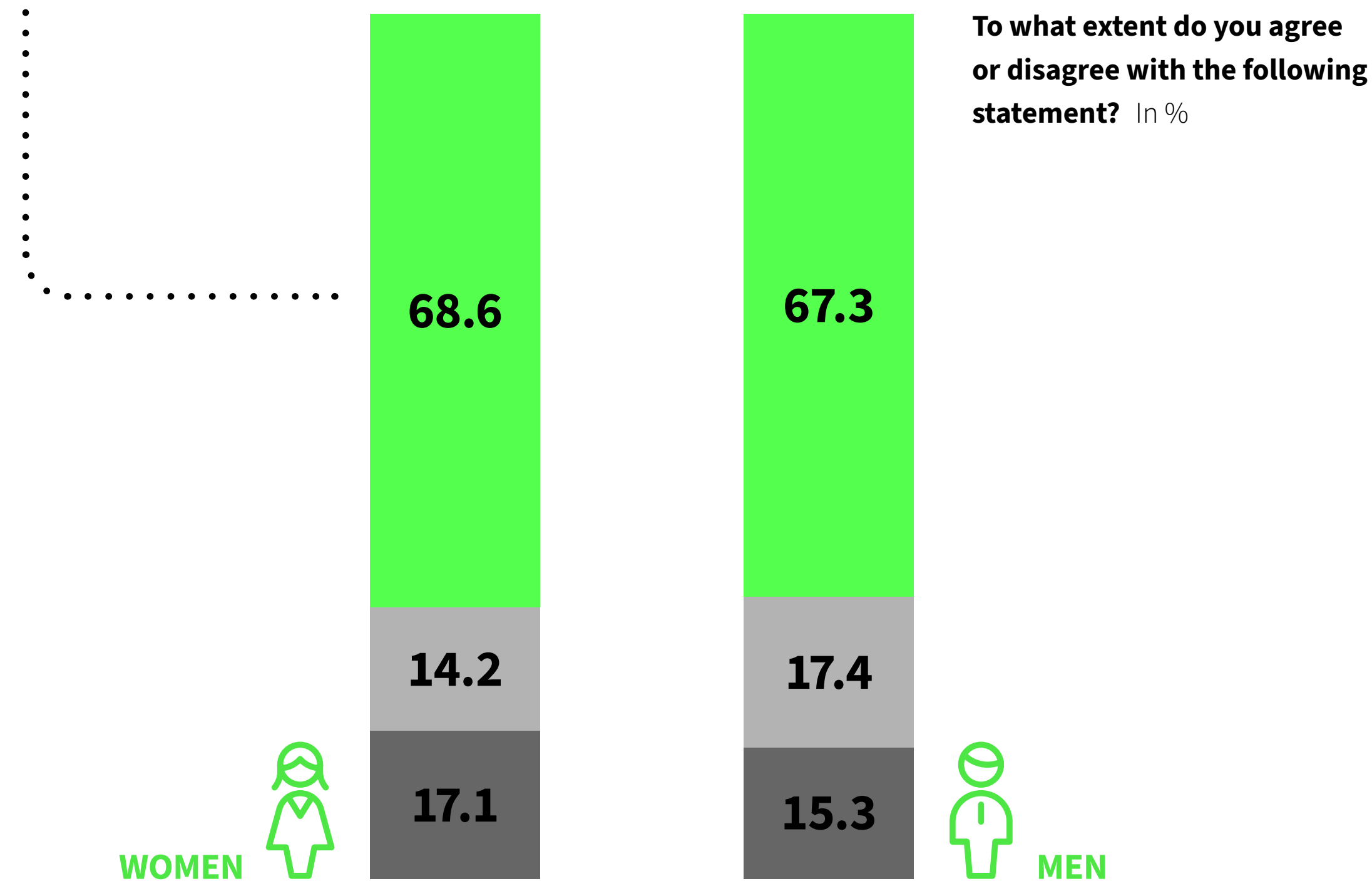


\*A legal right to parental leave has existed since 2007. Each parent is entitled to parental leave until the child reaches the age of three. The survey also includes men and women whose children were born and raised before parental leave was introduced. Instead, the German child-rearing allowance/child-rearing period applied to them.



# PARENTAL LEAVE IS (LARGELY) SUPPORTED BY COMPANIES.

“TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE IS WELL REGARDED AND SUPPORTED IN MY COMPANY.”

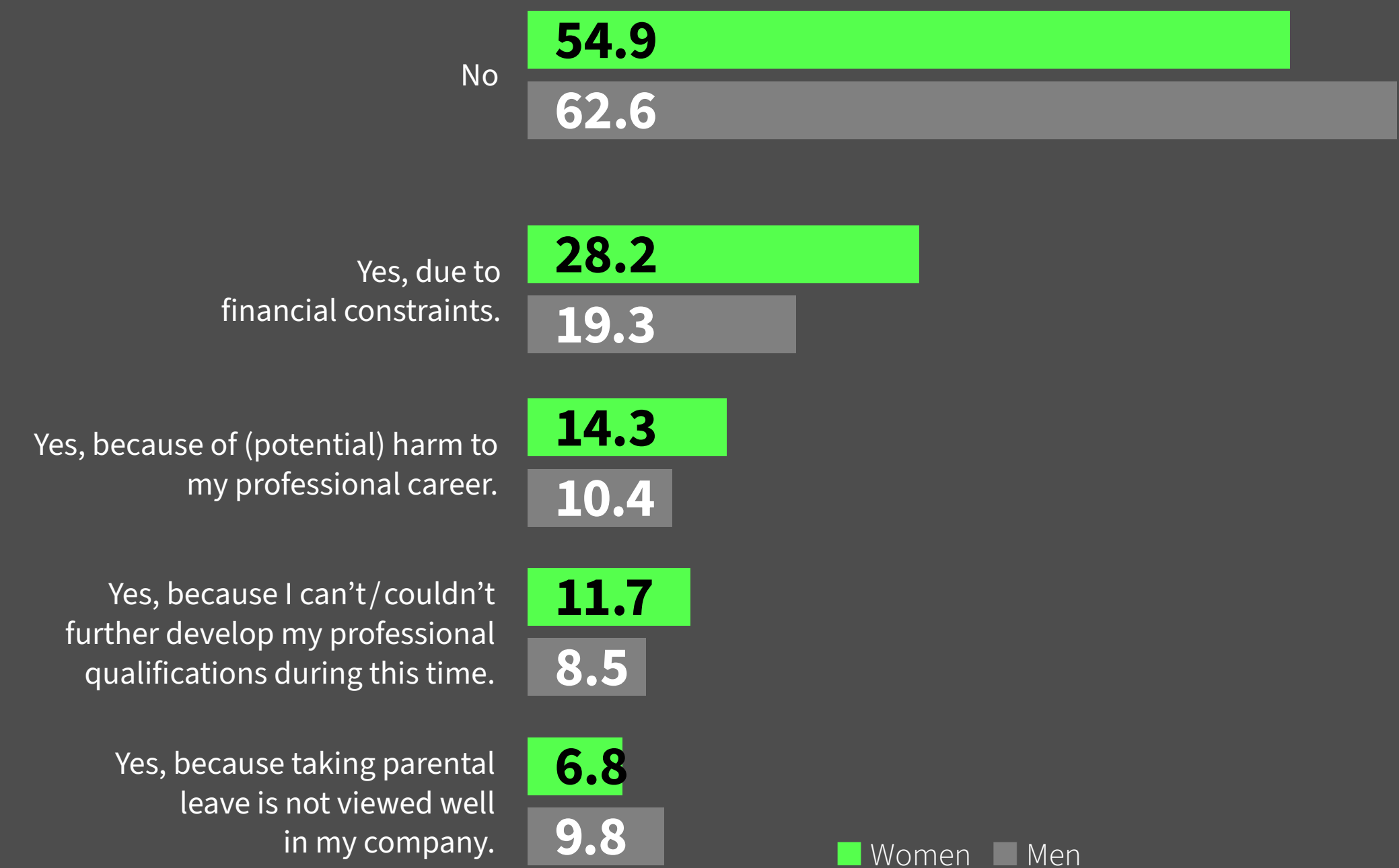


■ Completely agree/Agree/Tend to agree  
■ Tend to disagree/Disagree/Strongly disagree  
■ I cannot judge

# IS PARENTAL LEAVE DISADVANTAGEOUS? OPINIONS ARE DIVIDED.

Most men and women say that parental leave was not or cannot be considered disadvantageous for them. However, 37.4% of men and 45.1% of women think the opposite, suspecting that parental leave could have a negative impact on money and their career.

Do you think that taking parental leave was or could be disadvantageous for you? In %: top 5 answers

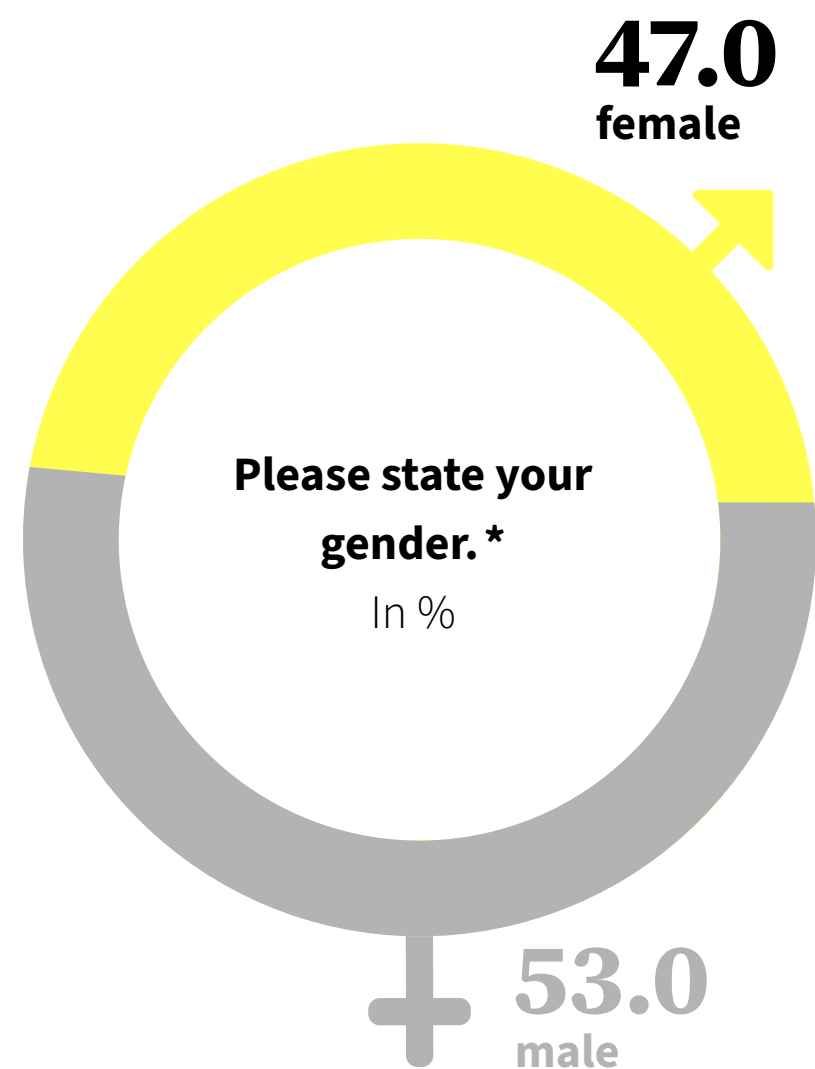


**FOR 46.7% OF MEN AND 25.2% OF WOMEN WHO SUSPECT THAT PARENTAL LEAVE WILL HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT, THIS WOULD BE A REASON NOT TO TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE.**



**FACTS ABOUT THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS.**

**ABOUT THE STUDY.**

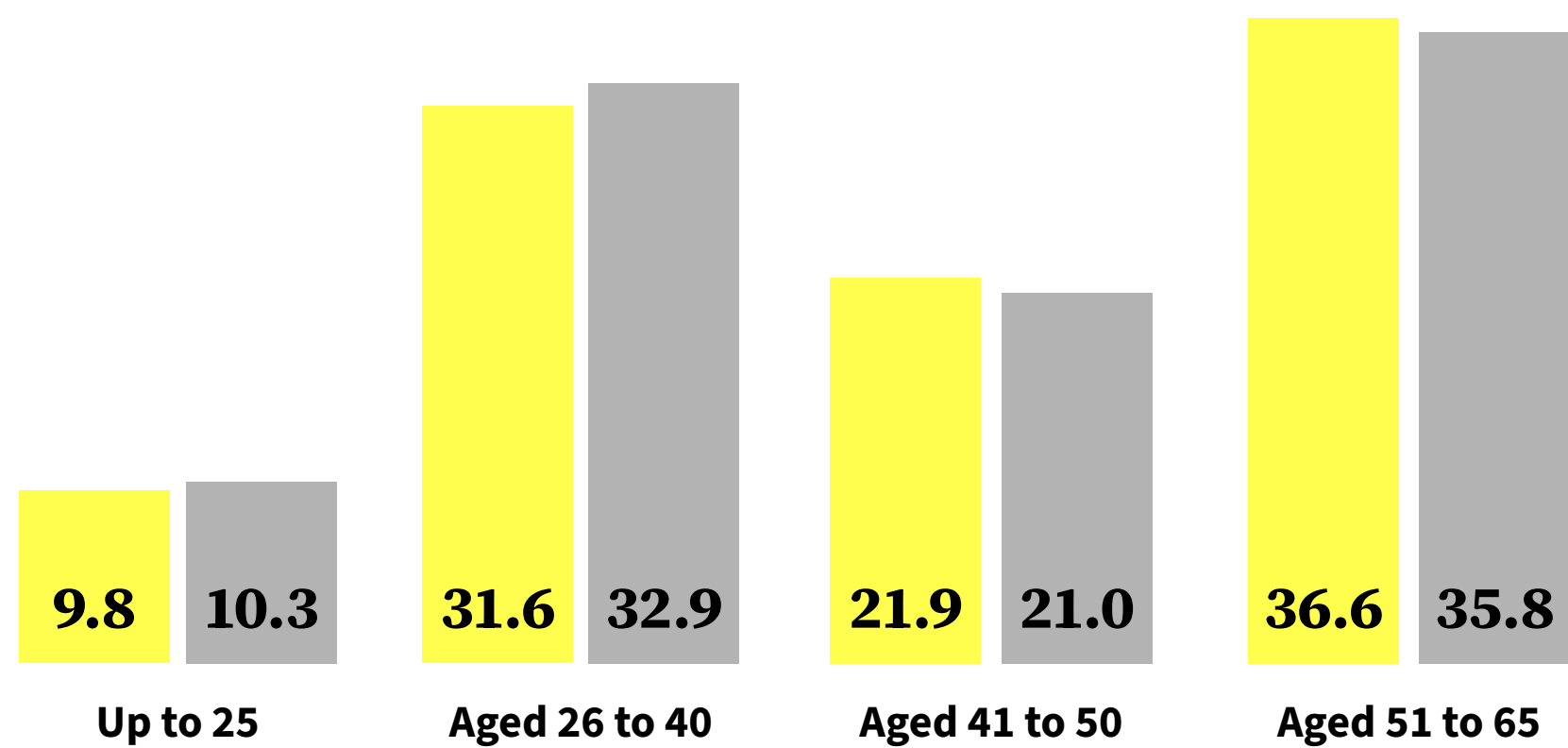


**54.8%**  
of the women  
surveyed have  
children.

**52.5%**  
of the men  
surveyed have  
children.

Do you have children?

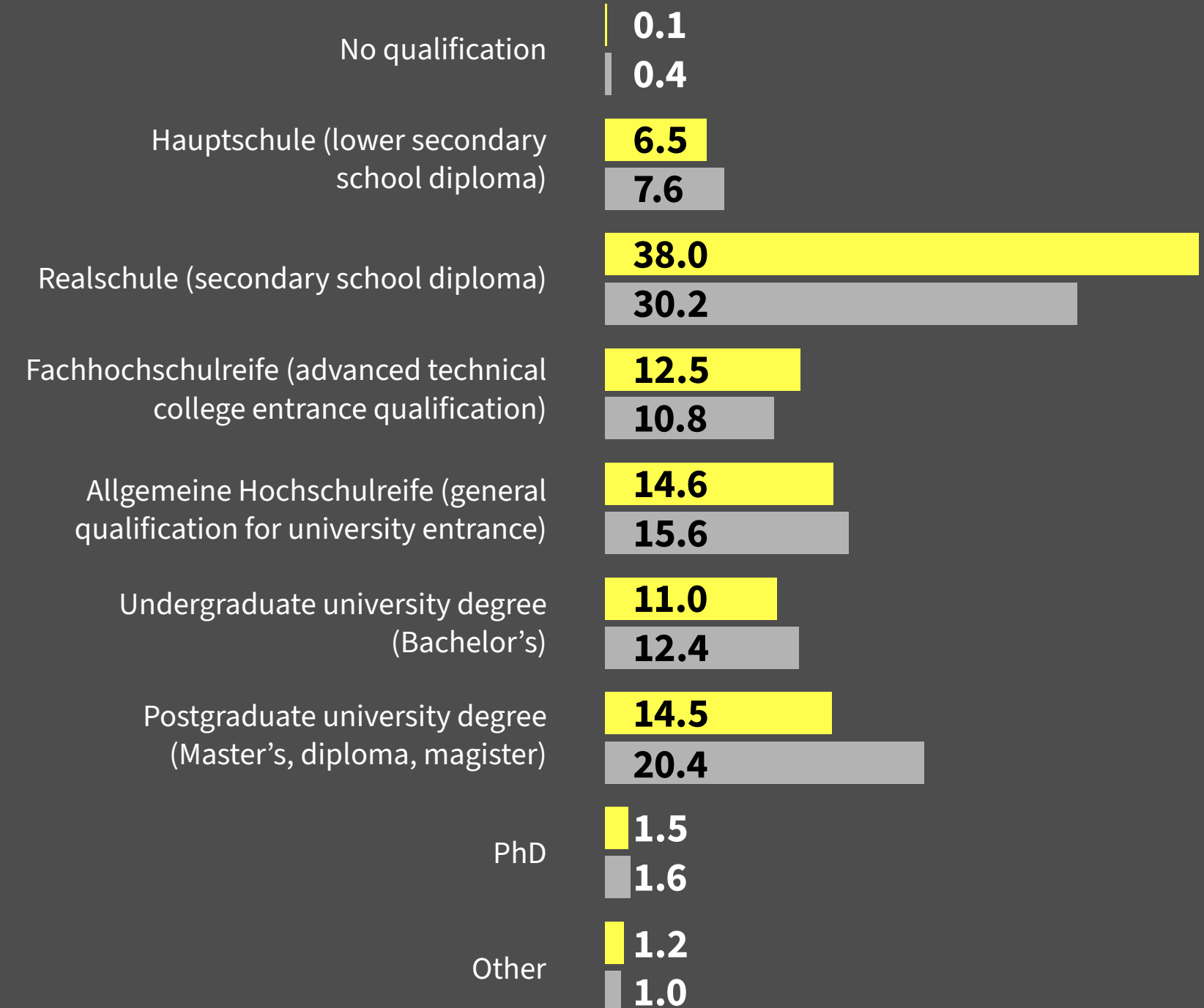
How old are you?  
In %; age groups combined



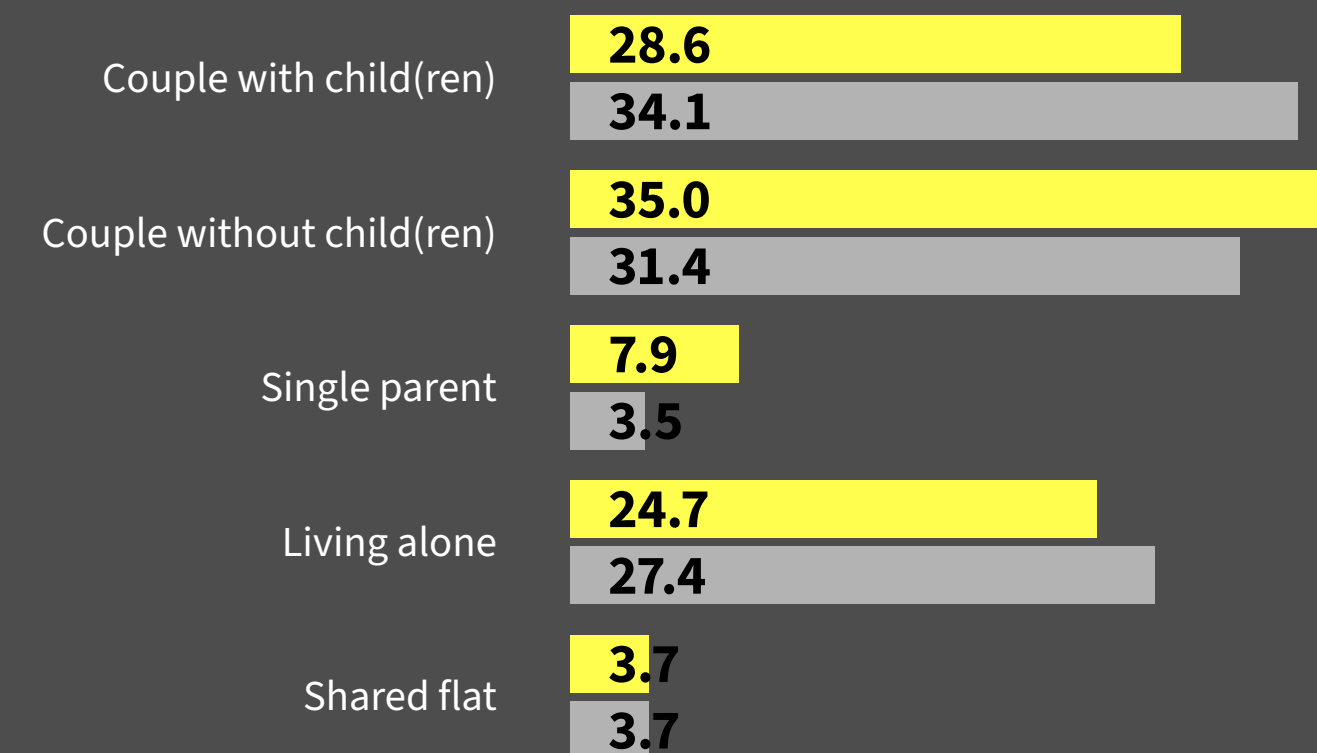
\*Although gender requires more than a binary classification into female and male, the data currently available for such an analysis is limited. In general, the numbers are too small to allow a statistically significant breakdown by additional variables. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, gender is considered in a binary system.

Women Men

What is your highest qualification? In %



What type of household do you currently live in? In %



Women Men



FACTS ABOUT THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS.

# ABOUT THE STUDY.

# 4,480

respondents between the ages of 16 and 65 who are employed.

Representative of the German job market in age and gender.

## IMPRINT

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Anonymous survey via Tivian  
Panel: Norstat

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## Contact us

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**You can also find us on:**

