

Women on the Board

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The Issue:

Women are well represented in companies all the way up to the **'marzipan level'** of management (just below the icing!) but this falls off at board level.

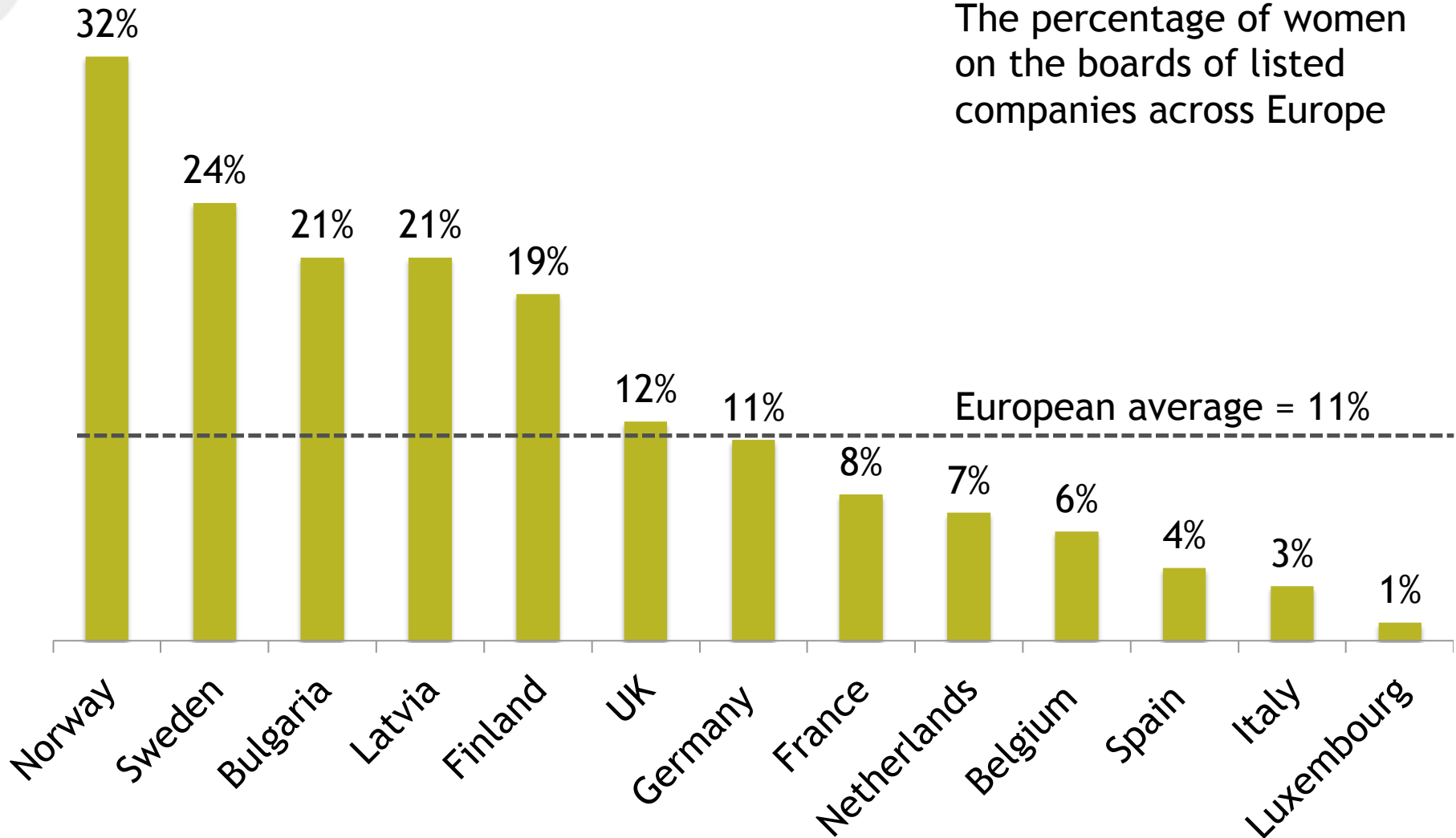
In 2011, women made up **12.5%** of board members in the FTSE 100 companies, and **7.8%** of board places across the FTSE 250.

Of 185 new appointees to FTSE 100 boards in 2010-2011, **only 18 were women.**

At the current rate of change, it will take **over 70 years** to achieve gender balanced board rooms in the UK's biggest companies.

The International Context

The percentage of women on the boards of listed companies across Europe



Source: European Commission/McKinsey and Catalyst



How important is this issue?



We asked:

“At present, only 7.8% of the board members of FTSE 250 companies are women, and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies in the UK have no women at all on their boards of directors.

How important is it that UK businesses work to get more women into senior positions within their companies?”

Key Findings

This issue is important to about **half of the population**.

Women are very likely to agree that this issue is important, as are **public sector workers**.

Men over 45 and from C2DE backgrounds are the most likely to think this is unimportant.

Young people are far less likely to have an opinion than those over 24.

Half of the population said it was ‘**very**’ or ‘**quite**’ important that UK businesses do more to get more women into senior positions

51%

Q. At present, only 7.8% of the board members of FTSE 250 companies are women, and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies in the UK have no women at all on their boards of directors. How important is it that UK businesses work to get more women into senior positions within their companies?

[Base: General population n =2039]

Unsurprisingly, this support comes largely from women

Women

64%

Men

38%

Q. At present, only 7.8% of the board members of FTSE 250 companies are women, and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies in the UK have no women at all on their boards of directors. How important is it that UK businesses work to get more women into senior positions within their companies?

[Base: general population n =2039. Men = 999 Women = 1040]

Though still one quarter of women, and over half of men, say it is 'not at all' or 'not particularly' important

Women

26%

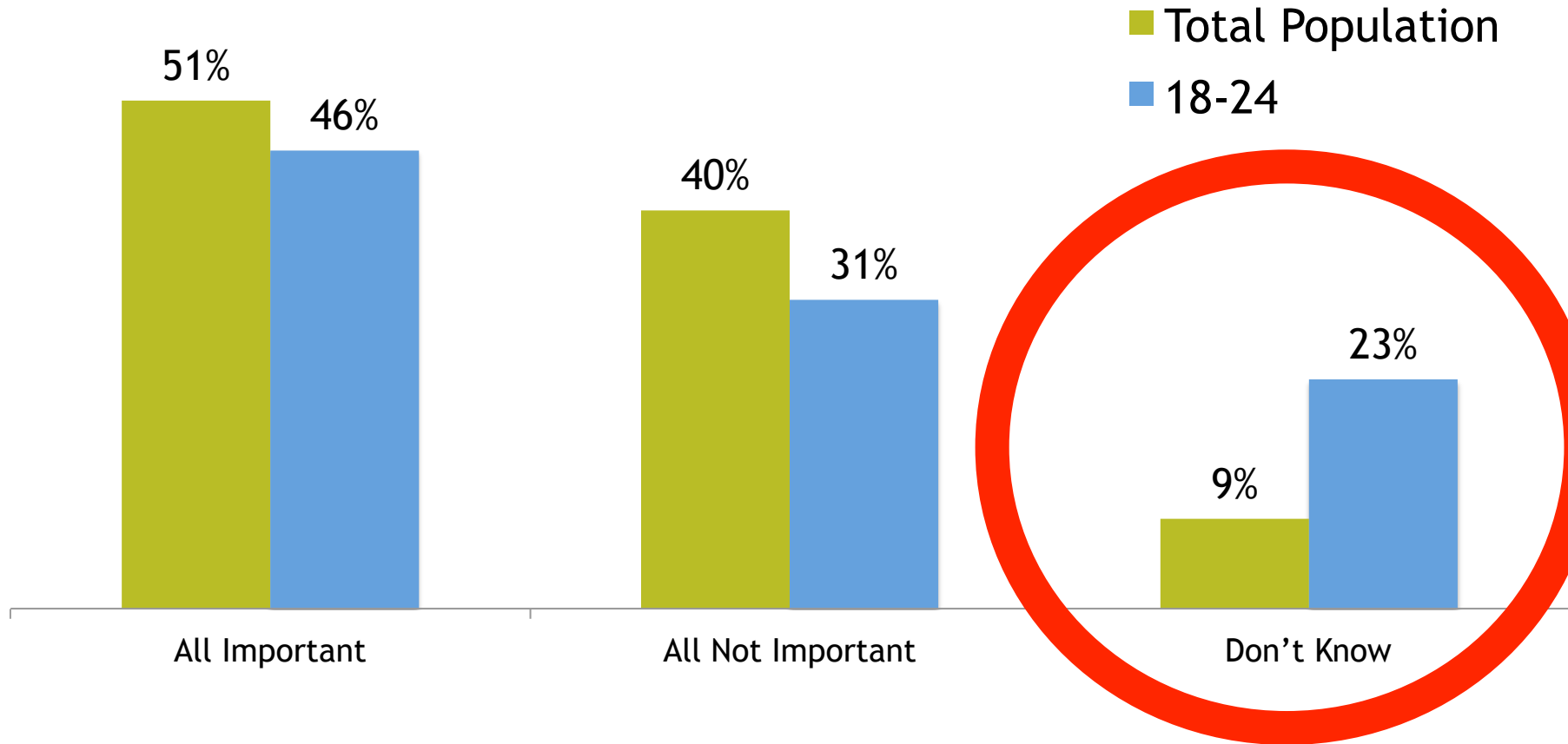
Men

53%

Q. At present, only 7.8% of the board members of FTSE 250 companies are women, and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies in the UK have no women at all on their boards of directors. How important is it that UK businesses work to get more women into senior positions within their companies?

[Base: general population n =2039. Men = 999 Women = 1040]

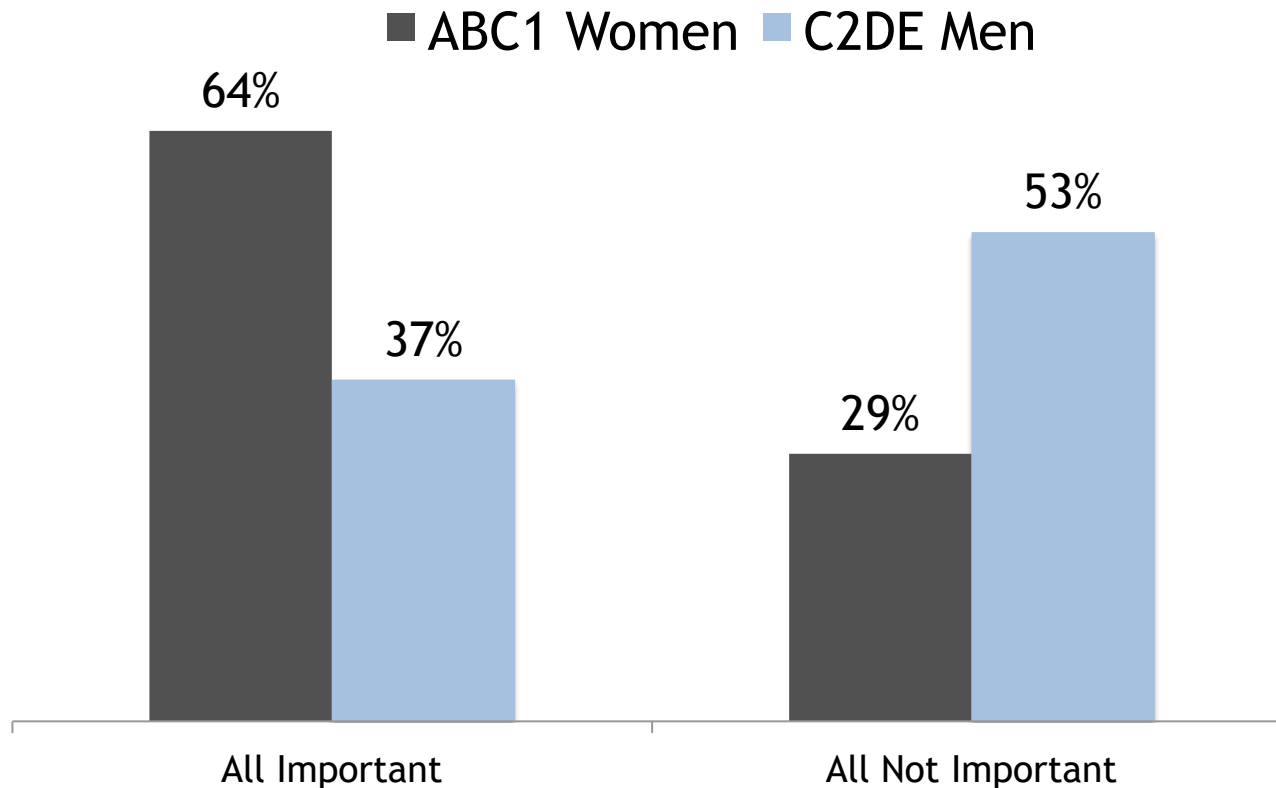
Those under 24 are the least likely age group to have an opinion on the issue



Q. At present, only 7.8% of the board members of FTSE 250 companies are women, and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies in the UK have no women at all on their boards of directors. How important is it that UK businesses work to get more women into senior positions within their companies?

[Base: general population n = 2039 18-24 = 245]

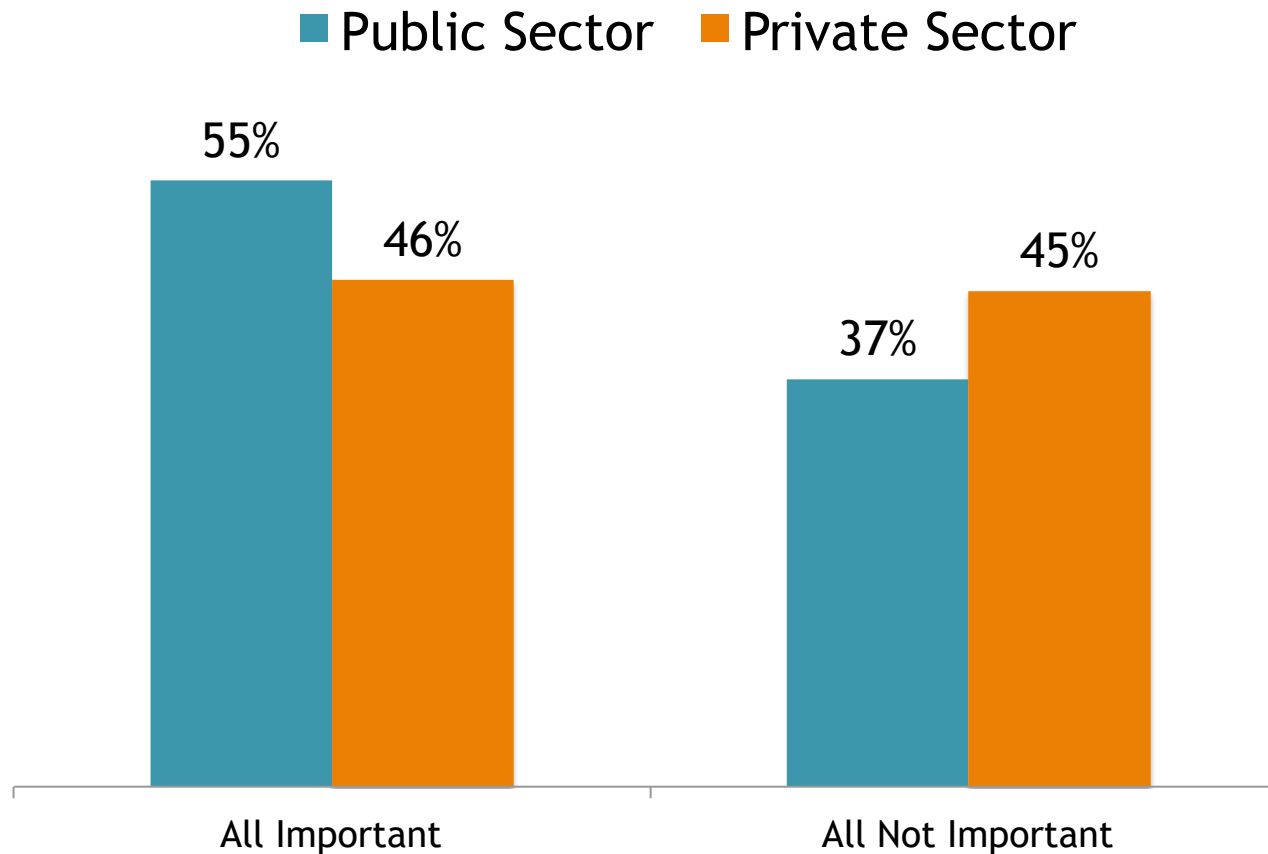
Whilst there is little difference by Socio-Economic Grade alone, there is a sharp contrast between middle class women and working class men:



Q. At present, only 7.8% of the board members of FTSE 250 companies are women, and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies in the UK have no women at all on their boards of directors. How important is it that UK businesses work to get more women into senior positions within their companies?

[Base: general population n =2039]

Public sector employees feel it's a more important issue than private sector workers do



Q. At present, only 7.8% of the board members of FTSE 250 companies are women, and nearly half of all FTSE 250 companies in the UK have no women at all on their boards of directors. How important is it that UK businesses work to get more women into senior positions within their companies?
[Base: general population n =2039]



Answers to the problem:

We gave respondents 6 statements, and asked them to state how far they agreed or disagreed with each:

- “All FTSE companies **should be made to use quotas** to ensure that the number of women on their boards increases over the next few years”
- “The rules should be changed to **allow either parent to use maternity leave**, so that it isn't always women who take a career break to look after children.”
- “Businesses should advertise **more top-level roles with the possibility of working part-time or flexible hours** so that more women can take on senior roles.”
- “All FTSE companies should **publicly set out the percentage of women they aim to have on their boards in 2013 and in 2015**, so that their progress can be tracked.”
- “The 100 largest companies should **commit to a minimum of 25% female representation on their boards by 2015.**”
- “Each year FTSE companies should **disclose meaningful information about their firm's appointment processes**, and the number of women at each level in their company.”

Key Findings

The most popular suggestions are those which address the **perceived root of the problem** - in particular, in relation to **childcare** and **flexible working**.

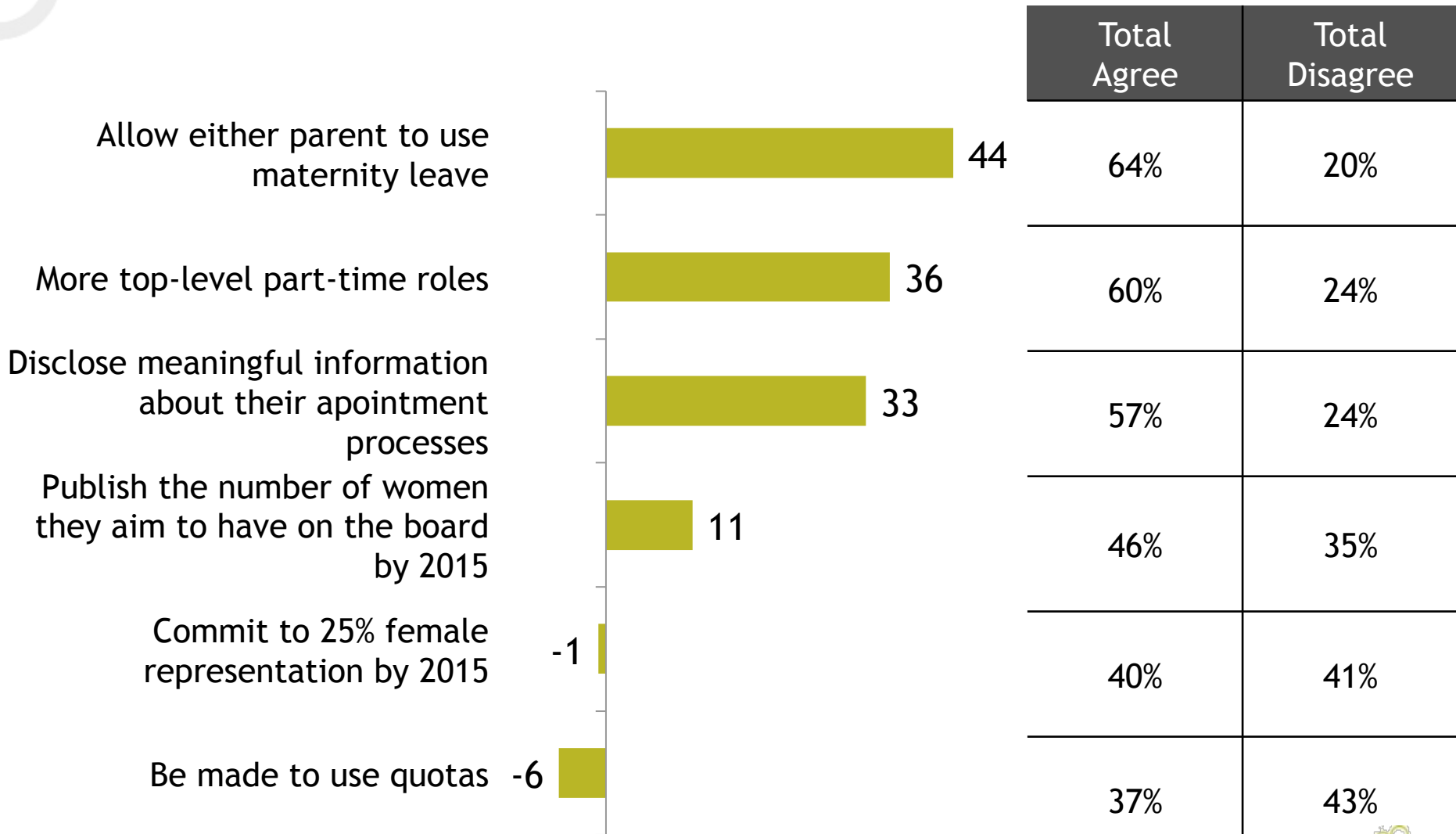
Setting requirements for the increased numbers of women on boards is the least popular approach - and the impact of **using the term 'quotas'** has a **particularly negative impact**.

Women are significantly more sympathetic towards all remedies suggested than men.

Men aged over 45 are much less likely than younger men to support suggested remedies. In contrast, women's views are quite consistent across age groups.

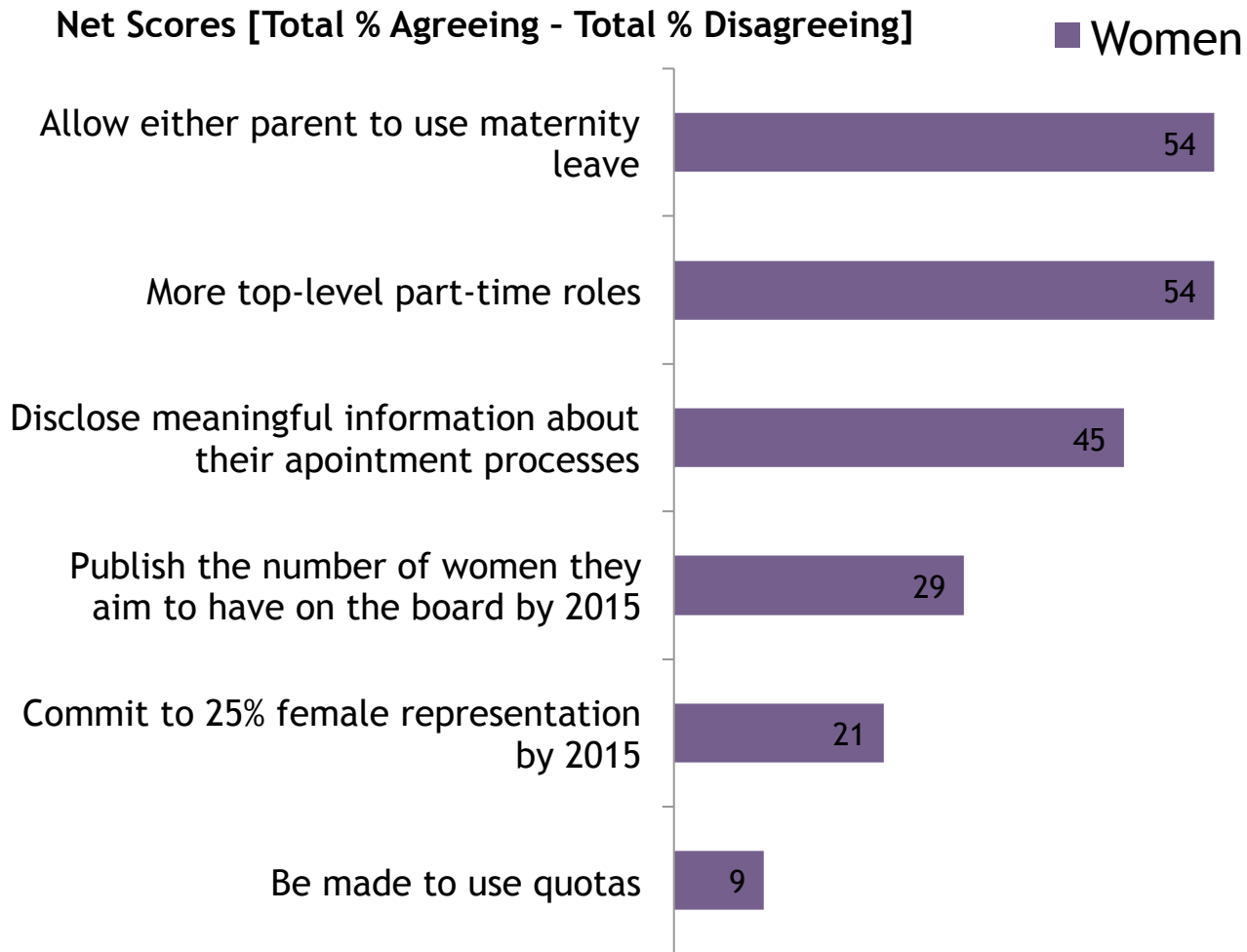
Support for quotas is low across the population, but particularly amongst **men, older groups and private sector workers**.

Suggestions of quotas were the two least popular statements, by a significant margin and changes which address the perceived root of the issue of women's achievement were most popular



Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statements? [Base: Total Population = 2039]

Amongst women, net scores for quotas were positive, despite still being the least popular suggestions

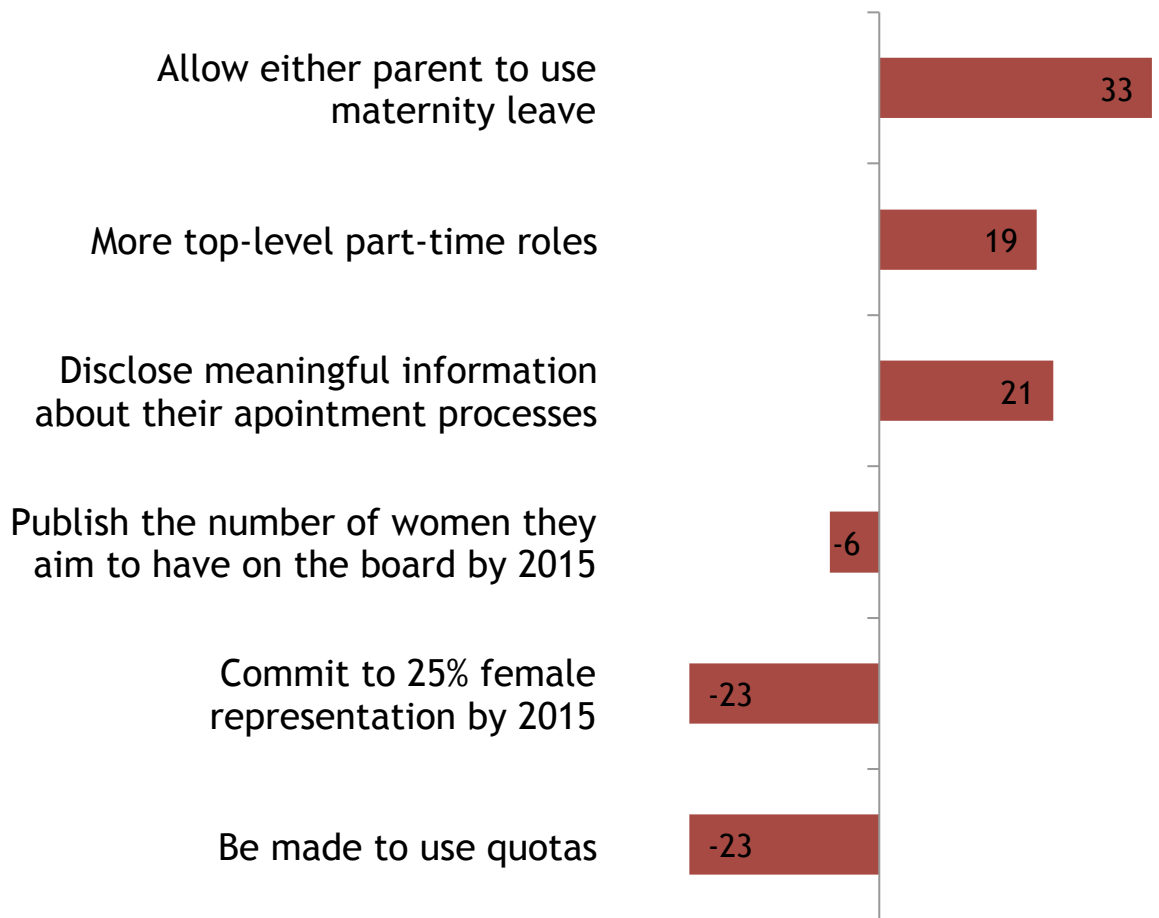


Total Agree	Total Disagree
68%	14%
68%	14%
62%	17%
53%	24%
50%	29%
43%	34%

Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statements?
 [Base: Total Population = 2039. Men = 999 Women = 1040]

Amongst men, there was not only rejection of quotas but also to setting internal targets for increasing the number of women on boards.

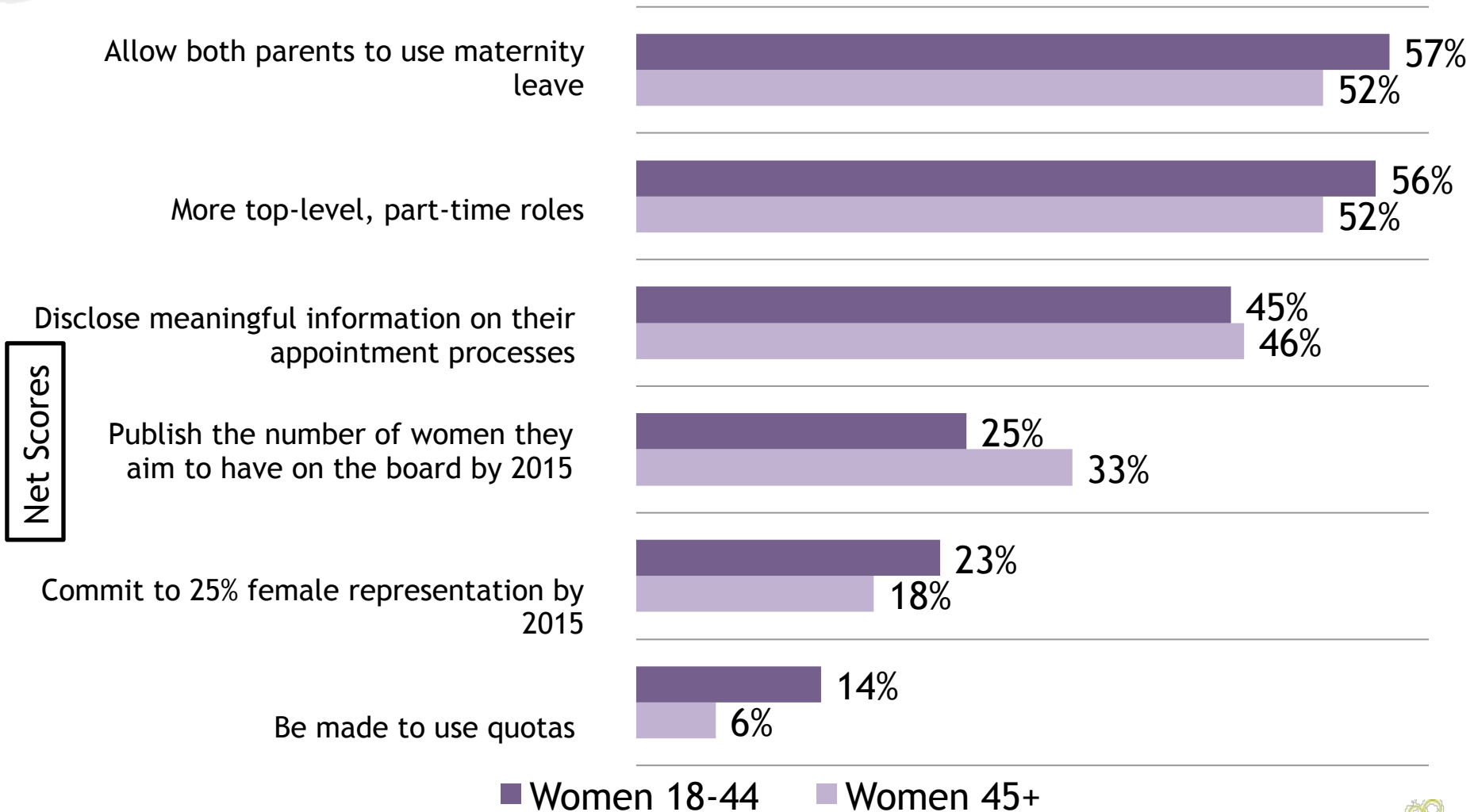
Net Scores [Total % Agreeing - Total % Disagreeing] ■ Men



Total Agree	Total Disagree
59%	26%
52%	33%
53%	32%
39%	45%
30%	53%
31%	54%

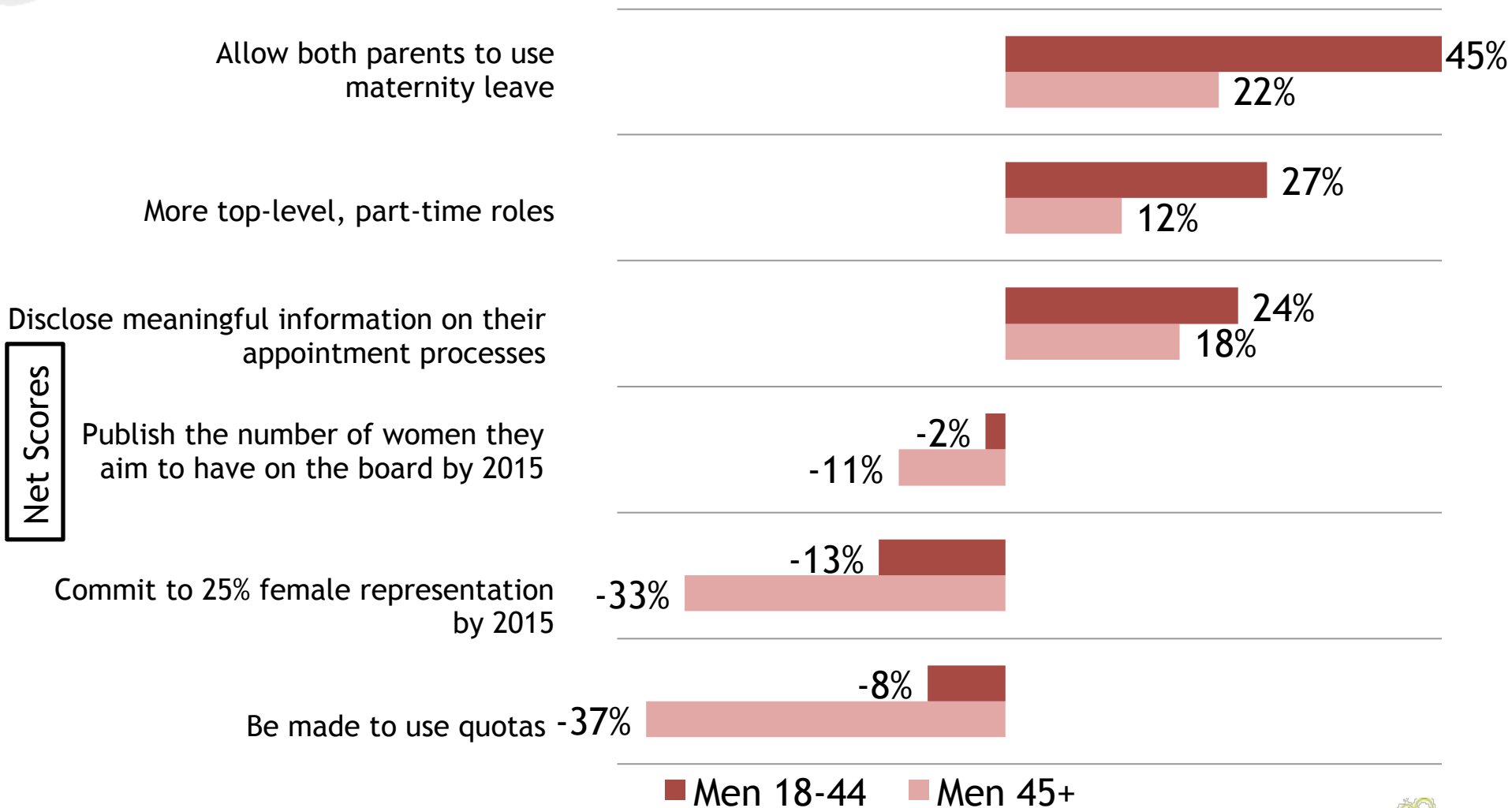
Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statements?
 [Base: Total Population = 2039. Men = 999 Women = 1040]

Women of all ages have fairly similar views, though on the whole younger women care more about the issue...



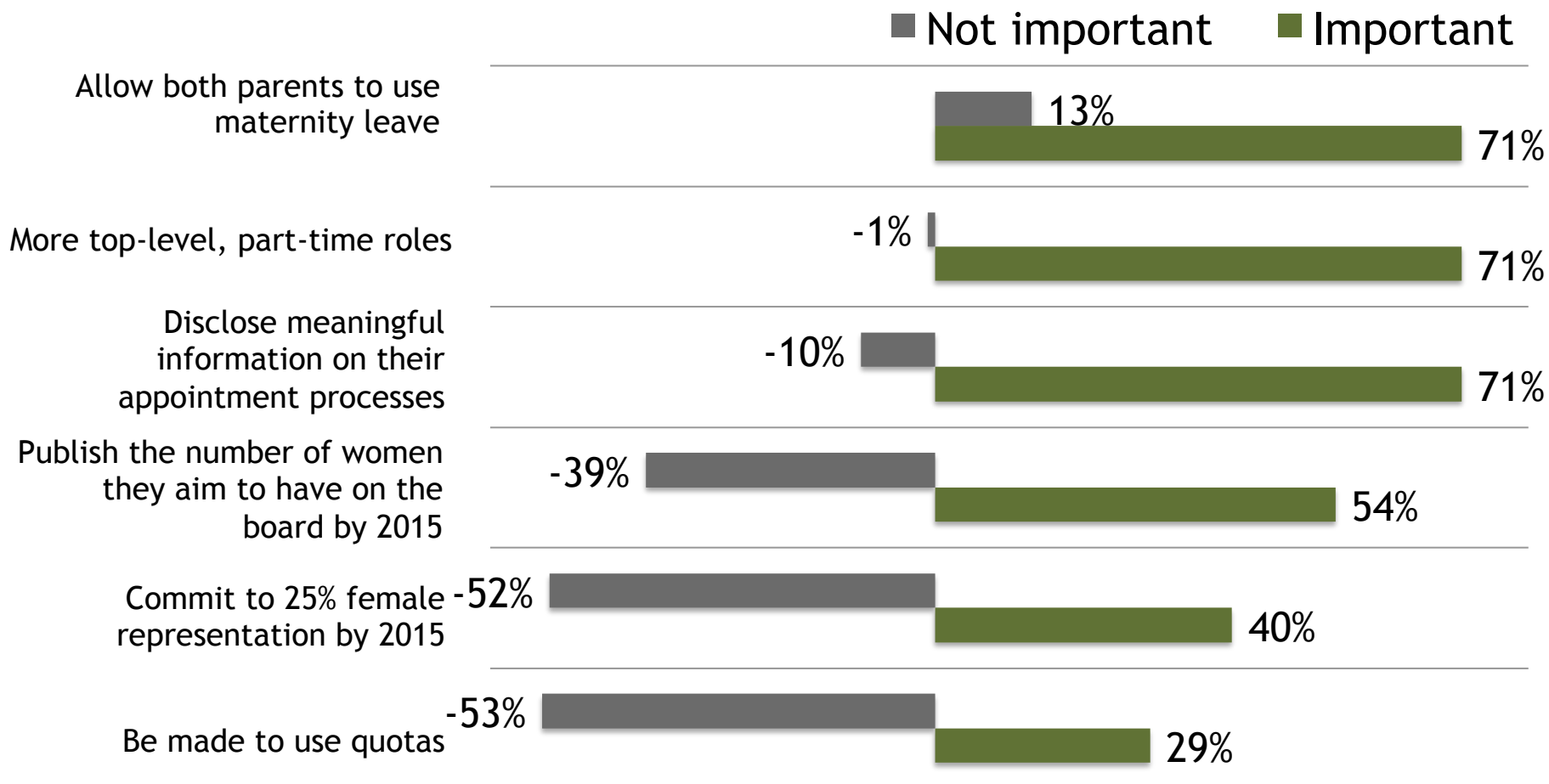
Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statements? [Base: Total Population = 2039]

However, amongst men there is a far more significant contrast - with those over 45 much less likely to care about the issue or to support any remedies



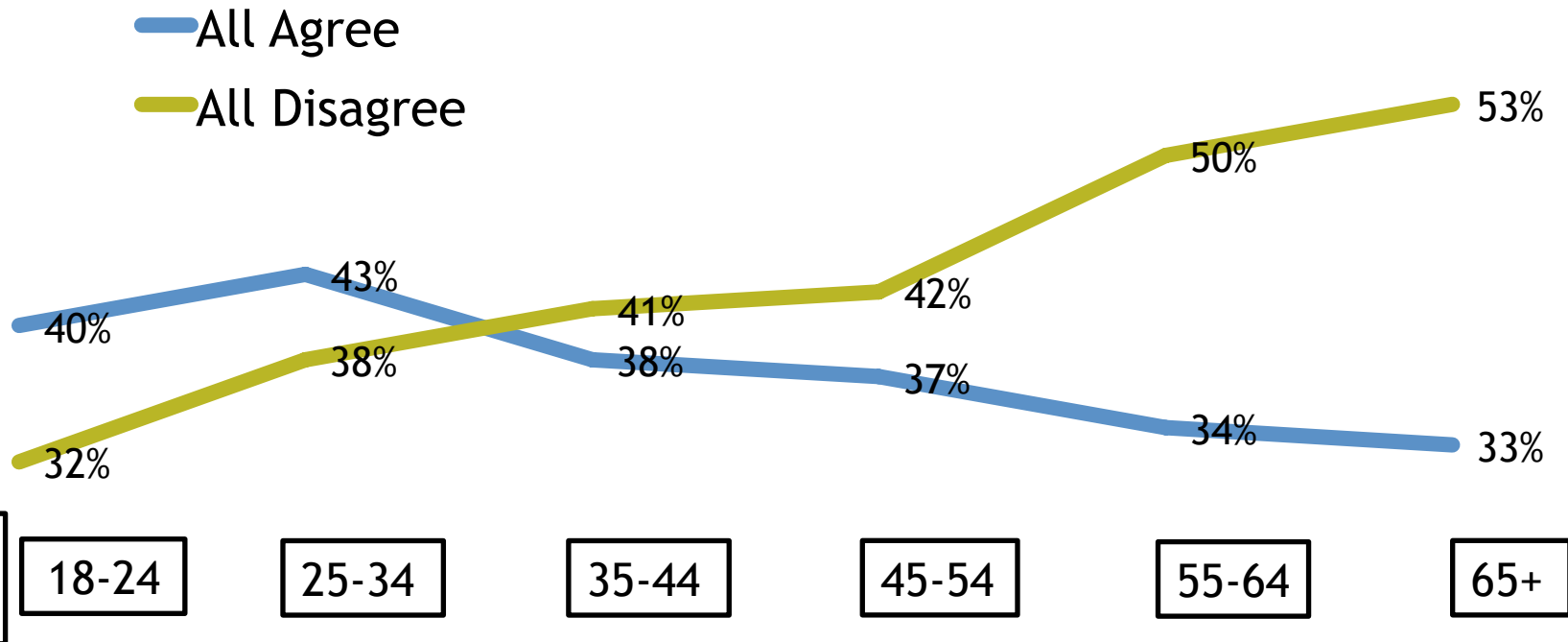
Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statements? [Base: Total Population = 2039]

For those who think the issue of women's representation is not important, shared 'maternity' leave is the only argument that scores positively



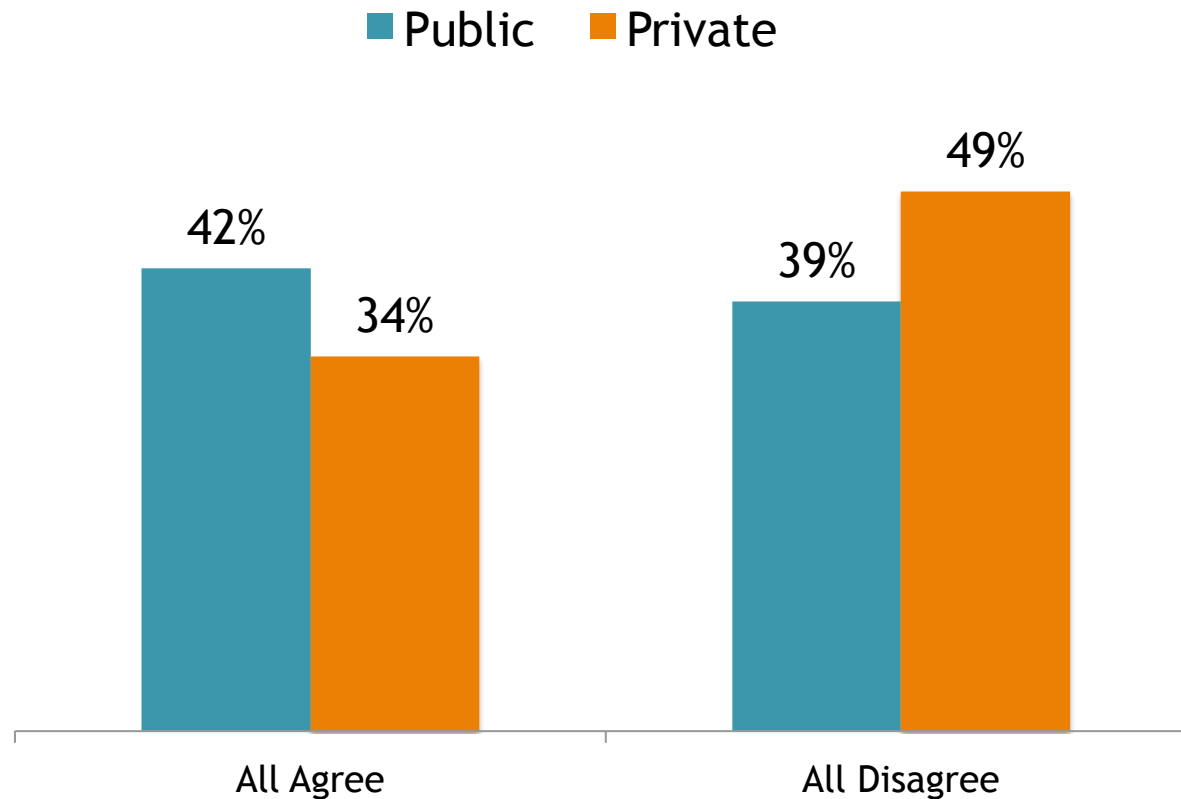
Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statements? [Base: Total Population = 2039]

Across the UK population, support for quotas declines as age increases



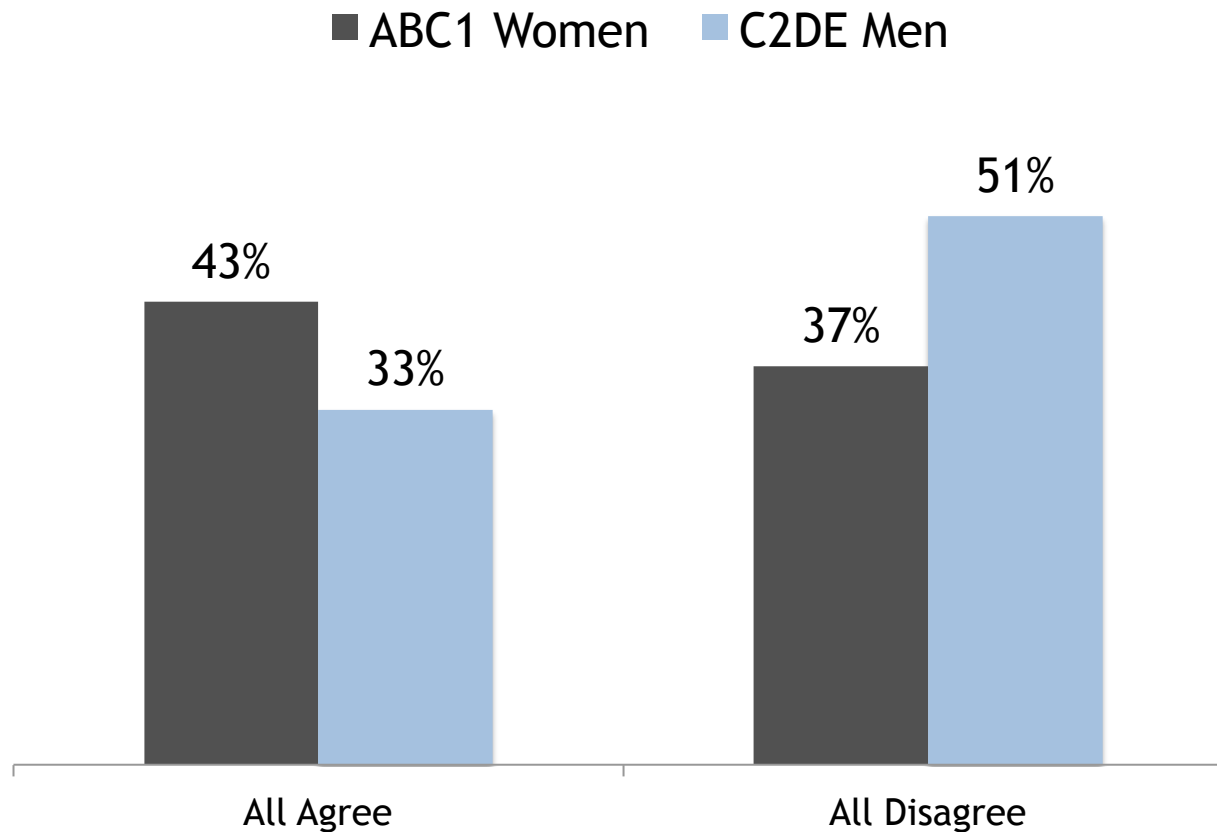
Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statement: All FTSE companies should be made to use quotas to ensure that the number of women on their boards increases over the next few years [Base: Total Population = 2039]

Quotas are also less popular amongst private sector employees than public sector.



Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statement: All FTSE companies should be made to use quotas to ensure that the number of women on their boards increases over the next few years [Base: Total Population = 2039]

And over half of C2DE men disagree with quotas



Q: Please say how far you agree with the following statement: All FTSE companies should be made to use quotas to ensure that the number of women on their boards increases over the next few years [Base: Total Population = 2039]



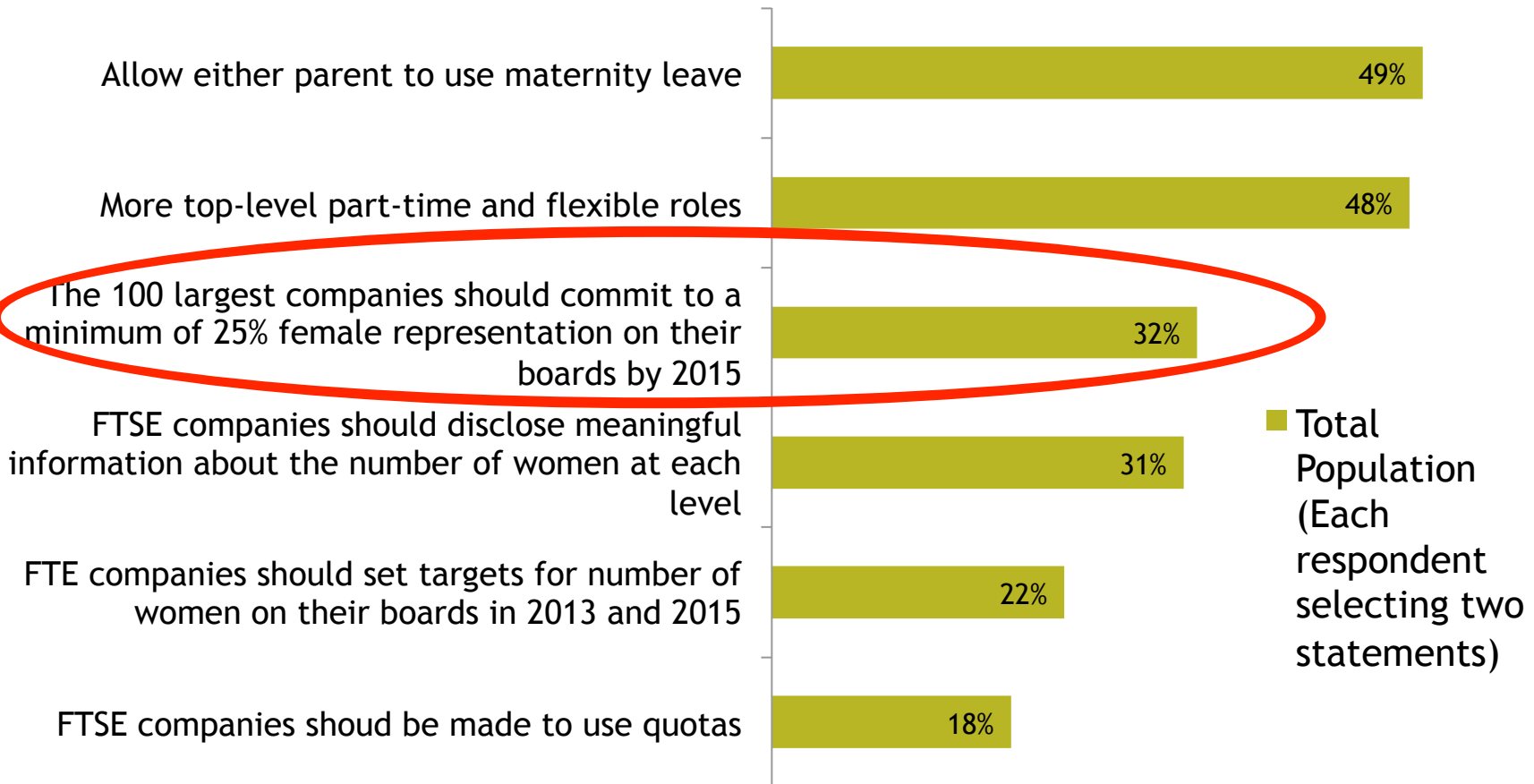
Which would have the most
impact?



We presented the same six statements but asked:

“Regardless of whether you agree with them, which of these suggestions do you think would have the biggest impact in increasing the number of women on the boards of UK businesses?”

Despite many people disagreeing with the idea that 100 largest companies should commit to 25% representation, there was much higher agreement that this would have a big impact.



Q: Regardless of whether you agree with them, which of these suggestions do you think would have the biggest impact in increasing the number of women on the boards of UK businesses? [Base: Total Population = 2039]



Arguments in favour

We asked:

“How far do you agree with each of the following arguments for increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies?”

“This is **simply a question of fairness** - the boards of British companies should have more equal representation of women”

“Companies with all-male, or mostly male, boards are **ignoring the talent of half the population.**”

“**At least half of customers are women** - if companies want to serve their customers better, they need women on the board making decisions too.”

“Women make the board better they **bring different working practices and perspectives that lead to positive cultural change** in organisations.”

“**All male, or mostly male, boards of UK businesses are not doing a great job**, so it’s time to bring in more women to senior positions to see if that can shake things up a bit.”

“Taking responsibility for **looking after children is the biggest reason that women tend not to reach board level positions** in UK businesses. It is when women take a break from work to have children that men tend to get promoted ahead of them.”

“The **"long hours culture" of UK business penalizes women** more than men, because women often have caring responsibilities that get in the way of staying behind at the office.”

“It is **unfair that having childcare responsibilities should mean that women are less-well represented** on the boards of UK business.”

Key Findings

Whilst there is **strong agreement that childcare responsibilities are the main barrier** to women's ability to reach board level, **far fewer respondents were prepared to label this 'unfair'**, even amongst women.

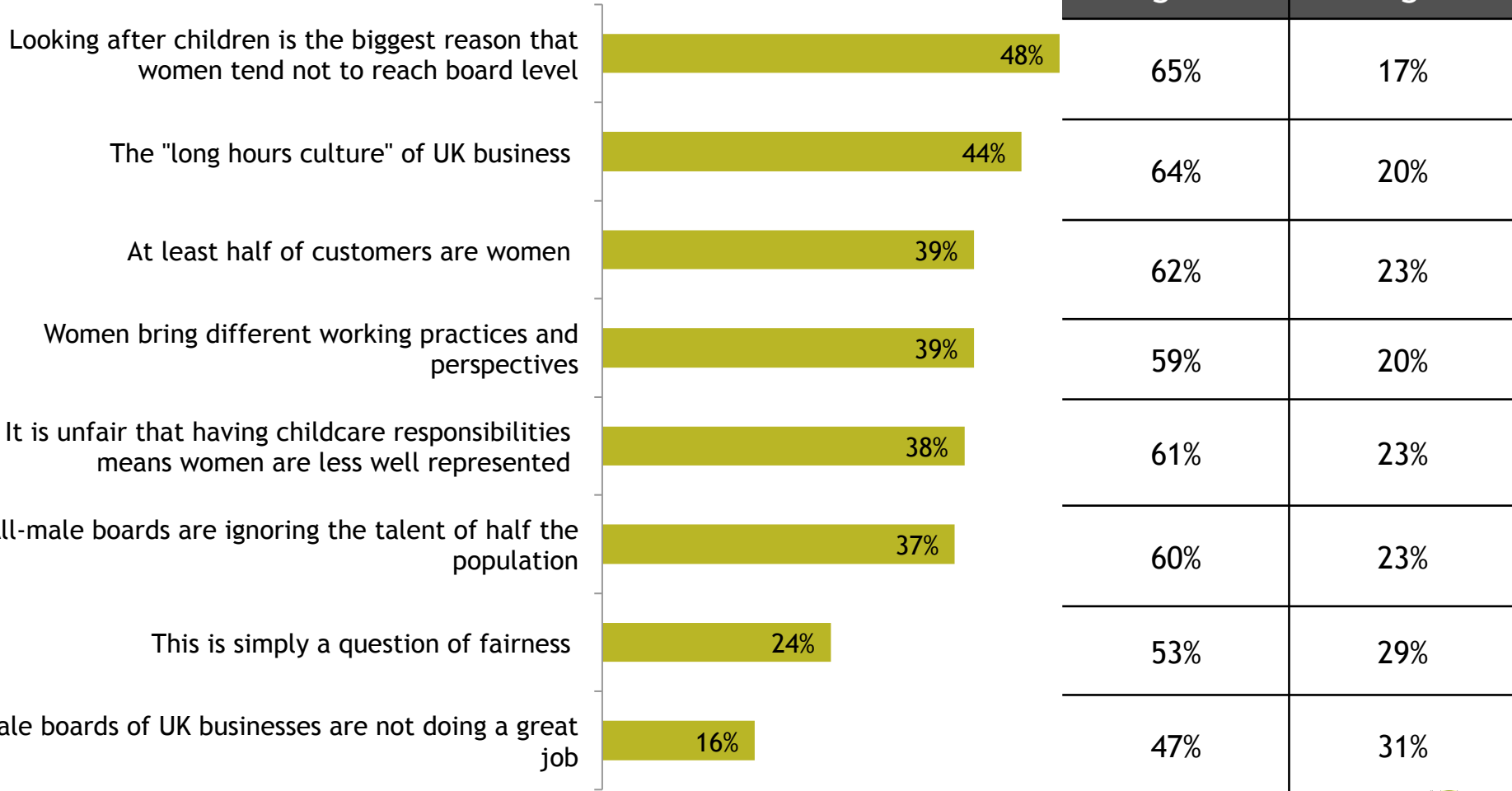
Similarly, the statement 'this is simply a **question of fairness**' was the **second-lowest scoring**.

The argument which **resonates most** with both men and women is that at **least of half of customers are women**, and therefore a company's board should reflect this.

The two most popular arguments for increasing representation of women echo the support for more part-time roles and shared maternity leave.

Net Scores [Total % Agreeing - Total % Disagreeing]

■ Total Population

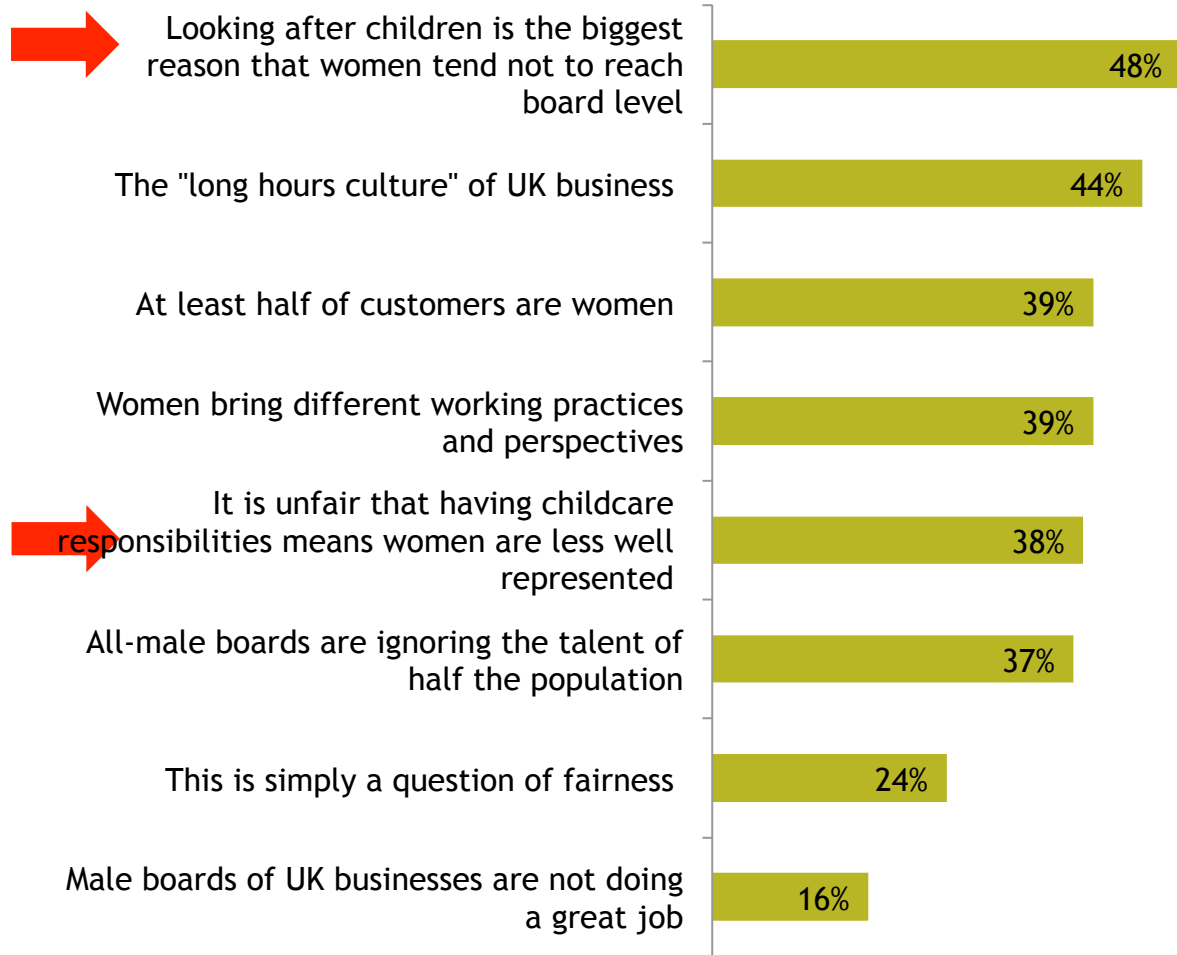


Q: Please say how far you agree with each of the following arguments for increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies? [Base: Total Population = 2039]

Whilst many felt that childcare is the biggest barrier to women's achievement, far fewer agreed that this is 'unfair'

Net Scores [Total % Agreeing - Total % Disagreeing]

■ Total Population



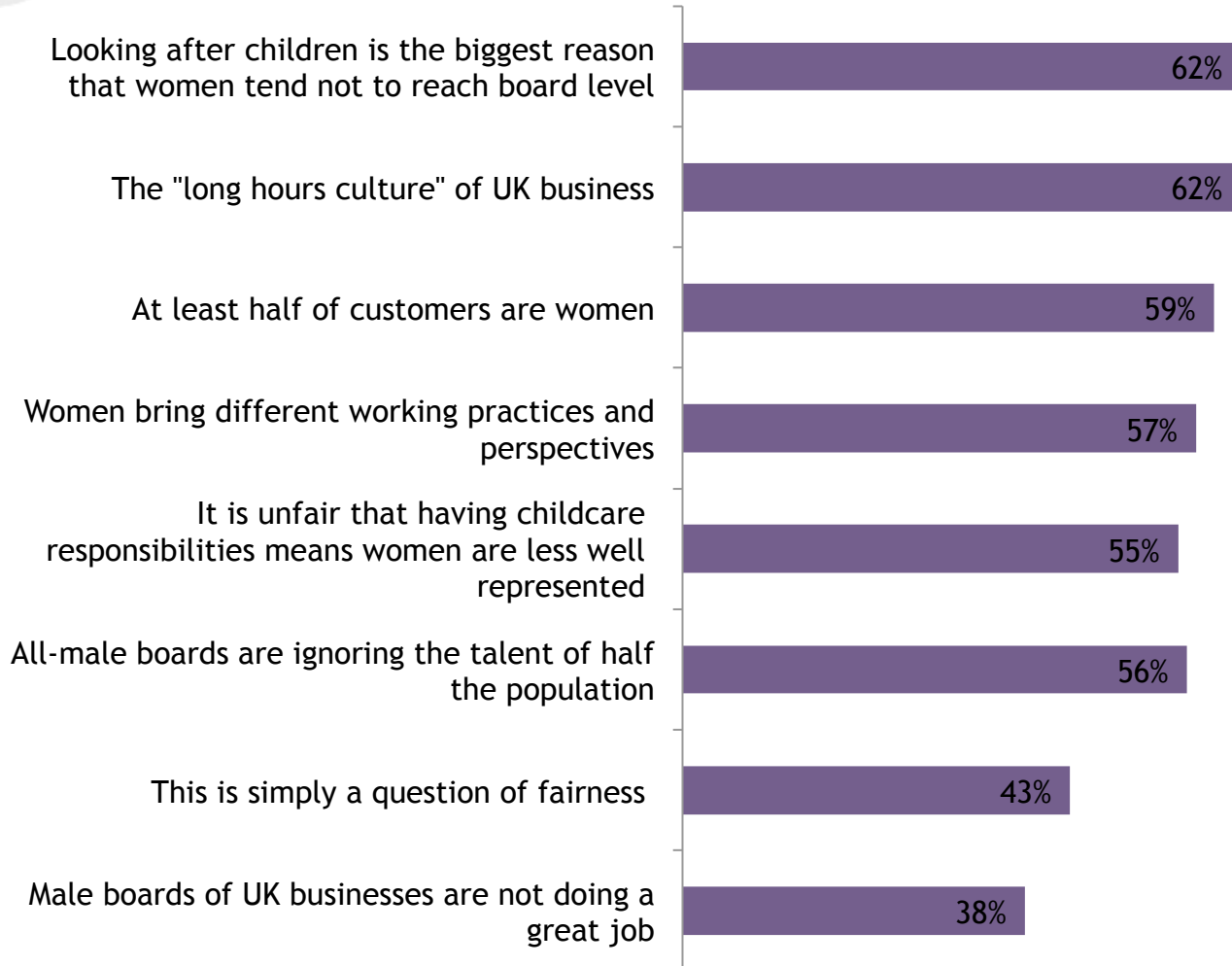
Total Agree	Total Disagree
65%	17%
64%	20%
62%	23%
59%	20%
61%	23%
60%	23%
53%	29%
47%	31%

Q: Please say how far you agree with each of the following arguments for increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies? [Base: Total Population = 2039]

Amongst women, levels of support for the arguments was high across the board.

Net Scores [Total % Agreeing - Total % Disagreeing]

■ Women

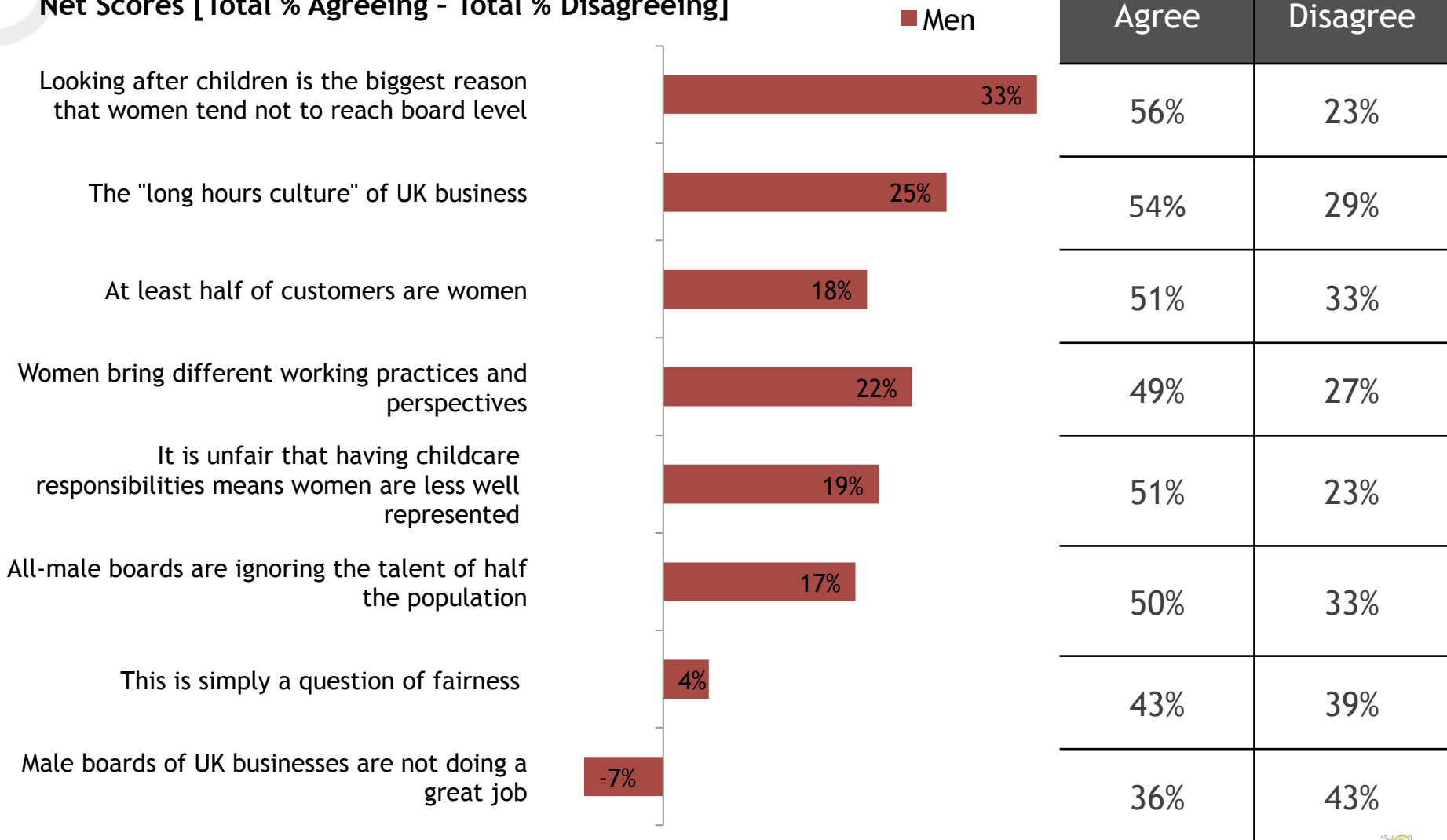


Total Agree	Total Disagree
73%	11%
74%	12%
72%	13%
69%	12%
70%	15%
70%	14%
63%	20%
58%	20%

Q: Please say how far you agree with each of the following arguments for increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies? [Base: Total Population = 2039. Men = 999 Women = 1040]

For men, perhaps unsurprisingly, there was most disagreement with the idea that male boards are not currently doing a good job

Net Scores [Total % Agreeing - Total % Disagreeing]



Q: Please say how far you agree with each of the following arguments for increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies? [Base: Total Population = 2039. Men = 999 Women = 1040]



Arguments against

We asked:

“How far do you agree with each of the following arguments against increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies?”

“It is **wrong to artificially engineer more women on the boards** of UK companies.”

“**While it is wrong** that there aren’t more women on UK boards, **the answer can’t be to start forcing companies** to promote women.”

“Companies should **just choose the best people for the job**, regardless of gender.”

“Trying to ensure a gender balance on the board is **just tokenism at its worst.**”

“The fact that there are fewer women on the boards of UK companies is just a reflection of the fact that **women tend to be less ambitious and career-focused than men.**”

“Forcing company boards to have more women is **discriminating against men.**”

Key Findings

The argument that **'companies should just choose the best person for the job'** is comfortably **the most popular**, and even **higher amongst women** than men.

Men were happier to agree that **women shouldn't be artificially engineered into board positions**, rather than to concede that 'whilst it is wrong that there aren't more women on boards, the answer can't be to start forcing companies to promote women'.

The argument which **divided the two genders most sharply** was the suggestion that increasing women on boards is **'discriminating against men'**.

The **only argument against** increasing women's representation which **men disagreed with** was the idea that 'women tend to be less ambitious and career-focused than men'.

‘Just choose the best people for the job’ was comfortably the most compelling argument.

Net Scores [Total % Agreeing - Total % Disagreeing]

■ Total Population

Should just choose the best people for the job

75%

Total Agree

Total Disagree

82%

7%

It is wrong to artificially engineer more women on the boards

52%

69%

17%

Whilst it is wrong, the answer can't be to start forcing companies to promote women

52%

69%

17%

Just tokenism at its worst

34%

58%

24%

Forcing companies to have more women is discriminating against men

18%

52%

34%

Women tend to be less ambitious and career-focussed than men

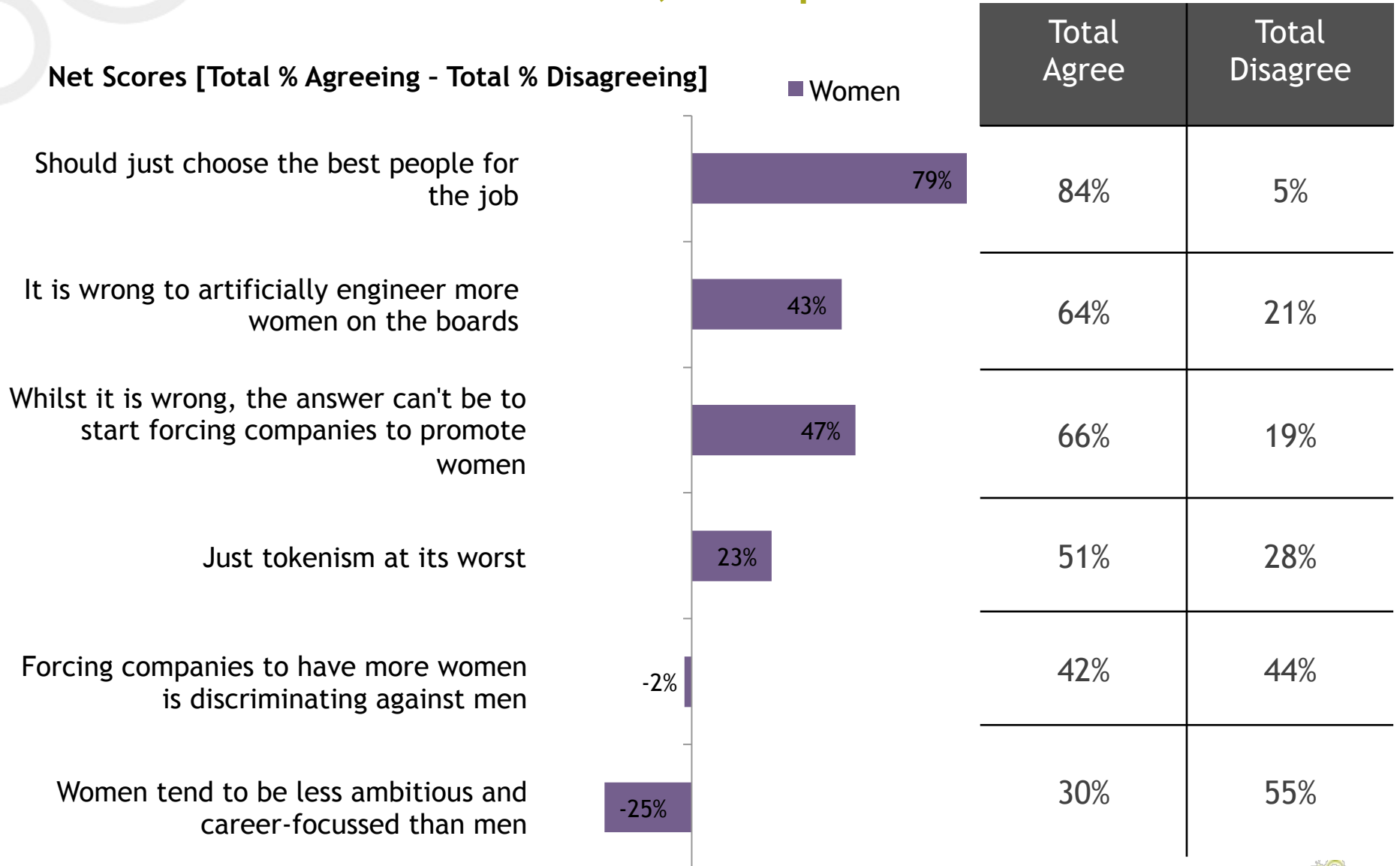
-16%

34%

50%

Q: Please say how far you agree with each of the following arguments against increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies? [Base: Total Population = 2039]

30% of women still agree with the idea that women tend to be less ambitious, compared to 8% of men

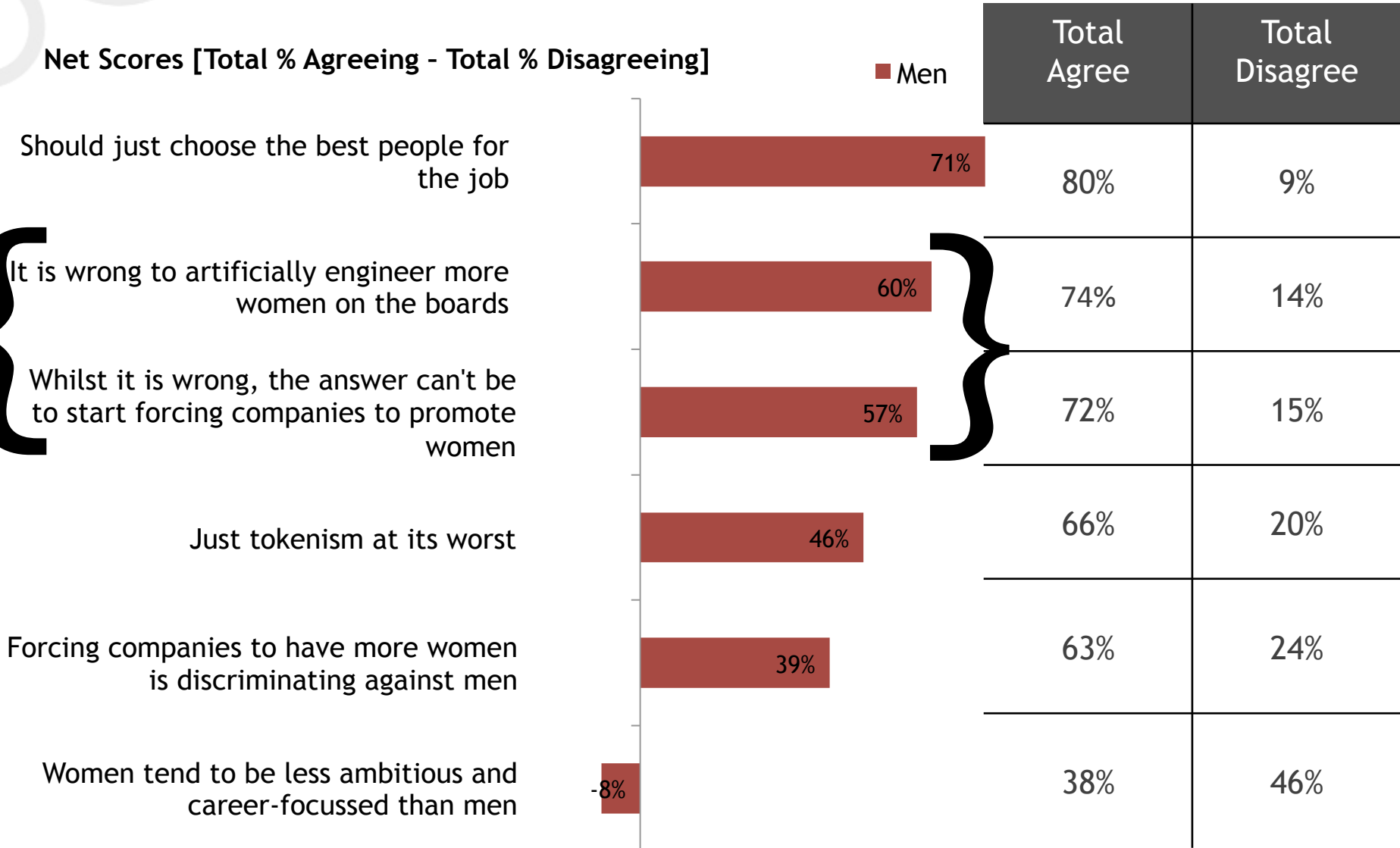


Q: Please say how far you agree with each of the following arguments against increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies? [Base: Total Population = 2039. Men = 999 Women = 1040]

Men were supportive of every argument, except for the idea that women tend to be less ambitious

Net Scores [Total % Agreeing - Total % Disagreeing]

■ Men



Q: Please say how far you agree with each of the following arguments against increasing the representation of women on the boards of UK companies? [Base: Total Population = 2039. Men = 999 Women = 1040]

What else can be done?

- Shell is running a company-wide career development programme for talented women
- At TimeWarner, the diversity in succession plans for the top management in each division are reviewed annually.
- Vodafone has a '1 + 1' programme, requiring all managers to put an additional woman on each team every year
- DeutscheTelekom is focusing on the 'marzipan layer' of management - committing to raising the number of women at middle and upper management to 30% by 2015.

Women in Business

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