



14<sup>th</sup> Annual Edition 2022

# CHARTING A NEW COURSE



ArabYouthSurvey



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# The voice of the 'Arab Spring Generation'



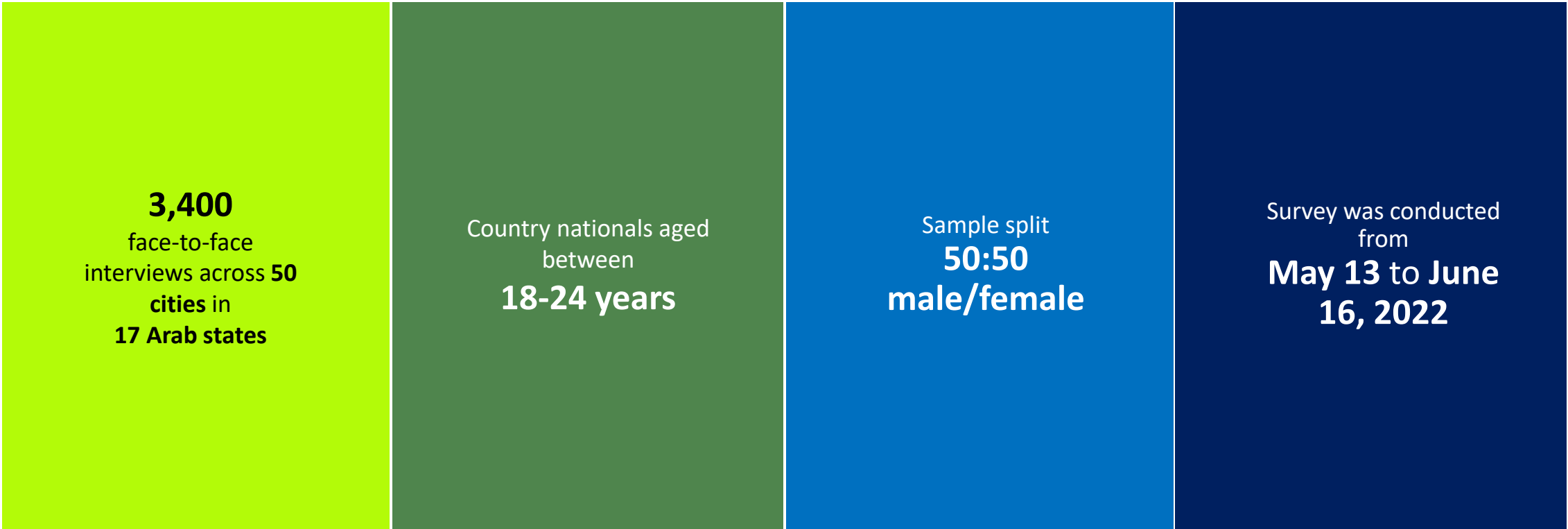
- Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey is **the largest study of its kind of the Arab world's largest demographic, its over 200 million youth.**
- These **evidence-based insights** inform governments, the private sector, multilateral institutions and academics on policymaking and business strategy.
- **To preserve the survey's independence and credibility**, we fund the research entirely ourselves and share the top findings publicly on our website [www.arabyouthsurvey.com](http://www.arabyouthsurvey.com)
- This year's findings examine the hopes, fears and aspirations of the so-called **Arab Spring Generation**, the cohort of Arab men and women who entered adulthood after the epochal events of the early 2010s.
- We present the findings here under six distinct themes: **My Identity, My Livelihood, My Politics, My Global Citizenship, My Lifestyle, and My Aspirations.**
- What they show is a generation **Charting A New Course** away from the divisions of more than a decade ago.
- Arab youth are proud, self-reliant and defiantly optimistic about the future, but seek leadership and reassurance on the direction they should go.

## Sunil John

President- MENA, BCW and  
Founder of ASDA'A BCW



# Largest independent survey of its kind among young Arabs



**3,400**  
face-to-face  
interviews across **50**  
cities in  
**17 Arab states**

Country nationals aged  
between  
**18-24 years**

Sample split  
**50:50**  
male/female

Survey was conducted  
from  
**May 13 to June**  
**16, 2022**

# Field survey covering 17 Arab states in 3 regions



# Face-to-face interviews conducted in 50 Arab cities



Professional interviewers of IDS Research & Consultancy conducted 3,400 face-to-face interviews from May 13 to June 16, 2022. The interviews were completed in Arabic and English. Margin of error is +/-1.65% for the total sample and larger for sub-groups. Every country included is equally represented in the results of this survey. Sample details are below:

Arab states covered originally in 2008								Added in 2011	Added in 2012			Added in 2013			Added in 2014	Added in 2020	
UAE	Oman	Bahrain	KSA	Kuwait	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon	Iraq	Tunisia	Libya	Algeria	Morocco	Yemen	Palestinian Territories	Syria	Sudan	
<b>N=200 per country</b>																	
Dubai (40%)	Muscat (50%)	Manama (100%)	Jeddah (40%)	Kuwait City (20%)	Cairo (50%)	Amman (50%)	Saida (25%)	Baghdad (50%)	Tunis (50%)	Tripoli (50%)	Algiers (50%)	Casablanca (25%)	Sanaa (50%)	Gaza (50%)	Damascus (50%)	Khartoum (50%)	
Sharjah (20%)			Riyadh (40%)	Al Hawalli (30%)	Alexandria (25%)	Irbid (25%)	Beirut (50%)	Irbil (25%)	Safaqis (25%)	Misrata (25%)	Oran (25%)	Fes (25%)	Al Hodaydah (25%)		Latakia (25%)	Port Sudan (25%)	
Abu Dhabi (40%)	Batinah (50%)		Dammam (20%)	Al Ahmadi (20%)	Mansoura (25%)	Zarqa (25%)	Tripoli (25%)	Basrah (25%)	Susah (25%)	Benghazi (25%)	Constantine (25%)	Rabat (25%)	Ta'izz (25%)	West Bank (50%)	Aleppo (13%)	Al Obeid (25%)	
			Al Farwaniya (30%)								Marrakech (25%)			Homs (12%)			

Countries and gender were weighted equally.

# KEY THEMES



1

## MY IDENTITY

The views of young Arabs on religion, their concerns about the loss of traditional values, how important the Arabic language is for them, and what defines their personal identity



2

## MY LIVELIHOOD

Insights by Arab youth on the quality of education, lack of jobs, obstacles facing the region, their financial situation and the rise in entrepreneurial spirit



3

## MY POLITICS

Perspectives of young Arabs on democracy, political stability, gender rights, and how they see government policies vis-à-vis their priorities



4

## MY GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Standpoints on foreign relations – which countries do they see as their nation’s allies and adversaries; and views on model nations – the country they like most to live in and their own nation to emulate



5

## MY LIFESTYLE

Attitudes of young Arabs towards social media, how they consume news, how they struggle to disconnect and its effects on their mental well-being, besides the growing popularity of online shopping



6

## MY ASPIRATIONS

Outlook on whether their country is moving in the right direction, their optimism about the future and their views on emigration

# 1

## MY IDENTITY

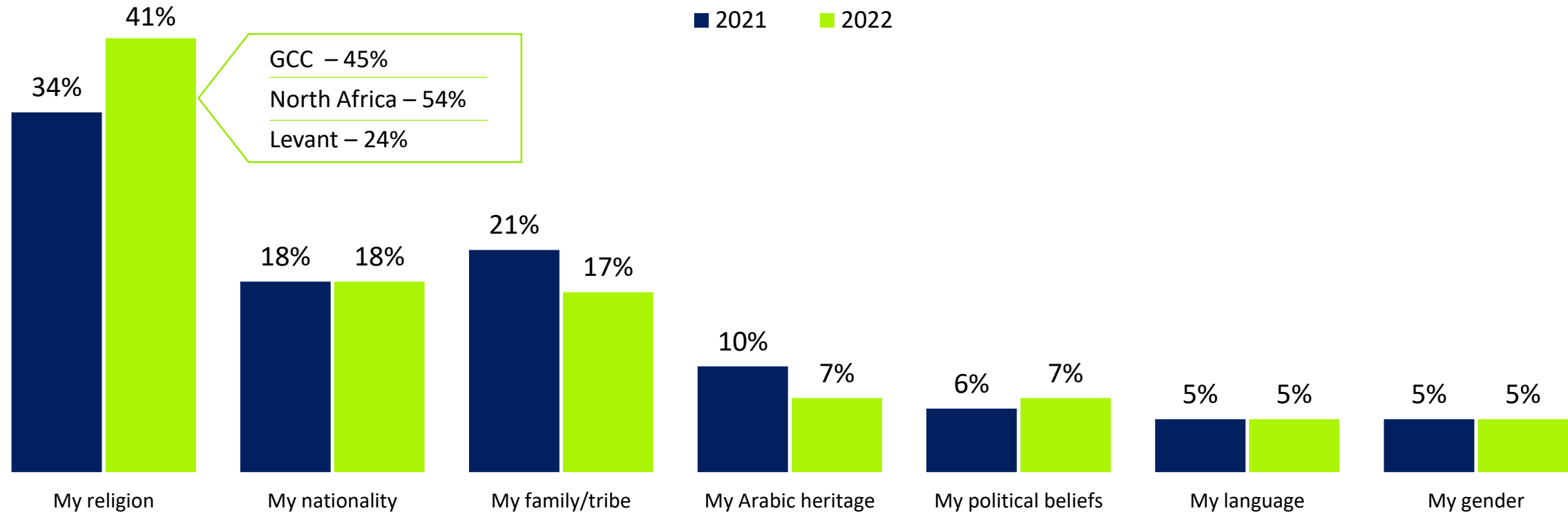
Religion is central to the personal identity of young Arabs; yet they want religious institutions to reform

# Young Arabs view their religion as most important to their personal identity



Which of the following is most important to your personal identity?

(Showing percentage, among all)

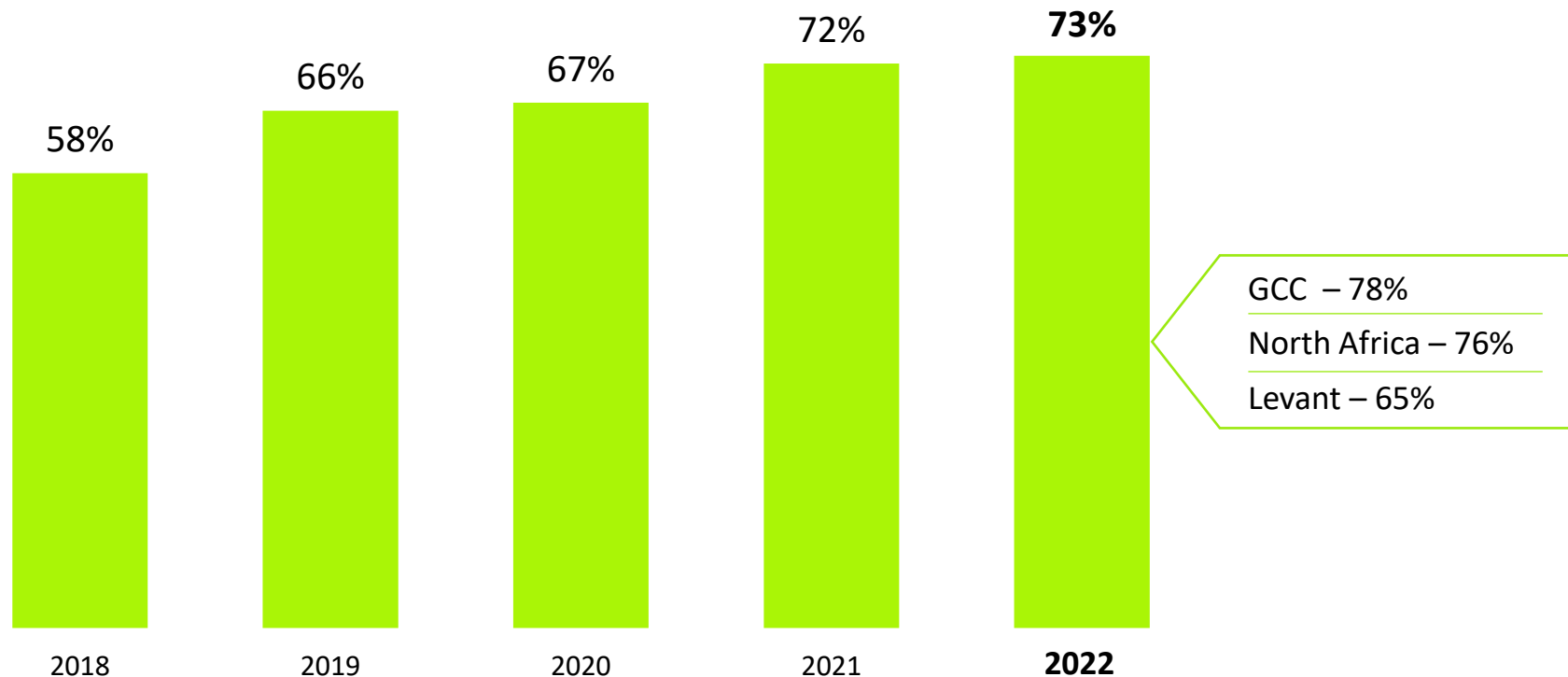




# There is increasing agreement that religion plays too big a role in the Middle East

How strongly do you agree or disagree that religion plays too big of a role in the Middle East

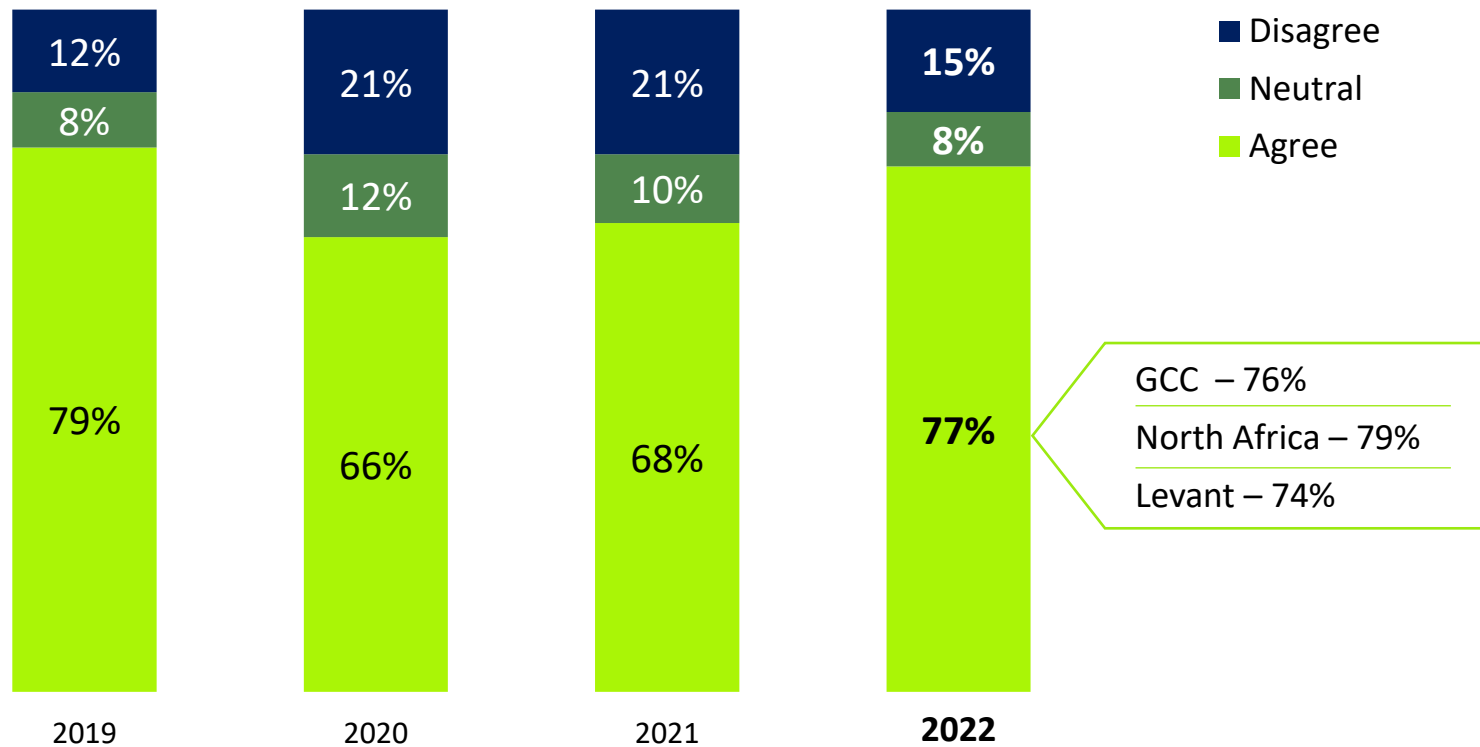
*(Showing percentage, among all, agreeing religion plays too big a role)*



# Over three quarters of young people say the Arab world needs to reform its religious institutions

How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Arab world needs to reform its religious institutions?

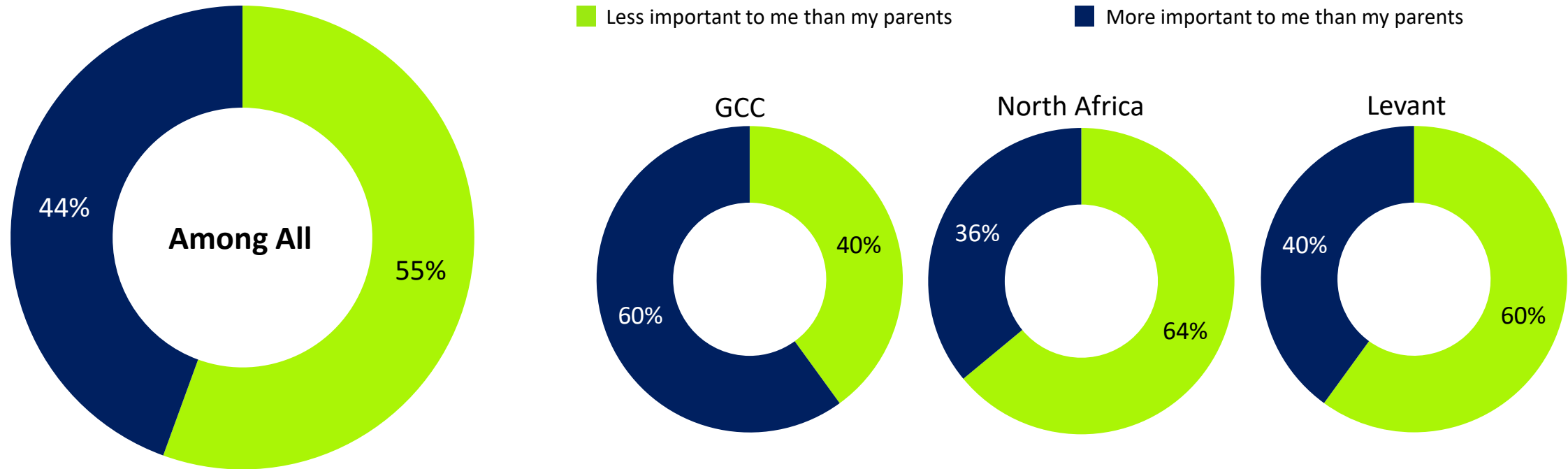
(Showing percentage, among all)



# A majority of young Arabs, outside the GCC, say Arabic language is less important to them than their parents

Which of the following is closer to your point of view? The Arabic language is...

*(Showing percentage, among all)*

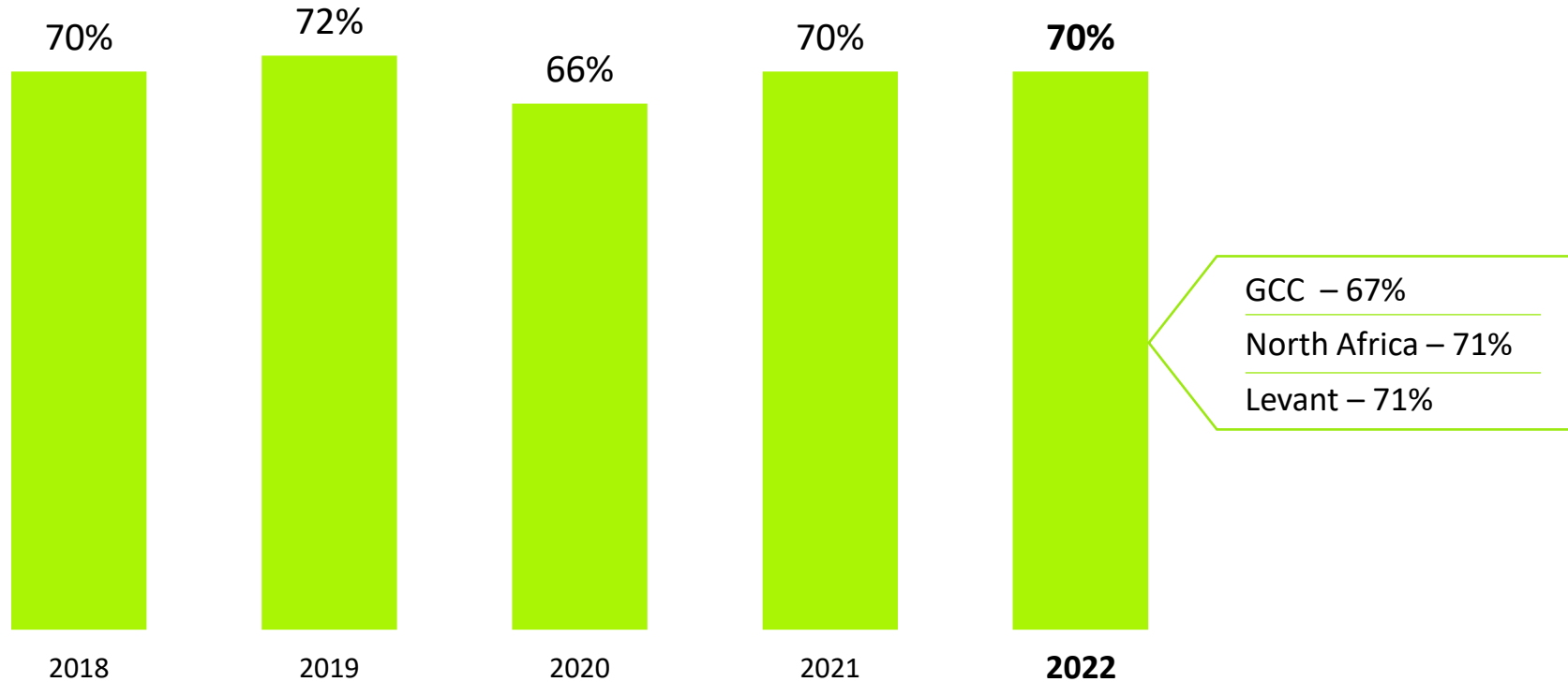


*(Not including 'Don't know')*

# Nearly three quarters of young Arabs are concerned about the loss of traditional values and culture

How concerned would you say you are about the loss of traditional values and culture?

*(Showing percentage, among all, saying 'Very concerned' and 'Somewhat concerned')*

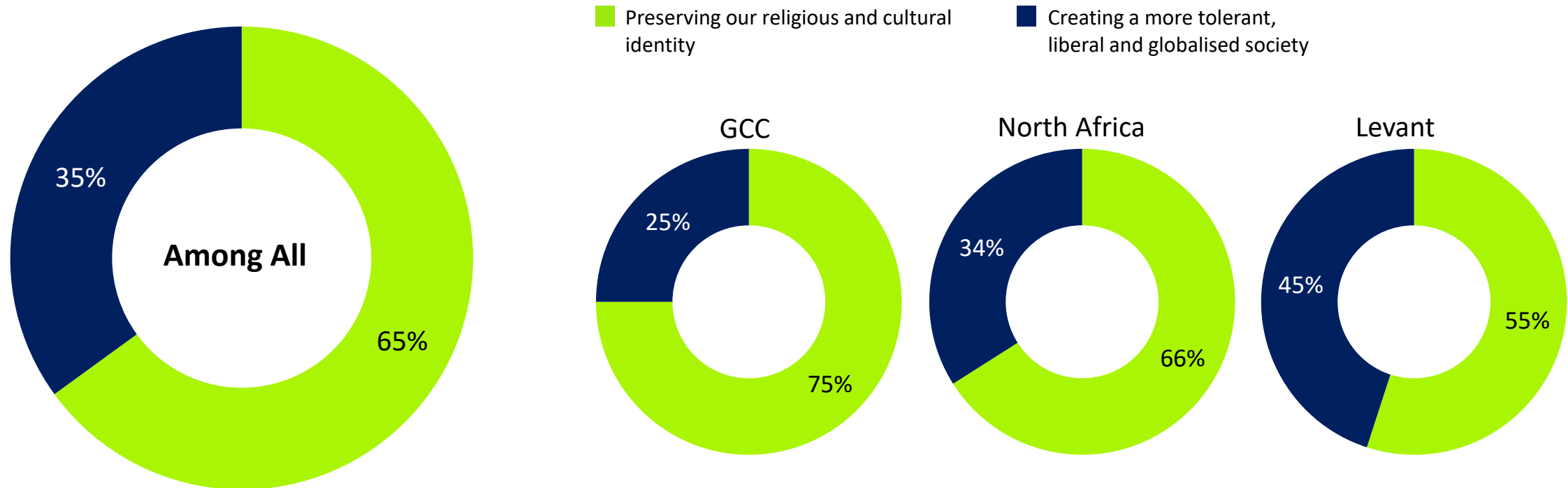


# Most young Arabs say preserving their religious and cultural identity is more important than creating a more globalised society



Which of the following is more important to you?

(Showing percentage, among all)



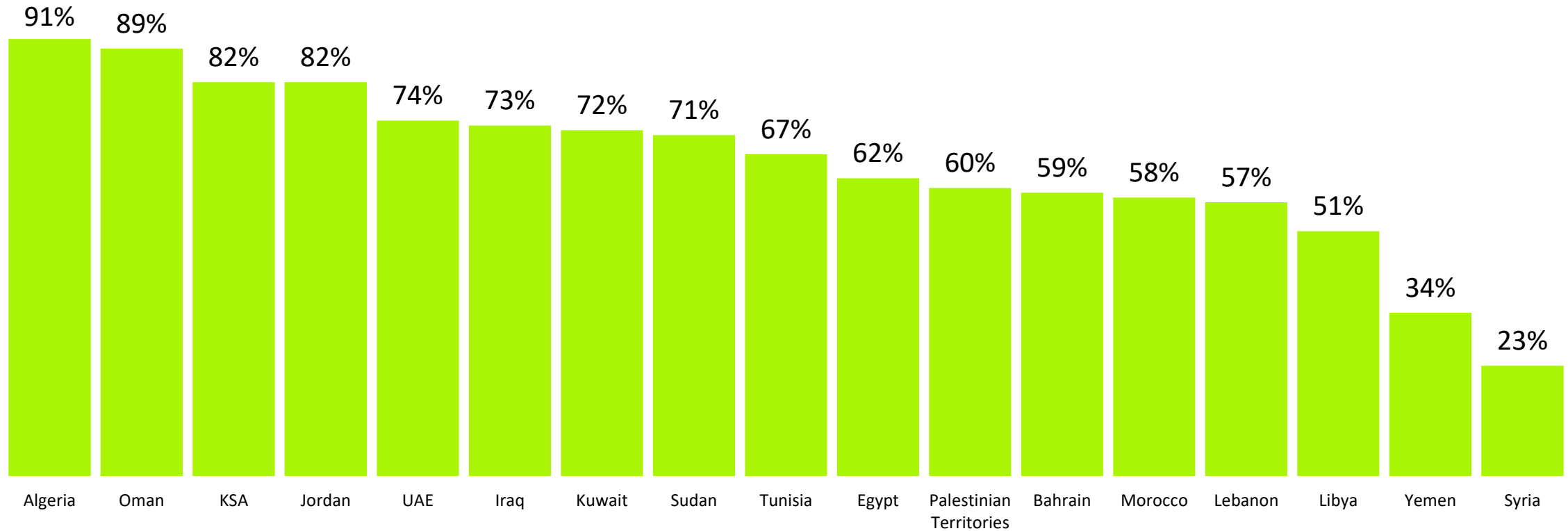
(Not including 'Don't know')

# More young Arabs want to preserve their cultural identity except for youth in Syria and Yemen



Which of the following is more important to you?

(Showing percentage , among all, saying: 'Preserving our religious and cultural identity')

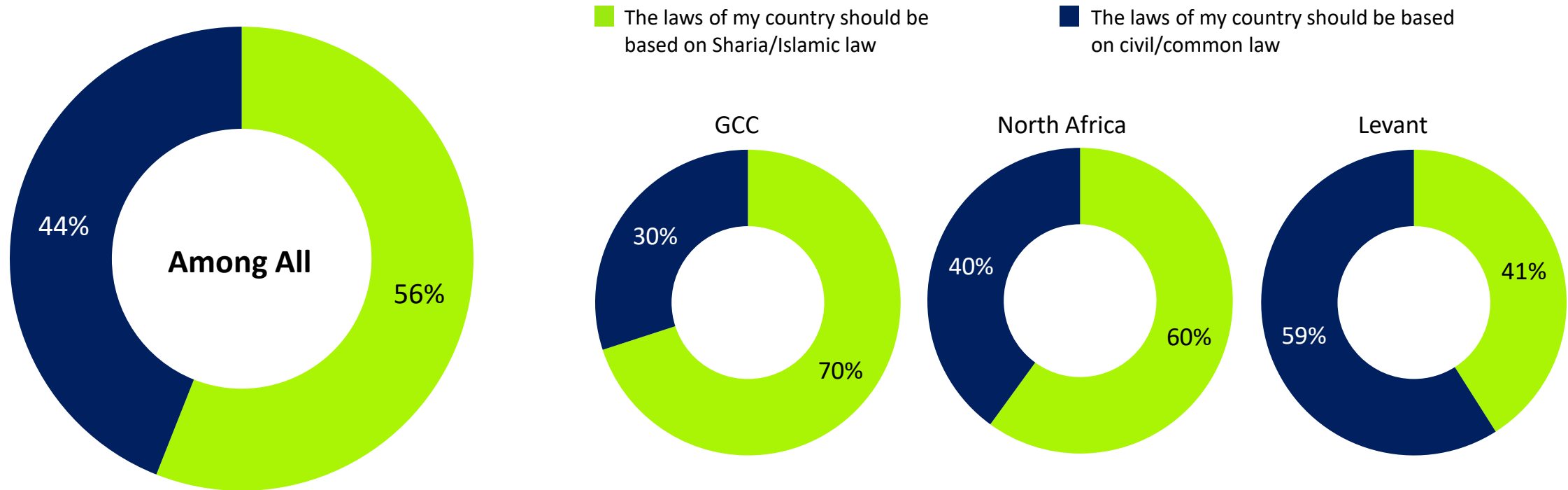


# A majority of young Arabs say the laws in their country should be based on Shariah



Which of the following is closer to your point of view?

*(Showing percentage, among all, answering)*



# 2

## MY LIVELIHOOD

Young Arabs are concerned about the quality of education, lack of jobs and rising personal debt, and many are turning to entrepreneurship, rather than depend on government or private sector jobs

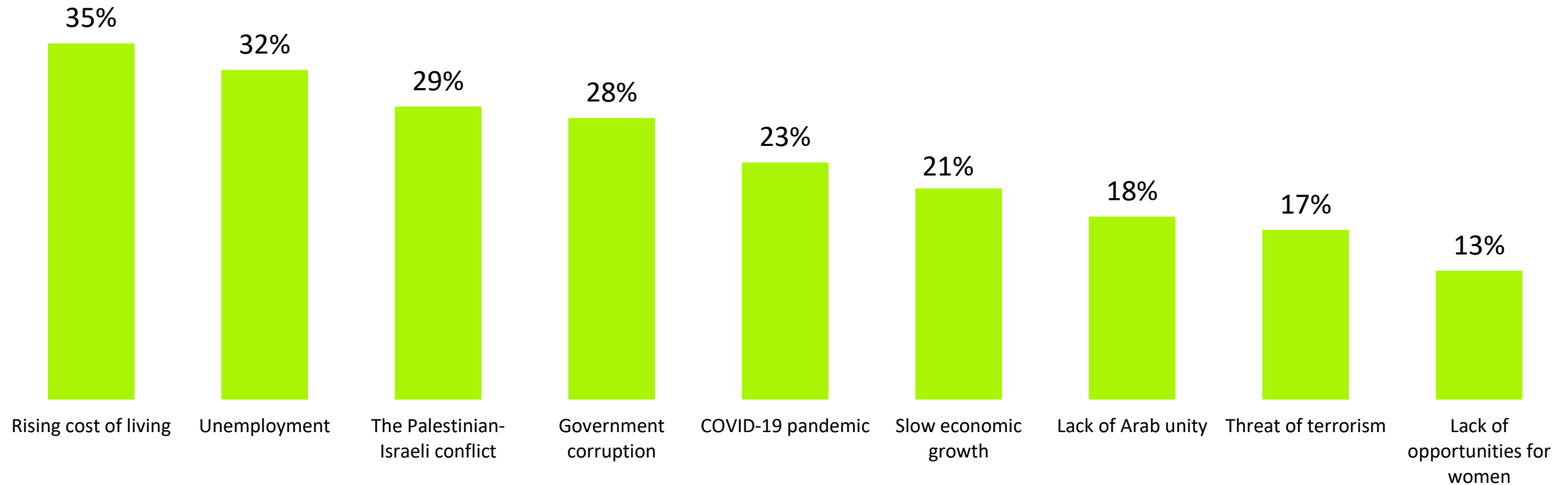


# Young Arabs say rising cost of living and unemployment are the biggest obstacles facing the region



What do you believe is the biggest obstacle facing the Middle East?

(Showing percentage, among all)

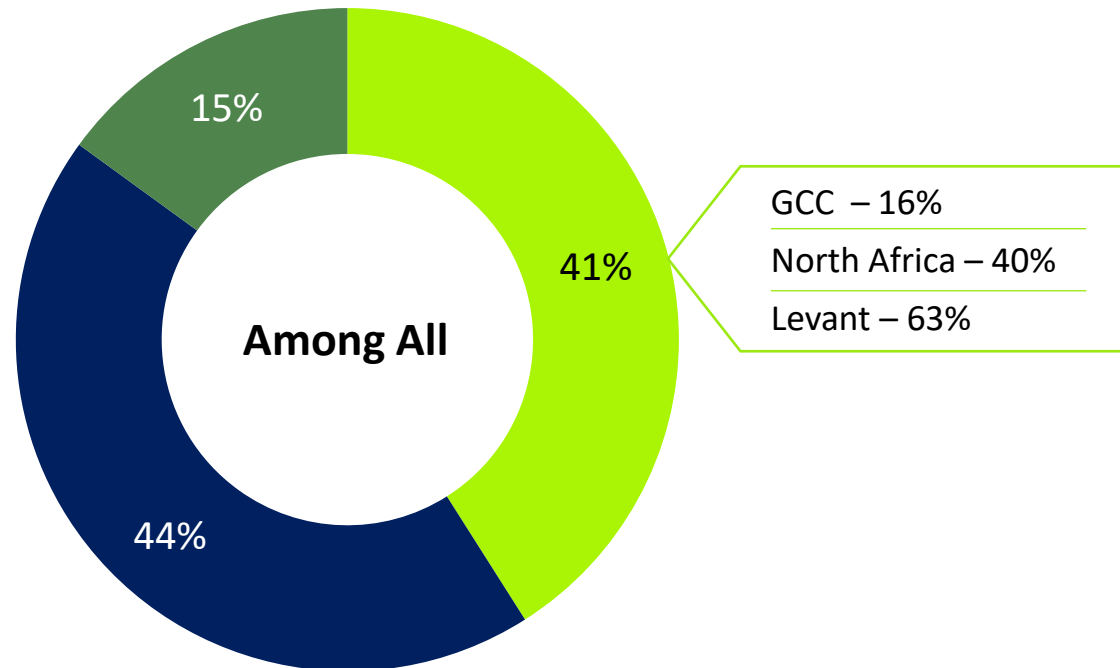


**Rising cost of living and unemployment have remained the top concern of young Arabs across all 14 years of the survey, except in 2016 and 2017, when the rise of Daesh and the threat of terrorism ranked higher**

# More than a third of young Arabs struggle to meet their basic expenses, rising to more than two-thirds in Levant

Which of the following best describes you when it comes to paying for the expenses you incur on a regular basis?

*(Showing percentage, among all)*



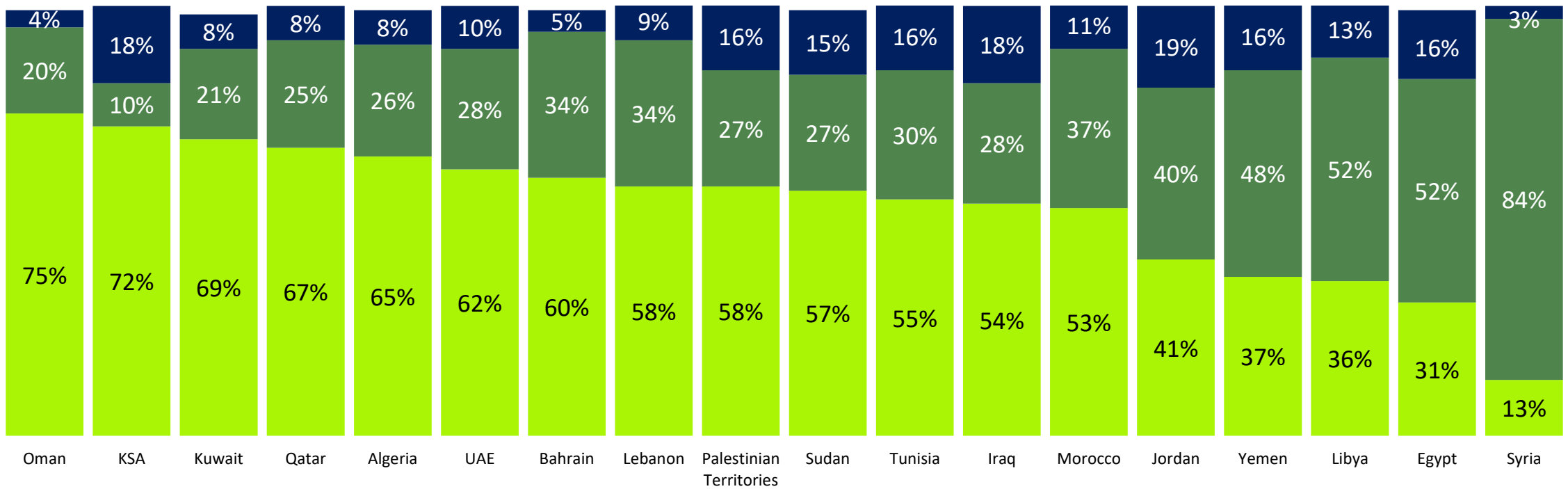
- I struggle to pay my expenses in full
- I am able to pay my expenses in full, but usually have no money left for savings
- I am able to pay my expenses in full, and usually have some money left for savings

# Most young Arabs look for financial support from their family

Which of the following applies to you?

(Showing percentage, among all)

■ I give regular financial support to my wider family
 ■ I neither give nor receive regular financial support from my family
 ■ I receive regular financial support from my family



(Not including 'Don't know')

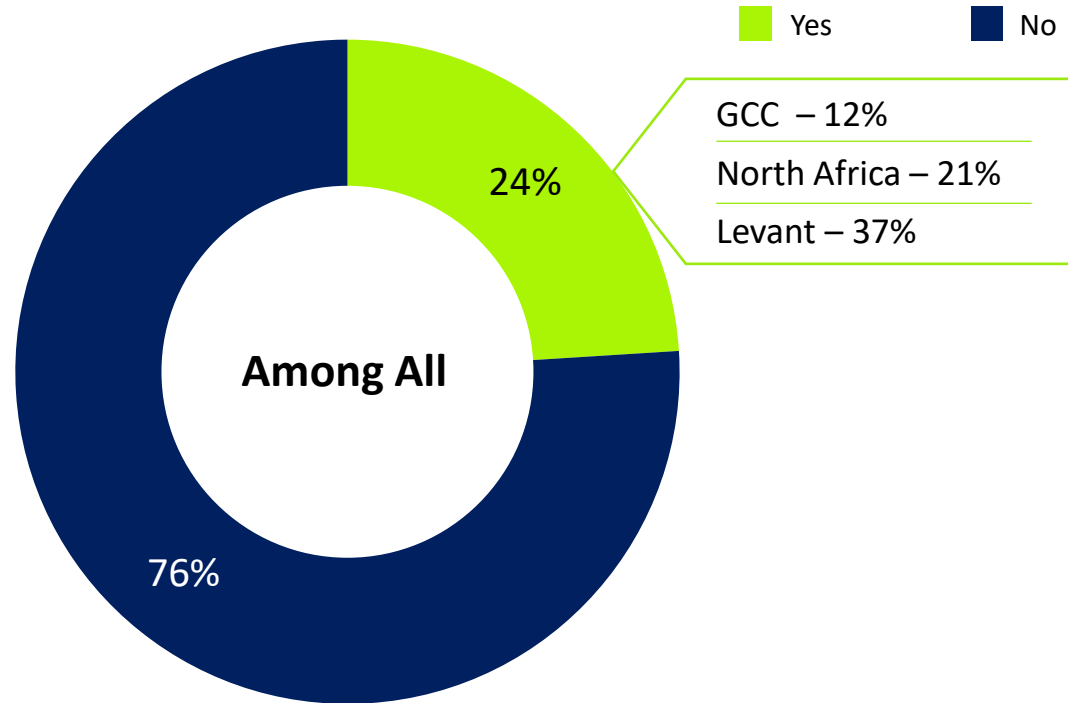
# One-fourth of young Arabs are in personal debt

Student loans, car loans and healthcare bills are the top reasons



Are you currently in debt?

(Showing percentage, among all)

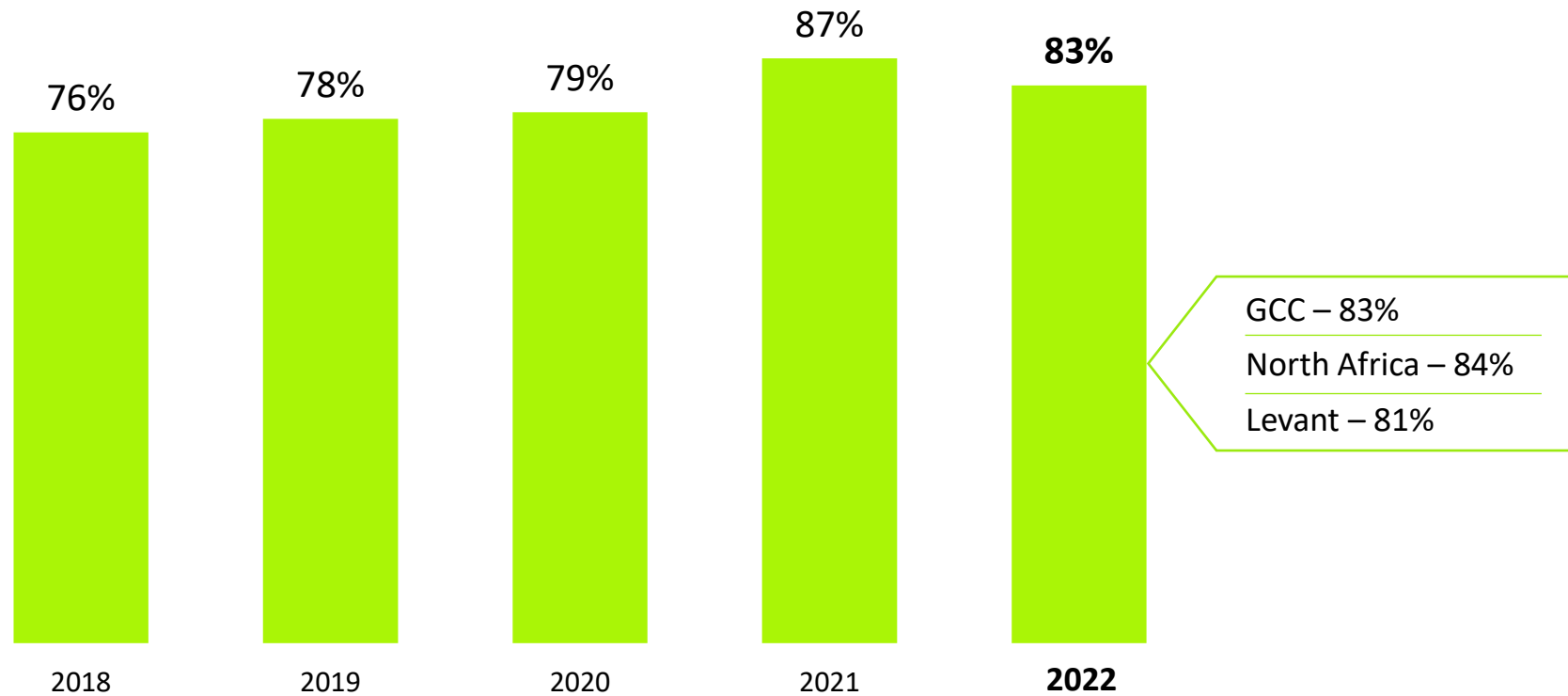


Region	Reason for debt
GCC	Car loans (28%), Credit cards (24%), Excessive shopping (13%)
North Africa	Student loans (18%), Business loan (17%), Medical Bills (15%)
Levant	Student loans (41%), Medical bills (17%), Car loans (10%)

# 8 in 10 young Arabs are concerned about the quality of education in their country

How concerned are you about the quality of education in your country?

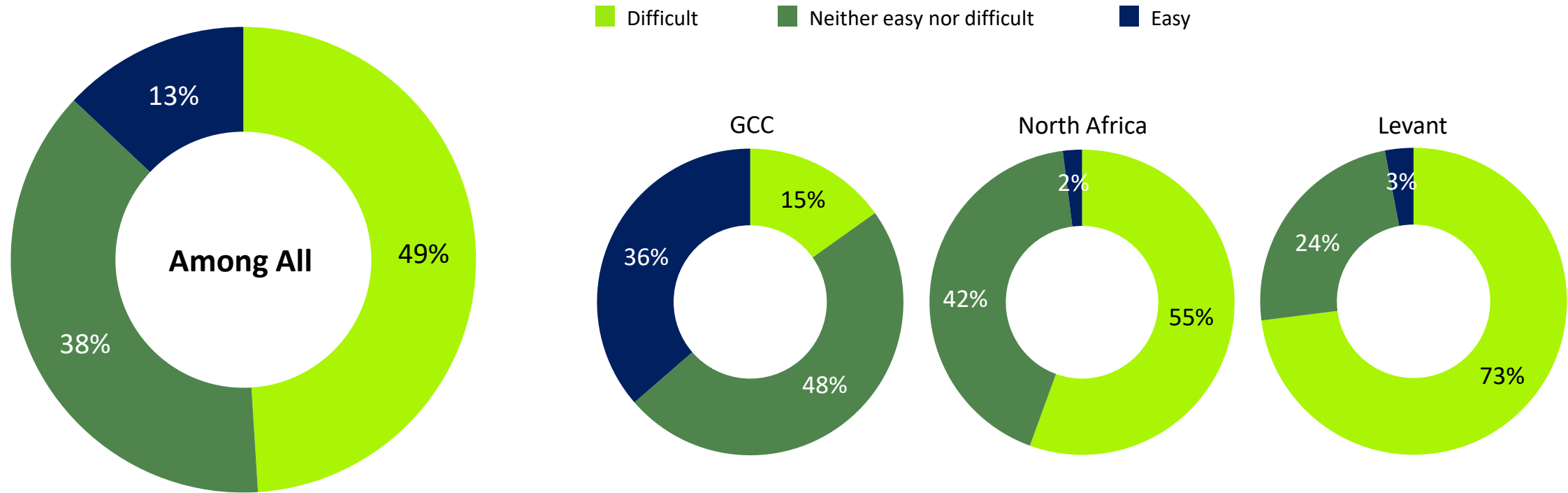
*Showing percentage, among all, saying 'very concerned and somewhat concerned'*



# Half of Arab youth believe it would be difficult to find a job in their country



Thinking about the job market in your country, would you say that finding a new job in your country is currently?

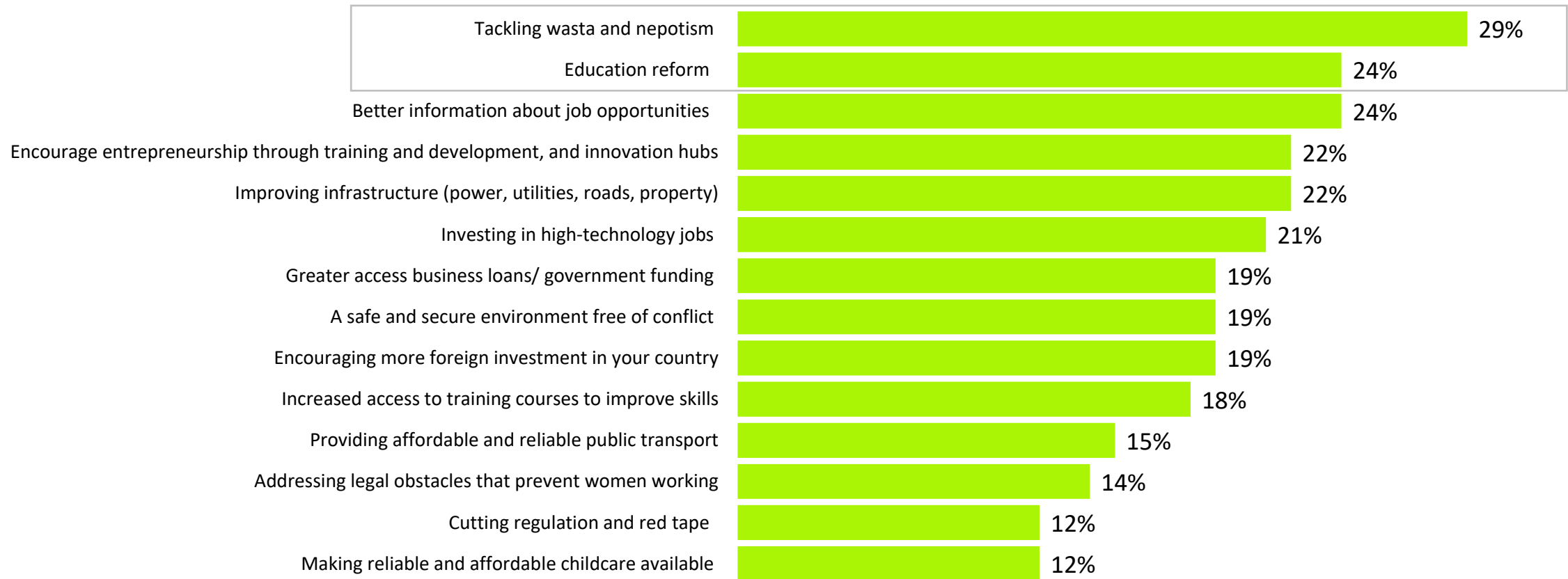


(Not including 'Don't know')

# To create more jobs, governments must prioritise tackling corruption and education reform



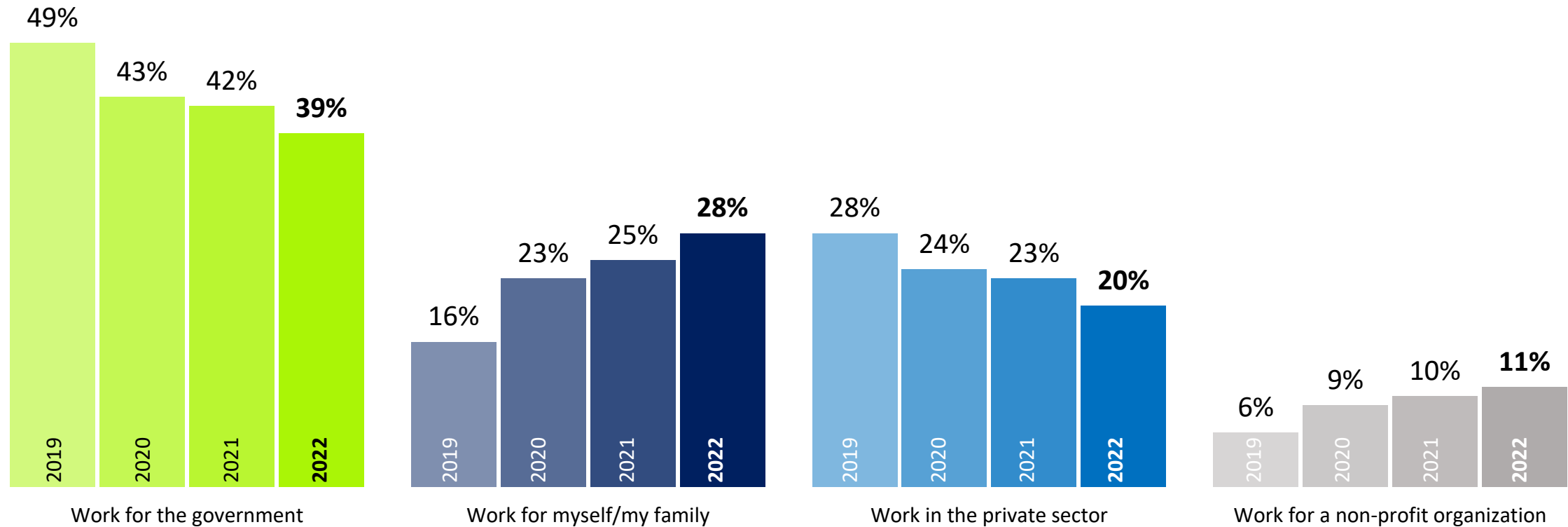
Now thinking specifically about jobs, which of the following, if any, should be your government’s top priorities to create more jobs?



# More young Arabs are interested in working for themselves

Thinking about your future career, would you prefer to...?

(Showing percentage, among all)



(Not including, 'Don't know')



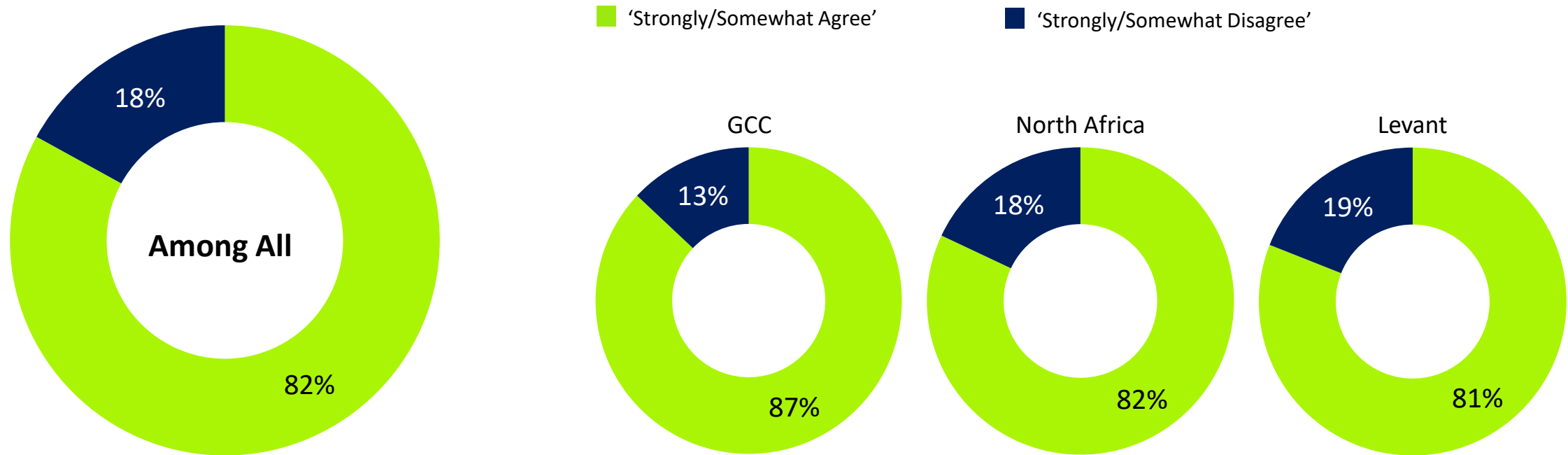
# 3

## MY POLITICS

The Arab Spring generation says promoting stability is more important than democracy

# Overwhelming majority of young Arabs say promoting stability is more important than democracy

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement, 'Promoting stability is more important than promoting democracy'?

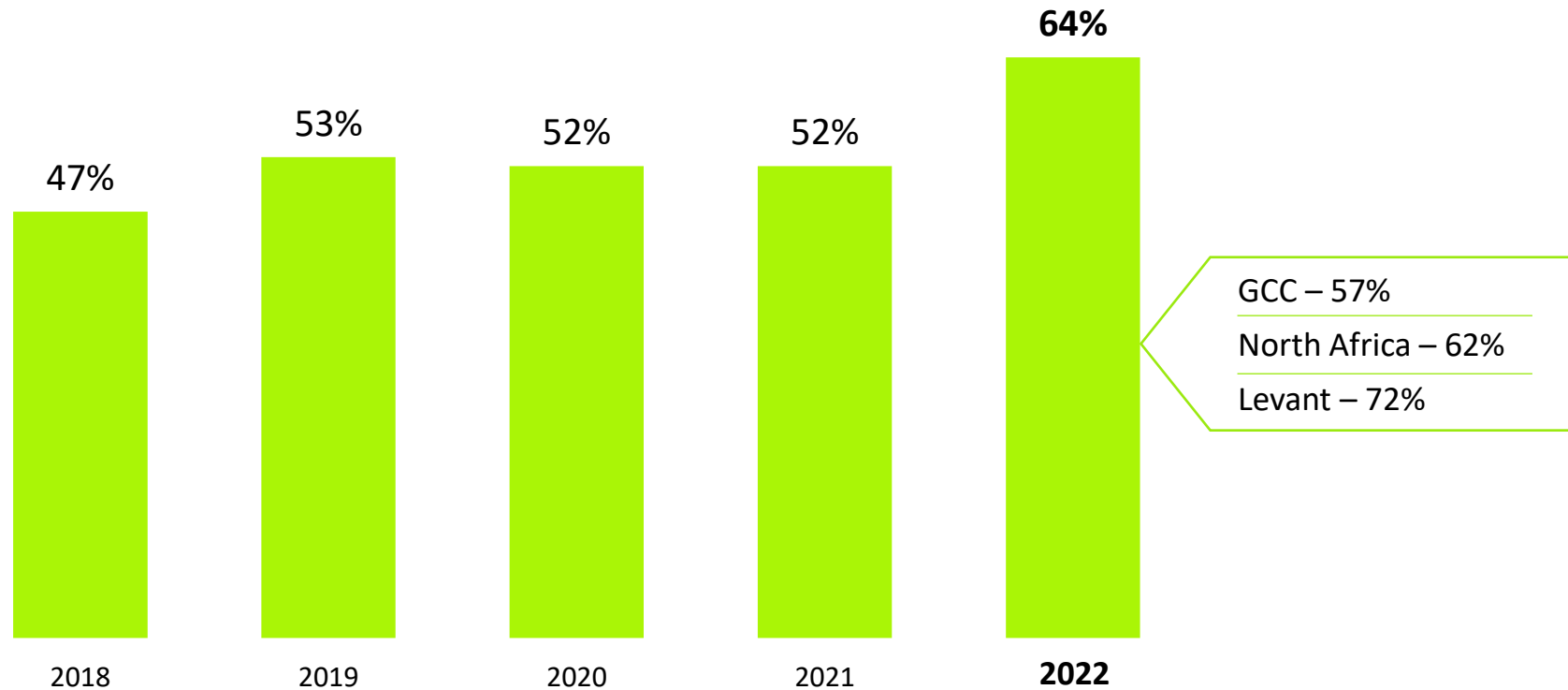


In contrast, our 2009 survey, prior to the events of Arab Spring, reported 92% of young Arabs saying 'living in a democratic country' was their single most important priority

# Nearly two thirds say democracy will never work in the Middle East, rising to about three quarters in the Levant

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement, 'Democracy will never work in the Middle East'?

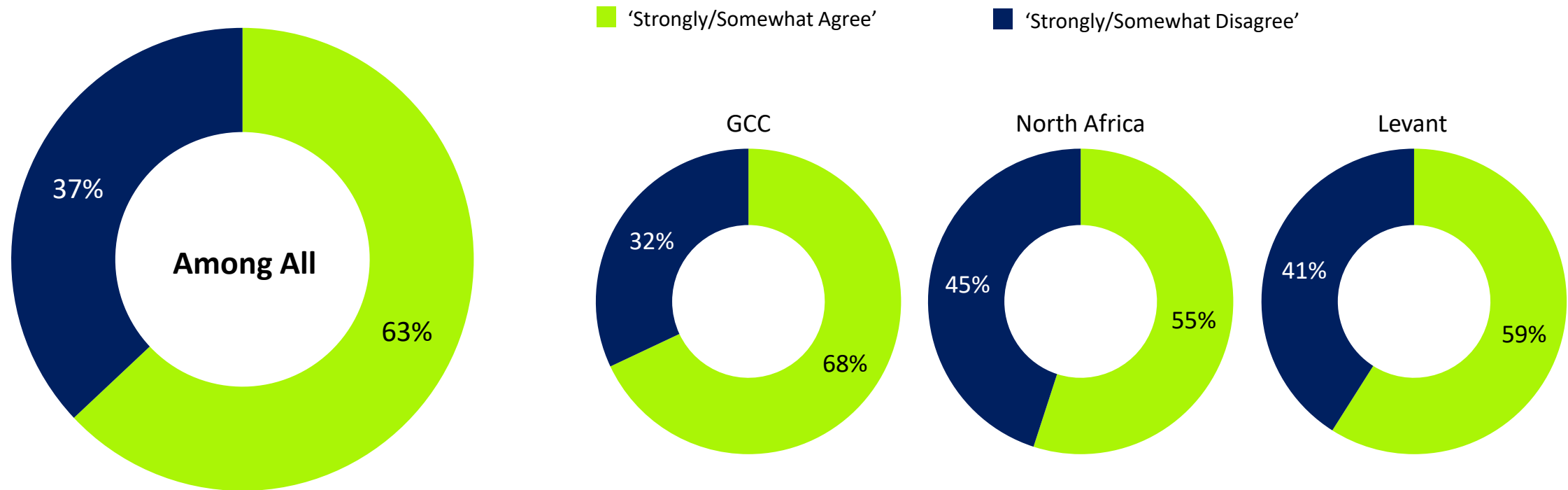
*(Showing percentage strongly agreeing)*



# A majority of young Arabs say they enjoy more rights due to the Arab Spring, more so in the GCC



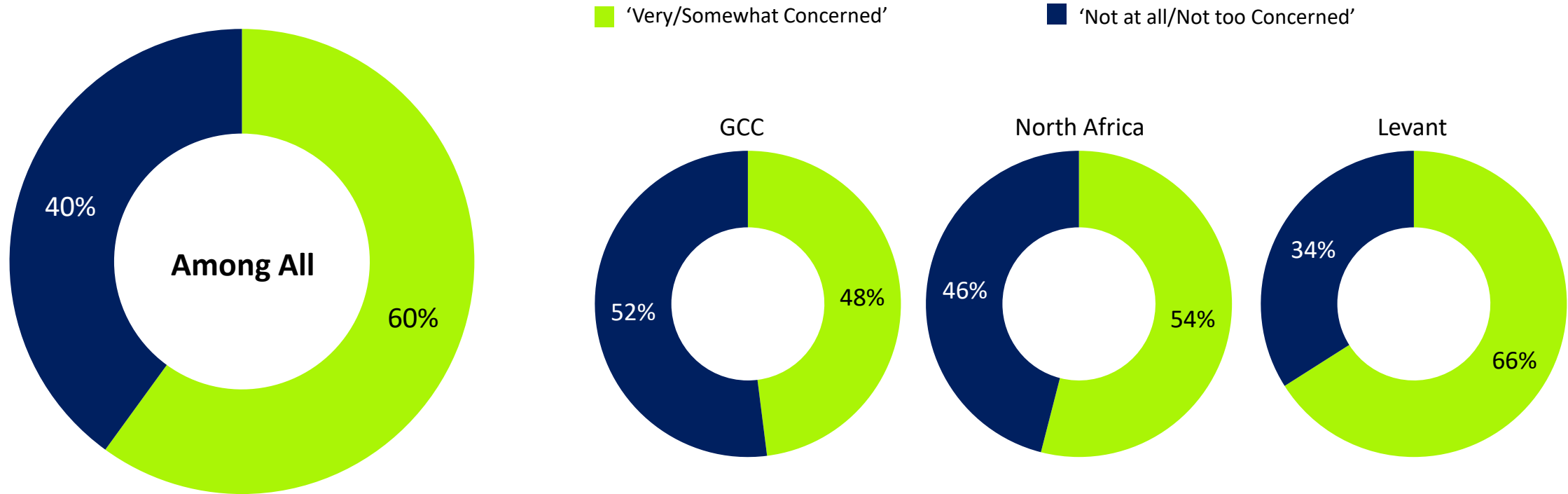
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement, “Young Arabs like myself have more rights and freedoms today because of the Arab Spring”



# However, many young Arabs say they are concerned about the increased role of government in their daily life



How concerned are you with the, “Increased role of government in your daily life?”

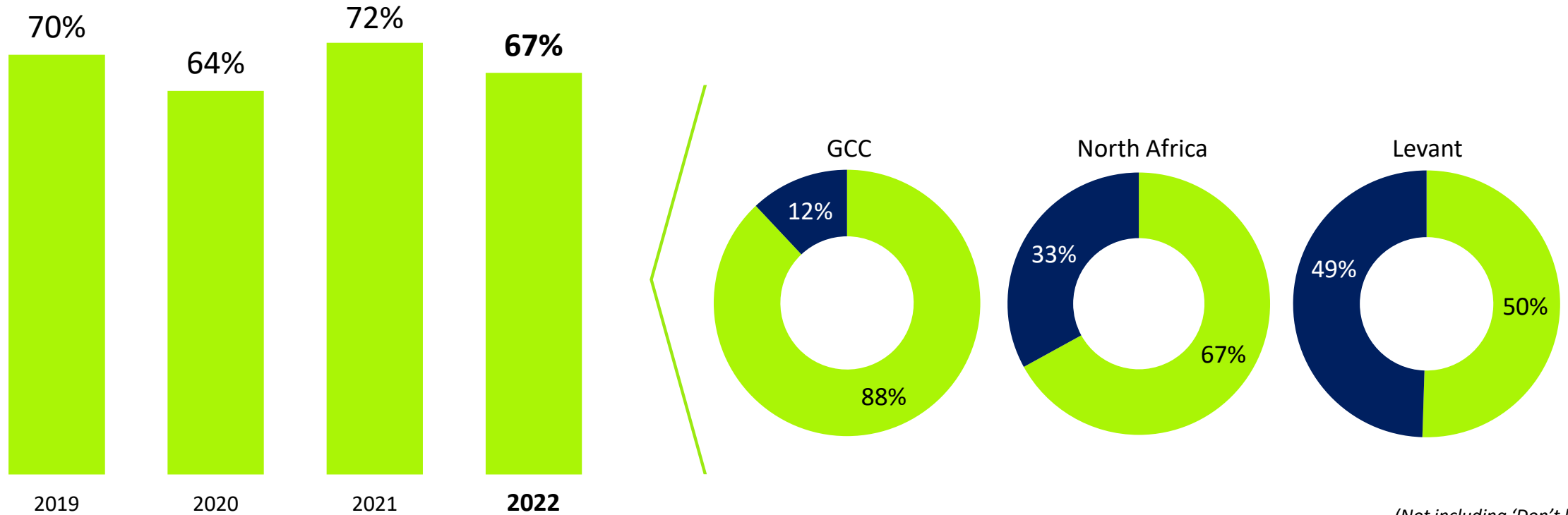


# Two-thirds of young Arabs say their voice matters to their leadership



How strongly do you agree or disagree that your voice matters to your country's leadership?

*(Showing percentage strongly agreeing)*

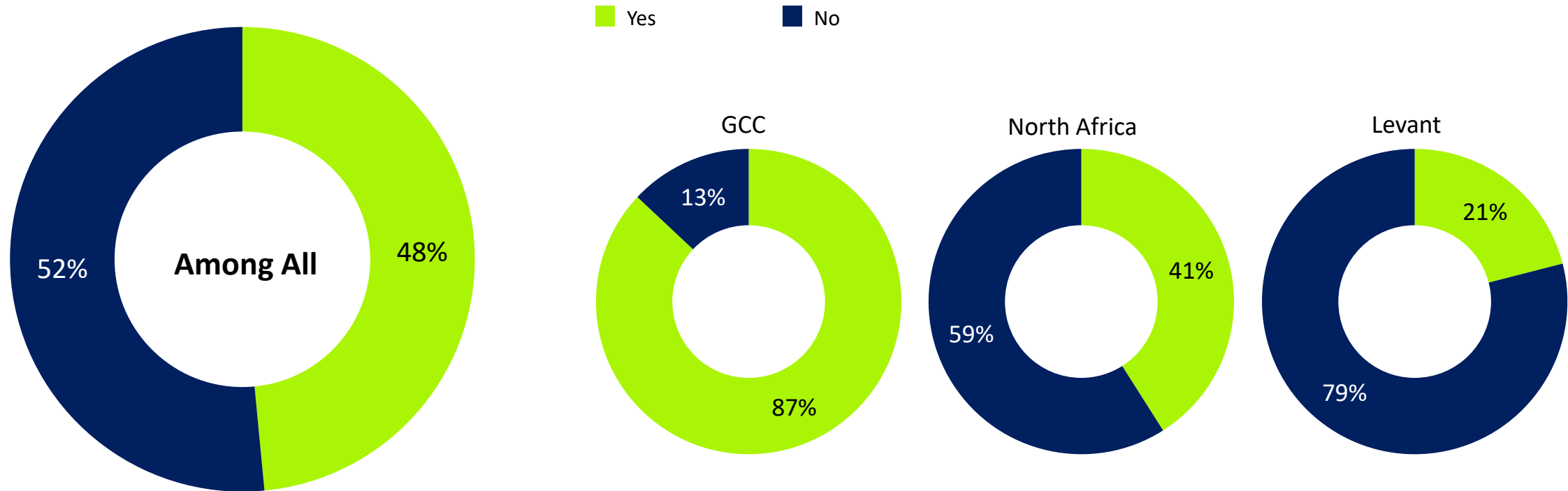


*(Not including 'Don't know')*

# But less than half, except in the GCC, feel their governments have the right policies to address their issues



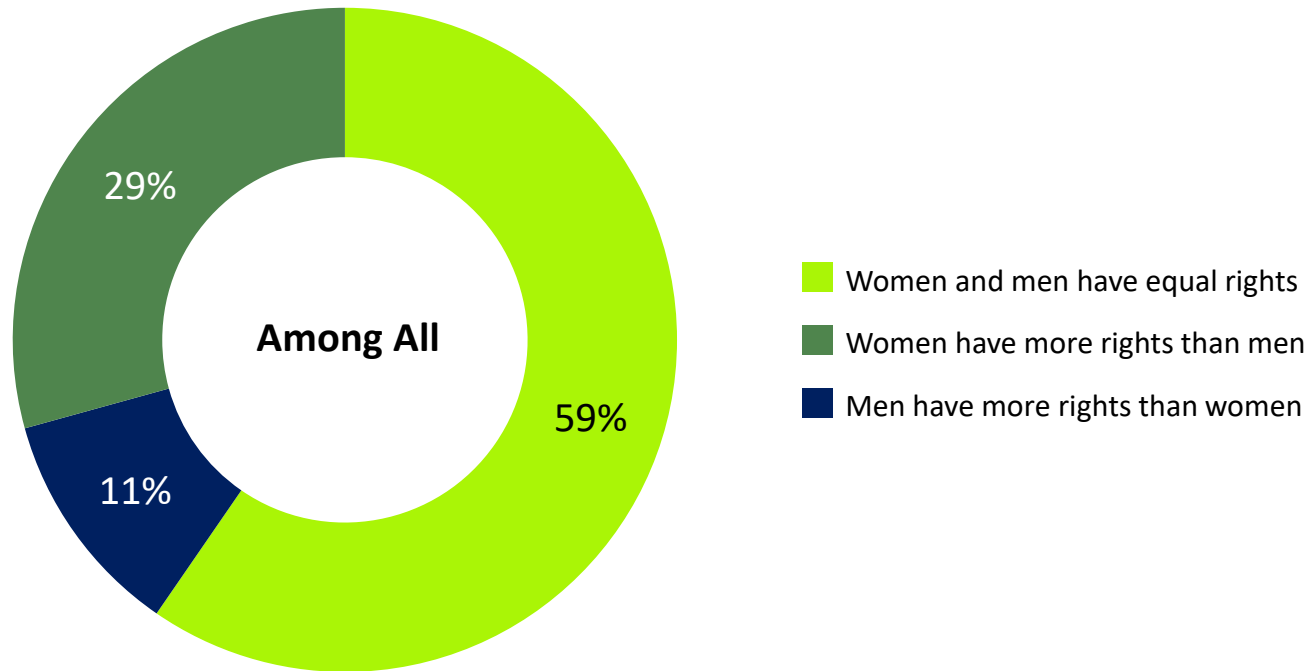
Do you think your government has the right policies to address the issues most important to young people?



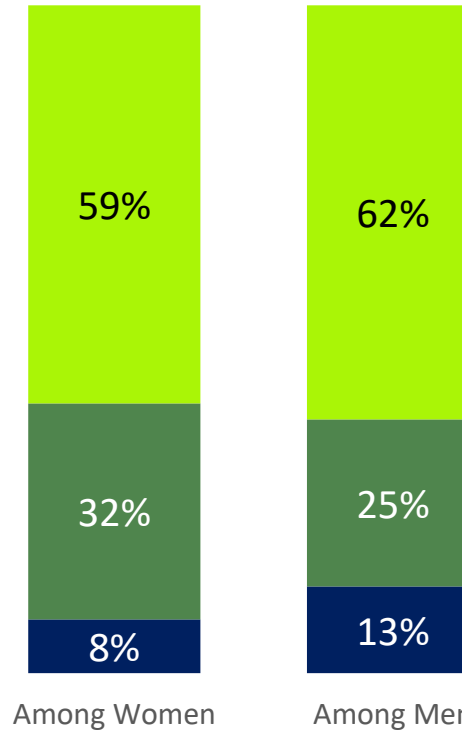
# A majority of young Arab women and men say they have equal rights



Which of the following is closer to your opinion? In my country ...



(Not including, 'Don't know')

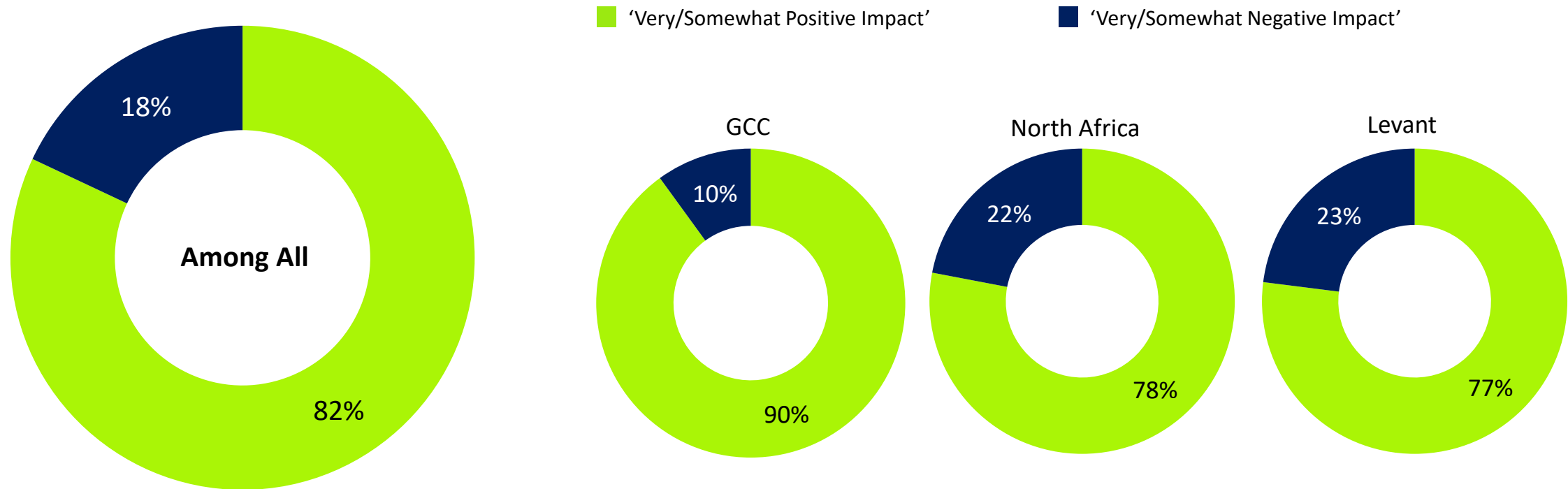




# Most young Arabs believe having more women in the workplace will benefit their country



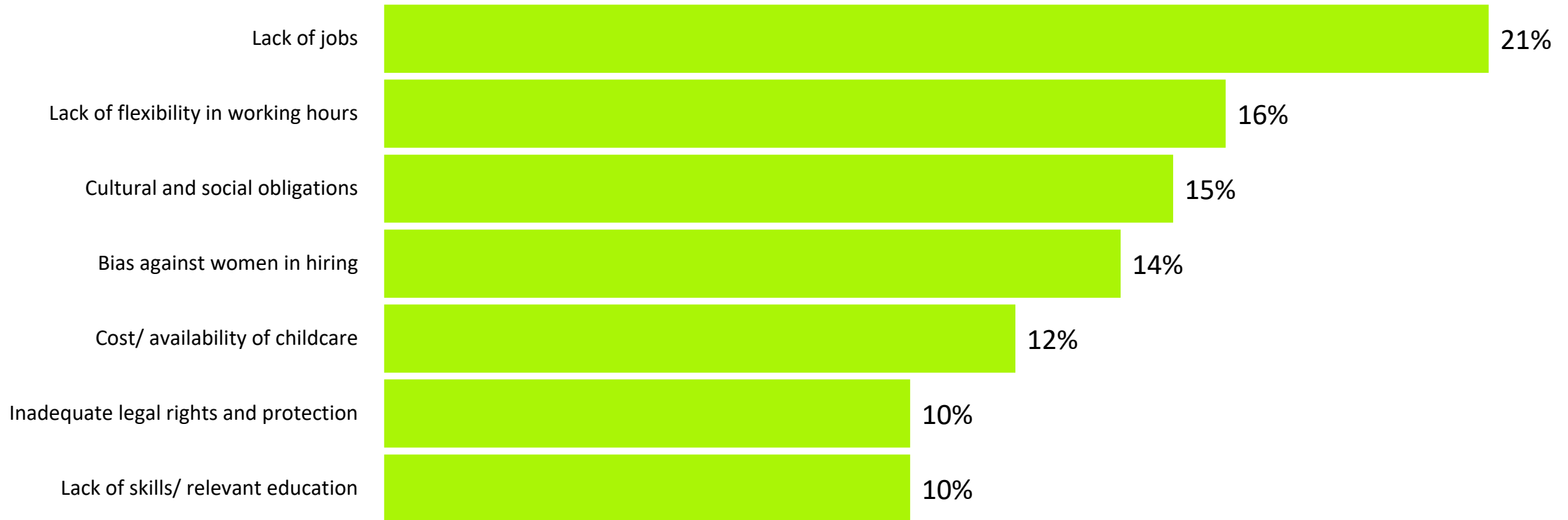
As more women enter the workplace in your country, will that have a positive or negative impact on your country?



# Lack of jobs and flexible working hours, social obligations and bias are holding women back



Which of the following, if any, do you think is the main barrier stopping more women accessing secure and well-paid jobs in your country?



# 4

## MY GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

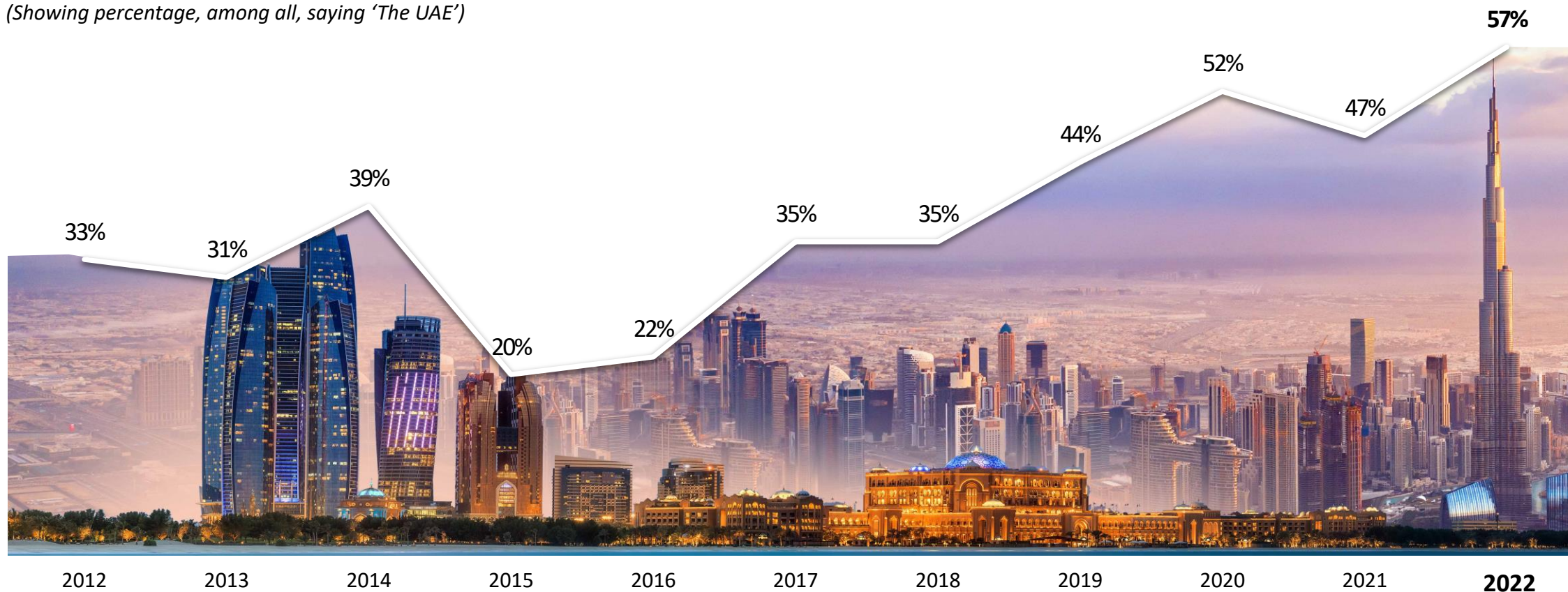
For the 11th consecutive year, most young Arabs say the UAE is the country they would most like to live in and their own nations to emulate; dynamic shift in outlook on foreign affairs, with China emerging as top ally

# Nearly two-thirds of young Arabs say the UAE is the country they would most like to live in – a record



Which country in the world, if any, would you like to live in?

*(Showing percentage, among all, saying 'The UAE')*

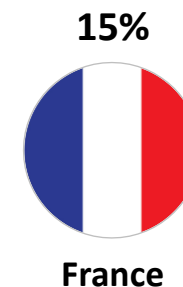


# Young Arabs view the UAE as the top country to live in for the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year far surpassing other nations



Which country in the world, if any, would you like to live in?

*(Showing percentage from among all the top five countries)*



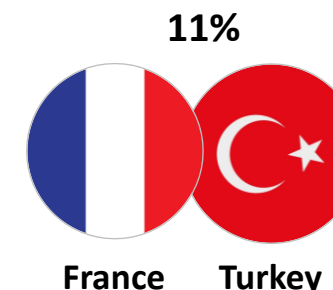
Top 5 Countries to Live In									
2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE
France	France	US	US	US	US	Canada	Canada	US	US
US	US	UK	Germany	Germany	KSA	US	US	Canada	Canada
Turkey	Turkey	KSA	Canada	KSA	Canada	KSA	Turkey	UK	France
KSA	KSA	Qatar	Qatar	Canada	Germany	Germany	UK	Germany	Germany

# The UAE is also the country most Arab youth would like their own to emulate



Which country in the world, if any, would you like your own nation to emulate?

(Showing percentage from among all the top five countries)



Top 5 Countries to Emulate									
2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE	UAE
US	France	US	US	US	US	US	US	US	US
France	US	Qatar	Germany	Germany	Canada	Canada	Japan	Germany	Canada
Turkey	Turkey	KSA	Canada	France	Germany	Japan	Turkey	Canada	Germany
China	China	UK	France	UK	KSA	Germany	Canada	Japan	France

# Young Arabs are drawn to the UAE for its growing economy and safe and secure environment

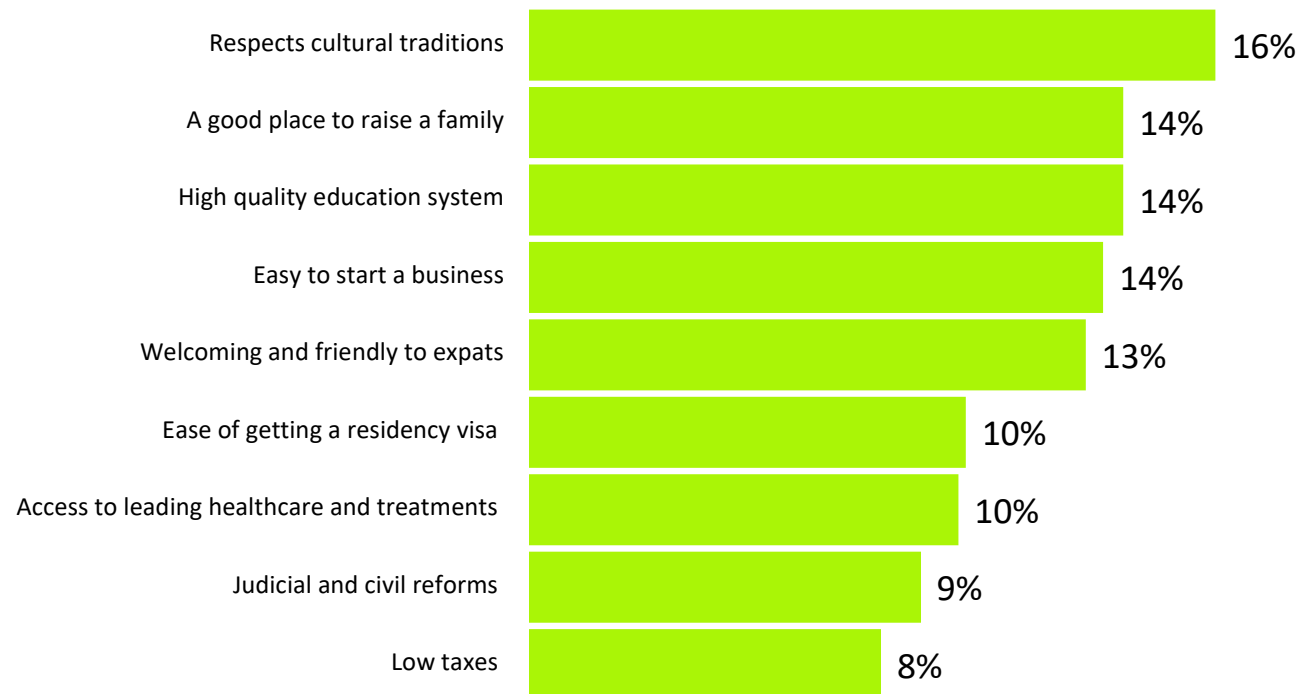


Now thinking specifically about the United Arab Emirates, which of the following phrases, if any, do you associate most strongly with the UAE?

## Top five associations with the UAE



## Other associations with the UAE

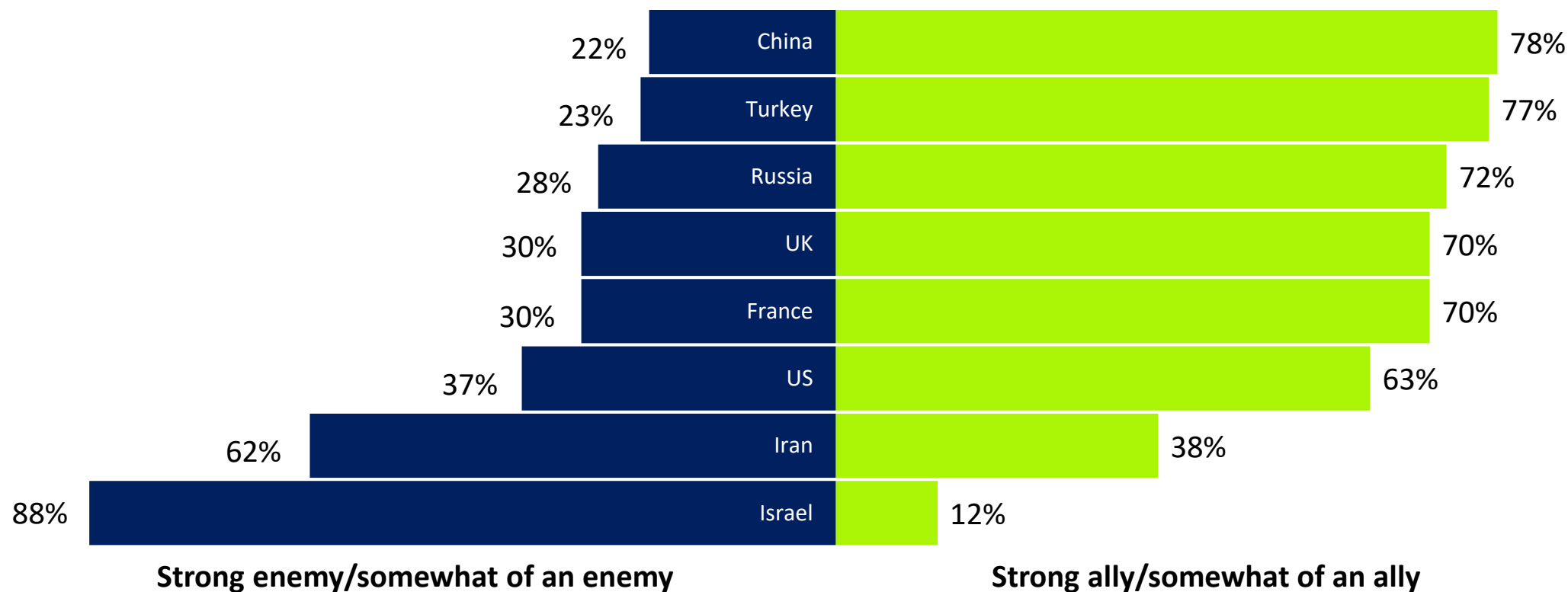


# Among non-Arab nations, China is seen by most young Arabs as their nation's ally followed by Turkey and Russia



Do you consider (country) an ally or enemy of your country?

*(Showing percentage among all)*



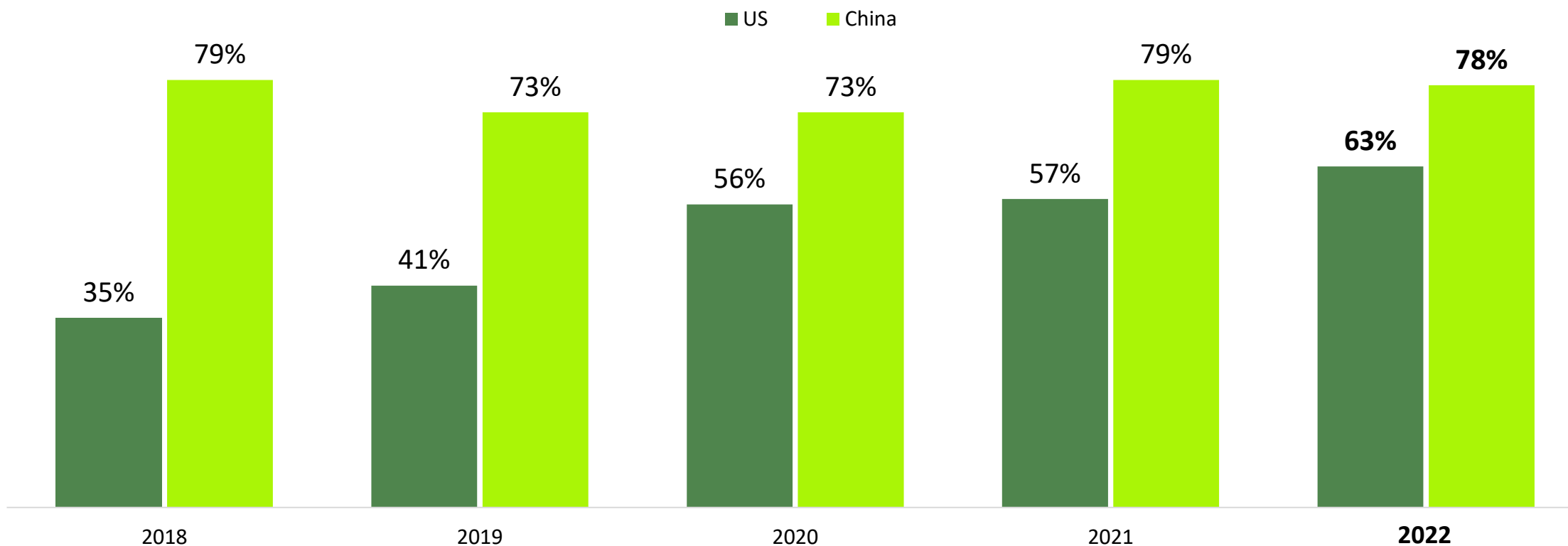


# In the past five years, China has consistently been seen by young Arabs as a stronger ally of their nation than the US



Do you consider (country) an ally of your country?

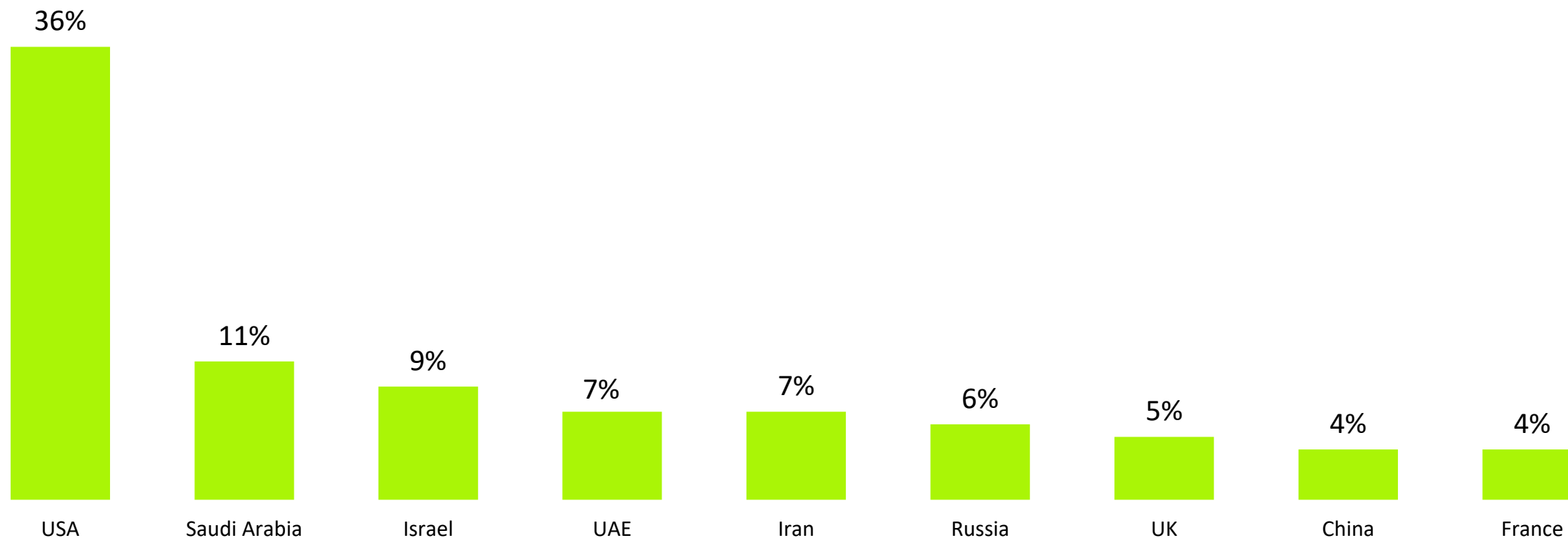
*(Showing percentage of youth describing China and the US as a strong ally or somewhat of an ally)*



## US continues to be seen as having the most influence in the Arab world

Which of the following countries, if any, has the most influence on the Arab world?

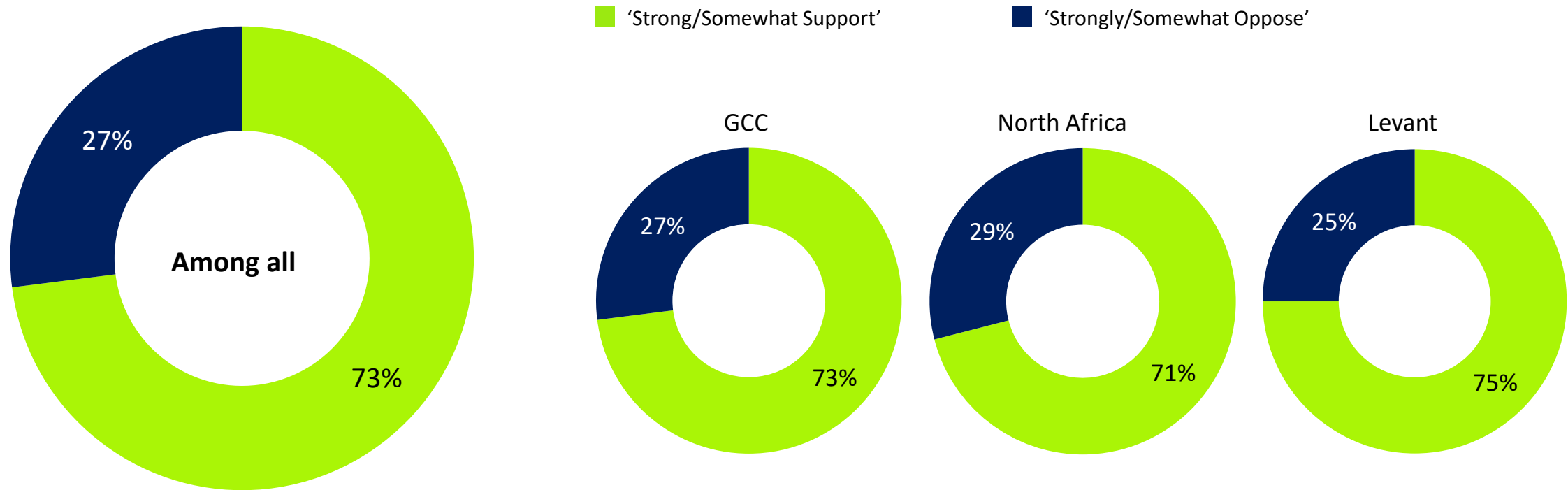
*(Showing percentage among all)*



# There is widespread support for US disengagement from the Middle East



How strongly do you support or oppose disengagement of the United States in the Middle East region?

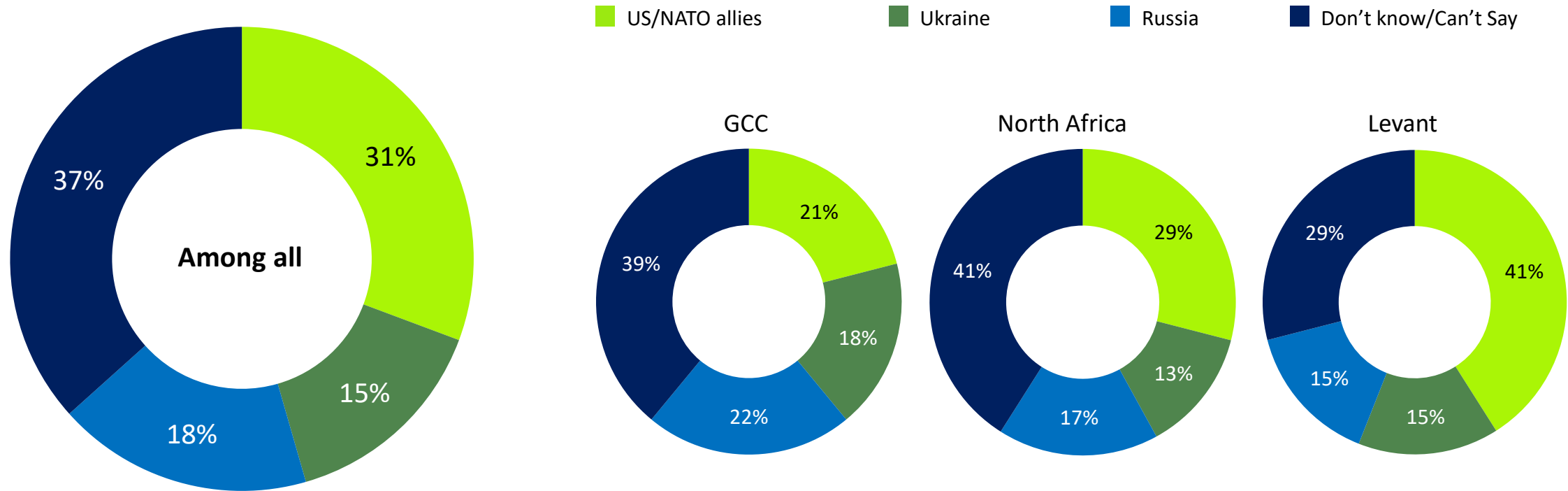


# The US and its NATO allies are seen as more responsible for the Ukraine war than Russia



Who is primarily responsible for the conflict between Russia and Ukraine?

(Showing percentage among all)



# 5

## MY LIFESTYLE

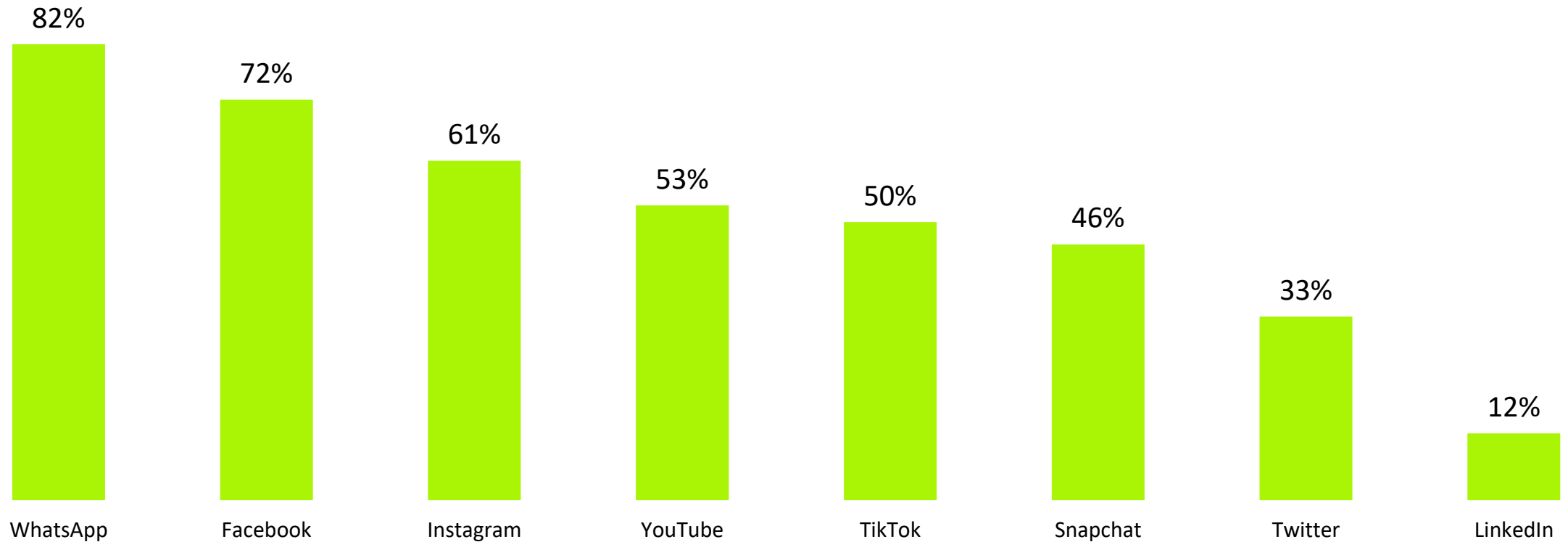
Young Arabs spend more time on social media and struggle to disconnect; online shopping is booming



# WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are the most commonly used social media platforms

How often do you visit or use each of the following

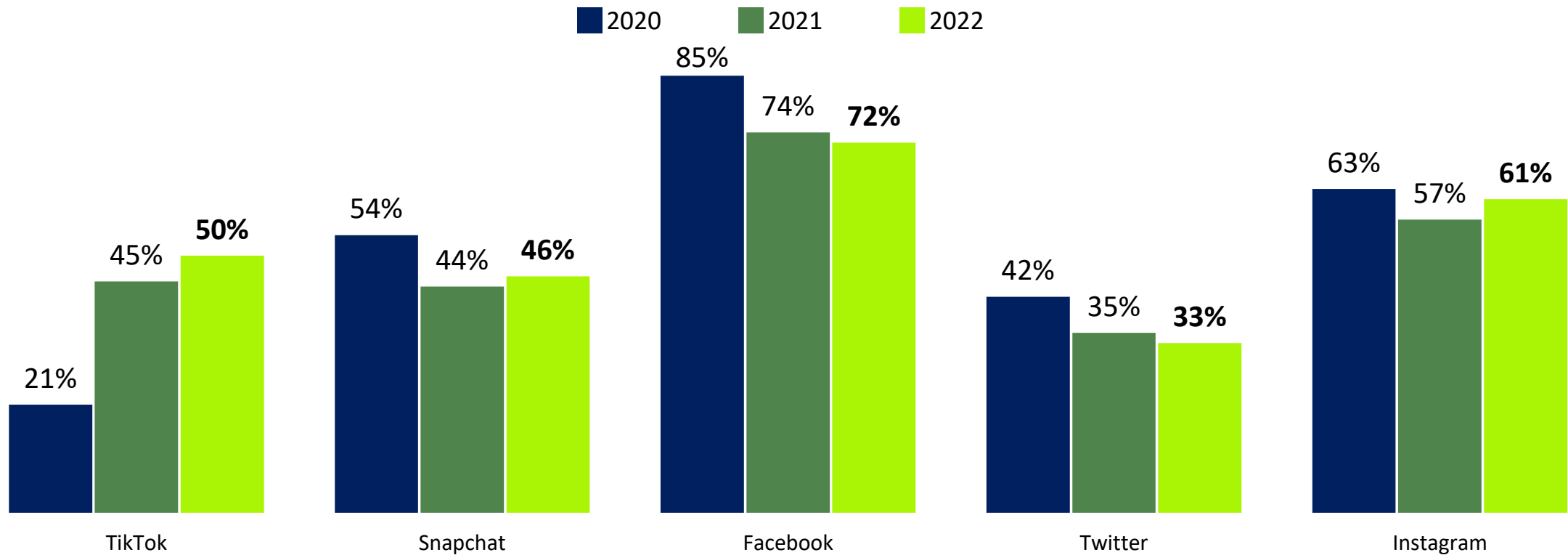
*(Showing percentage, among all, who use each daily)*



# Use of TikTok more than doubled in three years while that of Facebook and Twitter declined

How often do you visit or use each of the following?

*(Showing percentage who use each daily)*

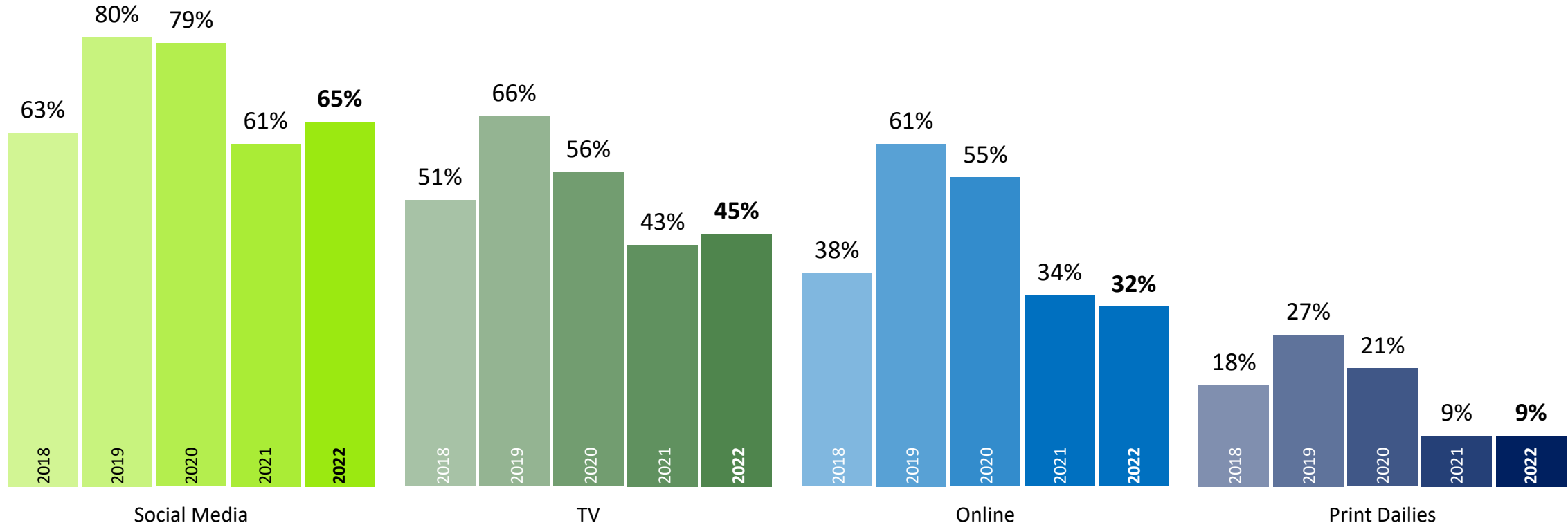


# News consumption is declining with social media being the most important source of news



Where do you get your news?

(Showing percentage among all)



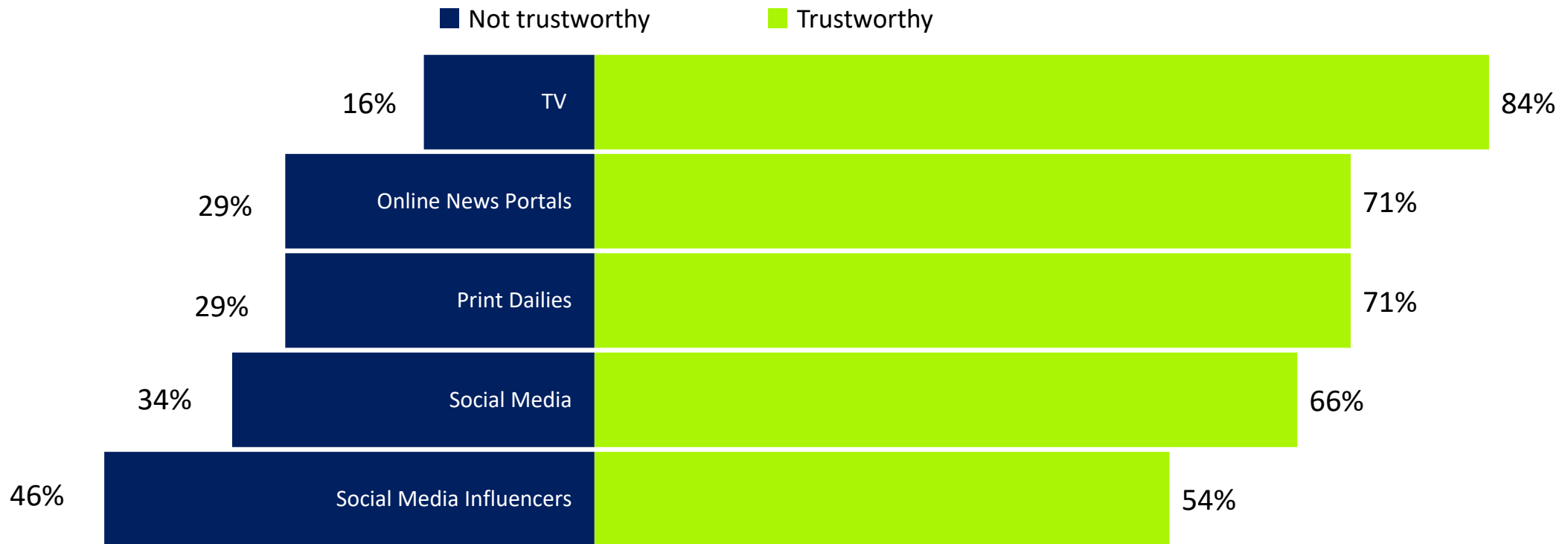


# TV, newspapers and online portals are seen as more trustworthy than social media or by influencers



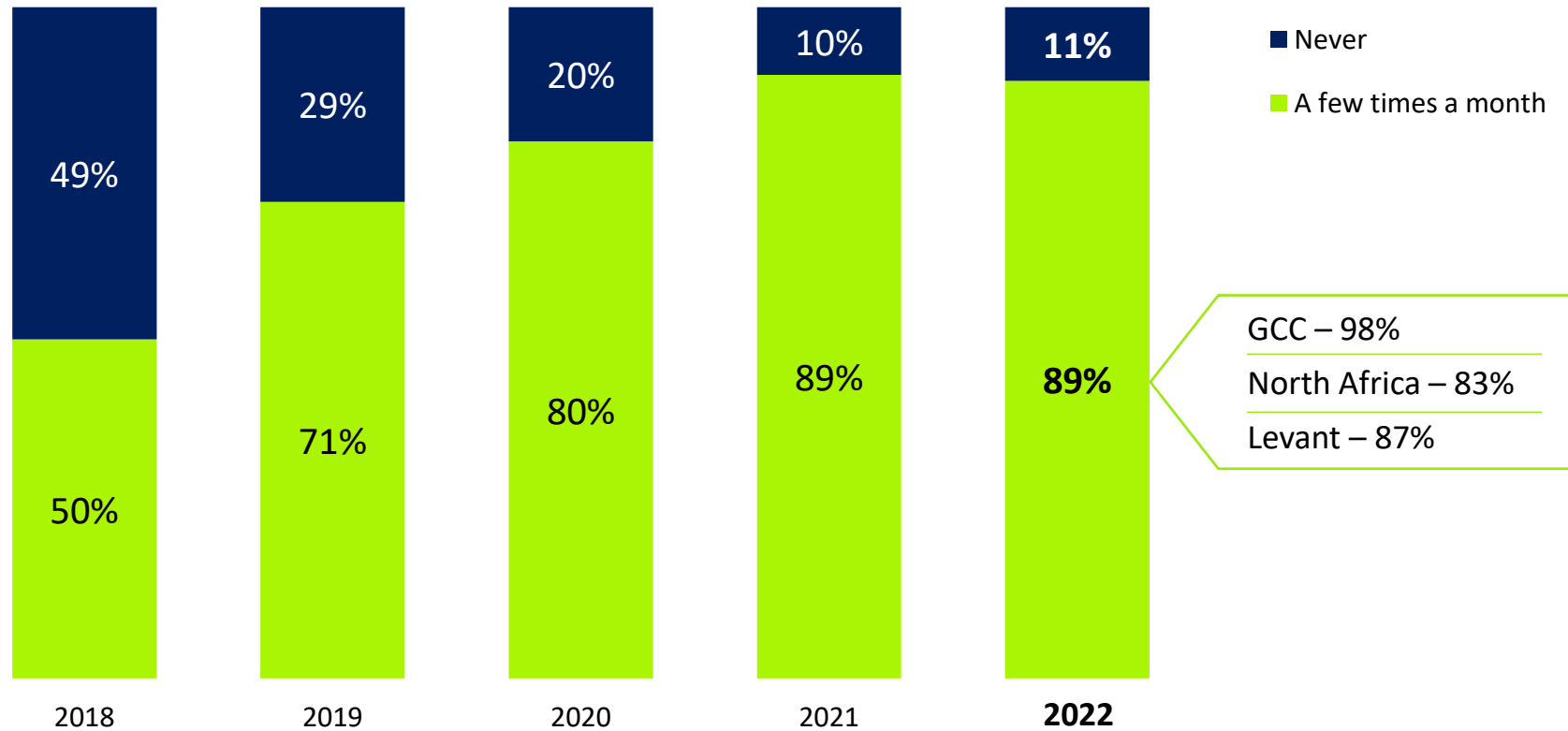
How trustworthy do you think is each of the following is as a source of news?

*(Showing percentage among all)*



# The number of young Arabs shopping online has nearly doubled in five years

How frequently, if at all, do you purchase products or services online via an app or website?



(Not including, 'Don't know')

# Youth are most likely to buy food, clothing, groceries and electronics online



Which of the following products or services, if any, have you purchased online in the past year?

*(Showing percentage among all)*

## Top products/services purchased online



**Food**  
48%



**Clothing**  
42%



**Groceries**  
27%

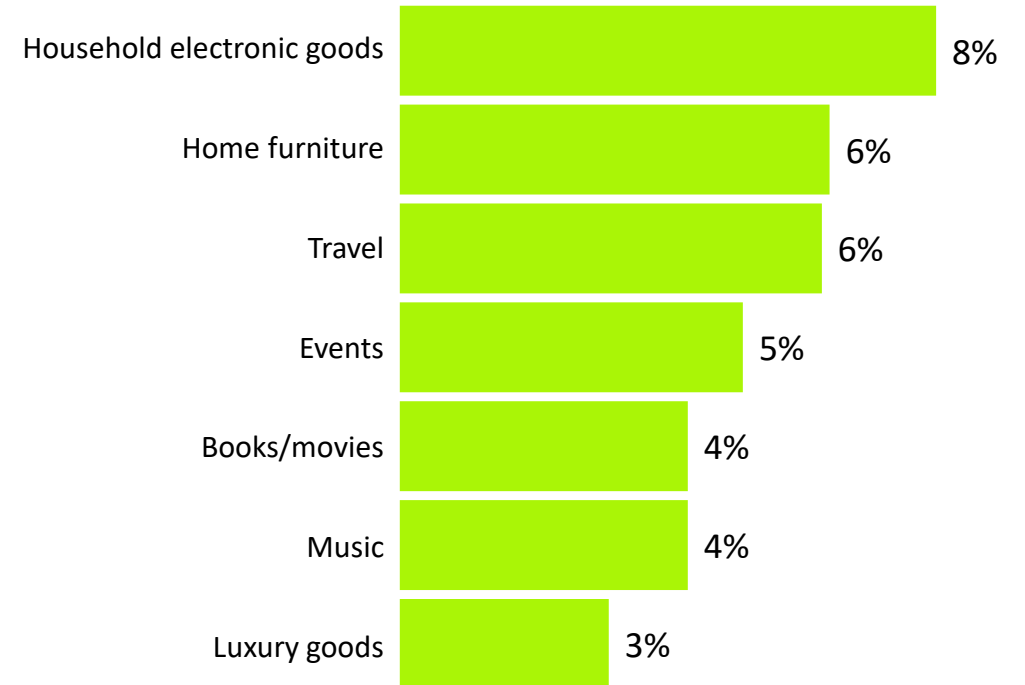


**Electronics**  
25%



**Beauty/Grooming**  
20%

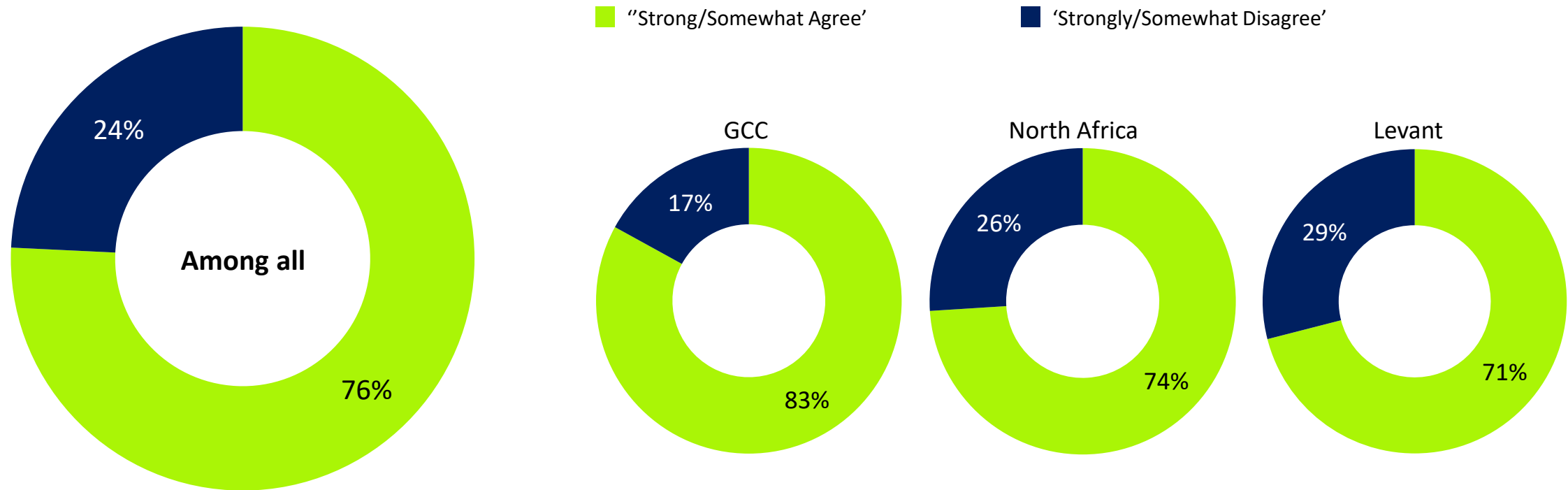
## Other online purchases



# Three-quarters of youth say they struggle to disconnect from social media



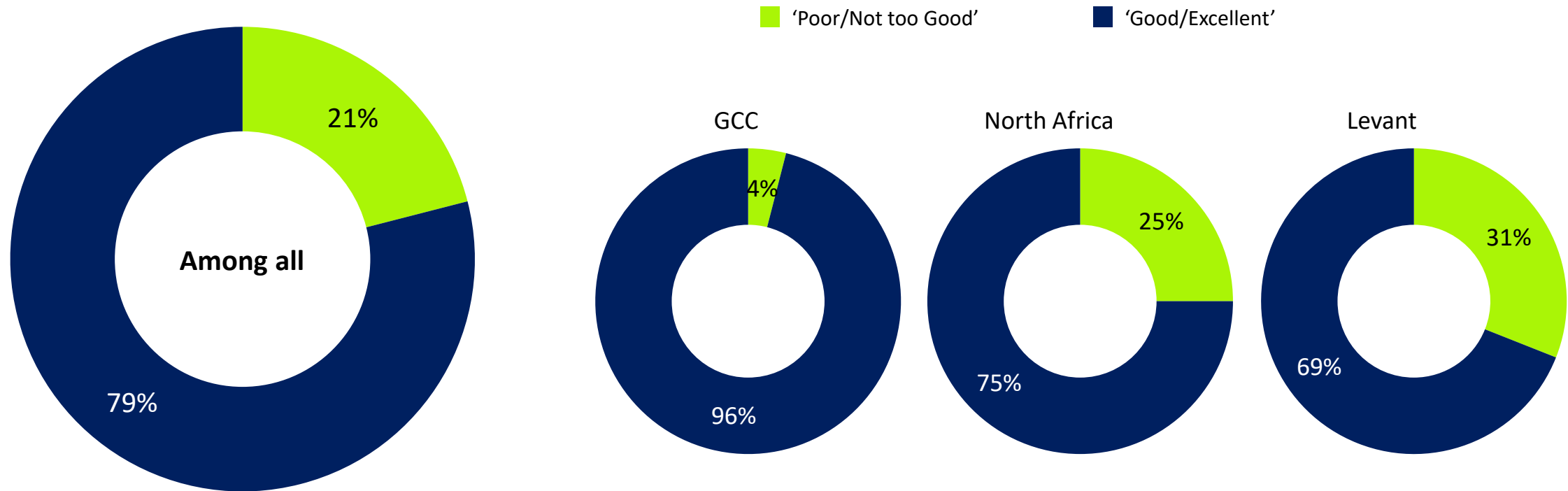
Do you agree or disagree that “I often find it difficult to disconnect from social media”



# One in five young Arabs, especially in North Africa and the Levant, describe their mental health as 'poor or not too good'



In general, how would you rate your current mental health and wellbeing?

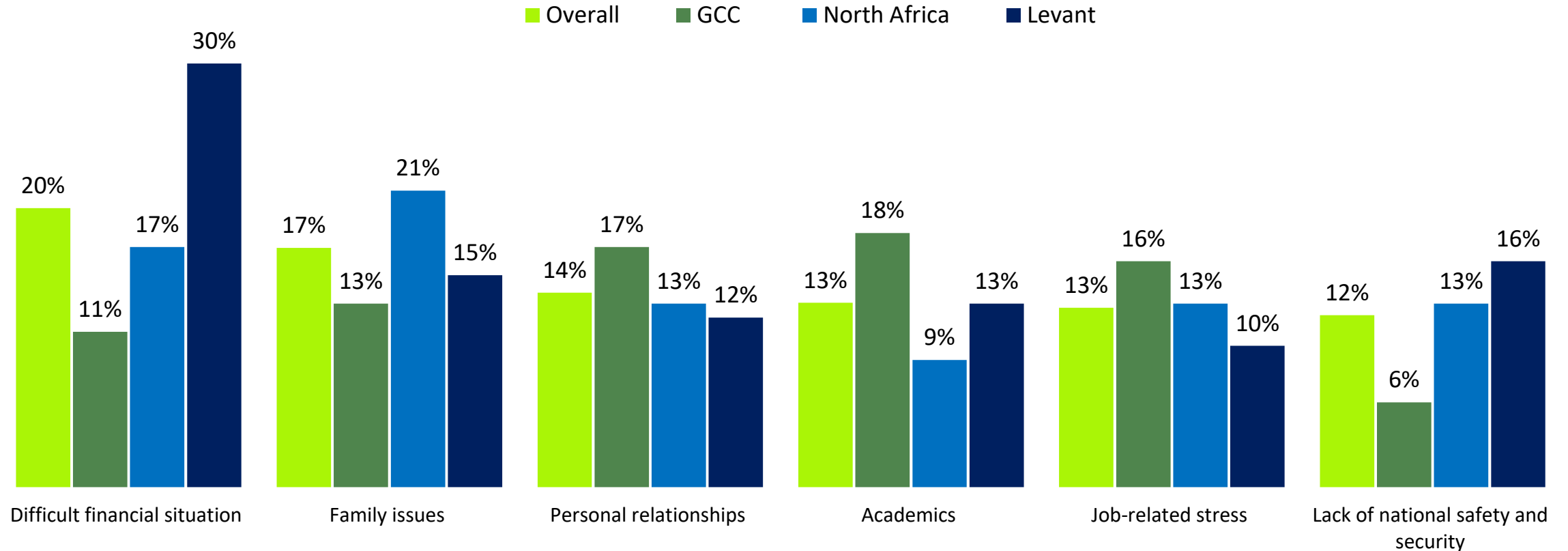


# Across the Arab world, youth's financial situation is their biggest source of stress



Which of the following, if any, is the biggest source of stress in your daily life?

(Showing percentage among all)



# 6

## MY ASPIRATIONS

Majority of Arab youth are optimistic of better days but many fear their national economies are headed in the wrong direction and nearly half are considering emigration

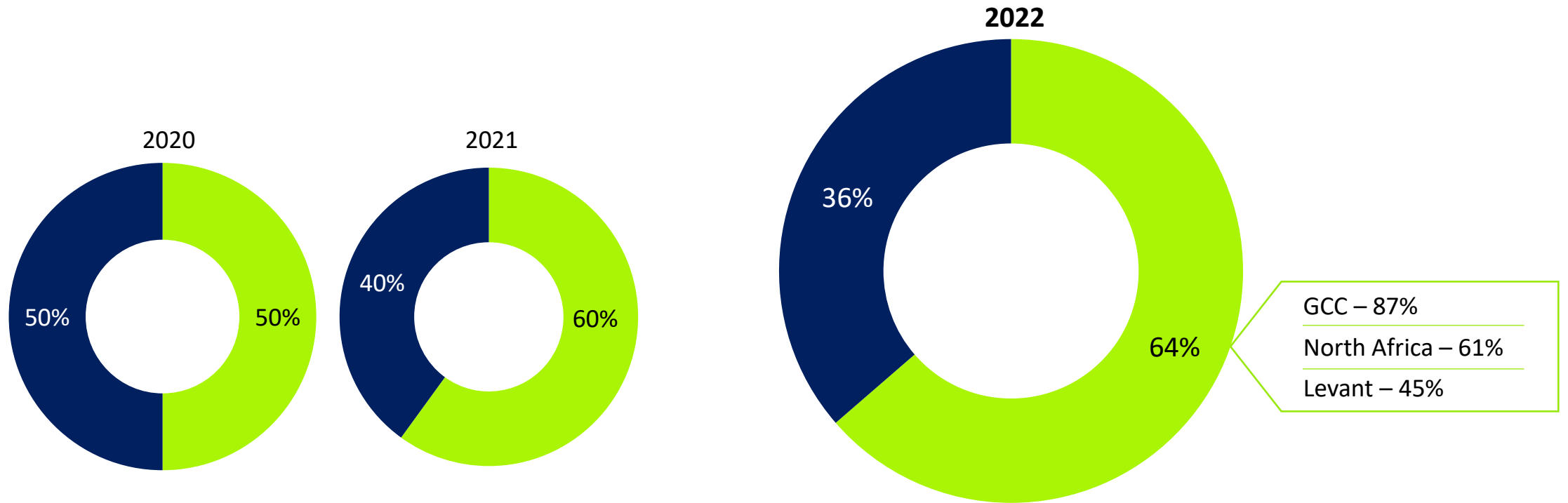


# Young Arabs recorded the highest level of optimism in three years, that their best days lie ahead



Which of the following do you agree with?

*(Showing percentage saying 'Our best days are ahead of us')*

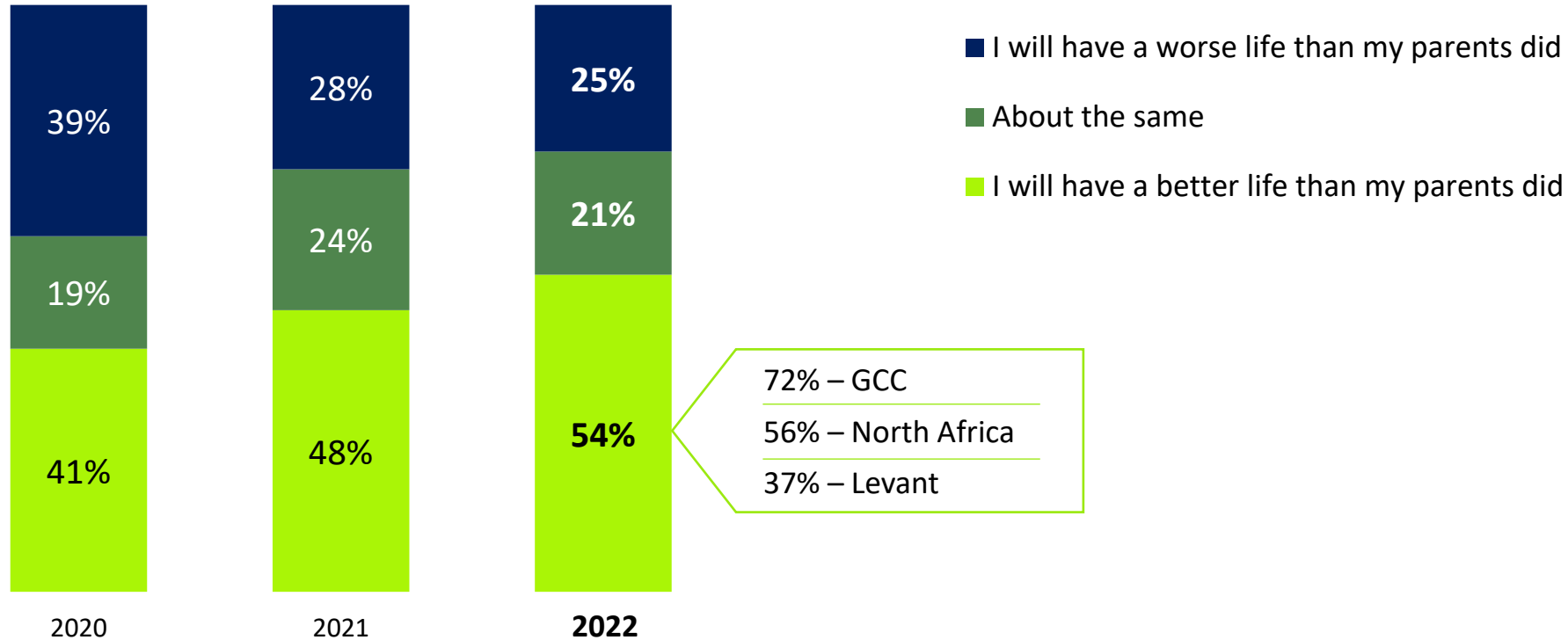




## Over half say they will have a better life than their parents, the highest level of optimism in three years

Which of the following is closer to your view?

(Showing percentage among all)

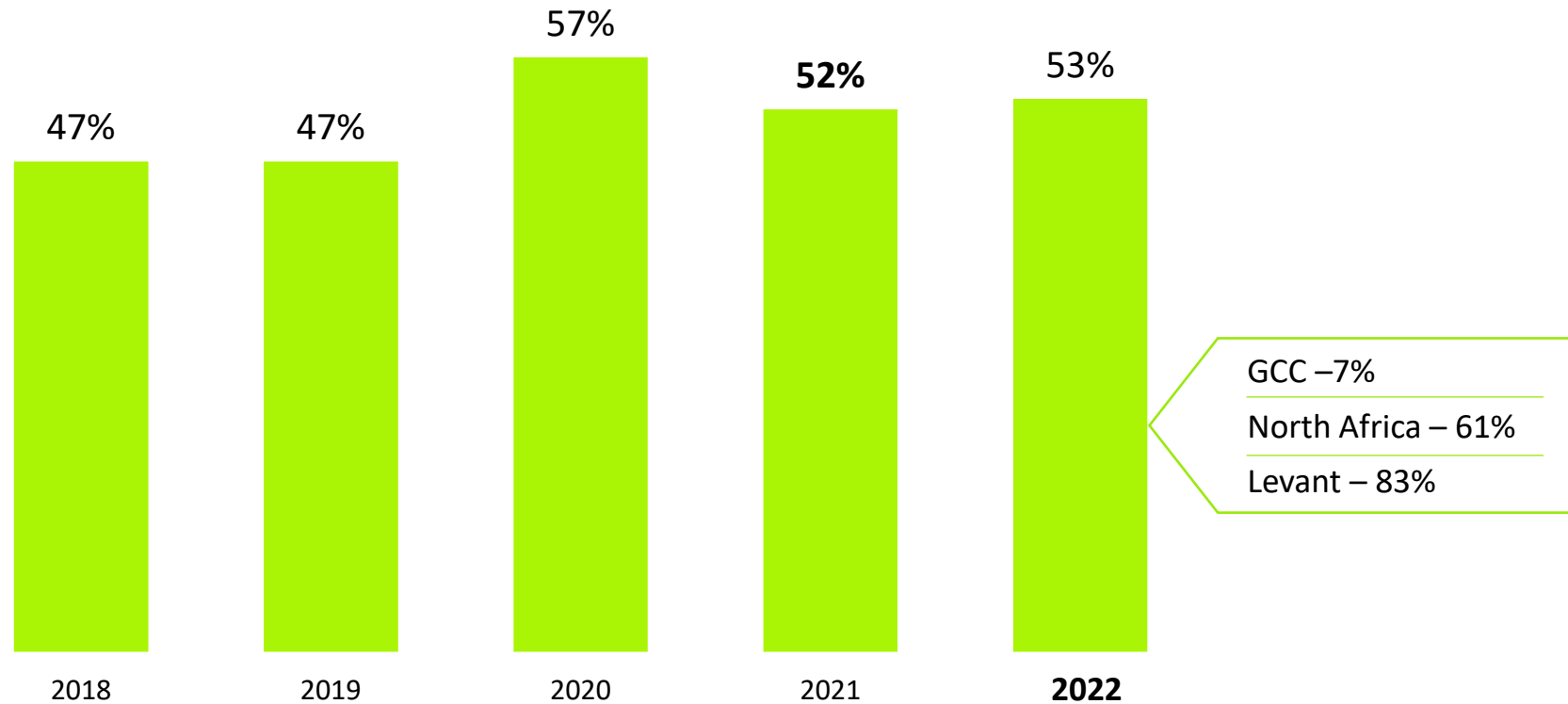


(Not including 'Don't know')

## Over half say their national economies is going in the wrong direction

In general, do you think the economy in your country is going in the right direction or in the wrong direction?

*(Showing percentage saying 'Wrong direction')*



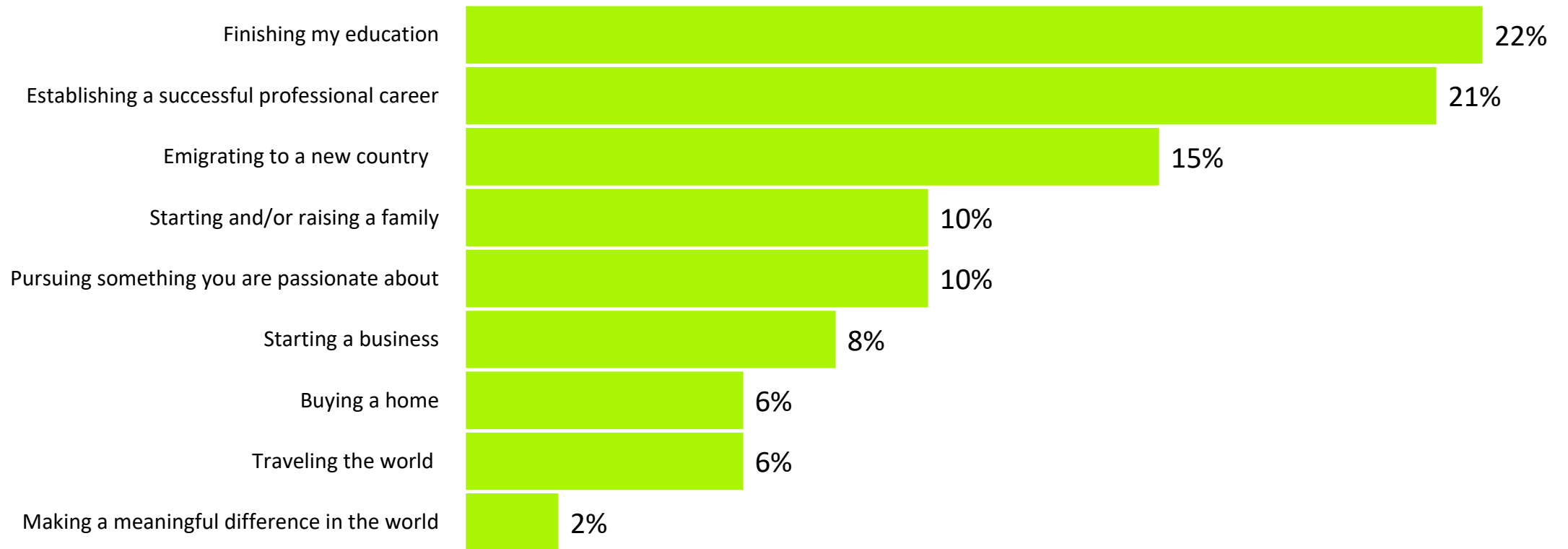
*(Not including 'Don't know')*

## Youth are most looking forward to finishing education and finding jobs but emigration is top of mind among many



Now thinking about the next 10 years, what are you personally most looking forward to?

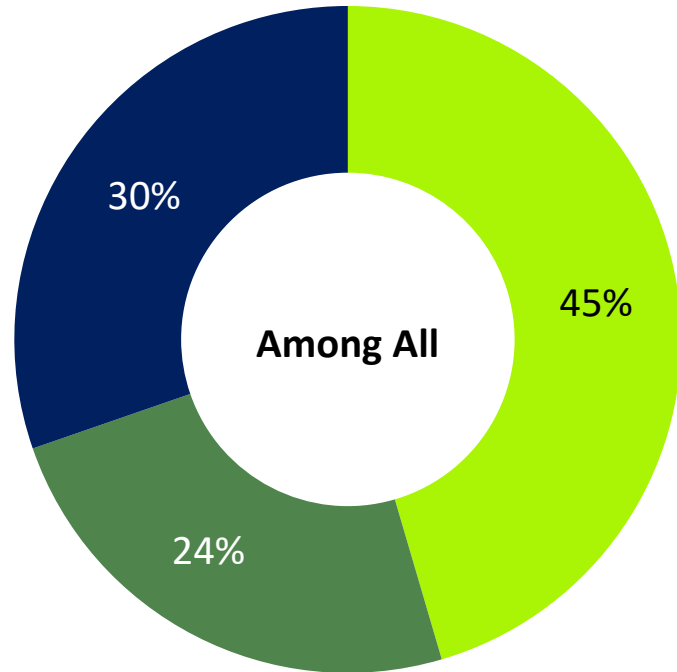
*(Showing percentage among all)*



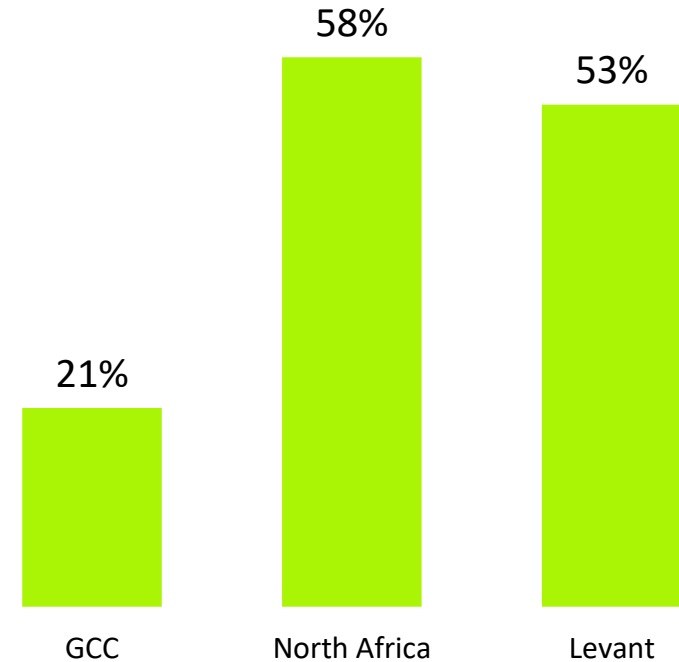
# Nearly half of young Arabs are actively trying to or considering emigrating to another country

As you know, some people leave their country and emigrate to another country. which of the following best describes you?

*(Showing percentage saying)*



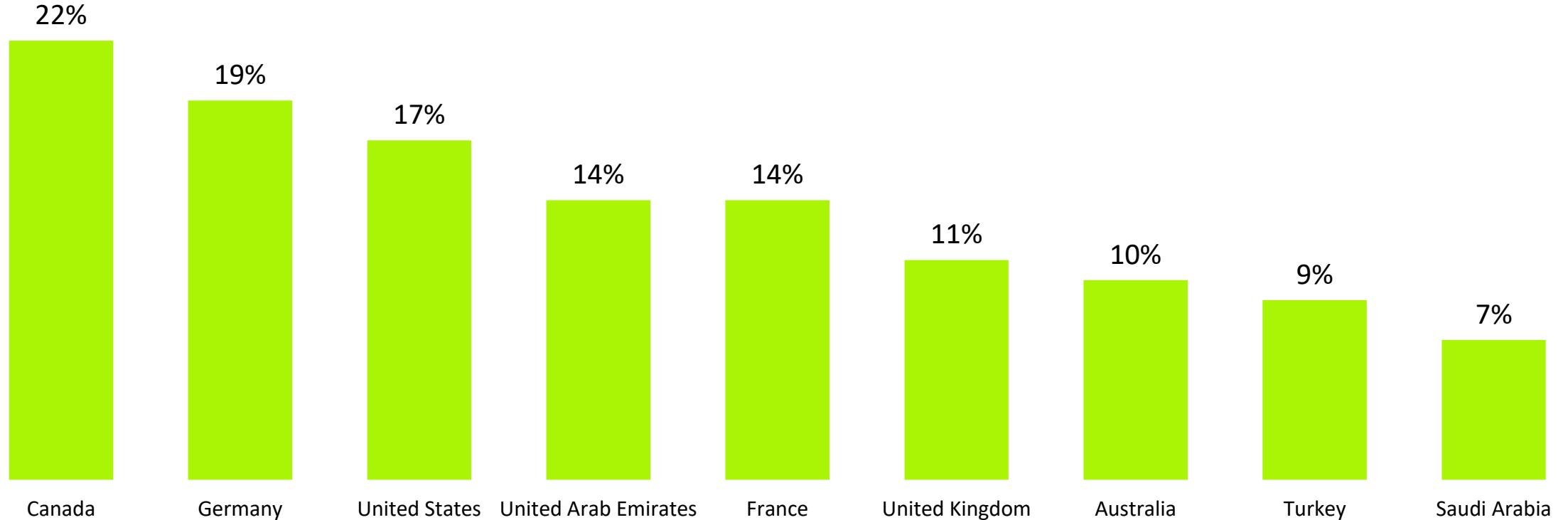
- I am actively trying to emigrate/considered emigrating to another country
- I have not considered emigrating to another country, but could do so in the future
- I would never leave my country



## Canada, Germany and the United States are the most popular destinations for prospective emigrants

If you were to emigrate to another country, which country in the world would you be most likely to move to?

*(Showing top 10, among those wishing to emigrate)*



# TOP FINDINGS



1

## MY IDENTITY

Religion is central to the personal identity of young Arabs; yet they want religious institutions to reform



2

## MY LIVELIHOOD

Young Arabs are concerned about the quality of education, lack of jobs and rising personal debt, and many are turning to entrepreneurship, rather than depend on government or private sector jobs



3

## MY POLITICS

The Arab Spring generation says promoting stability is more important than democracy



4

## MY GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

For the 11th consecutive year, most young Arabs say UAE is the country they would most like to live in and their own nations to emulate; dynamic shift in outlook on foreign affairs, with China emerging as top ally



5

## MY LIFESTYLE

Young Arabs spend more time on social media and struggle to disconnect; online shopping is booming



6

## MY ASPIRATIONS

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14<sup>th</sup> Annual Edition 2022

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