



Cuentapropistas: A Survey of Cuban Entrepreneurs

October 26 - November 25, 2017



Methodology

- The survey was conducted by a research firm based in Latin America under the supervision of the Center for Insights in Survey Research (CISR) between October 26 and November 15, 2017.
- The survey targeted *cuentapropistas*—Cubans who are self-employed or “non-state” workers; literally, those who work for their “own account”—across Cuba. For the purposes of this survey, IRI included all non-state workers, including licensed and unlicensed *cuentapropistas*, members of cooperatives and those employed in the informal sector or black market.
- Data was collected through face-to-face interviews conducted by interview teams. To minimize respondents’ concerns and increase the response rate, interviews were held in a conversational format without visible questionnaires, and responses were coded immediately after the interview. All interviewers were trained extensively in recalling all questions and responses.
- This convenience sample consisted of 397 respondents aged 18 and older. Multiple steps were taken to ensure randomization of the sample, e.g. stratification by region and varying starting points and travel routes within regions. Lacking reliable sample frame data on *cuentapropistas* in Cuba, CISR is not able to assess whether the achieved sample is representative of the sector at-large. However, based on comparison with other recent surveys that measure occupation as well as with the limited data published by the Cuban government, IRI is confident that this sample represents a close approximation of the target population.
- The information in this report has been compiled in accordance with international standards for market and social research methodologies. CISR has undertaken various measures to protect interviewers and respondents during and after fieldwork. CISR is not aware of any interference by Cuban authorities during the fieldwork period.
- Figures in charts and tables may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

What is a *Cuentapropista*?

Cuentapropista: A Cuban term for a self-employed or “non-state” worker; literally, **someone who works on their “own account.”**

Cuba currently authorizes 201 occupations, **most of which are low-skill jobs** and none of which are in manufacturing or industry.

Since 2010, the regime under Raul Castro has allowed the number of authorized jobs and *cuentapropistas* to expand, though it **heavily taxes and regulates their operations** and many cannot receive licenses.

Why Survey *Cuentapropistas*?

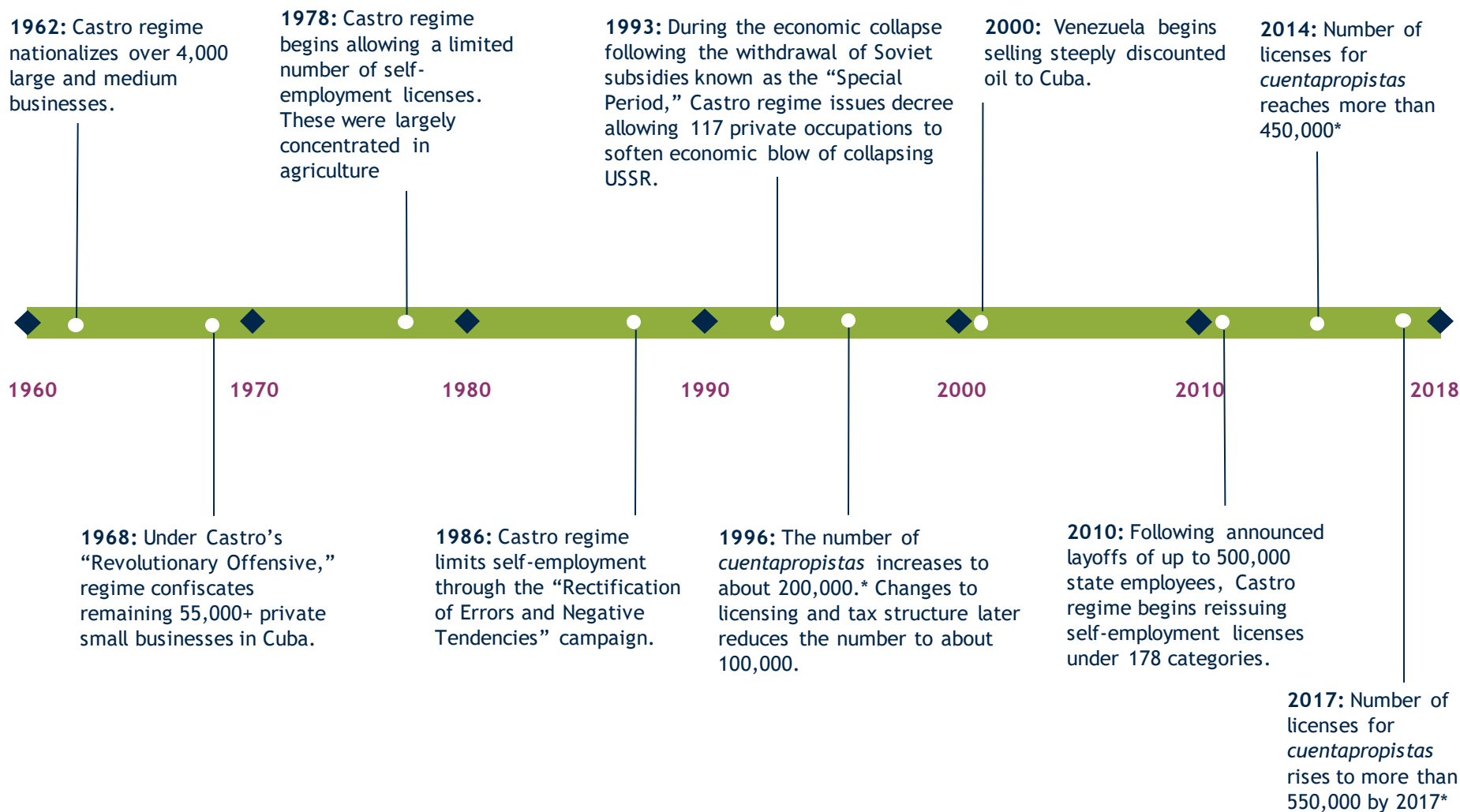
The number of *cuentapropistas* has **expanded significantly in recent years** because of the state’s increasing inability to provide employment.

With more than 550,000 individuals licensed as *cuentapropistas*, the **implications on Cuban society are unclear.**

Information on *cuentapropistas* is mostly anecdotal. Rigorously collected **descriptive data** is lacking.

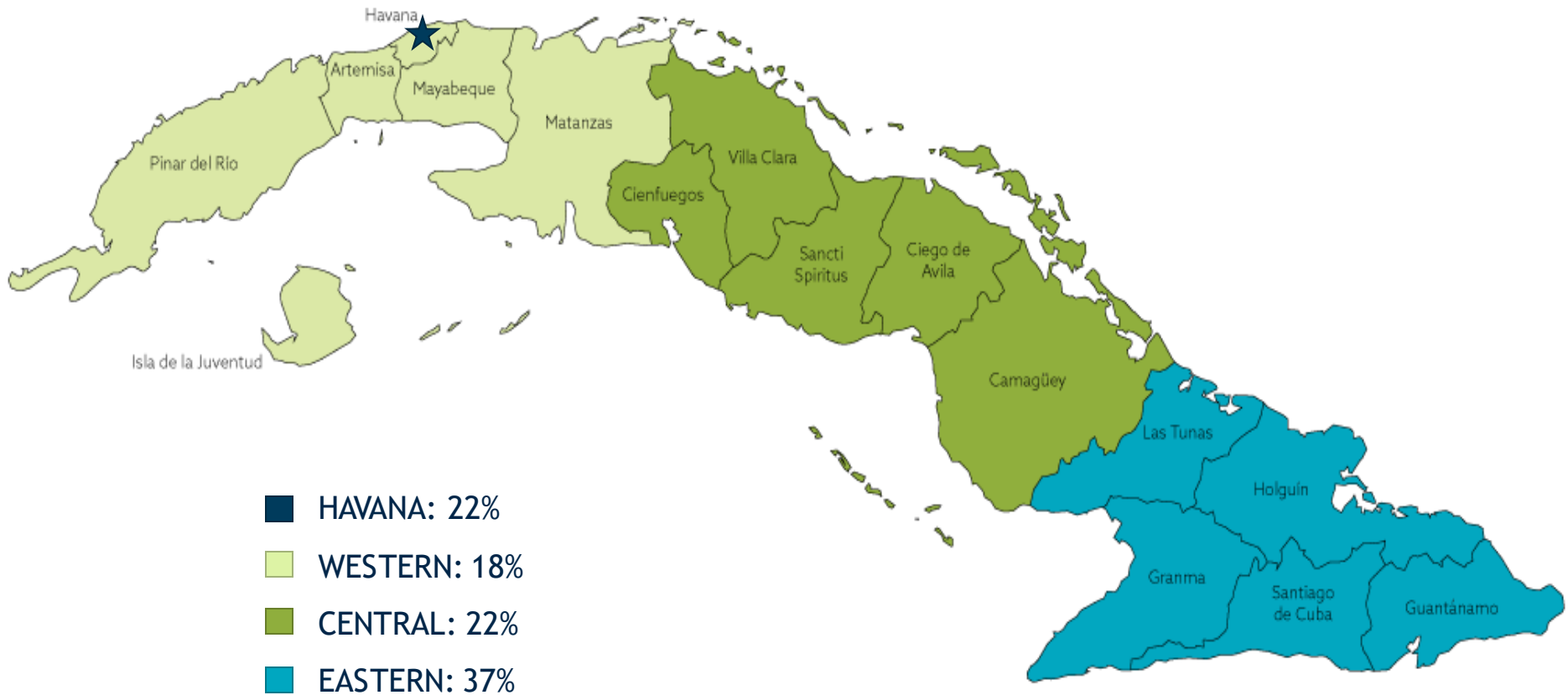
This survey seeks to provide a **more nuanced and accurate understanding of *cuentapropistas***: who they are, how they operate and their outlook.

Timeline of Relevant Events



*According to official Cuban government figures, unverified by IRI.

Regional Composition of Survey Sample





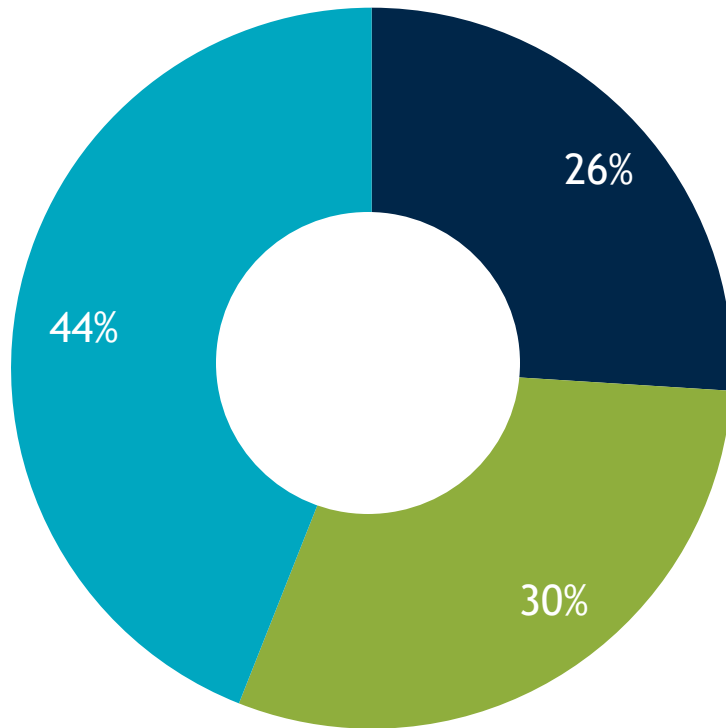
The *Cuentapropista* Demographic Profile



A PROJECT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE

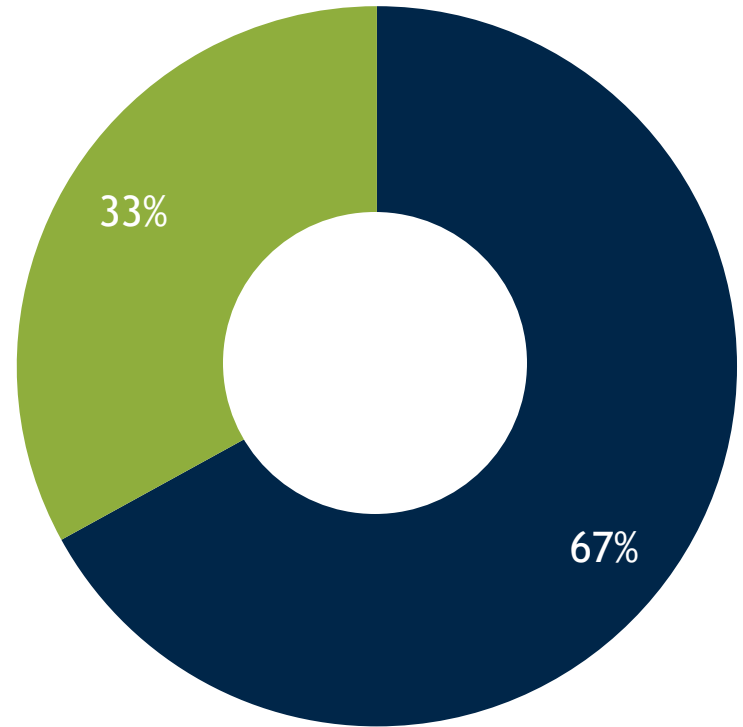
Demographics

Racial Breakdown of Respondents*



- Afro-Cuban
- Mixed Race
- White/Caucasian

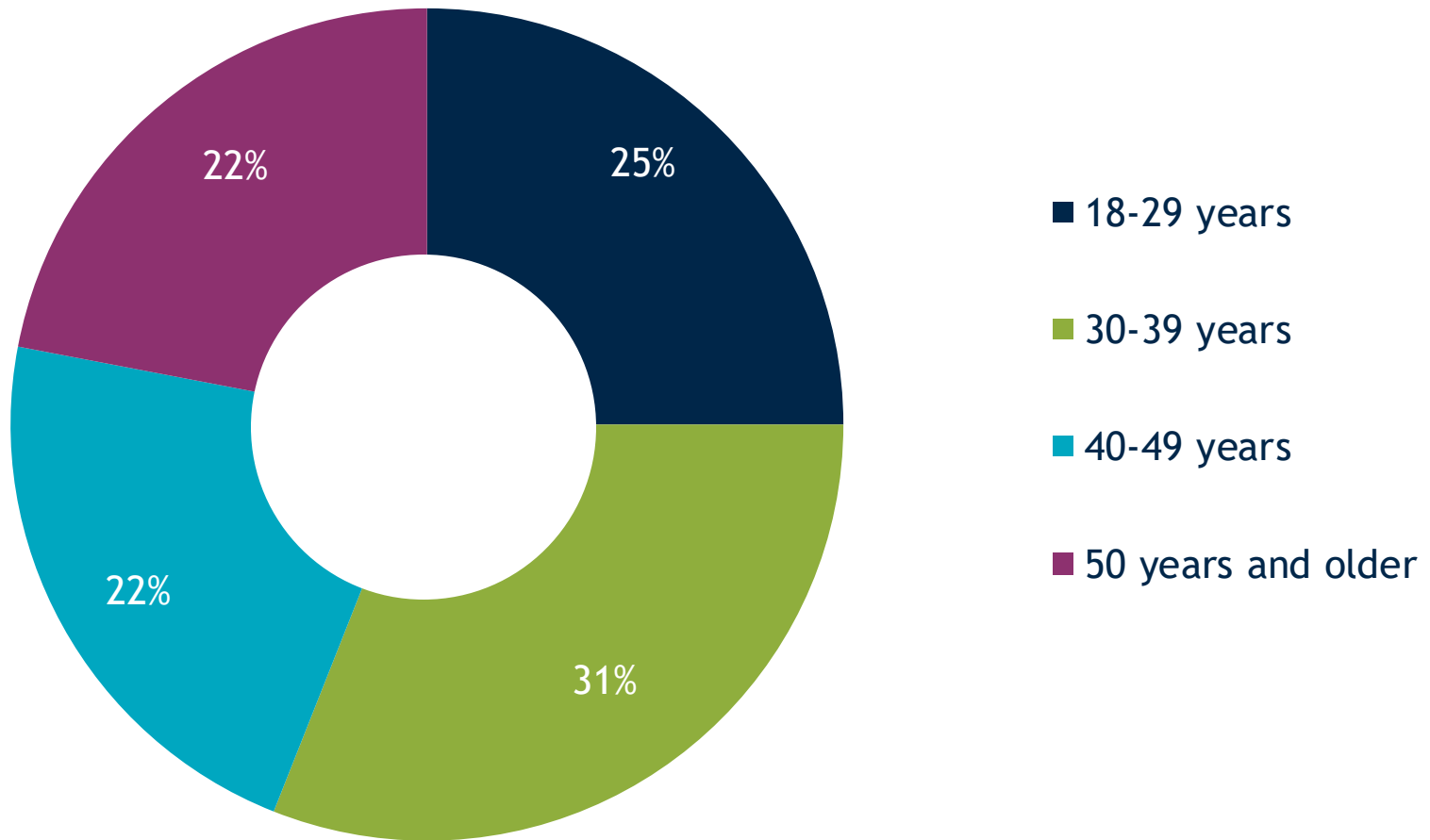
Gender Breakdown of Respondents*



- Male
- Female

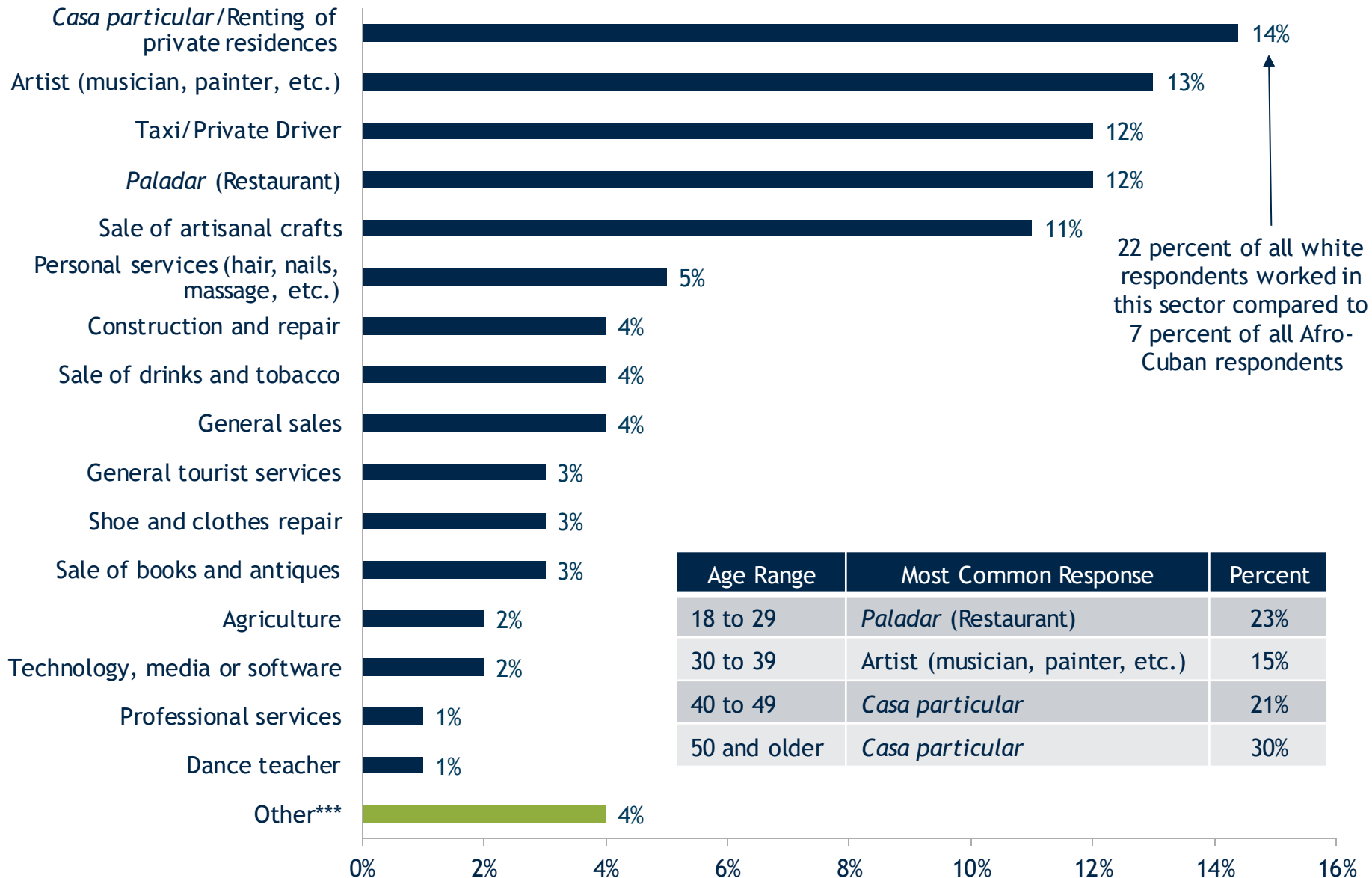
Demographics

Age Breakdown of Respondents*



*Identified or estimated by surveyor.

What type of sector* do you mainly work in?**

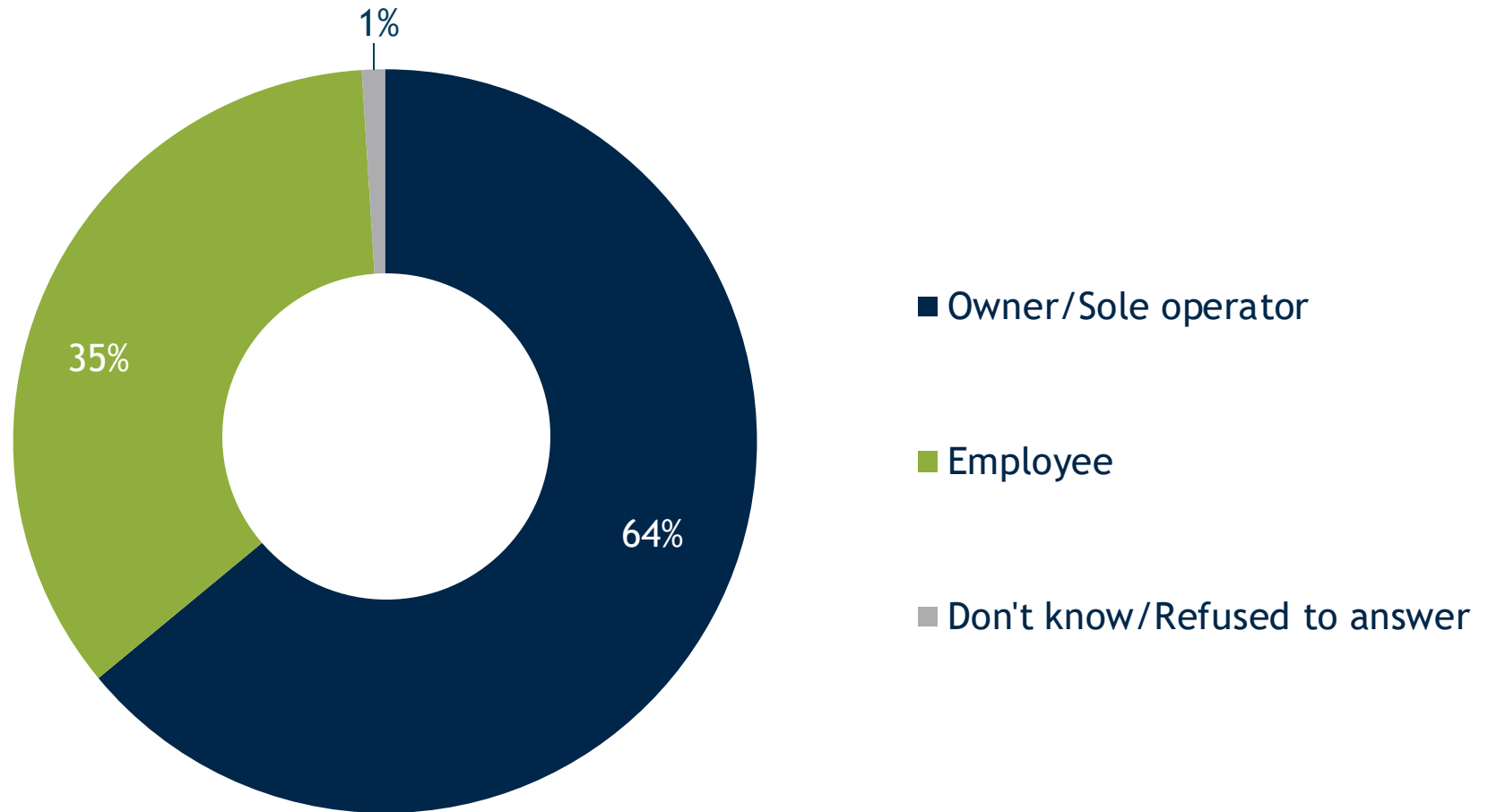


*The Cuban government allows 201 specific jobs, most of which are non-professional in nature.

**Identified by the surveyor.

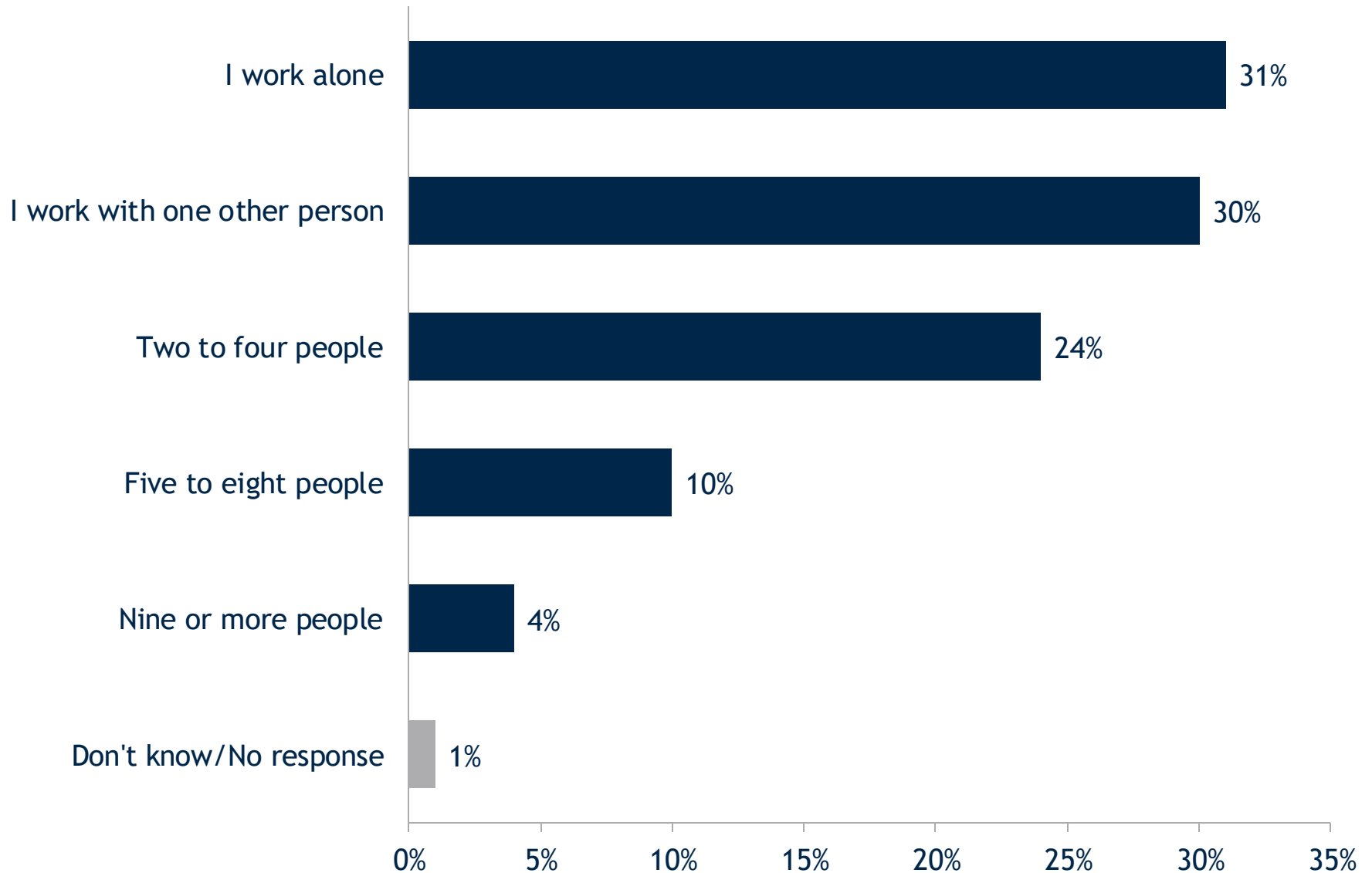
***All responses that did not total more than one percent are included under "Other."

Are you the owner (*dueño**) of your business or employed by someone else?

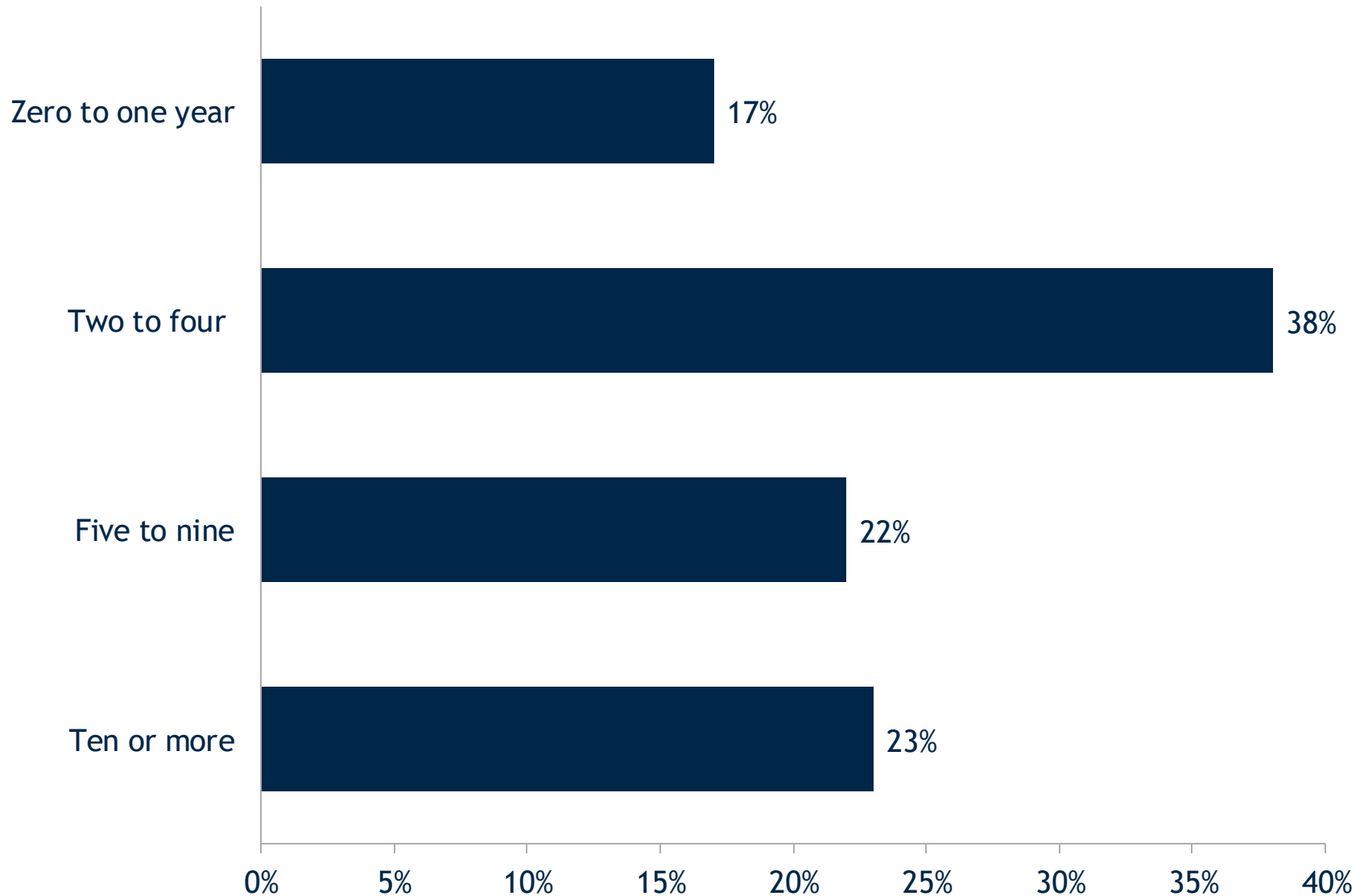


**Dueño* refers to one who owns or has control over one's labor.

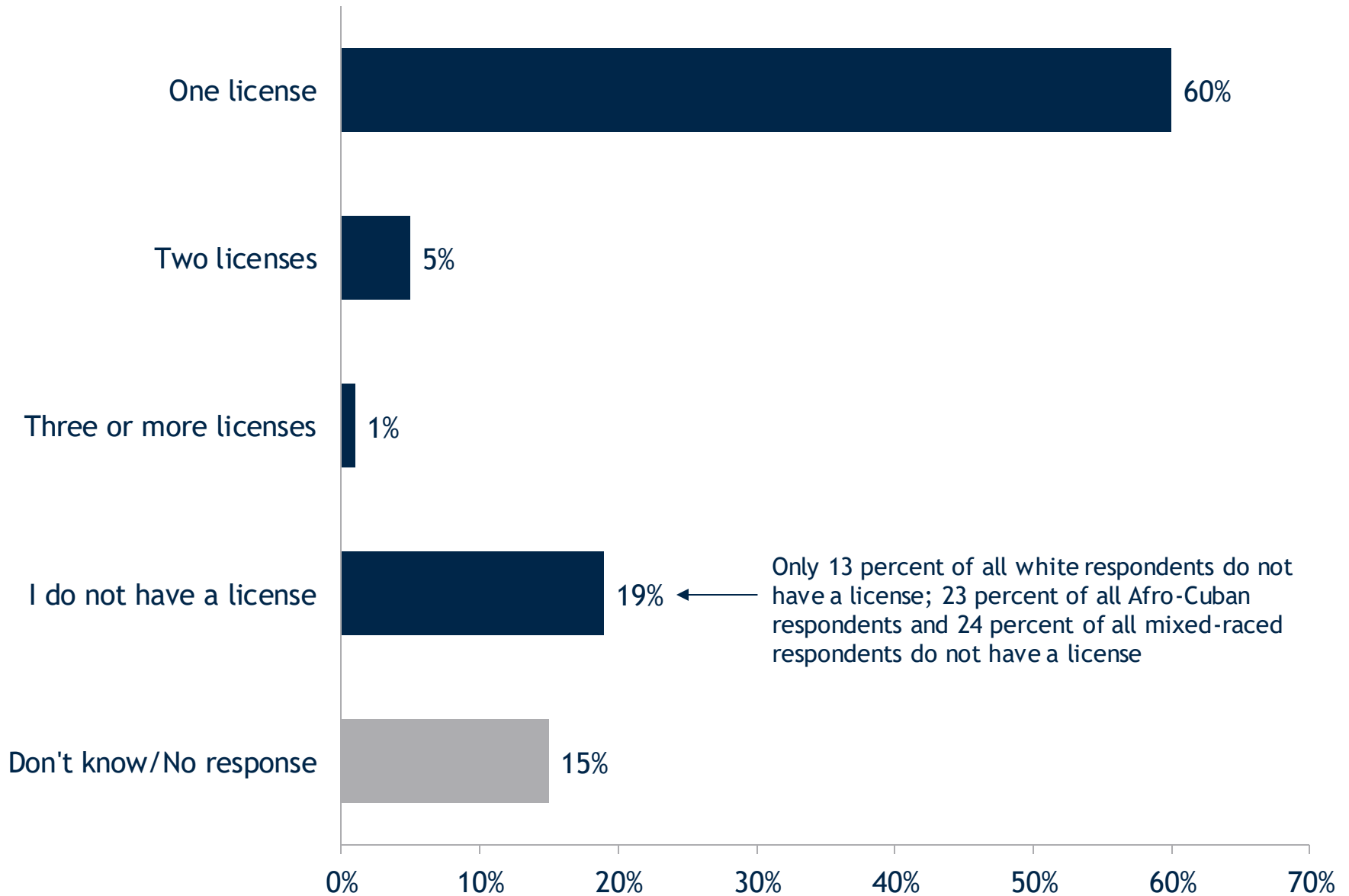
How many people work with you (either under your charge or as co-workers)?



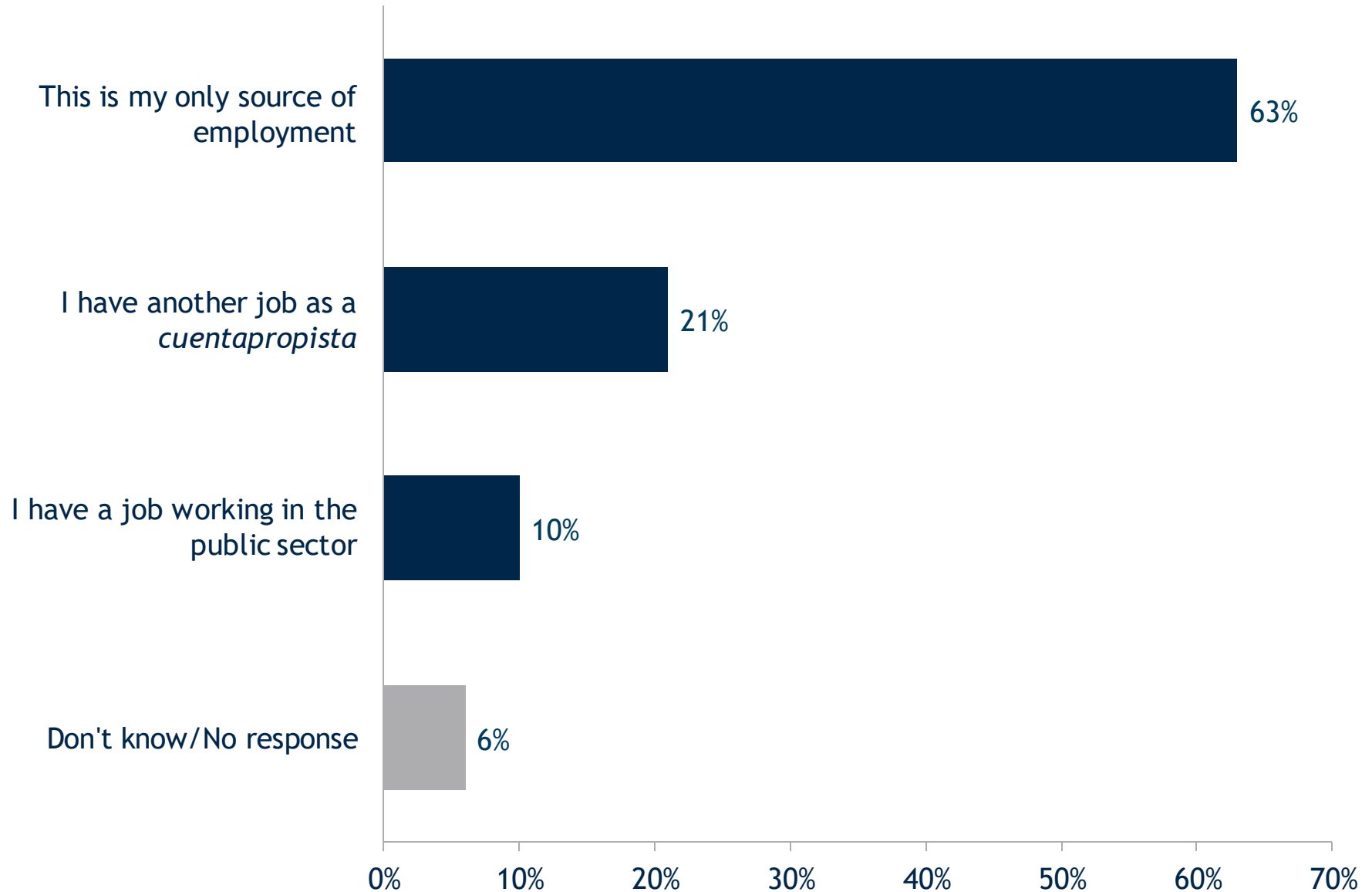
How many years have you been in business?



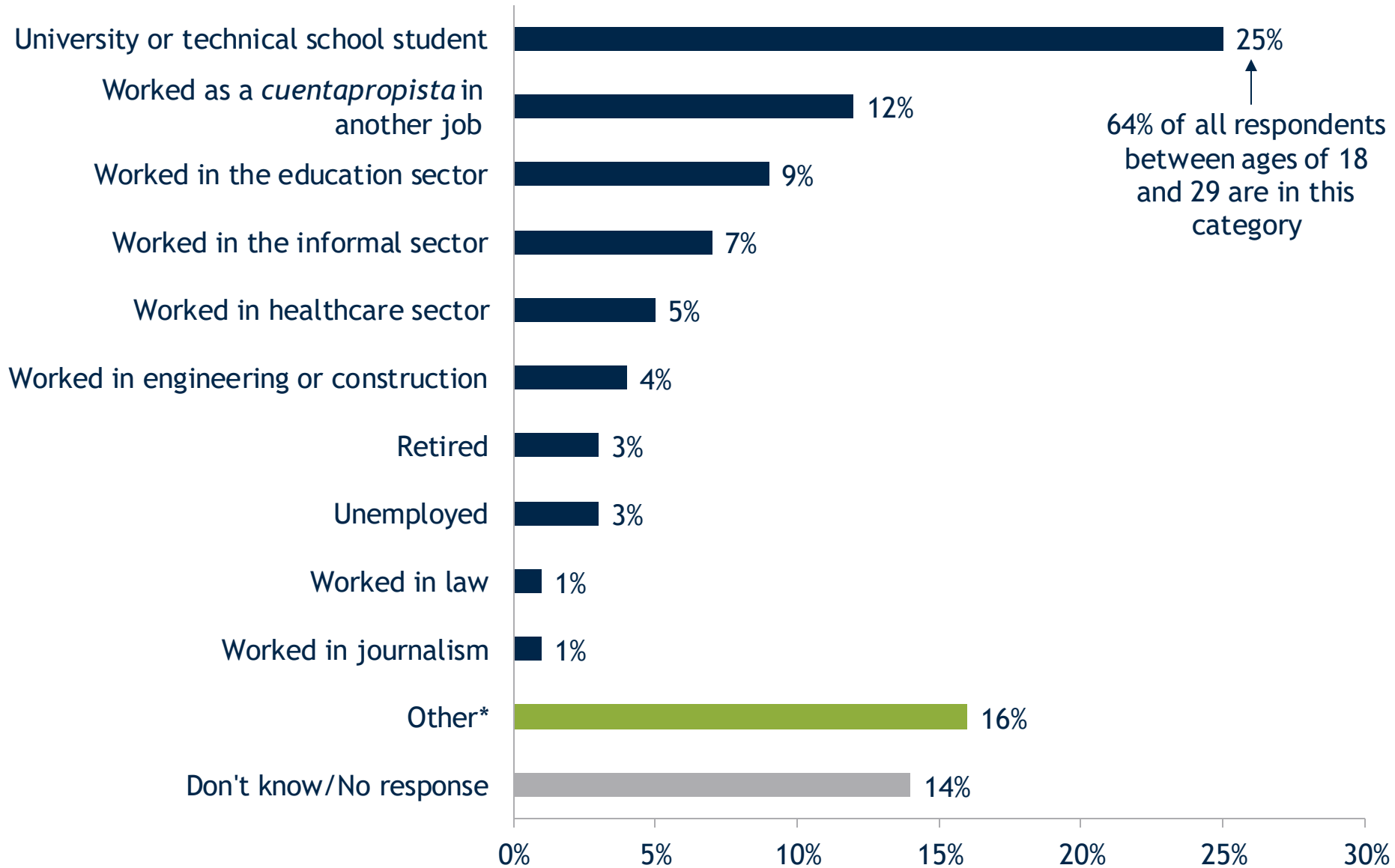
How many licenses do you have, or do you not have a license?



Do you have other sources of employment, or is this your only job?

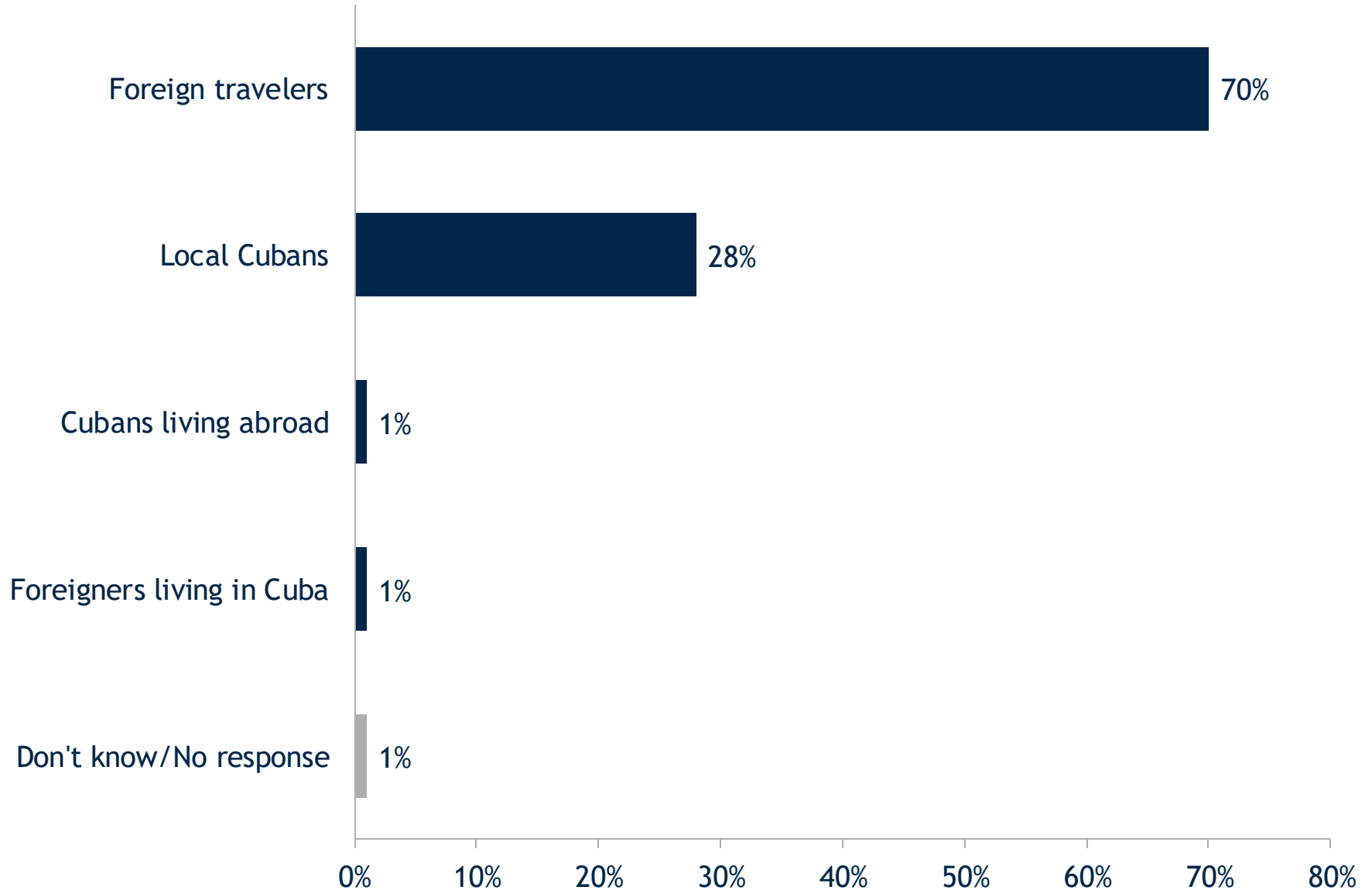


Before starting this business, what did you do most recently? (Open-ended)

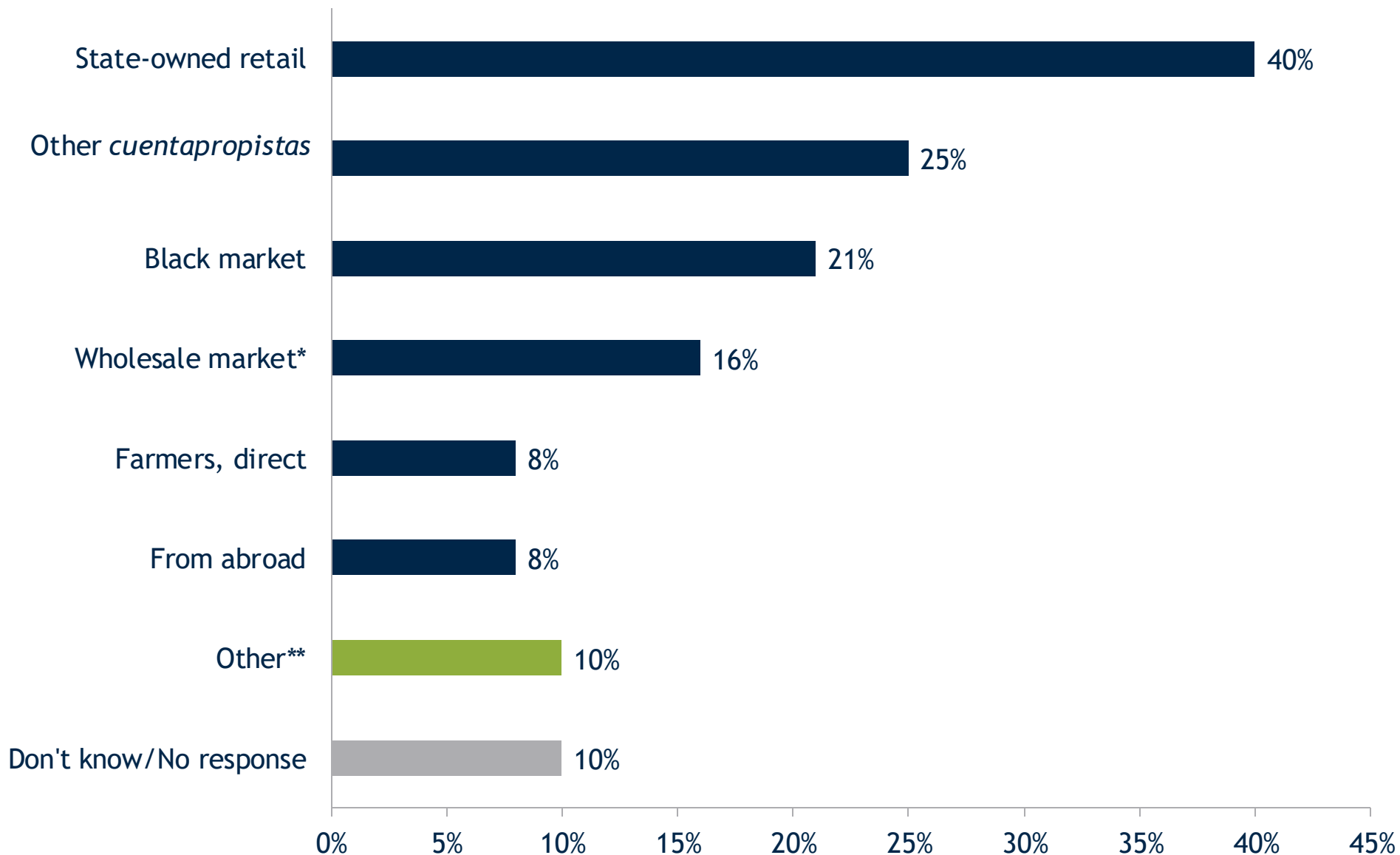


*All responses that did not total more than one percent are included under "Other."

Who are your primary customers? (Open-ended)



Where do you get most of your materials? (Open-ended; multiple responses accepted)

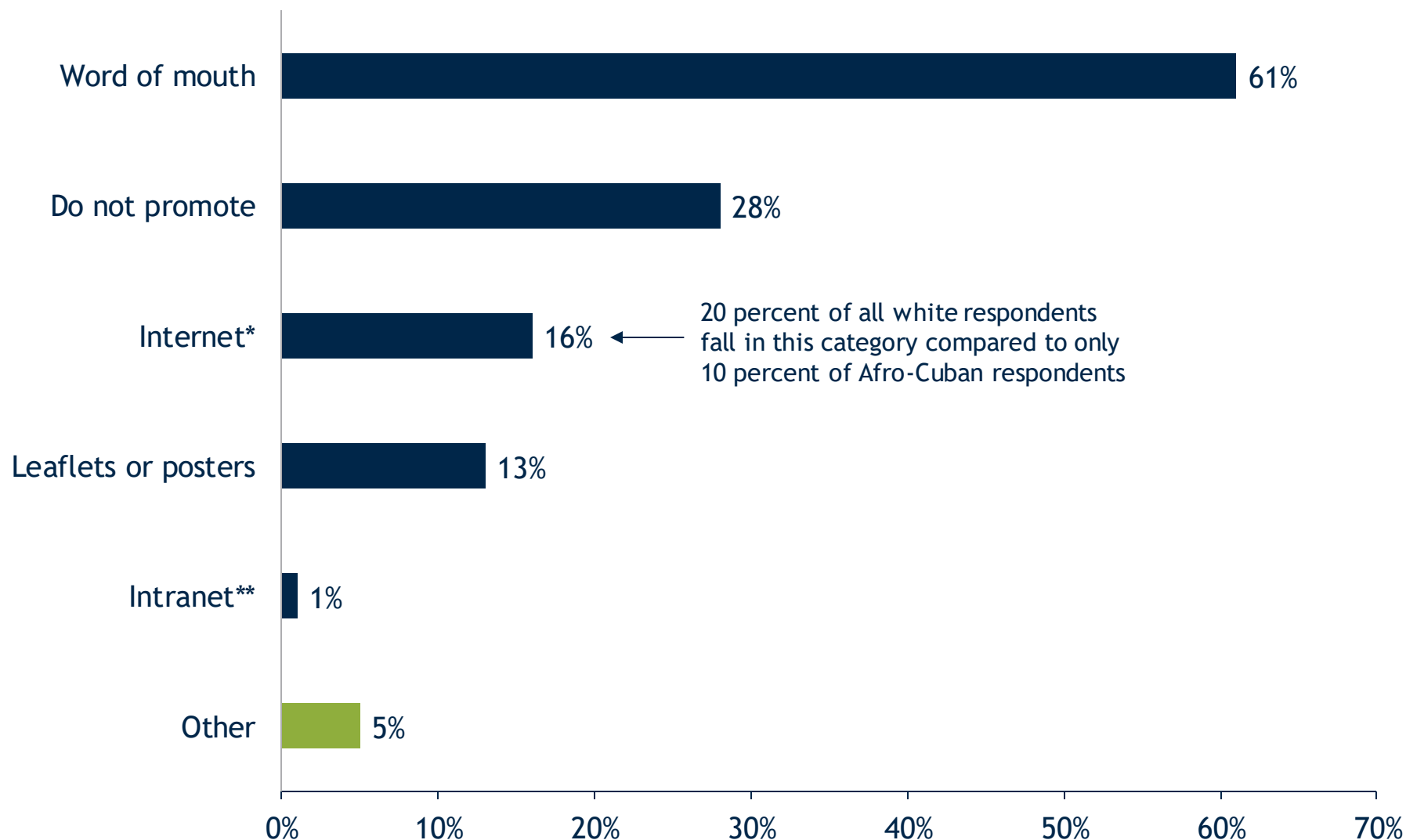


*Wholesale markets in Cuba primarily provide food products and produce, not imported goods, tools or parts.

**All responses that did not total more than one percent are included under "Other."

What is the primary means of promoting your business or do you not promote your business?

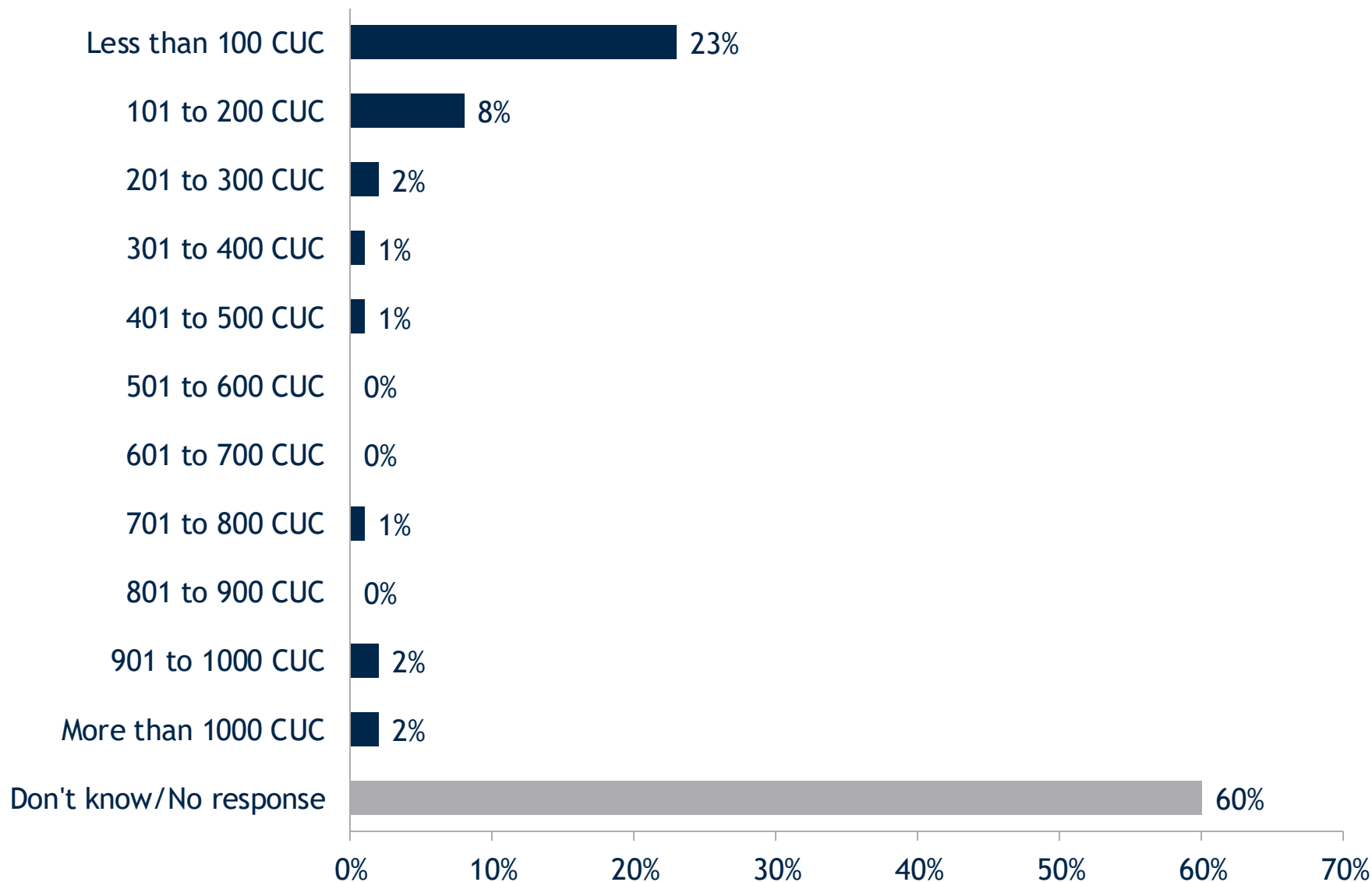
(Open-ended; multiple responses accepted)



*Internet access is highly restricted in Cuba.

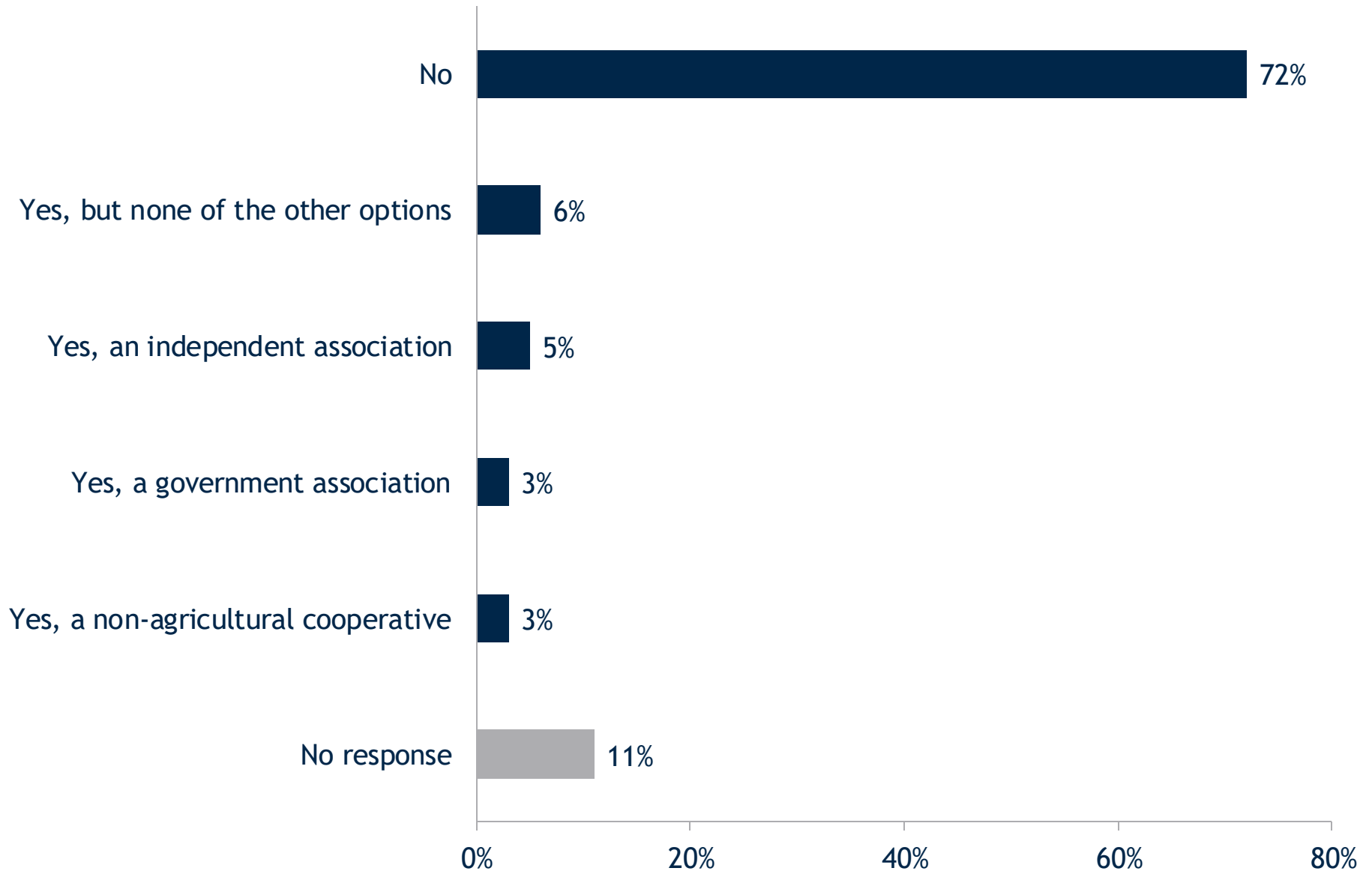
**Intranet refers to a government-controlled national internet system only available to Cubans.

Monthly Earnings of Respondents



*At the time of survey release, one Cuban CUC was equivalent to \$1 USD.

Are you a member of any work-associated organization?*



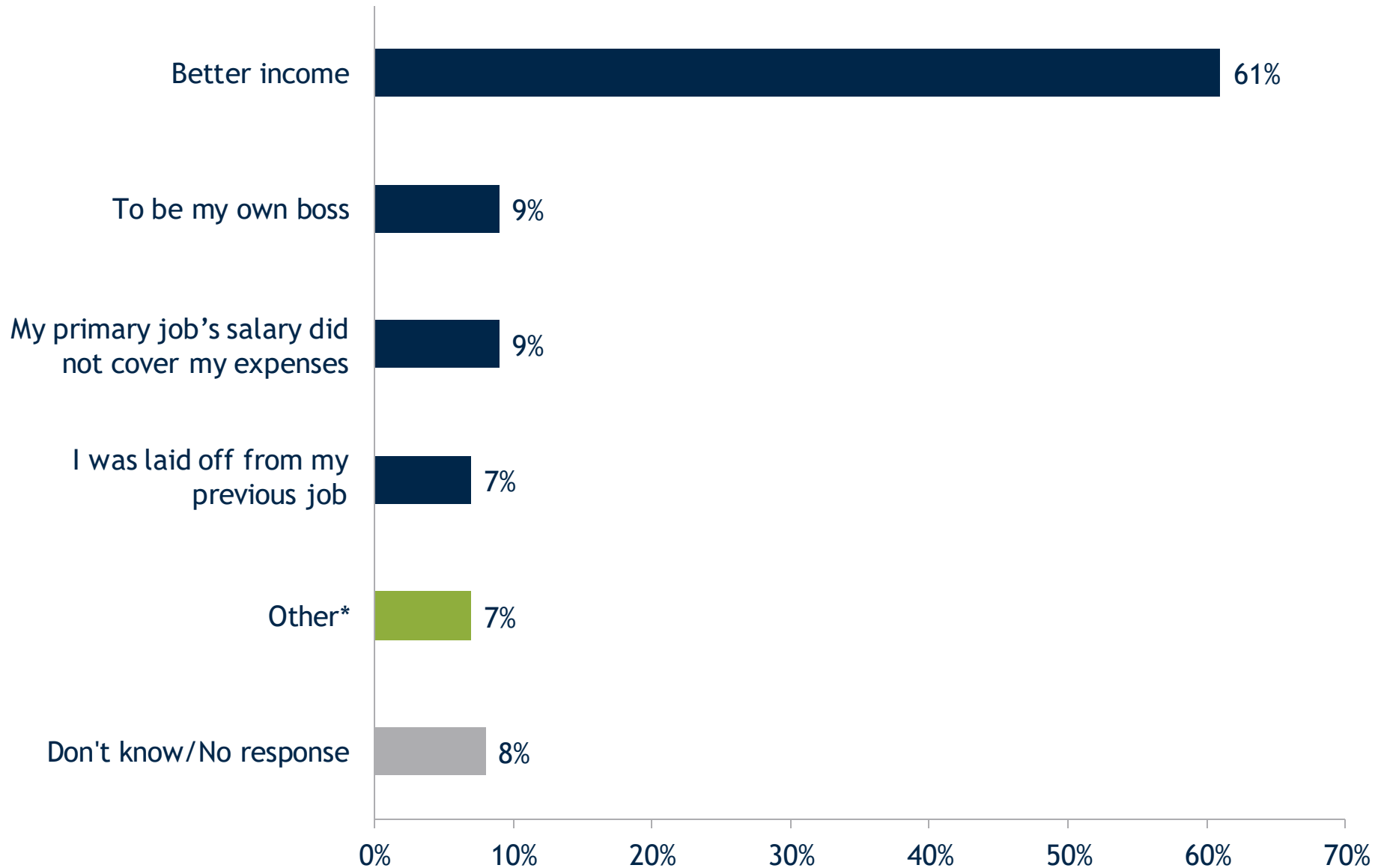
**Cuentapropistas* are not permitted by the Cuban government to organize or create independent associations.



Perspectives on the Cuban Economic Environment

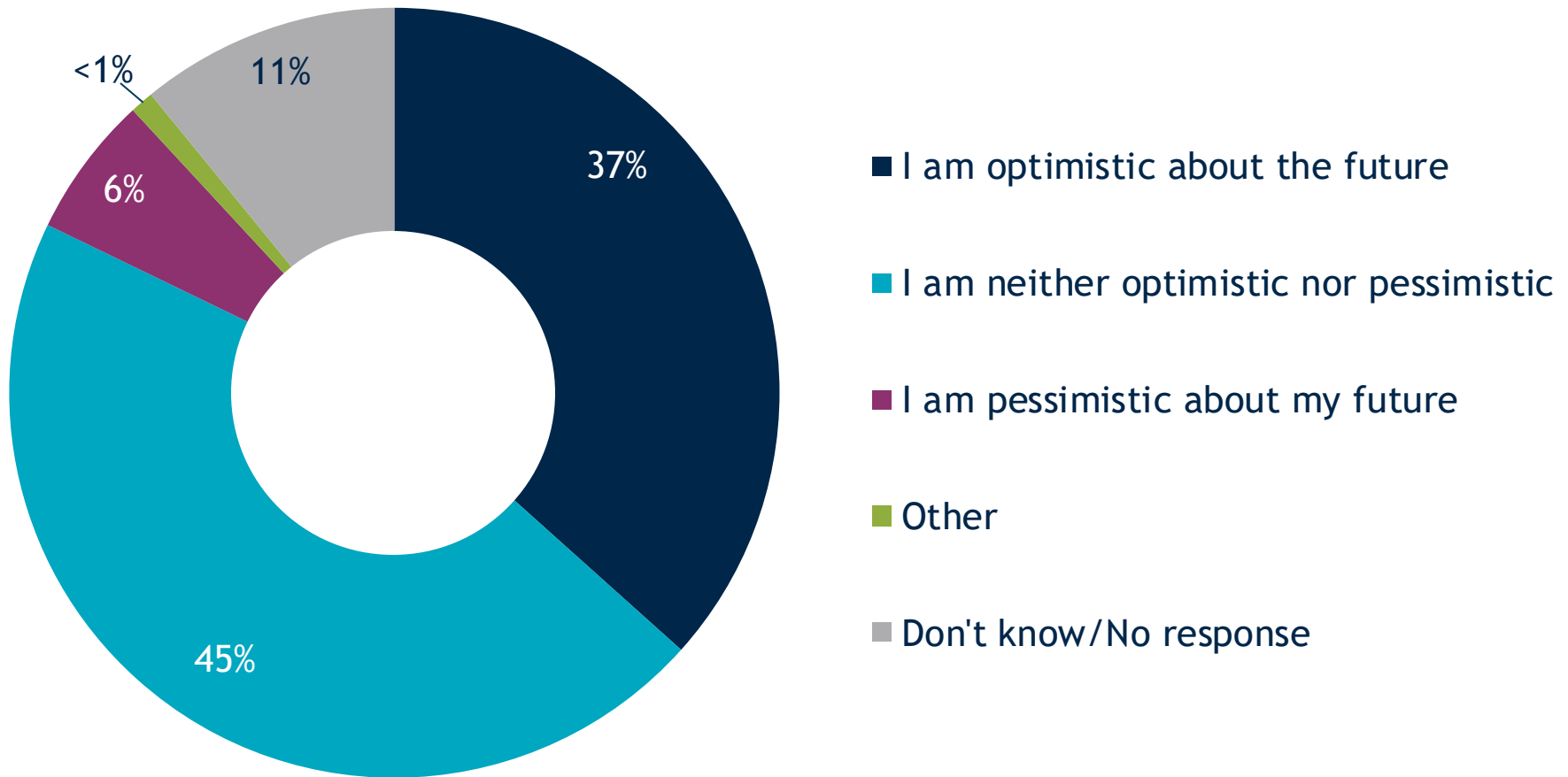


Why did you start your business? (Open-ended)

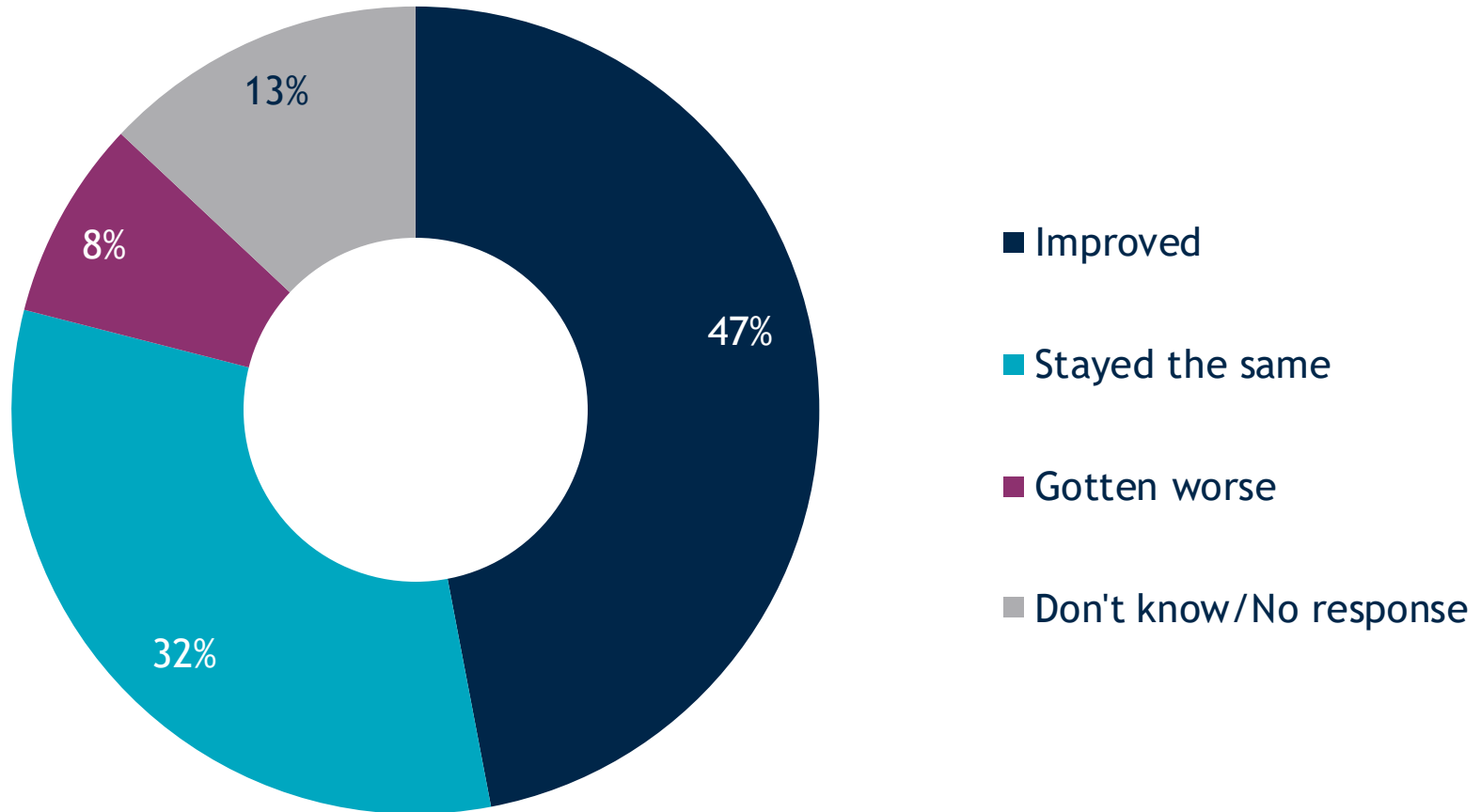


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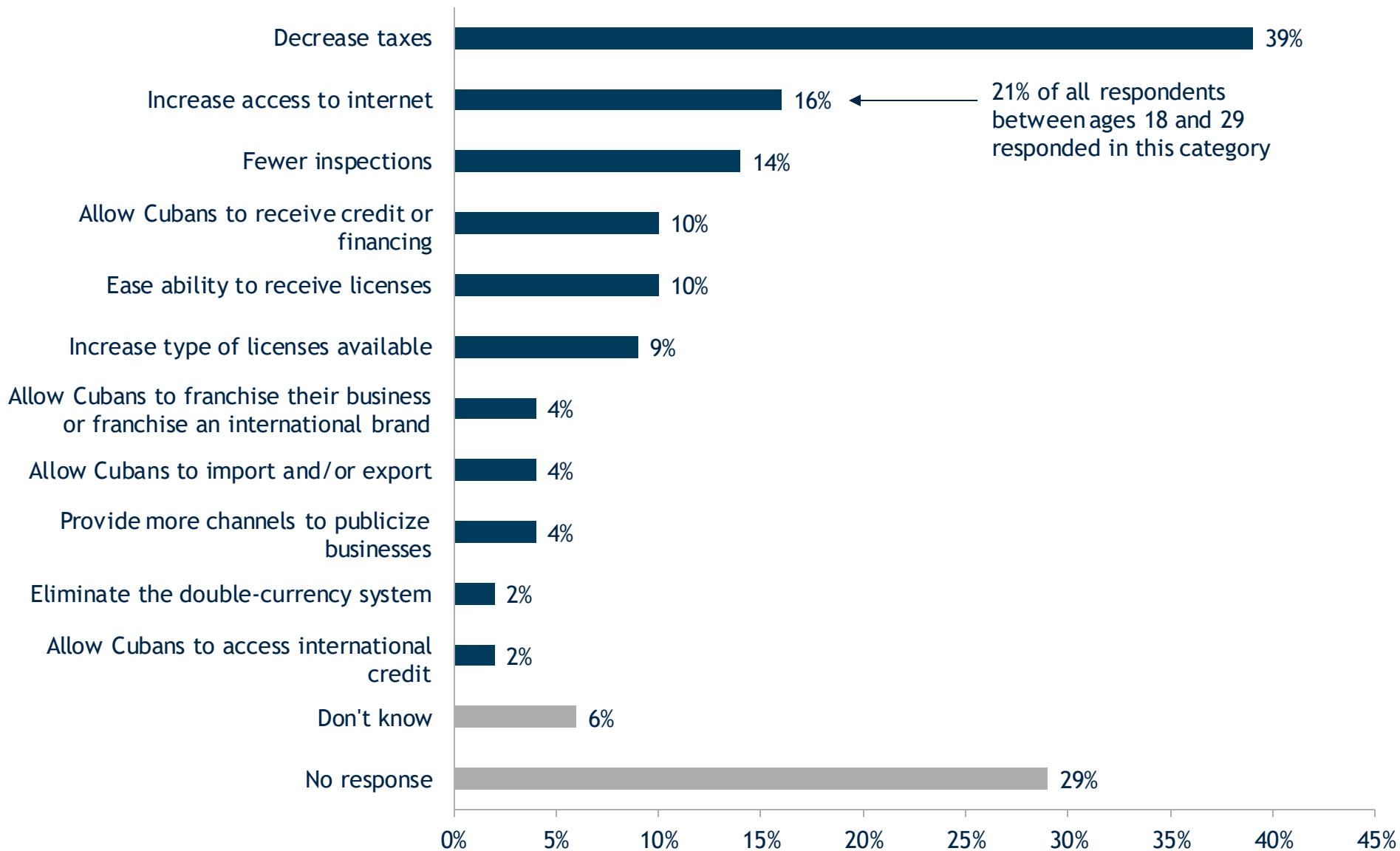
Optimism about your future as a *cuentapropista*: are you optimistic, pessimistic or neither?



Since you opened your business, has business improved, gotten worse, or stayed the same?



How can the Cuban government help *cuentapropistas*? (Open-ended; top three responses)



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