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# Amnesty International – Abortion Research

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October 2016

# Background and methodology

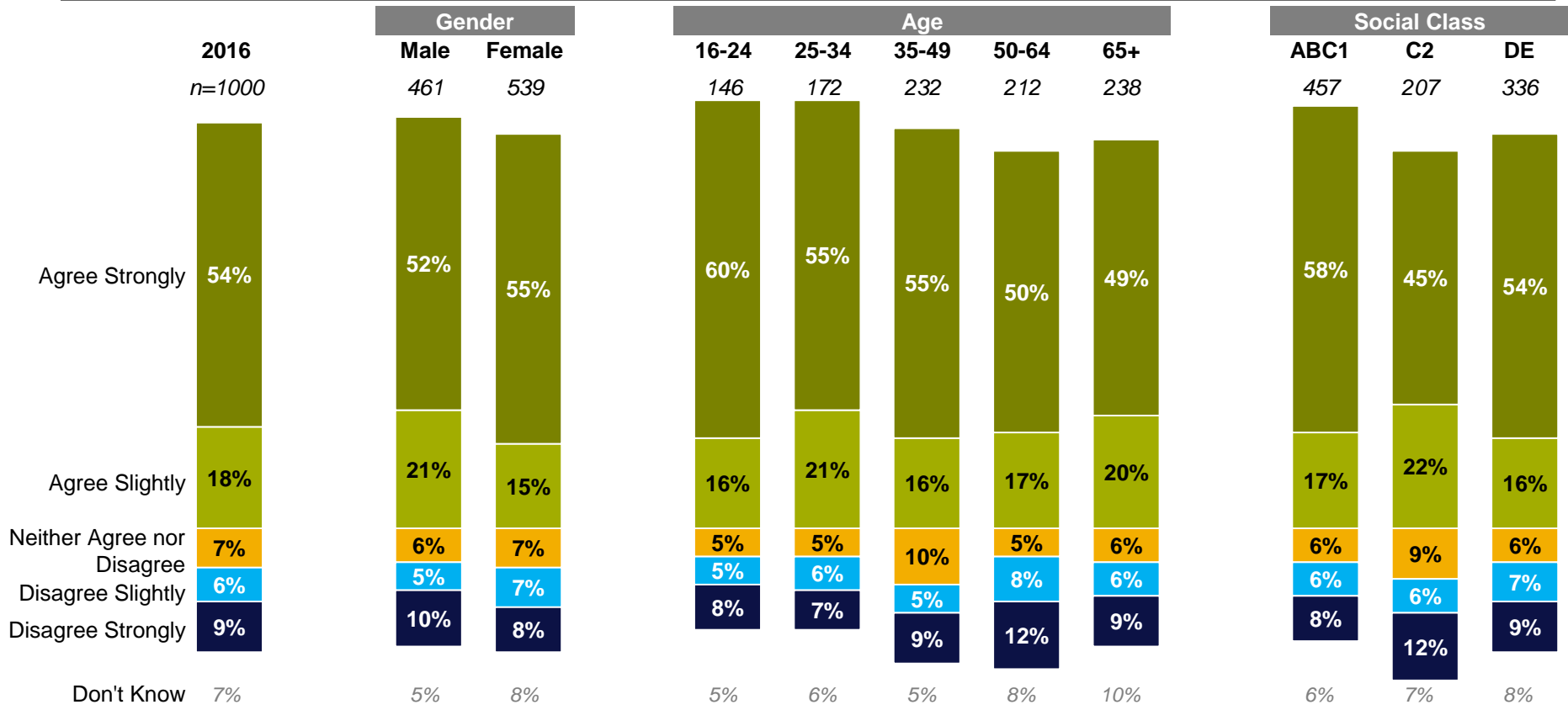
- **Questions were included on the Millward Brown Omnibus Survey in Northern Ireland**
- **1016 respondents (weighted to 1000) were interviewed in NI**
- **Samples representative of the 16+ populations in each respective market**
- **Interviewing conducted face-to-face via hand held computers**
- **Following the initial random selection of 60 sampling points a quota sampling methodology was utilised**
- **Fieldwork was conducted from the 15th to 30th September in Northern Ireland by members of the Millward Brown Interviewer Panel**
- **Research Conducted In Compliance With The International Quality Standard ISO 20252 : 2012 and fully in accordance with the Market Research Society ethical Code of Conduct**

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# Main Findings

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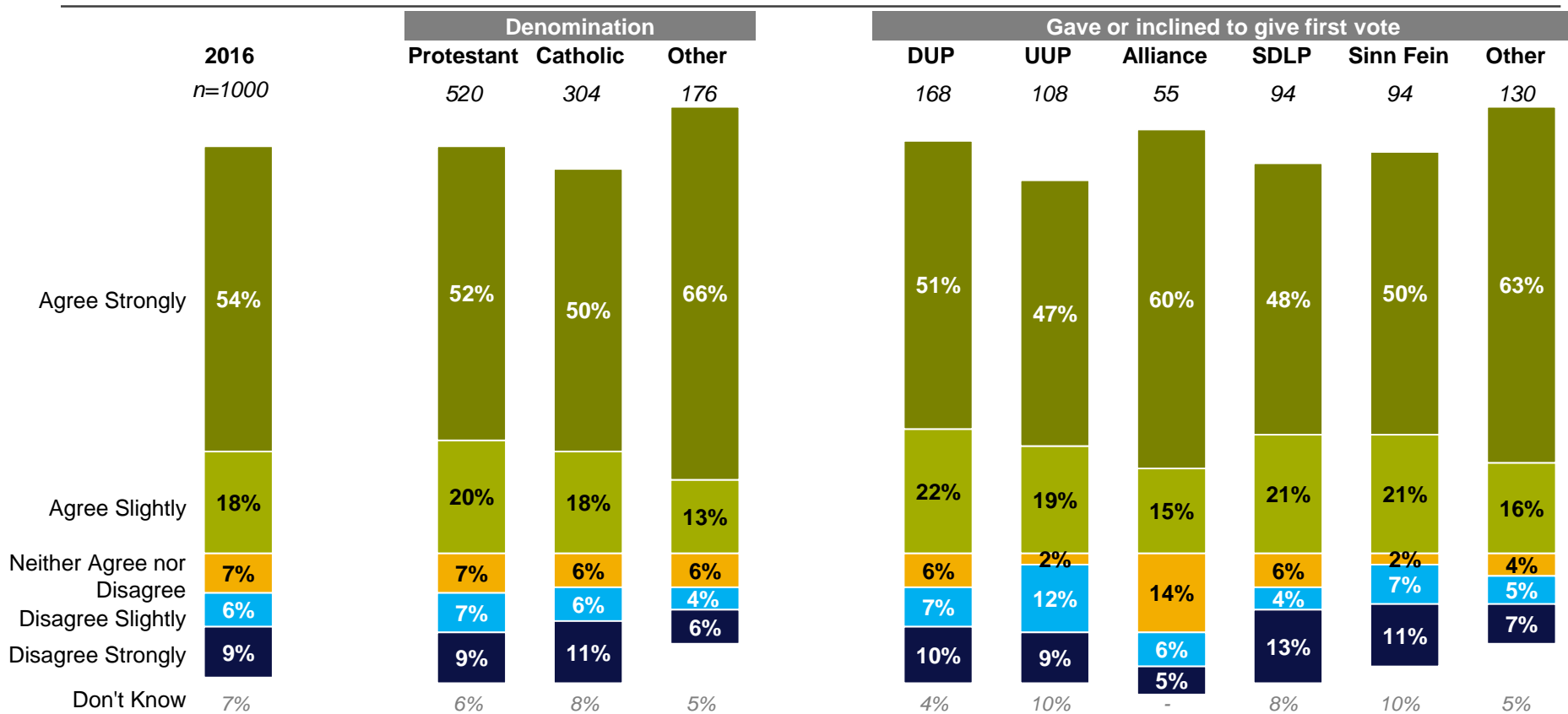
Approaching three quarters of the sample (72%) agreed that abortion should be available in Northern Ireland if the pregnancy is as a result of rape or incest. There were broadly similar responses by gender, age (albeit with stronger support amongst the 16-24 yr olds) and some small differences by socio economic grouping. 15% disagreed here.



Agreement - Abortion should be available in Northern Ireland if the pregnancy is as a result of rape or incest?

[ Base: All respondents – n=1000 ]

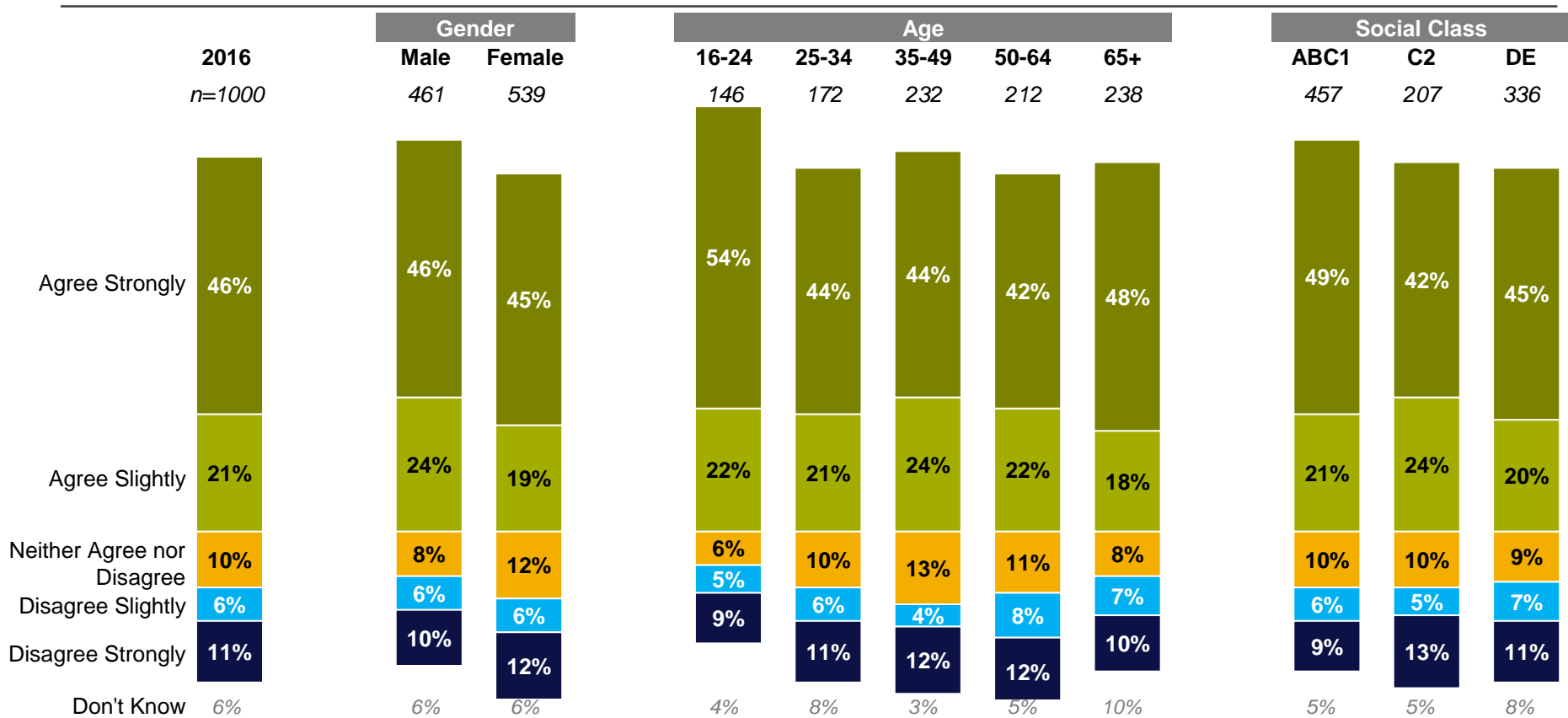
There were relatively similar levels of agreement amongst Catholics when compared to Protestants, that abortion should be available in Northern Ireland if the pregnancy is as a result of rape or incest. Agreement was slightly less prevalent amongst UUP, SDLP and Sinn Fein voters.



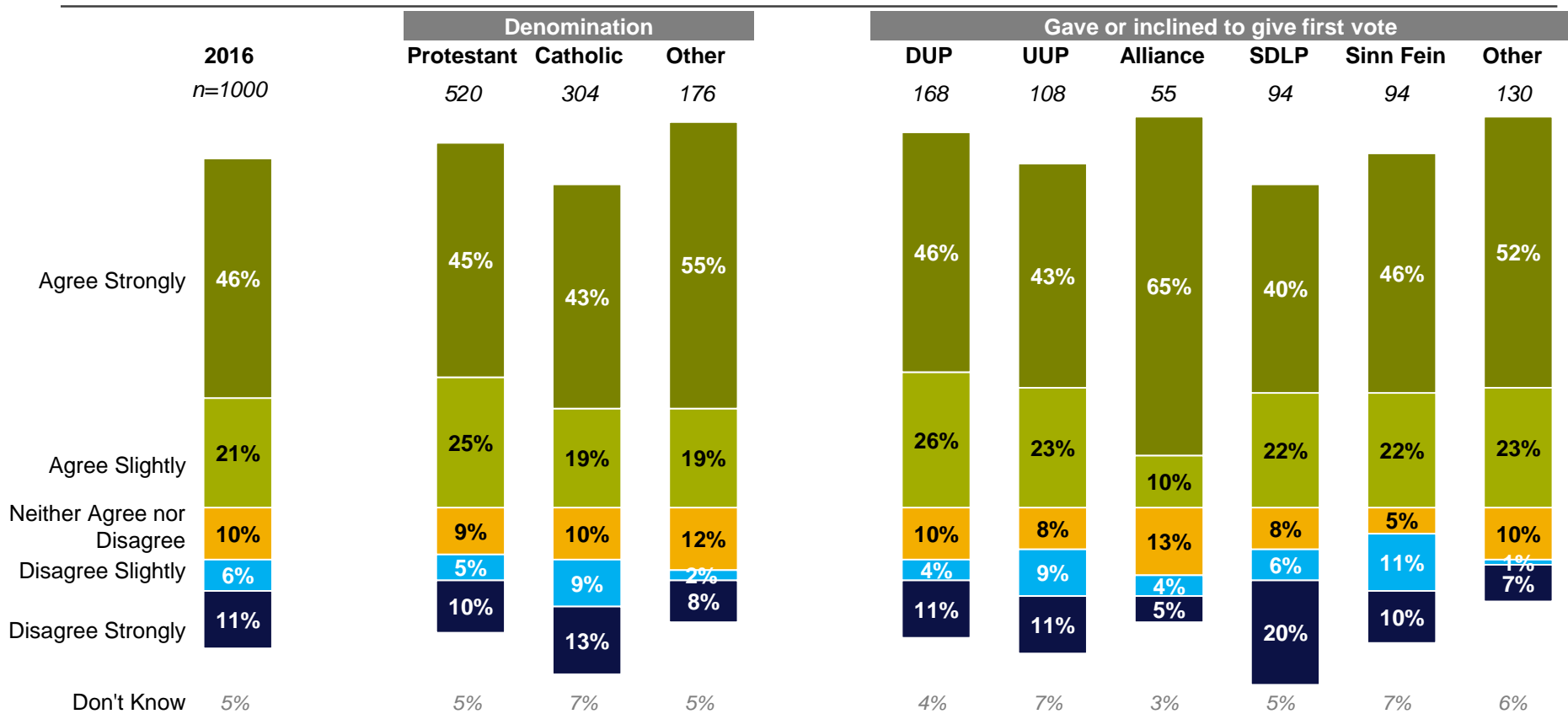
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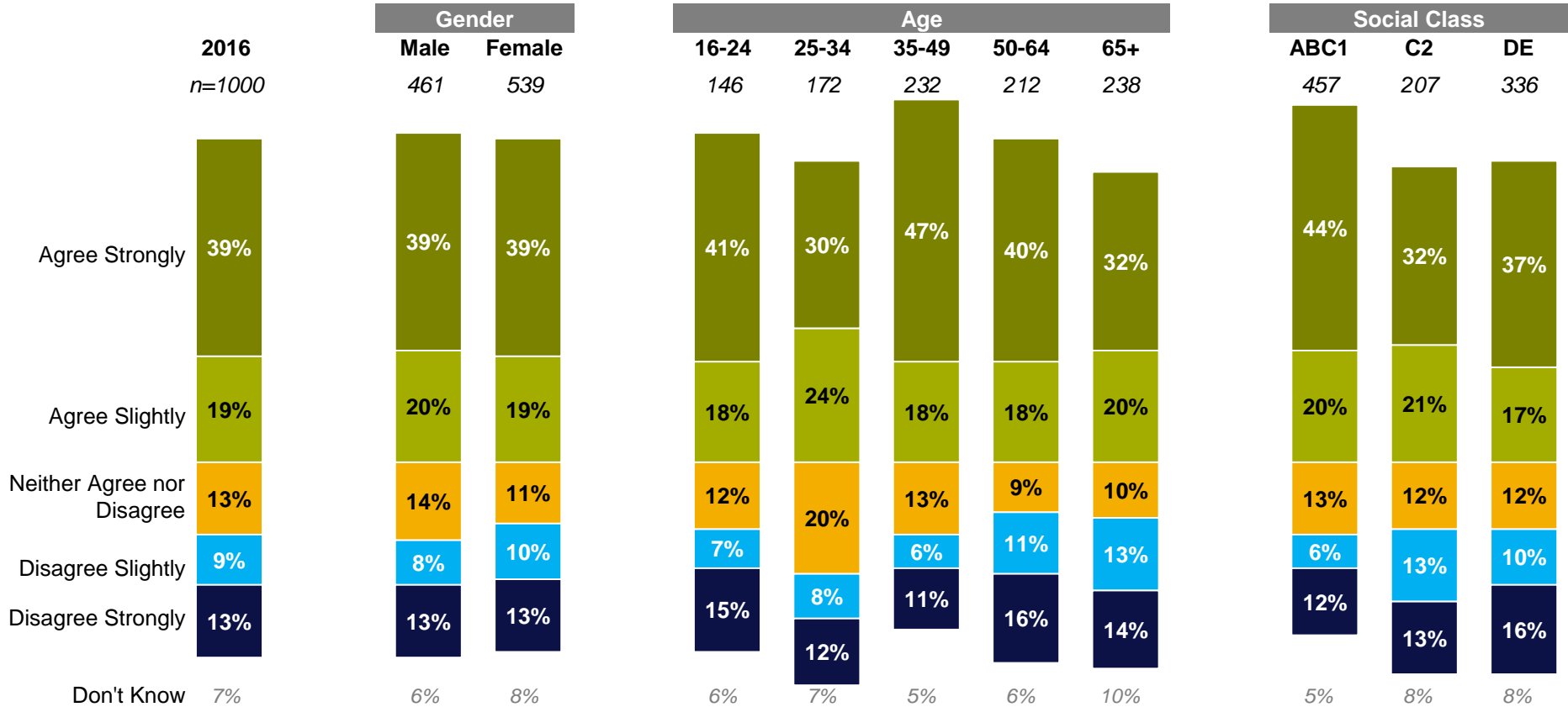
Just over two thirds of the sample (67%) agreed that abortion should be available in Northern Ireland if there is a fatal foetal abnormality which, in the opinion of medical professionals, means there is a high likelihood of death of the foetus in the womb or shortly after birth. Overall 17% disagreed here. Higher levels of agreement emerged amongst males and those in the younger 16-24 age cohort.



There was also slightly higher agreement amongst Protestants and 'other' religious groups and also amongst DUP, Alliance and 'other' party voters that abortion should be available in Northern Ireland if there is a fatal foetal abnormality which, in the opinion of medical professionals, means there is a high likelihood of death of the foetus in the womb or shortly after birth.



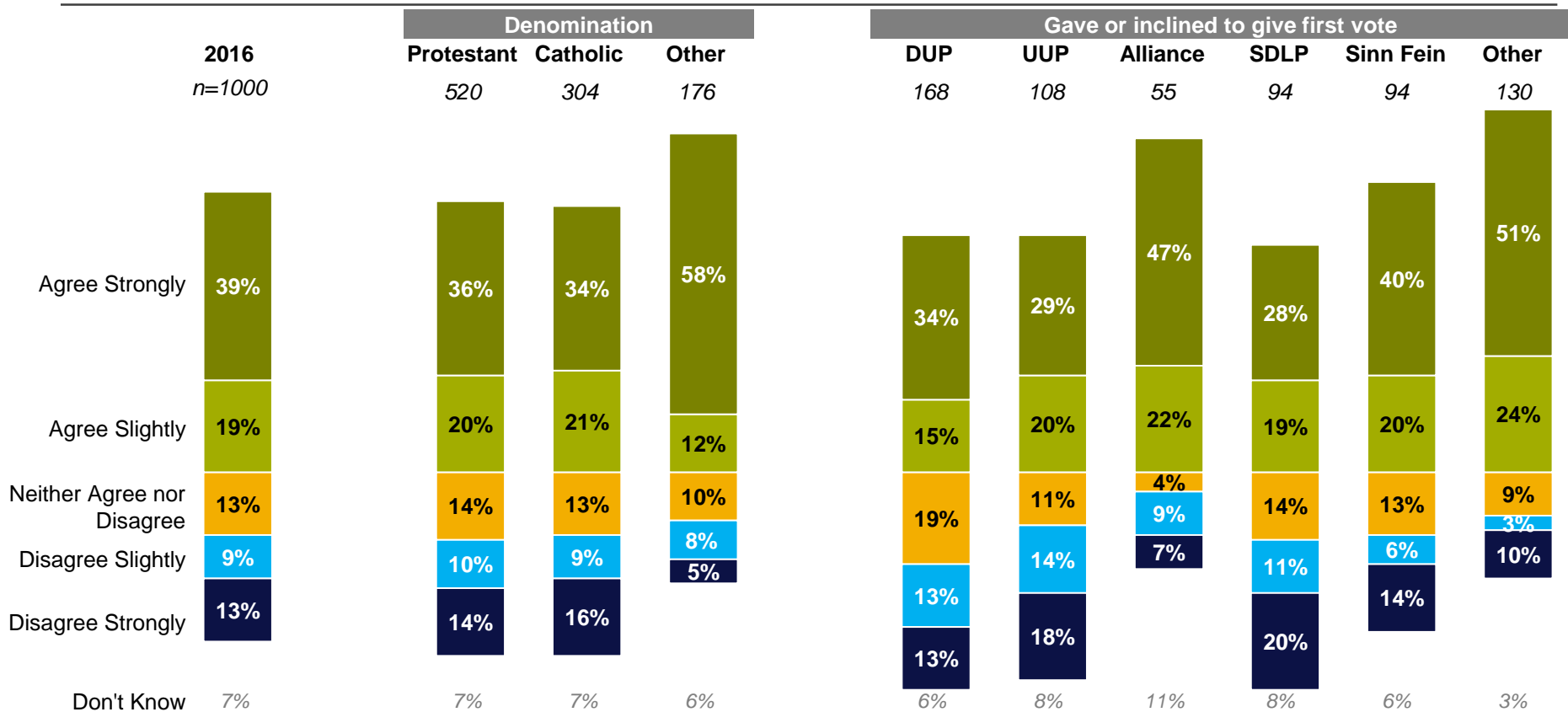
Almost 3 in 5 (58%) of the sample agreed that the Northern Ireland Assembly should decriminalize abortion by removing the criminal penalty for woman who have abortions in Northern Ireland. There were broadly similar levels of agreement by gender, but stronger support amongst 35-49 year olds and those from ABC1 socio economic backgrounds.



Agreement - The Northern Ireland Assembly should decriminalize abortion by removing the criminal penalty for woman who have abortions in Northern Ireland? [Base: All respondents – n=1000]

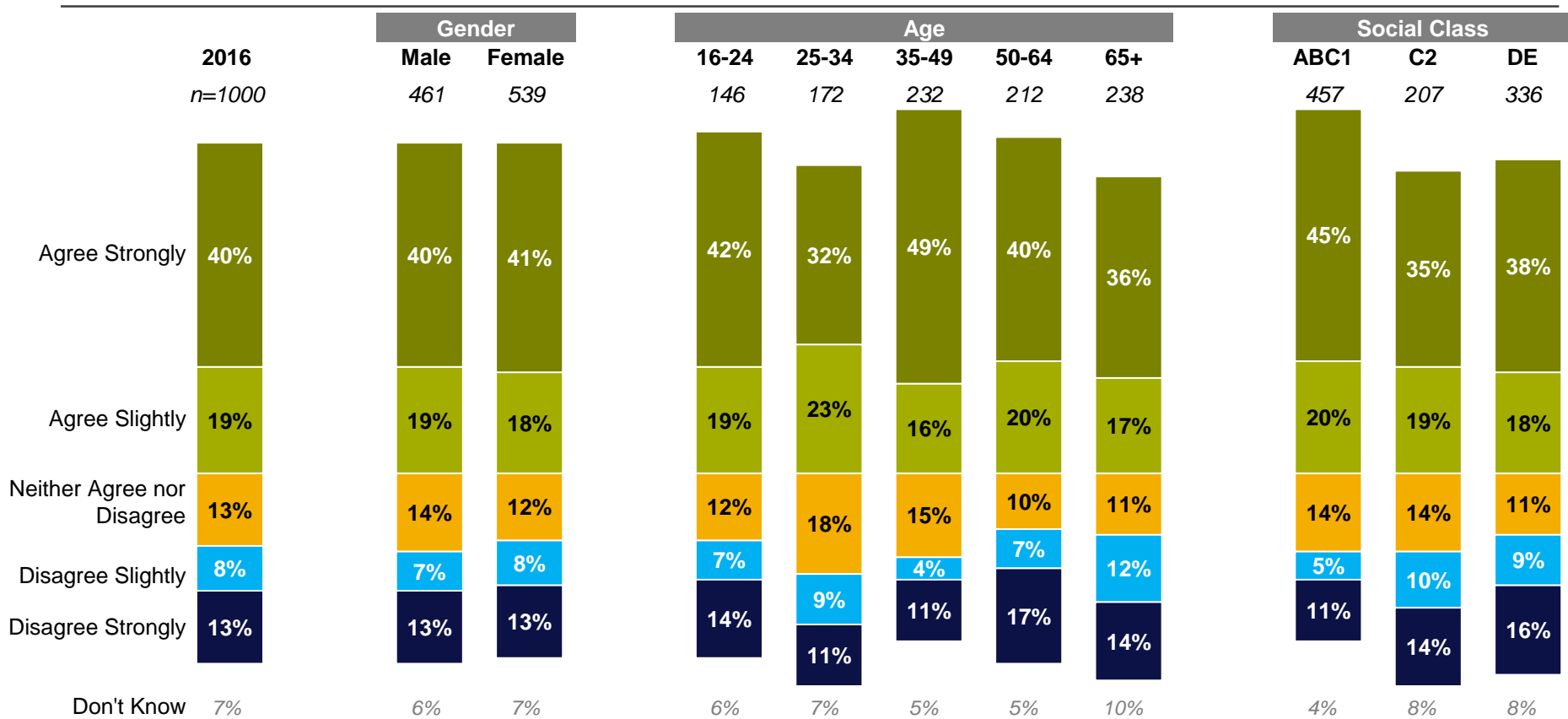


Although Protestants and Catholics were broadly similar in their agreement that the Northern Ireland Assembly should decriminalize abortion by removing the criminal penalty for woman who have abortions in Northern Ireland, there was a spike of agreement amongst the 'other' religion category. In terms of party support, Alliance and 'other' party voters were stronger in their agreement here.



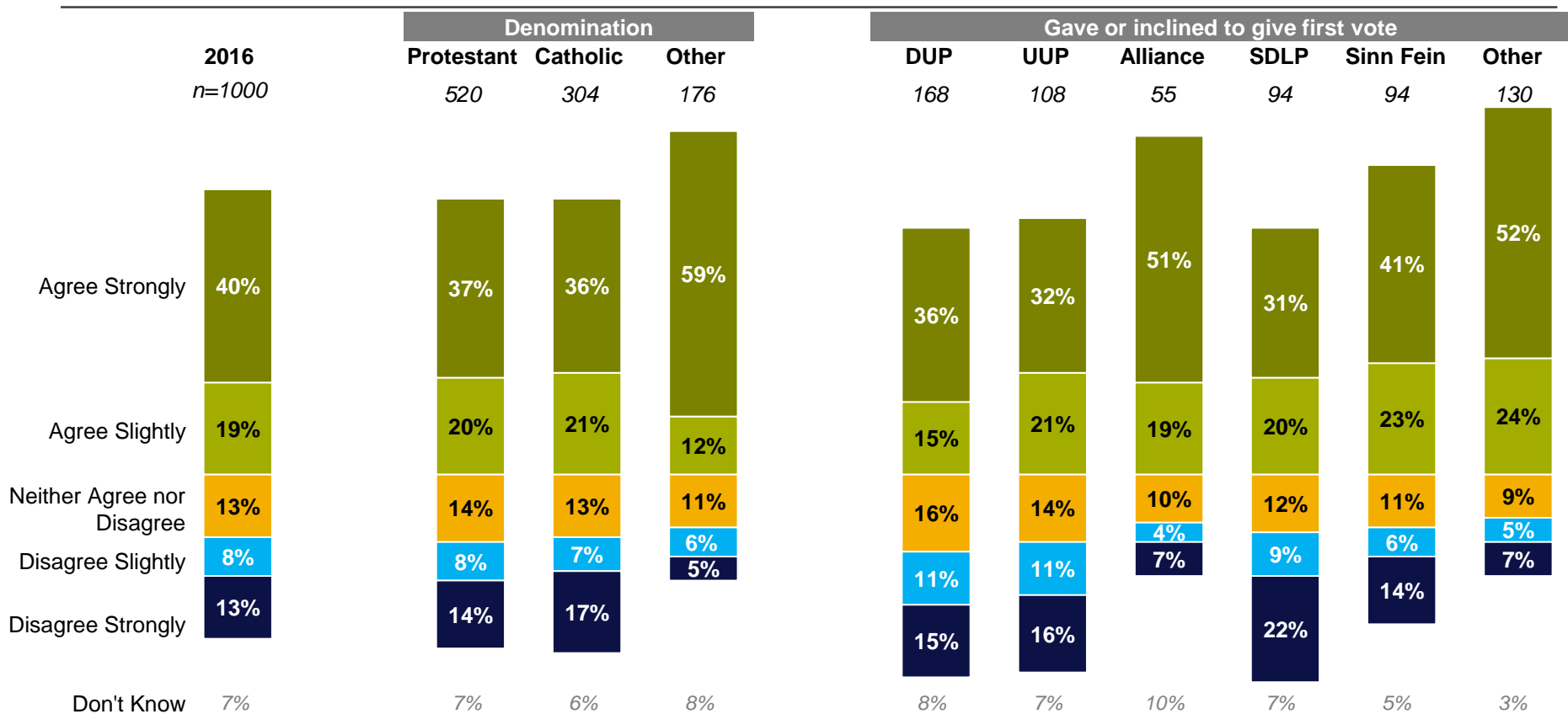
Agreement - The Northern Ireland Assembly should decriminalize abortion by removing the criminal penalty for woman who have abortions in Northern Ireland? [Base: All respondents - n=1000]

Just under 3 in 5 (59%) of the sample agreed that the Northern Ireland Assembly should decriminalize abortion by removing the criminal penalty for doctors and medical staff who provide abortion services here. There were broadly similar levels of agreement by gender, but noticeably stronger support amongst ABC1 respondents. Overall, 21% disagreed here.



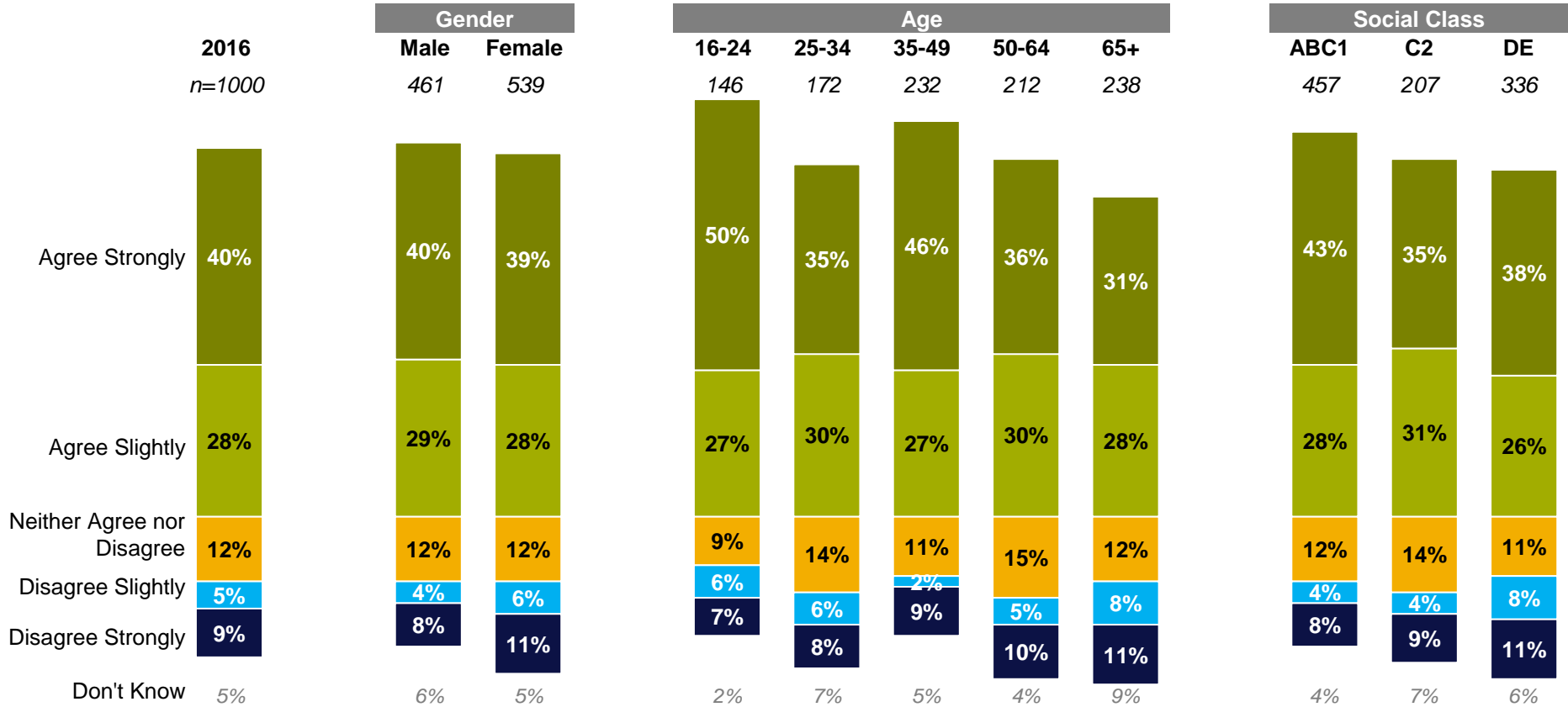
Agreement - The Northern Ireland Assembly should decriminalize abortion by removing the criminal penalty for doctors and medical staff who provide abortion services here? [ Base: All respondents – n=1000 ]

Although Protestants and Catholics were consistent in their agreement that the Northern Ireland Assembly should decriminalize abortion by removing the criminal penalty for doctors and medical staff who provide abortion services here, agreement emerged considerably higher within the 'other' religion category. In terms of party support, Alliance and 'other' party voters were much stronger in their agreement.



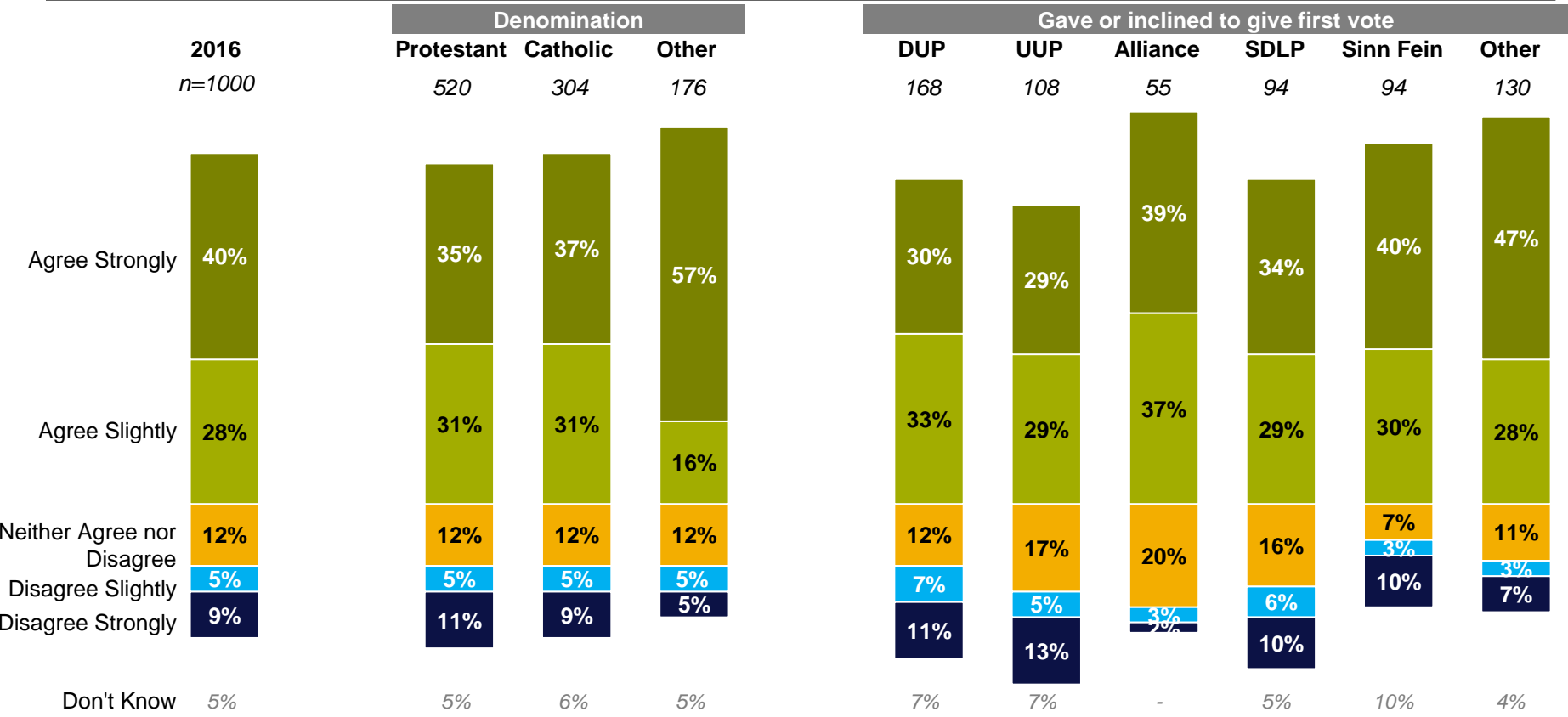
Agreement - The Northern Ireland Assembly should decriminalize abortion by removing the criminal penalty for doctors and medical staff who provide abortion services here? [ Base: All respondents – n=1000 ]

Over two thirds (68%) of the sample agreed that the fact that in most cases abortion is classified as a crime in Northern Ireland adds to the distress of women who are seeking an abortion. Agreement was similar between men and women but slightly higher amongst ABC1s, and those in the 16-24 and 35-49 year old age groups. Overall, 14% disagreed here.



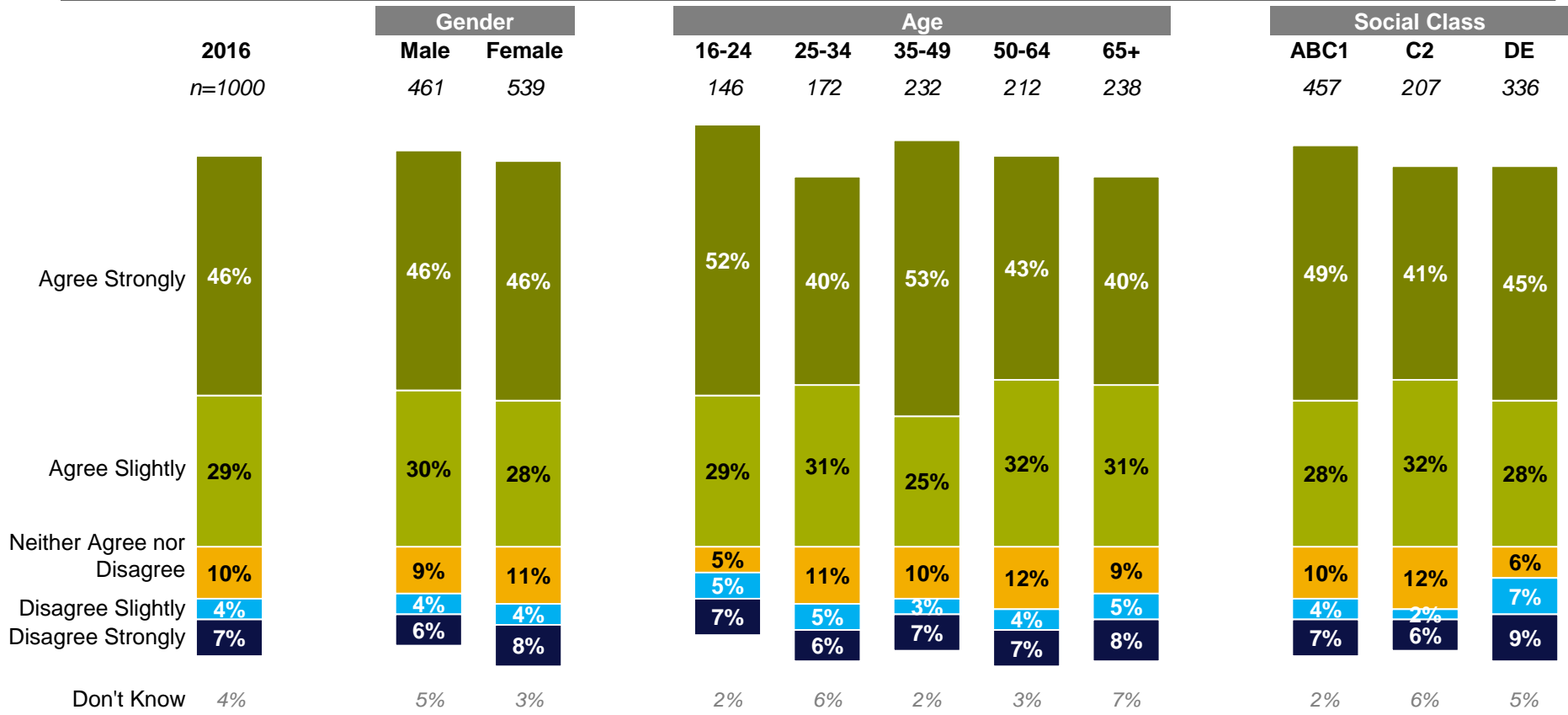
Agreement - The fact that in most cases abortion is classified as a crime in Northern Ireland adds to the distress of women who are seeking an abortion? [ Base: All respondents – n=1000 ]

The fact that in most cases abortion is classified as a crime in Northern Ireland adds to the distress of women who are seeking an abortion engendered stronger agreement amongst those in the 'other' religion category as well as Alliance, Sinn Fein and 'other' party voters.



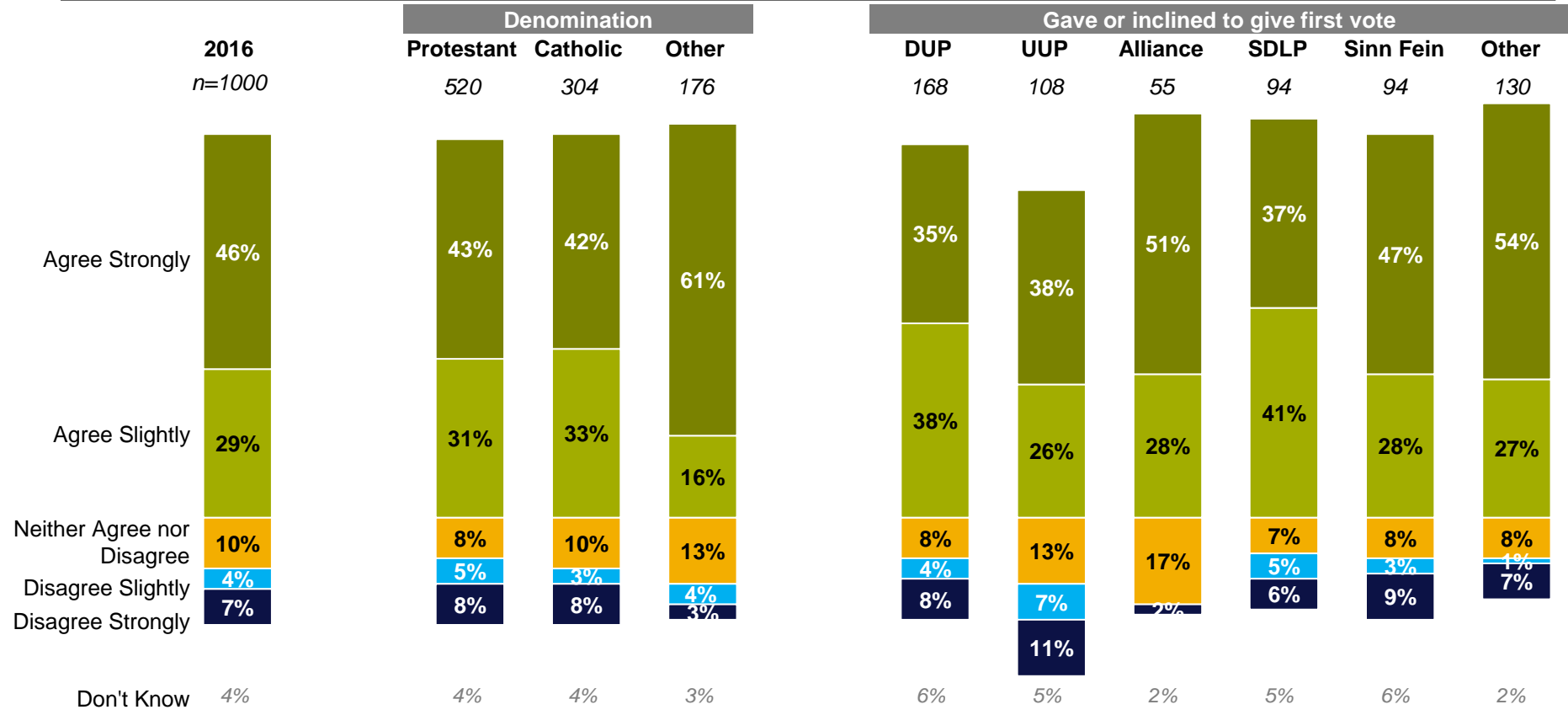
Agreement - The fact that in most cases abortion is classified as a crime in Northern Ireland adds to the distress of women who are seeking an abortion? [ Base: All respondents - n=1000 ]

Three quarters (75%) of the sample agreed that the fact that women from Northern Ireland who are seeking a lawful abortion must travel to England or other parts of the UK adds to their distress. Agreement was similar between men and women and across the socio economic spectrum. However, agreement was stronger amongst the 16-24 and 35-49 year old age groups. Overall, 11% disagreed here.



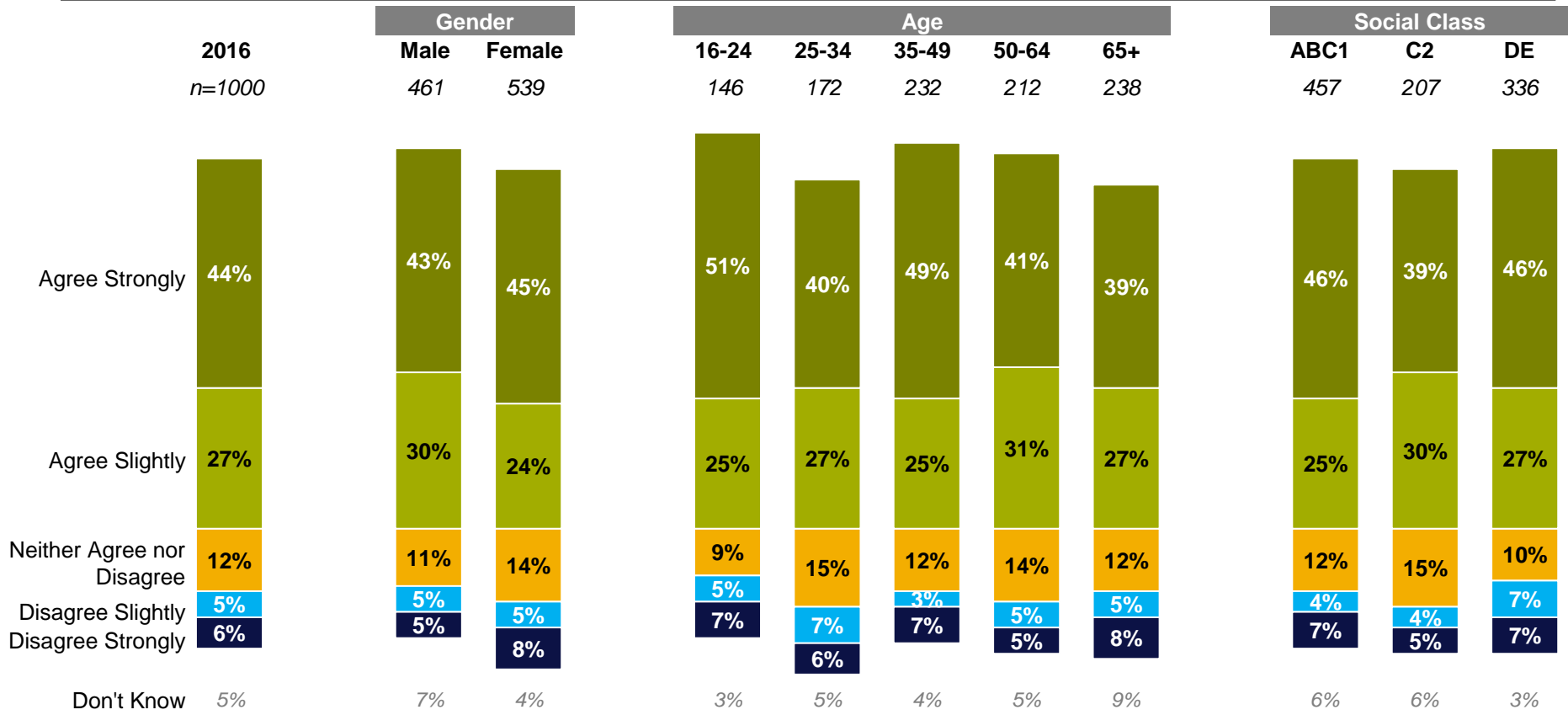
Agreement - The fact that women from Northern Ireland who are seeking a lawful abortion must travel to England or other parts of the UK adds to their distress? [ Base: All respondents – n=1000 ]

Agreement with the fact that women from Northern Ireland, who are seeking a lawful abortion must travel to England or other parts of the UK adds to their distress, was again broadly consistent between Protestants and Catholics. However, the 'strongly agree' cohort was noticeably more prevalent amongst the 'other' religious groups. Agreement was also consistently high by party support, with the exception of the UUP



Agreement - The fact that women from Northern Ireland who are seeking a lawful abortion must travel to England or other parts of the UK adds to their distress? [ Base: All respondents – n=1000 ]

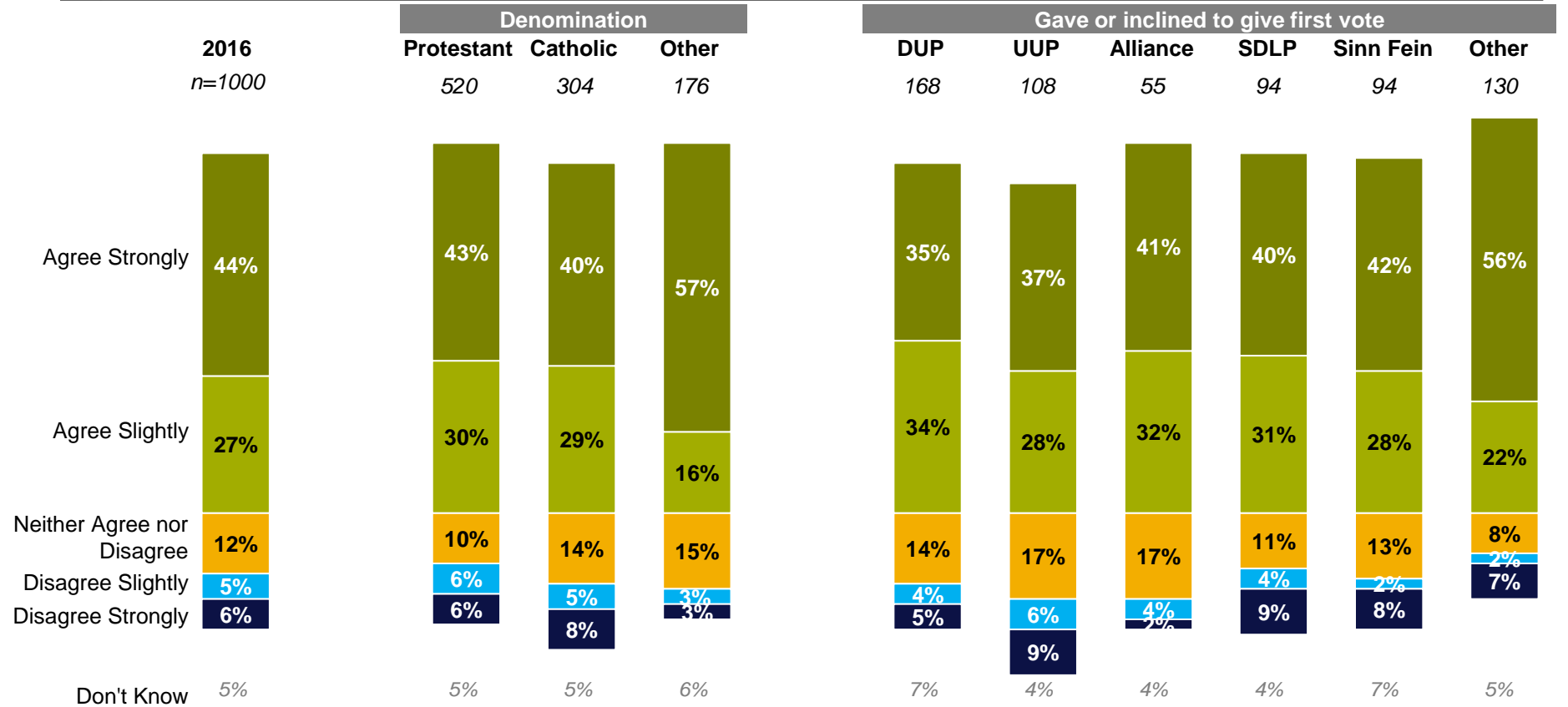
Over 7 in 10 (71%) of the sample agreed that that the fact that most women from Northern Ireland who are seeking a lawful abortion must travel to other parts of the UK or abroad has a disproportionately negative impact on women with a low income. Agreement was similar between men and women and across the socio economic groups but marginally weaker amongst the 25-34 and 65+ age groups. Overall, 11% disagreed here.



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Agreement with the fact that most women from Northern Ireland who are seeking a lawful abortion must travel to other parts of the UK or abroad has a disproportionately negative impact on women with a low income was similar amongst Protestants and Catholics but stronger amongst the 'other' religious groups. In terms of party support there was more consistency in agreement here amongst voters for the 5 main parties.



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# Summary of Findings

- **Approaching three quarters of the sample (72%) agreed that abortion should be available in Northern Ireland if the pregnancy is as a result of rape or incest. There were broadly similar responses by gender, age (albeit with stronger support amongst the 16-24 yr olds) and some small differences by socio economic grouping. 15% disagreed here.**
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- **There was also slightly higher agreement amongst Protestants and 'other' religious groups and also amongst DUP, Alliance and 'other' party voters that abortion should be available in Northern Ireland if there is a fatal foetal abnormality which, in the opinion of medical professionals, means there is a high likelihood of death of the foetus in the womb or shortly after birth.**
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