

Christmas past and present

How festive attitudes and behaviours have changed in the last 55 years

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About this study

This study compares changes and similarities in attitudes to Christmas between 2024 to 1969, drawing on [a survey](#) conducted 55 years ago by National Opinion Polls (NOP) Ltd and one carried out in December of this year by Focaldata.

Question wordings and response options have been kept consistent between the two surveys to preserve trends, even though in some cases they do not reflect current best practice in polling methods (for example, not allowing “don’t know” responses).

Fieldwork

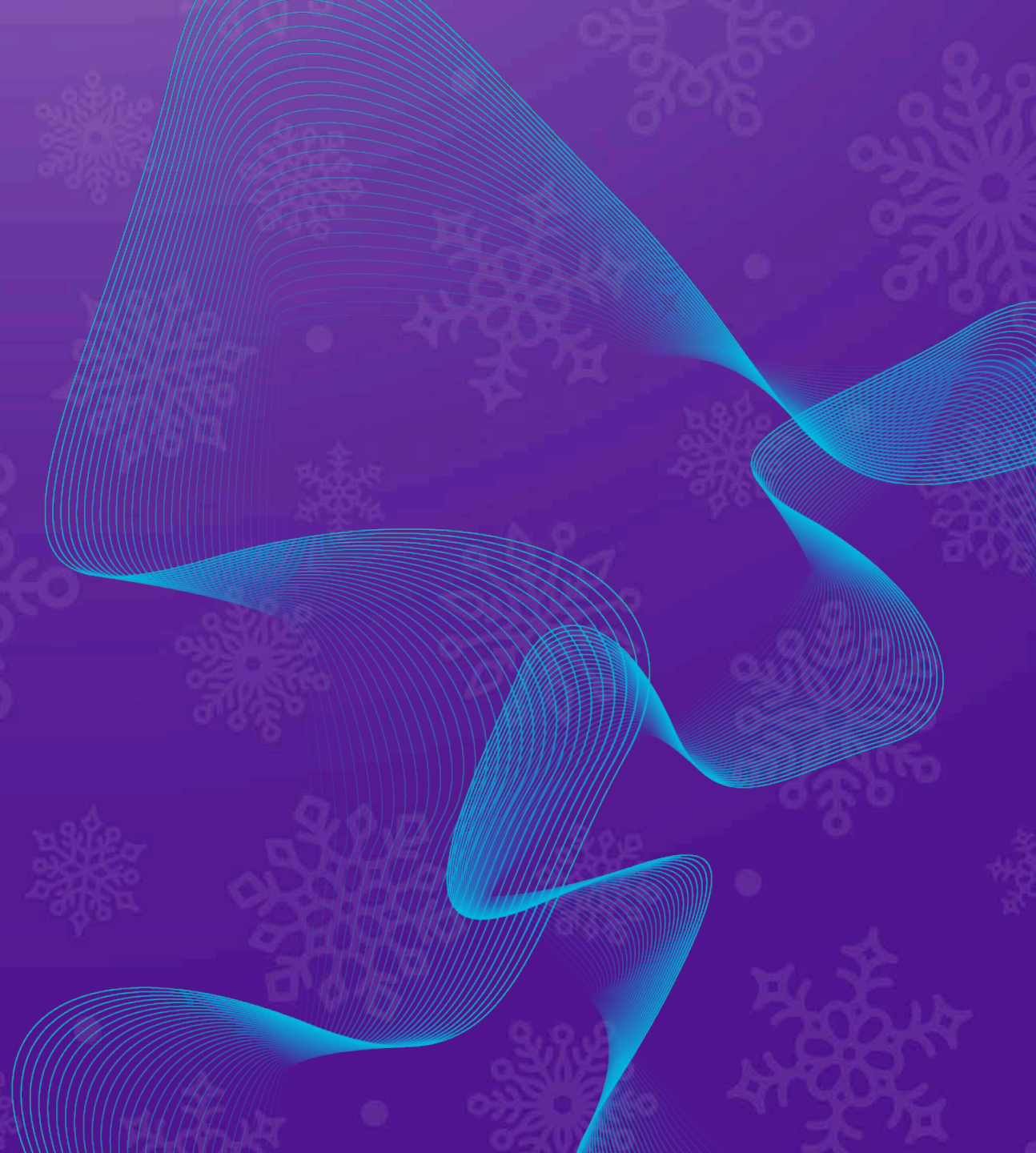
2024

Fieldwork was conducted via Focaldata’s in-house platform, with API integration to an online panel network. Data collection took place between 11 and 12 December 2024, with a total of 996 respondents from a nationally representative group of those aged 21+ in the UK completing the survey. Data was weighted by age, gender, region, ethnicity and education status.

1969

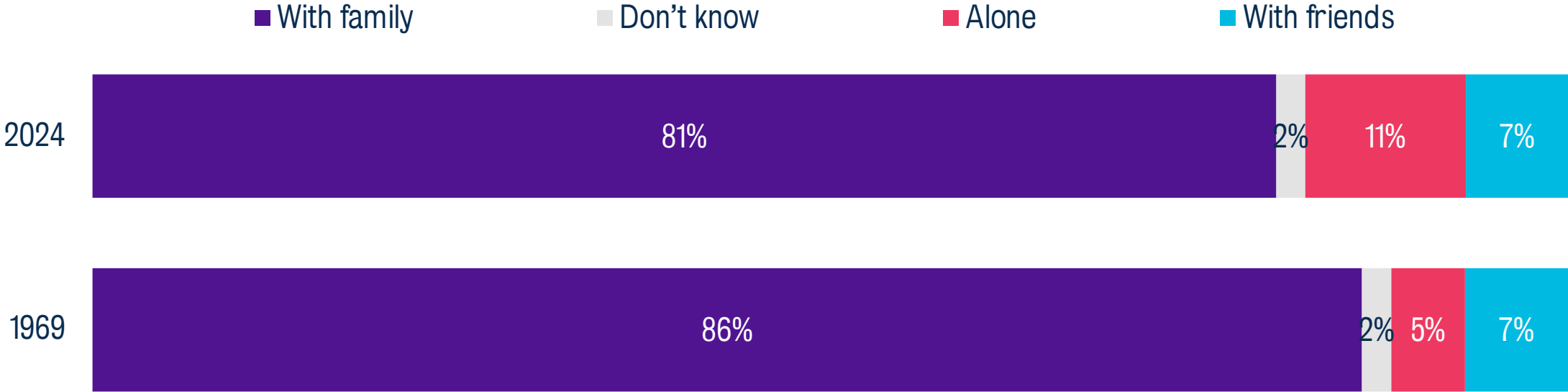
Fieldwork was conducted by National Opinion Polls (NOP) Ltd. Data collection took place between 10 and 15 December 1969, with a total of 1,742 respondents from a nationally representative systematic probability sample.

How people are spending Christmas: 2024 vs 1969



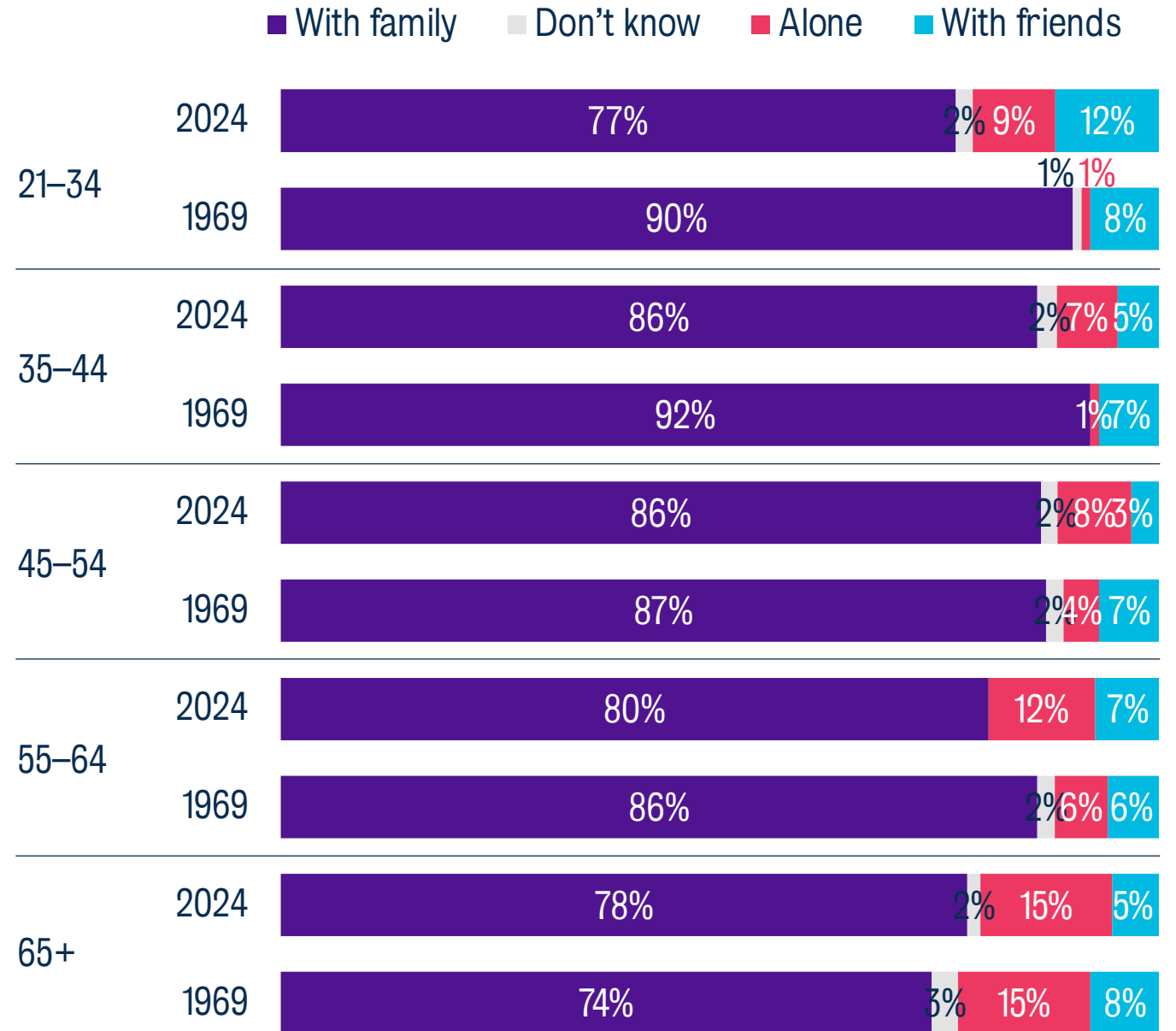
One in nine people now say they'll be spending Christmas Day alone this year – up from one in 20 back in 1969

How will you be spending Christmas Day this year, with friends, with your family or by yourself?

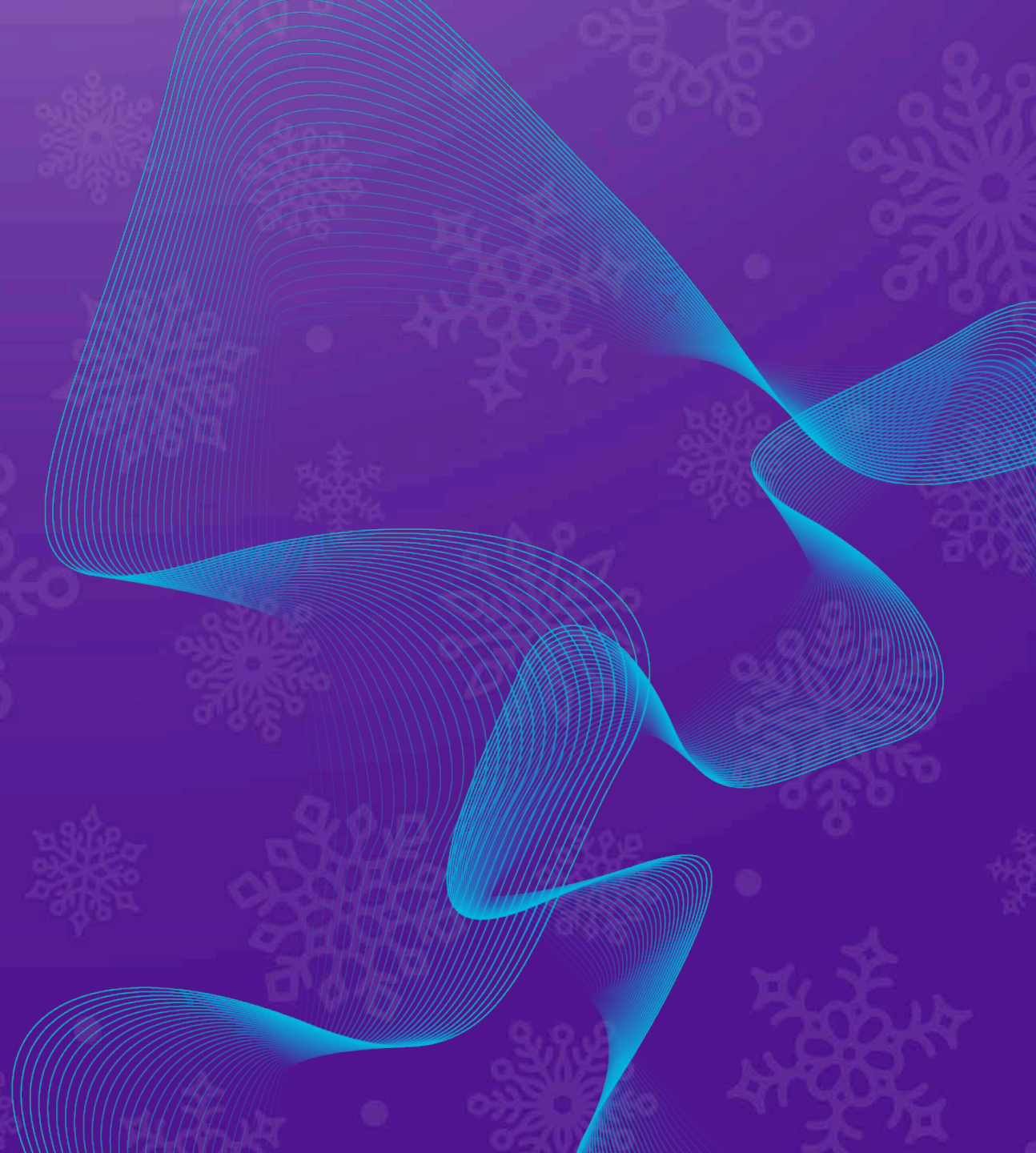


The share of people aged 65+ saying they will spend Christmas Day alone has remained the same – but among all other age groups it has risen, with the biggest increase among the youngest surveyed, where one in 11 now say this applies to them, up from one in 100 in 1969

How will you be spending Christmas Day this year, with friends, with your family or by yourself?

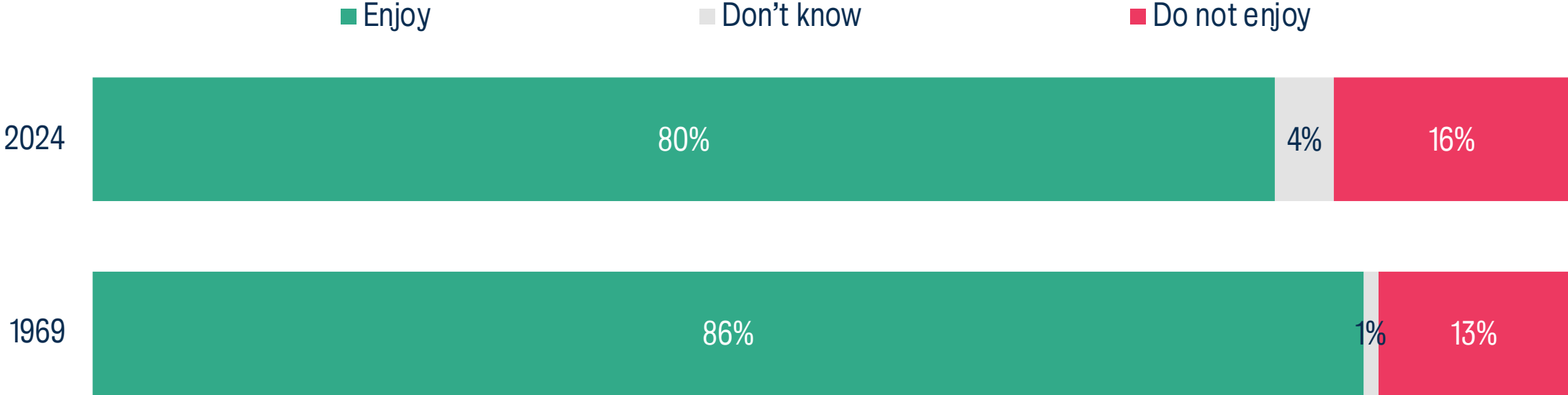


Attitudes to Christmas: 2024 vs 1969



Eight in 10 people now say they enjoy Christmas – down slightly from 55 years ago

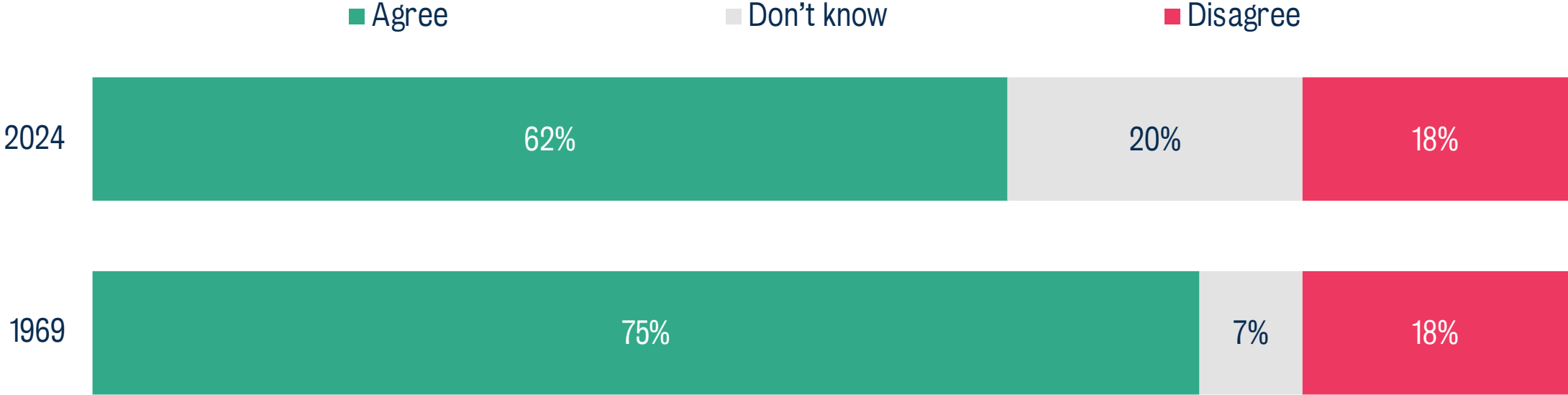
Do you enjoy Christmas or not?



Six in 10 people today think parents should encourage their children to believe in Santa – down from three-quarters in 1969

Here are some statements about Christmas. Do you agree or disagree that...

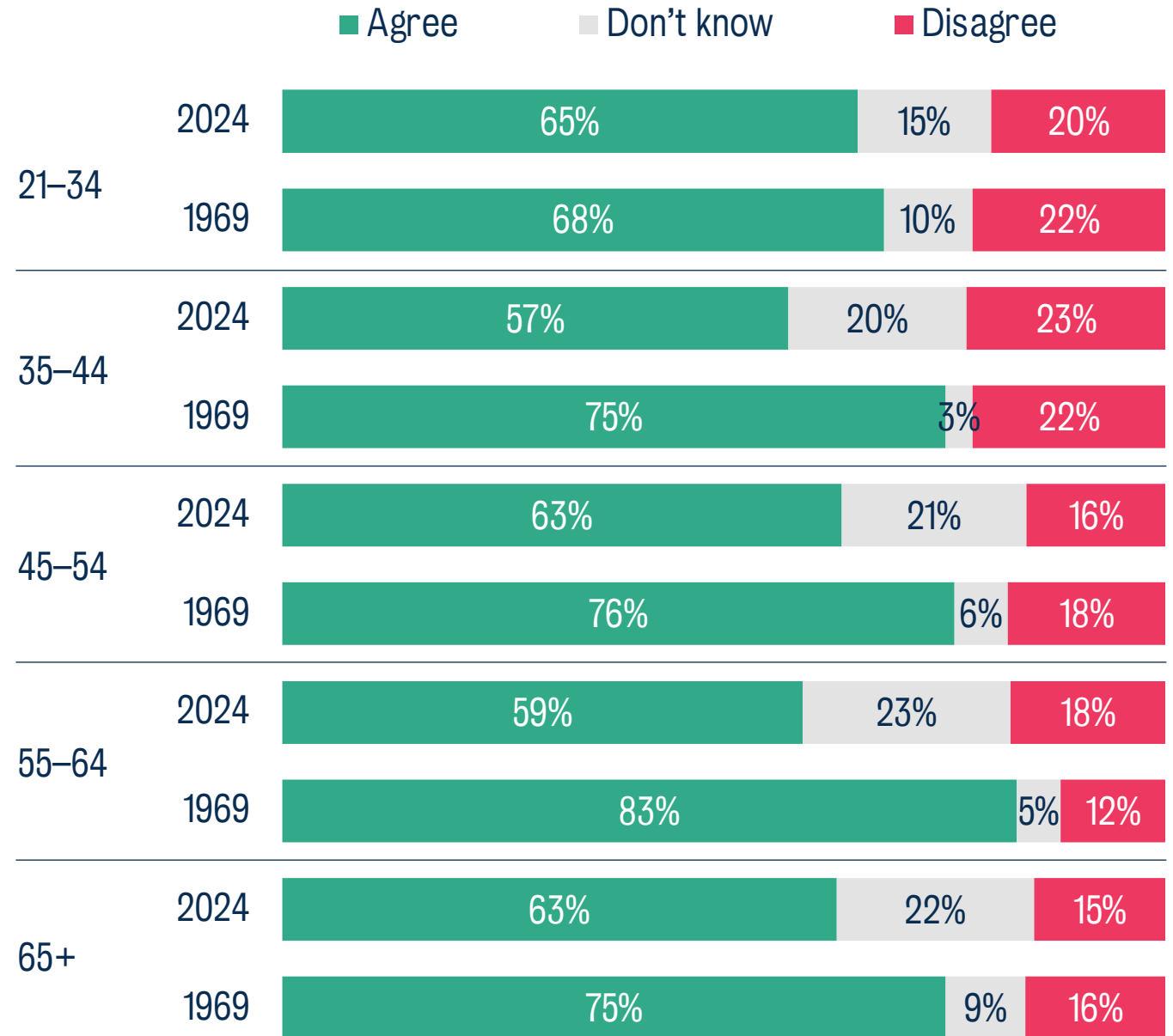
Parents should encourage their children to believe in Santa Claus



This change has been driven by shifting views among older age groups, while attitudes among the youngest surveyed – 21-to-34-year-olds – are largely unchanged

Here are some statements about Christmas. Do you agree or disagree that...

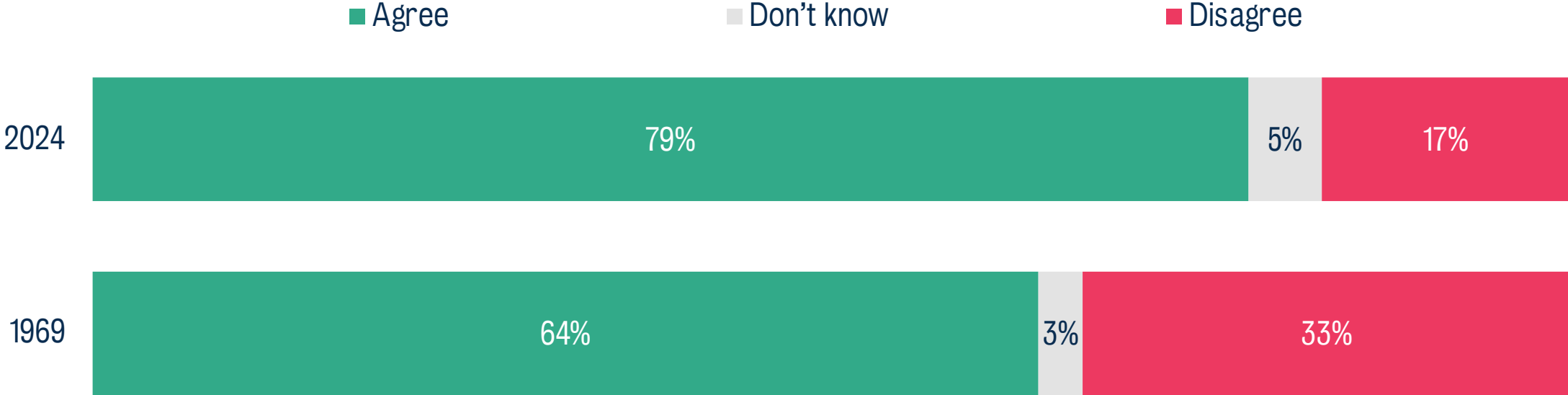
Parents should encourage their children to believe in Santa Claus



The public are more likely than they were 55 years ago to think big stores start selling Christmas goods too early in the year

Here are some statements about Christmas. Do you agree or disagree that...

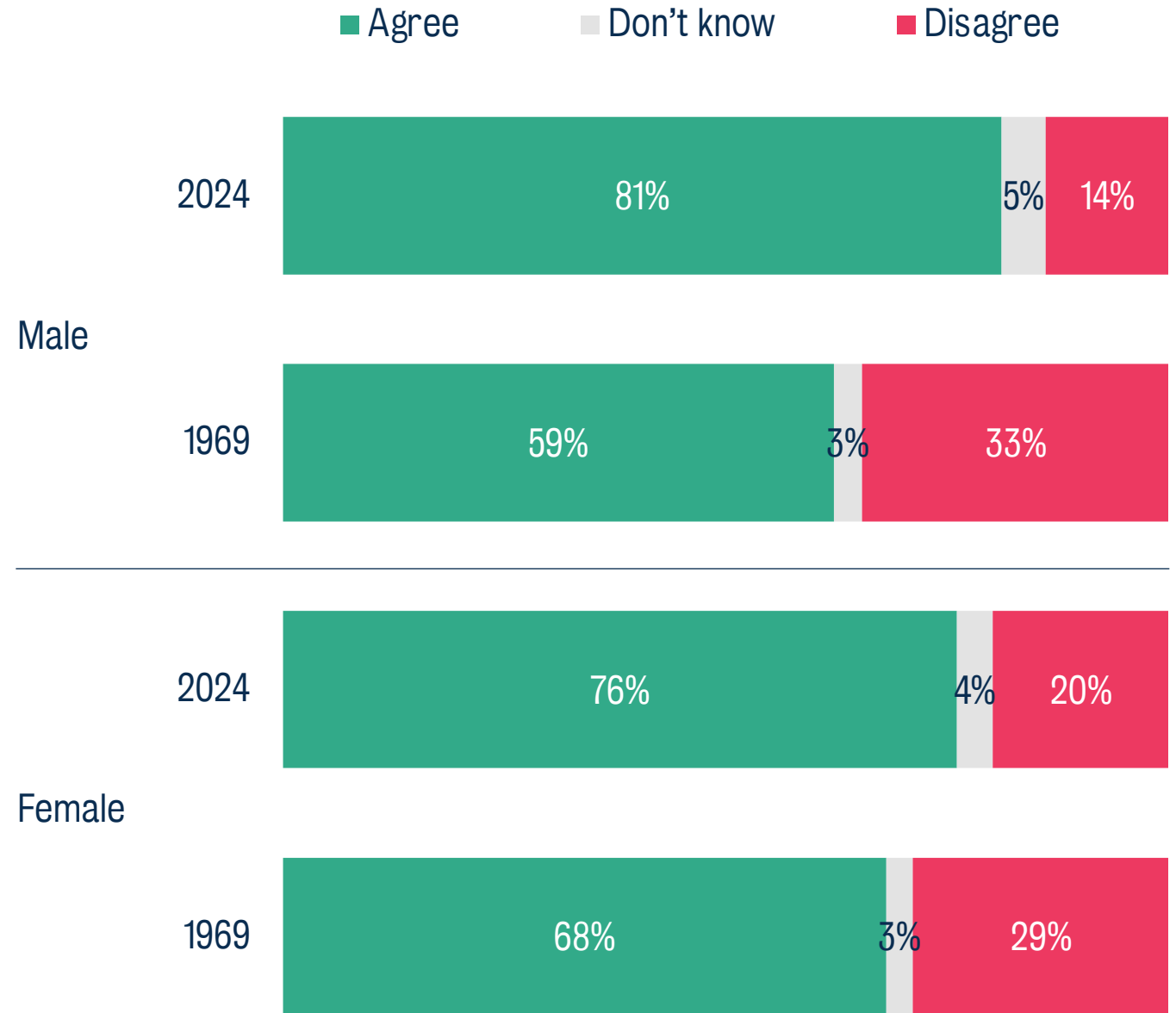
Big stores start selling Christmas goods too early in the year



Men have seen the biggest change in attitudes, with eight in 10 now saying Christmas goods are sold too early – up from six in 10

Here are some statements about Christmas. Do you agree or disagree that...

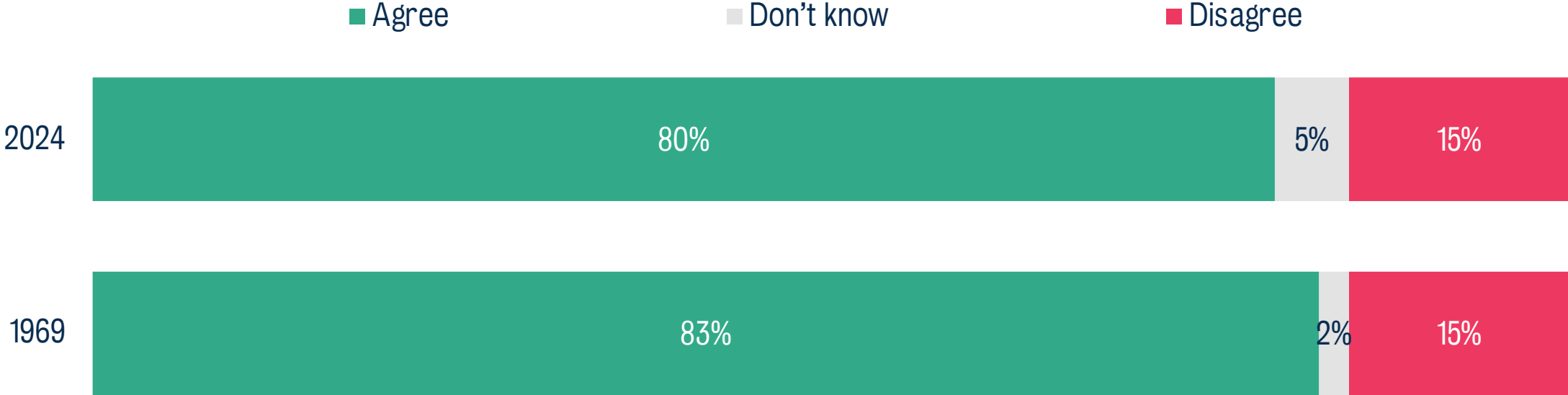
Big stores start selling Christmas goods too early in the year



But people were just as likely to feel Christmas was too commercialised back in 1969 as they are today...

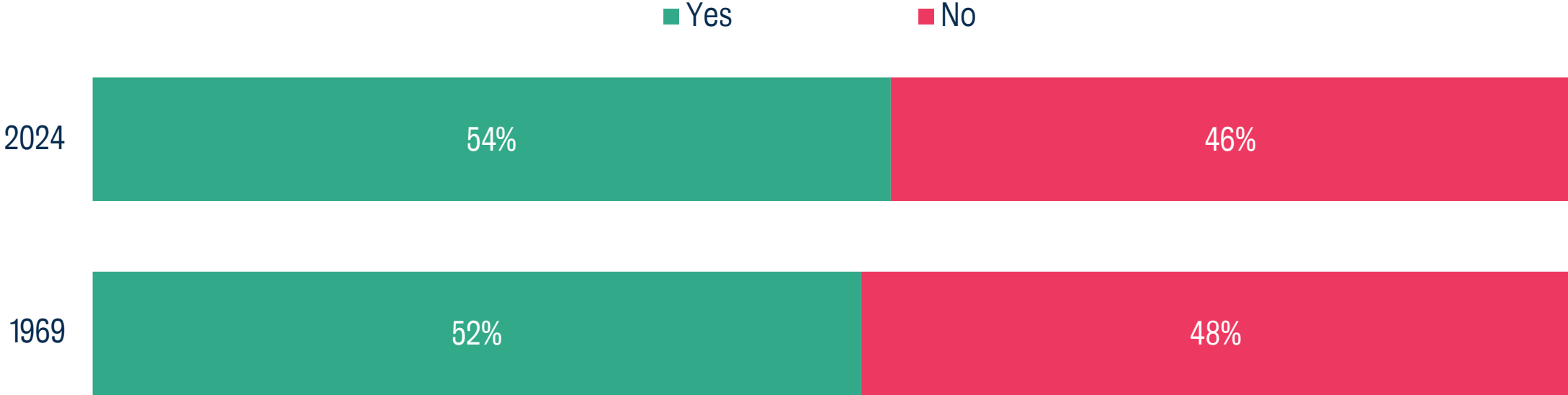
Here are some statements about Christmas. Do you agree or disagree that...

Christmas is too commercialised



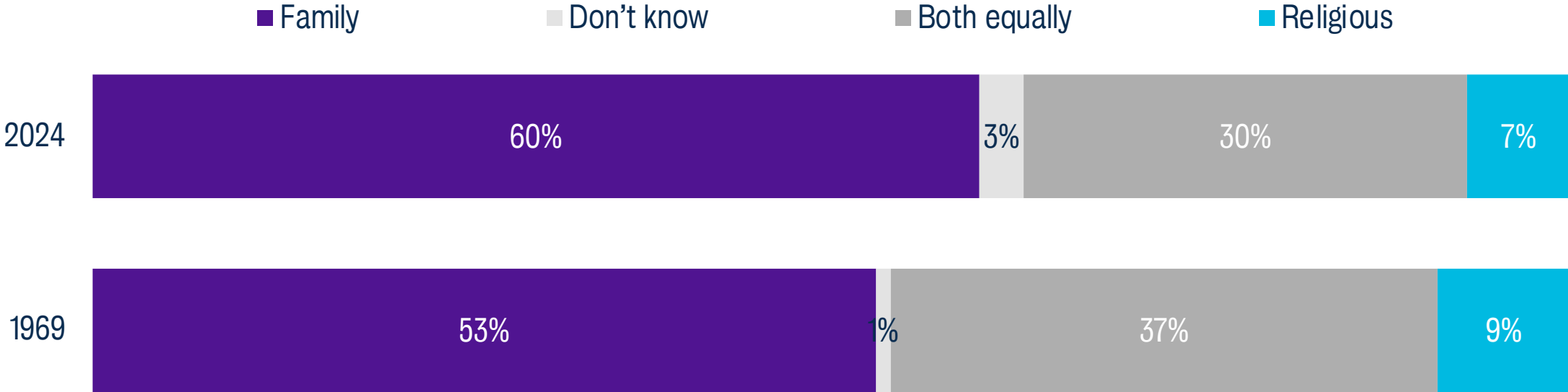
...and they were just as likely to want to cut down on Christmas spending, with the nation closely divided

Would you like to cut down on spending for Christmas or not?



Six in 10 people say Christmas is mainly a family occasion, rather than religious – up from around half 55 years ago

Some people think Christmas is mainly a family occasion, others see it mainly as a religious occasion. How do you think of Christmas?



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