

# *Election Satisfaction Survey 2024*

## An Overview of Results



Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES)  
Research Division, HSRC

# A RESEARCH-DRIVEN ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY (EMB)

Since the late 1990s, the **Electoral Commission** has partnered **with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)** to undertake a programme of electoral research.

This focuses on generating survey-based as well as qualitative insight to inform operational planning and outreach.

- **The Power of the X:** Monitoring electoral predispositions through the Voter Participation Survey (VPS) series: 23,806 surveyed to date
- **The Voter's Voice:** Evaluating electoral experiences through the Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) series; 118,541 surveyed to date



# 2024 South African Elections: Measuring Voter Satisfaction and Electoral Integrity

- On the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024, the seventh **National and Provincial Elections (NPE)** in South Africa took place.
- The **Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)** was commissioned by the **Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC)** to conduct a survey on the day of the elections.
- The intention was to establish the opinions and perceptions of voters on election day, understanding the electoral experience of voters.
- In the **Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS)**, voters were asked a series of questions about the election process, including whether the 2024 NPE were free and fair.

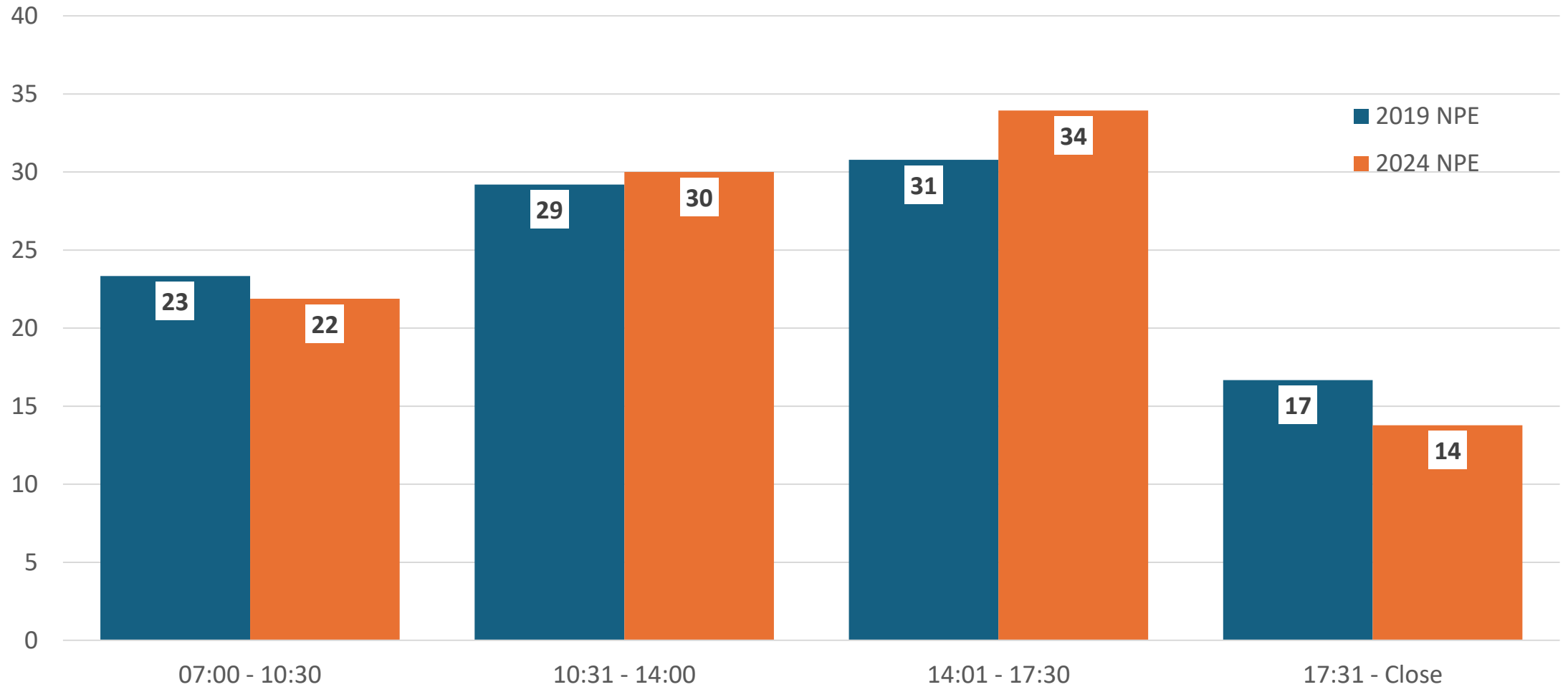


# Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) series Methodology

- **Aims:** (i) to determine perceptions of voters regarding the freeness and fairness of the electoral process; (ii) to assess the operational efficiency of the IEC in managing elections.
- **Sample design:** included **stratification; multi-stage** procedure
  - Database of **voting stations** obtained from Electoral Commission merged with **Census Enumerator Areas**.
  - **National representative sample of 300 voting stations** selected countrywide, proportional to race, geographic type and the number of voting stations in each province.
- **At voting stations,** fieldworkers **randomly select 50 voters for interviewing during Election Day** to ensure a fair representation of voters.
- **Realisation rate** of 88%, 13,155 interviews completed with respondents in nine provinces.
- **Margin of error:** Less than 1%

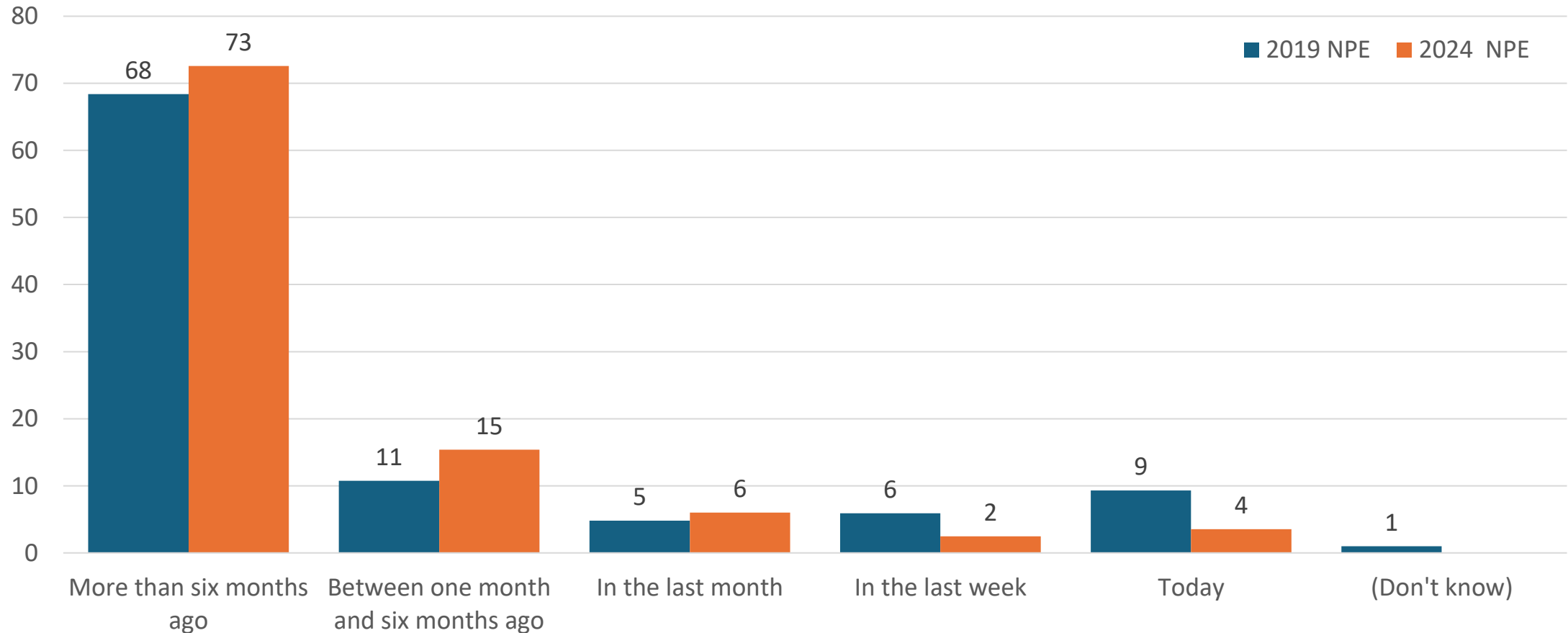


# Time period of interview for the Election Satisfaction Survey, 2019 and 2024



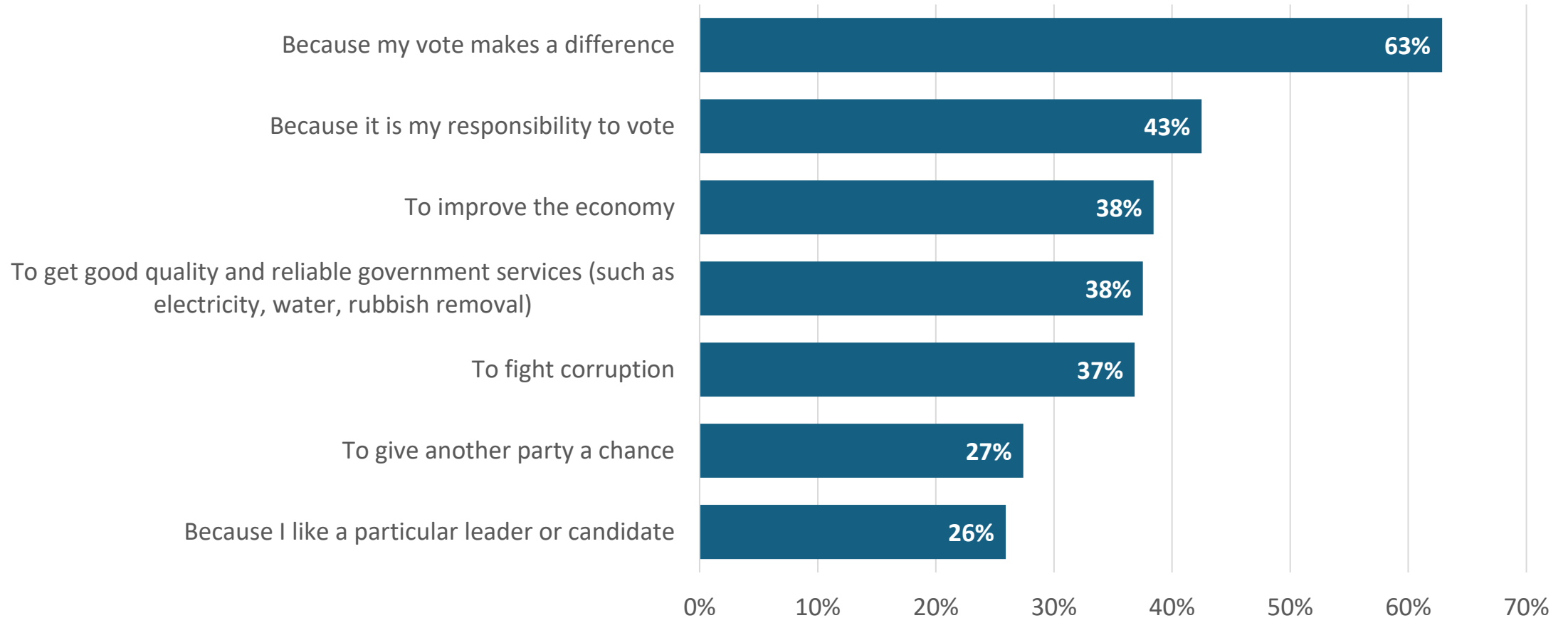
Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2019; 2024

# Voter responses to the question, “When did you finally decide to vote in this National and Provincial Election?”, 2019 and 2024



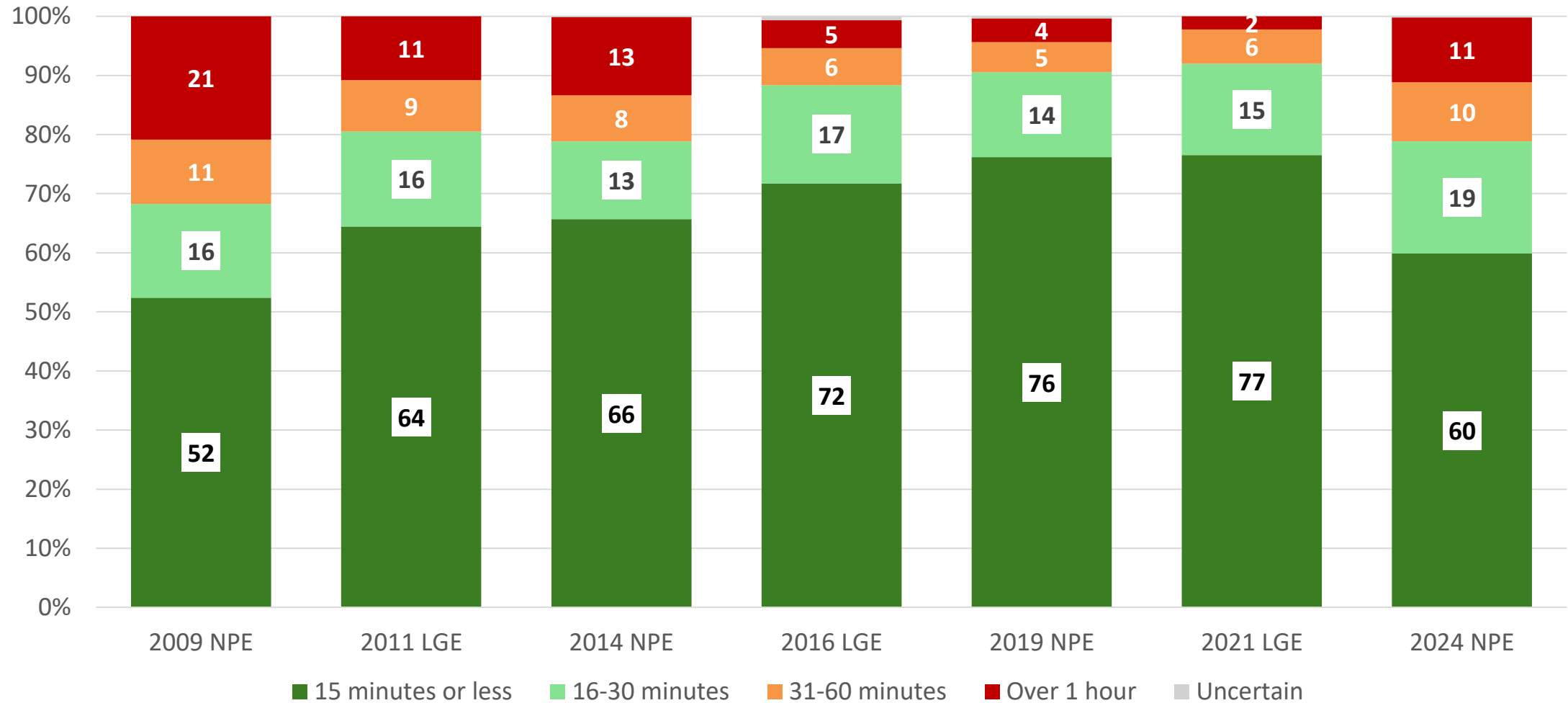
Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2019; 2024

# How voters responded to the following question, “Did ANY of the following reasons have a BIG influence on your decision to vote today? I voted... “



Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2024

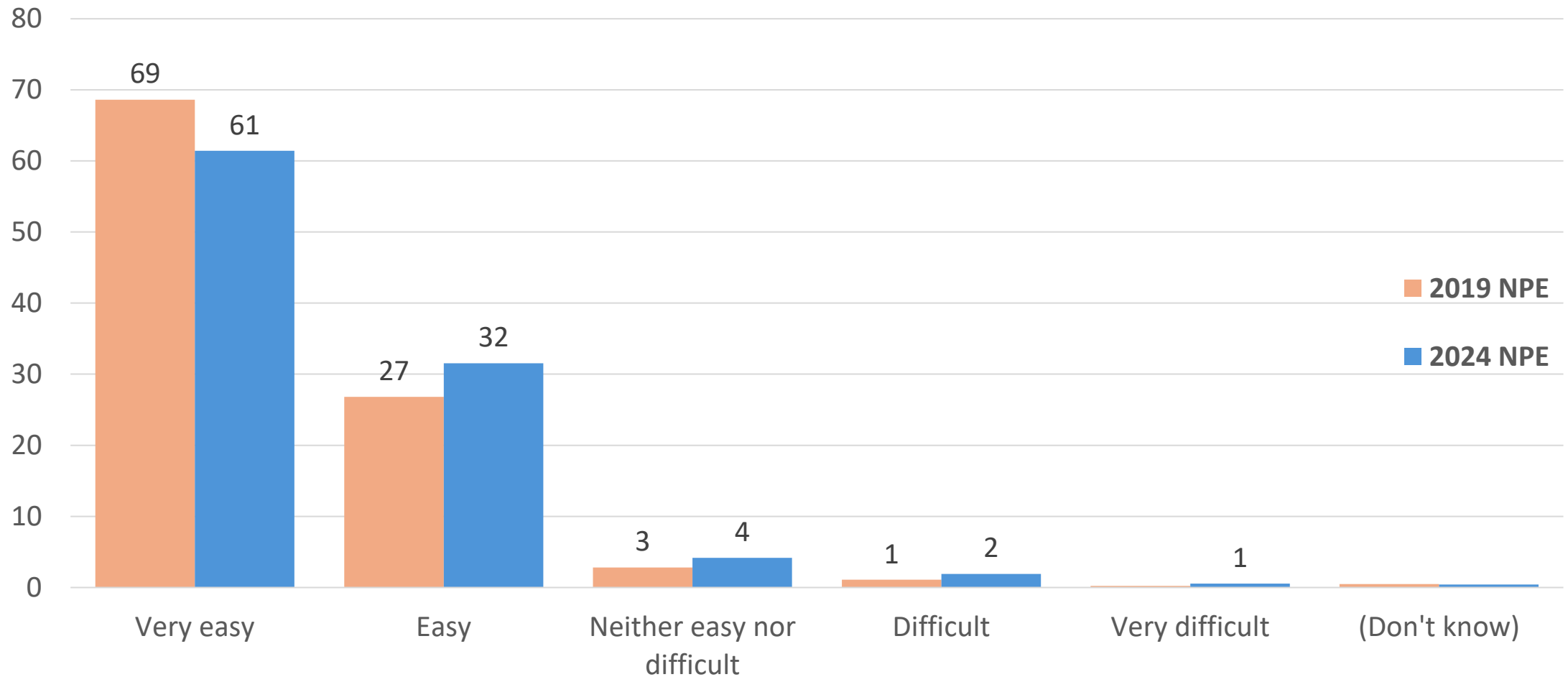
# Voter responses to the question: "How long did you queue before voting?", 2009-2024



Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2024



# Voter responses to the question, “How easy or difficult was it to find your party or candidate of choice on the ballot papers?”, 2019 and 2024 (%)



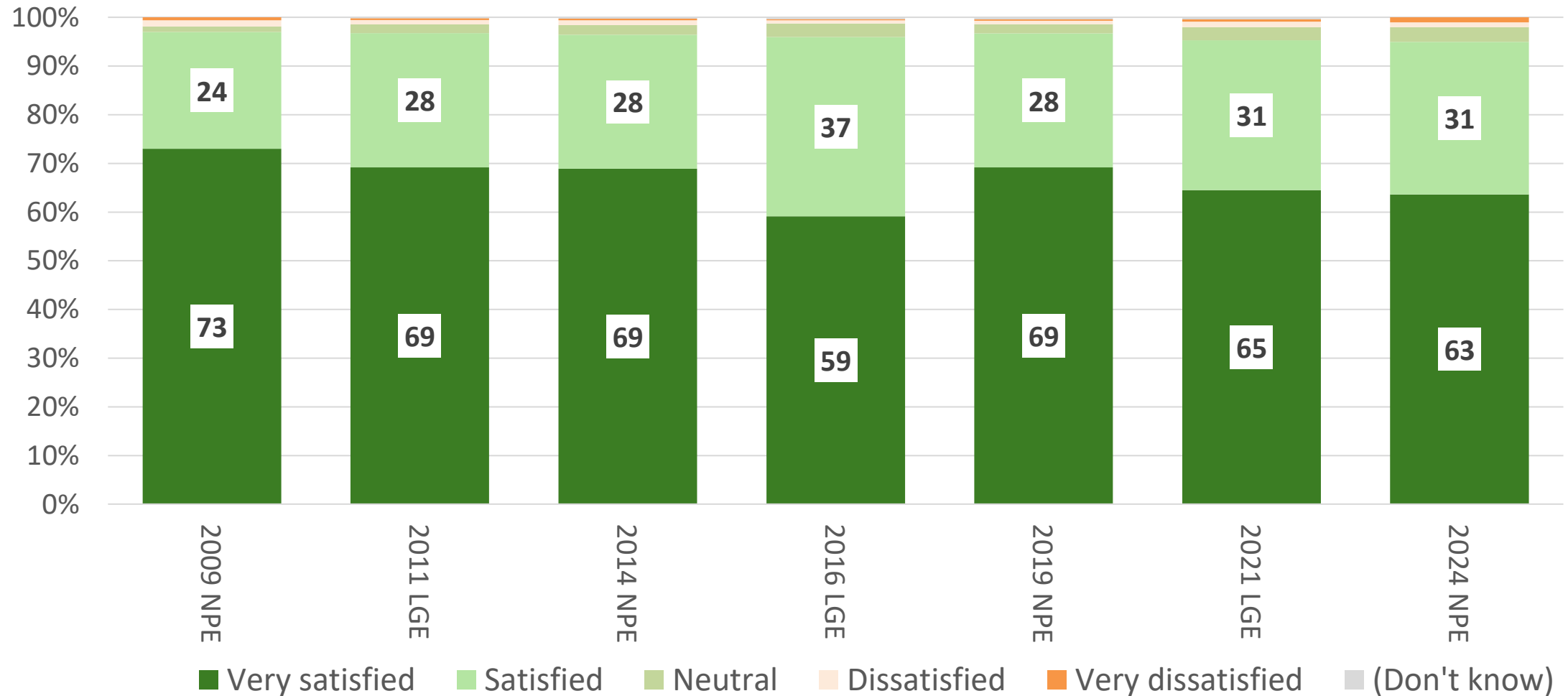
Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2019;2024

# Improving the ballot papers for major government elections

- The vast majority of the voting population were pleased with the ballot papers used at their voting station.
- 58% said that they were 'very satisfied' with the ballot papers used in the election and 35% told us that they were 'satisfied'.
- 38% wanted to improve the ballot paper for future elections.
  - 51% of those who wanted improvements favoured changing the size of the party logos.
  - 38% of those who wanted improvements wanted to change the number of parties and candidates on the ballot paper
  - 36% of those who wanted improvements supported altering the size of the party name or acronym or the candidate's name



# Voter responses to the question: "Are you satisfied with the quality of service that the IEC officials provided to voters?", 2009-2024 (%)



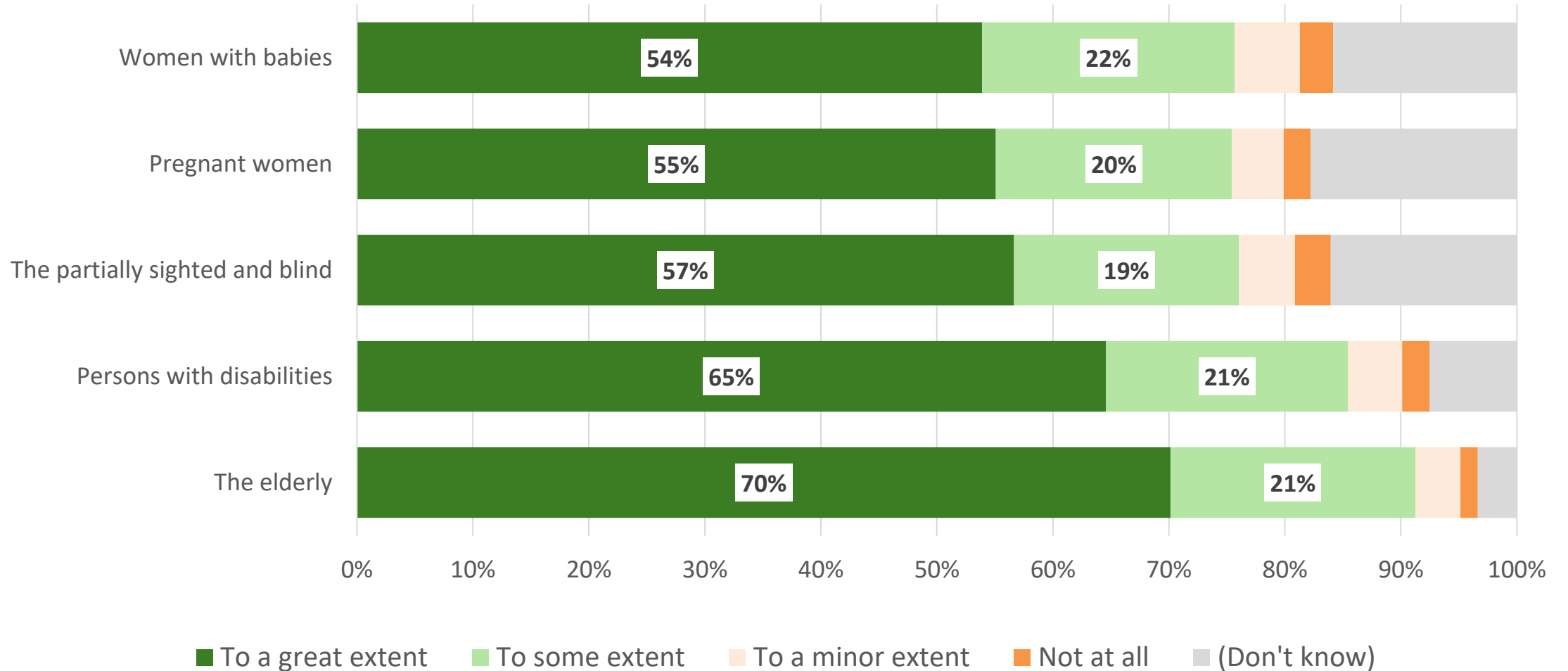
Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2024

# Voter evaluations of the performance and conduct of the Election Commission officials

- As part of the ESS questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate officials on **seven different attributes** (e.g., honesty and professionalism).
- A **clear majority** of the voter population gave electoral officials a positive rating on all seven of these indicators in the 2024 NPE.
- Of the seven, the indicator that received the most positive evaluation from voters was **'helpful'**. Almost nine-tenths (84%) of voters described officials as helpful to **'a great extent'**.
- The indicator that received the lowest rating was **'impartial'**. 71% said this applied 'to a great extent', while close to a tenth stated that officials were **not at all** impartial (8%).



# Voter responses to the question: “To what extent did the voting procedure at this voting station consider the needs of special groups?”, 2024



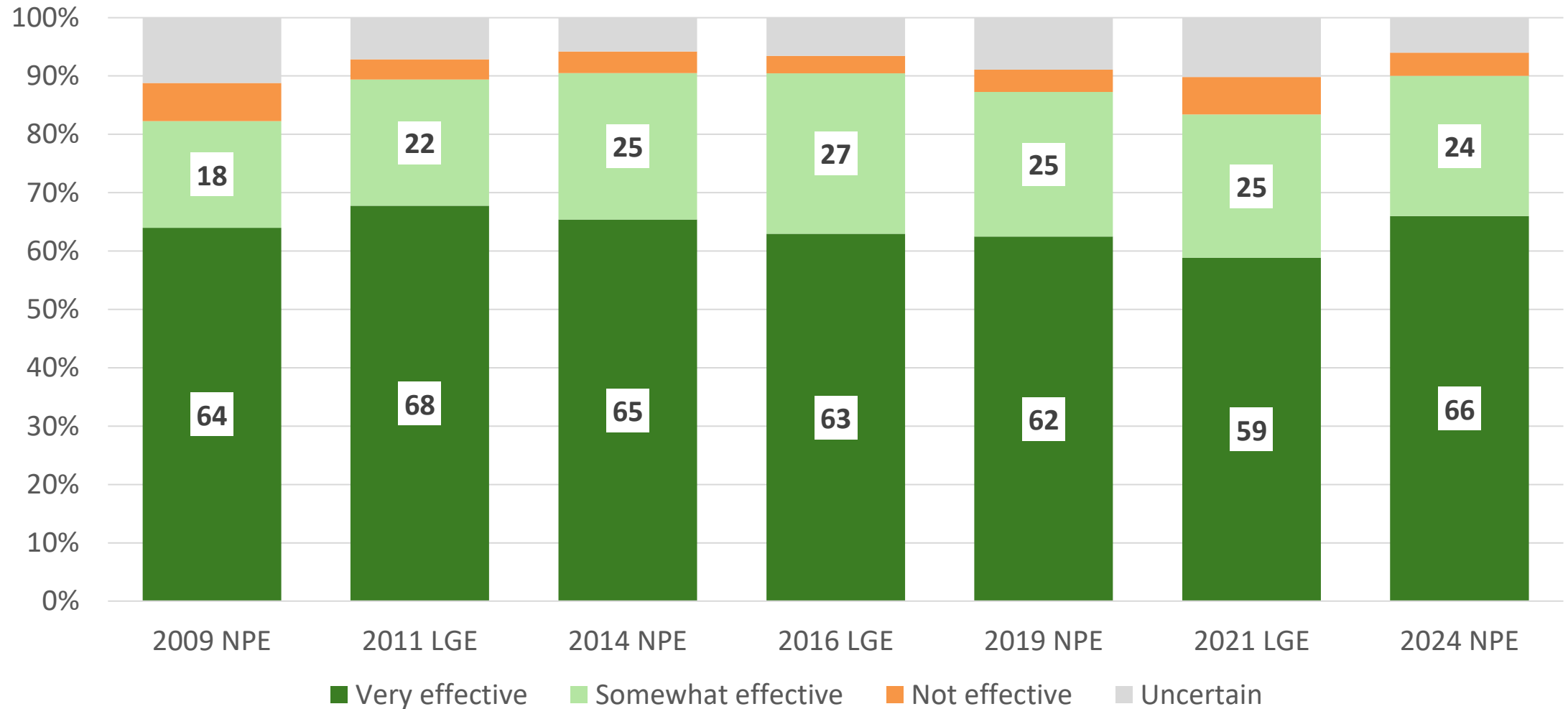
Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2024

# Level of information voters had about voting procedures

- We found that 61% of voters thought the procedures inside their voting station were **‘very easy’** to understand and 35% stated that they were **‘easy’**.
- Roughly a tenth (13%) stated that they had **far too little information** and 10% said they had **too little information** about the voting procedures.
- 42% of the voting population said that the IEC WEBSITE was **very useful** in providing information and education. 23% said **‘somewhat useful’**.
- 52% of the voting population said that the IEC VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS was **very useful** in providing information and education. 28% said **‘somewhat useful’**.

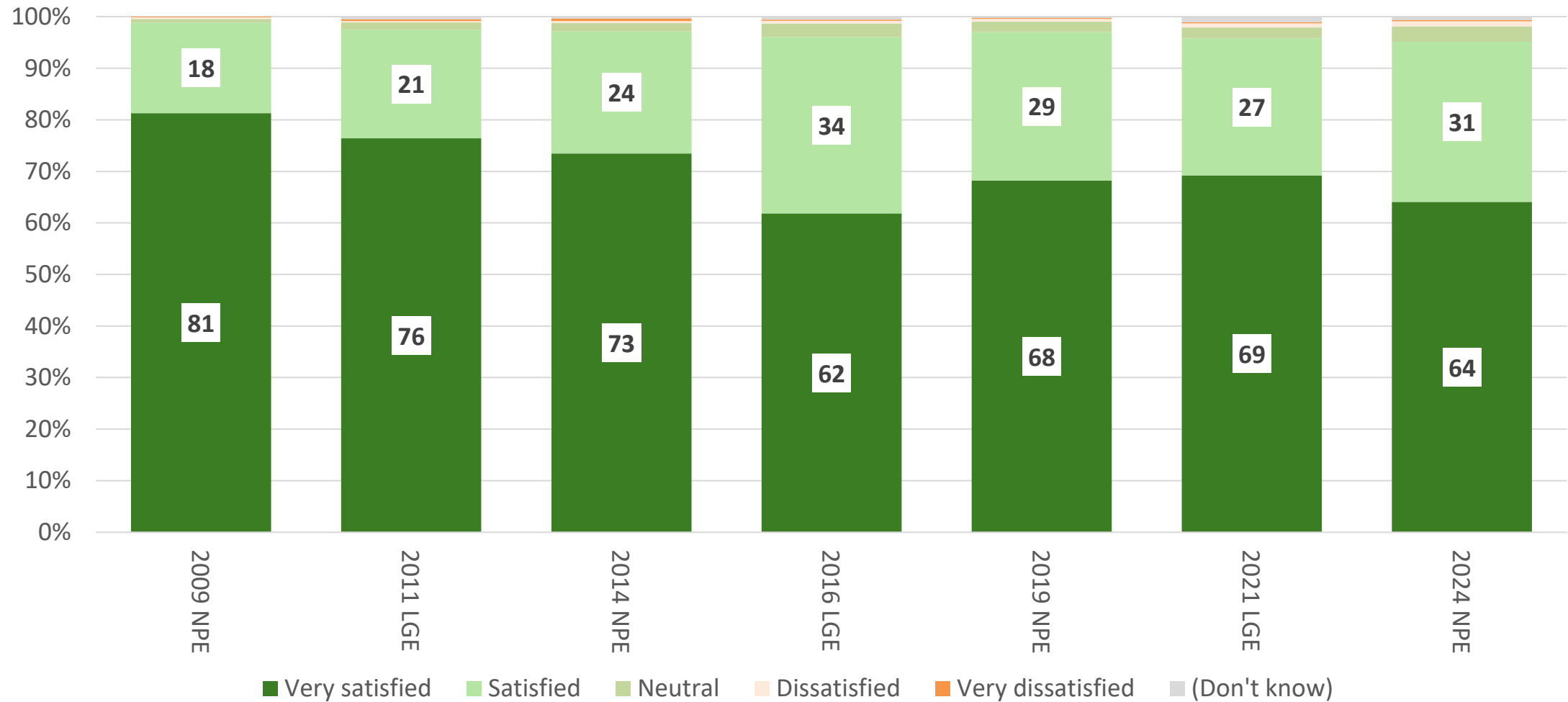


# Voter responses to the question: "How effective was the IEC's voter education campaign for these elections?", 2009-2024



Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2024

# Voter responses to the question: "Are you satisfied that your vote in this voting station was secret?", 2009-2024



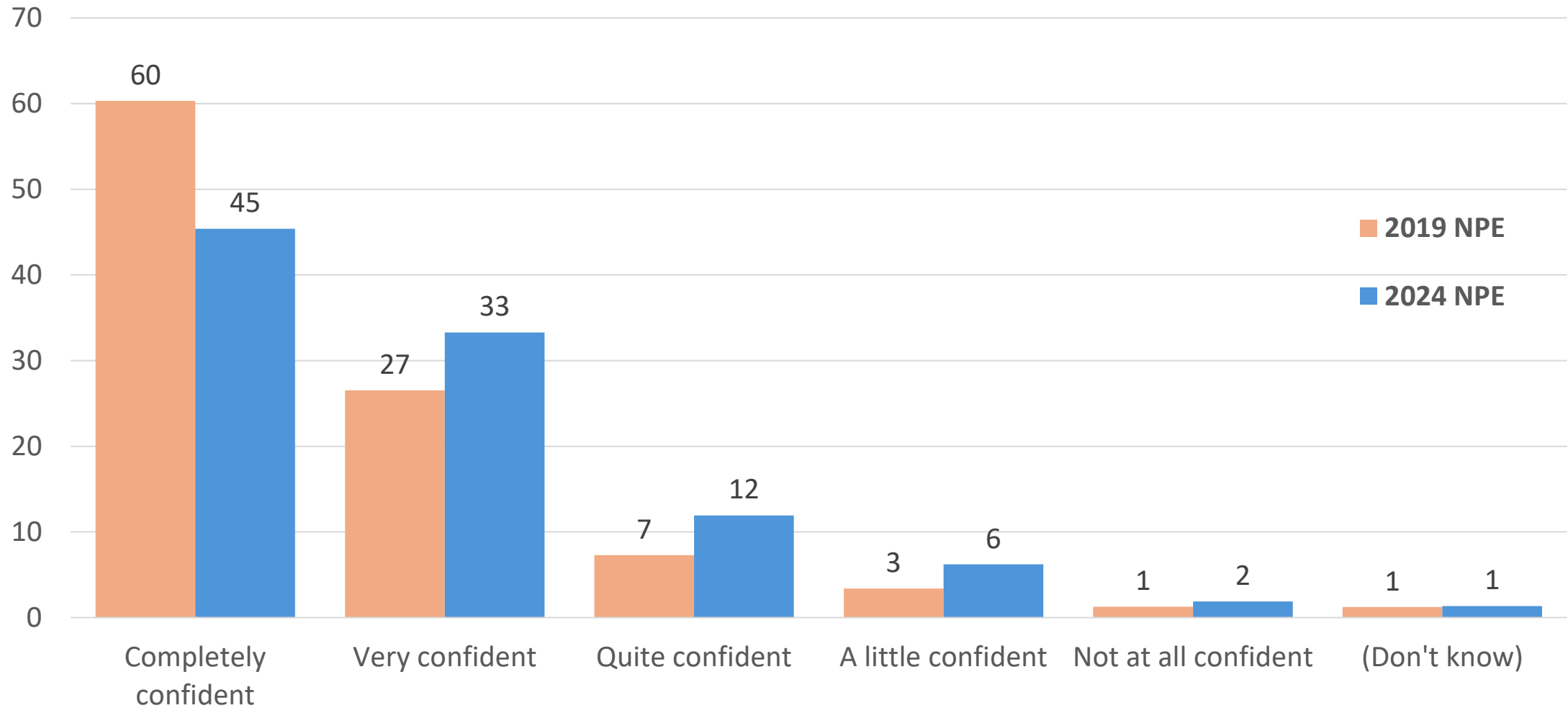
Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2024



# Self-reported coercion during the context of Election 2024

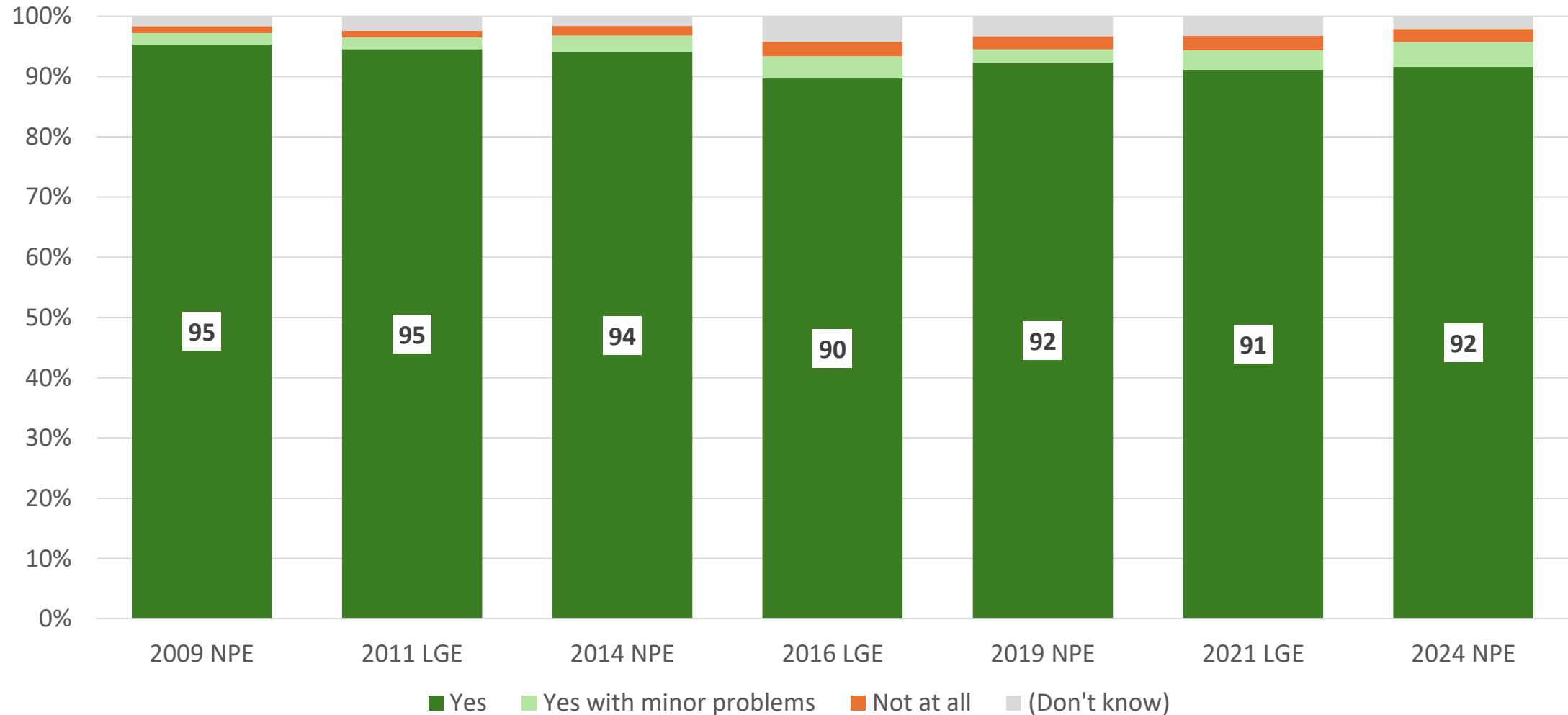
- In the context of Election 2024, 12% reported experiencing someone trying to force them to vote for a certain political party or candidate
  - 9% reported it happening before Election Day: 4% party agents and 4% friends and family
  - 4% while queuing: sources were 2% party agents; 1% friends and family; 1% voters
  - 2% inside voting station: sources were 1% party agents, 1% family and friends.
  - Election officials barely mentioned as a source of electoral coercion (<1%)
- Of those reporting coercion, 73% reported that it had no bearing on electoral choice; 25% said it did and 2% uncertain. This translates into 3% of all voters who changed their vote.

# Voter response to the question, “How confident are you that your vote will be accurately counted?” - 2019 and 2024 compared



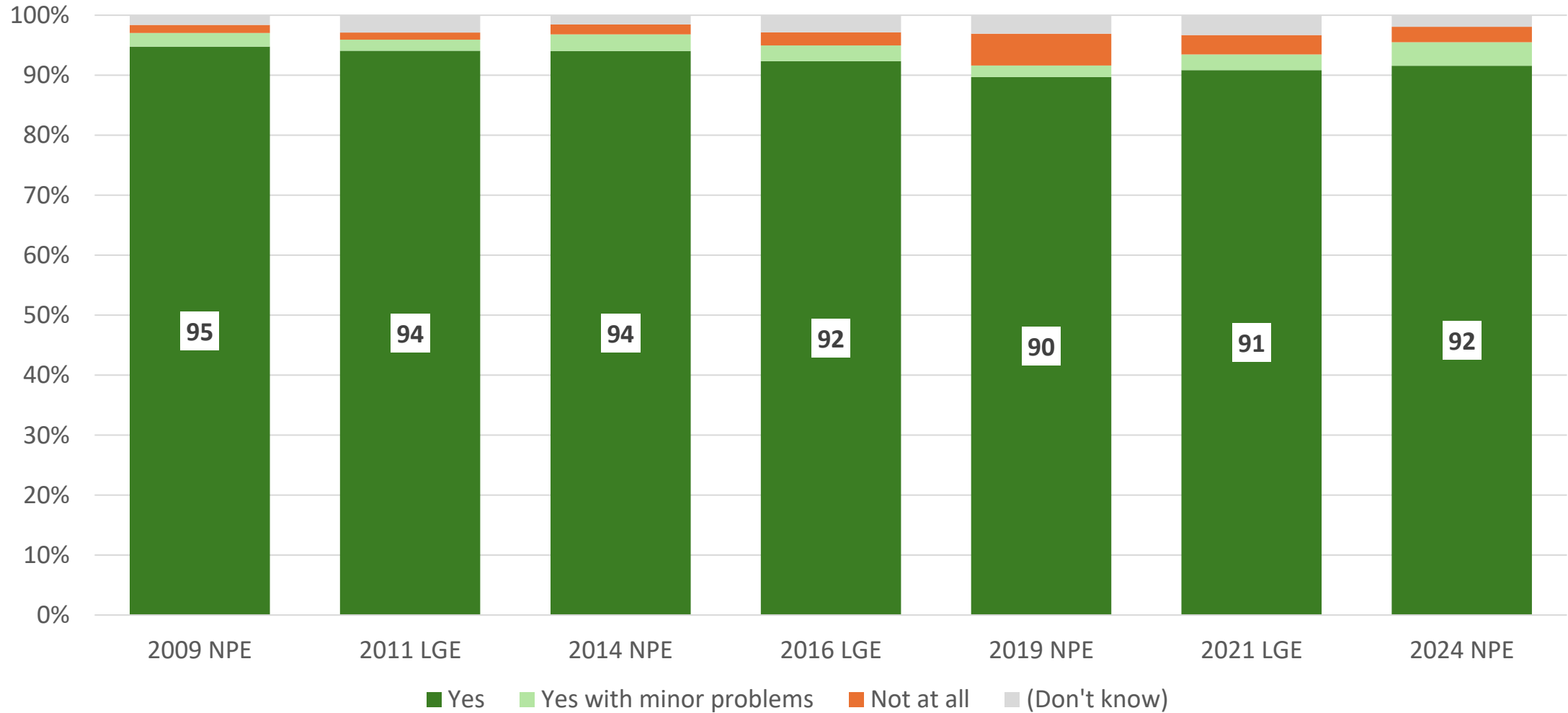
Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2019;2024

# Voter responses to the question: "Do you think that the election procedures were free?", 2009-2024



Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2024

# Voter responses to the question: "Do you think that the election procedures were fair?", 2009-2024

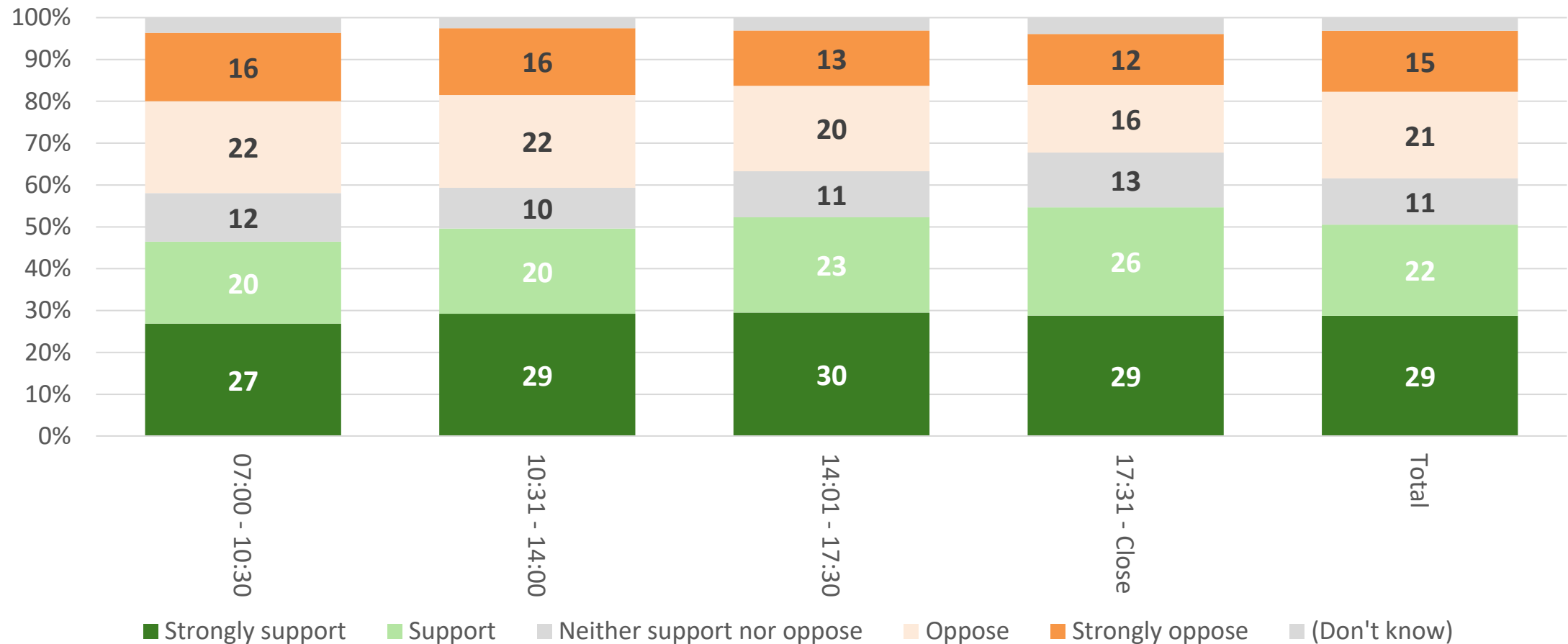


Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2009-2024





# Voter responses to the question, “Would you support or oppose replacing paper ballots with electronic voting machines at voting stations?” by time of day



Source: Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) 2024

# Queuing times and their impact of evaluations

	Up to 15 minutes	16- 30 m	31- 60 m	1- 2 hours	More than 2 hours	All voters	PP difference (high minus low)
Confidence that vote will be counted accurately (% completely/ fairly)	81	78	74	71	63	79	18
Support for electronic voting (evoting)	47	53	60	62	64	51	17
Satisfaction with IEC officials	96	95	91	91	82	95	14
IEC officials were INTERESTED IN THEIR JOBS?	83	79	75	76	67	80	16
IEC officials were HELPFUL?	87	82	77	83	72	84	15
IEC officials were IMPARTIAL?	73	69	67	70	60	71	13
IEC officials were FRIENDLY?	85	82	76	78	70	82	15
IEC officials were PATIENT?	86	82	77	78	72	83	14
IEC officials were HONEST?	83	80	74	79	70	81	13
Trust in the IEC	87	83	81	81	74	84	13
Perceived fairness of NPE 2024	93	90	90	90	83	92	10
Safety and security	96	95	94	92	89	95	7
Perceived freeness of NPE 2024	93	90	88	89	86	92	7
Satisfaction with ballot paper	94	93	89	93	89	93	5



# Concluding Remarks

- The ESS 2024 assessed voters' views on the **election process**, including its **integrity**, and evaluated the **operational efficiency** of the IEC.
- Results indicated that voters **overwhelmingly** believed the 2024 NPE were **free and fair**, and they **positively** rated the conduct of officials at voting stations.
- Trust in the **Election Commission** was high and almost all voters felt that they were **safe** to cast their ballot in **secrecy**.
- The majority of voters felt that the IEC adequately considered the needs of **vulnerable groups** (e.g., elderly and people with disabilities).
- But **queuing time at voting stations** increased relative to more recent elections, which had a bearing on electoral evaluations

