



# Political Priorities, Attitudes & Identities since the Agreement:

Evidence from 25 years of the  
Life & Times Survey

#NILTSurvey launch

1<sup>st</sup> June 2023



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# Overview

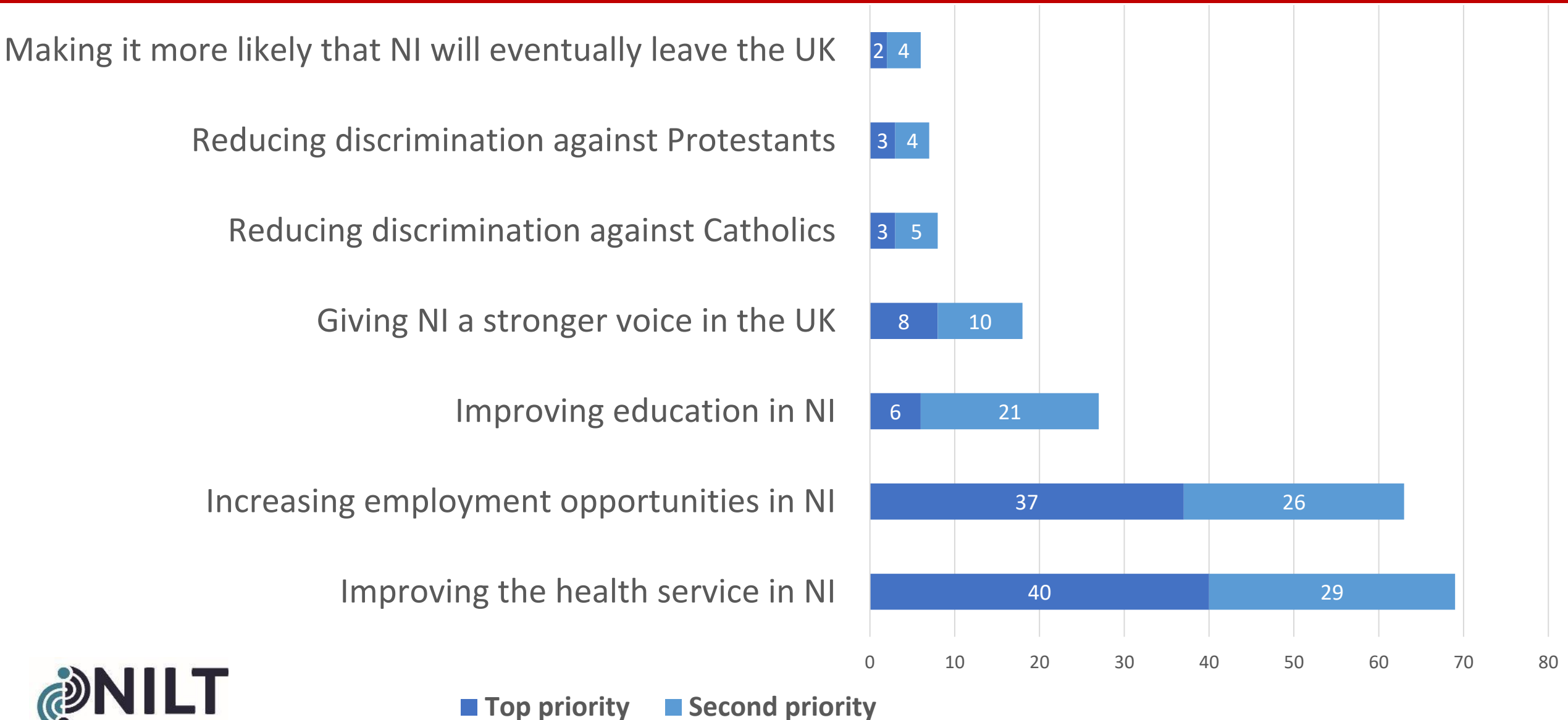
- Priorities
- Identities
- Attitudes
- Expectations



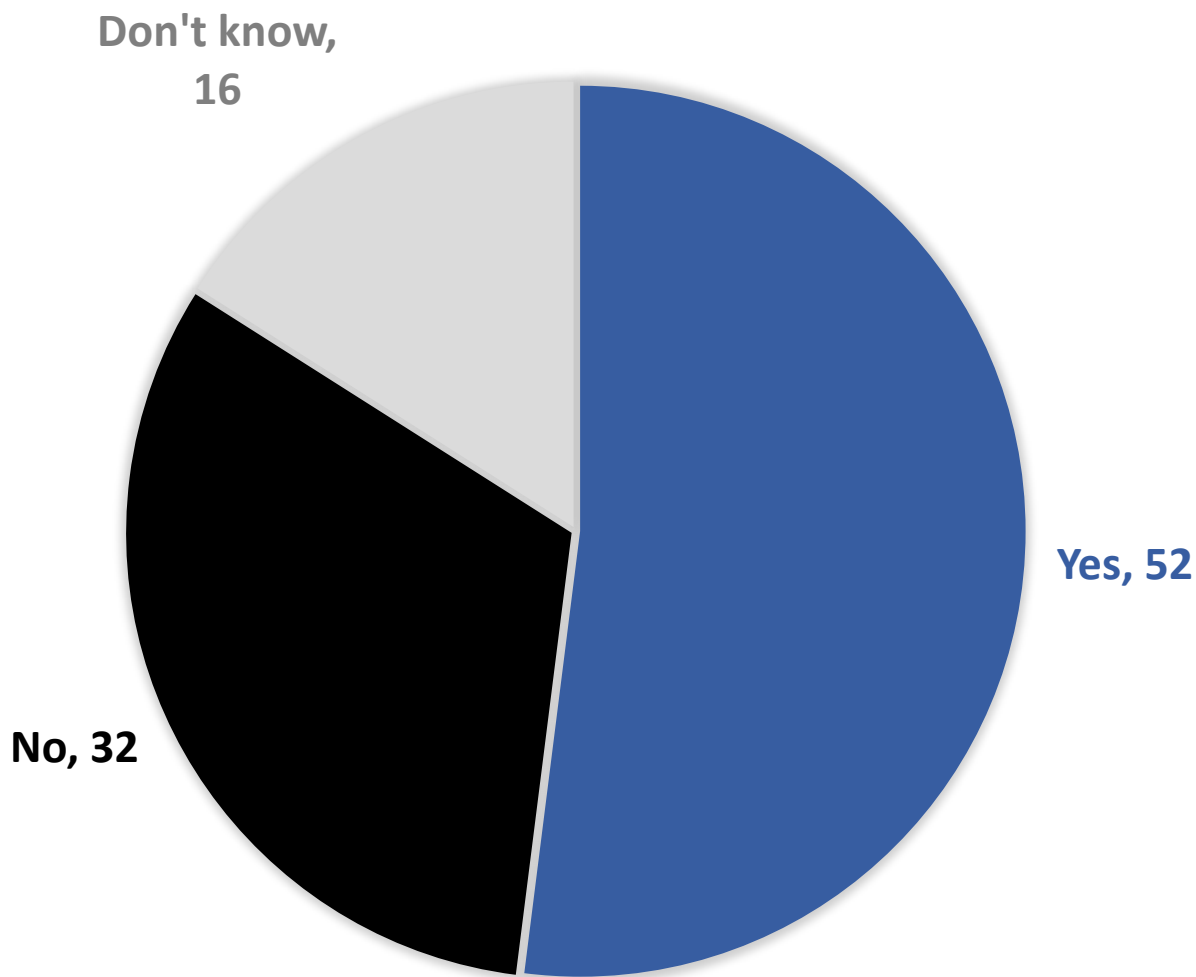
# Priorities

# What is most important for the Assembly to bring about? (%)

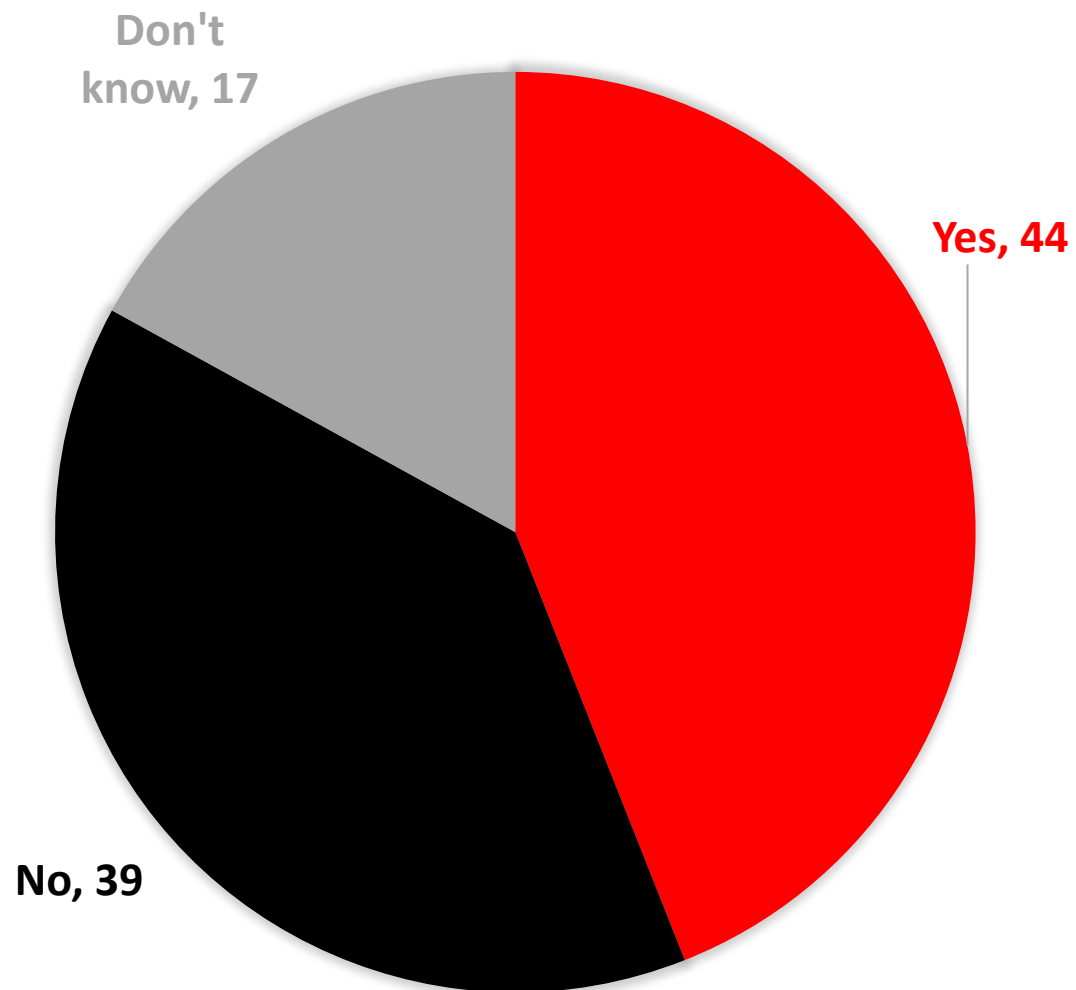
## (NILT, 1998)



# Do you think that the NI Assembly should develop closer links with the Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly? (NILT, 1999, %)



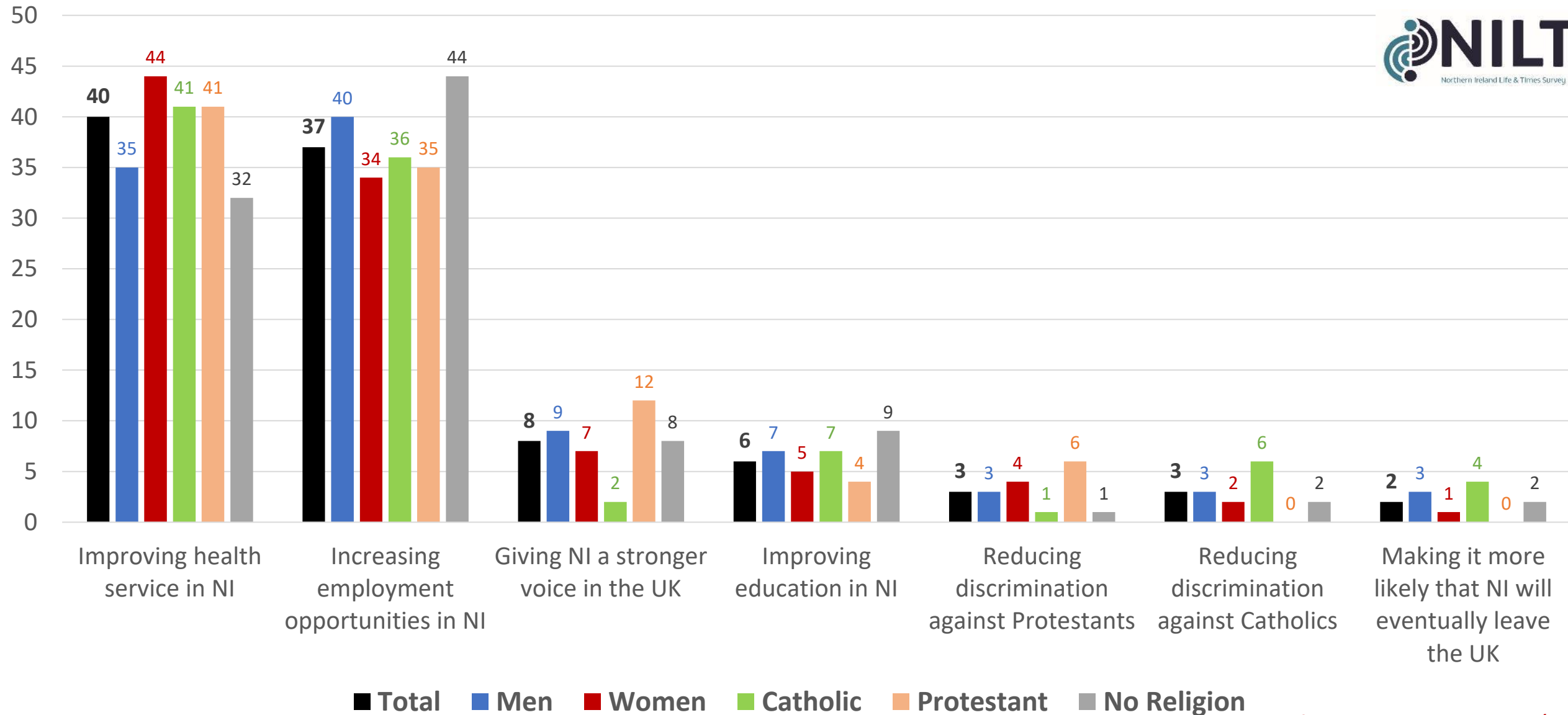
Scottish Parliament



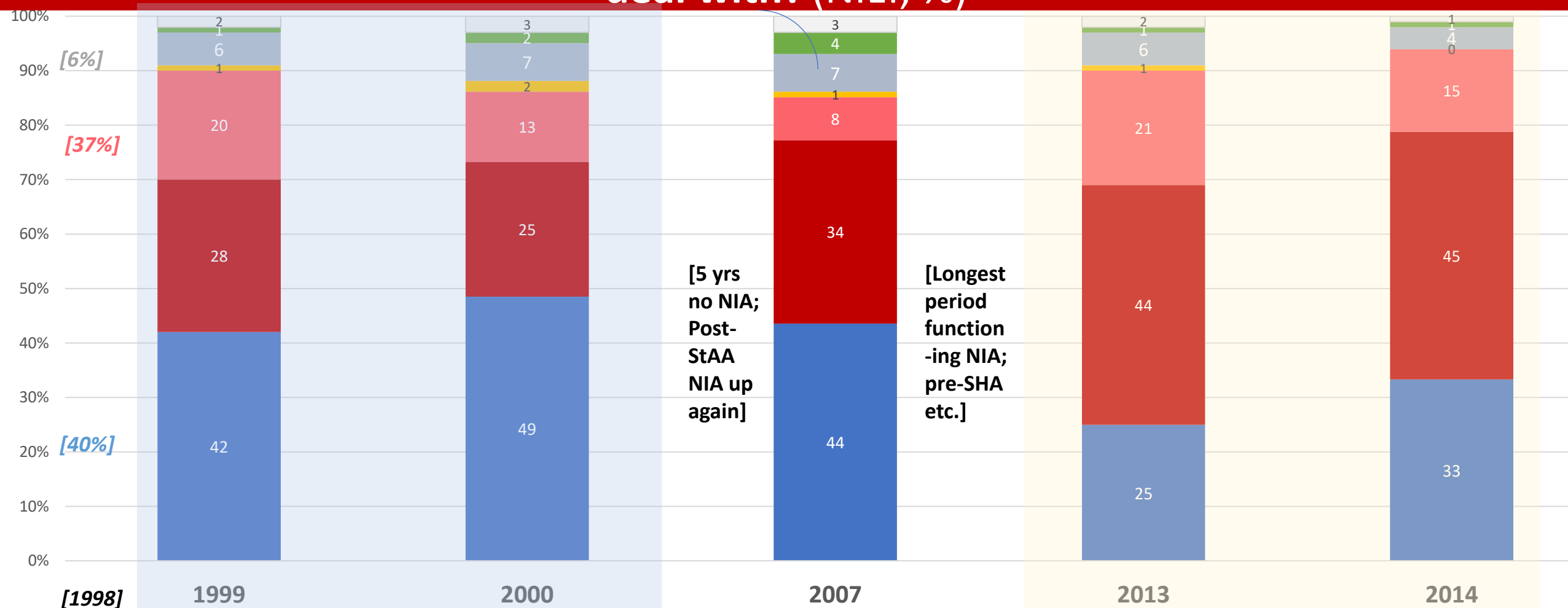
Welsh Assembly

# What is most important for the Assembly to bring about? (%)

## (NILT, 1998)



# Which of these, if any, do you think is the most important for the Assembly to deal with? (NILT, %)



■ Improving the health service

■ Improving transport

■ None/DK

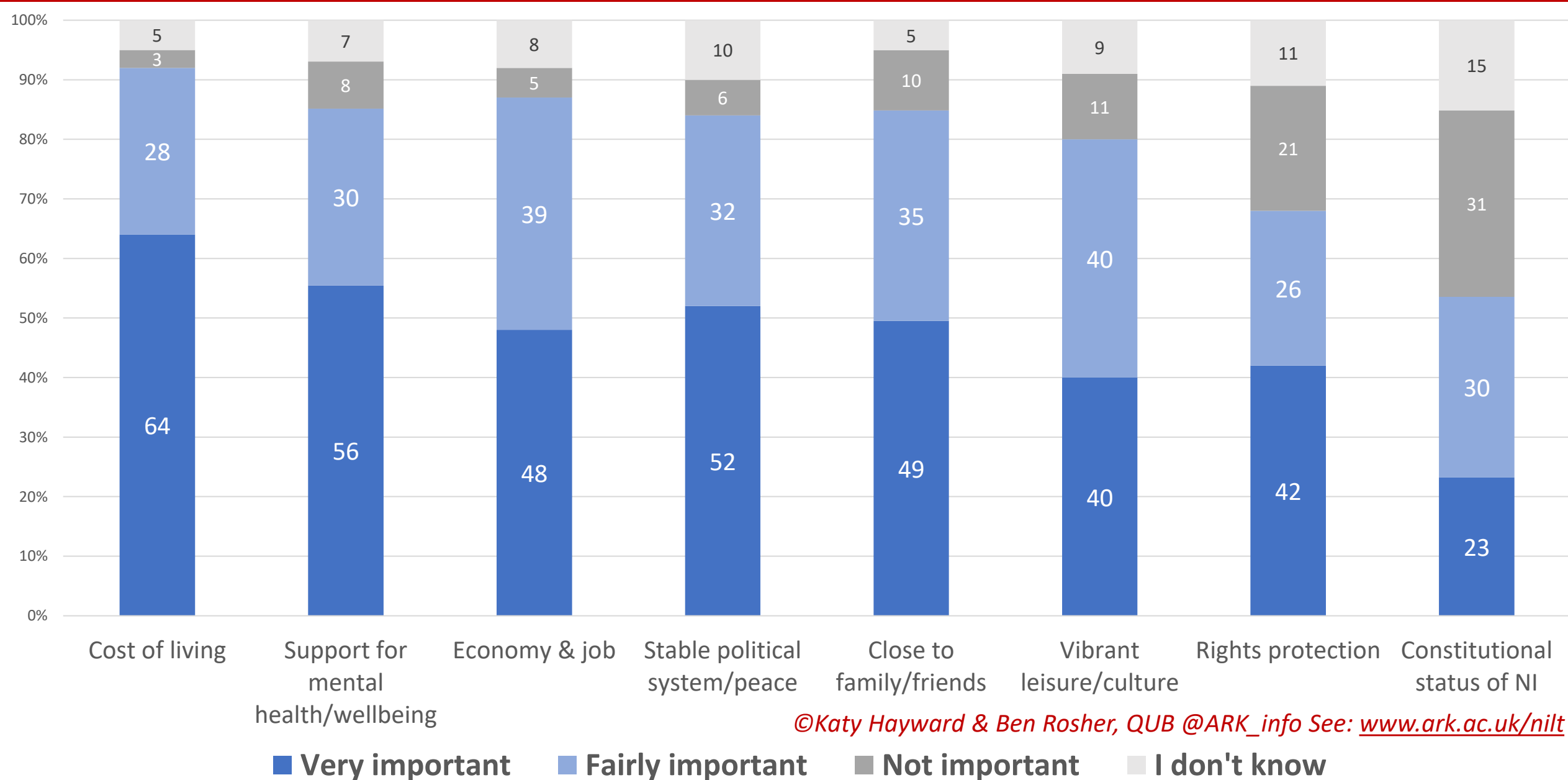
■ Improving the economy of Northern Ireland

■ Improving education

■ Increasing employment opportunities

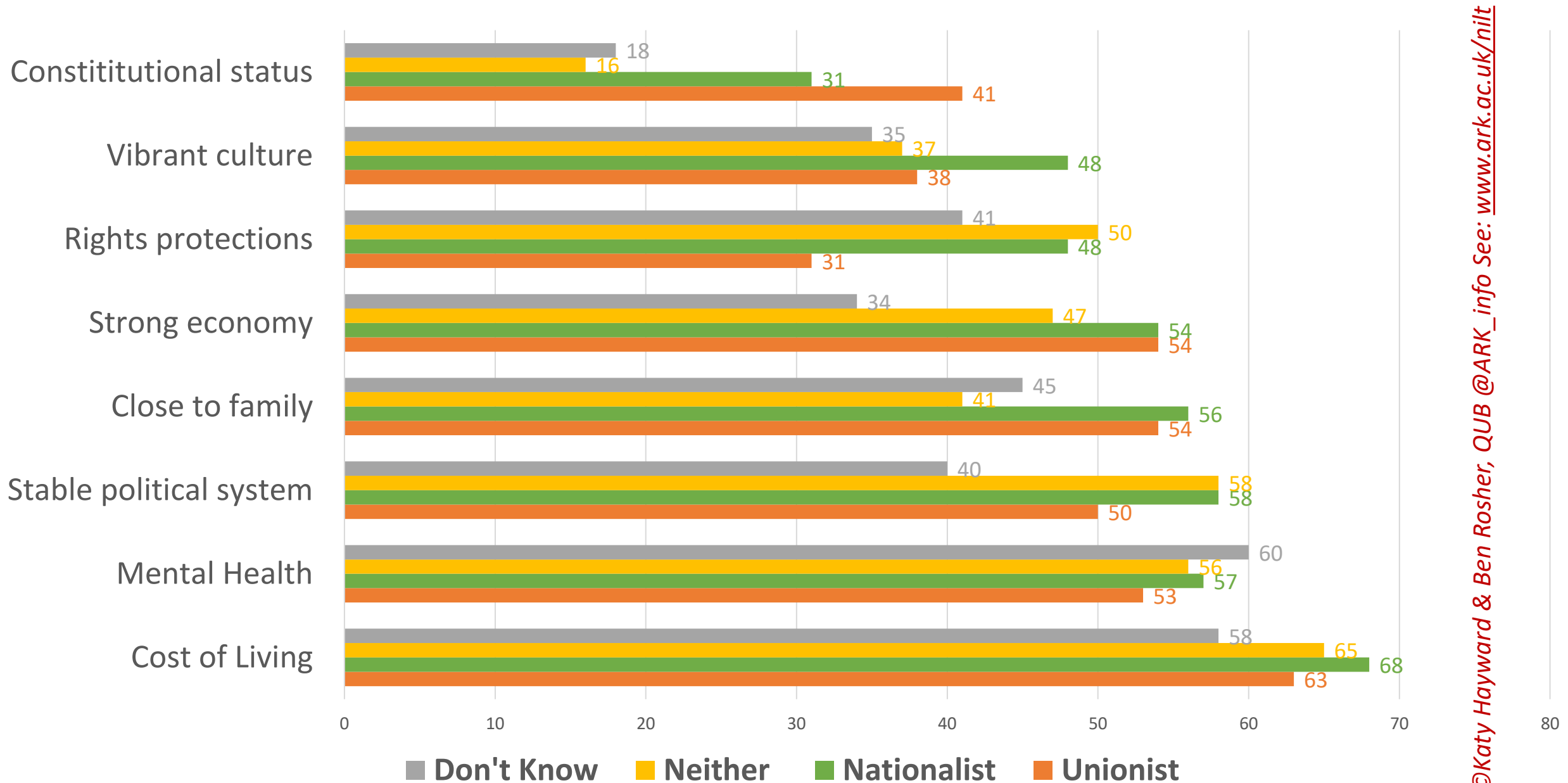
■ Improving the environment

# Thinking about the future of Northern Ireland, would \*\*\*\*\* be important in shaping your opinion as to whether NI is a good place for you to live? (YLT 16yrs, 2022, %)



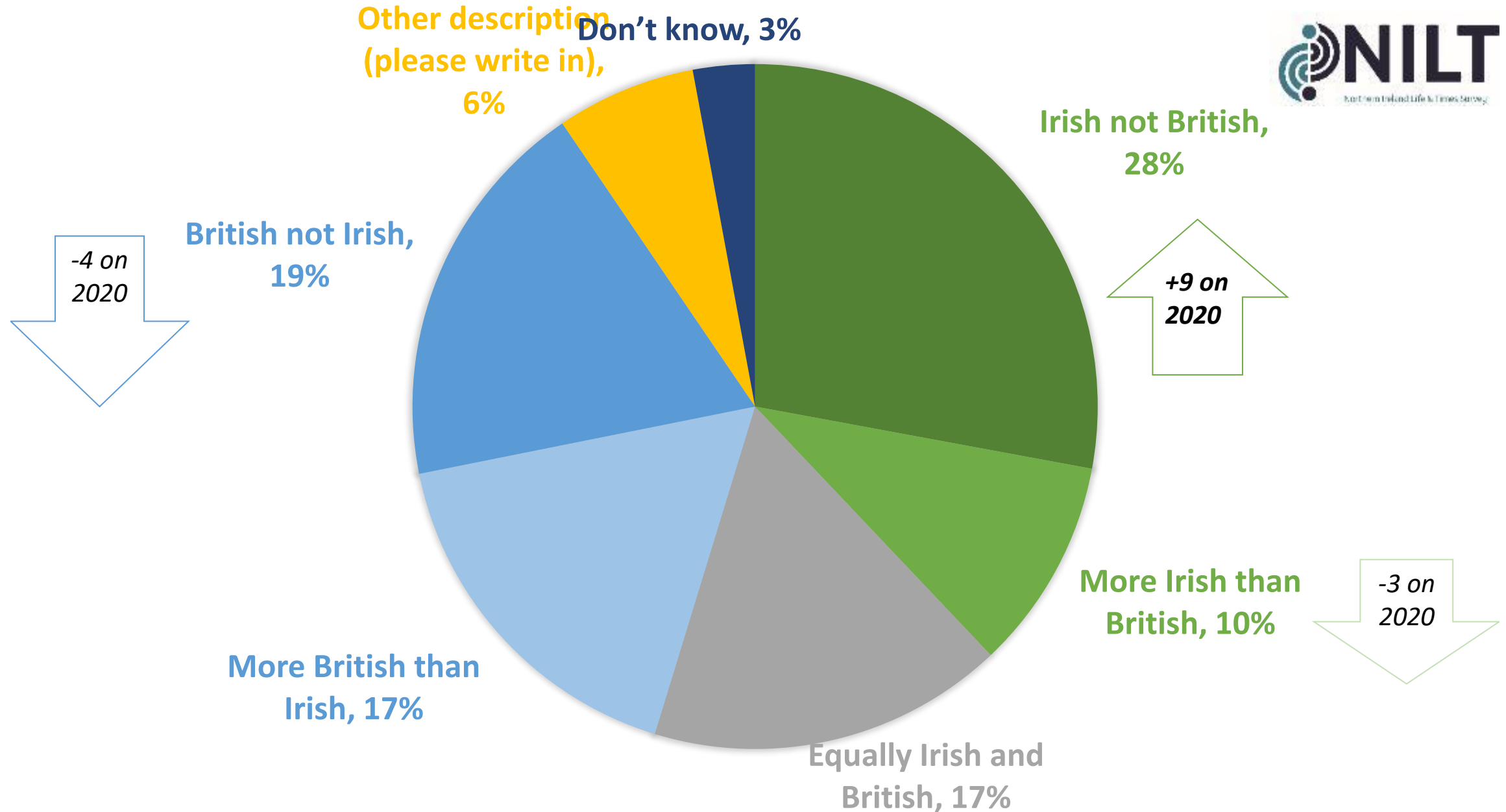


# What is very important in making NI a good place to live? [YLT 16yrs, 2022, %](#))

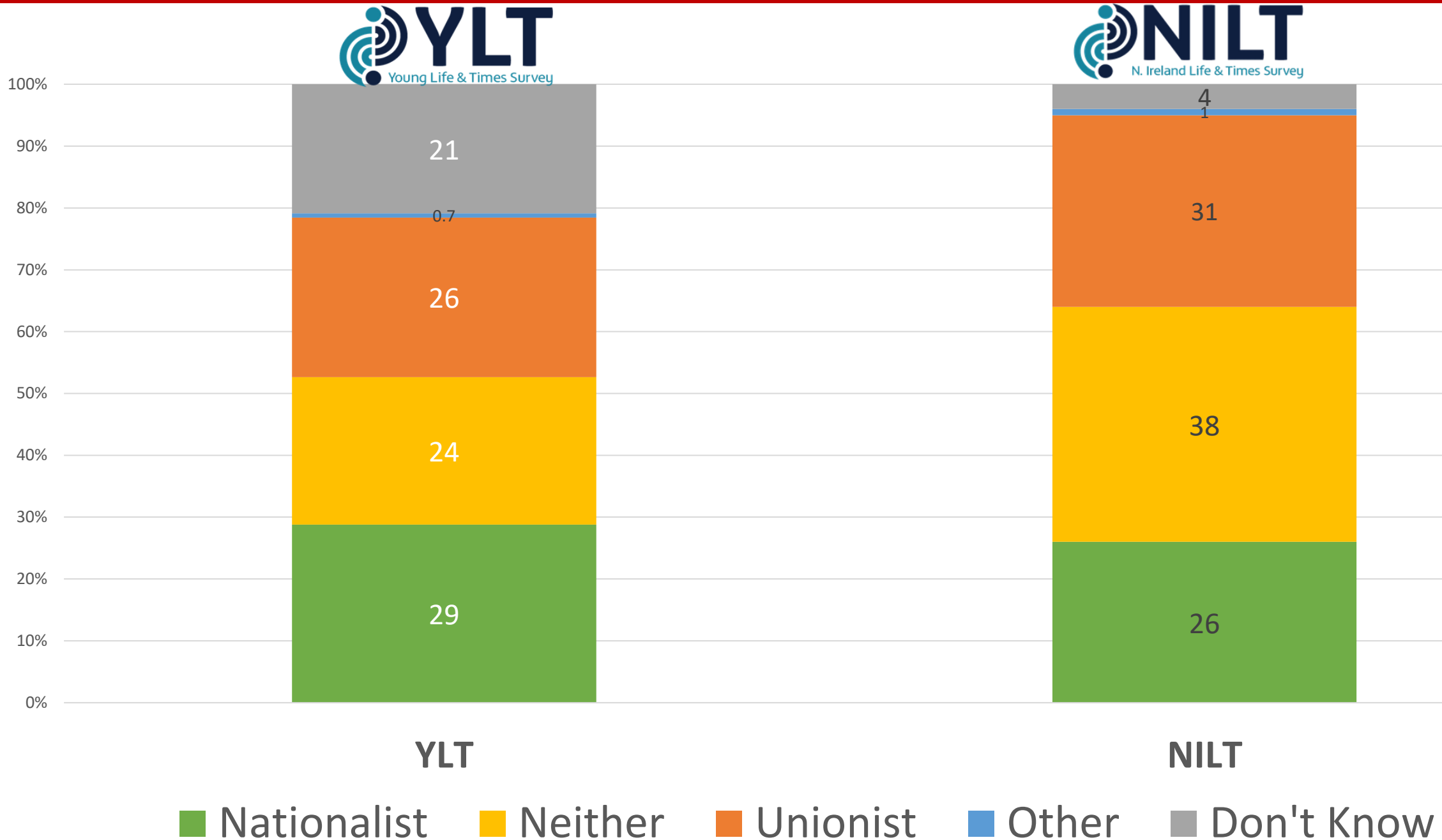


# Identities

# National identity (NILT, 2022, %)

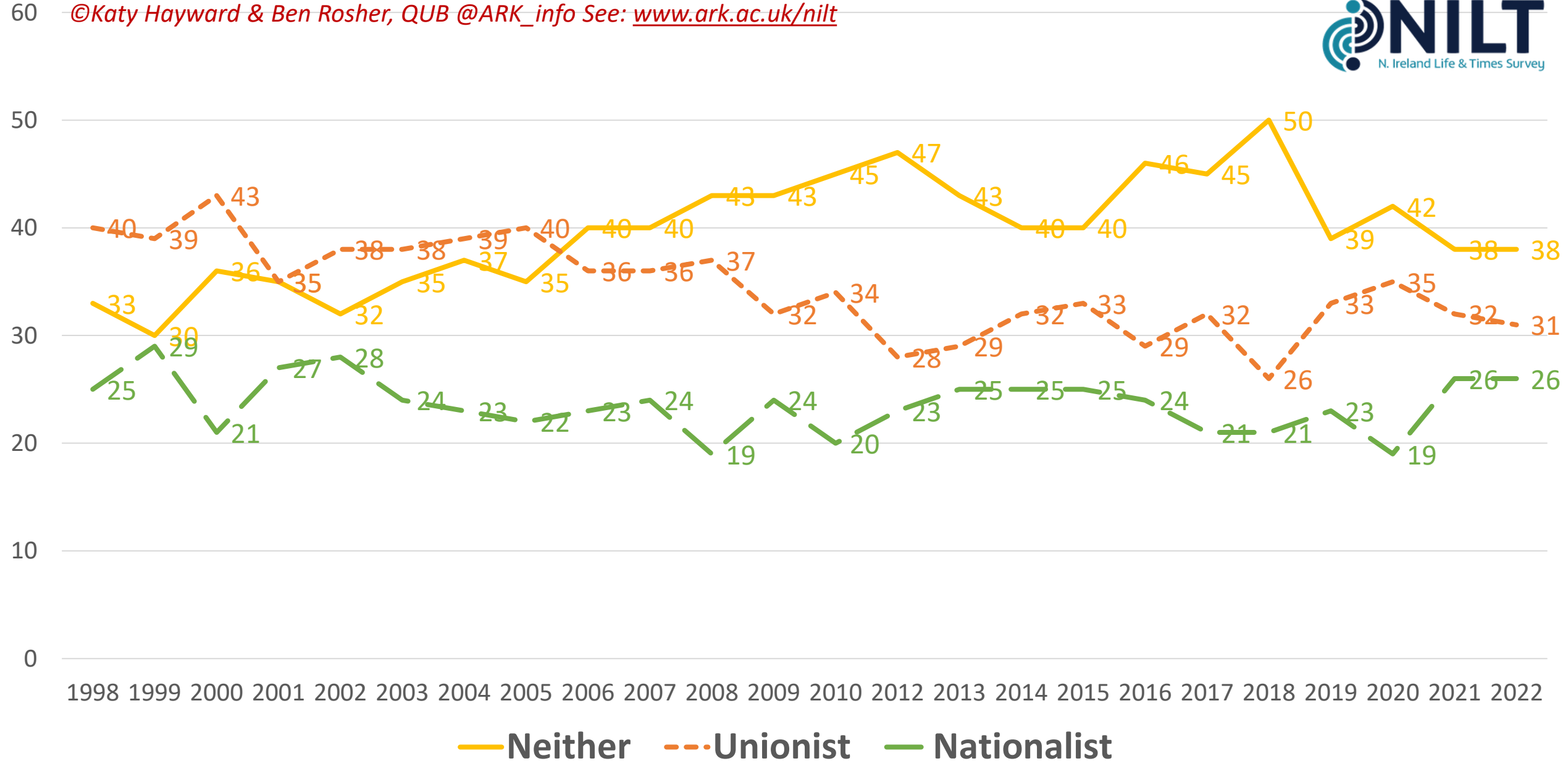


# Political identity (%) (YLT [16yo] & NILT, 2022)



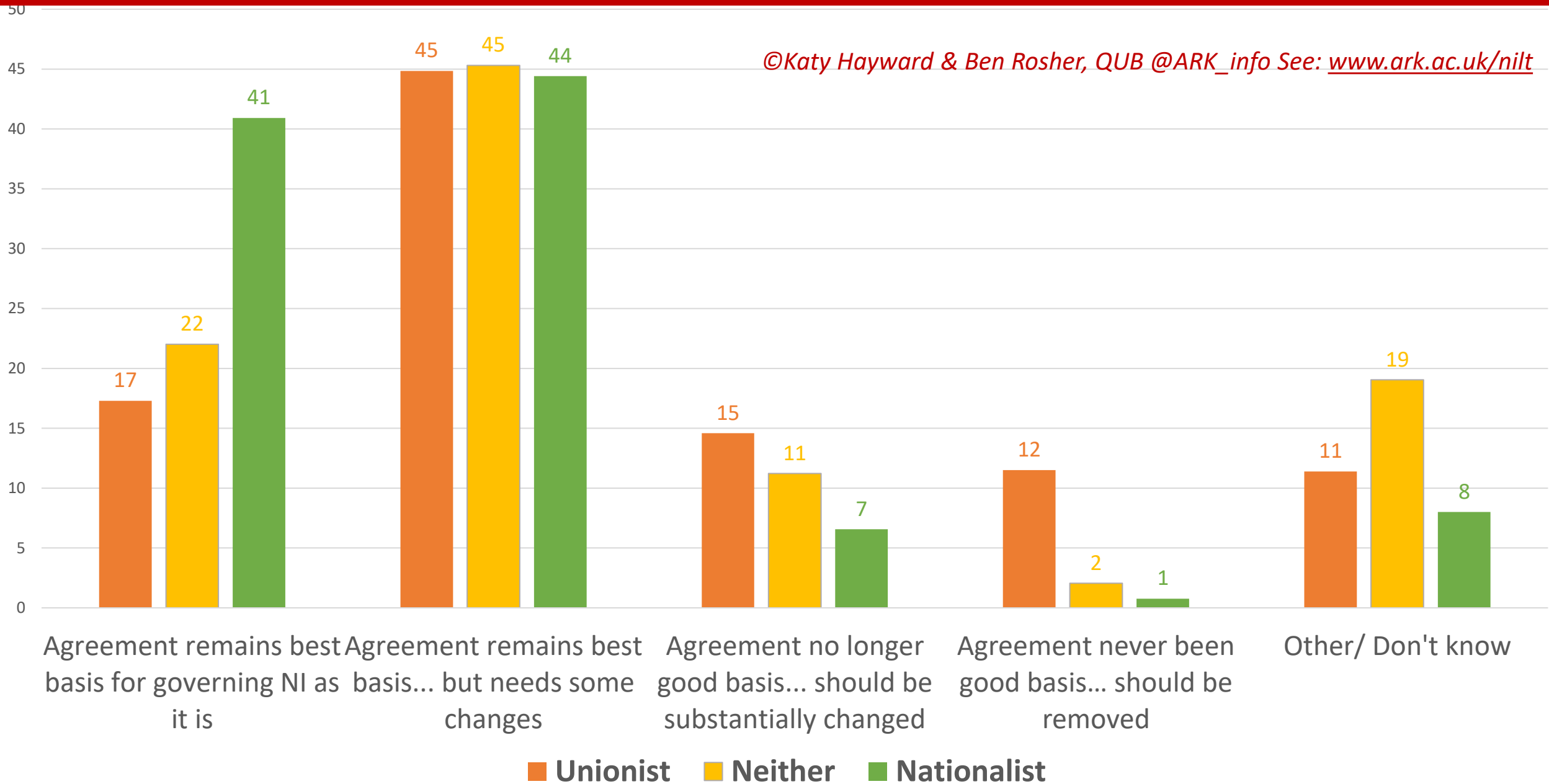
# Political identity (%) (NILT, 1998-2022)

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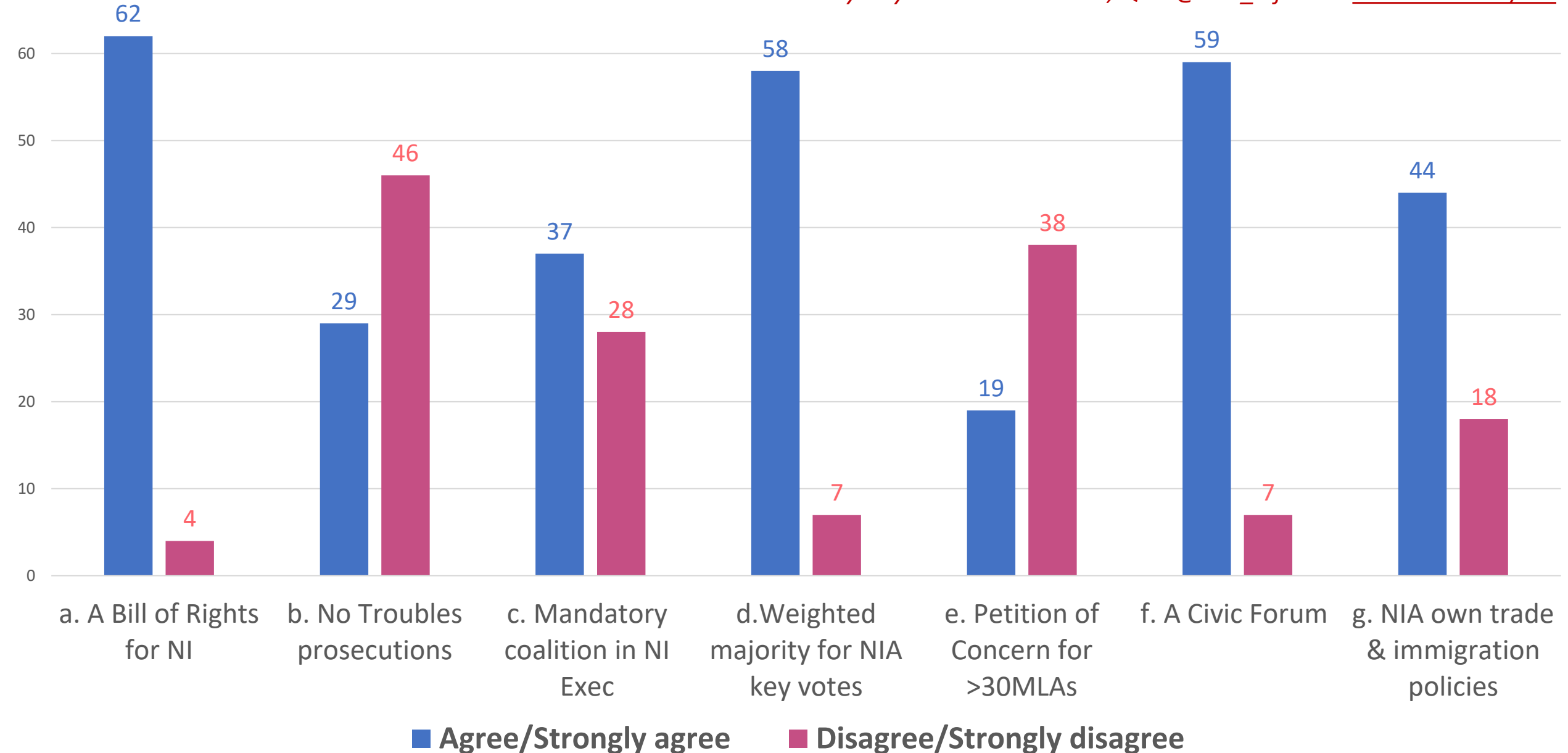
# Opinions on the 1998 Agreement (%) (NILT, 2022)

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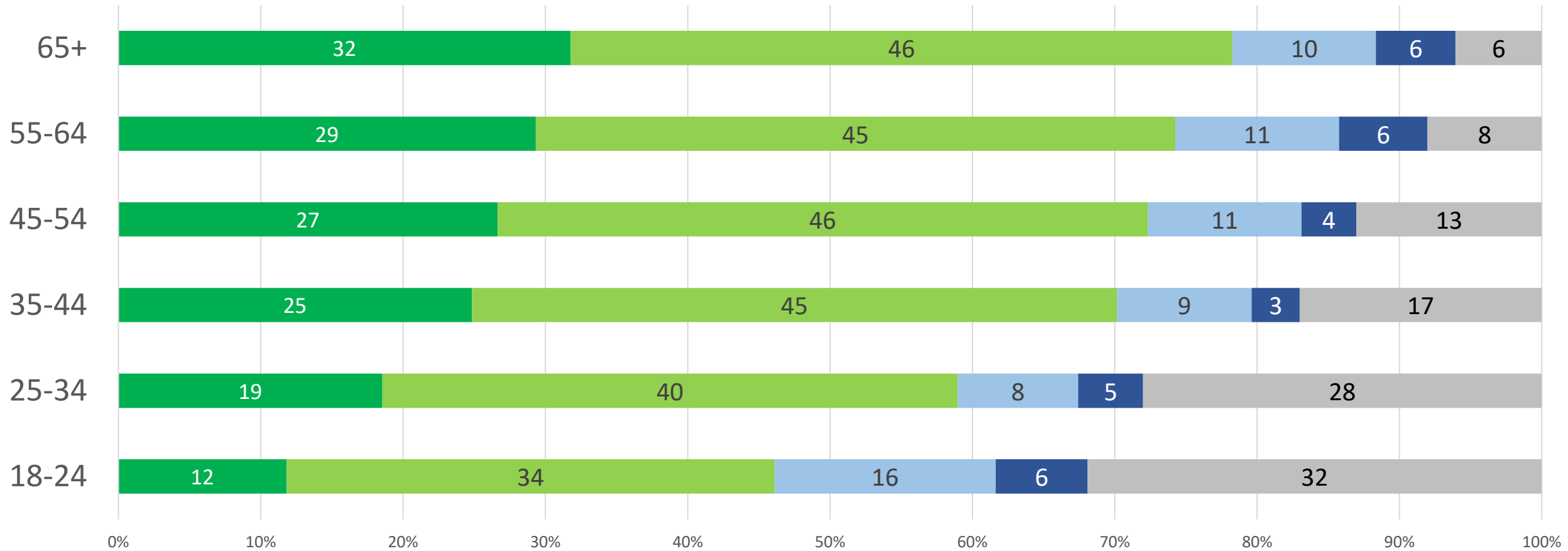


# What might be changed in the 1998 Agreement (%) (NILT, 2021)

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# Opinions on the 1998 Agreement (%) (age) (NILT, 2022)



■ Agreement remains best basis for governing NI as it is

■ Agreement remains best basis... but needs some changes

■ Agreement no longer good basis... should be substantially changed

■ Agreement never been good basis... should be removed

■ Other/ Don't know

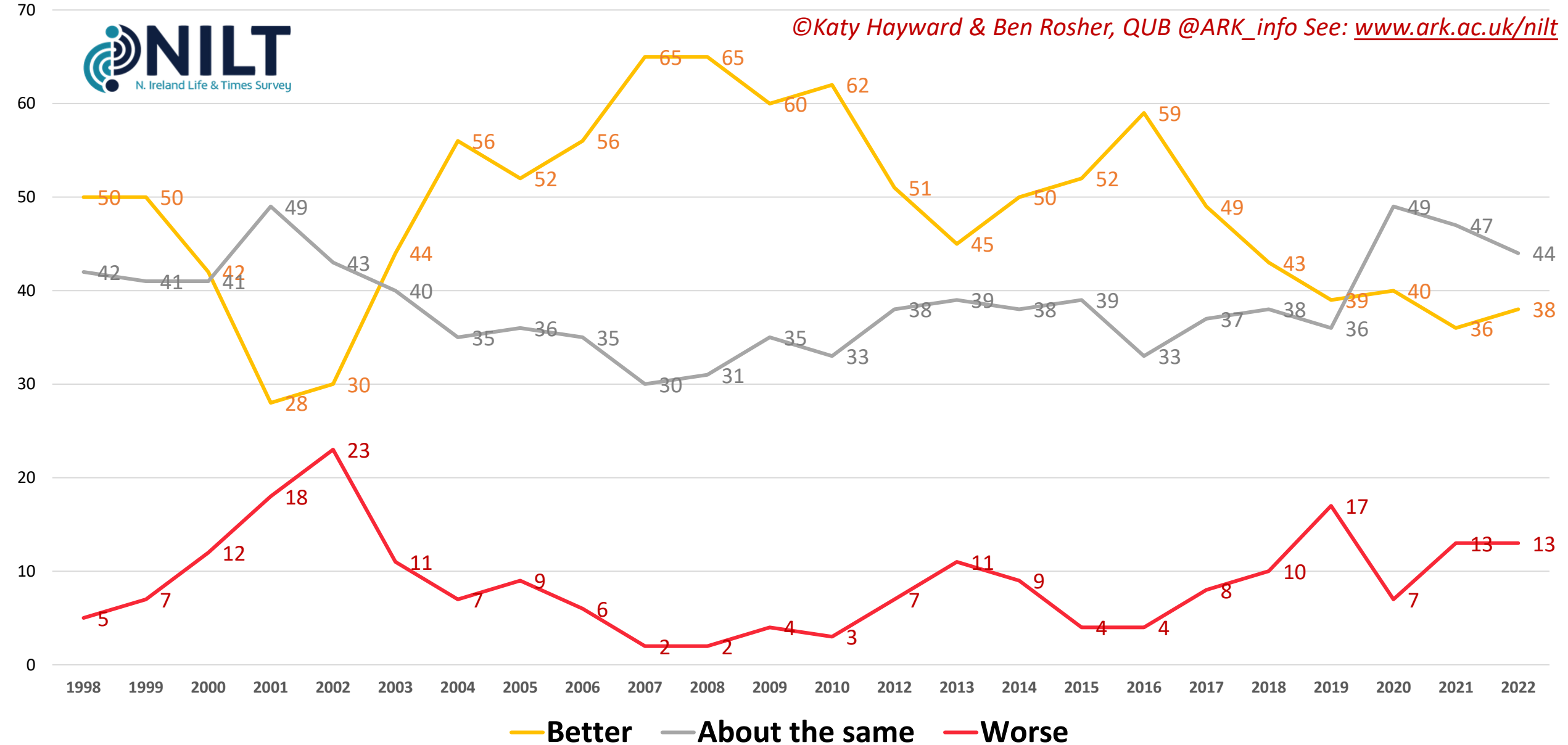


# Attitudes

# Are relations between Protestants and Catholics better now than 5 years ago? (%)



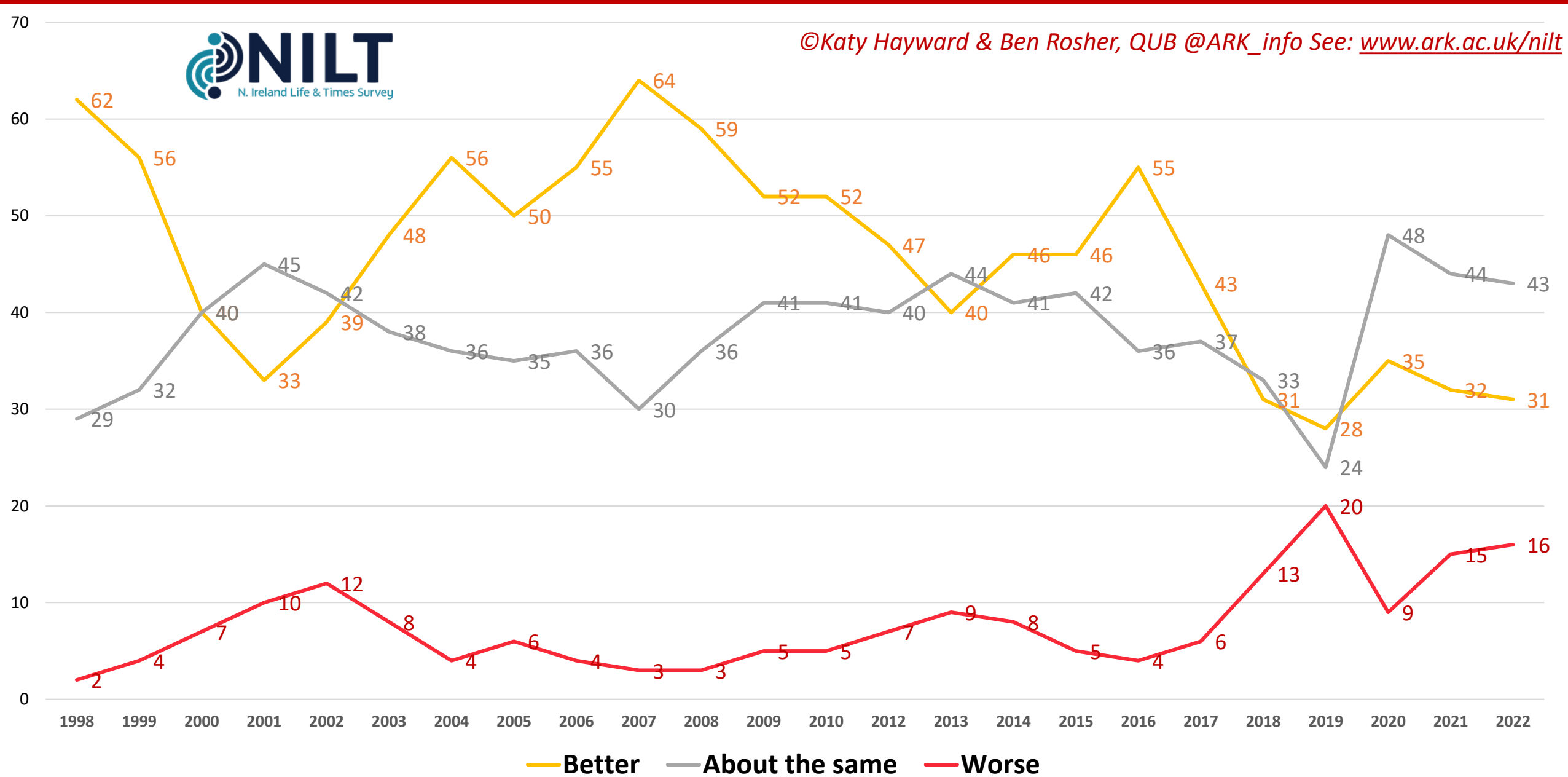
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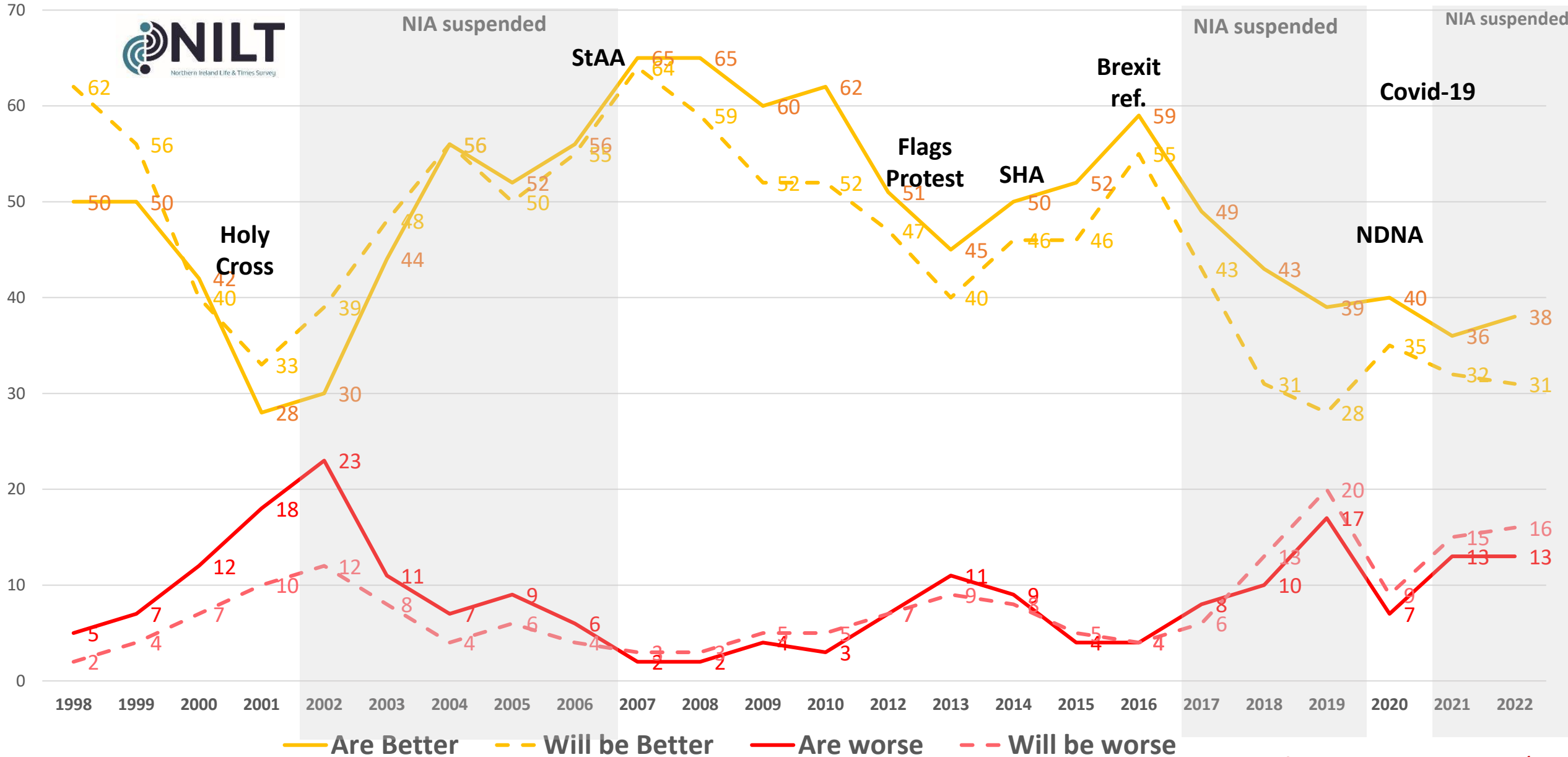
# Will relations between Protestants and Catholics be better in 5 years? (%)



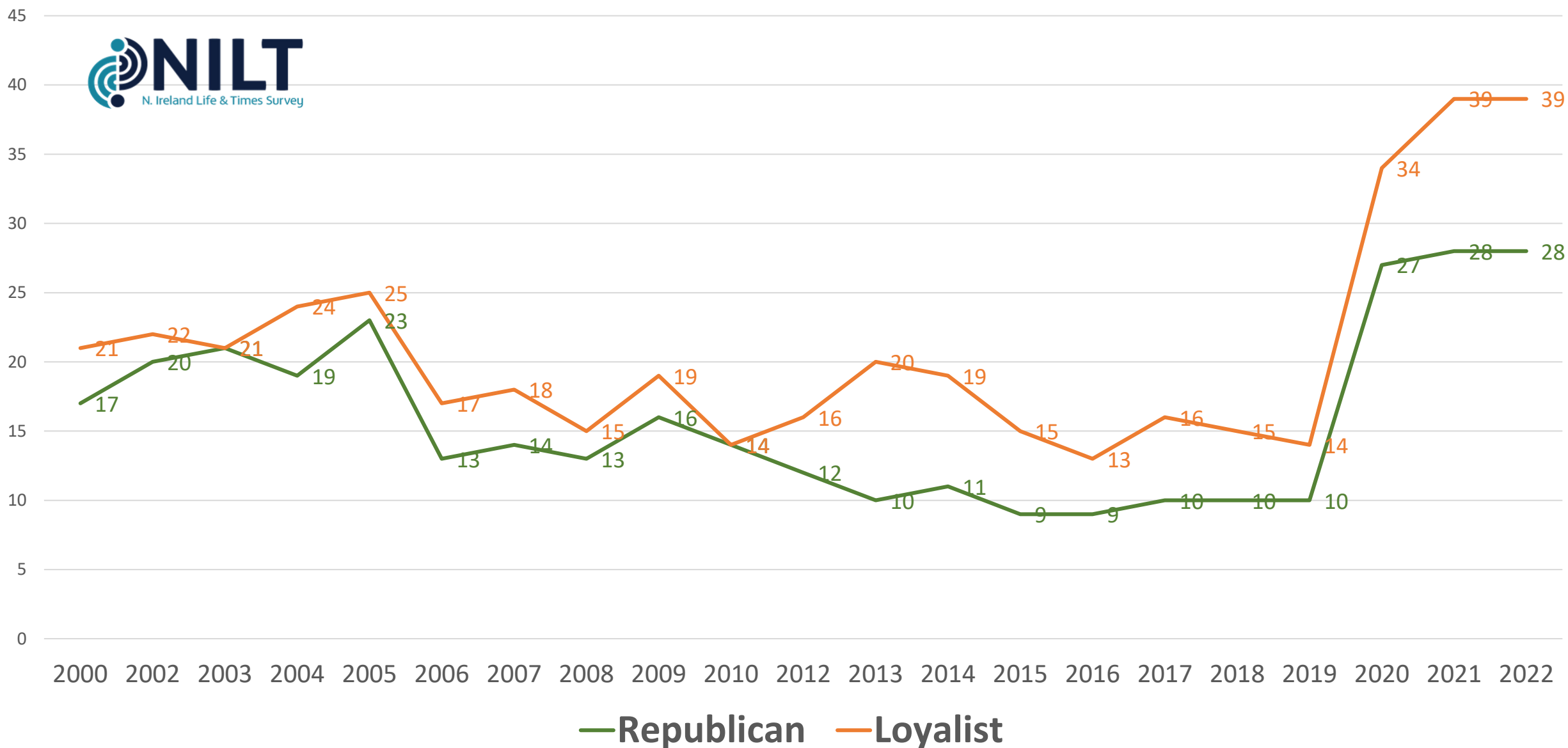
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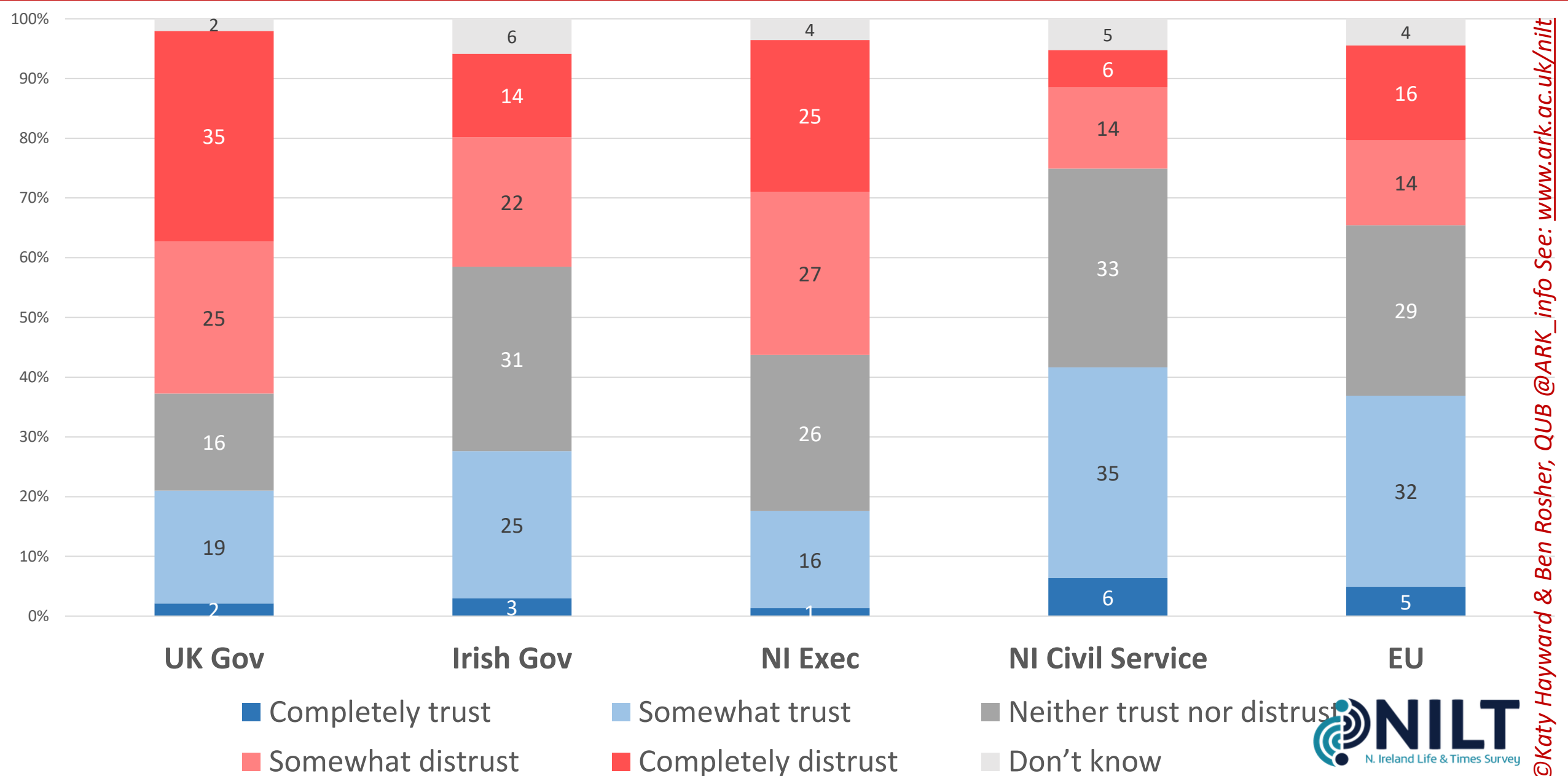
# Are relations between Protestants and Catholics in N.Ireland better/worse than 5 years ago; and will they be better/worse in 5 year's time? (%) NI Life&Times Survey 1998-2022



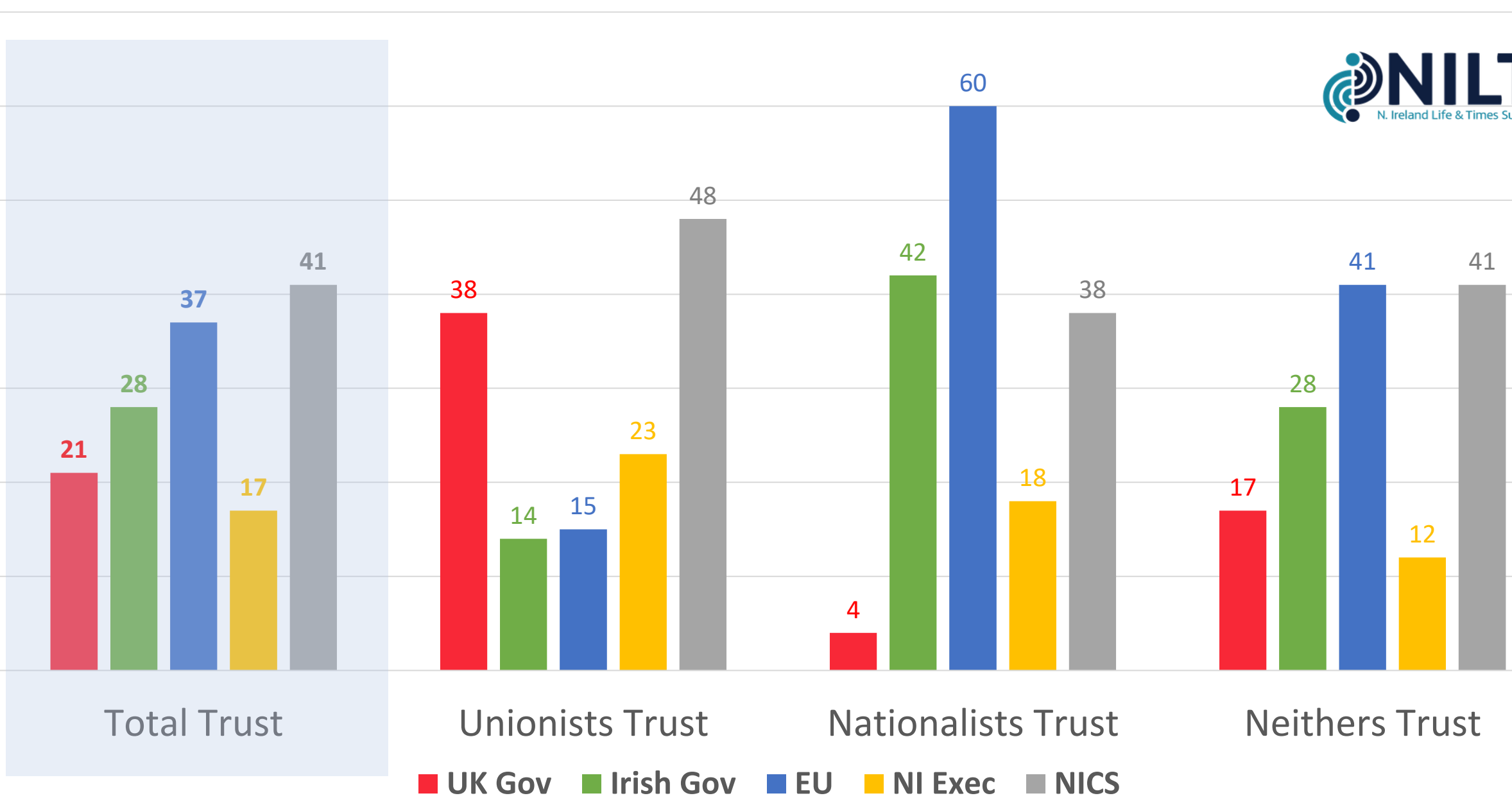
# Has there been any time in the last year when you personally have felt intimidated by republican/loyalist murals, kerb paintings, or flags? (% Yes) (NILT, 2000-2021)



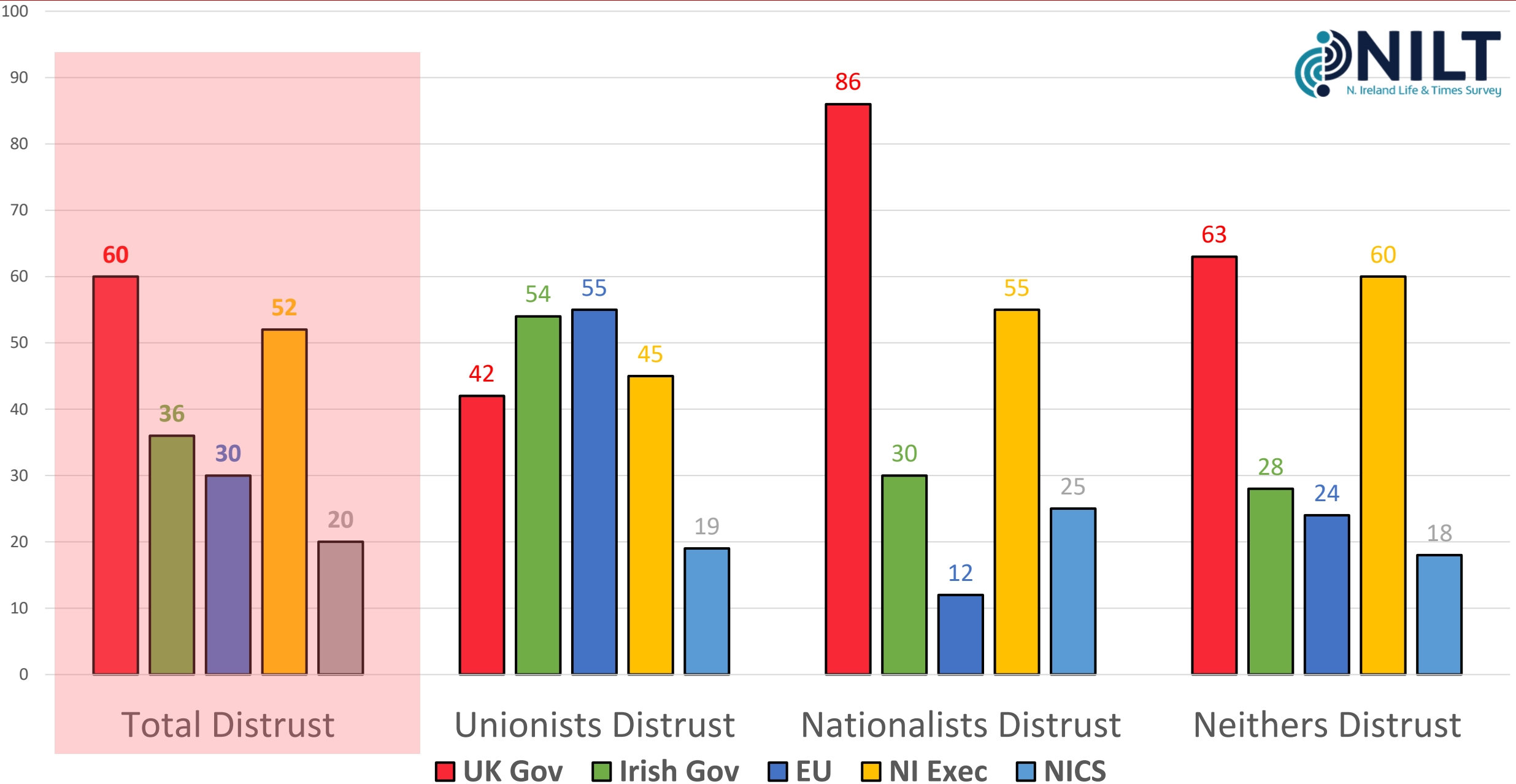
# Levels of Trust (%) (NILT, 2022)



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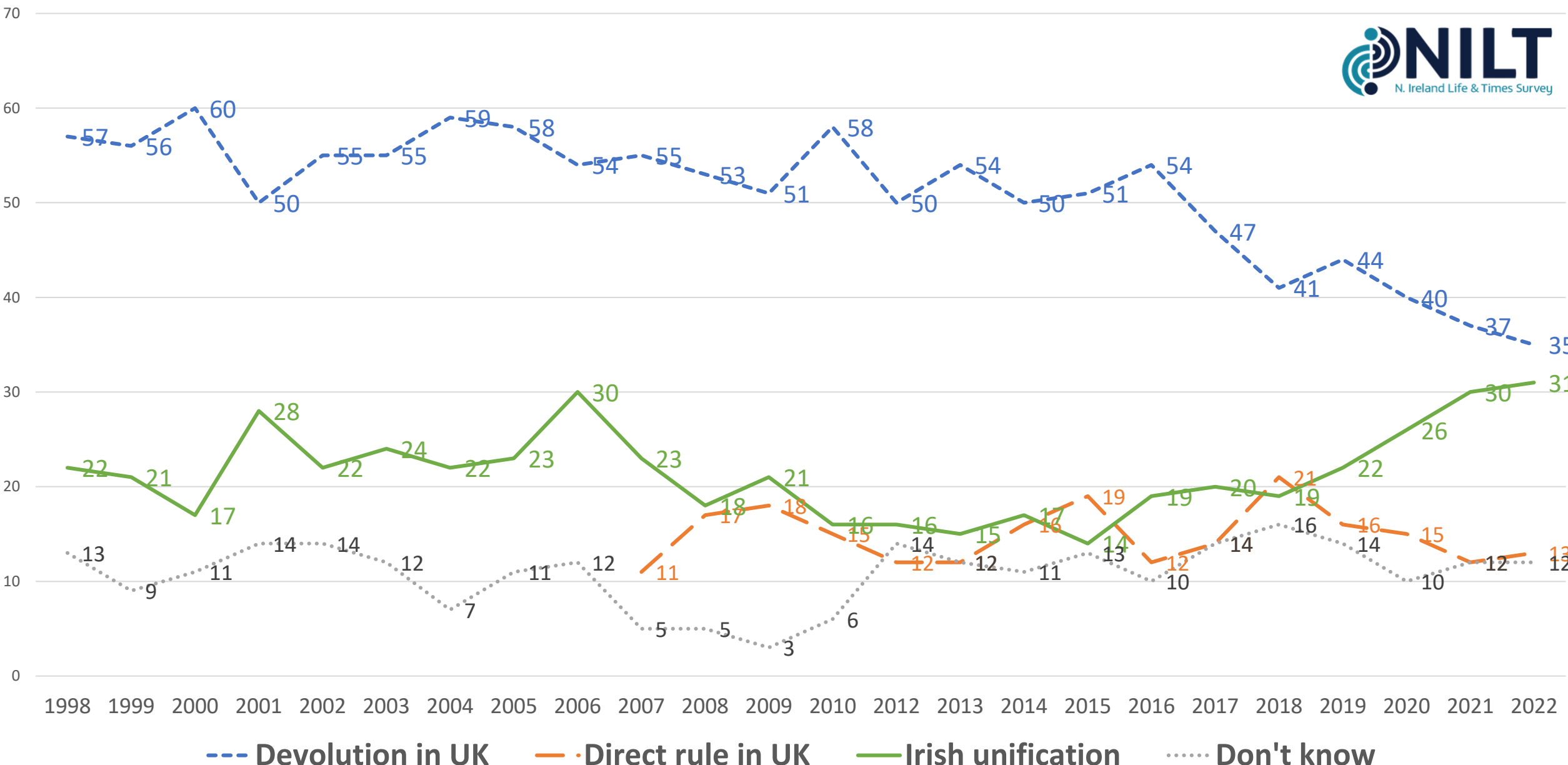
# Levels of Distrust (%) (NILT, 2022)





# Expectations

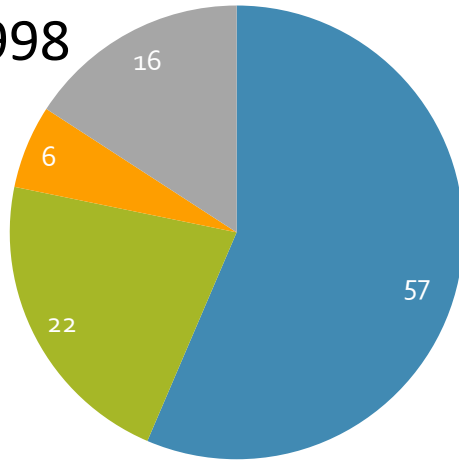
# Preferred long-term policy for NI (%) (NILT, 1998-2022)



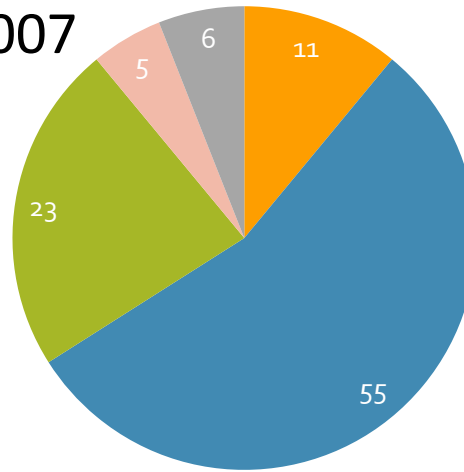
# Preferred long-term policy for NI (%) (NILT, 1998-2022)



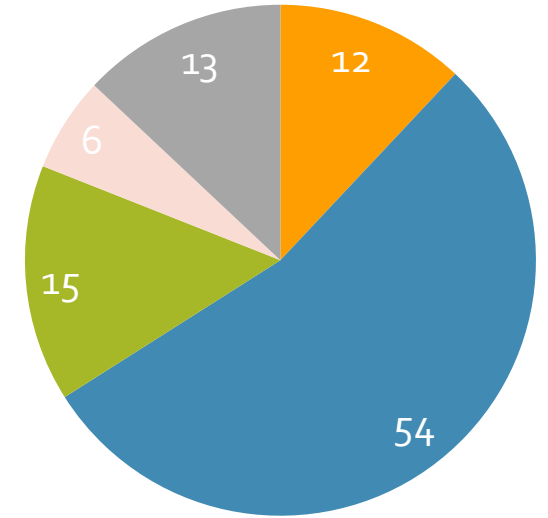
1998



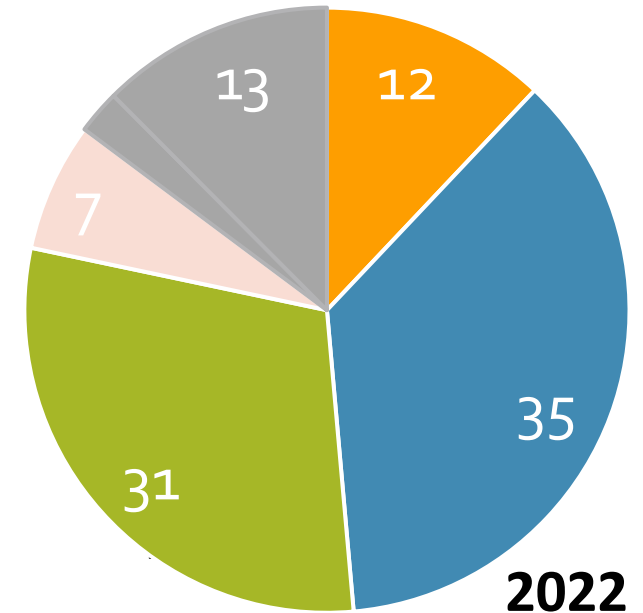
2007



2013

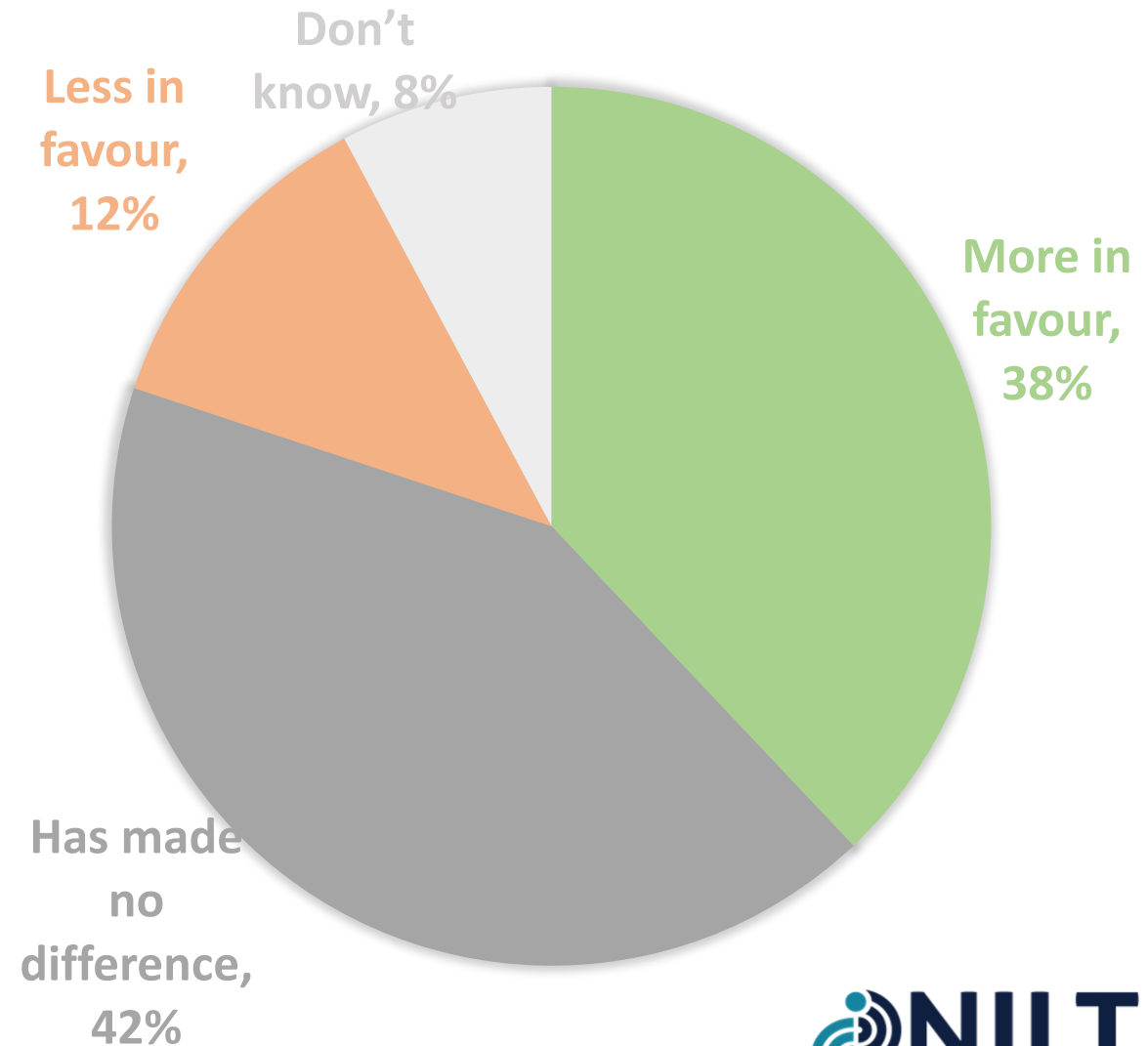
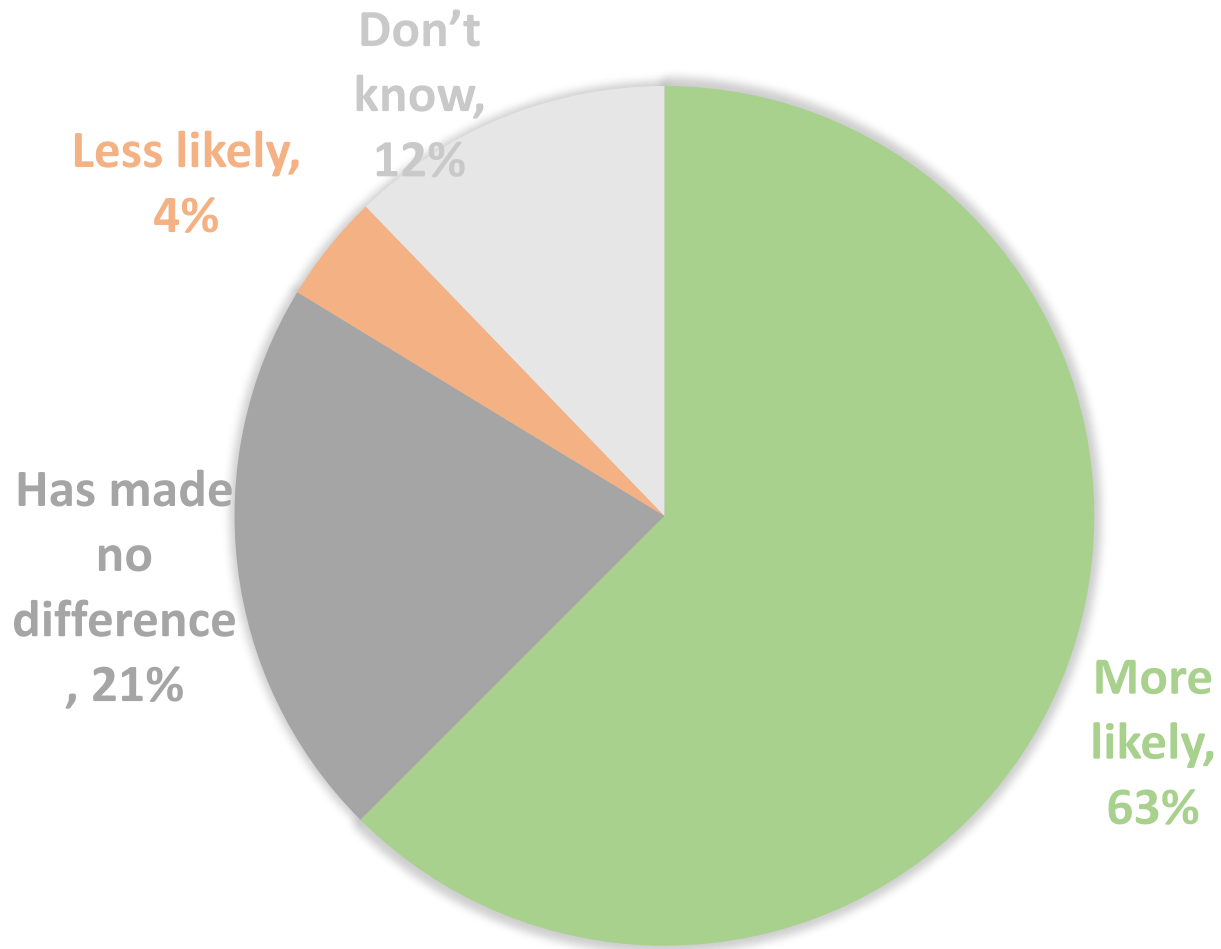


- To remain part of the United Kingdom, with direct rule
- To remain part of the United Kingdom, with devolved government
- To reunify with the rest of Ireland
- Independent state
- Don't know/Other



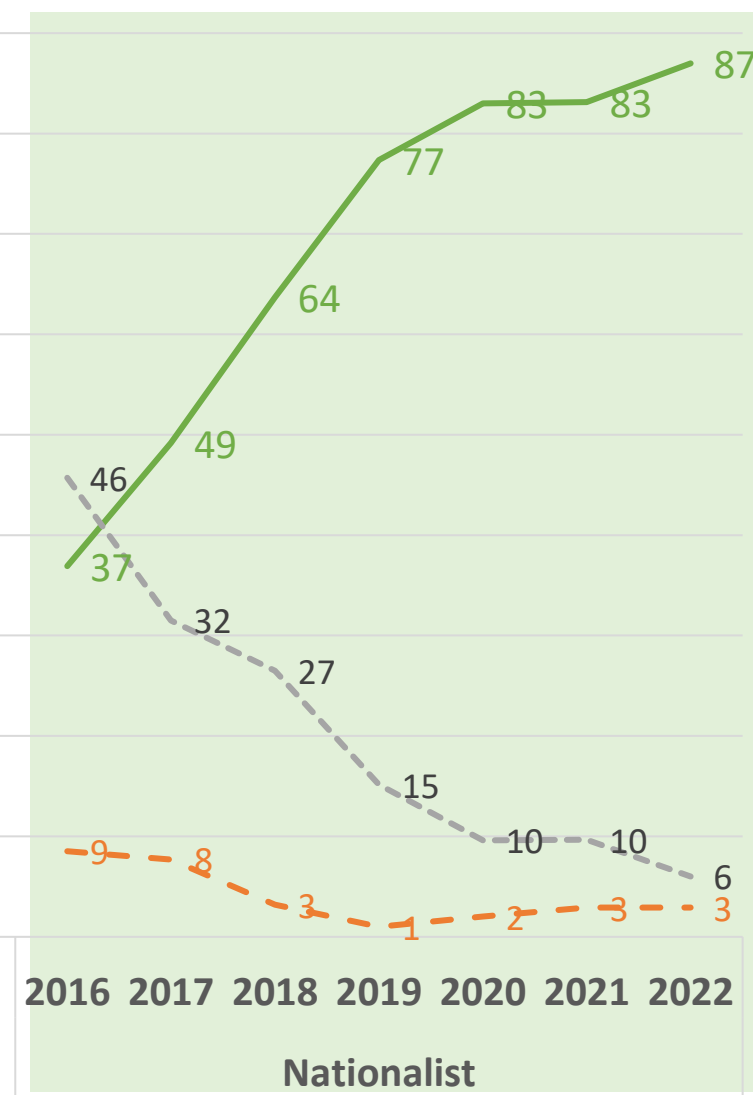
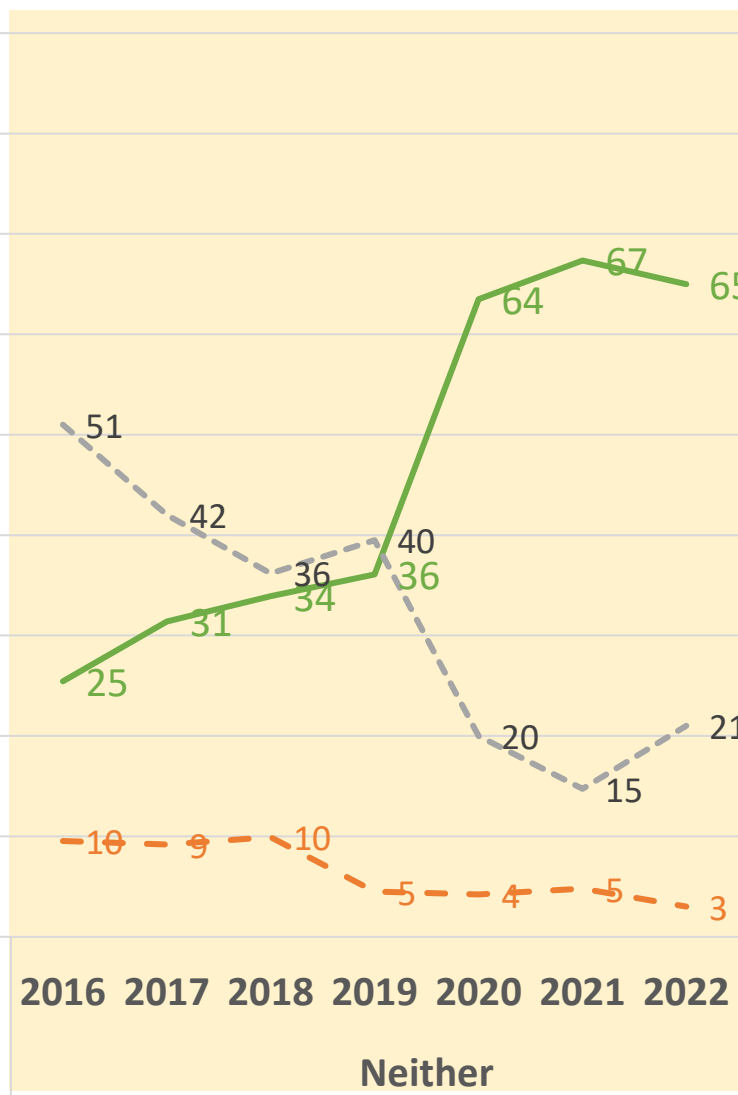
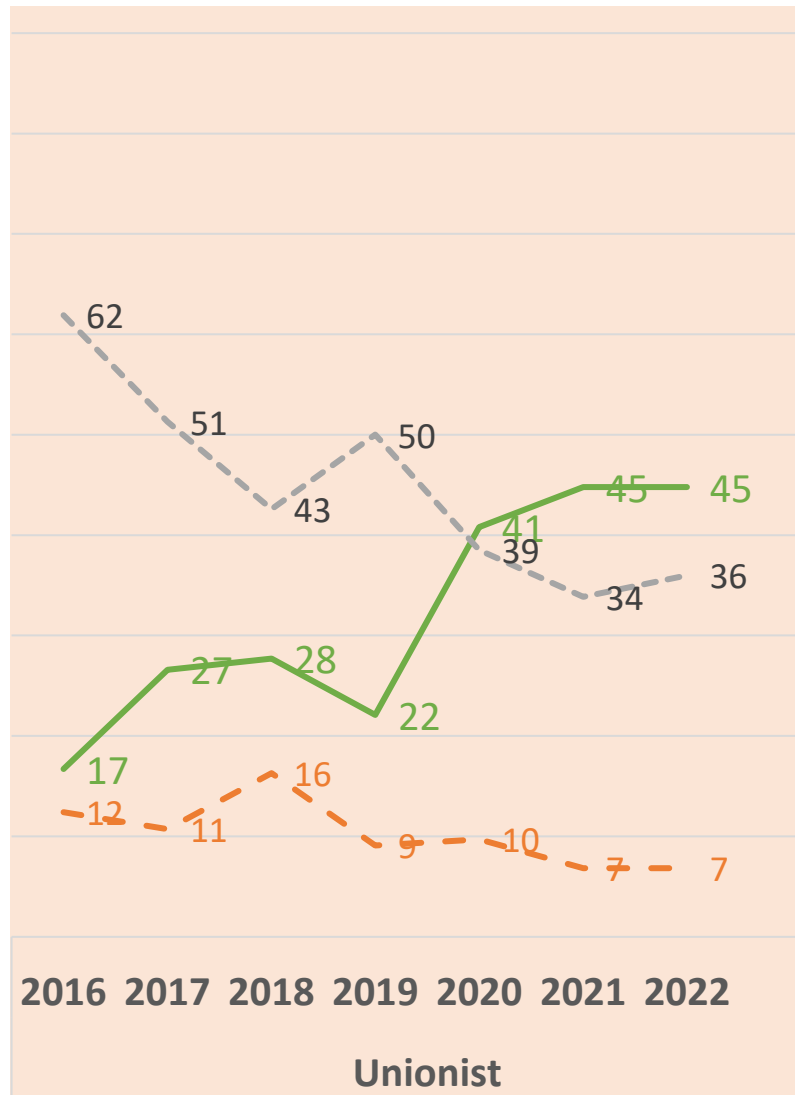
2022

# Does Brexit make a United Ireland more likely / more desirable? (2022)



# Does Brexit make a United Ireland more likely?

100

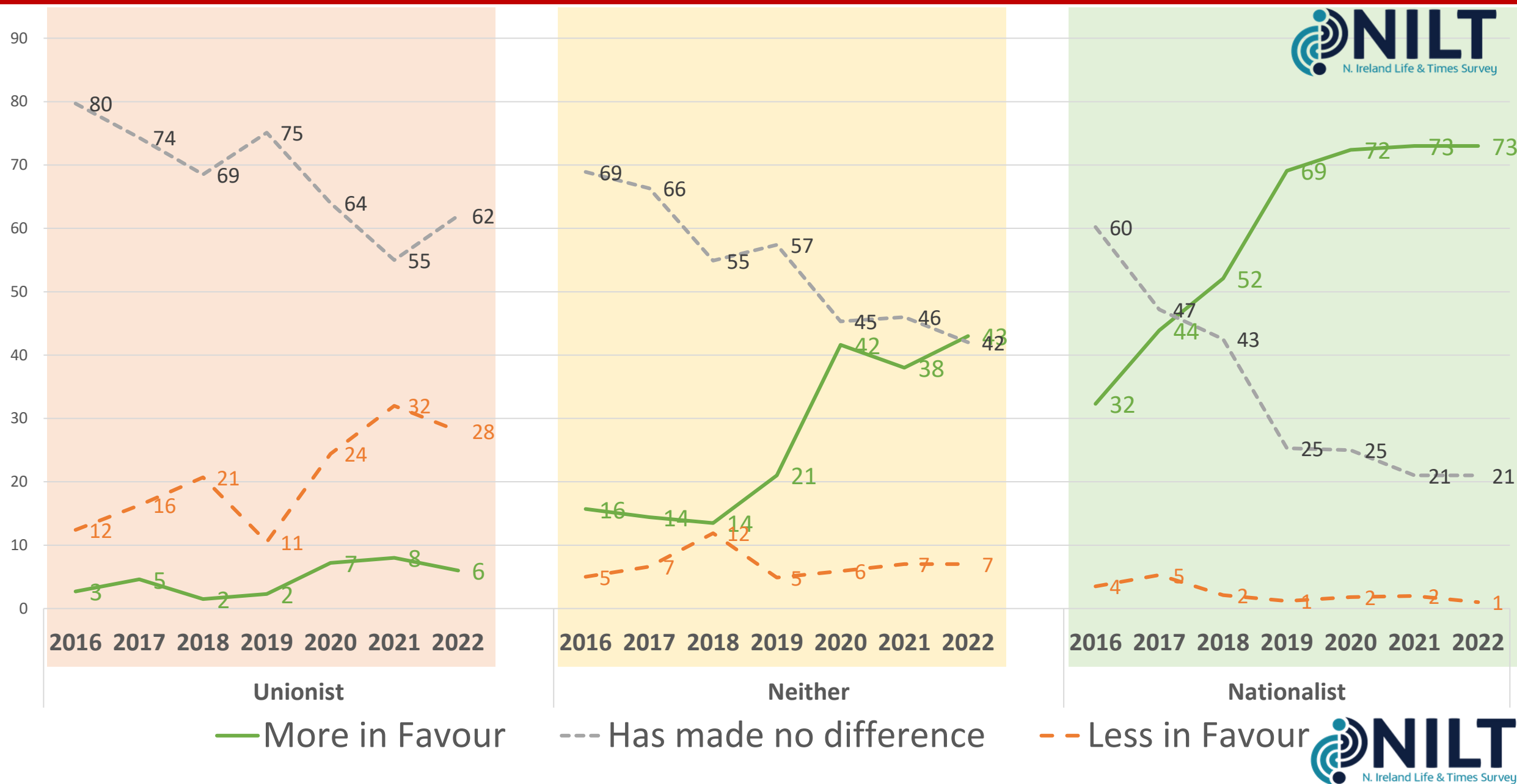


— More Likely

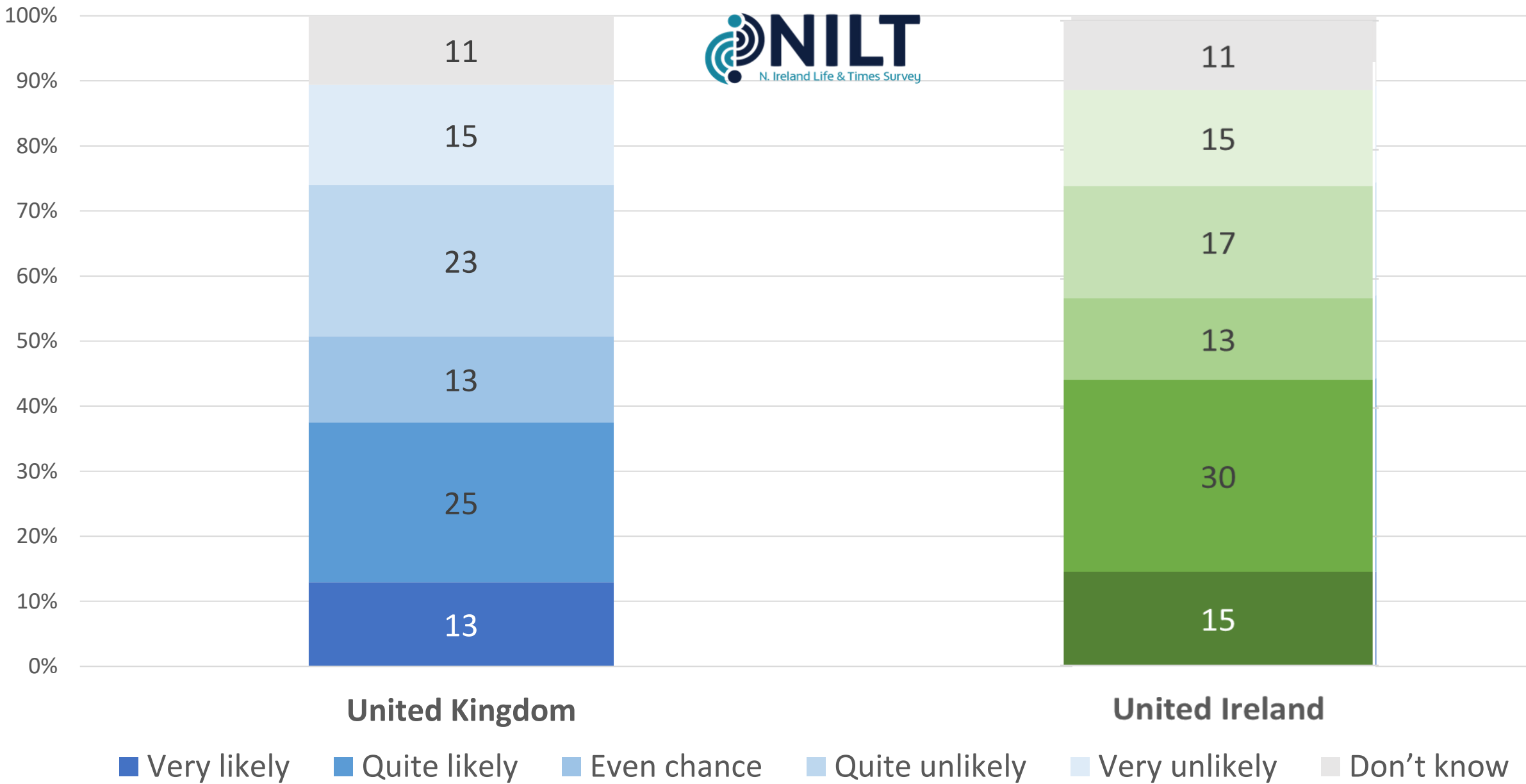
--- Has made no difference

- - - Less likely

# Does Brexit make you more in favour of a United Ireland?



# In 20 years' time, will the United Kingdom or a United Ireland exist? (2022)



# In sum

## • Priorities

- Plus ça change
- (Mental) health
- Economy/Cost of living

## • Identities

- British/Irish balance
- Three groups... or four?
- What happens to the 'Don't knows'?!

## • Attitudes

- Decline in optimism post-1998
- Huge impact of Brexit
- What happened in 2020 re: perceptions of symbolic environment?!
- Low trust, high distrust

## • Expectations

- Impact of Brexit
- Genuinely unknown future...



Thank you



**Through the Barricades**

Northern Ireland arpillera, Jacqui Hill 2013

Photo Deborah Stockdale, © Conflict Textiles

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