

Do Irish Teenagers Agree with Irish Neutrality?

A Statistical Investigation Into Whether The Recent War in Ukraine Has Challenged Irish Teens' Stance On Neutrality.

INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous surveys and studies conducted on Irish adults to do with joining NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), becoming a belligerent (non-neutral) country, etc. For example, the Irish Times surveyed Irish voters in April of 2022, and the majority - two thirds of voters - did not want a change to Irish neutrality.

However, there has never been a study done for the younger generations, and as they will soon be of age to vote in Irish political elections and referendums, we think it to be of vital importance to give teens a chance to express their opinions and ideas about political ideals that affect them, and in some cases, will continue to affect them throughout their life.

EXPERIMENTAL METHOD

We surveyed over 500 post primary students (age 12 – 19) on their attitudes towards Ireland's neutral status. These surveys were sent to students in every county in Ireland using SurveyMonkey and then the results were analysed.

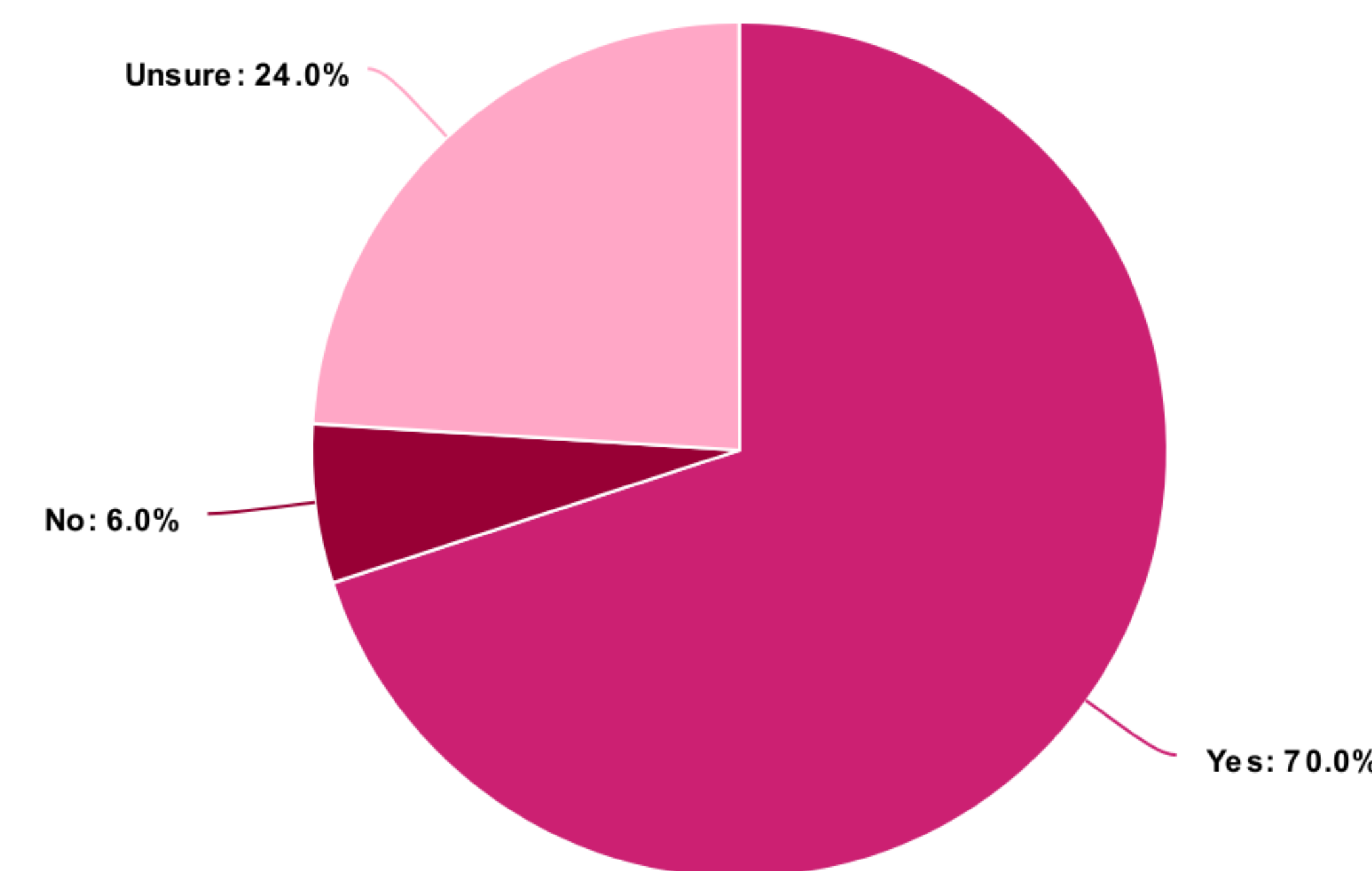
To help us get an understanding of Ireland's Neutrality, we have researched on the internet and got in contact with the UG history department, army, An Garda Síochana, and local politicians.

We started to get replies almost immediately, which allowed us to begin our analysis as the responses began to stream in. We could see patterns and trends start to form, which made us even more enthusiastic to compile our results.

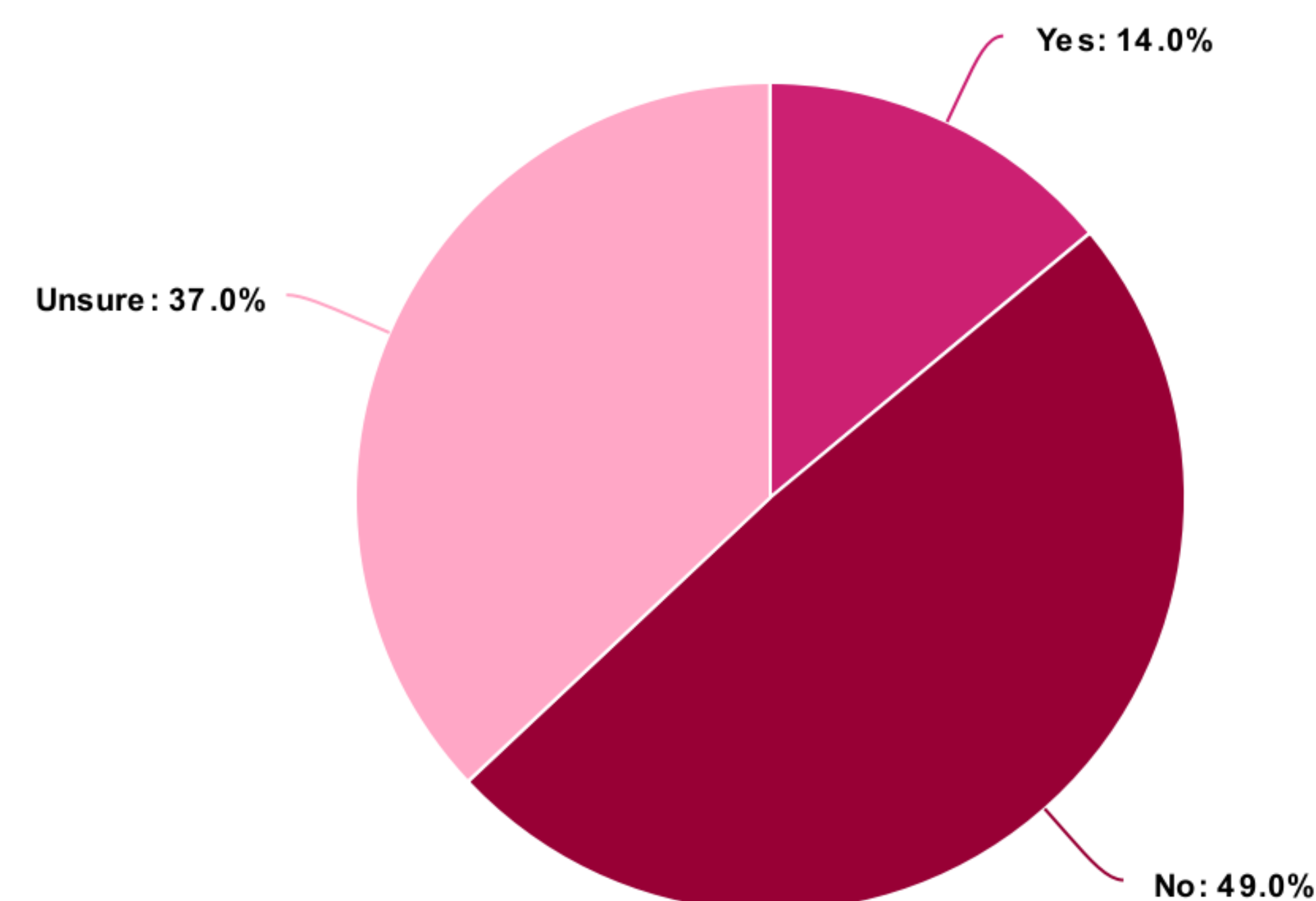
We included a text box at the bottom of the first survey in support and against neutrality, as there are a number of different advantages and disadvantages to neutrality, but we wanted to see which ones were chosen most often.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

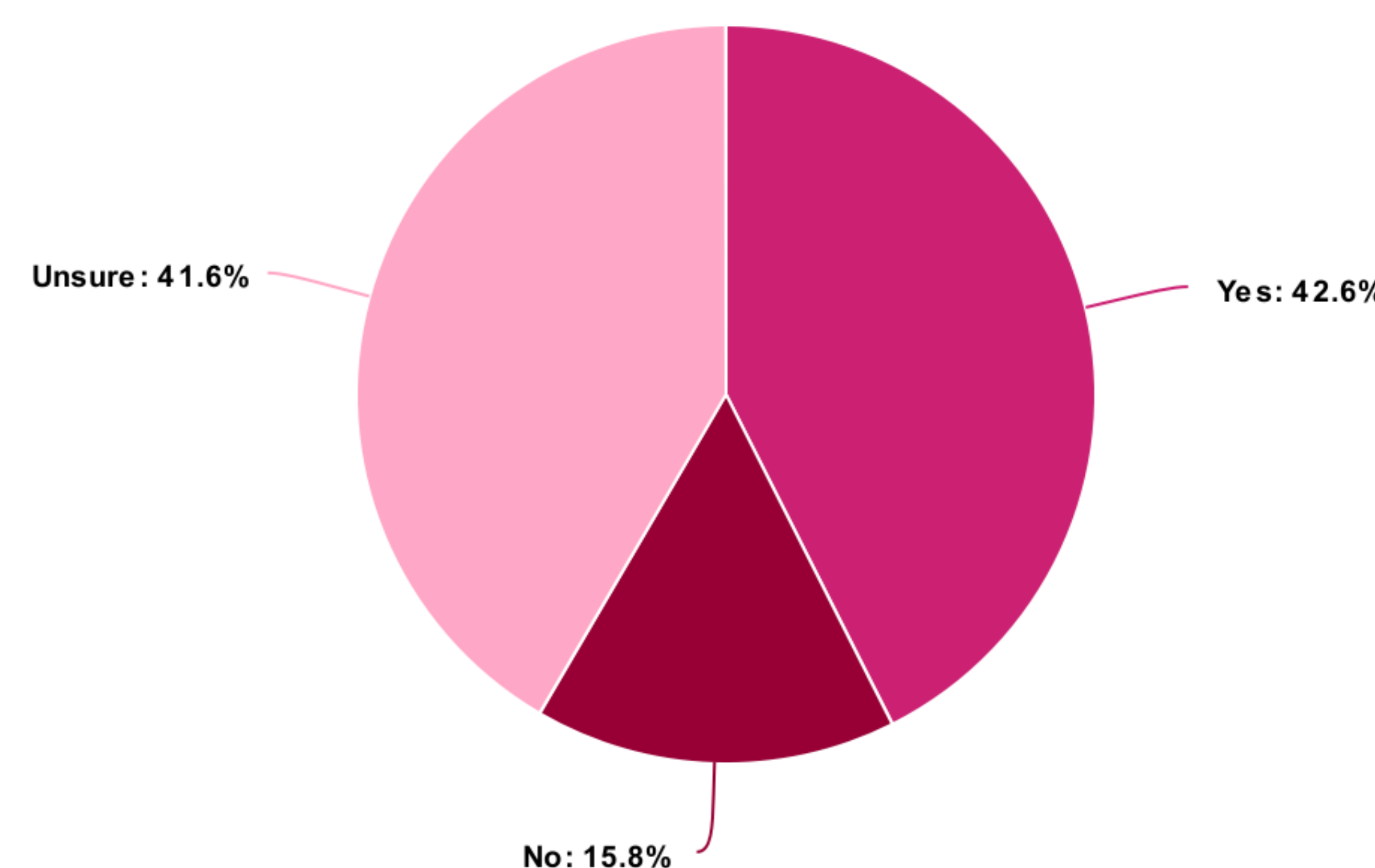
Do You Agree With Neutrality?



Do You Agree With Conscription?



Do You Agree With Ireland Joining NATO?



An intriguing question which sparked a lot of controversy was 'Do You Agree With Ireland Joining NATO?' Most interestingly, almost 75% of the teens who voted for Neutrality believed that Ireland should join NATO, two contradicting statements. As well as this, out of the 43% of youth who agreed with NATO, only 25% were aware of the benefits of the Irish Passport

Teens VS Adults

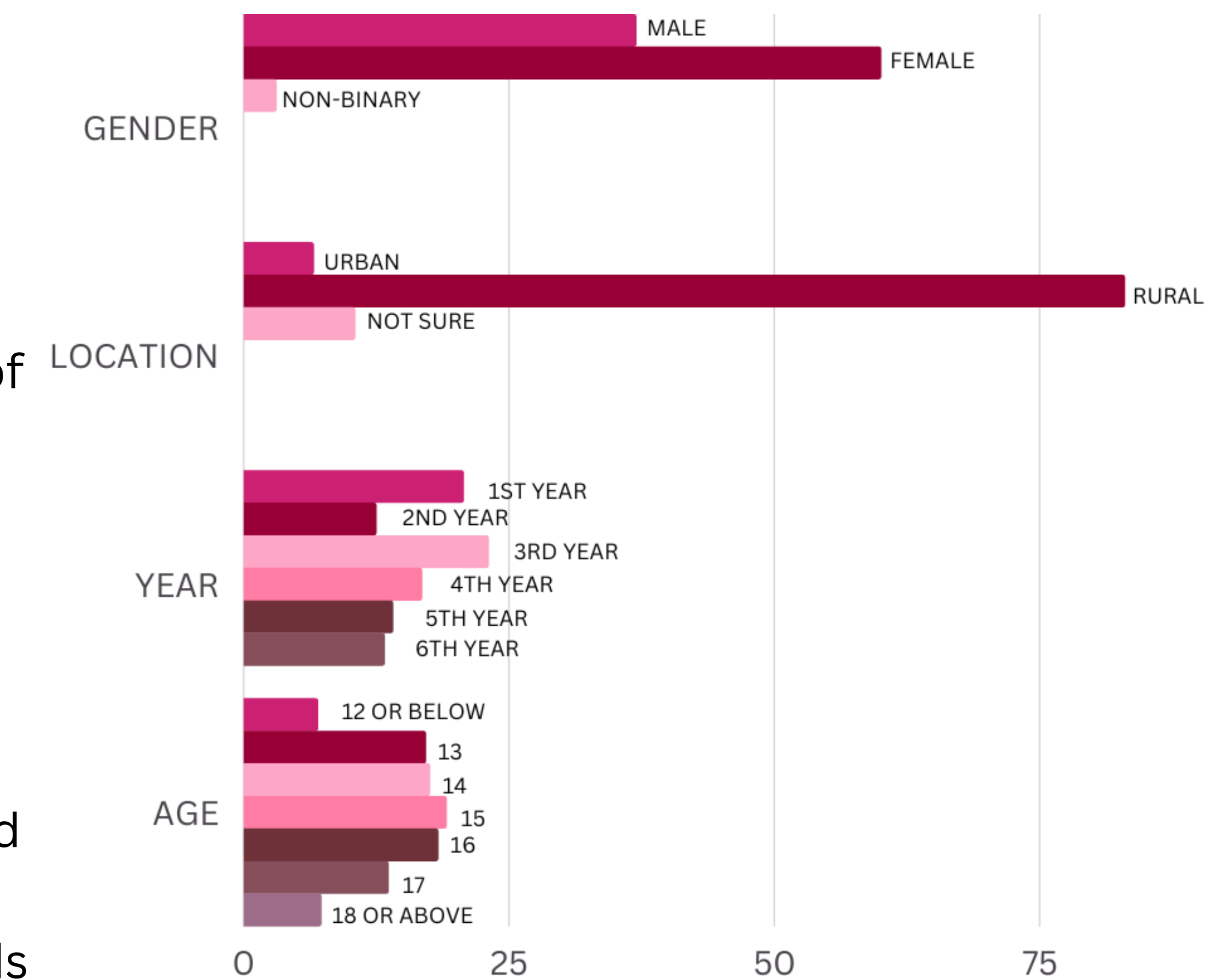
The Irish Times surveyed Irish voters in April 2022, asking about Ireland's current status, and you can see how opinions differ and stay the same between adults and teenagers. Two thirds of adult voters don't want to change Ireland's neutral policy, compared to 70% of teens. In terms of sending aid to Ukraine, only 35% of adults want Ireland to continue to send aid, compared to a whopping 79% of teens. This really says a lot about the differing views and experiences between generations.

If You Are For Neutrality, Why?

We wanted to give teenagers a chance to express their opinions on neutrality, and why they do/why they don't agree with Ireland being neutral. These results really gave us a good understanding of Irish teenager's feelings about their country changing their status. We analysed these results thematically.

Because...:

- We want Ireland to be peaceful: 70%
- We don't have the resources, army, etc: 14%
- Want to provide aid to Ukraine peacefully: 9%
- We don't agree with conscription: 5%
- History has proved that neutrality works best: 2%



Graph displays a Respondent Profile

CONCLUSIONS

This project and research doesn't compare to any existing theories, as there has never been a study quite like this before, because teenagers have never been asked in a survey for their opinion on Neutrality. The closest it has come is a poll conducted on adults, but it didn't contain interviews, history or as much background research as our project this year.

We believe our project to be quite accurate, as 500 responses gave us a good idea of Irish teenager's opinions nationally.

We recommend that if the Irish government were to ever debate the subject of Irish neutrality, the joining of NATO, or the introduction of conscription, there should be a referendum for Irish adults, but also a survey/questionnaire for under 18's/teenagers, because we have proven that due to the differing experiences of young people, they have different opinions to older generations.