

Surveillance: A mixed method behavioural analysis of the Irish public perception on modern day surveillance.

Introduction

Our group first became interested in the topic of surveillance when we came across an article about surveillance while researching online. The article was based in Poland and was about analysis on the surveillance system in the context of the European Court of Human Rights hearing. In the article it stated that “the lack of control and information on the activities of secret services threatens not only the privacy, but also the legal safety of people they defend and their relationships with clients, protected by client-attorney privilege”

According to the Irish Criminal Justice Act 2009 surveillance is defined as:

a) monitoring, observing, listening to or making a recording of a particular person or group of persons or their movements, activities and communications,

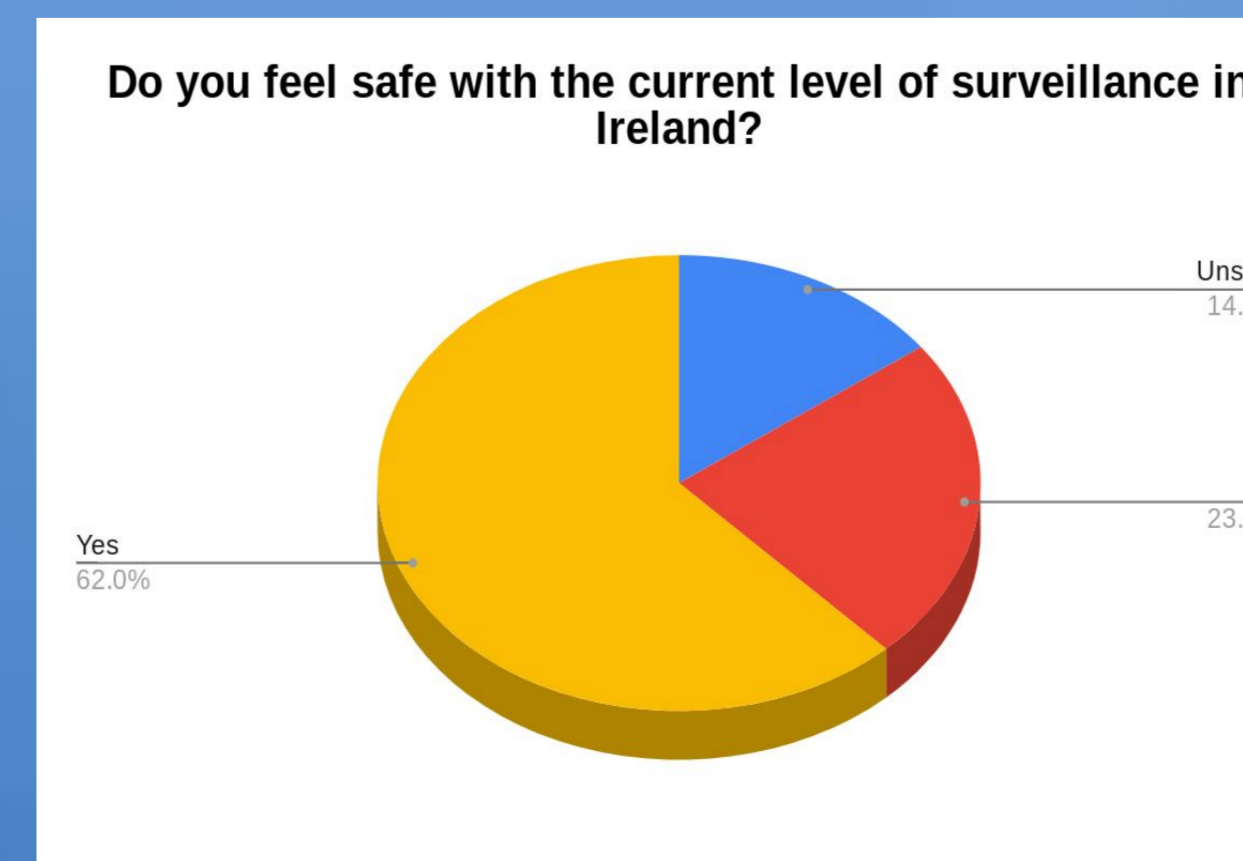
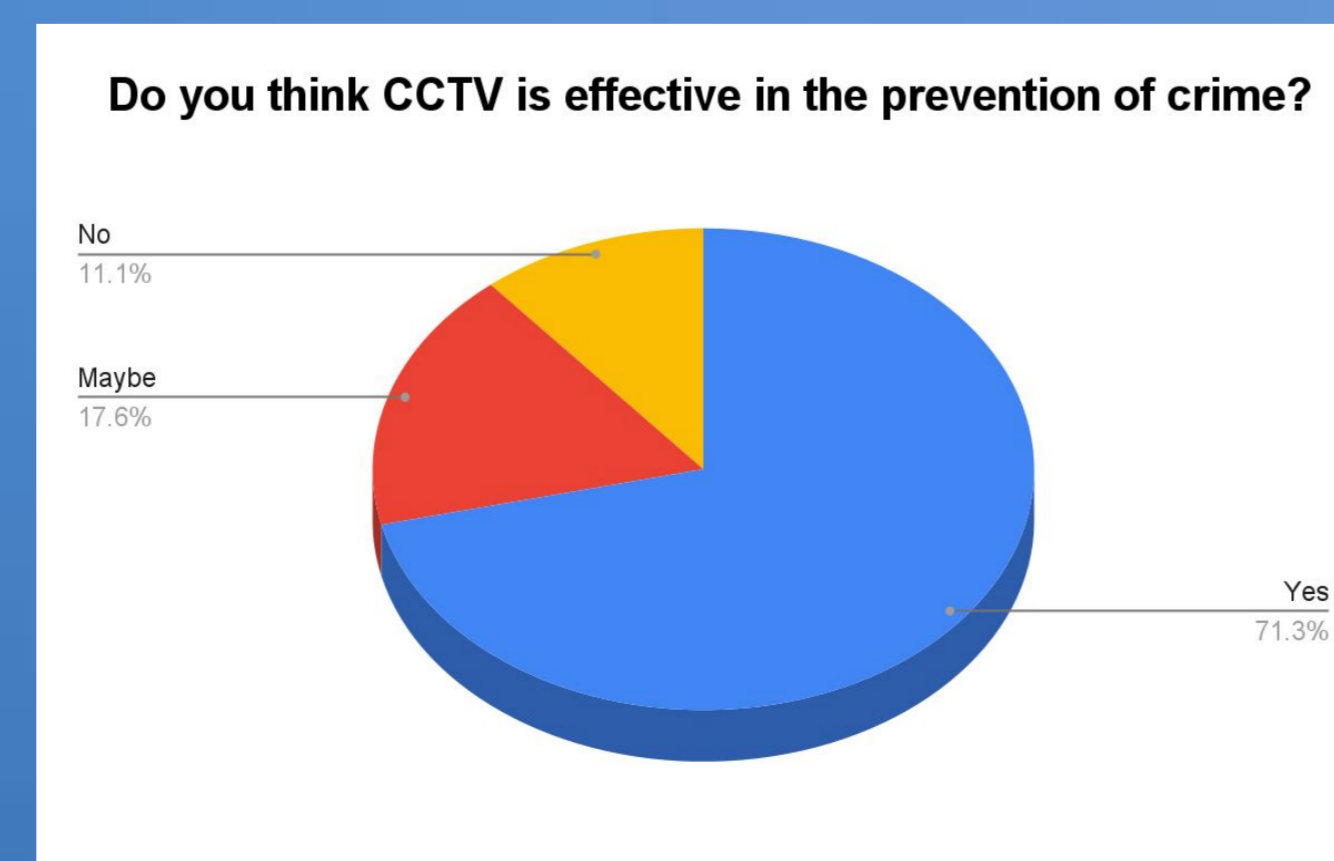
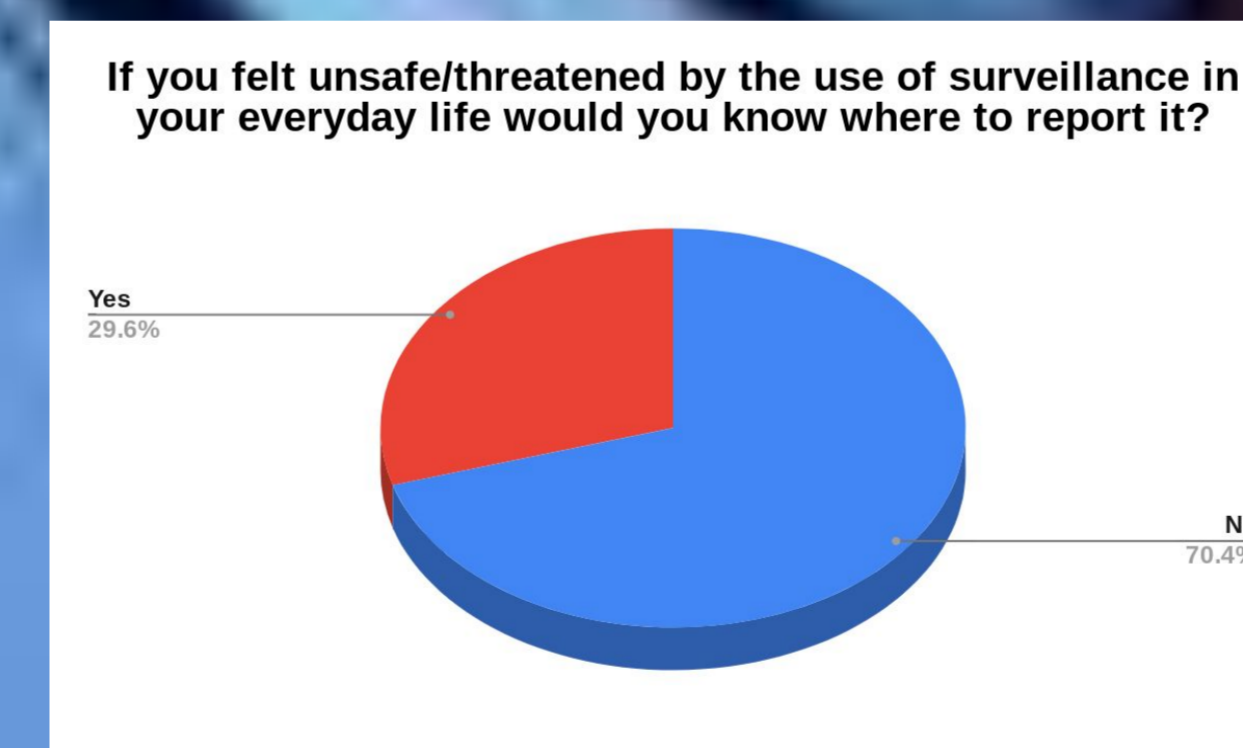
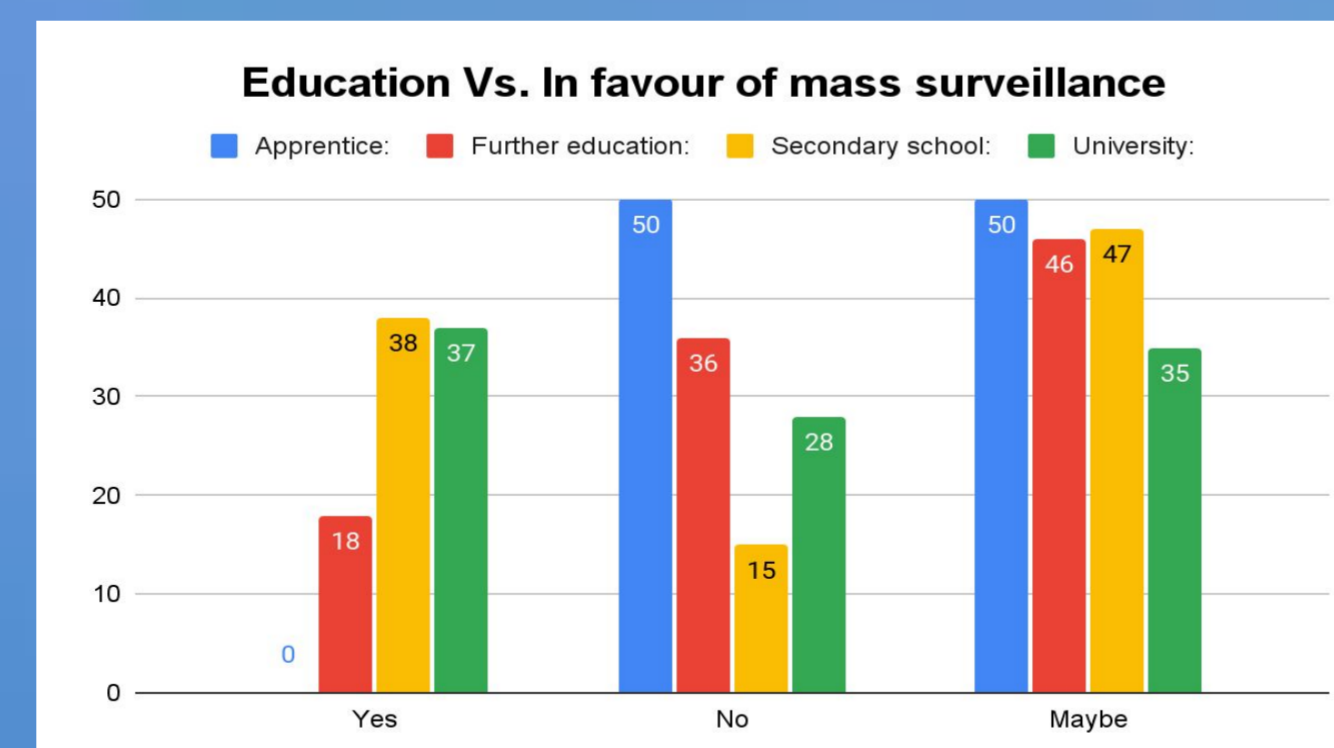
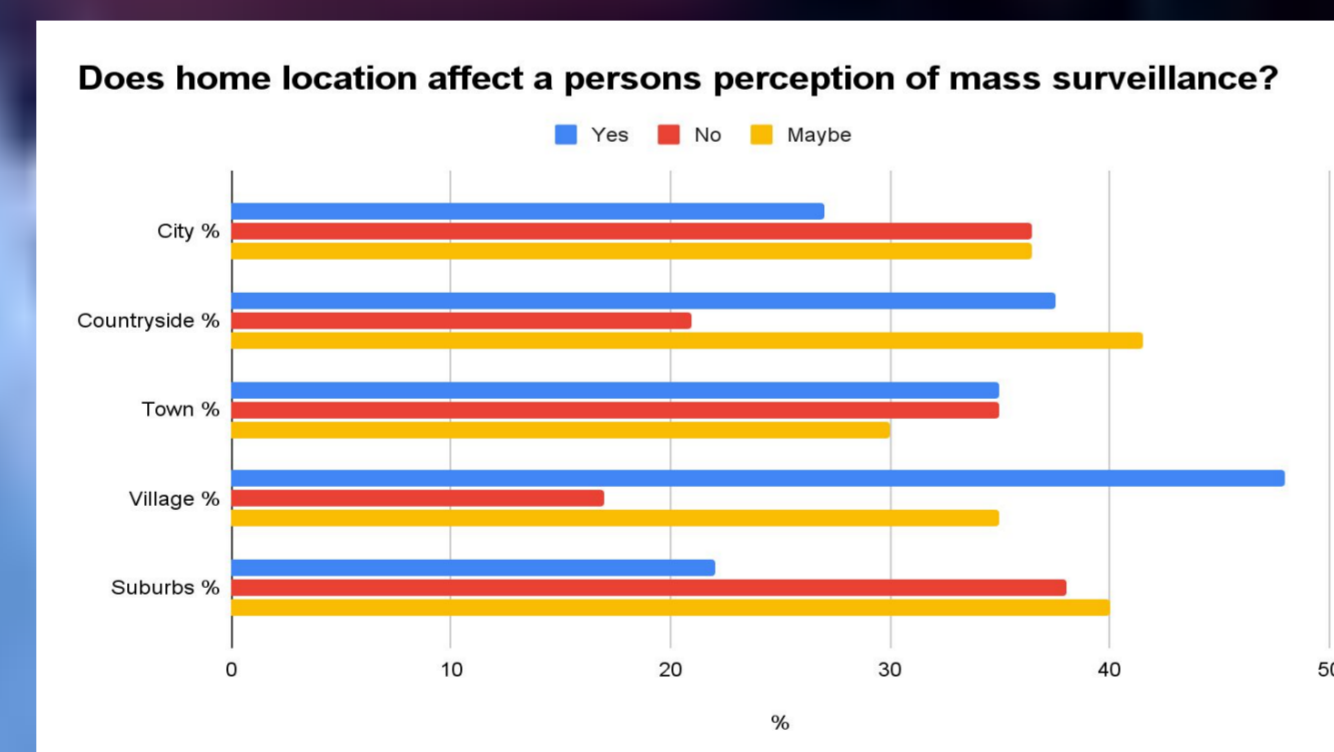
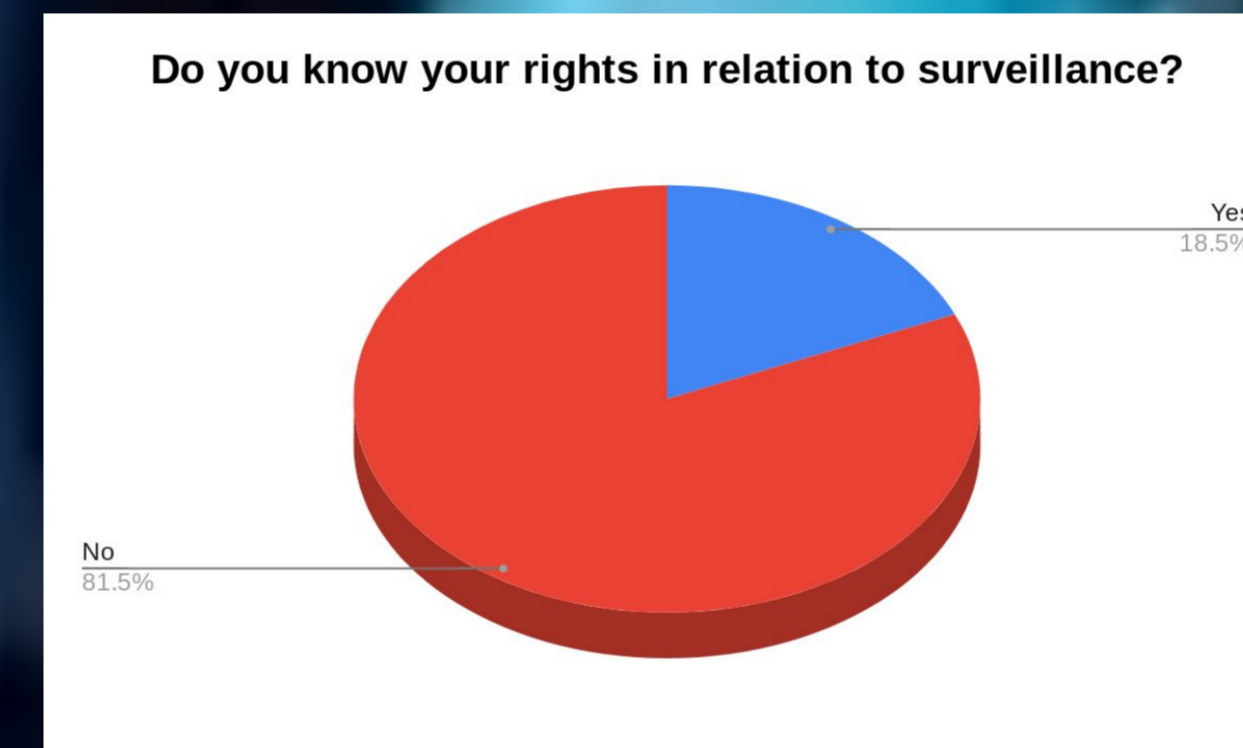
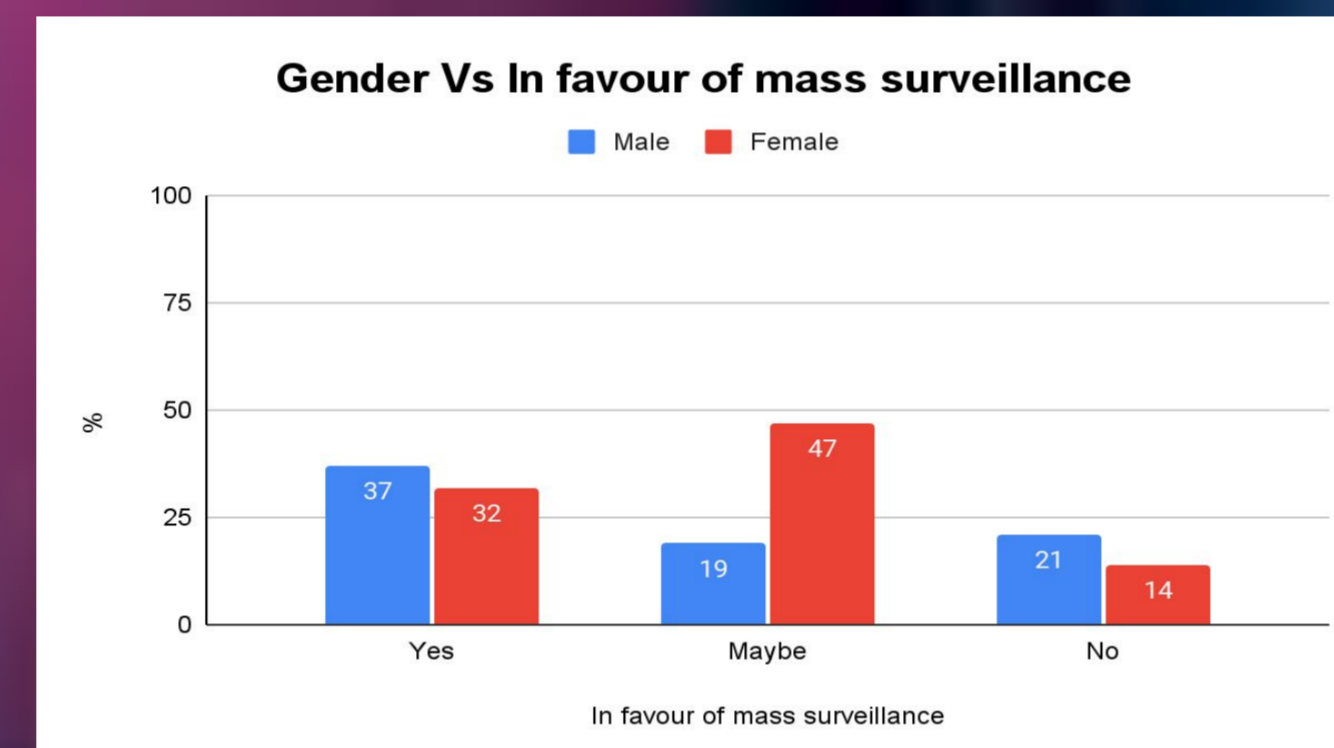
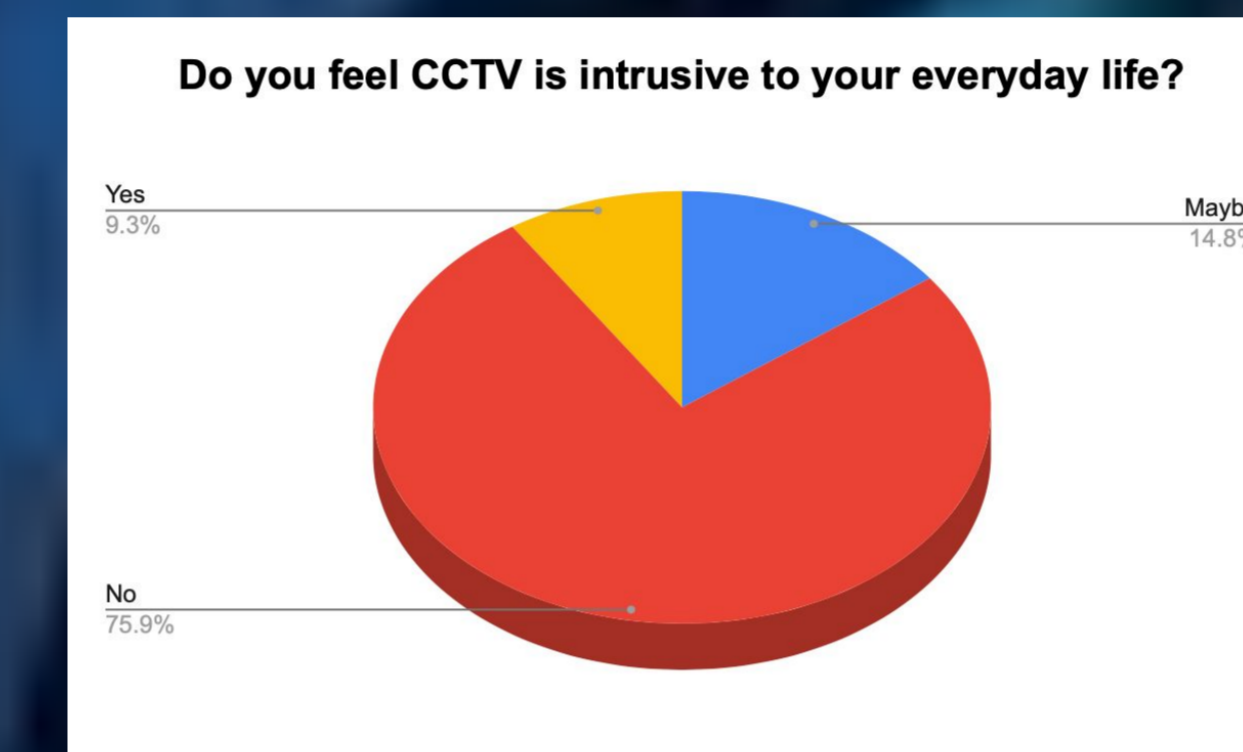
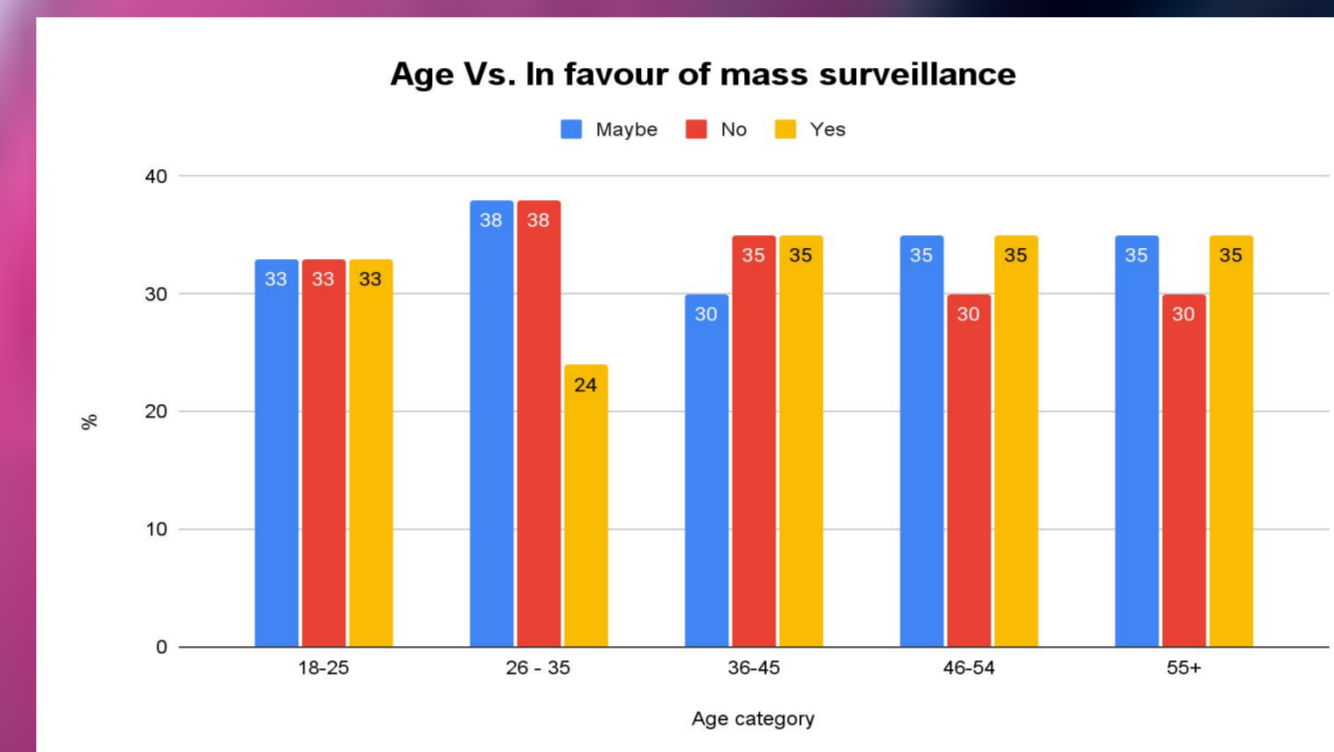
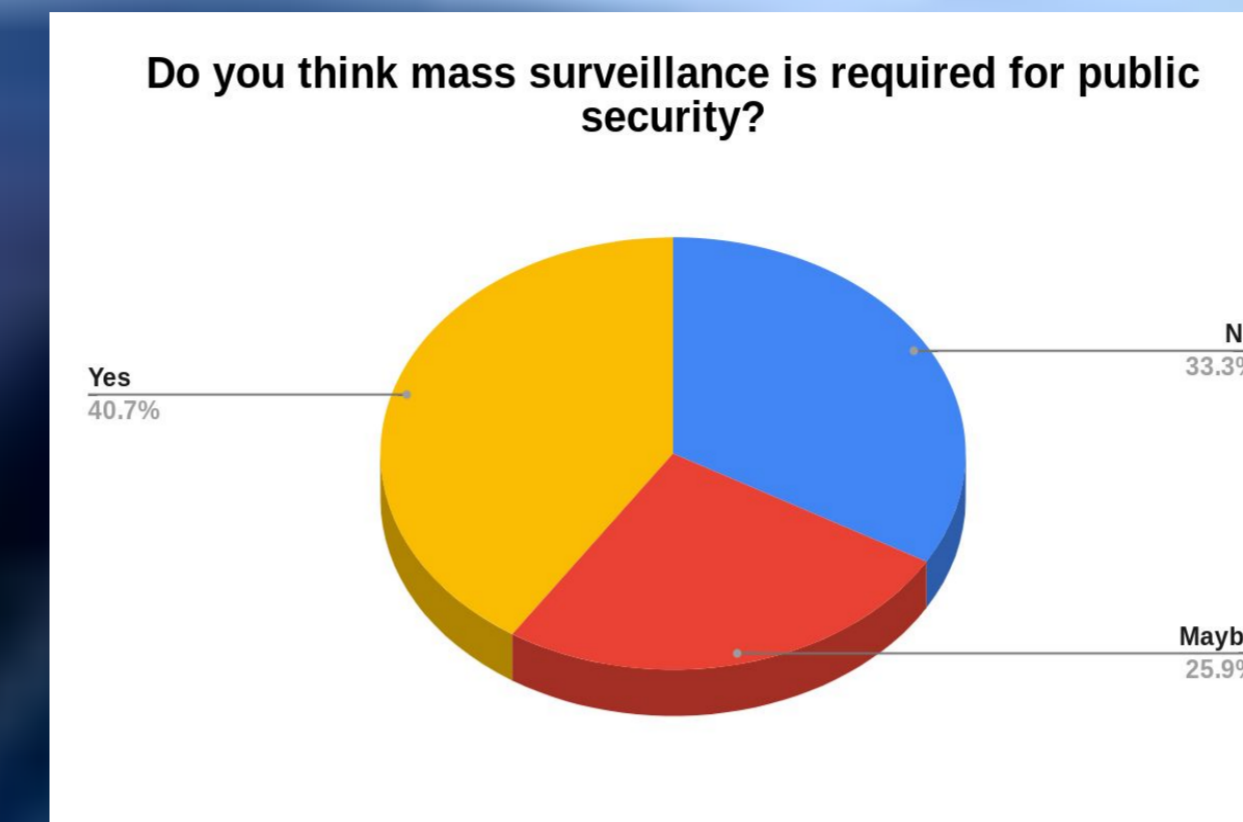
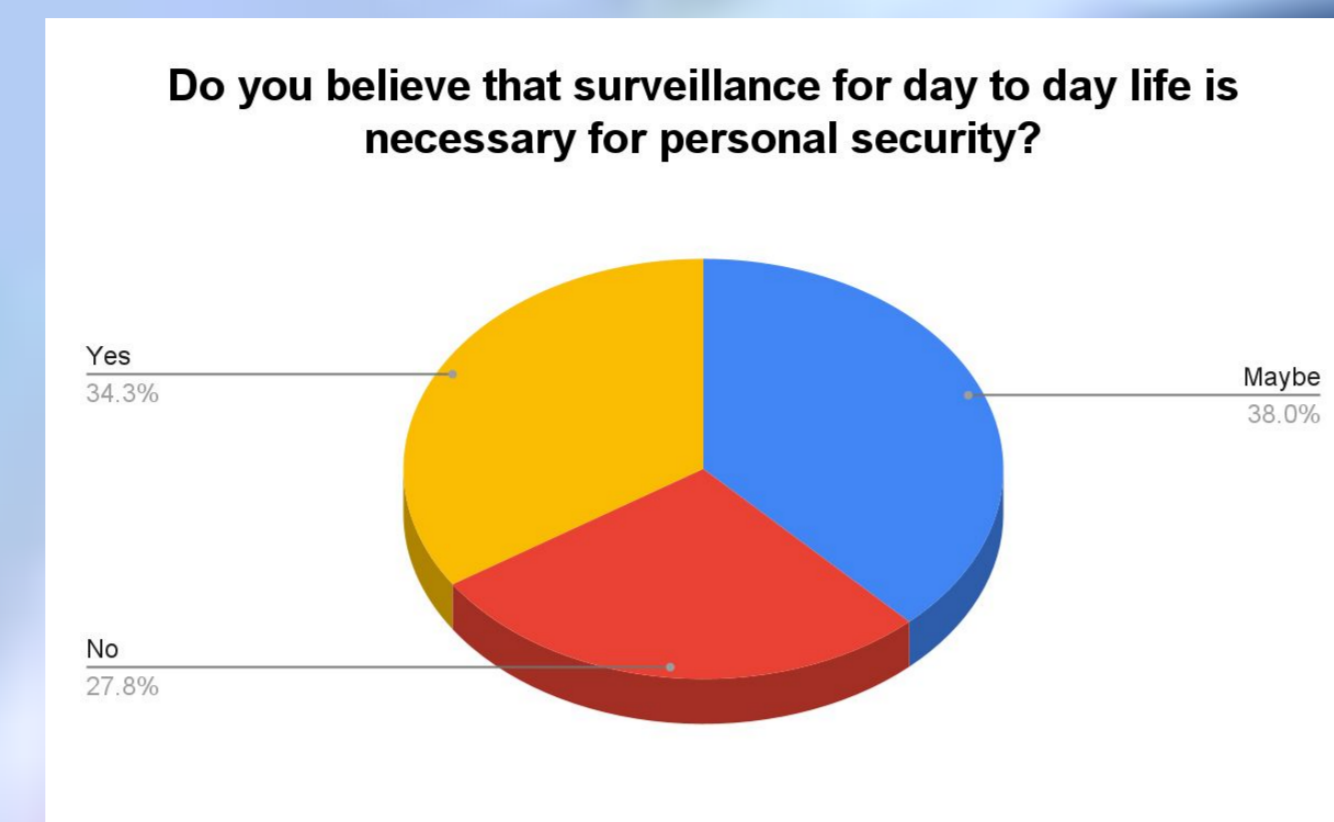
or
b) monitoring or making a recording of places or things by or with the assistance of surveillance devices.

Aims

- We aim to determine what factors could affect a person's perception on surveillance.
- We hope to answer some of the following questions:
- Are people in Ireland aware of the laws surrounding surveillance?
- Do factors such as education, age, gender, location etc determine a person's perception of surveillance?

Experiment Design

- Research on the area of surveillance was carried out in respect to Ireland
- Questions on surveillance were designed on the basis of our research.
- Research on the area of questionnaire design was carried out to ensure both quantitative and qualitative data could be collected.
- The questionnaire underwent several iterations before it was finalised.
- The questionnaire was sent to multiple people to distribute.
- A total of 108 responses were collected.
- The quantitative responses were analysed and graphs were created.
- Qualitative responses were also analysed to further strengthen the reliability of the results obtained.



Results

Is surveillance for day to day life necessary for personal security?: This was very split with the slight majority being unsure whether it was necessary or not to have mass surveillance.

Age Vs. In favour of mass surveillance: Age had no clear effect on the opinion of mass surveillance.

Gender Vs. In favour for mass surveillance: There were no major differences identified between male and female perception of the use of mass surveillance.

Does home location affect a person's perception of mass surveillance?: People living in cities and towns are less in favour of surveillance compared to people living in villages and the countryside.

Education Vs. In favour of mass surveillance: There is a minor trend observed that the higher the level of education, the higher the acceptance of mass surveillance.

CCTV: Most people agreed that the use of CCTV helped in the prevention of crime and is not intrusive to people's everyday lives.

Is surveillance for day to day life necessary for public security?: This is very split with a slim majority unsure whether surveillance is needed for day to day life

Rights/ Gardaí rights in relation to Surveillance: A very large majority do not know their own rights and their Gardaí rights in relation to surveillance.

Reporting the use of surveillance: A large majority do not know where to report if they were to feel unsafe/threatened by the use of surveillance.

Current Level of surveillance: A large proportion are in favour of the current surveillance in Ireland. A significant amount stated they were unsure.

Conclusion

- A large proportion are in favour of the current surveillance in Ireland. A significant amount stated they were unsure.
- The public are unsure of the current laws in relation to surveillance, including of where to report the potential misuse of surveillance.
- Education has a bigger impact on the perception of surveillance than either age or gender.
- People living in cities and towns are less in favour of surveillance compared to people living in villages and the countryside.

Going forward

Throughout our research we noticed there was a gap in knowledge of what laws and rights apply to the public in relation to surveillance. We decided to propose a solution for this.

Proposal:

- The Government could make an information booklet for the public to access easily and understand on the laws of surveillance.
- An module could be designed for secondary schools within the teaching of Digital Literacy.