

# Investigating Public Transport Satisfaction Levels in Galway: Preliminary results from a quantitative student-run research study

*Researchers and Undergraduate Students from the School of Political Science & Sociology,  
and under the stewardship of the SSRC*



**The Social Sciences Research Centre (SSRC)**









## Students-as-producers: Developing valuable student-centered research and learning opportunities

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### *Abstract*

The desire to connect teaching and research to create a productive and progressive framework for student learning has become one of the most significant spaces for academic development in Higher Education over the recent past. The positive effects on student learning through the inclusion of real-life, complex and unstructured research-like activities needs to be at the core of undergraduate education, and following this paradigm the student acts as producer of knowledge instead of simply knowledge consumer. The concept underpinning 'student-as-producer' is that learning is grounded in research and research-like activities so much of what the student learns will be through their own discoveries, working in collaboration with academic advisers and other students in a supportive research-rich environment. This paper focuses on the research practices and activities during a study carried out by undergraduate students from the School of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland Galway, primarily designed as a student-as-producer project, under the guidance of an academic supervisor/facilitator. Students were placed at the center of deliberations, design, development and implementation of the research and subsequently have become the focus of this particular reflective paper. What were their experiences at various stages of the process, what do they think were worthwhile and valueless in the practice, and what learning principles, if any, were paramount? A series of semi-structured open questions were posed to uncover pressures and barriers to their overall learning experiences resulting in some thoughtful and helpful lessons to enhance such student-centered learning in the future.

**Keywords:** student-as-producer; student-centered learning; knowledge; higher education; teaching and research

# **This was a student led project...**

The desire to connect research and teaching to create a productive and progressive framework for undergraduate teaching and learning has become one of the most significant areas for academic development in higher education.

The positive effect on student learning through the inclusion of real-life, complex and unstructured research-like activities is at the core of undergraduate education, and following this paradigm the student acts as 'producer' of knowledge instead of simply knowledge consumer

# Meet the Project Team

Researchers from the School of Political Science and Sociology

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**Principal Investigator**  
Dr. Mike Hynes



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**Student Researcher**  
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**Student Researcher**  
Michael McNally

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**The Social Sciences Research Centre (SSRC)**



**Gaillimh  
2020  
Galway**

This project is also extremely thankful to EXPLORE for their support





“Active and public transport can enhance the livability of a city and create an environment that is better suited to social activities”

Vuchic V. (1999). Transportation for livable cities. New Brunswick, NJ: Centre for Urban Policy Research Press



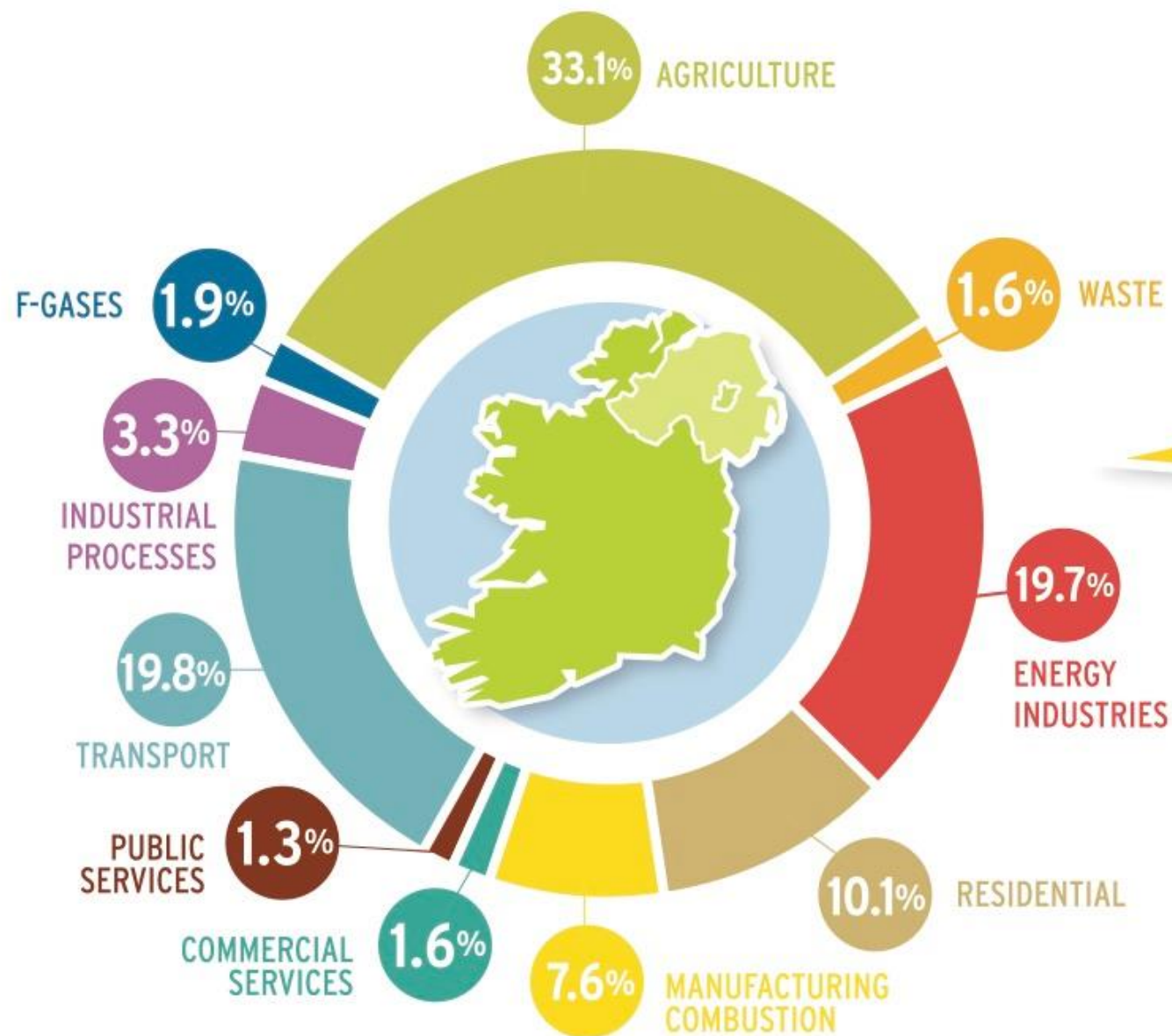
“A public transport system physically ties a city together and enables all inhabitants of the city to move around the city. Such transport welfare enables inhabitants to be citizens: transport links are the sinews of urban citizenship”

Wickham, J. (2006). 'Public Transport Systems: The Sinews of European Urban Citizenship? *European Societies*, 8(1): 3-26





# SOURCES OF GREENHOUSE GASES



Agriculture, Energy Industries and Transport accounted for 72.5% of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions in 2015



“Bus use, if cultivated, promises to be a key part of the transition to a low carbon economy. Decision makers need to have the courage and vision to make decisions to encourage a modal shift if we are to tackle climate change, even if this means spending more in the short term”

Campaign for Better Transport (2011) Buses Matter: A Report by Campaign for Better Transport for the RMT. London



# The Data...

- Data collection initially begun online via the SSRC website
- Given the monocentric nature of the Public Bus Transport System in Galway, data was then collected via face-to-face interviews at the various bus stops in Eyre Square
- **363** completed questionnaire, **36** partial → overall total of **n=399**
- So what were the questions asked...

1. Where do you currently live?

Galway City

Galway County

Outside Galway

2. What is your age group?

0-14 years old

15-24 years old

25-44 years old

45-64 years old

65 years +

3. Which gender do you most identify with?

Male

Female

4. How often do you take the bus in Galway City?

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Occasionally

Never



5. In general (and if you do use the service), for what reason do you take the bus?

School/College	Work	Shopping	To visit family/friends	For social/leisure	Other
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

6. Is the bus your only option for completing this journey?

Yes	No
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

7. If you have answered 'no' to question 6, what reason best describes your preference for taking the bus?

I save money taking the bus	The journey is quicker by bus	There's less stress travelling by bus	I can get work/reading done on the bus	For environmental reasons	Other or I'd prefer not to say
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

8. What bus route do you normally take?  
*For example; 401, 402, 403, etc.*



The following questions were asked with kind permission granted by TransportFocus in the UK

This will allows us make some comparisons with public bus services in the regions of the UK



**Bus Passenger Survey**

Autumn 2016 Report



9. How satisfied were you with the **value for money** of your most recent bus journey?

Very Satisfied

Fairly Satisfied

Neither/nor

Fairly Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

10. How satisfied were you with the **punctuality of the bus** on your most recent journey?

Very Satisfied

Fairly Satisfied

Neither/nor

Fairly Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

11. How satisfied were you with the **length of time** your most recent journey on the bus took?

Very Satisfied

Fairly Satisfied

Neither/nor

Fairly Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

12. Overall and taking everything into account from the start to end of the bus journey, how satisfied were you with your most recent journey?

Very Satisfied

Fairly Satisfied

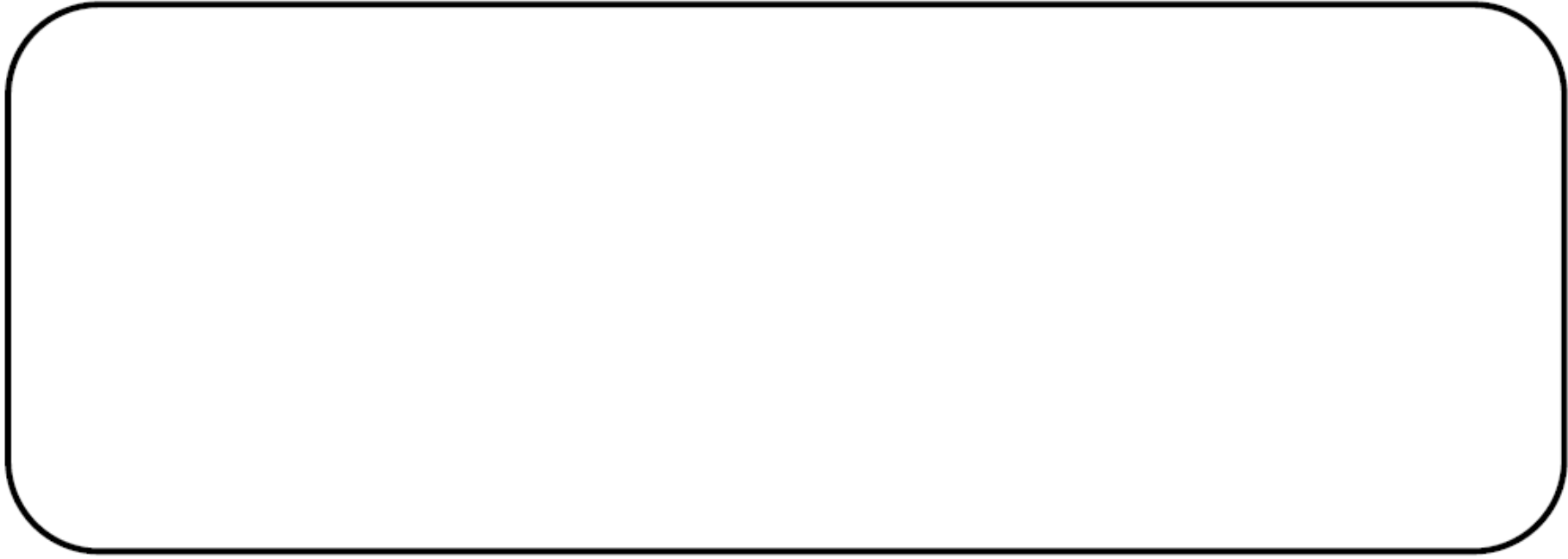
Neither/nor

Fairly Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

13. Have you any final overall comments or remarks about the public bus transport service in Galway City?

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If you wish to be entered into a draw for a Leap Card with free Public Bus Transport for a month please enter an email address or phone number here



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*Rest assured these details will ONLY be used for the purpose of the draw and securely destroyed once the draw has been completed!*

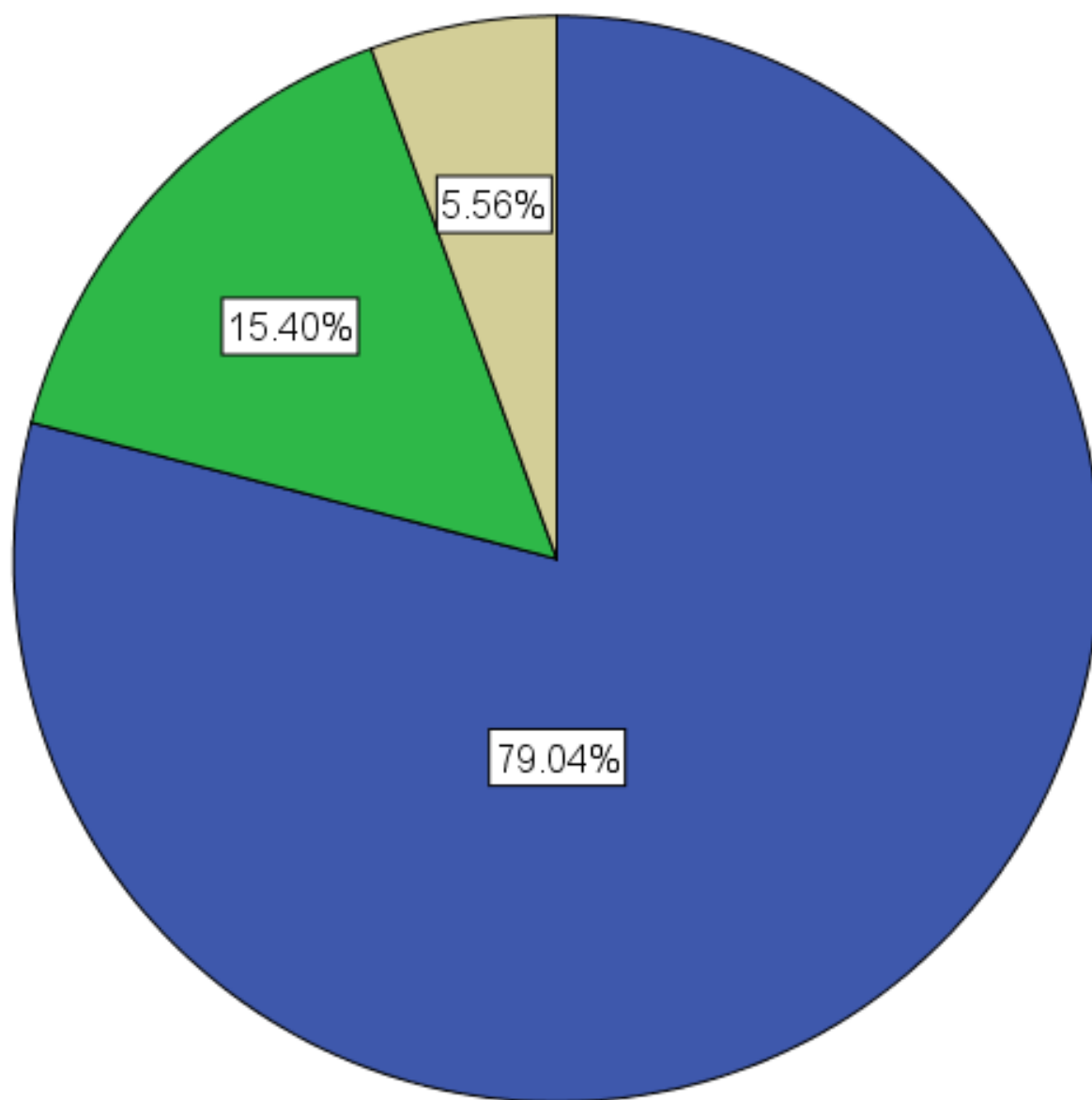
# Some initial findings....

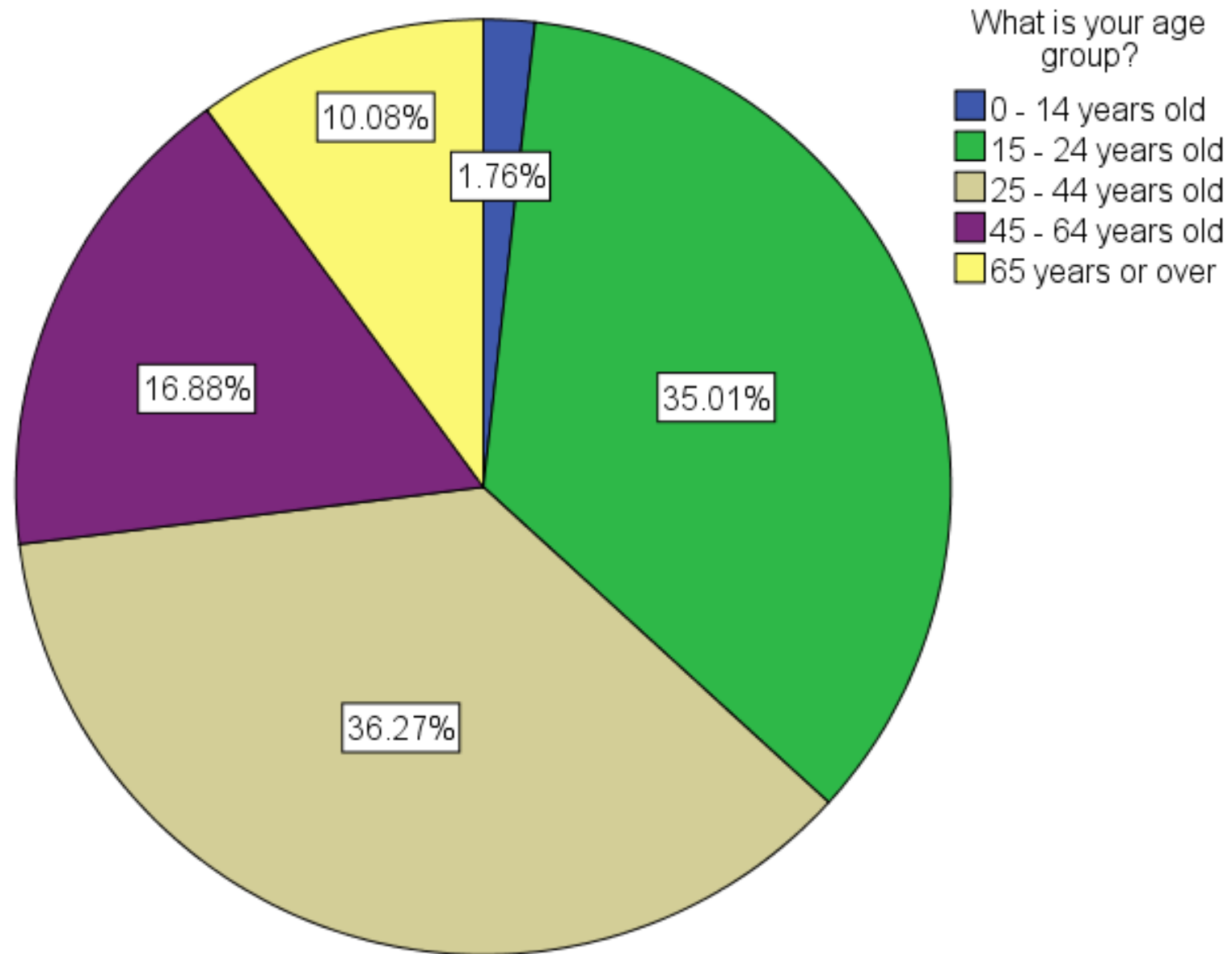
N.B. much more analysis will need to be undertaken before we can release the findings



Where do you currently live?

- Galway City
- Galway County
- Outside Galway

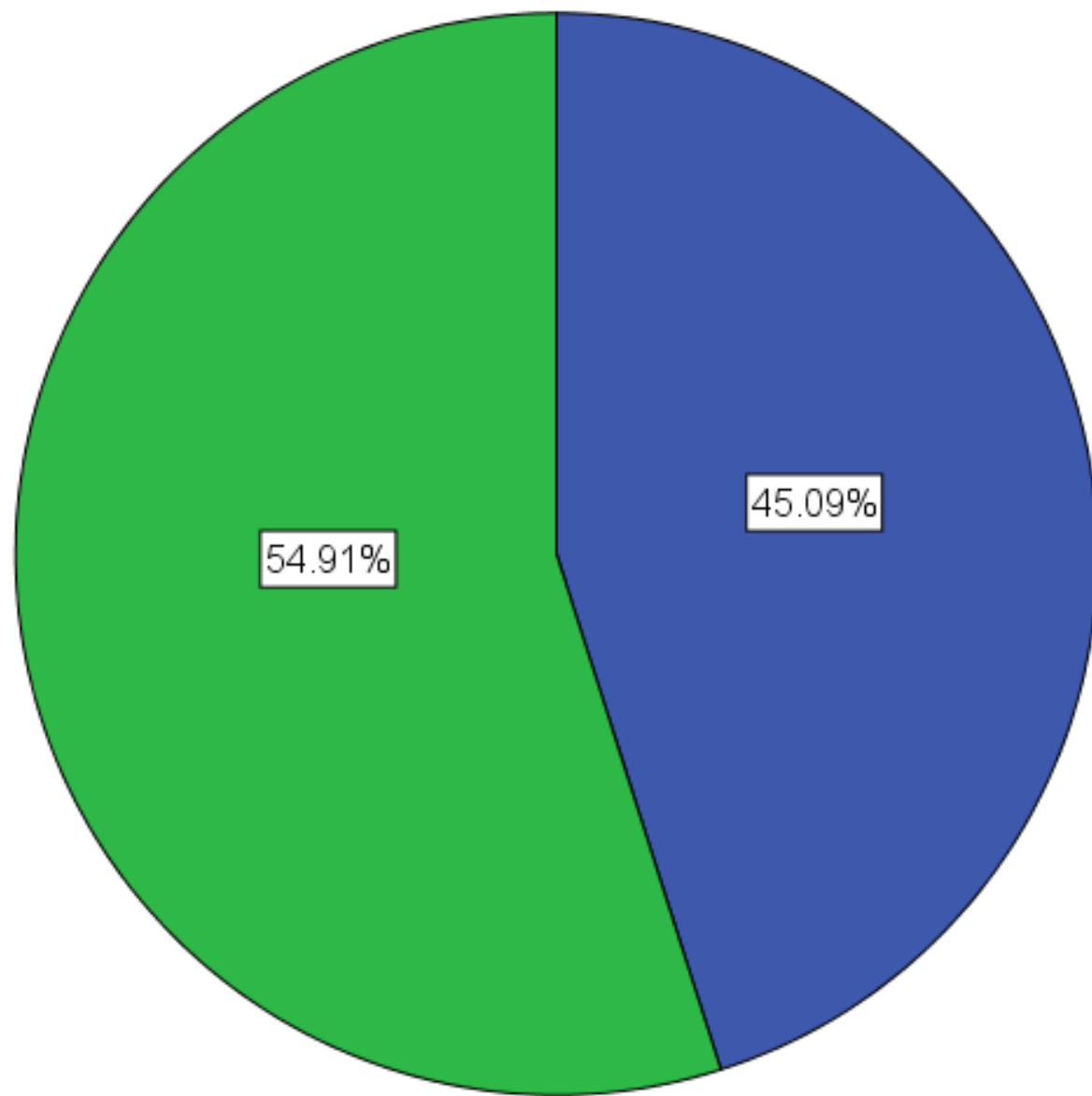




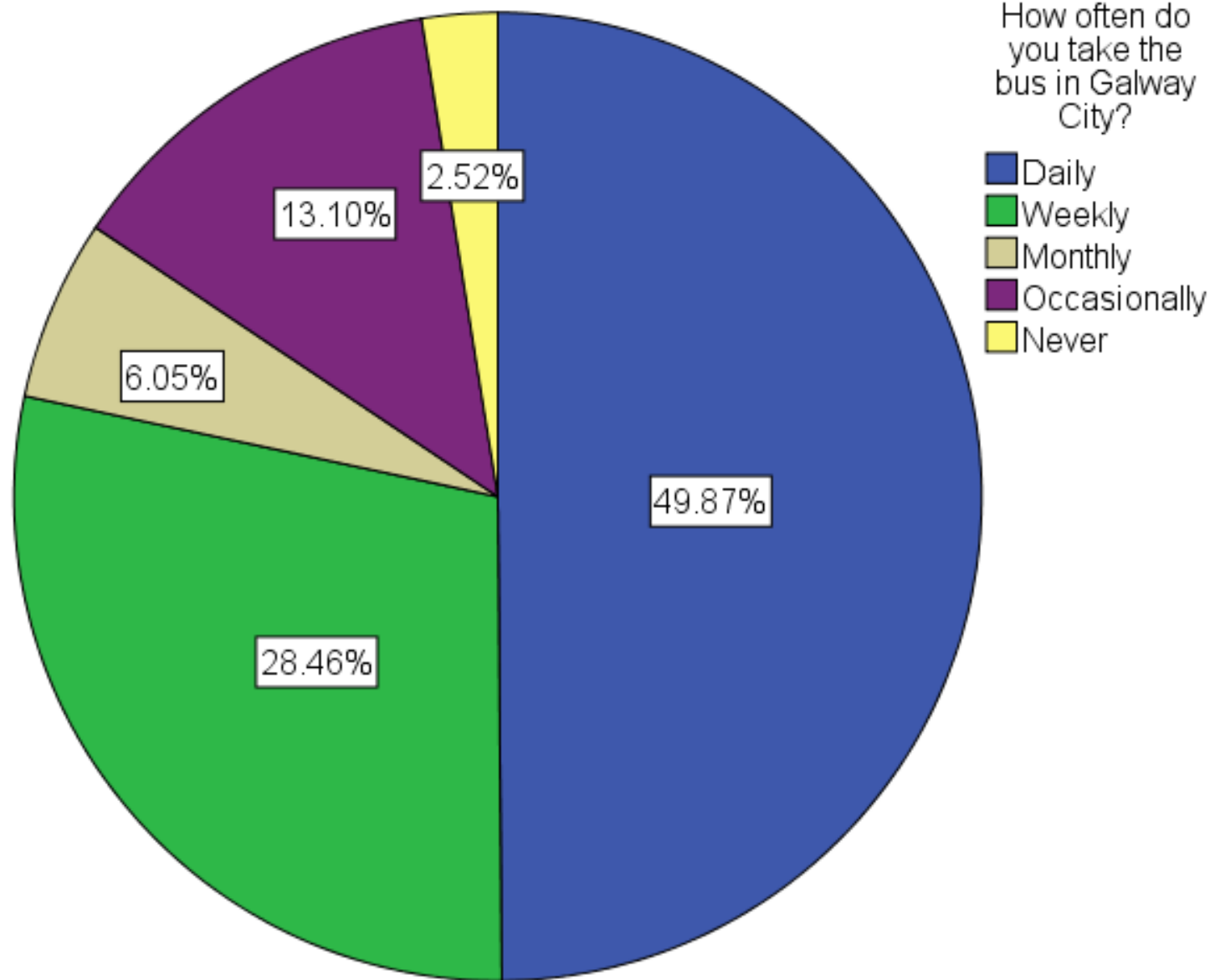


Which gender do you most identify with?

Male  
Female

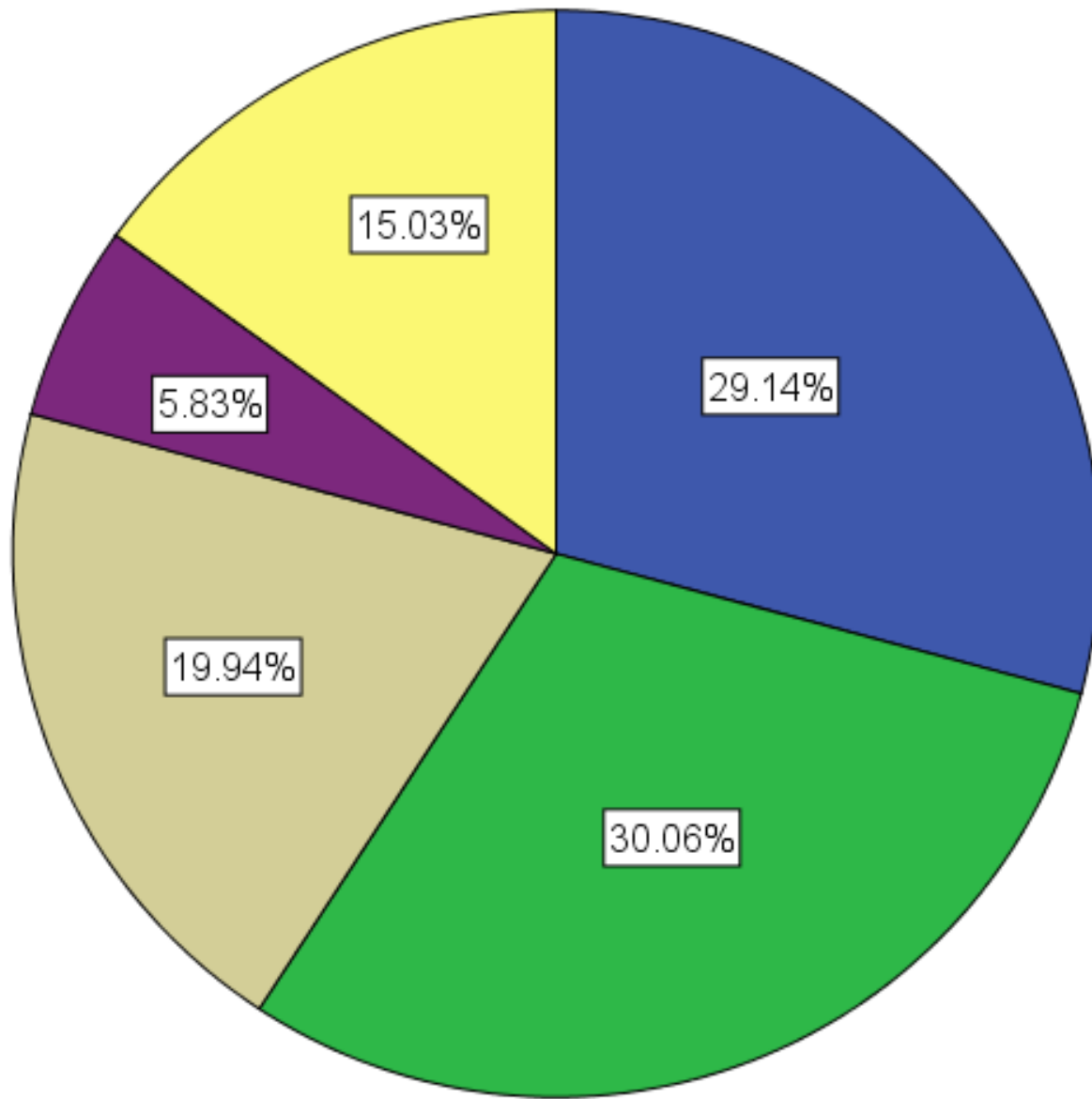


How often do you take the bus in Galway City?

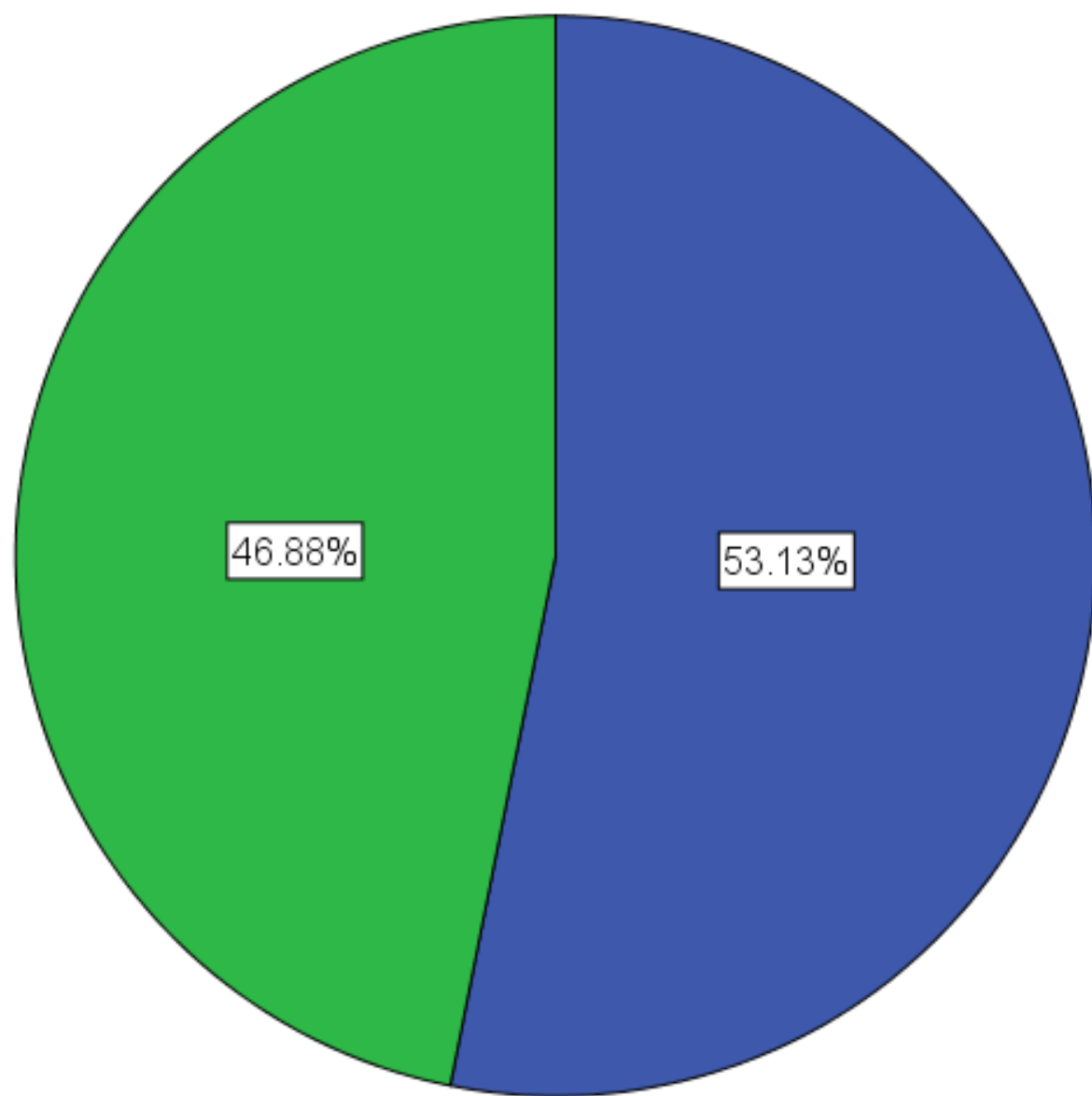


In general, for what reason do you take the bus?

- School/College
- Work
- Shopping
- To visit family/friends
- For social/leisure



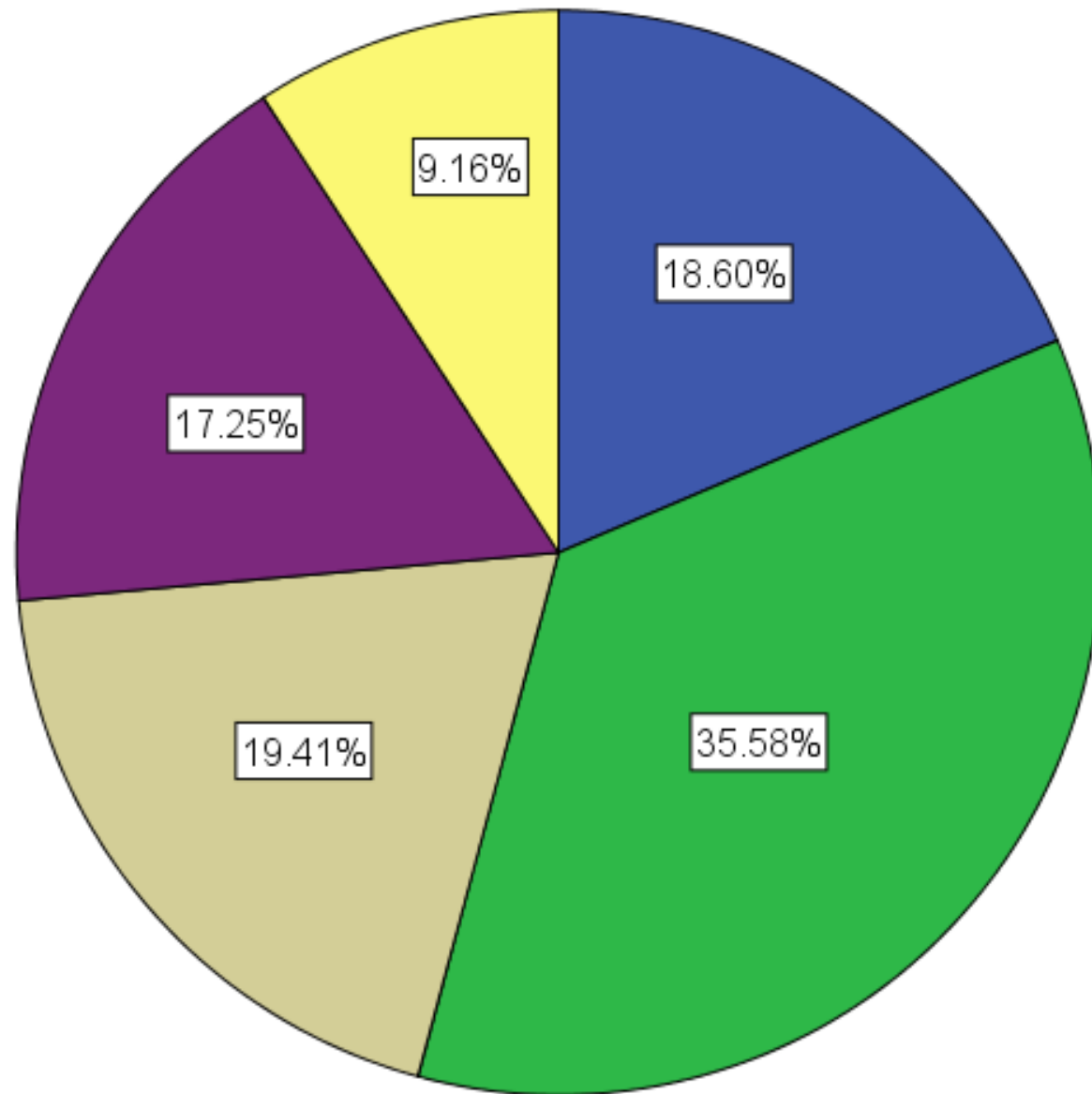




Is the bus  
your only  
option for  
completing  
this  
journey?

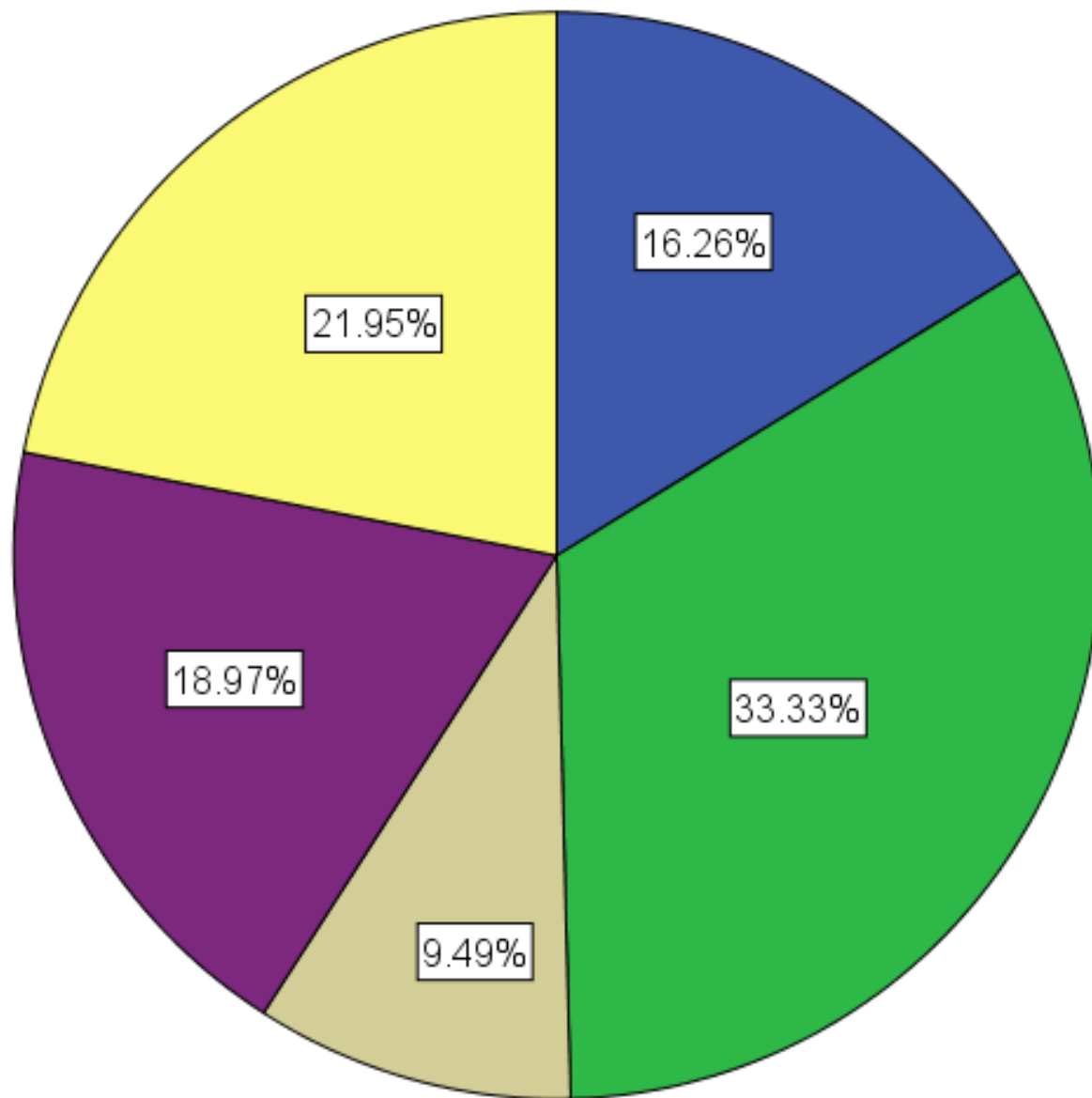
■ Yes  
■ No

How satisfied were you with the value for money of your most recent bus journey?



- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither/nor
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

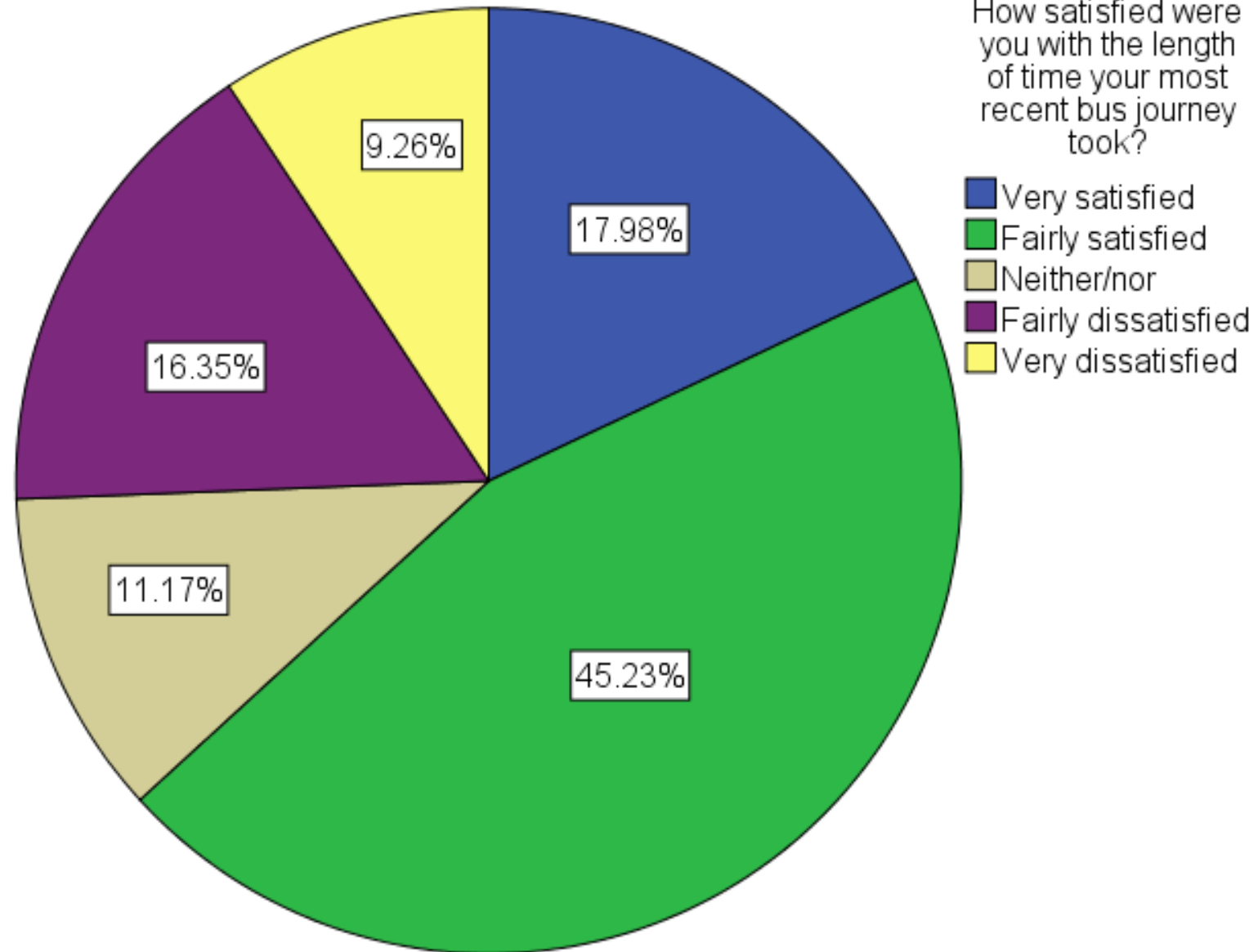
How satisfied were you with the punctuality of the bus on your most recent journey?

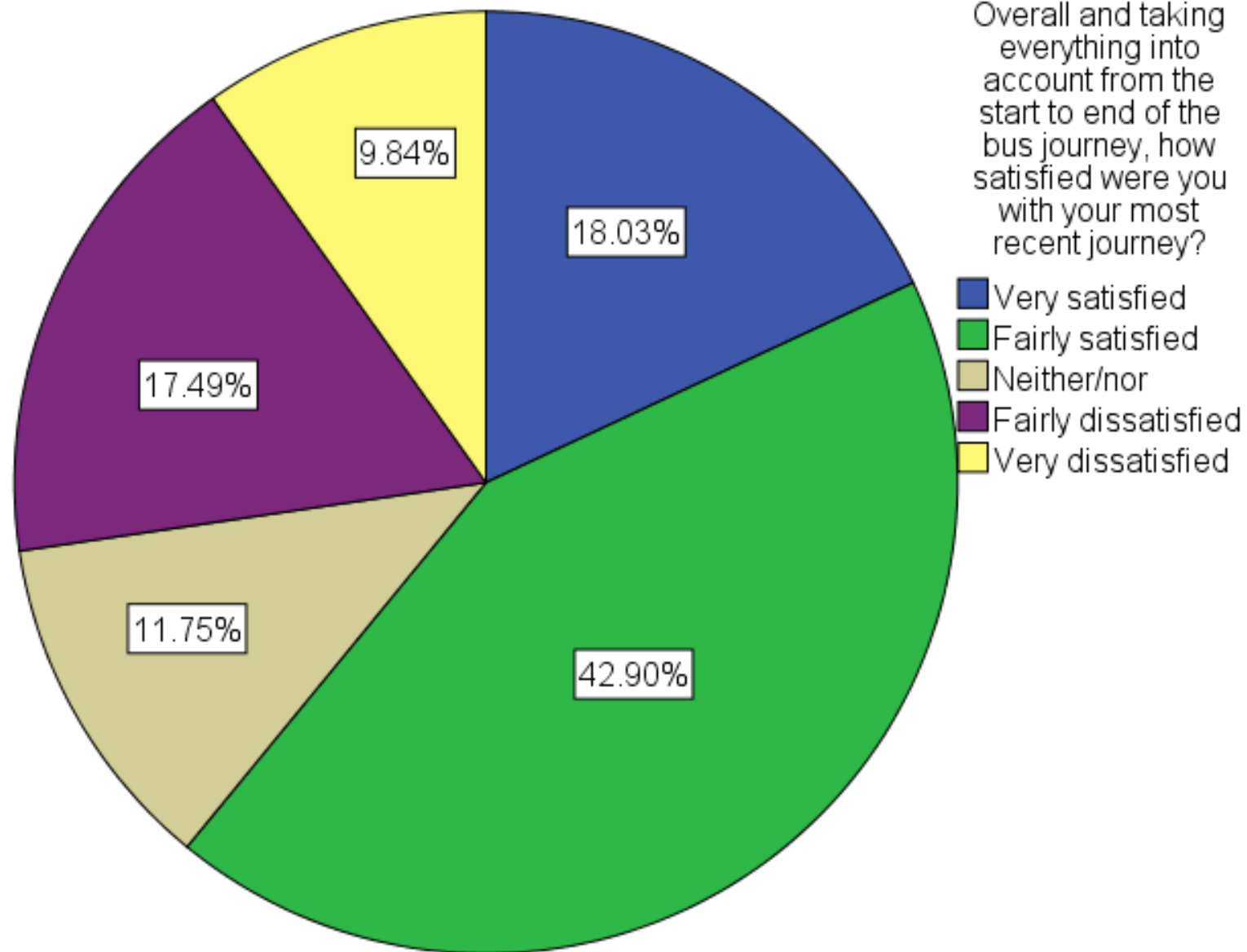


- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither/nor
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied



How satisfied were you with the length of time your most recent bus journey took?





## Some brief addition findings...

- Unreliable timekeeping, unpunctual and inefficient service
- The 'real-time' system is not working correctly | no such service for CityDirect bus routes
- Buses are regularly 'caught' in city traffic
- Expensive. Unexplained price rises from time-to-time
- 'Why do we have to change buses in Eyre Square, and pay twice, to get across the city'
- 'Some bus drives are very rude'



“In addition, €750m has been made available to fund the BusConnects programme which will transform bus services in cities”

Ann Graham CEO, National Transport Authority 'Presentation to the National Citizens Assembly', Sat, Nov 4, 2017

“Galway BusConnects will deliver a rationalised network of five high-performing cross-city routes. All routes will serve major city centre attractions as well as linking all major destinations across the city. Galway BusConnects will comprise next generation bus lanes, enhanced services, cashless fares and account-based ticketing. As part of this programme delivery, a network of park and ride sites, serviced by the more efficient bus network, will be put in place. Galway BusConnects will also encompass a variety of city centre public realm enhancements, will enhance the overall transport experience and improve the attractiveness of the city centre”

Project Ireland 2040, National Development Plan 2018-2027

Some positive signs with regards to Public Transport investment therefore... **HOWEVER...**

Shane Ross, who was wearing his anorak, had a big line which he trotted out more than once.

“It’s the end of a lost decade for Irish transport.”

Plans for roads? “Huge.” Plans for tourism? “Massive.” Other projects? “Very, very exciting.”

Miriam Lord (2018) ‘It was like Pyongyang on the Garavogue’. The Irish Times, Sat, Feb 17, 2018





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## Roads big winner with €10.2bn earmarked as old plans dusted off

Dublin Metro to get €3bn and diesel electric trains to benefit from 300 new rail carriages

Sat, Feb 17, 2018, 01:00

Tim O'Brien



Dublin's M50: A new "M50 Dublin Port south access" road is proposed. Photograph: Alan Betson

At €10.2 billion, the allocation for roads under the National Development Plan far exceeds the €2 billion Irish Rail will get for renewal and expansion of the DART to Mespil, Hazelhatch, and Drishadea.

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Man loses appeal over Luas defamation damages claim

56 mins

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1 hour

PTSB loan sale may be to regulated banker, says Taoiseach

1 hour

Abortion vote wording to be decided by March 6th, Cabinet told

1 hour

Dublin man fails in appeal over conviction for murder

1 hour

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