

**Large music
festivals and the
feeling of belonging
to Europe among
young Europeans**

Master thesis results
Anaiz Mendonça - 09/2021

Research questions

Do large-scale European music festivals have an impact on young attendees' perception of belonging to Europe?

If so, how do festivals impact it?

Research methods

Mixed method:

1. **Survey** (205 participants, 193 valid responses)
2. **In-depth interviews** (9 participants)

Survey results **analysis**: integral results and by comparing **profiles**:

- 1) "Pro-Europe"
 - 2) "Frequent festival goer"
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Main findings

- Festivals are a **social experience** for the majority of participants, although a **feeling of community was not as commonly identified**
 - A **feeling of connectedness to Europe was not as impacted** by the festival experience of most participants
 - “**Frequent festival goer**” profile showed a **higher sense of community-building** in their festival experience, suggesting that a **prolonged engagement** with festivals could have a **larger impact** on the sense of connectedness to Europe
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Findings in detail

Festivals as a **social experience**:

34,2% declared feeling "**a sense of community building**" as one of the primary takeaways from their experience

78,2% chose "**a social experience**" as one of the best options to describe their festival experience

82,9% declared **they meet new people** intentionally or unintentionally in festivals

75% stated they always, very frequently or occasionally **meet people from different countries** than theirs in festivals

... even though the majority of participants indicated not having traveled to attend a festival in a different country

83,4% said that they felt **more open to meeting new people** in festivals

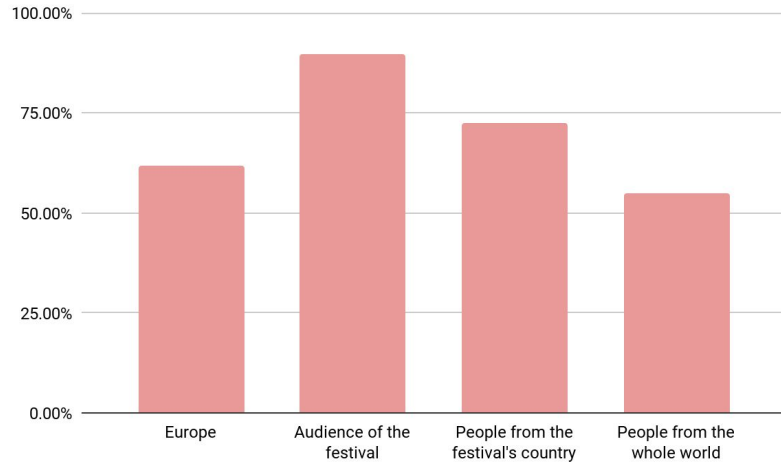
73,6% said that they felt like they **had more things in common** with people around them

78,2% said that they **felt more positive about other people** in festivals

83,9% said that they **felt a sense of community and/or belonging** within the festivals

Findings in detail

Feeling of connectedness to:



Debatable impact: only **38,9%** indicated **high levels** (4 and 5) of impact in their connectedness to **Europe**, in comparison to **61,7%** for festival audiences and **45%** for people from the festival's country

Speculated "subconscious" effect: connectedness to Europe promoted within festival environments since most participants **meet people from other European countries** in their experiences and **feel a sense of connection to the festival audiences**, which logically includes audience members from other European countries

Profiles

1) "Pro-Europe"

Definition: very attached to Europe; think of themselves (also) as European; feel very positively about free movement within the European Union/Schengen Area → **49 participants** (25,4% of the total)

Demographic changes: around **22%** less participants from the **UK**; **15,6%** less with a **Bachelor's** degree, but **22%** more with a **Master's** degree

- Attend festivals **less frequently**
- **Less prone to meeting new people** in festivals, decreasing potentiality of a sense of community-building
- More prone to indicate a **high level of impact** in regard to their feeling of connectedness to Europe

2) "Frequent festival goer"

Definition: attended large music festivals in Europe at least "once or twice a year" in the last 14 years; had been attending such festivals for at least 4 years → **39 participants** (20,2% of the total)

Demographic changes: around **12%** more participants from the **Netherlands** and **9%** less from the **UK**; around **10%** students; around **18%** less women and **17%** more men

- **Travel to other European countries to attend large music festivals more**
- **More prone to attending 3+ days of festivals**
- perceived more
- Perceive audiences **more often as equally international and local**
- **Very frequently meet new people from other countries**
- **More prone to feeling a sense of community/belonging**

Profiles findings

- “Pro-Europe” are **less** prone to attending festivals and to feeling a sense of community/belonging
 - “Frequent festival goer” are **more significantly and positively** impacted on their **feeling of connectedness to the people of Europe**
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In-depth interviews

Frequently mentioned aspects:

Multiculturality: generally **positive** and attractive, tied to the "**international**" environment of festivals

→ Some **link** between **multiculturality** and **Europeanness**, either from facing the contrast with other cultures or by noticing similarities

Openness: to **meeting new people** and **interacting**, from them and from the audiences in general; open-mindedness, common understandings

→ Similar to the feeling when **travelling**

→ **Long-lasting effect** on their general openness

Size: **smaller festivals** facilitate **more bonds** due to a feeling of intimacy

Thank you for your contribution to this research!

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Considering the number of total participants of the survey, its **outcomes are not intended to be considered representative of the total population** of young Europeans, or even of the ones who have experienced at least one attendance to large music festivals in Europe in their lifetime. The research results could, however, be considered **potential indicators** and might ignite relevant reflections about their meaning among the population who participated, which can be further explored with future research.