



**Master of Arts Thesis  
Euroculture**

**University of Göttingen (First semester)**

**University of Udine (Second semester)**

**August 2021**

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

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**MA Programme Euroculture  
Declaration**

I, Anaïz Mendonça, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Large music festivals and the feeling of belonging to Europe among young Europeans”, submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

I declare that the written (printed and bound) and the electronic copy of the submitted MA thesis are identical.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

Signed ..... *Anaiz Mendonça* .....

Date: 07 August 2021

## **Abstract**

This research paper aims at filling a gap in literature by analysing the potential impact of the attendance to large European music festivals on young European attendees' feeling of belonging to Europe, in the context of discussions related to strategies for European integration. By conceiving that the frequently multicultural and international environment of large music festivals could provide such an impact, the two research questions that guided the research are: do large-scale European music festivals have an impact on young attendees' perception of belonging to Europe? If so, how do festivals impact it?

To provide answers, a mixed method was used, with a survey and in-depth interviews. The results of the survey were analysed in their integrity and by comparing the general results to two conceived profiles: "Pro-Europe" and "Frequent festival goer".

The main findings of this paper indicate that festivals are a social experience for the majority of the participants, although a feeling of community was not as commonly identified. Results of the survey also indicated that a feeling of connectedness to Europe was not as impacted by the festival experience of most of the participants as their connection to other geographical spheres (e.g. the place where the festival happened). The "Frequent festival goer" profile, however, demonstrated 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. An impact on general participants' level of attachment to Europe, however, was not perceived as a result from their festival experience only.

The main part of this thesis has 29.926 words.

**Keywords:** festivals, youth, Europe, belonging, identity

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## Acknowledgements

I always thank my family first, and this time is no different. I am aware of and grateful for the luck and privilege I have for being part of our family, and I thank all of you everyday for your care, love and encouragement. I would not have come this far without you.

I am also very grateful for the dedication and support of my supervisors, Gülay and Monica, who offered so much detailed attention to my research and helped me develop a piece of work that I can finally say I am very proud of. Thank you for your patience and commitment, and for the inspiration you brought me.

Each part of this research was made ineffably easier by a few different people, and I would like to thank them in particular: Laura made the literature review much more accessible by supporting my search for materials; Stasha (and her friend) essentially conceived the research design and method with me over a pizza night; Kevin (and Alex) offered an invaluable and unflagging stubbornness in hoarding participants for the survey; and all throughout the process, Katie provided the most enriching discussions, study sessions, kind words of faith and encouragement, and necessary reminders of the need for balance. I will never forget all the support and kindness you each offered me and I hope one day I can return these huge favours.

Chris and Raine: I am every day grateful for your continuous support and how you never fail to boost my enthusiasm or to believe in me, and for filling every step of the way with so much laughter, shelter and love.

I am grateful for the friends I made along the way, especially the ones who, for briefer or longer periods, offered this semi-nomadic student in isolation the feeling of being home.

Finally, thank you to my professors from Göttingen and from Udine for their wisdom and enthusiasm, and the friends I was lucky enough to meet in this Master's program for offering their kindness and affection while sharing this beautiful path with me. The challenges were many, but we made it, and I am proud of all of us.

## 1. Introduction

Since their widely recognised success in the 1960s led by events such as Woodstock and Monterey, music festivals have kept a stable relevance in the lives of Western societies, particularly among younger people. The attendance to music festivals has even been deemed as “the most widely accessed social musical activity for many youth in Western societies”, and this importance is oftentimes indicated in the pertinent literature as being related to the environment that festivals provide for their audiences to experiment and discover their own identities.<sup>1</sup> In its turn, this exercise of identity creation within festivals is suggested to not only happen at a personal level, but also at collective and social ones.<sup>2</sup>

In order to investigate such effects festivals could have on their attendees, research has been conducted from a variety of approaches. For instance, Bennett et al. have explored the potential of festivals in Australia and Europe to create a sense of community among their audiences on a local and a global level, in their book *The Festivalisation of Culture* (2014); and Jaeger and Mykletun have developed a similar research, but focused on the relation between the audience and the place and the local community of the place where the festival happened, in Norway, in an article entitled *Festivals, Identity and Belonging* (2013). With a different approach, in their book section *Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals* (2014), Chalcraft et al. investigated how the idea of “cosmopolitanism” can be present in a multitude of ways in festivals, and the impact that this characteristic has on audiences’ sense of community; and the book chapter *The Emotional Ecologies of Festivals* (2014), by Duffy, further scrutinized how this impact on attendees’ feelings of community and identity may be connected to affective relations with other members of the audience and the locality, boosted by the festival itself.

The academic literature on the impact of art festivals on their attendees’ senses of identity and community, therefore, has focused on different geographic and social levels (local, global, related to the place) and on the aspects of festivals that could be in some level responsible for this impact (cosmopolitanism, affective relations, etc.). Building on this literature, in this thesis I intend to investigate a geographic level that, to my knowledge, has

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<sup>1</sup> Julie Ballantyne, Roy Ballantyne, and Jan Packer, ‘Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees’ Psychological and Social Benefits’, *Musicae Scientiae* 18, no. 1 (March 2014): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864913511845>.

<sup>2</sup> Andy Bennett and Ian Woodward, ‘Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging’, in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 12.

not yet been analysed by the existing literature: the impact of such festivals on the attendees' conceptualization of the idea of Europe.

This focus on Europe, in its turn, is connected to discussions that deal with the future of European integration, which is frequently discussed in relation to the development and maintenance of a feeling of belonging and identity among the population of the continent. Therefore, the suggestion of festivals as one of the platforms that could strengthen and enhance the dissemination of a feeling of community and/or belonging among Europeans is a very topical matter, as they could be spaces of amplification for the three focuses of the 2007 European Agenda for Culture: “cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; culture as a catalyst for creativity; and culture as a key component in international relations”.<sup>3</sup> These inter- and multicultural exchanges among festival audiences could be key elements to boost a sense of European integration and belonging, working in a similar manner to projects such as the Erasmus academic programmes and other European initiatives.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the potential impact of young people's attendance in large music festivals with international audiences in Europe on their perception of a European sense of community/belonging. The key terms in this research are “festivals”, “youth” and “(collective) European belonging”, all of them further explored and defined in the initial parts of this paper. The two central research questions are: do large-scale European music festivals have an impact on young attendees' perception of belonging to Europe? If so, how do festivals impact it?

The main hypothesis is that large music festivals in Europe do indeed have an impact on young members of the audience and their sense of community/belonging to Europe, influenced by an inherent multicultural aspect of such festivals and the interactions promoted among audience members. Therefore, the following hypothesis is that this impact would generally be a positive one, that would promote a positive feeling of transnational community and that would therefore go in line with other European initiatives of integration.

The chosen method in providing answers to the research question is a mixed one, starting with a survey and following with in-depth interviews with nine of the survey participants. The survey questionnaire consisted of closed questions, with the intention of producing quantitative data, and the instrument selected for it was an online questionnaire, completed by 205 participants within the period between 21 January and 16 March 2021. The

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<sup>3</sup> Jasper Chalcraft, Gerard Delanty, and Monica Sassatelli, ‘Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals’, in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 120.



online questionnaire was developed and hosted on the Google Form platform and the access to it was made public and sent to potential participants via social networks such as Facebook and Instagram; via e-mail; and by engaging participants through online platforms such as SurveyMonkey. The survey consisted of 14 questions about their experiences and feelings during their past festival attendances, five questions about their level of attachment to Europe (drawn from Eurobarometer), six questions about their demographic characteristics, and four follow-up questions (in regard to their wish to stay informed about the results of the research and to volunteer for the in-depth interviews). Finally, the survey data was drawn from the Google Forms platform and interpreted with basic statistics via the software Excel. The results were then analysed in their integrity, and two profiles were created for further comparisons (“Frequent festival goer” and “Pro-Europe” profiles).

The in-depth interviews had open questions that provided qualitative information. The purpose of the follow-up in-depth interviews was to explore in further detail some of the results drawn from the survey, following an explanatory sequential design of research. The findings from both the survey and the subsequent in-depth interviews were then considered and discussed in the light of the relevant theoretical framework.

The units of analysis for this research were young people (here understood as being between the ages of 18 and 32, as is defined in the fourth chapter of this paper) who were either citizens, residents or nationals from one of the countries of Europe, and who had already attended at least one large music festival in Europe. For practical purposes, this research considered Europe as the territory and political space of the 27 member states of the European Union, plus the additional five countries which are regularly considered part of the geopolitical area of Europe and which are part of the Schengen area (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). As for defining the concept of large festivals, since the reasoning behind the preference for these is their inherent international aspect, the numeric size of audiences considered for this research follows the definitions given by the online tool Music Festival Wizard, in which a large festival hosts at least 26 thousand people per day.

This study is outlined as follows. After this introduction, the first part of the thesis is dedicated to a literature review to frame the main concepts of the thesis. Its first chapter focuses on the topics of identity and belonging, especially dealing with European identity and belonging, followed by further subchapters dealing with the ideas of collective belonging/identity and the relation between culture and identity. The subsequent chapter of the literature review deals with the academic literature on festivals and their effects on

identity and belonging; and the next one, on the concept of youth, subdivided into an exploration of the relevance of “youth” to the research, the concept of generation and finishing with an instrumental delimitation for the purposes of this study.

Chapter five describes in detail the research method and design chosen for this study, including the participant selection and a thorough detailing of the questionnaire and in-depth interview plans and questions. In sequence, chapter six of the paper presents and explains the results of the survey and in-depth interviews, and chapter seven provides an analysis of their content and findings and a consequent discussion in the light of the pertinent literature. Finally, the final chapter of the work suggests concluding reflections inspired by the results and their meaning in an attempt to provide answers to the research questions and to encourage further research on the topic.

## 2. Identity and belonging

The main hypothesis of this study suggests that attendance to big music festivals in Europe would have an impact on the feeling of belonging to Europe among young attendees. In order to structure the investigation of this hypothesis, this chapter is dedicated to exploring the literature related to the concept of belonging and other correlated ideas and theories, such as the ones regarding identity (individual and collective) and the process of identity/belonging formation. Finally, this section also adds to the discussion about the application of such concepts and ideas to the European context, highlighting their definition and relevance, and clarifying the function of culture and cultural events to the concepts of identity and belonging.

It is not easy to define the concept of “identity”, and this difficulty can easily be identified by observing the variety and quantity of academic works dedicated to this purpose, from fields that go from psychology to sociology and others. As explained by Brubaker and Cooper (2019), “the difficulty in answering the question of what identity is (...) it can mean anything and nothing at the same time”, which has also led academics in the past to ponder whether the concept itself would be of any practical relevance.<sup>4</sup> This questioning has been subsequently refuted by some scholars, who would not only reinforce the utility of the concept of identity, but additionally question the insistent intention of finding “a unanimous and all-inclusive definition” for it, otherwise preferring to understand it as “highly contextual”.<sup>5</sup>

Possibly a less complex concept to work with, the idea of “belonging” can be considered to have, in determinate contexts, a similar meaning to “identity”. While “identity” can be more focused on the individual and the “narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not)”,<sup>6</sup> “belonging” goes beyond the cognitive and involves “emotional investments and desire for attachments”.<sup>7</sup> This puts the concept of “belonging” closer to the idea of “social/collective identity”, whilst giving it a tone of fluid, in-the-future sense of identification with others.<sup>8</sup> According to Yuval-Davis, “belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home’” and it can have varying degrees of

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<sup>4</sup> Waqas Ejaz, ‘European Identity and Media Effects: A Quantitative Comparative Analysis’ (TU Ilmenau, 2019), 10, <https://doi.org/10.22032/DBT.39483>.

<sup>5</sup> Ejaz, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis, ‘Belonging and the Politics of Belonging’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no. 3 (July 2006): 202, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331>.

<sup>7</sup> Yuval-Davis, 202.

<sup>8</sup> Yuval-Davis, 202.

stability and dynamics, mostly understood by people in a very natural way and “becom[ing] (...) politicized only when it is threatened in some way”.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, belonging to and participating in a determinate group, or to a number of them, has strong impacts on the way people relate to each other.

The process of social identity formation (or “mechanism of identification”<sup>10</sup>), in its turn, commonly appears in scholarly literature as being a “result of practice”<sup>11</sup> throughout a considerable period of time.<sup>12</sup> It is an exercise through which one comes to understand their place as part of a group and in comparison to their peers, as well as the unofficial guidelines and rules that conduct their collective action, whilst having these characteristics also become part of their individual identity.<sup>13</sup> This process is thought to result from a series of frequent happenings in one’s life, such as “routines, predispositions and practices” which would define the “habitus of social life”, as defined by Pierre Bordieu, being first common throughout smaller groups and then growing into larger spheres such as the nation and, ultimately in the case of this study, Europe.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, the creation and maintenance of common narratives that sustain feelings of identity, belonging and attachment, bridging the individual and their social surroundings, are consequences of “repetitive practices, relating to specific social and cultural spaces”.<sup>15</sup>

Scholars have additionally pointed to the important role of recurring exposure to certain types of media (i.e. pro-EU communication) as an important tool in the intention of boosting the feeling of European belonging across the continent.<sup>16 17</sup> This influence comes from the role of these media in shaping the “imagined community”, following the format conceived by Benedict Anderson, by constructing its identity<sup>18</sup> and/or by profiting from the

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<sup>9</sup> Yuval-Davis, 197–99.

<sup>10</sup> T. Parsons (1958) *apud* Gabriele Pollini, ‘Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging’, *International Review of Sociology* 15, no. 3 (November 2005): 502, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906700500272483>.

<sup>11</sup> Rebecca Friedman and Markus Thiel, ‘Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging’, in *European Identity and Culture: Narratives of Transnational Belongings*, Studies in Migration and Diaspora (Burlington, Vt. ; Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 2.

<sup>12</sup> R. Cinpoes (2008) *apud* Ejaz, ‘European Identity and Media Effects’, 65.

<sup>13</sup> T. Parsons (1958) *apud* Pollini, ‘Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging’, 502.

<sup>14</sup> Rebecca Friedman and Markus Thiel, ‘Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging’, in *European Identity and Culture: Narratives of Transnational Belongings*, Studies in Migration and Diaspora (Burlington, Vt. ; Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 6.

<sup>15</sup> V. Bell, A.M. Fortier (1999) *apud* Yuval-Davis, ‘Belonging and the Politics of Belonging’, 203.

<sup>16</sup> Ejaz, ‘European Identity and Media Effects’, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Michael D. Kennedy, ‘Cultural Formations of the European Union: Integration, Enlargement, Nation and Crisis’, in *European Identity and Culture: Narratives of Transnational Belongings*, ed. Rebecca Friedman and Markus Thiel, Studies in Migration and Diaspora (Burlington, Vt. ; Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 20.

<sup>18</sup> B. Anderson (1983) *apud* Ejaz, ‘European Identity and Media Effects’, 26.

mere-exposure effect of the increasing familiarity of its symbols.<sup>19</sup> More importantly, the consequences of this familiarity and identification have been shown to result in a "sense of community and the development of 'Europeanized national public spheres'",<sup>20</sup> and these feelings tend to remain considerably stable and less central to people's emotions as long as they are not challenged or threatened.<sup>21</sup>

### 2.1. *Collective belonging/identity*

It is possible (and likely) for individuals to develop both individual and collective identities,<sup>22</sup> and these collective identities are frequently closely intertwined with the conception of belonging. Moreover, one's social or collective identities would have a significant influence on their individual identities as well,<sup>23</sup> influencing the choices one makes in their life.<sup>24</sup> Being part of (at least) a social group would be what creates the feeling of social belonging,<sup>25</sup> and it is the person's reflection about their participation in the collectivity that will lead to the identification (or not) with such a specific group, in opposition to others.<sup>26</sup>

This social identity and belonging, therefore, is not a natural conception, but rather a result of a creation and learning process.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, it can happen with different "degrees of 'identification'" which are defined and understood by the individual in relation to social groups, and which will impact the "identity performance" of the person, or the varying manners in which they will exteriorise their different identities according to the context in which they find themselves.<sup>28</sup> Both these degrees of identification and the social identities themselves, however, are not permanent and can constantly vary in intensity, even when tied to collectivities with a high level of stability (i.e. nations or Europe).<sup>29</sup>

Hence, social belonging would be related to "the symbolic dimension of human and social relations and interactions"<sup>30</sup> and would define which individuals are considered part of certain social groups and those who are not, based on commonalities related to "origin,

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<sup>19</sup> R.B. Zajonc (2001) *apud* Ejaz, 51.

<sup>20</sup> L. D'Haenens (2005), C. De Vreese (2007) *apud* Ejaz, 52.

<sup>21</sup> Yuval-Davis, 'Belonging and the Politics of Belonging', 202.

<sup>22</sup> Markus Josef Prutsch et al., *Research for CULT Committee - European Identity: Study*, 2017, 9, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/585921/IPOL\\_STU\(2017\)585921\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/585921/IPOL_STU(2017)585921_EN.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Yuval-Davis, 'Belonging and the Politics of Belonging', 202.

<sup>24</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 9.

<sup>25</sup> Pollini, 'Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging', 498.

<sup>26</sup> Prutsch et al., *Research for CULT Committee - European Identity*, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Prutsch et al., 10.

<sup>28</sup> Prutsch et al., 10–11.

<sup>29</sup> Prutsch et al., 35.

<sup>30</sup> Pollini, 'Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging', 498.

culture and normative behaviour",<sup>31</sup> for instance. On a sociopolitical level, social belonging is commonly intertwined with the issue of citizenship, eventually leading to considerations in regards to rights and duties of members of groups, which raises the debate on how to define who should be considered as part of particular collectivities.<sup>32</sup> Common history (or myths) and similarity in religious faith, language and worldview are examples of characteristics which are frequently considered as structural to the feeling of collective belonging.<sup>33</sup> In their turn, culture and the practice of its symbols are also widely accepted as key aspects for group identification.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, belonging to a social group is not merely a cognitive activity. In addition to the aspect of understanding oneself as part of a community due to similarities and the consequential perception of who is included in it and who is not (the cognitive side), social belonging has an emotional or affective feature, related to "an individual's emotional attachment and feeling of belonging within a collective".<sup>35</sup> Additionally, social belonging can be characterized by four main elements of one's relation to a group, defined by Pollini as being: "attachment; loyalty; solidarity; and the sense of affinity or we-feeling",<sup>36</sup> the latter inspired by Max Weber's concept of *Zusammengehörigkeit*, or a feeling of belonging together either by emotional or historical ties.<sup>37</sup> Arguably, this sense of affinity could either be the ultimate goal of the other three or the very structural basis upon which the other three elements could thrive amongst a community.<sup>38</sup>

When analysing individuals' identification with and belonging to a determinate space, there are three main elements which guide such a process: the feeling of belonging to the physical and social place; the attachment to local communities; and the political identification.<sup>39</sup> The identification with one's nation, for instance, is coherent with a determinate time period (logically, one in which nations exist and are relevant)<sup>40</sup> and could be less fundamental in contemporaneity, in which a globalised society would promote "defensive identity communities" more so than traditional identities such as the national.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Yuval-Davis, 'Belonging and the Politics of Belonging', 207.

<sup>32</sup> Yuval-Davis, 208.

<sup>33</sup> Yuval-Davis, 209.

<sup>34</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 'Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging', 3.

<sup>35</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 12.

<sup>36</sup> Pollini, 'Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging', 499.

<sup>37</sup> M. Weber (1922) *apud* Pollini, 500.

<sup>38</sup> Pollini, 500.

<sup>39</sup> Yuval-Davis, 'Belonging and the Politics of Belonging', 199.

<sup>40</sup> Yuval-Davis, 207.

<sup>41</sup> M. Castells (1997) *apud* Yuval-Davis, 198.

In his already mentioned seminal work, Anderson described the maintenance of the "imagined communities" being primarily sustained from an underlying feeling of "communion" among its members regardless of the likelihood of them never meeting all other individuals of the group, in the past, present and future.<sup>42</sup> This "communion", in turn, or what was previously described as "we-feeling" would be structured upon "a common culture, history, language and/or political traditions",<sup>43</sup> the basis of collective belonging and identification of the individual with their peers. Some authors further emphasize the role of values, even more than sociopolitical heritage, especially as what defines a common perspective of the future by communities.<sup>44</sup>

Since 1989, authors such as Stuart Hall and David Held have suggested the emergence and possibility of multi-level citizenships, adding to the traditional national citizenship with both smaller (subnational) and bigger scales (supranational or transnational) of official representation, for example when being defined by ethnicity, culture, locality, or political representativity, as would be the case of the European Union (EU).<sup>45</sup> The intensification of human mobility and of global communication, facilitating connections based on other aspects of one's life (i.e. occupation), would be some of the reasons why such an attachment to the local scale would be losing strength or, at the minimum, its traditional exclusivity.<sup>46</sup> However, empirical research has shown that what has been happening in reality is "a change in the structure and (...) configuration of socio-territorial belonging", not an "unidirectional loss of importance"; what would now be the most important aspect of territorial identity is the emotional attachment to it and its communities, as is the primordial element of belonging to other non-territorial groups.<sup>47</sup> In consequence, it has been perceived that the emotional (or "symbolic-expressive, rather than symbolic-moral") attachment that is now primordial to socioterritorial identity has enhanced a tendency of identification by individuals as "cosmopolitan", as in a "sense of belonging to the whole world", without necessarily overwriting the connection with the local territory.<sup>48</sup> For this particular research, nonetheless, it is particularly interesting to highlight the shift towards a more emotionally-charged sense of belonging even when dealing with traditional identities such as

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<sup>42</sup> B. Anderson (1983) *apud* Yuval-Davis, 204.

<sup>43</sup> Andrew C. Gould and Anthony M. Messina, *Europe's Contending Identities: Supranationalism, Ethnoregionalism, Religion, and New Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 4, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139567558>.

<sup>44</sup> Yuval-Davis, 'Belonging and the Politics of Belonging', 212.

<sup>45</sup> Yuval-Davis, 206.

<sup>46</sup> Pollini, 'Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging', 502–3.

<sup>47</sup> Pollini, 503.

<sup>48</sup> Pollini, 506.

the territorial, and to recognise the possibilities brought by such change, such as one's potential to develop identities with places that are not necessarily their birth or residence place, as long as emotional bonds are constructed and maintained with this third territory.<sup>49</sup>

It must thus be highlighted that identities are not mutually exclusive, and that individuals are likely to sustain more than one identity at a time. It is considered an "inevitable" aspect of the contemporary person, who is expected to take part in different collectivities, be them related to different territorial areas (i.e. nation, city) or to social groups, or yet both.<sup>50</sup> This extends also to a capacity of holding multiple political identities at a time,<sup>51</sup> as research has shown to also be the case in Europe, in which individuals' identification with Europe would not necessarily impact (either positively or negatively) other political identities such as the national.<sup>52</sup> As a matter of fact, this multiplicity of identities would be particularly characteristic of the European context, precisely due to the complicated issue of "Europe as cultural category".<sup>53</sup>

One of such multiple identities in the European context is exactly the idea of a European identity, with both individual (as a "sense of personal identification") and collective (as in political) façades.<sup>54</sup> The concept has been a frequent object of research since the Maastricht Treaty of the European Union in 1992 and led to equally numerous theories in a variety of scientific fields.<sup>55</sup> The term "identity" itself, however, had been used in such a political context since 1973, when the Declaration on European Identity was signed by the nine member states of the then European Community.<sup>56</sup> This choice of the term "identity" appeared as a substitute for "integration", pointing to the intention of giving it both a political and a social understanding, and the subsequent academic production about the matter also followed this trend.<sup>57</sup>

One of the many meanings of the concept of European identity implies a "transnational belonging" to the continent, under a conceptual "existence of a pan-European, all-encompassing and largely cultural, identity".<sup>58</sup> This "all-encompassing" cultural identity has been identified by scholars in recent years as permeating the social life in Europe as a

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<sup>49</sup> Pollini, 508.

<sup>50</sup> Pollini, 502–10.

<sup>51</sup> Gould and Messina, *Europe's Contending Identities*, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Monica Sassatelli, 'Introduction', in *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 8.

<sup>53</sup> Kennedy, 'Cultural Formations of the European Union: Integration, Enlargement, Nation and Crisis', 20.

<sup>54</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 2.

<sup>55</sup> Ejaz, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Sassatelli, 'Introduction', 39.

<sup>57</sup> Sassatelli, 24.

<sup>58</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 'Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging', 1.



consequence to processes of "Europeanization" or "adaptation to EU policies", the perception of Europeans as different from non-Europeans, and an "internal homogenization" that would result from having common institutions and norms.<sup>59</sup>

On a social level, on the other hand, the process of identity-building would request more than this politically-oriented engagement, and would demand both a cognitive and an affective bond between individuals and the territory or political body. Ejaz defines the cognitive bond as a conscious and voluntary "identification as" (i.e. European) and the affective as "identification with" (i.e. Europe or Europeans), and such aspects would be the main ones to conceive a social collective identity.<sup>60</sup>

In both cases, the constructivist approach seems adequate when envisaging a transnational European identity with a contemporary focus. It is accepted by the constructivist theorists that this European identity is not a given, natural concept among the population, but otherwise a conceived and constructed idea that is facilitated by institutions.<sup>61</sup> Such a function can be encountered in the discourses of the institutions of the European Union, with official documents dedicated to the topic clearly describing European identity as a "sense of identifying with a transnational, political European community".<sup>62</sup> In one of such documents, the idea of European identity is conceived as having two central meanings: one of a "cultural community of shared values" inherited from a common history (cultural focus); and one of a "political community of shared democratic practices" (political focus).<sup>63</sup> Although both could be considered as existent among the European population recently, research has shown that the political understanding is more widespread than the cultural, at least insofar as understanding the political community as one system (mainly under the European Union).<sup>64</sup>

A possible reason for the lesser popularity of the cultural approach of a European identity could be due to the inexistence or unlikelihood of a "singular European identity", even more so than it is already rare for a nation state to conceive one "single set of national identity values".<sup>65</sup> However, the practices involved in the political conception of European identity and the strong relations built on constant transnational engagement via civic and cultural initiatives are understood by the constructivist theorists as an impulse to foster

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<sup>59</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 14.

<sup>61</sup> Kennedy, 'Cultural Formations of the European Union: Integration, Enlargement, Nation and Crisis', 21.

<sup>62</sup> Prutsch et al., *Research for CULT Committee - European Identity*, 15.

<sup>63</sup> Prutsch et al., 15.

<sup>64</sup> M. Bruter (2005) *apud* Gould and Messina, *Europe's Contending Identities*, 2.

<sup>65</sup> Gould and Messina, 3.

European values and priorities, promoting commonality and the structure needed for the development of European identity in the involved locations.<sup>66</sup>

As theorised before, however, the observed growth in identification with Europe (albeit not exclusively) has not affected people's sense of identity with their nations.<sup>67</sup> European identity is understood by individuals as another type of identity in a plane that is beyond the national scope, and focuses more on "encounters and mediation among individualities" such as nations.<sup>68</sup> Conversely, some scholars would rather define European identity as "supplementary" to the national ones, existing alongside them and not going beyond them, but being present in some aspects of all national European identities.<sup>69</sup>

Additionally, the concept of European identity can be identified in the form of symbols, in a wide range that some authors include from common "histories, and national traditions, notions of EU citizenship, and the Euro" to the free "movement of services, goods, people and capital".<sup>70</sup> Clearly, not all these characteristics are considered as part of individual or collective identities, but they are part of social imaginary and customs that are shared among Europeans and that have the capacity of creating a sense of belonging and identification across nations.<sup>71</sup> Within a political perspective, the main actor pushing for an European identity and sense of collectivity is logically the European Union, including the set of symbols that it has constructed and the offer for a stronger space of representation in the face of global politics.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, as defined by Connelly, "when we see European authorities declaring certain values to be characteristic of European belonging, they do not mean to describe a state of being (...), but rather a desirable state of becoming".<sup>73</sup>

The motivation behind this political interest in strengthening a European identity has a variety of arguments. To start with, the fact that it became part of the official agenda of the European Union since at least 1973, but possibly as early as the 1950s, points to its relevance as a means to attempt to reinforce the support offered by the European population to such transnational institutions and their projects.<sup>74</sup> The identification with Europe could bring unity, and more importantly legitimacy and political support to the European institutions,

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<sup>66</sup> Gould and Messina, 2–5.

<sup>67</sup> Sassatelli, 'Introduction', 8.

<sup>68</sup> Monica Sassatelli, 'Imagined Europe: Narratives of European Cultural Identity', in *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 37.

<sup>69</sup> Gould and Messina, *Europe's Contending Identities*, 8.

<sup>70</sup> Kennedy, 'Cultural Formations of the European Union: Integration, Enlargement, Nation and Crisis', 22–26.

<sup>71</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 'Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging', 2.

<sup>72</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 34.

<sup>73</sup> *Apud* Kennedy, 'Cultural Formations of the European Union: Integration, Enlargement, Nation and Crisis', 28.

<sup>74</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 15.

especially in contexts of dispute against other powers.<sup>75</sup> In a more positive perspective, the European identity would still be a tool which "fosters mutual trust between Europeans, and hence, simplifies cooperation, the search for compromises, and further integration steps", reaching beyond merely economic outcomes.<sup>76</sup>

In regards to which strategies exist with the purpose of nourishing the sense of European identity or belonging, the EU Parliament recognises an opportunity in "supplementing output performance with policies that promote in parallel both a political and a cultural identity, and bring bottom-up initiatives centre stage", especially ones that boost a dimension of civic culture.<sup>77</sup> In this context, it is especially noteworthy that the Parliament recognises "collective identity as being central to any body politic", especially with a constructivist approach.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, despite having multiple juxtapositions, it must be highlighted that Europe and the EU do not mean the same thing,<sup>79</sup> so that an attempt to build a sense of community among Europeans must look beyond the goals of the institution and the narratives and symbols the EU focuses on. The increase in the circulation of people in the European space, for instance, could be considered a powerful tool to boost the aforementioned "we-feeling", or feeling of belonging in a community,<sup>80</sup> although it is unlikely to be enough, especially without initiatives such as the fostering of a well-defined "European political space".<sup>81</sup> Moreover, statistics show that the free movement of people resulted in merely around 2.2% of the European working force currently working in a different member state of the EU, and that the population who has had that experience in their lives for more than three months is only 13% of the total.<sup>82</sup>

There are a variety of reasons why the development of a sense of European belonging, and perhaps even more so of an European identity, is an ongoing discussion for a long time, not limited to academic areas. As a matter of fact, this is a topic of high relevance for the geopolitical sphere of Europe, especially in regards to its relation to other countries and regions.<sup>83</sup> It is theorised that a stronger feeling of identity or belonging among Europeans in relation to the continent, possibly more so than or with a similar attachment to their nations, would lead to a stronger legitimacy of the European Union, for instance, paving way to a

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<sup>75</sup> Ejaz, 15–16.

<sup>76</sup> Ejaz, 16.

<sup>77</sup> Prutsch et al., *Research for CULT Committee - European Identity*, 6–7.

<sup>78</sup> Prutsch et al., 7.

<sup>79</sup> Sassatelli, 'Introduction', 19–20.

<sup>80</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 17.

<sup>81</sup> Gould and Messina, *Europe's Contending Identities*, 18–19.

<sup>82</sup> Gould and Messina, 18.

<sup>83</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 'Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging', 1.

wider reach and acceptance of EU policy.<sup>84</sup> The stability of the European Union, following that line of thought, could also be enhanced if such a common feeling of belonging would come to exist.<sup>85</sup>

Additionally, this conjectured European identity would have a social function of propelling coherence among the population.<sup>86</sup> This could come as a counterforce to the current "disintegrational tendencies within the EU"<sup>87</sup>, a potentiality emphasized by the recent withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union.

## 2.2. *Culture and identity*

When attempting to understand the impact of culture in the process of identity formation, especially on a collective level and for the purposes of this research, it can be useful to understand culture as "a 'concrete and bounded body of beliefs and practices'".<sup>88</sup> It is a source from which habits and understandings are drawn, created and developed, and more importantly put into practice.<sup>89</sup> The construction of such habits and understandings, in their turn, can be used for specific purposes and possibly lead to social transformations,<sup>90</sup> one example of which being the deepening of a sense of identity among certain groups and/or individuals.

This is the example, for instance, of what Benedict Anderson notoriously conceived as the "imagined communities" that are nations, based on "cultural roots" which are closely connected to people's emotions.<sup>91</sup> These cultural aspects which would characterise demonstrations of national identity would even appear, for example, in people's daily lives and customs, taste, consumer culture and class, including leisure - travel and entertainment.<sup>92</sup> Following this argumentation, it makes sense to consider the potentiality of recurrent leisure events (which are considered to have a capacity of "transformation of a structure"<sup>93</sup>) to cause transformations in these cultural aspects,<sup>94</sup> and consequently to individual and collective identities. In this line of thought, it could be argued that arts festivals, being recurrent leisure events, have a latency of becoming agents of change to their attendee's cultural identities, and

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<sup>84</sup> Gould and Messina, *Europe's Contending Identities*, 2–6.

<sup>85</sup> D. Castiglione (2009) *apud* Gould and Messina, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Gould and Messina, 6.

<sup>87</sup> V. Kaina, I.P. Karolewski (2013) *apud* Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 3.

<sup>88</sup> W.H. Sewell (2005) *apud* Kennedy, 'Cultural Formations of the European Union: Integration, Enlargement, Nation and Crisis', 21.

<sup>89</sup> Kennedy, 21–22.

<sup>90</sup> Kennedy, 28.

<sup>91</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 'Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging', 5.

<sup>92</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 6.

<sup>93</sup> Kennedy, 'Cultural Formations of the European Union: Integration, Enlargement, Nation and Crisis', 28.

<sup>94</sup> Kennedy, 29.

could possibly be used - either by voluntary or involuntary influence by organisers and sponsors - as tools with the specific aim of boosting feelings of European belonging.

Pollini, in his theory of place attachment and socio-territorial belonging, presents four dimensions of involvement of individuals in human relations, two of them being of special relevance to the current research topic: social belonging; and cultural conformity or commonality.<sup>95</sup> The latter implies "sharing by individuals of value systems and (...) of attitudes of 'consensus' (...), and also, though not necessarily, conformism", whilst the social belonging comprehends the possibility of internal conflict.<sup>96</sup> However, it is the idea of social belonging that includes a feeling of community and social ties or kinship, a definition brought forward by the author with the use of Max Weber's concept of *Gemeinschaft*.<sup>97</sup> This collective belonging would be both characterised but also boosted and enhanced by the sharing of symbols among the members of the group, "in particular by participation in specific symbolic actions and rituals like ceremonies, celebrations, gatherings, meetings, and by projection of shared value sentiments onto individual members", emphasizing a "sense of affinity" among individuals.<sup>98</sup> Pollini's conclusions, therefore, would be according to the conception of festivals (here understood as "symbolic actions and rituals") as opportunities to strengthen feelings of belonging ("sense of affinity") among members of a collectivity - in this case, the audience.

Culture in general is considered to play a pivotal role in the creation and maintenance of collective identities, and such would also be the case for the European identity and sense of belonging. At the same time, it can have the function of strengthening the regional community, which could work greatly for the transnational integration project, and it also reinforces local and smaller-scale feelings of belonging, working therefore against such a project.<sup>99</sup> The first approach to an attempted European identity suggested a somewhat patronising initiative for culture, inspired by federalist lines of thought that conceived imageries of a "common destiny" and were based on a depicted common past for Europeans, focused on the Greek-Roman cultural and intellectual traditions and the Judeo-Christian morals.<sup>100</sup> Alternatively, this perspective would also point to the heritage from the

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<sup>95</sup> Pollini, 'Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging', 497.

<sup>96</sup> Pollini, 498.

<sup>97</sup> Pollini, 498.

<sup>98</sup> Pollini, 502.

<sup>99</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 'Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging', 2.

<sup>100</sup> Sassatelli, 'Introduction', 26.

Renaissance and the Enlightenment, emphatically humanism and modern science and politics.<sup>101</sup>

However, the federalist understanding of European identity was widely criticised in more contemporary pertinent literature, especially for being seen as having a rather exclusionary approach.<sup>102</sup> One contrasting theory suggests a focus on the plurality and diversity of the European culture (neofunctional view), and the middle-ground between them is observed in the idea of "unity in diversity".<sup>103</sup> This unity, conversely from the federalist perspective, would come from an idea of a "projected future" of a continent that would understand itself as one while maintaining the various cultures and identities existing in Europe.<sup>104</sup> This discourse is also the one chosen by the European Union, which uses "unity in diversity" as a maxim in a variety of official instances.<sup>105</sup> For some, the plurality of cultures itself could even sometimes be considered "the distinguished feature of Europe"<sup>106</sup>, and the "unity in diversity" identity would express the role of Europe (and/or the EU institutions) in conciliating these diverse groups.<sup>107</sup> As one could expect, this view of the European identity and culture has also received criticism, focused especially on its "emptiness"; however, the reality is that the idea has shown itself to be useful in directing sociopolitical practices.<sup>108</sup>

Following this idea of "unity in diversity", and even more emphatically the project of a unity in the future, the EU supports and initiates a wide range of projects which aim or contribute to building a European cultural identity and sense of belonging. In line with the understanding that "performativity of cultural expressions and rituals" can be connected to the "transnational identity creation",<sup>109</sup> these projects very frequently boost cultural exchange and movement of ideas and peoples. One of such examples is the European Capital of Culture (ECOC), an initiative that attracts activities and people from the whole continent while also presenting the city in case to the external communities, promoting this aforementioned exchange via direct contact and cultural events.<sup>110</sup> Additionally, the ECOC project operates in a structure that inherently incentivizes cities from different countries to work together, a clear

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<sup>101</sup> L. Couloubaritsis et al. (1993), H. Mikkeli (1998) *apud* Sassatelli, 27.

<sup>102</sup> Sassatelli, 30.

<sup>103</sup> Sassatelli, 26.

<sup>104</sup> Monica Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 29–30.

<sup>105</sup> Sassatelli, 'Imagined Europe: Narratives of European Cultural Identity', 42.

<sup>106</sup> Sassatelli, 30.

<sup>107</sup> Sassatelli, 34–35.

<sup>108</sup> Sassatelli, 35–38.

<sup>109</sup> Friedman and Thiel, 'Introduction: Culture and Narratives of Transnational Belonging', 2.

<sup>110</sup> Monica Sassatelli, 'A Simple Idea and a Vision: The ECOC Programme', in *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 85.

inducement to transnational cooperation in a medium-run and to cultural exchanges.<sup>111</sup> Possibly, the success in the ECOC initiative would come from its bottom-up approach, as is the declared intention behind most of these transnational cultural projects from the EU.<sup>112</sup> Other examples of projects with a similar mechanism are the ones which promote "travelling, studying, living in another European country" and therefore "an increased sense of being European",<sup>113</sup> such as the Erasmus project (which also plays an important role in overcoming "cultural and linguistic barriers")<sup>114</sup> and the EUNAMUS (European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen) initiative to establish museums as agents in building a social identity for Europe.<sup>115</sup>

These projects reflect an understanding that was already suggested by Durkheim and further developed by David Kertzer, by suggesting the power of rituals in building "solidarity without requiring the sharing of beliefs", or yet "by people acting together, not by people thinking together",<sup>116</sup> this solidarity thus potentially pushing for a sense of belonging or "we-feeling". Additionally, what empirical research has shown is that there is indeed a growing sense of belonging and identity among Europeans, and that even when a common culture (here understood mainly as heritage) is not necessarily identified by interviewees, a shared identity is more widely deemed as existing - although the specific European attributes of both concepts are nevertheless difficult for subjects to illustrate.<sup>117</sup> The lack of identification of a clear culture, moreover, could be due to the "discrete" approach in some projects which promote the European identity, which "often goes unnoticed, especially with regard to its relevance for how contexts become meaningful for identities, because it takes subtler forms than those expected".<sup>118</sup> As concluded by M. Roche:

(...) when we consider the theme of 'cultural Europeanization' and people's potential collective identity as 'European', it would make sense to lower our sights from grandiose and elite-driven ideals and dreams relating to the potential for sharing 'European values' through sport or for the development of EU teams competing in international sport. Perhaps a better approach would be to look for less direct and more practical, albeit more complex and ambiguous, forms of popular 'European awareness' and

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<sup>111</sup> Monica Sassatelli, 'A "Wealth of Urban Cultures": The European Cities of Culture in 2000', in *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 127.

<sup>112</sup> Prutsch et al., *Research for CULT Committee - European Identity*, 32.

<sup>113</sup> S. Immerfall (2009) *apud* Sassatelli, 'Introduction', 5.

<sup>114</sup> Prutsch et al., *Research for CULT Committee - European Identity*, 32.

<sup>115</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects', 32.

<sup>116</sup> É. Durkheim (1912), D. Kertzer (1988) *apud* Sassatelli, 'Introduction', 5.

<sup>117</sup> Sassatelli, 'A "Wealth of Urban Cultures": The European Cities of Culture in 2000', 135.

<sup>118</sup> Monica Sassatelli, 'Conclusion', in *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 135–36.

Euro-cosmopolitanism, such as those which have been loosed in the field of sports culture and sport-related media across Europe's societies.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> M. Roche (2007) *apud* Monica Sassatelli, 'Conclusion', in *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 196.



### 3. Festivals and their effects on identity and belonging

Arts and culture festivals have been part of the rituals organised and enjoyed by multiple societies for a long time and in a variety of formats. In a traditional perspective, they are conceptualised as "ritualistic or recurrent short-term events in which members of a community participate in order to affirm and celebrate various social, religious, ethnic, national, linguistic or historical bonds", with a contemporary enhanced focus on the formation of cultural identities among their audiences.<sup>120</sup> This process of identity formation in relation to festivals is highly related to the context of the event. In rural communities, for instance, they can help develop the local economy and promote jobs for the population, but also reinforce social bonds among the population and serve as a space for strengthening and developing a "sense of local identity".<sup>121</sup>

Considering the large number of festivals that happen in Europe every year, it would hardly be possible to estimate the percentage of the European population that goes to this sort of event. However, their relevance can be estimated when considering the average yearly number of attendees in some of the biggest festivals in the continent: 2 million in Danube Island Festival (Austria), 800 thousand in Glastonbury (United Kingdom), 400 thousand in Pol'and'Rock Festival (Poland), 200 thousand in Exit Festival (Serbia).<sup>122</sup> A survey made by Yourope (European Festival Association) in 2019 showed a slight decrease in the number of ticket sales in relation to the previous time period, but the absolute numbers of 3.75 million tickets sold and 1.44 million free entries demonstrate the significant population that attended their 90 festival members in the year.<sup>123</sup> In addition, the international aspect of these festivals is also pinpointed by the research, which showed that 12% of regular attendees from the United Kingdom went abroad for attending festivals in 2018, and that 30% of non-British festival goers attended at least one festival in the United Kingdom in the same year.<sup>124</sup>

The success of the festival industry - and the music festival industry in particular - can be traced back to its history, especially due to events dating from the end of the 1960s which

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<sup>120</sup> Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward, 'Introduction', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 1.

<sup>121</sup> Bennett, Taylor, and Woodward, 1.

<sup>122</sup> Reality Check, 'What's the World's Biggest Music Festival?', *BBC News*, 4 July 2018, sec. World, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44697302>.

<sup>123</sup> 'Yourope Members Survey' (Yourope (The European Festival Association), January 2019), <https://www.yourope.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Yourope-Members-Survey-2019.pdf>.

<sup>124</sup> IQ Live Music Intelligence, 'European Festival Report 2018', 01/19, 29, <https://issuu.com/gregiq/docs/iq81/28>.

gained "legendary" statuses, such as Woodstock and Monterey.<sup>125</sup> The number of festivals is also indicative of the increasing significance of the industry, with a 71% growth from 2003 to 2007 in the United Kingdom, for instance;<sup>126</sup> and a total of 402 music festivals listed in Europe for the years of 2019-2020 in the website Music Festival Wizard.<sup>127</sup>

Given the considerable range of Europeans affected by music festivals, it could come as a natural conclusion that they play a significant role in shaping some of the attendees' perceptions, especially in regards to social aspects which are highly tied to the concept of festivals itself. Indeed, research has shown that these impacts exist and can affect both individual and communitarian perceptions of identity, both of the attendees and host collectivities.<sup>128</sup> Jaeger and Mykletun, in this sense, claim that "festivals may constitute an arena that satisfies the need to belong and social identity creation, and facilitates the development of place and personal identities".<sup>129</sup> Ballantyne et al. have found that festivals are capable of creating "ephemeral communities" and a "shared sense of camaraderie"<sup>130</sup>, and Aitchison and Pritchard go as far as defining festivals as "a space for the articulation, performance and rediscovery of identity".<sup>131</sup> In sum, as defined by Bennett and Woodward, "a critical function of the festival is to allow a collective representation, a collective celebration and, in many cases, a collective outpouring of a commonly articulated form of socio-cultural identity".<sup>132</sup> The authors also highlight the duality of the aims of festivals in being, at the same time, open to diversity and processes of globalisation and spaces of belonging and community-oriented identities.<sup>133</sup>

There are a plurality of characteristics which are intrinsic to festivals and that reinforce their critical role of identity building. The first and perhaps most obvious one would be the interaction promoted by festivals among their attendees.<sup>134</sup> This interaction comes in a

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<sup>125</sup> Yvette Morey et al., 'Festivals 2.0: Consuming, Producing and Participating in the Extended Festival Experience', ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 215–2.

<sup>126</sup> Morey et al., 252.

<sup>127</sup> MFW Music Festival Guide, 'Europe Music Festivals 2019-2020', Music Festival Wizard, accessed 26 September 2020, <https://www.musicfestivalwizard.com/festival-guide/europe-festivals/>.

<sup>128</sup> Kari Jaeger and Reidar J. Mykletun, 'Festivals, Identities, and Belonging', *Event Management* 17, no. 3 (28 August 2013): 213, <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599513X13708863377791>.

<sup>129</sup> Jaeger and Mykletun, 214.

<sup>130</sup> Julie Ballantyne, Roy Ballantyne, and Jan Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', *Musicae Scientiae* 18, no. 1 (March 2014): 66, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864913511845>.

<sup>131</sup> Andy Bennett and Ian Woodward, 'Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 11.

<sup>132</sup> Bennett and Woodward, 12.

<sup>133</sup> Bennett and Woodward, 18.

<sup>134</sup> Jaeger and Mykletun, 'Festivals, Identities, and Belonging', 214.

variety of formats, all capable of enhancing the social experience; in addition to the regular activities (i.e. concerts and side attractions), through the stays in festivals' camping sites,<sup>135</sup> or through "mundane activities like queuing for toilets, cooking or buying food, and congregating in bars, refreshment tents and the general spaces of the festival".<sup>136</sup> In related research, interviewed festival-goers have even indicated the social coexistence in campsites as one of the most important aspects of the event<sup>137</sup> and social interaction in festivals as a whole as the experience which brings more psychological and social benefits.<sup>138</sup> Through promoting the possibility to create collective stories and practices and offering environments in which attendees feel comfortable with others around,<sup>139</sup> festivals manage to be spaces in which social interactions can lead to the construction of collective feelings of belonging and to "developing an extended self - a social identity or a social self".<sup>140</sup>

The social identity formation process in festivals is also influenced by the frequently inherent opportunity for attendees to encounter and coexist with different cultures for a determinate period of time. Festivals are "meeting places"<sup>141</sup> for people from different backgrounds which are then encouraged by the context to exchange with others in a more intense manner than regular daily interactions would promote.<sup>142</sup> Consequently, this coexistence with different cultures could lead to a social conscience of the festival-goers which could be connected to senses of "cosmopolitanism" and "worldliness and communitarianism".<sup>143</sup> Festivals would be spaces with unique ways to promote interaction among people due to their innate variety of attendees and therefore would facilitate "performative dimensions of cosmopolitan openness".<sup>144</sup> Even more so, these events are customarily at the same time the cause and the effect of cosmopolitan exchanges and attract goers who are already open to this kind of exchange.<sup>145</sup> In this regard, a result of the way

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<sup>135</sup> Kimberly F. Rudolph, 'The Importance of Music Festivals: An Unanticipated and Underappreciated Path to Identity Formation' (University Honors Program Theses, Georgia Southern University, 2016), 8, <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/honors-theses/216>.

<sup>136</sup> Jasper Chalcraft, Gerard Delanty, and Monica Sassatelli, 'Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 122–23.

<sup>137</sup> Morey et al., 'Festivals 2.0: Consuming, Producing and Participating in the Extended Festival Experience', 266.

<sup>138</sup> Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', 81.

<sup>139</sup> Bennett and Woodward, 'Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging', 18.

<sup>140</sup> Jaeger and Mykletun, 'Festivals, Identities, and Belonging', 213–20.

<sup>141</sup> Jaeger and Mykletun, 223.

<sup>142</sup> Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', 69.

<sup>143</sup> Bennett and Woodward, 'Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging', 16–17.

<sup>144</sup> Bennett and Woodward, 17.

<sup>145</sup> Chalcraft, Delanty, and Sassatelli, 'Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals', 111–21.

festivals are normally structured is that attendees come to identify common needs among themselves,<sup>146</sup> therefore favouring a sense of collective belonging.<sup>147</sup> Chalcraft et al. detailed this process of social identity formation by interaction with the difference:

This is what the idea of the virtuous circle, rather than a scale, addressed: the fact that once you relativize your culture because of exposure to other cultures, you may be induced to positively recognize the other, and/or to start to re-evaluate your own culture, which in turn may affect your openness and capacity of code switching between different cultural repertoires.<sup>148</sup>

The discourse used in a festival's communication is an additional indicative of its purposeful collective-oriented discourse. As examples, Bonnaroo (in the United States) sells itself as a community<sup>149</sup> and Earthcore (in Australia) works with the concept of "citizenship" in its advertising.<sup>150</sup> The intention, however, is not always only of building identification within the audience of the event itself, but rather to promote a sense of uniqueness and differentiation<sup>151</sup> of that which is ultimately a commercial product. Possibly due to dealing with attendees who define themselves as having "international" identities,<sup>152</sup> festival organisers are then emphatically influenced to not only make their events more open to diverse audiences but also to communicate in a manner that makes this positioning clear. This discourse, in consequence, serves as a reference for the way the festival-goers behave in this context<sup>153</sup> and leads to local identities being momentarily set aside while audiences are more open to differences and exchanges.<sup>154</sup>

Moreover, research has shown that a facilitating condition in the process of social identity building in festivals is the separation from routine by the attendees, favouring the connection among them.<sup>155</sup> In that ephemeral context, they are "immersed (...) in a particular culture" and can "experiment with different identities".<sup>156</sup> The presence in an "in between

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<sup>146</sup> Chalcraft, Delanty, and Sassatelli, 120.

<sup>147</sup> Michelle Duffy, 'The Emotional Ecologies of Festivals', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 231.

<sup>148</sup> Chalcraft, Delanty, and Sassatelli, 'Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals', 126.

<sup>149</sup> F. Rudolph, 'The Importance of Music Festivals: An Unanticipated and Underappreciated Path to Identity Formation', 30.

<sup>150</sup> Susan Luckman, 'Location, Spatiality and Liminality at Outdoor Music Festivals: Doofs as Journey', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 199.

<sup>151</sup> Duffy, 'The Emotional Ecologies of Festivals', 230.

<sup>152</sup> Chalcraft, Delanty, and Sassatelli, 'Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals', 213.

<sup>153</sup> Luckman, 'Location, Spatiality and Liminality at Outdoor Music Festivals: Doofs as Journey', 197.

<sup>154</sup> Chalcraft, Delanty, and Sassatelli, 'Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals', 125.

<sup>155</sup> Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', 68.

<sup>156</sup> Bennett and Woodward, 'Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging', 11.

space" stimulates the openness for self and collective reinventing<sup>157</sup> and can also be considered a form of "escapism" from everyday life.<sup>158</sup> By promoting spatial and temporal displacement, and also diverse opportunities for encounters that would not be part of one's regular routine, festivals are capable of offering a space for different types of social interaction which facilitate a general cosmopolitan atmosphere.<sup>159</sup> In that regard, Earthcore's founder Spiro Boursine adds, in regards to audiences in festivals, that "social inhibitions, and their ego, and their hierarchic structures between their own personal social groups sort of dissipate".<sup>160</sup>

To add to that, the journey to the venue or festival location is also part of the formation process of the sense of belonging among the festival-goers. Sometimes actively used by organisers as a plan to engage their communities, these pre-established trajectories can serve as strategies to initiate reflections among the attendees, some within the sort of "what does my part of the world look like, and how do I belong there?".<sup>161</sup> Potentially, these preceding reflections are capable of leading to further openness to rethinking one's own collective identity, which could then be enriched by the festival attendance experience through both passive and active actions as and with the audience.

Finally, an additional strategy that some festivals actively engage in and that has the capacity of boosting identity-building processes among the attendees is the extension of the event through time, be it by promoting recurrent editions (e.g. yearly, biannually) or through engaging in online environments. Chalcraft et al. define the "atmosphere" created by the recurrence of some festivals as a "communal self-realizing, self-perpetuating spirit" among attendees,<sup>162</sup> and the frequency with which the audience returns to the festival has the potential of creating bonds not only among themselves but also between attendees and the festival itself and the venue. In a similar manner, the online presence of the event can "extend and multiply the meanings and identities of festivals and festival-goers"<sup>163</sup> by providing a platform in which audiences can continue to interact and share stories, opinions and information considerably beyond the time frame of the event itself.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, the online

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<sup>157</sup> Luckman, 'Location, Spatiality and Liminality at Outdoor Music Festivals: Doofs as Journey', 201.

<sup>158</sup> Morey et al., 'Festivals 2.0: Consuming, Producing and Participating in the Extended Festival Experience', 252.

<sup>159</sup> Bennett and Woodward, 'Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging', 18.

<sup>160</sup> Luckman, 'Location, Spatiality and Liminality at Outdoor Music Festivals: Doofs as Journey', 200.

<sup>161</sup> Luckman, 194.

<sup>162</sup> Chalcraft, Delanty, and Sassatelli, 'Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals', 123.

<sup>163</sup> Morey et al., 'Festivals 2.0: Consuming, Producing and Participating in the Extended Festival Experience', 251.

<sup>164</sup> Morey et al., 259.

tools are also spaces which can substantially increase the community identity feeling through allowing the events to "be experienced – anticipated, celebrated and re-lived – all year round".<sup>165</sup>

Music festivals, in turn, engage the audience with specific characteristics that can boost their potentiality to reimagine their collective belonging. This is due to particular properties of music itself and how it is perceived by humans that have been proven to boost our social proneness. This process starts with the "rhythmic, tonal and tactile qualities of sound and music" which would "facilitate and enable personal and social things to happen";<sup>166</sup> and is enhanced by our active engagement and physical involvement with the music through dancing, which would lead to much deeper connections with the others around as a community than other more common proceedings such as through "shared myths or common custom".<sup>167</sup> Moreover, music has for a long time been recognised as one sign or symbol through which social groups build and communicate their identities, especially among young people, and attending music events is part of that identity-building process.<sup>168</sup> Music festivals, in consequence, are environments in which attendees can partake in a cultural experience of rethinking their identities and social belonging<sup>169</sup> in a variety of manners that are more related to their mindsets and artistic preferences<sup>170</sup> than other geographic, civic or politically-oriented distinctiveness.

Finally, as indicated by Chalcraft et al., "a festivals placedness (*sic*) does not rank it near a "local" pole on a local-to-cosmopolitan scale; rather, it displaces such a scale and suggests that we find ways of representing "place" that are not based on such linear models".<sup>171</sup> The ambients promoted in and by festivals are potential initiators of processes of "benign and upward spirals of storytelling and image formation"<sup>172</sup> which ultimately can lead to the formation of "*spontaneous communitas*" of spontaneous bonding<sup>173</sup> or spaces of "secular 'liminal culture'"<sup>174</sup> through which attendees rethink their communal identities.

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<sup>165</sup> Morey et al., 264.

<sup>166</sup> Duffy, 'The Emotional Ecologies of Festivals', 231.

<sup>167</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich (2008) *apud* Duffy, 214.

<sup>168</sup> North and Hargreaves (1999) *apud* Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', 65.

<sup>169</sup> Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer, 66.

<sup>170</sup> Joanne Cummings, 'The Greening of the Music Festival Scene: An Exploration of Sustainable Practices and Their Influence on Youth Culture', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 169.

<sup>171</sup> Chalcraft, Delanty, and Sassatelli, 'Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Art Festivals', 115.

<sup>172</sup> Jaeger and Mykletun, 'Festivals, Identities, and Belonging', 224.

<sup>173</sup> Rachel Bowditch (2012) *apud* Luckman, 'Location, Spatiality and Liminality at Outdoor Music Festivals: Doofs as Journey', 195.

<sup>174</sup> Graham St. John (2010a) *apud* Luckman, 190.

Shared principles, interests and background are highlighted in an intense parallel to what happens over time in communities<sup>175</sup> and music enhances the feeling of belonging to the festival collectivity in a manner that might be extended beyond the festival environment.<sup>176</sup> This reflection on social belonging by the attendees can then happen on a variety of levels, including geographical ones, and can express or have impact on the audience's perceptions of their identification with a specific place<sup>177</sup> or community,<sup>178</sup> for example. As concluded by Duffy, "festivals are, then, political mechanisms that can help constitute individual feelings of acceptance and belonging within an imagined, collective sense of 'we'".<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Alessandro Falassi *apud* Jodie Taylor, 'Festivalizing Sexualities: Discourses of "Pride", Counter-Discourses of "Shame"', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 27.

<sup>176</sup> Duffy, 'The Emotional Ecologies of Festivals', 245.

<sup>177</sup> Bennett and Woodward, 'Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging', 208.

<sup>178</sup> Duffy, 'The Emotional Ecologies of Festivals', 229.

<sup>179</sup> Michelle Duffy, 'The Emotional Ecologies of Festivals', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 245.

## 4. Youth

Initially, the key group of people on which this research is focused was broadly defined as "youth", as part of the hypothesis which lastly led to the research question. Therefore, in order to delimitate the age of the participants who could be considered for the survey and interviews, the concepts of "youth" and "generation" are further explored in this chapter. These conceptual reviews are based primarily on works by Jane Pilcher and Karl Mannheim and, in sequence, framed in the context of this research, ultimately leading to the definition of the suitable age range for its target group of interviewees.

### 4.1. Relevance of "youth"

Following the purpose of finding out whether attendance in transnational festivals has an impact on individuals' sense of belonging to Europe, the option for "youth" as a target group for this research resonates with findings and literature that have pointed to this stage of life as being determinant of one's social and individual identitarian development. Pilcher, for instance, describes "the formative experiences during the time of youth (...) as the key period in which social generations are formed",<sup>180</sup> the validity of such a statement being demonstrated through studies that determined the age range of the study group's "formative experiences" as being from "approximately seventeen to the upper twenties".<sup>181</sup> This is also reinforced by Mannheim, who indicates the age of seventeen as roughly being when one starts to experiment with life and therefore "really questioning and reflecting on things".<sup>182</sup> Other authors still defend that, whilst childhood would be when one's understanding of the world would be most strongly affected, one's identities suffer their most meaningful impacts around "late adolescence and the transition to adulthood".<sup>183</sup>

Additionally, one's social experiences during their youth would have consequences for the rest of their lives.<sup>184</sup> This is supported by developmental psychology, which has found that occurrences which happened during youth are reported as "important" by people of all subsequent ages,<sup>185</sup> and that their worldviews acquired around that formative stage will

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<sup>180</sup> Jane Pilcher, 'Mannheim's Sociology of Generations: An Undervalued Legacy', *The British Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 3 (September 1994): 483, <https://doi.org/10.2307/591659>.

<sup>181</sup> Pilcher, 487.

<sup>182</sup> Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge: Collected Works*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti, vol. 5 (New York: Routledge, 2015), 300.

<sup>183</sup> Abigail J. Stewart and Joseph M. Healy, 'Linking Individual Development and Social Changes.', *American Psychologist* 44, no. 1 (1989): 40, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.1.30>.

<sup>184</sup> Pilcher, 'Mannheim's Sociology of Generations', 488.

<sup>185</sup> Schuman and Scott (1989) *apud* Pilcher, 489.



heavily determine their understanding of the world as adults, with new experiences being processed under their influence (as "verification", "negation" or "anti-thesis" of the original standpoints).<sup>186</sup> Thus, it could be inferred that the age range generally defined as "youth" is of enhanced interest to the process of developing one's sense of identity and belonging, with prospective long-term effects.

This particularity of the impact of youth experience would be linked to what Mannheim defines as a "potentially fresh contact" with contemporaneous events and issues, or a moment in individuals' lives in which they become more "aware" and partial to such external happenings.<sup>187</sup> However, considering that the youth do not live in isolation, their reflections upon lived experiences would not only impact their worldviews but also influence concurrent people from different age groups,<sup>188</sup> indicating the potentiality of the youth as a vector to exponential social changes outside their own collectivity. In the context of the current research, this could be translated into the potential capacity of the youth to exponentialize the effects of the enhanced feeling of belonging to Europe post festival experience(s), should our main hypothesis be confirmed.

#### 4.2. *The concept of generation*

The attempt to delimit the boundaries of "youth" in order to operationalise the concept brings forth the need to understand in further depth what constitutes a social generation, in order to indicate why a (or more than one) social generation would have unique experiences and potential impacts on other members of society. The problem of such an attempt starts with the difficulty in defining when a social category like "youth" begins and ends in an individual's life, is enhanced when the collective context is also considered, and is additionally complicated by the social reality of a "seamless continuum of daily births" which blurs generational borders.<sup>189</sup>

Following Mannheim's work, Pilcher defines two façades of social generations: one qualitative, based on collective experiences; and one quantitative, determined by absolute numbers such as age and time.<sup>190</sup> The most relevant of the two for social research would be the qualitative definition, which considers part of the same social generation the individuals who have experienced the same or similar socio-historical contexts and events.<sup>191</sup> These

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<sup>186</sup> Pilcher, 490.

<sup>187</sup> Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', 300–301.

<sup>188</sup> Mannheim, 300.

<sup>189</sup> Spitzer (1973) *apud* Pilcher, 'Mannheim's Sociology of Generations', 487.

<sup>190</sup> Pilcher, 487.

<sup>191</sup> Pilcher, 482.

social generations based on shared experience could therefore be more accurately named as "cohorts", although both terms would be regularly interchangeable in the social sciences.<sup>192</sup> The preference for this qualitative conceptualisation, however, does not mean that time is not relevant to the definition of a social generation, as Mannheim also highlights, since individuals of the same age will likely experience similar events in life; but it highlights other key features to define such social groups, such as the "participation in the same social and historical circumstances".<sup>193</sup> This is particularly the supposed case of the target groups of this research, given the focus of the hypothesis on a shared experience in a specific category of event (large music festivals) in a specific location (Europe) during a particular period of their lives (youth), which could configure this collectivity as a social generation.

The duration of a generation is also a difficult asset to be delineated, with Mannheim already in 1927 mentioning its many attempted descriptions by different schools of thought that define it, for example, as being of 15 or 30 years.<sup>194</sup> However, as previously discussed, chronological time is not sufficient for defining a group of people as participants of the same social generation without the same or similar experiences as a collective; therefore, it is more correct to work with this notion by understanding it as being subjective.<sup>195</sup> Each social generation has interactions among particular social groups during certain periods of time, which eventually lead to broader impacts in "art, religion, and so on"<sup>196</sup> - and, in the case of this study, prospective impacts on individuals' perception of their transnational belonging to Europe.

The importance of generations and the impact they have on social and historical processes is thus shaped by the kind of experiences they share as individuals in a collective. At the same time, these socio-historical contexts are what shapes the experiences the individuals will have as part of a generation; and shaped by the actions of these same individuals and generations.<sup>197</sup> However, as presented earlier, chronological time is not sufficient to determine whether different individuals will have similar experiences. A diversity of approaches to events and experiences flourishes when partakers of similar ages originate from different classes, backgrounds, and a variety of social factors.<sup>198</sup> This is what Mannheim defines as belonging to a same "generation location":

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<sup>192</sup> Pilcher, 483.

<sup>193</sup> Mannheim (1952) *apud* Pilcher, 490.

<sup>194</sup> Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', 278.

<sup>195</sup> Mannheim, 282.

<sup>196</sup> Mannheim, 285.

<sup>197</sup> Mannheim, 291.

<sup>198</sup> Mannheim, 292.

The fact that people are born at the same time, or that their youth, adulthood, and old age coincide, does not in itself involve similarity of location; what does create a similar location is that they are in a position to experience the same events and data, etc., and especially that these experiences impinge upon a similarly 'stratified' consciousness. (...) Only where contemporaries definitely are in a position to participate as an integrated group in certain common experiences can we rightly speak of community of location of a generation. (Mannheim, 1927, p. 297-8)

The belonging of individuals to a certain generation location, therefore, is conditioned by their: 1) coexistence in terms of chronological time; 2) sharing of a similar location; and 3) participation in similar/same events and experiences; resulting in what Mannheim calls the "participation in the common destiny".<sup>199</sup> The recognition of the impact of the participation in similar events and experiences as determinant to individuals' sense of belonging to a collective, in this case the social generation (and generation location), is of particular relevance to the purpose of this research.

In a similar manner to the two-ways in which social context and social generations shape each other, the understanding that individuals have of experiences and the experiences themselves are also shaped bidirectionally. Concurrently, experiences will shape one's perception of reality, while this perception itself is a sort of filter through which one perceives the experience, a filter that is tightly linked to the social group in which one participates.<sup>200</sup> The consequence of this is that different social groups which have different experiences, even if within the same time and spatial frame, will have varying perceptions - and, most likely, also opinions - on the same matters. This is what Mannheim defines as "generation-units" within the same generation, and the author recognises the potential strength that these groups have of influencing thoughts much beyond their own members, by initially articulating their beliefs and viewpoints closely together - such as would be the example of what happens with class ideology.<sup>201</sup> In this framework, Mannheim brings forth the work of François Mentré which demonstrates that informal social groups (the given example being "literary *salons*") are considerably more prone to being influenced by generation-units than are more structured associations.<sup>202</sup> Considering festival gatherings as part of the informal social groups, for the

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<sup>199</sup> Mannheim, 303.

<sup>200</sup> Mannheim, 306.

<sup>201</sup> Mannheim, 307.

<sup>202</sup> Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge: Collected Works*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti, vol. 5 (New York: Routledge, 2015), 319.

general lack of stratified structures and regulations that dictate their behaviour especially in regards to social interaction, they would fit into the category of groups which are more easily impacted by ideological influences from generation-units, one of them potentially being the discourse of European belonging.

#### 4.3. *Instrumental delimitation*

Despite its high value as a reference, Mannheim's work on generations does not present a clear practical, "empirical model" for the instrumentalisation of the concept of generation - and consequently of "youth".<sup>203</sup> The concrete information that can be drawn both from Mannheim's and Pilcher's works points to the age of seventeen as being generally an indicator of the beginning of the formative years of youth, and the "upper twenties" as being the other end of such spectrum, as already presented above. In consequence, further data that could help define the subjective boundaries of the most relevant target group to the current research becomes necessary.

In order to analyse the effects that festivals have on the European identity of "young" people, hence, it would be reasonable to consider the age groups which includes the most significant number of festival-goers. A study conducted by Eventbrite, an event manager website based in the United States of America, shows that approximately "75% of music festival conversation was generated by individuals between the ages of 17 to 34" upon analysing over 20 million conversations on Twitter.<sup>204</sup> Although this percentage could be biased due to its high level of coincidence with the average age of Twitter users,<sup>205</sup> it is still a possible relevant indicator of the boundaries of the social generation of heavy festival-goers. This conclusion is further reinforced by a recent report by Festival Insights, which identified festival attendees' as belonging more emphatically to the age groups between 18 to 20 (20.6%), 21 to 25 (29.2%) and 26 to 30 years old (18.3%), summing up to a total of 68.1% of a sample of 19 thousand festival-goers.<sup>206</sup> Finally, another report by the UK Festival Awards also highlights these age groups as the most expressive consumers of festivals, with 12% of their sampling ranging from 18 to 20 years of age, 13% being between the ages of 21 and 25, and 10% being between 26 and 30 (summing up to a total of 35%). This last report shows a

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<sup>203</sup> Jane Pilcher, 'Mannheim's Sociology of Generations: An Undervalued Legacy', *The British Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 3 (September 1994): 492, <https://doi.org/10.2307/591659>.

<sup>204</sup> Eventbrite and Mashwork, 'Music Festival Study', 2014, 2, [https://eventbrite-s3.s3.amazonaws.com/marketing/MusicFestivalResearch/EventbriteStudyMusicFestivals8\\_25\\_14.pdf](https://eventbrite-s3.s3.amazonaws.com/marketing/MusicFestivalResearch/EventbriteStudyMusicFestivals8_25_14.pdf).

<sup>205</sup> Eventbrite and Mashwork, 15.

<sup>206</sup> Festival Insights, 'The European Festival Market Report 2017', *Festival Insights* (blog), 25 August 2017, <https://www.festivalinsights.com/2017/08/european-festival-market-report-2017/>.

considerably different percentage than the ones before, with the selected age groups being less representative, but in comparison to other age groups in the same report, they are still the ones with the highest percentages, with the exception of a spike of 19% for the ages of 41 to 50.<sup>207</sup> The latter group, however, would hardly fit into the concept of "youth" and therefore are not considered for this research.

In conclusion, taking into consideration the qualitative aspect of shared experience (high frequency in attending festivals) to define the social generation that is the target group for this research, and drawing tangible information from related reports, the age range of the individuals selected to participate as objects of this research comprises the ages of 18 to 32 years when submitted to the experience of attending the considered festivals.

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<sup>207</sup> UK Festival Awards, 'UK Festival Market Report 2018' (United Kingdom: Mondiale Publishing, 2018), <https://www.festivalinsights.com/2019/10/uk-festival-market-report-2018-2/>.

## 5. Design and method

Building on the literature that has been revisited in the previous chapters, this research has a goal to verify whether and (in case of a positive answer) how large-scale music festivals in Europe could have an impact on their young attendees' feeling of belonging to Europe. Therefore, the two research questions that guide it are: do large-scale European music festivals have an impact on young attendees' perception of belonging to Europe? If so, how?

The units of analysis for this research are thus young people (here defined as being aged from 18 to 32 years old, as detailed in the previous chapter) who are either citizens, residents or nationals from all countries of Europe, who have already attended at least one large music festival in Europe. In all parts of this survey, although citizens and nationals are legally granted the same rights and duties in European countries,<sup>208</sup> both titles are listed in order to include all possibilities of identification of the participants.

The definition of Europe in itself is already a complicated matter, and a wide portion of the literature which deals with the concept opts for a functional and "generic" meaning for it, by matching Europe to the European Union.<sup>209</sup> This choice is logical and practical given the complexity of the idea of Europe, which "is contemporaneously thematized as a place, a history, a concept and a subjectivity", and even in only one attempted definition ("today's sanctioned history of the idea of Europe") can list up to 14 historical conceptions of Europe, from its geography to its myths or its contemporary institutions.<sup>210</sup> For pragmatic purposes, we shall follow the aforementioned trend and consider Europe as the territory and political space of the 27 member states of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden). In addition to those, we shall also consider other countries which are regularly considered part of the geopolitical area of Europe and which are part of the Schengen area, although they are not part of the European Union: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> 'Using "Citizen" and "Resident" Legally', in *Merriam-Webster*, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/what-is-the-difference-between-a-citizen-and-a-resident>.

<sup>209</sup> Markus Josef Prutsch et al., *Research for CULT Committee - European Identity: Study*, 2017, 15, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/585921/IPOL\\_STU\(2017\)585921\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/585921/IPOL_STU(2017)585921_EN.pdf).

<sup>210</sup> Monica Sassatelli, 'Introduction', in *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 22.

<sup>211</sup> 'Countries', European Union, 5 July 2016, [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en).

Concerning the concept of large festivals, the intention behind the preference for these is due to the inherent aspect of bigger events to have "an international scale", an essential aspect for the purpose of this research,<sup>212</sup> being even sometimes considered as tourist attractions.<sup>213</sup> In regards to their purely numeric size, in this research the definitions given by the online tool Music Festival Wizard shall be used as guidelines: the respondents must have attended at least one day in a music festival with an audience of at least 26 thousand people per festival day. This categorises a large festival, according to the website; and mega festivals are the ones with above 50 thousand attendees per day.<sup>214</sup>

The method selected in order to attempt to provide answers to this research question is a mixed one, with a survey (in the format of an online questionnaire) followed-up with in-depth interviews. The questionnaire consisted of closed questions, with the intention of producing quantitative data; whereas the in-depth interviews with open questions provided qualitative information. The purpose of the follow-up in-depth interview is to explore in further detail some of the analysed results drawn from the survey, following an explanatory sequential design of research.<sup>215</sup> The participants in the in-depth interview were drawn from the general pool of the survey, following their responses to one of the questions in the survey which invited them to participate in the interviews, to which fifteen participants responded "yes", nine of which effectively participated in the second part of the research.

The instrument selected for the survey was an online questionnaire, open for responses from 21 January and 16 March 2021. The questionnaire accepted answers from participants between 18 and 32 years of age who are citizens, residents and/or nationals from the previously defined area of Europe. The online questionnaire was developed and hosted in the Google Form platform for the whole duration of the research and the access to it was made public and sent to potential participants via social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and similar platforms; and shared via online tools for pooling participants (in this case, Survey Monkey and Survey Swap).

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<sup>212</sup> Terri Byers, Trevor Slack, and Milena Parent, *Key Concepts in Sport Management* (1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473914599>.

<sup>213</sup> J.R.B. Richie (1984) *apud* Martin Müller, 'What Makes an Event a Mega-Event? Definitions and Sizes', *Leisure Studies* 34, no. 6 (2 November 2015): 627–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2014.993333>.

<sup>214</sup> 'Europe Music Festivals', Music Festival Wizard, accessed 21 November 2020, <https://www.musicfestivalwizard.com/festival-guide/europe-festivals/>.

<sup>215</sup> Nataliya V. Ivankova, John W. Creswell, and Sheldon L. Stick, 'Using Mixed-Methods Sequential Explanatory Design: From Theory to Practice', *Field Methods* 18, no. 1 (February 2006): 3–20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05282260>.

The intention with the survey was initially to achieve a minimum of 200 respondents, and the final result achieved was of 205 participants, 193 with valid sets of responses. The first initiative to gather participants via social networks consisted of a snowball sampling, which was then modified into a purposive sampling when the online pooling tools were engaged in order to achieve the intended quorum, and as filters were established for the research:<sup>216</sup> age range, nationality/citizenship/residency, as detailed above; and attendance to large music festivals (here meaning having been to at least one large music festival in Europe).

Clearly, with such a sampling size, the results found through this research are non-representative of the total population indicated as subject of the research. No generalization of the findings is intended, especially in regards to the qualitative answers given in the in-depth interviews. It is recommended, therefore, that this research is further expanded in the future in order to reinforce the relevance of its findings. Furthermore, another limitation of this research is due to the frequently disputed meaning of the main concepts of the study, namely culture and identity. As perceived by Monica Sassatelli in one of her works on these topics:

It may be because of this general focus on multiculturalism – or more specifically perhaps on a problematization of culture as monolithic and homogeneous – that my interviewees gave more positive answers to the question on a European identity than to that on a European culture. This is not only because identity is, especially as a practical, lay notion, even more ambiguous than culture, but because the focus on identity seems to contain more room for a forward-looking perspective, focusing on the active contribution of what people in Europe are building now, rather than on what we have inherited (as ‘cultural heritage’) from the past.<sup>217</sup>

Finally, the survey data was drawn from the Google Forms platform and statistically interpreted via the software Excel. The results were then analysed in their integrity and also by comparing different respondent profiles to check if there are any variations between them (namely a "Pro-Europe" pool and a "Frequent festival goer" pool, as will be further detailed in the analysis chapter).

In-depth interviews were performed with the nine volunteers via Zoom, each lasting for around 15 minutes. Seven structured questions were asked to each interviewee, some of

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<sup>216</sup> Paul J Lavrakas, ‘Purposive Sample’, in *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2008), <http://www.credoreference.com/book/sagesurveyr>.

<sup>217</sup> Monica Sassatelli, ‘A “Wealth of Urban Cultures”: The European Cities of Culture in 2000’, in *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 135.



which with smaller follow-up questions, and in some cases, participants were prompted to develop further their responses by questions which were not initially previewed. The analysis of the content of such interviews is also further explored in the analysis chapter. Additionally, the findings from both the survey and the subsequent in-depth interviews were considered and discussed in the light of the relevant theoretical framework so as to promote a comparison between different approaches to the matter.

### 5.1. *Survey and in-depth interview questions*

#### 5.1.1. Survey

The survey questionnaire consisted of 30 questions, including two initial ones focused on declarations of suitability and consent and four final ones dedicated to contact and follow-up intentions (the latter ones keeping answers optional). All the questions in the survey were primarily close-ended, and seven of them offer an "Other" field in the responses in which the participant could write their own answer if they found no other option suitable.

The following indicators were considered to attempt to answer the research questions and were therefore traced: travel/displacement (to another European country), frequency of attendance to large music festivals, perceived general experience in such events, encounters with new people from different European countries, perceived behavioural change, perceived sense of community-building, perceived level of attachment to different social scales, and general level of attachment to Europe.

After the two initial questions, the first group of questions was dedicated to the participants' festival attendance experience(s) from a particular perspective. The first two questions in this group ("1. Have you ever attended a large music festival in your country?" and "2. Have you ever traveled to another European country to attend a large music festival?") were intended to map the geography of the participant's attendance in music festivals and whether their mere experience on its own could already be considered transnational. The following question, "3. In average, how often have you attended large music festivals in the last 14 years?", intended to add the aspect of repetition to the research hypothesis, considering that literature suggests that "some of the 'deeper' well-being benefits are more likely to be attained by those who attend the festival for longer".<sup>218</sup> This hypothesis was further explored with the following two questions: "4. If you have attended multiple

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<sup>218</sup> Julie Ballantyne, Roy Ballantyne, and Jan Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', *Musicae Scientiae* 18, no. 1 (March 2014): 80, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864913511845>.

large music festivals in Europe, for how many years have you been attending/have you attended them?" and "5. When attending a large music festival, for how many of its days do you usually go?". Finally, the two last questions in this first group were focused on the main takeaways from the festivals by the attendees ("6. What were the primary takeaways from these festival experiences for you?" and "7. In general, which of these options would best describe your experience in large music festivals in Europe?"), and the provided answers included options through which they could express feelings of community-building or social experiences distributed among other options that would not communicate such feelings.

The next group of questions was also focused on the participant's experience attending festivals, now from a collective point of view. The first question, "1. In general, do you go to large music festivals with the intention of meeting new people?", intended to directly understand whether the attendance of such festivals is generally a social experience for the respondents. The following one, "2. When attending large music festivals, do/did you perceive the audience as more international or local/national?", was focused on overviewing the perspective of the respondent in regards to the experiences they had in festivals, at the same time understanding from their answer whether they interacted with the audiences of such festivals and if they experienced social exchanges with transnational audience members. The third question of the group, "3. In these festival experiences, with which frequency do you meet new people from countries other than yours?", attempted to bring the answer from the previous question into a more quantitative approach.

The following two questions had their possible answers displayed in the format of Likert scales, a five-point scale used to measure levels of agreement or disagreement with particular statements, generating a sort of "opinion survey data".<sup>219</sup> Question four, "4. How much do you agree with the following statements?", with possible answers varying from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", focused on how much participants had: enjoyed being around people with similar interests; felt more open to meeting new people; felt they had more things in common with the people around them; felt more positive about other people; and felt a sense of community/belonging. This question aimed at measuring the level of general social engagement that the attendance to such music festivals promote, and the set of answers was based on previous research done with similar purposes.<sup>220</sup> The next question, "5.

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<sup>219</sup> Andrew C. Gould and Anthony M. Messina, *Europe's Contending Identities: Supranationalism, Ethnoregionalism, Religion, and New Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 22, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139567558>.

<sup>220</sup> Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', 72–76.

On a scale of 1 to 5, in which 1 means "a lot of impact" and 5 means "no impact at all", how much impact did your attendance at large music festivals have on how connected you feel to:", with possible answers varying from "1 - No impact at all" to "5 - A lot of impact", intended to measure the participant's level of connectedness to the audience of the festivals, the local communities of the places where the festivals happened, the people of the country(ies) in which they attended the festivals, the people of the country(ies) of the festival-goers they met in the festivals, the people of Europe and the people of the whole world. Again, the inclusion of "the people of Europe" as one among many potential answers is once more an attempt to grasp if there was any impact of the attendance to these festivals in how attendees feel their sense of belonging to Europe, without biasing the answers. These two questions will also help in separating two different potential perspectives of the social impact of festivals: an enhancement to the participants' feeling of belonging to the festival audience itself (local) versus a wider sense of community (national/transnational/global). This separation of geographic scales has been shown to be useful in previous similar research focused on place attachment.<sup>221</sup> Finally, the last question in this group has the intention of measuring the quality of such an impact, with possible answers varying from "Very negative" to "Very positive".

The next group of questions was based essentially on Eurobarometer questions in order to check the participants' self-assessed level of attachment to Europe. It was interesting for the purpose of this research to establish how the participants are generally inclined towards a European-oriented thought so as to possibly also profile them accordingly and measure different impacts of festivals in different profiles of people. The first question, "1. In general, how much would you say you feel attached to Europe?", could be answered with varied degrees from "Not at all attached" to "Very attached", as also appears in the Eurobarometer. The second, "2. Do you ever think of yourself as not only a national/citizen/resident of your country, but also as European?", could be answered with "Yes" or "No", and was further developed in the following question, "3. What do you usually see yourself as?" with varying answers: "A national/citizen/resident of my country only", "A national/citizen/resident of my country first and a European second", "A European first and a national/citizen/resident of my country second", "A European only" and "None of the above". The fourth question, "4. In general, does the idea of Europe conjure up a very positive, a fairly positive, a neutral, a fairly negative or a very negative image for you?", was also drawn

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<sup>221</sup> Gabriele Pollini, 'Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging', *International Review of Sociology* 15, no. 3 (November 2005): 510, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906700500272483>.

directly from the Eurobarometer. The final question of this group, "5. Does the free movement of people within the European Union (and the Schengen Area), including for leisure activities such as attending festivals, evoke more of a positive or negative feeling for you?", was based on the Eurobarometer question: "Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you", which included the statement "Immigration of people from other EU Member States". Considering the focus of this research in festivals, which are more emphatically linked to the free movement of people (and not necessarily immigration, as a more permanent state), the question was adapted accordingly. Similar combinations of questions from the Eurobarometer have been used before to assess levels of identification with Europe among participants in literature.<sup>222</sup>

The last group of questions (before the ones about contact/follow-up) presented six questions intended to collect personal demographic information from the respondents so as to establish their profiles through answers about their gender, age, nationality/citizenship/country of residency, level of education, employment situation. The format of the question and answer options for gender were defined in respect to recent guidelines.<sup>223</sup> The question about nationality/citizenship/residency was divided in two parts: a first one in which the respondents had to choose one country among the list of countries considered for this research to be their primary nationality answer, and an open-ended subsequent and optional question in case they would like to indicate a secondary or other nationality, citizenship or residency.<sup>224</sup>

### 5.1.2. In-depth interviews

The first of the seven questions in the in-depth interview was, "Thinking back to your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling while attending it? Did you enjoy your time there?". The intention with this question was to initiate the conversation and get the participant to talk, with an introductory and general approach about the theme. Then, a sub-question was, "How did you choose the festival(s) you attended? What were the factors that counted more on your choice?", with the intention of better understanding the motivation that makes the participants go to festivals. Following, the next sub-question was intended to understand a potential spill-over effect of the festival

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<sup>222</sup> Waqas Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects: A Quantitative Comparative Analysis' (TU Ilmenau, 2019), 20, <https://doi.org/10.22032/DBT.39483>.

<sup>223</sup> Katta Spiel, Oliver Haimson, and Danielle Lottridge, 'How to Do Better with Gender on Surveys: A Guide for HCI Researchers', *ACM Interactions*, August 2019.

<sup>224</sup> Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', 68.

experience, by asking "Do you usually share the experience with others, such as friends and family, after it happens? If so, how?".

The second question was then "Tell me about your most remarkable festival experience in Europe. In your opinion, what made it especially remarkable?". This question had the aim of being a slightly more specific question while still remaining somewhat general, in order to engage the participants' memories and potentially get answers which could mention a feeling of belonging or community, or the interactions they had within the audience. This question was followed up by more specific ones, with the intention of further prompting participants' memories and starting to engage them in reflections about these experiences: "Could you share an example or memory of an interaction within festival audiences that were particularly relevant to you?" and "In your opinion, what factors made this example particularly relevant to you?", and "How are these interactions similar or different in comparison to regular ones from your daily life?".

The following questions had the intention to generally reconnect to the survey. The first one was focused on reactivating memories of feelings about being surrounded by festival audiences: "In the first part of this research, you have mentioned [enjoying-not enjoying] being around people with similar interests during your past festival experiences. What factors do you believe helped your experience to be [positive-negative] in this regard?", followed by the next question: "In the survey, you indicated having felt [or not] more open to meeting new people during your past festival experiences. Since then, do you think this has impacted how you felt about meeting new people in your life in general?". The following question also had the intention of exploring more in detail the responses from the survey: "In the survey, you indicated feeling [or not] a sense of belonging or community during your past festival experiences. Would you say this feeling has remained with you afterwards, or has it changed in any way since then?"; and was followed up by a more specific question, attempting to understand who were the people they considered part of that sense of community ("How would you define that community? i.e. Who is that community composed of, in your understanding?"). Finally, a last question was more focused on Europe: "In the survey, you indicated feeling that the festival attendance had an impact [or not] on how you felt connected to Europe. You also indicated that this impact was generally [e.g. fairly positive]. Could you please elaborate on that?". The last question of the survey was an open space for participants to make any further remarks they considered relevant or necessary ("Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview, or are there any other issues or points that you think I may have missed while conducting it?").

## 6. Results

A total of 205 people completed the survey questionnaire, 12 of which declared themselves unfit or unwilling to participate in this research, resulting in 193 valid responses.

The demographic questions of the questionnaire provided an overview of the participants: most of them (66,84%) identified as women and 31,61% as men; with 1,04% of the participants self-identifying as non-binary and 0,52% preferring not to disclose this information. In terms of education, 52,33% of them had a Bachelor's degree, 29,02% had a Master's degree, 12,95% had a high school diploma, 2,07% had a PhD or another type of tertiary education (each), and 1,55% finished elementary school, with no respondents declaring not having finished elementary school (Figure 1). As for their employment situation, 66,32% of the participants were students; 10,36% were employed in the private sector; 8,81% were employed in the public sector; 4,66% were freelancers; 3,11% were employed in a non-profit organisation; another 3,11% were unemployed; and 3,11% answered with "Other" (Figure 2).

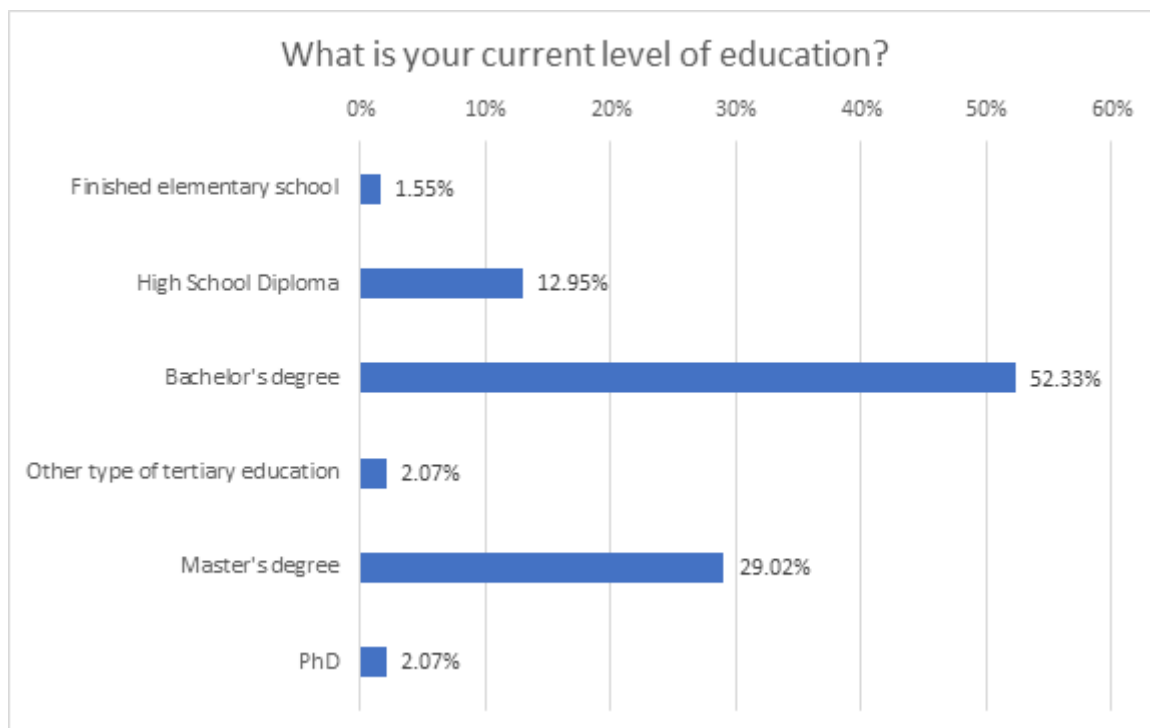


Figure 1. Survey participants' responses to question: What is your current level of education?.

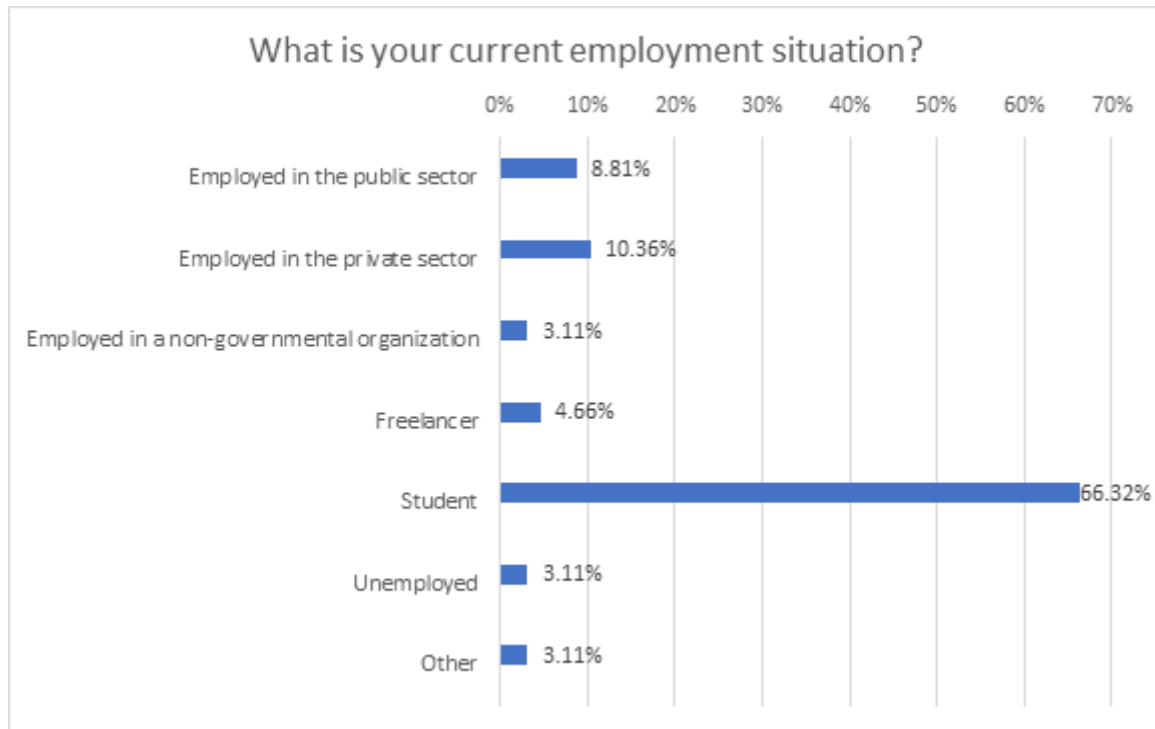


Figure 2. Survey participants' responses to question: What is your current employment situation?.

The ages of the participants were as follows: 22 (17,62%), 23 (14,51%), 21 (12,44%), 25 (10,36%), 27 (9,33%), 24 (8,29%), 20 (6,74%), 26 and 28 (each with 5,70%), 30, 31 and 32 (each with 2,07%), and 18, and 19 and 29 (1%) (Figure 3). As for their country of primary nationality/citizenship/residency, they ranked as follows: United Kingdom (32,12%), Netherlands (16,06%), Germany (8,81%), France (8,29%), Belgium (7,25%), Portugal and Ireland (each with 3,11%), Italy (2,59%), Romania (2,07%), Slovakia, Poland, Austria, Bulgaria and Estonia (each with 1,55%), Denmark, Spain and Sweden (1,04%), and Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Slovenia and Switzerland (each with 0,52%) (Figure 4).

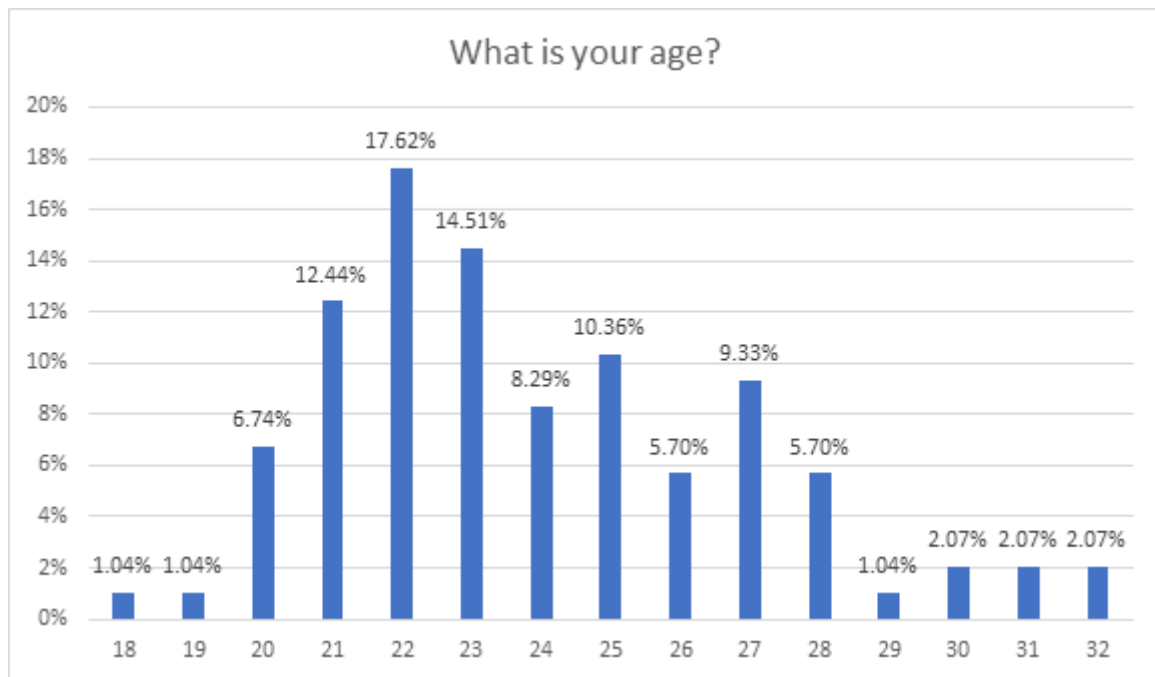


Figure 3. Survey participants' responses to question: What is your age?.



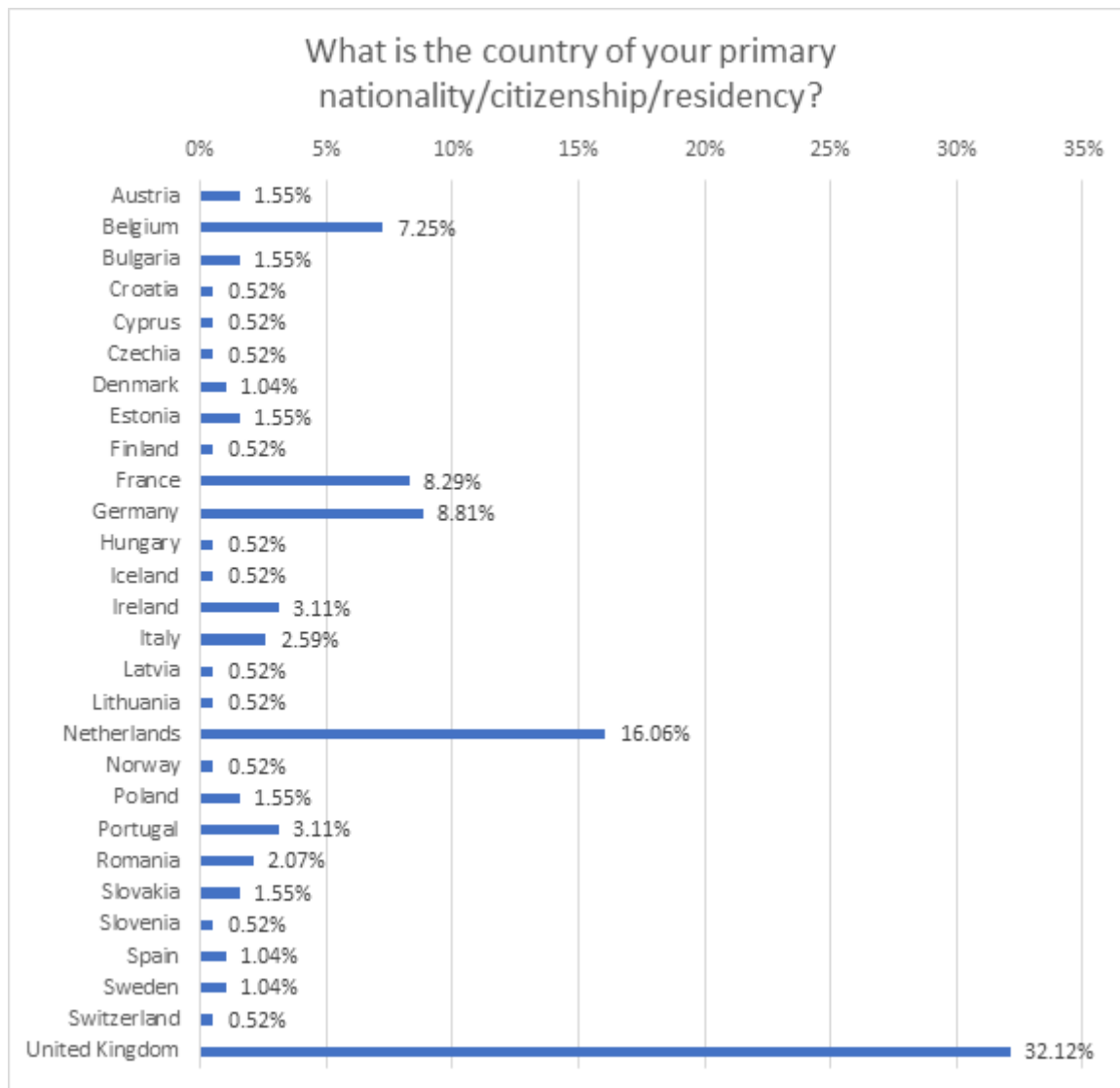


Figure 4. Survey participants' responses to question: What is the country of your primary nationality/citizenship/residency?.

As for the attachment of the participants to Europe, 49,22% of them identified as being fairly attached to Europe; 34,72% as being very attached to it; 13,47% as being not very attached; and 1,55% as being not attached at all. 1,04% did not know how to answer (Figure 5). 68,91% stated they thought of themselves as not only a national/citizen/resident of their own country but also as European, against 23,32% who stated they do not, and 7,77% who did not know (Figure 6). 55,96% declared they usually saw themselves as a national/citizen/resident of their country first and as European second; 16,58% as a national/citizen/resident of their country only; 12,95% as European first and as national/citizen/resident of their country second; and 4,15% as European only. 4,66% selected "I don't know" and 6,74% chose "None of the above" (Figure 7). A large portion of the participants (44,56%) stated that the idea of Europe conjures a fairly positive image for them

and 27,46% said it conjured a very positive image, against 15,03% declaring it to be neutral, 4,15% of fairly negative, and 0,52% of very negative images. 3,11% of the participants did not know how to answer this question (Figure 8). As for the free movement of people within the European Union space and Schengen area, 56,99% of the respondents thought it evoked a very positive feeling; 32,64% indicated a fairly positive feeling; and 4,15% said it evoked a fairly negative feeling. 6,22% of the participants did not know how to respond and no respondents selected "very negative" (Figure 9).

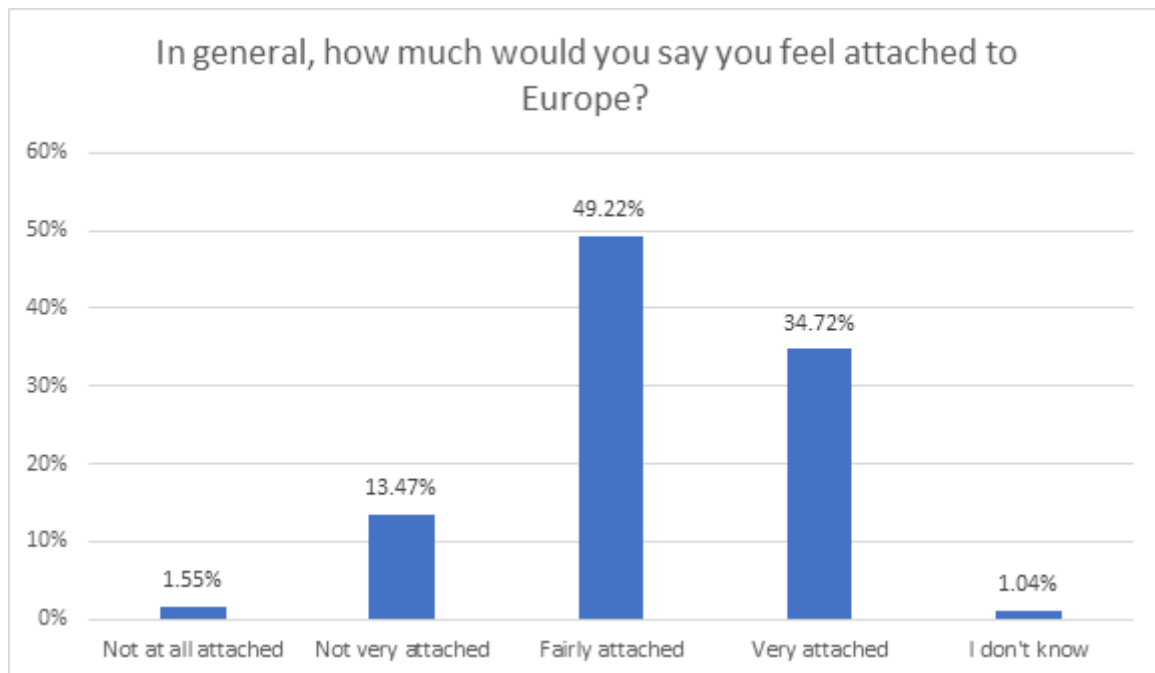


Figure 5. Survey participants' responses to question: In general, how much would you say you feel attached to Europe?.

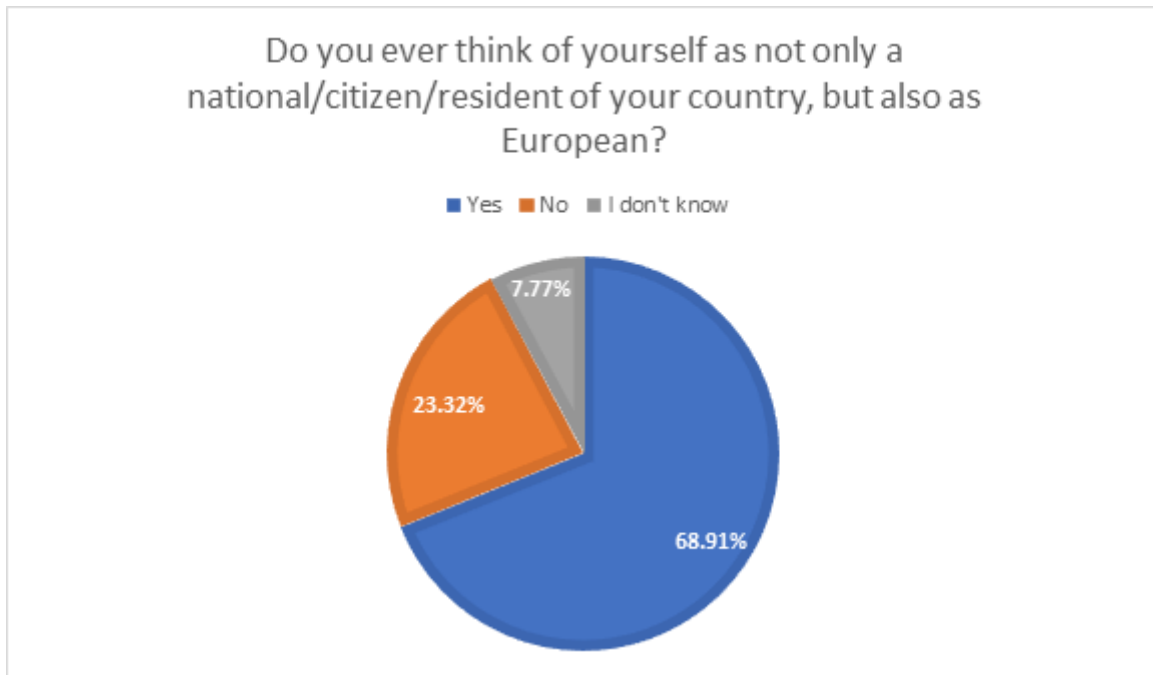


Figure 6. Survey participants' responses to question: Do you ever think of yourself as not only a national/citizen/resident of your country, but also as European?

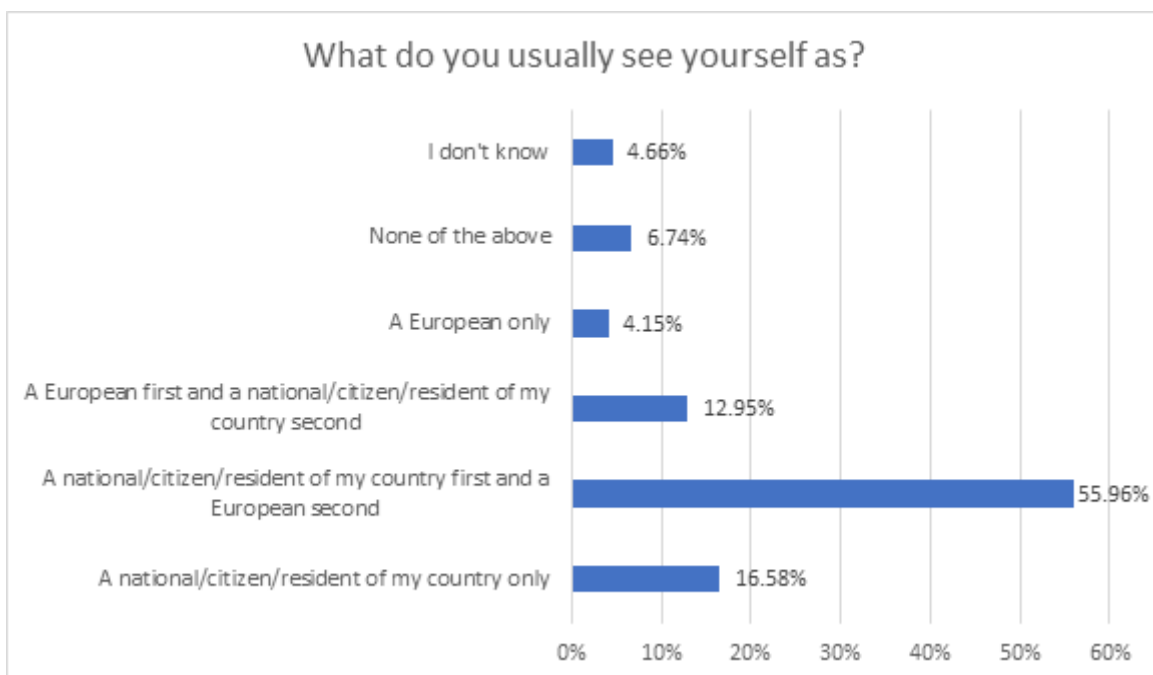


Figure 7. Survey participants' responses to question: What do you usually see yourself as?

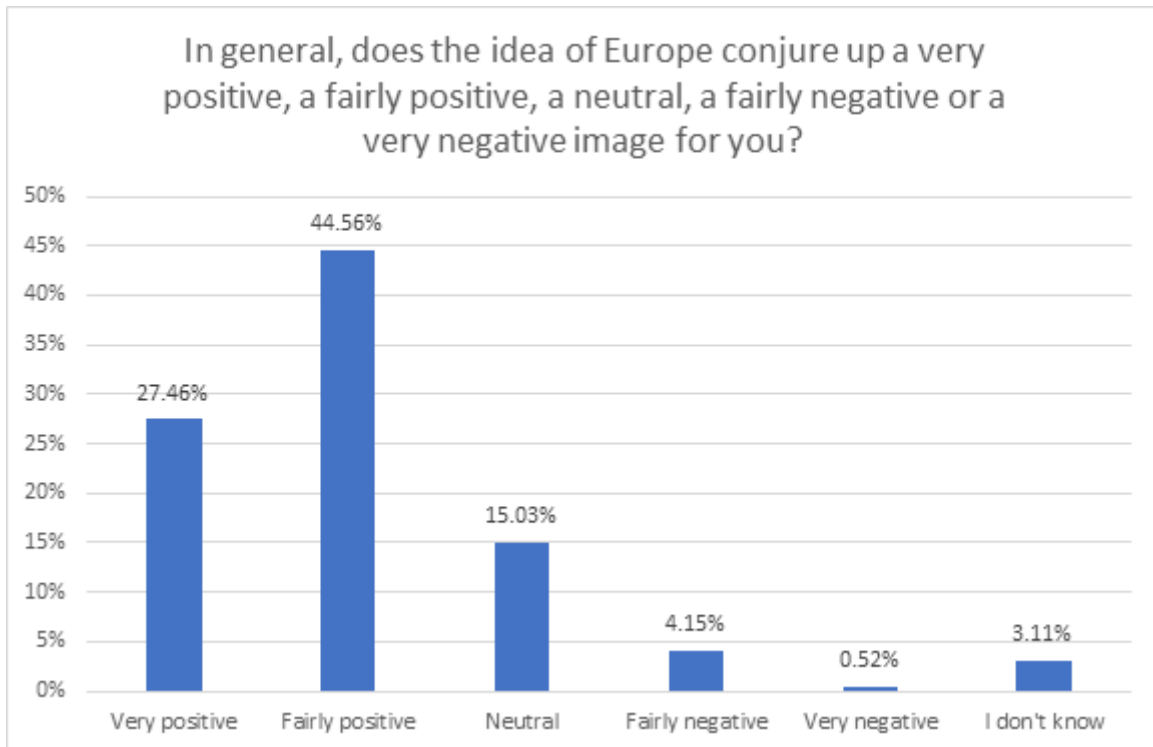


Figure 8. Survey participants' responses to question: In general, does the idea of Europe conjure up a very positive, a fairly positive, a neutral, a fairly negative or a very negative image for you?

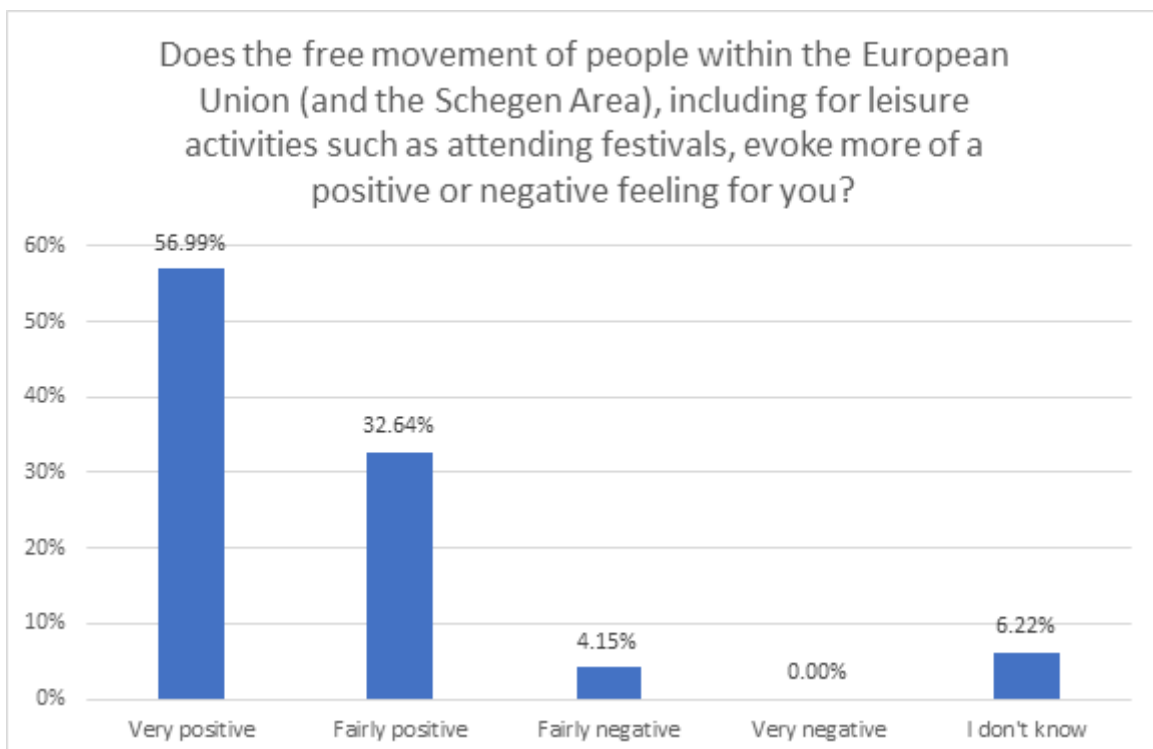


Figure 9. Survey participants' responses to question: Does the free movement of people within the European Union (and the Schengen Area), including for leisure activities such as attending festivals, evoke more of a positive or negative feeling for you?

In regard to this general participation, the first question, “Have you ever attended a large music festival in your country?”, resulted in a vast majority (91,71%) of positive responses and 8,29% of negative ones. When asked whether they had attended a festival in another European country, however, the outcome was considerably different: 65,28% of the respondents had never attended a festival abroad in Europe, while 34,72% had.

When asked about how often they had attended music festivals in the last 14 years, on average and per year, 41,45% indicated their attendance frequency was of “once every couple of years”; followed by 34,72% of the respondents who said they usually go “once or twice a year”. The next group, who answered “hardly ever”, was composed of 16,06% of the participants; and 6,74% of the respondents indicated going more than “twice a year”. The answer “none of the above” was selected by 1,04% of the participants (Figure 10).

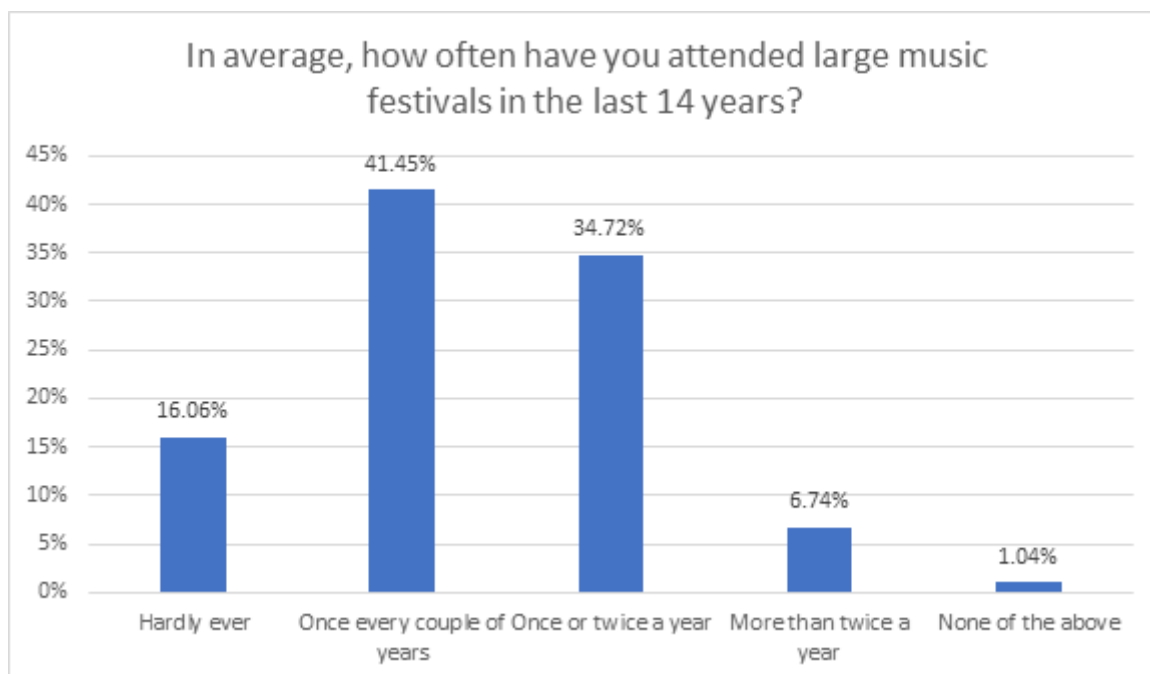


Figure 10. Survey participants’ responses to question: In average, how often have you attended large music festivals in the last 14 years?

The following question, about the length of their large music festival attendance in Europe measured by years, had 37,31% of respondents indicating they had attended festivals for 0-3 years; 26,42% indicating 4-7 years; 23,83% stating that they had only attended one festival up to their participation in the survey; 9,33% of participants having attended them for 8-11 years; and 2,59% for 12-14 years. Only one respondent (0,52%) indicated having attended festivals for over 14 years (Figure 11).

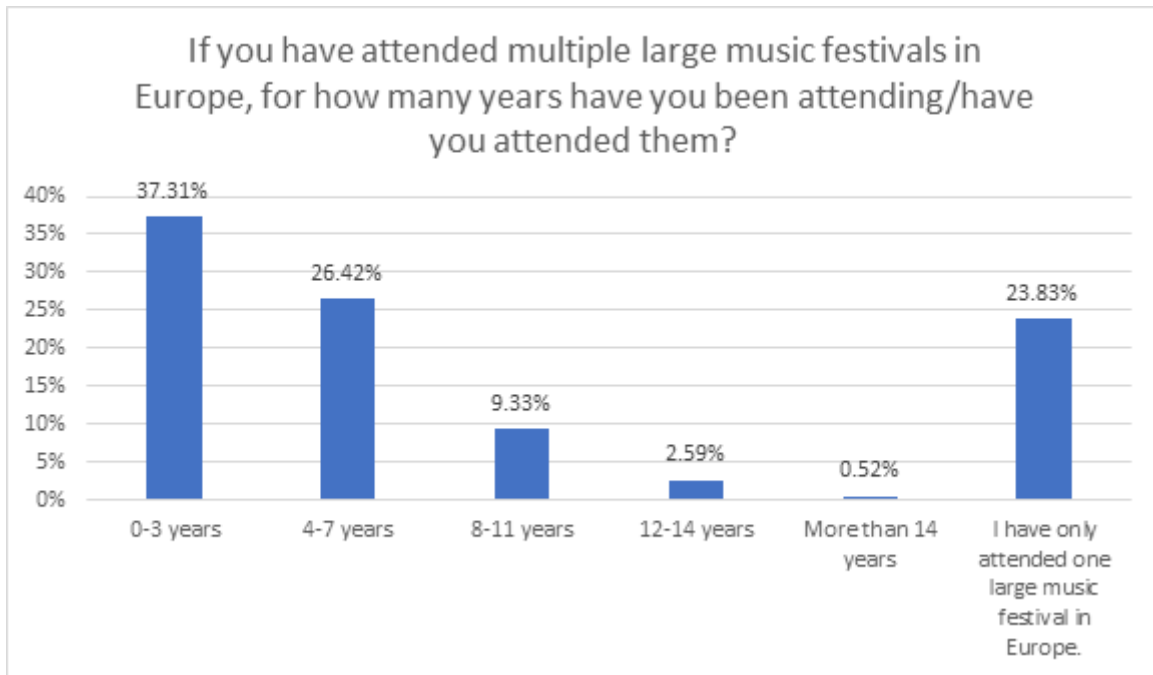


Figure 11. Survey participants' responses to question: If you have attended multiple large music festivals in Europe, for how many years have you been attending/have you attended them?

With regard to the age in which they first went to a large music festival in Europe, 36,79% stated they had started before the age of 18; followed by 26,94% who did so at the age of 18; 8,81% at the age of 19, and the same percentage for the age of 20; 8,29% at the age of 21; and 4,66% for both the ages of 22 and 23. Only 1,04% started attending such events at the age of 24, and none indicated having done so at any age older than 24 (Figure 12).

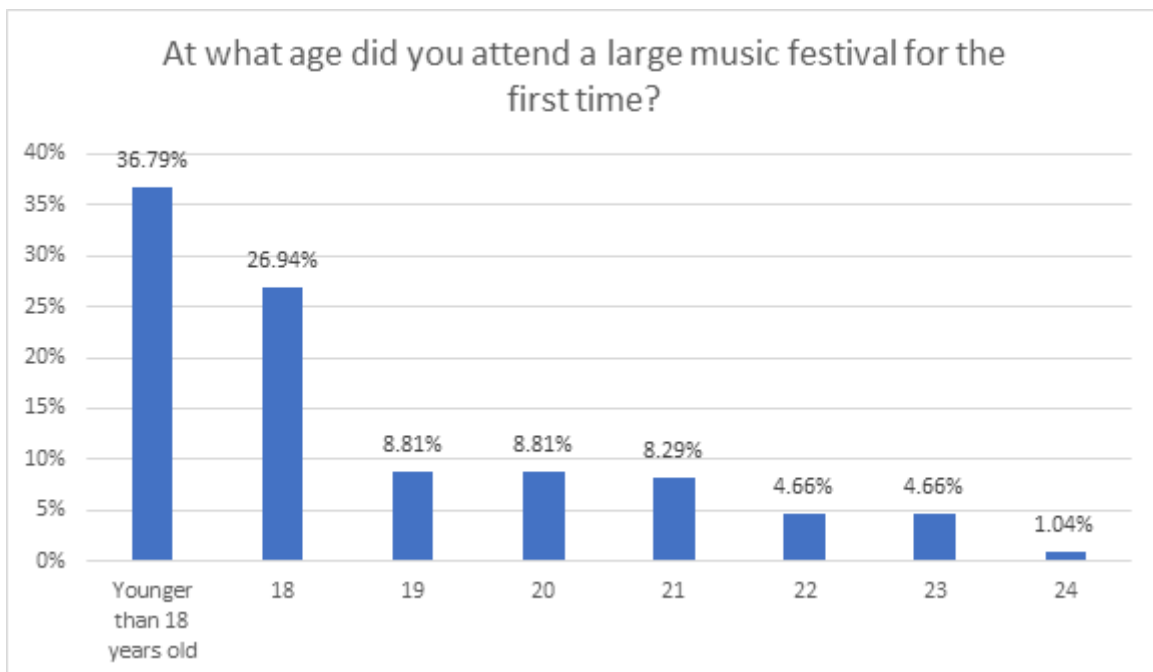


Figure 12. Survey participants' responses to question: At what age did you attend a large music festival for the first time?

36,79% of the participants said they usually go to all (three or more) days of a festival, contrasting with 29,53% who indicated they only go to one of the festival days (which is complemented by 9,33% who stated they actually prefer going to one-day festivals). 22,80% said they usually go to two or three days in a festival, and 1,55% did not know how to answer the question (Figure 13).

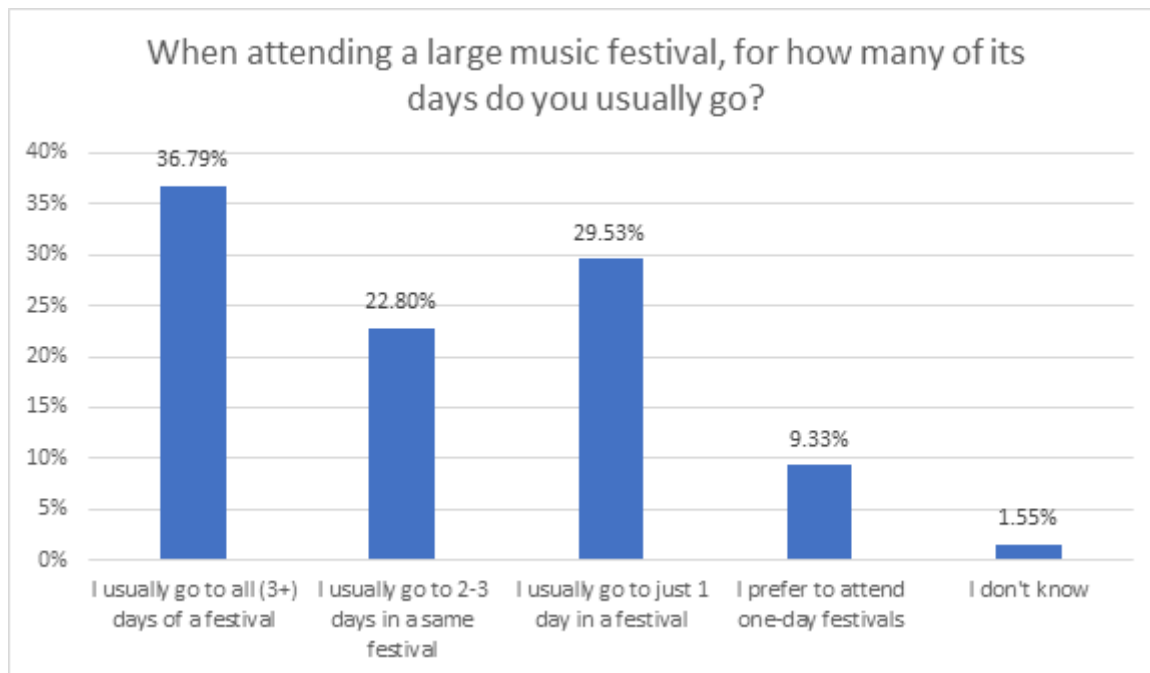


Figure 13. Survey participants' responses to question: When attending a large music festival, for how many of its days do you usually go?

The indicated primary takeaways from their festival experience were ranked in decreasing order as: entertainment (82,38% of the participants); artistic experience (58,03%); an escape of the routine (36,79%); and a sense of community building (34,20%). 1,55% of the participants indicated other primary takeaways and 0,52% answered "none of the above" (Figure 14). As for how they would describe that experience, 78,24% said it was a social experience, 47,67% said it was a personal experience, 35,75% said it was an artistic experience, and 12,95% said it was a spiritual experience. The remaining 1,04% chose "none of the above" (Figure 15).

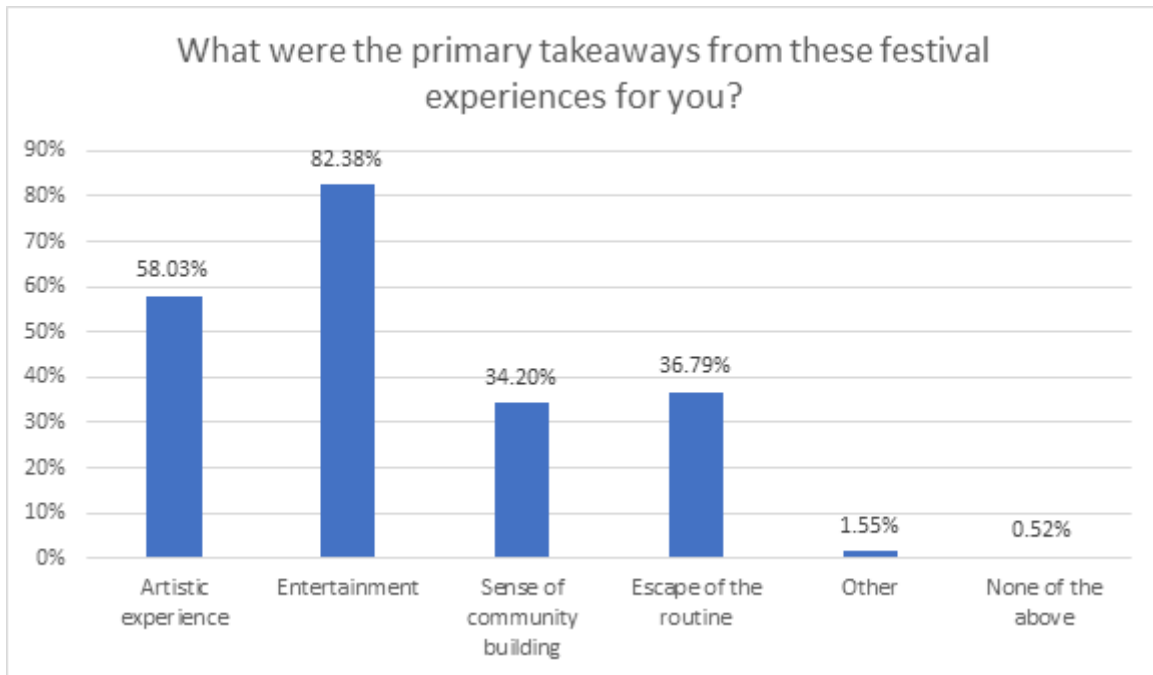


Figure 14. Survey participants' responses to question: What were the primary takeaways from these festival experiences for you?

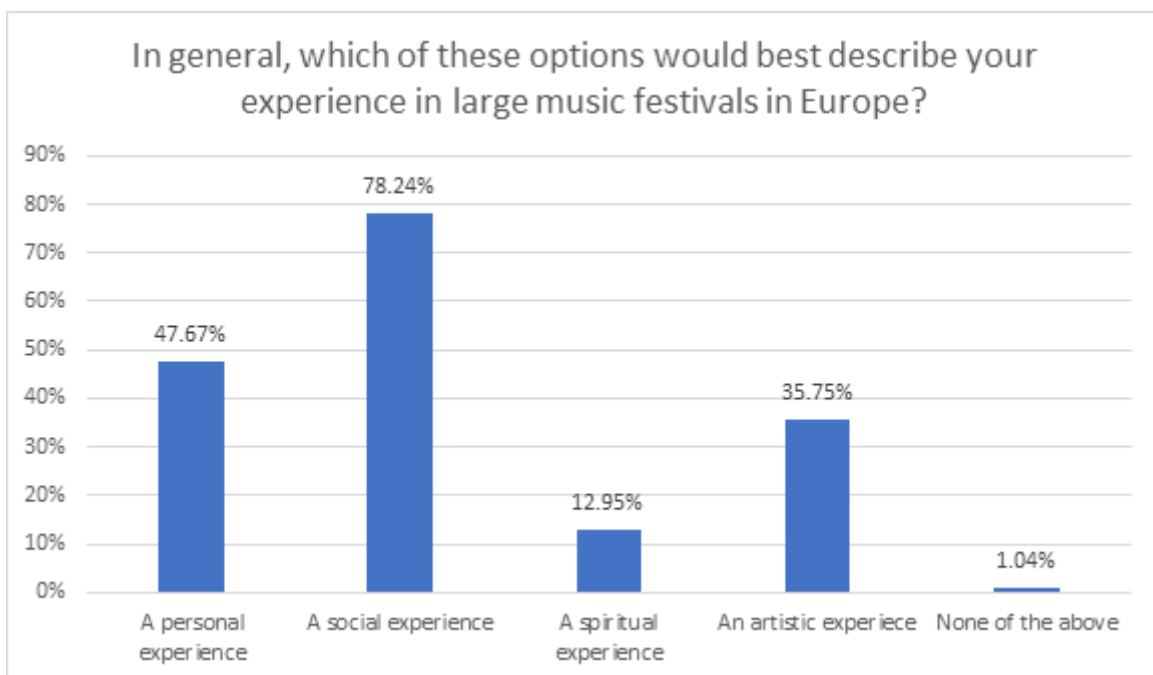


Figure 15. Survey participants' responses to question: In general, which of these options would best describe your experience in large music festivals in Europe?

When thinking about this experience from attending festivals, participants were asked whether they went to these events with the clear intention of meeting new people. To that, 14,51% said they do not; and 70,47% indicated that they do not go with that intention but unintentionally end up meeting new people. 12,44% indicated they go to festivals with the



intention of meeting new people, and 2,59% chose "none of the above/I don't know" (Figure 16).

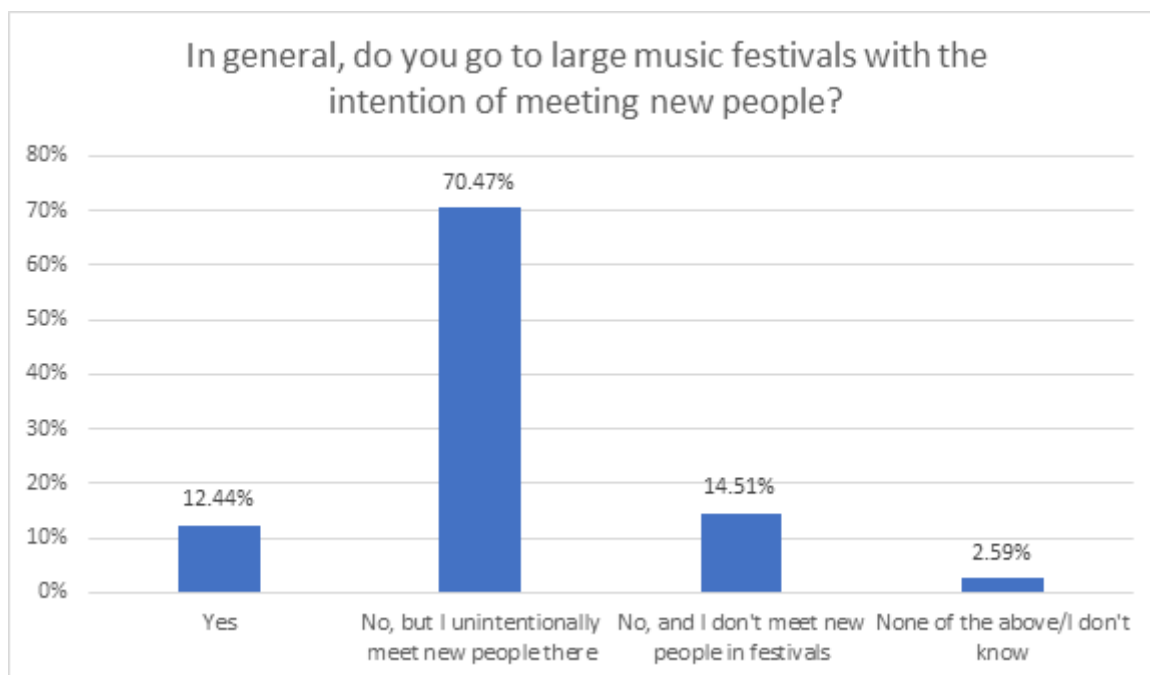


Figure 16. Survey participants' responses to question: In general, do you go to large music festivals with the intention of meeting new people?

37,31% of the respondents declared they perceived the festival audience as primarily local or national; 31,61% as equally international and local/national; 12,44% as primarily international; 7,25% as a lot more local/national - and the same percentage for "a lot more international"; and 4,15% did not know how to answer or did not observe (Figure 17). Following up with a similar question, 39,38% of the participants said they occasionally met people from other countries in their festival experience; 26,94% said they very frequently do so; 16,06% said they rarely do so; and 8,29% answered "always". "Very rarely" was the answer chosen by 5,70% of the participants, and "never" by 3,63% (Figure 18).

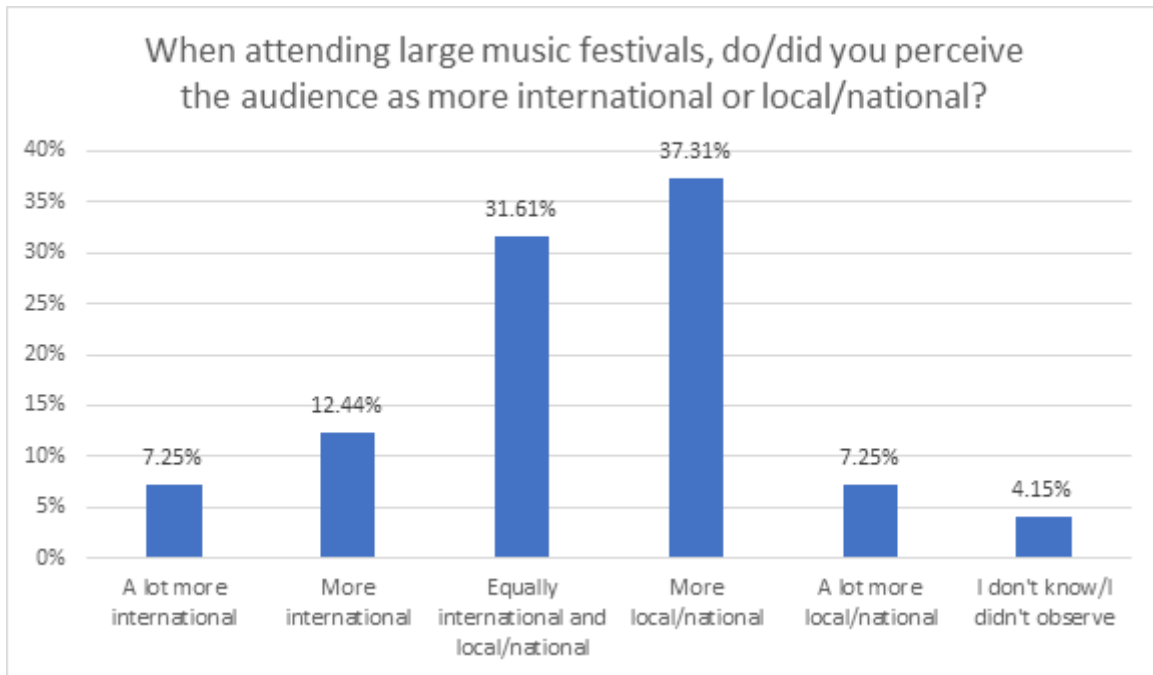


Figure 17. Survey participants' responses to question: When attending large music festivals, do/did you perceive the audience as more international or local/national?

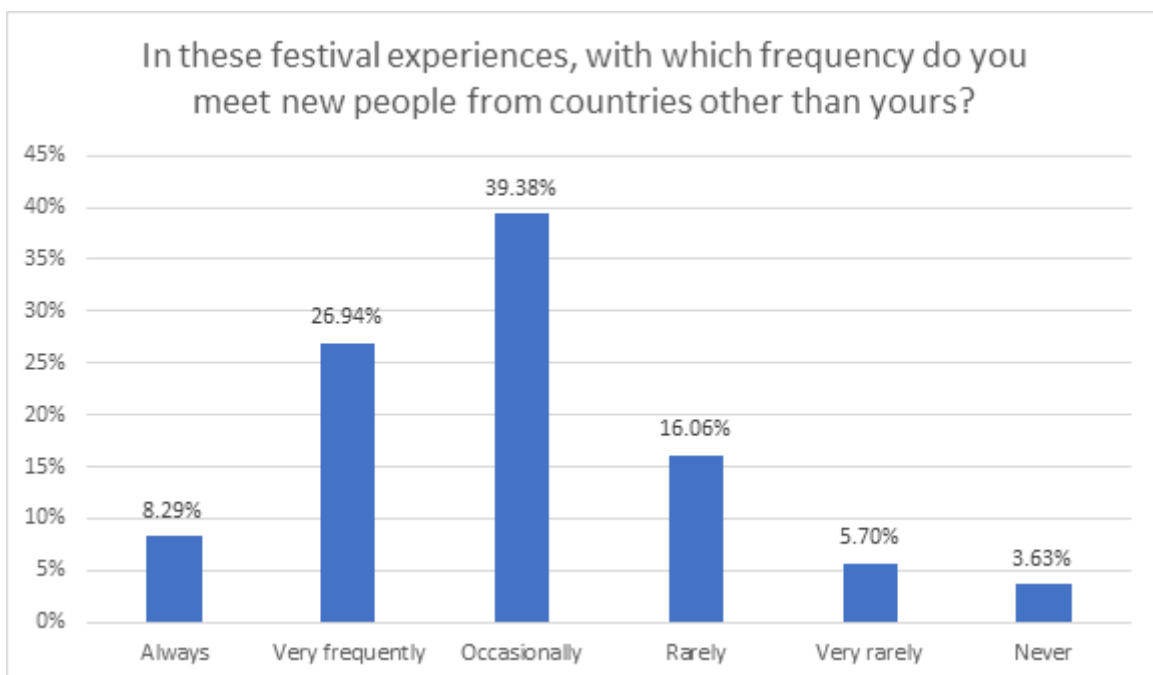


Figure 18. Survey participants' responses to question: In these festival experiences, with which frequency do you meet people from countries other than yours?

As for some of the sensations they experienced during their festival experiences, when asked if they had enjoyed being around people with similar interests, 50,26% of participants strongly agreed; 40,41% agreed; 4,15% disagreed; 2,59% strongly disagreed; and another 2,59% did not know. When asked if they felt more open to meeting new people, 32,12% strongly agreed; 51,3% agreed; 9,84% disagreed; 2,59% strongly disagreed; and

4,15% did not know. When asked if they felt they had more things in common with the people around them, 29,53% strongly agreed; 44,04% agreed; 17,10% disagreed; 3,11% strongly disagreed; and 6,22% did not know. When asked if they felt more positive about other people, 34,20% strongly agreed; 44,04% agreed; 13,99% disagreed; 2,59% strongly disagreed; and 5,18% did not know. Finally, when asked if they felt a sense of community and/or belonging, 47,15% strongly agreed; 36,79% agreed; 10,36% disagreed; 2,59% strongly disagreed; and 3,11% did not know (Figure 19).

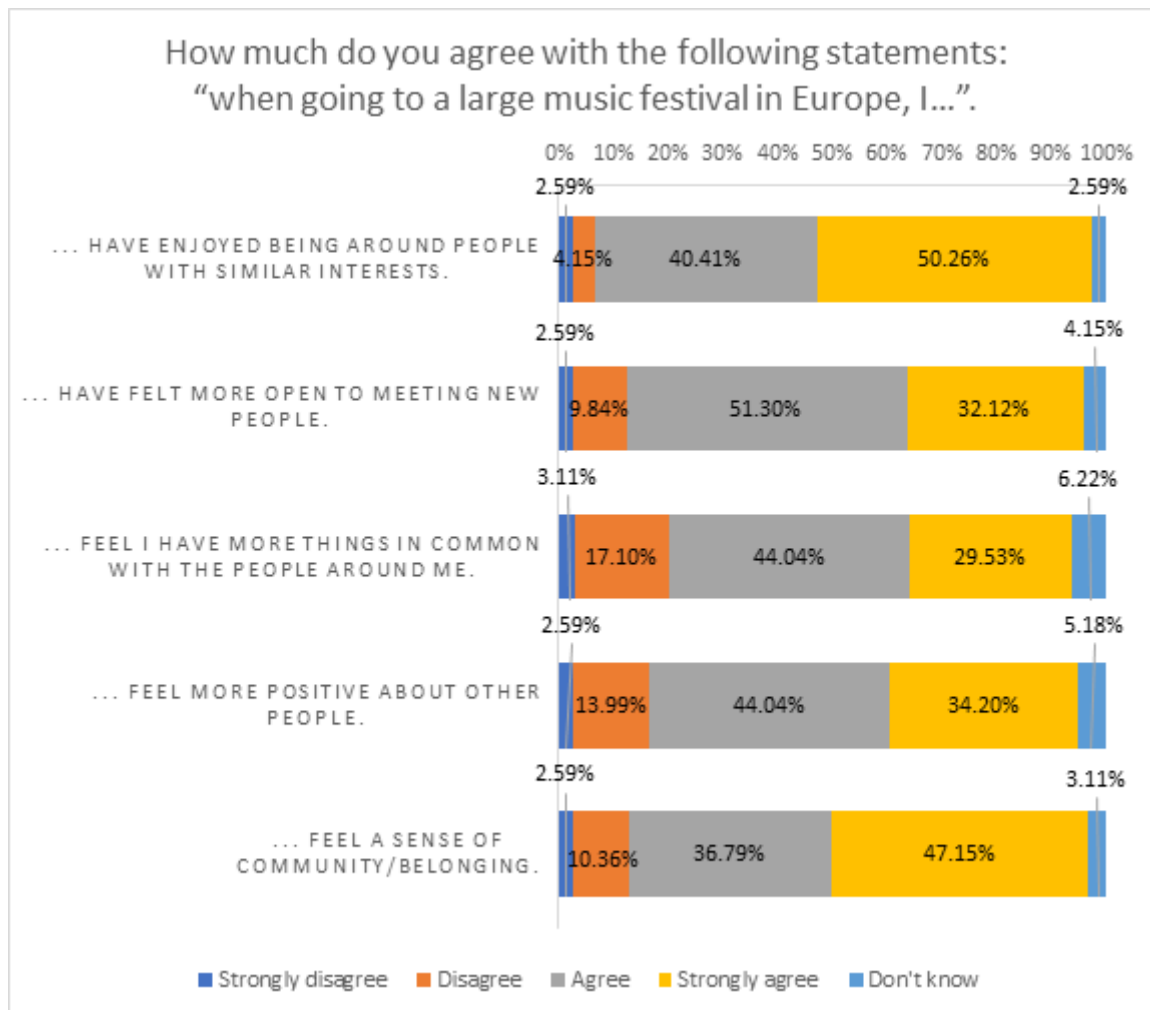


Figure 19. Survey participants’ responses to questions starting with: How much do you agree with the following statements: “when going to a large music festival in Europe, I...”

Finally, participants were asked about the impact that their festival attendance had (or not) on their feeling of connectedness to specific spheres, on a scale from 1 (no impact at all) to 5 (a lot of impact). In relation to the connectedness to the audience of the festivals, 28,50% of the respondents indicated 5; 33,16% indicated 4; 27,98% indicated 3; 7,25% indicated 2; 2,07% indicated 1; and 1,04% indicated "I don't know". In regard to the local communities of

the places where the festivals happened, a bit more than one sixth of the respondents selected 5; around one fifth selected 4; a quarter selected 3, and another quarter selected 2; 10,88% selected 1; and 1,55% selected "I don't know". As for the impact on the connectedness to the people of the country(ies) in which they attended the festival(s), 18,65% chose 5; 26,42% chose 4; 27,46% chose 3; 13,99% chose 2; 8,29% chose 1; and 5,18% chose "I don't know". When asked this question about the people of the country(ies) of the festival-goers they had met in the festival(s), if any, less than a sixth responded 5; around a quarter responded 4; a bit less than a third responded 3; less than one fifth responded 2; 6,74% responded 1; and another 6,74% responded "I don't know". As for the people of Europe, 16,06% indicated 5; 22,80% indicated 4, and another 22,80% indicated 3; 21,76% indicated 2; 11,40% indicated 1; and 5,18% indicated "I don't know". Finally, when thinking about the impact on their connectedness to the people of the whole world, less than a sixth selected 5; a bit more than a fifth selected 4; a fifth selected 3, and another fifth selected 2; less than a fifth selected 1; and 6,22% selected "I don't know" (Figure 20).

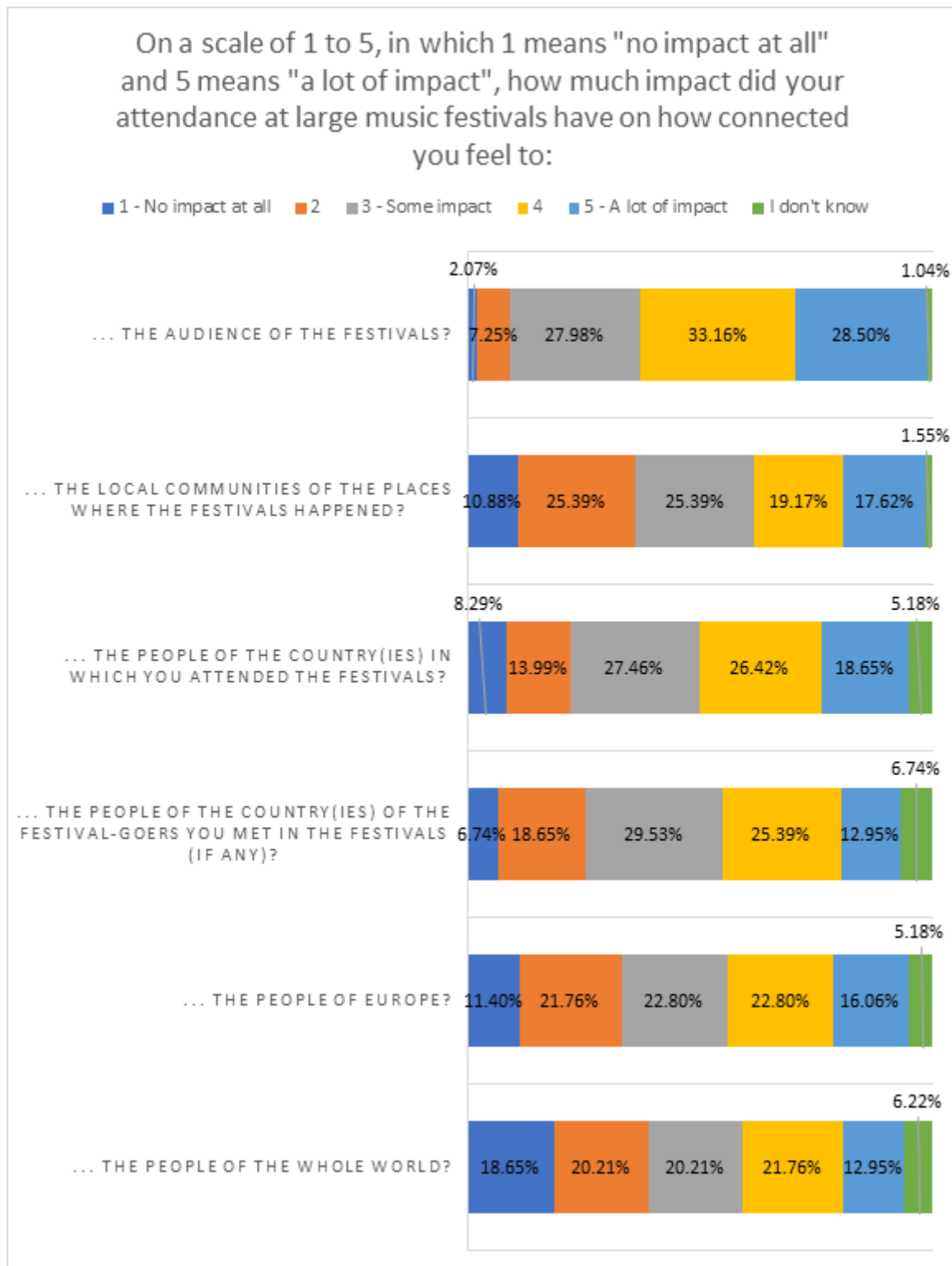


Figure 20. Survey participants' responses to questions enunciated with: On a scale of 1 to 5, in which 1 means "no impact at all" and 5 means "a lot of impact", how much impact did your attendance at large music festivals have on how connected you feel to:

As for the qualitative aspect of the impact measured with the previous question, 47,67% of the participants indicated that it was fairly positive and 39,90% indicated that it

was very positive. 5,70% did not know how to answer, 4,15% declared that there was no impact for them, 2,07% said the impact was fairly negative, and only 0,52% of the participants stated that the impact was very negative (Figure 21).

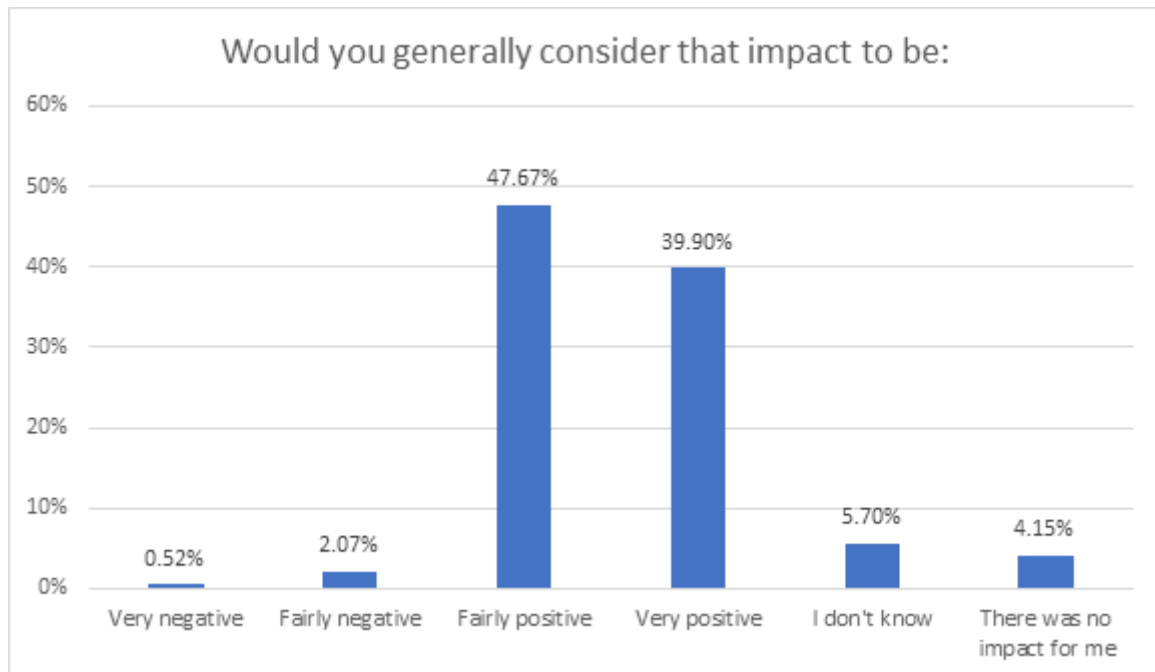


Figure 21. Survey participants' responses to the question enunciated with: Would you generally consider that impact to be:

## 7. Analysis and discussion

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. These possible indicators are explored in deeper detail in this chapter.

### 7.1. *Gender*

One interesting aspect to be discussed in regard to the general pool of participants is the considerable difference between participants who identified as male and as female, with 35,2% more participants identifying as female - the difference by itself being already bigger than the percentage of male participants (31,6%). This gender difference could be speculated as being a result of a theoretical biased behaviour determined by gender: as has been indicated by academic research, "females are more likely to engage in online activity characterized by communication and exchanging of information whereas males are more likely to engage in online activity characterized by seeking of information".<sup>225</sup> It might also be that the online platforms of survey exchange used to engage participants for this survey could have more female than male users, but that information is not accessible to the general public and therefore can only be speculated.

### 7.2. *Age*

When observing the participants' age groups, it can be relevant to mention that more than half (52,9%) of the participants in the survey were aged between 21 and 24. This could be due to the strategy of pooling for survey respondents, which included websites in which academic students could exchange points by participating in surveys by other student researchers. The average age of these participants, therefore, would logically coincide with the ages of higher education students who are developing research, i.e. in the final years of undergraduate and more emphatically in their Master's studies. This would make sense given that the average

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<sup>225</sup> William G. Smith, 'Does Gender Influence Online Survey Participation?: A Record-Linkage Analysis of University Faculty Online Survey Response Behaviour' (San José State University, June 2008), 13, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED501717.pdf>.

age of Master's students is around 20 to 26 years,<sup>226</sup> and it would also be reasonable with the 66,32% of the general participants in this survey declaring to be students.

### 7.3. *General level of attachment to Europe*

Considering the 49,22% of answers being "fairly attached" and 34,72% as being "very attached" when asked about Europe, it could be fair to say that the general pool of participants in this research leans more towards a positive view of Europe than the other way around - a deduction that is further reinforced by the result of the following question, with 68,91% declaring thinking of themselves as not only a national/citizen/resident of their own country but also as European. This aspect of the participants becomes even more clear in the following question, with 44,56% of the responses being that the idea of Europe conjured a fairly positive image for them and 27,46% responding with a very positive image.

In the process of trying to identify potential indicators within the results of this survey, this general inclination of participants towards a positive view of Europe and a feeling of attachment to it raises a relevant discussion. In an attempt to understand the relation between their festival attendance experience and their feeling of community or belonging to Europe, this positive attachment to Europe could be considered from two perspectives: 1) as a possible pre-existing condition that could be more present within festival attendees, and even potentially impacting on their proneness to attend such festivals; or 2) that their festival experience had an impact on their attachment to Europe, which would go more in line with the main hypothesis of this research. A third way would also be possible, in which both possibilities are valid, sometimes even for the same person, working in a cyclic manner; and a fourth possibility could suggest that people who feel more attached to Europe could be more prone to participate in the kind of survey employed here. In order to understand the cause-consequence relation of these two characteristics, however, further research would be necessary.

When contemplating potential patterns in terms of the countries of origin of the participants who expressed a lower level of attachment to Europe, it could be relevant to add that, within the 29 participants who stated being "not at all attached" or "not very attached" to Europe, 15 (51,72%) were from the United Kingdom, followed quite distantly by Belgium and the Netherlands with 3 participants each (10,34%). From the 45 who declared not ever

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<sup>226</sup> 'What Is the Average Age of MSc Students?', Rotterdam School of Management Erasmus University, 19 September 2019, <https://www.rsm.nl/shared-content/masters/frequently-asked-questions/faq-item/1020-what-is-the-average-age-of-msc-students/.eras>



thinking of themselves as Europeans in addition to being from their own countries, 30 (66,67%) were from the United Kingdom, also followed distantly by Belgium (4 participants, 8,89%). Among the 33 who identified themselves as a national/citizen/resident of their country only (and not European first or second), 22 (66,67%) were from the United Kingdom, with the Netherlands in second (5 participants, 15,15%). The United Kingdom and Belgium had two participants each (22,22%) among the 9 participants who stated having a fairly negative or a very negative image of Europe, with other countries having only one participant each expressing the same (Portugal, Poland, Czechia, Sweden and the Netherlands). And finally, among the 8 participants who declared that the idea of free movement within the European Union and the Schengen Area conjured a fairly negative feeling for them (since no one declared having a very negative feeling about that), the United Kingdom, Bulgaria and Estonia all have two participants each (25%), and the remaining two participants are from Austria and Belgium. The average age of participants in all these comparisons did not change significantly from one group to the other, and the average level of education was only significantly different between the two groups who declared that the idea of free movement within the EU and the Schengen Area conjured either a very/fairly positive or a fairly negative feeling for them (the first group averaging 3,22 on educational levels and the second 2,62 on a scale from 1 to 5 - in which 1 was equivalent to “Finished elementary school” and 5 to “PhD”). This small impact of education has been the focus of research that goes beyond the scope of this research, and has already been found to be "either irrelevant or merely slightly influential" on levels of attachment to the EU.<sup>227</sup>

Logically, the higher incidence of responses indicating a higher level of detachment from Europe being frequently from participants from the United Kingdom is partially due to the fact that this country is also the most largely represented in terms of nationality/citizenship/residency within the general pool; but some percentages shown here are higher than the portion of participants from the United Kingdom in the general pool (32,12%). As will be detailed in this chapter, this could be due to the fact that the population of the United Kingdom ranks third among the countries with the highest levels of detachment from Europe/the European Union, in the Barometer. This lower attachment to Europe and the European Union was also stressed with the Brexit political movement, which despite a somewhat controversial turnout of less than 75% of the total population, still had at least half

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<sup>227</sup> Bettina Westle and Roman Graf Buchheim, ‘National and European Identification — Their Relationship and Its Determinants’, in *European Identity in the Context of National Identity*, ed. Bettina Westle and Paolo Segatti (Oxford University Press, 2016), 127, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198732907.003.0004>.

of the voters expressing their preference for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.<sup>228</sup> In the festival context, furthermore, it could be theorised that the detachment in relation to Europe could also have to do with the geographical condition of the United Kingdom, which, being an island, offers more difficulty for those who want to go to other European countries (with the obvious exception of Ireland) than for the European peoples who live in the continent.

#### 7.4. *Key results: sense of community, social impact*

Specific questions within this survey were more directly focused towards attempting to verify whether the festival experience had direct impact on how participants felt in relation to aspects of social relations and community-building or belonging. For instance, a little over a third of the general pool (34,20%) declared feeling "a sense of community building" as one of the primary takeaways from their large music festival experience in Europe, along with other possibilities listed as options. Moreover, a vast majority of 78,24% of the respondents chose "a social experience" as one of the best options to describe their festival experience, being the most popular answer within this question by a difference of 30,57% from the option which ranked second. These two results together could potentially indicate that, within the participants of this survey, a community feeling was perhaps not as present in their festival experiences, but the social aspect of it was, more often than not - in interaction with already established friends, possibly, but also in new connections made with people they meet in the festivals, as clarified in the next question.

In a more practical approach, this next question about whether participants went to music festivals with the intention to meet new people brought a result of 82,91% declaring that they either met new people intentionally or unintentionally in these contexts. Moreover, 75,03% of the participants stated that they always, very frequently or occasionally meet people from different countries than theirs in festivals; against 25,39% who stated rarely, very rarely, or never doing so. The combination of these two results brings the possibility to suggest that, for the majority of the participants of this research, the act of meeting new people from different countries is considerably common in their festival experience, reinforcing the social aspect of it highlighted in the previous questions. Additionally, it can be relevant to observe this prevalence of interactions with foreigners even though the majority of the participants of the survey indicated not having traveled to attend a festival in a different

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<sup>228</sup> 'EU Referendum Results', BBC News, 2020, [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/eu\\_referendum/results.eu](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/eu_referendum/results.eu)

country, which would bring the aspect of interactions with Europeans from other countries to happen most frequently in their own countries.

Concerning general feelings when attending large music festivals in Europe, 83,42% of the participants declared either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they felt more open to meeting new people; 73,57% described strongly agreeing or agreeing that they felt like they had more things in common with people around them; 78,24% stated that they strongly agreed or agreed that they felt more positive about other people; and 83,94% strongly agreed or agreed that they felt a sense of community and/or belonging. These four results indicate strong majorities within the participants of this survey in feeling like the large music festivals they attended were environments in which interactions with strangers and a general feeling of positive openness to others are facilitated.

61,66% of the participants answered that their festival experience had between "some impact" and "a lot of impact" in how they felt connected to Europe, an observable difference appearing in relation to the same answers about the audiences of these festivals (89,64%), the people from the country(ies) in which they attended the festival(s) (72,53%), or the people from the whole world (54,92%). This result is especially interesting to observe given that, when asked about the quality of such impact, 87,57% of the participants generally described it as either "fairly positive" or "very positive".

However, whether this impact and the majoritarily stated sense of community and/or belonging are related to the participants feeling of connectedness to Europe is debatable. This uncertainty is due to the fact that only 38,88% of them indicated high levels (4 and 5) of impact in their connectedness to Europe, a percentage considerably lower than the sphere of the festival audiences themselves (61,66%) and of the people of the countries where they attended the festivals (45,07%) but in close proximity with other social groups (local communities - 36,79%, people of the countries of the festival-goers they met - 38,34%, and people of the whole world - 34,71%). On the other hand, it could be speculated that there might be a "subconscious" connectedness to Europe promoted within the festival environments reported here since the majority of the participants stated meeting people from other European countries in their experiences; and if their experiences also made them feel more connected to the festival audiences, it could logically result that this feeling includes audience members from other European countries.

### 7.5. Profiles

In order to verify if filtering different participant profiles provided any difference on the results of the survey, two participant profiles were established and filtered from the general pool. The first one filtered participants who were understood to have a more intense attachment to Europe, as established by filtering their answers to the five questions based on the Eurobarometer; and the second profile filtered participants who were understood to be more frequent festival attendees, as established by filtering their answers to the two questions about the length and frequency of their festival attendance experience. Further details on such filterings are explained under each profile section.

These two profiles were conceived due to their relevance to the general research topic and hypothesis. Both profiles were considered here because of their potential differences in results, especially within questions that dealt with their feeling of community/belonging connected to their festival experience. First, in case the "Pro-Europe" profile indicated a more emphatic feeling of community/belonging within their festival experience, it could be hypothesised that: a) their pre-existing behaviour and positive attitude towards other European countries could lead to a higher proneness to connecting within the festival environment; and/or b) their festival experience and social interactions within that context had an impact on how open to the idea of Europe (and other European countries/peoples) they became; and/or c) that their preexisting openness towards the difference would make them more likely to attend a festival in the first place. As for the second profile, of "Frequent festival goer", its filtered results could potentially indicate a difference in the impact of the festival attendance on their feeling of community/belonging in comparison to the general pool that could potentially be a consequence of their larger festival experience. For both profiles, the filtering and comparison to the general pool has the aim of checking whether the extremities of these two social groups present impact on the results about their sense of community/belonging as part of their festival experience.

The differences considered as indicatives of a potential impact from these profiles in this research paper are of around 10% to 15%.

#### 7.5.1. Profile I: Pro-Europe

Participants who were considered as part of the "Pro-Europe" profile answered that they feel "very attached" when answering the question "In general, how much would you say you feel attached to Europe?". They also stated that they do think of themselves as not only a national/citizen/resident of their countries, but also as European; and that they either saw

themselves as a national/citizen/resident of their country first and a European second, a European first and a national/citizen/resident of their country second, or a European only. As for how they felt about the idea of Europe and the free movement within the European Union/Schengen Area, they answered either "very positive" or "fairly positive". With those filters in place, the pool of "Pro-Europe" participants was made up of 49 respondents, representing 25,38% of the general total.

In regard to the "Pro-Europe" demographic profile, there were two questions which presented results with at least around 10% of difference in comparison to the general pool. First, the general pool had 32,12% of its participants as nationals/citizens/residents in the United Kingdom, whereas the "Pro-Europe" pool had 10,20% (Figure 22). This decrease in their representativeness goes in line with recent findings from the Eurobarometer 92, of December 2019 (the last one in which the United Kingdom participated), which indicated the UK as the third country in which the population declares to be the least attached to the European Union, behind only of Greece and Czechia,<sup>229</sup> two countries which had only zero and one participant taking part in this research, respectively.

Finally, in terms of their level of education, 52,33% of the general participants declared having a Bachelor's degree and 29,02% a Master's degree, as opposed to 36,73% and 51,02% within the "Pro-Europe" profile, respectively (Figure 23). These higher educational levels could theoretically be suggested as being related to long-standing scientific literature that endorses that education and Euroscepticism are inversely proportional; however, recent findings question this hypothesis<sup>230</sup> which is beyond the scope of this research.

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<sup>229</sup> European Commission, 'Eurobarometer', Eurobarometer (Brussels: European Commission, December 2019), 12, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2255>.

<sup>230</sup> Sander Kunst, Theresa Kuhn, and Herman G van de Werfhorst, 'Does Education Decrease Euroscepticism? A Regression Discontinuity Design Using Compulsory Schooling Reforms in Four European Countries', *European Union Politics* 21, no. 1 (1 March 2020): 24–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116519877972>.

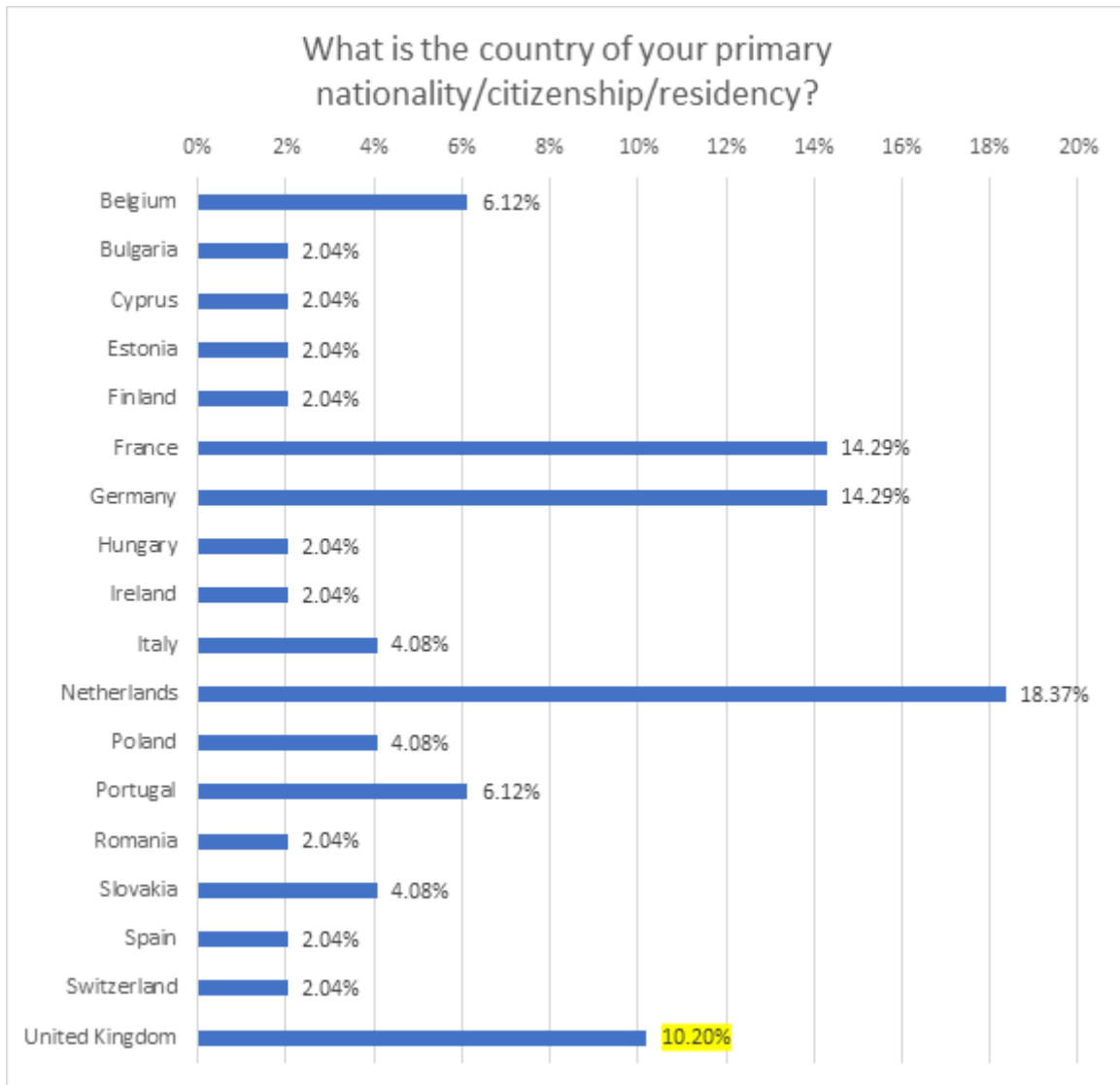


Figure 22. "Pro-Europe" pooled participants' responses to the question: What is the country of your primary nationality/citizenship/residency?

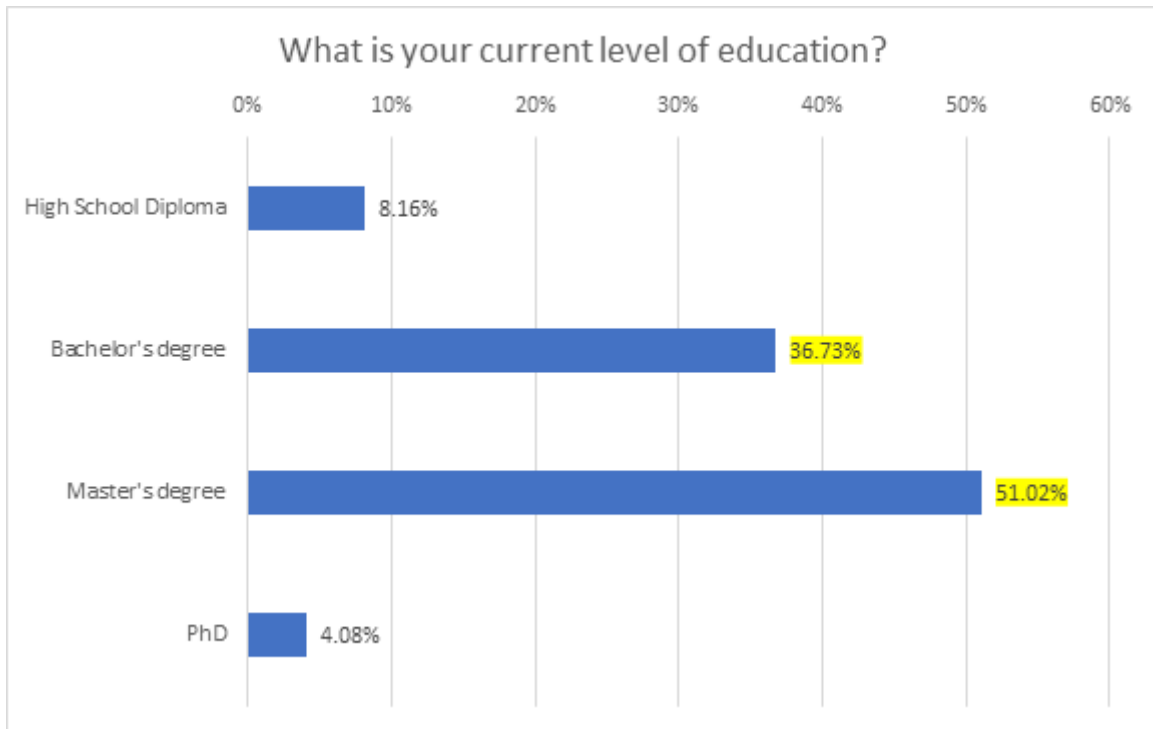


Figure 23. "Pro-Europe" pooled participants' responses to the question: What is your current level of education?

Following the order of the survey questions, the first difference in results that can be noticed is within the answers to the question "In average, how often have you attended large music festivals in the last 14 years?". While within the general pool of participants only 16,06% answered "hardly ever", the "Pro-Europe" profile had 26,53% of its respondents choosing that option (Figure 24). This finding could put into perspective whether the festival attendance could have impacted participants' feelings of belonging to Europe, since it brings to the forefront that the ones most attached to Europe are also less frequently attending festivals than the general participants.

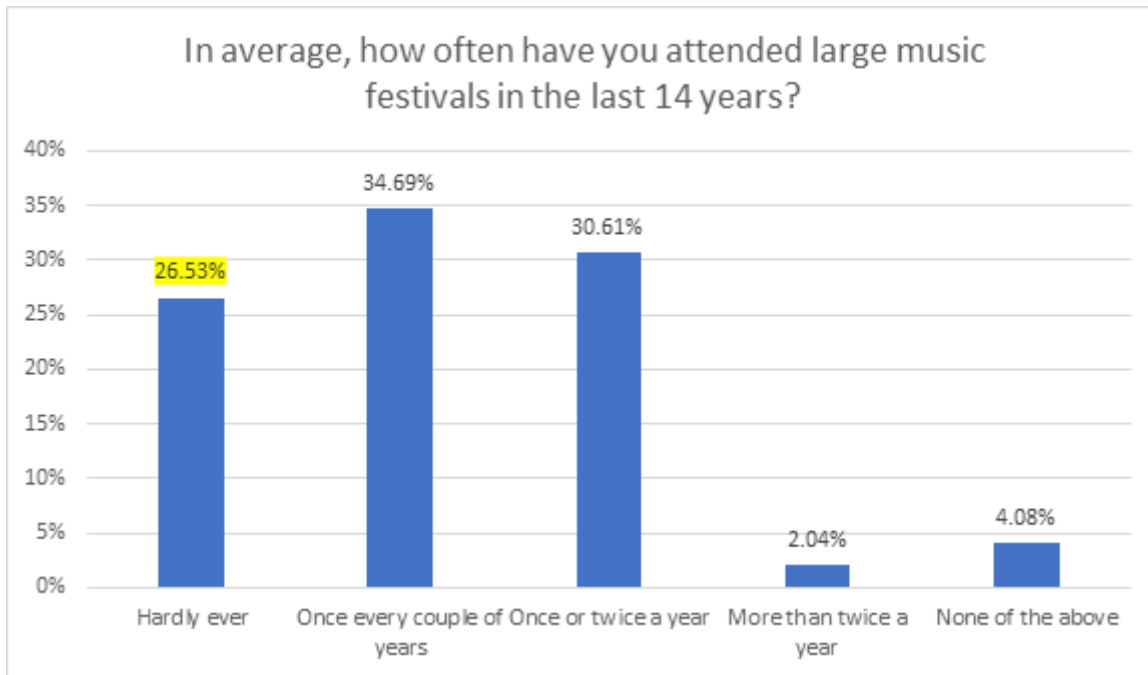


Figure 24. "Pro-Europe" pooled participants' responses to the question: In average, how often have you attended large music festivals in the last 14 years?

The next question within which a difference can be noticed in the results is "In general, do you go to large music festivals with the intention of meeting new people?". Within the general pool, 41,45% answered "No, but I unintentionally meet new people there" and 14,51% answered "No, and I don't meet new people in festivals", against 59,18% and 24,49% of the "Pro-Europe" participants, respectively (Figure 25). This result makes the hypothesis of festivals boosting feelings of connectedness to Europe even more uncertain, since it highlights that participants of the "Pro-Europe" profile are less prone to meeting new people in festivals than the general participants, decreasing the potentiality of a sense of community-building in these contexts.



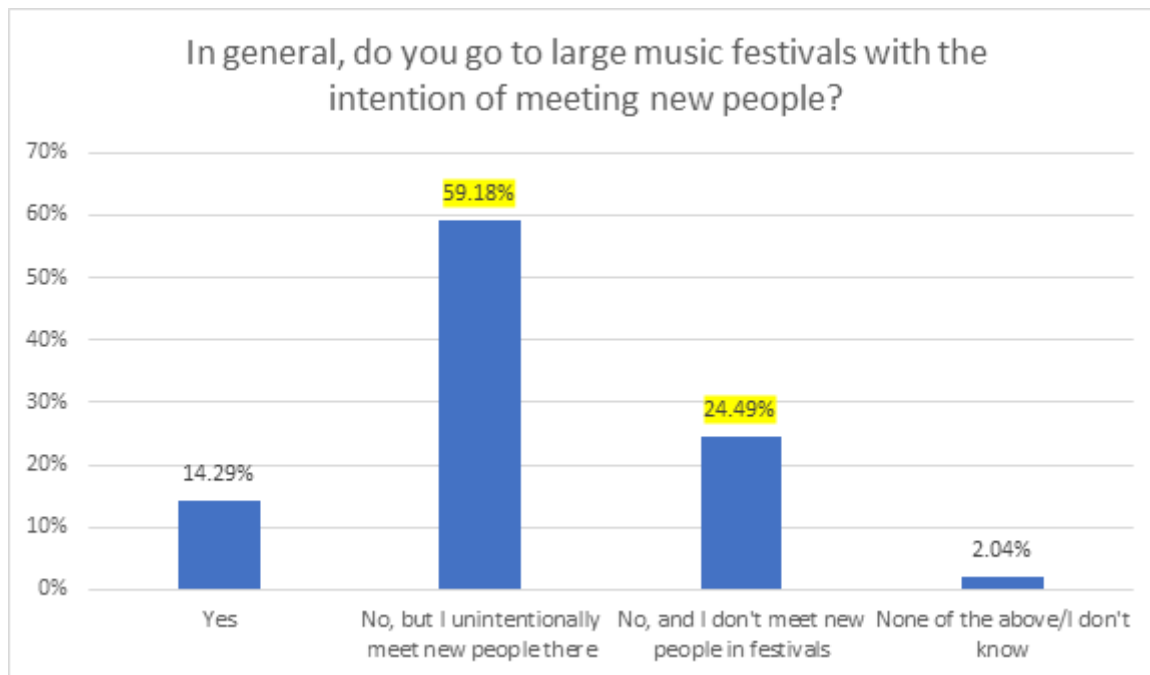


Figure 25. "Pro-Europe" pooled participants' responses to the question: In general, do you go to large music festivals with the intention of meeting new people?

When asked about their level of agreement with how they felt about five different aspects of their experience, the "Pro-Europe" profiled participants chose responses that presented some potentially indicative differences to the general pool. These differences appeared in regard to feeling they had more things in common with the people around them (38,78% strongly agreeing and 32,65% agreeing, compared to 29,53% and 44,04% in the general pool, respectively); and feeling more positive about other people (44,90% strongly agreeing and 30,61% agreeing, in comparison to 34,20% and 44,04% in the general pool, respectively) (Figure 26). As for the impact that the festival attendance had on their feeling of connectedness to six different groups of people, the only difference of around or over 10% appeared in the portion of the group that chose that they felt almost no impact (level 2) in their connectedness to the people of Europe (12,24% in the "Pro-Europe" pool, as opposed to 21,76% in the general one) (Figure 27). However, the entirety of the resulting percentages in regard to their feeling of connectedness to Europe shows that the "Pro-Europe" pool was more prone than the general participants to indicate a higher level of impact, since this difference is somewhat compensated also for respondents who chose level 5, or "a lot of impact" (16,06% in the general pool opposed to 22,45% in the "Pro-Europe" pool).

Finally, when asked about the quality of that impact, the answers from the "Pro-Europe" profile pool differ in around or above 10% from the general pool in the options

"fairly positive" (32,65%, against 47,67% in the general pool) and "very positive" (53,06% against 39,90% in the general pool) (Figure 28).

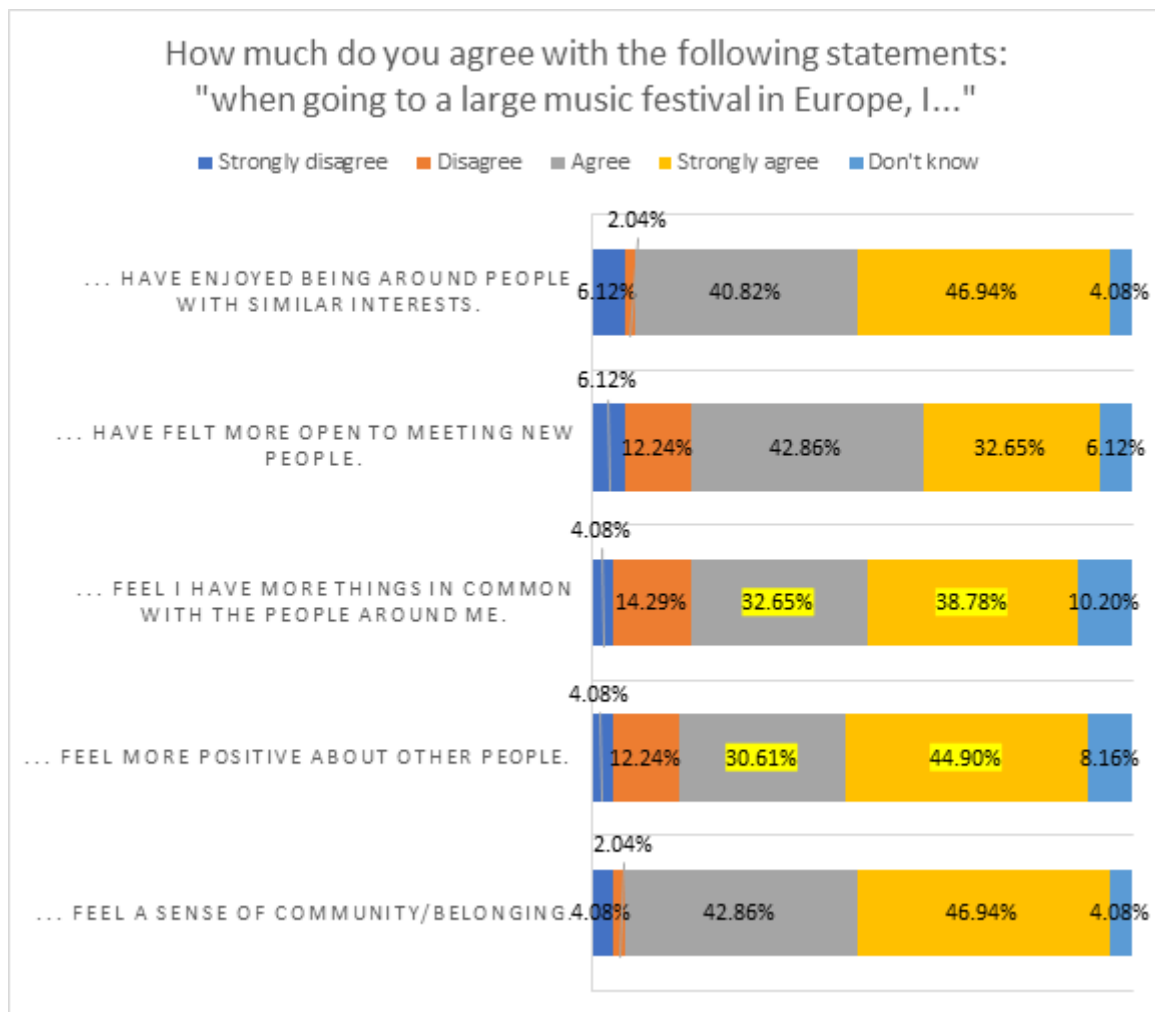


Figure 26. "Pro-Europe" pooled participants' responses to the questions enunciated with: How much do you agree with the following statements: "when going to a large music festival in Europe, I..."

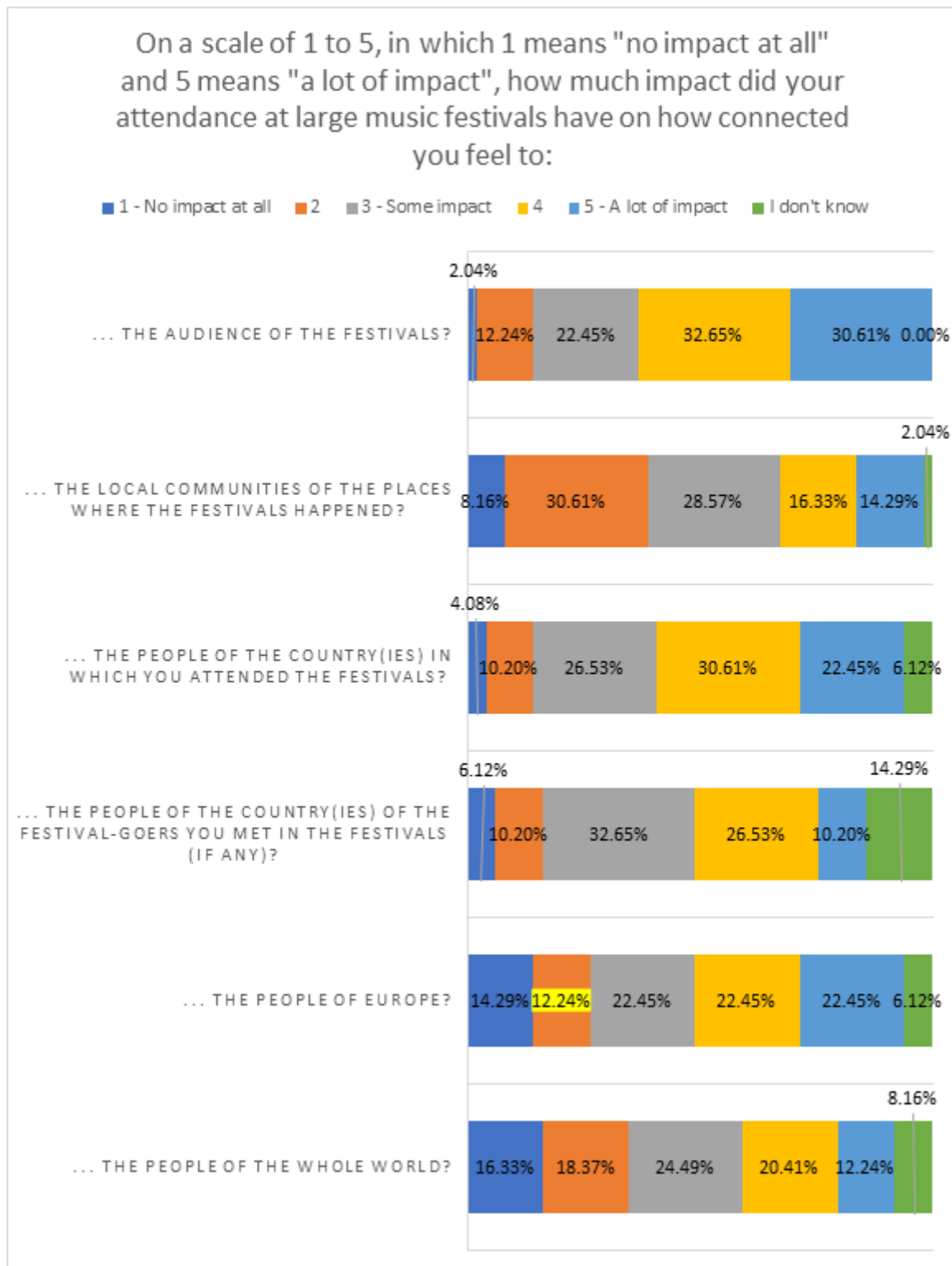


Figure 27. "Pro-Europe" pooled participants' responses to the questions enunciated with: On a scale of 1 to 5, in which 1 means "no impact at all" and 5 means "a lot of impact", how much impact did your attendance at large music festivals have on how connected you feel to:

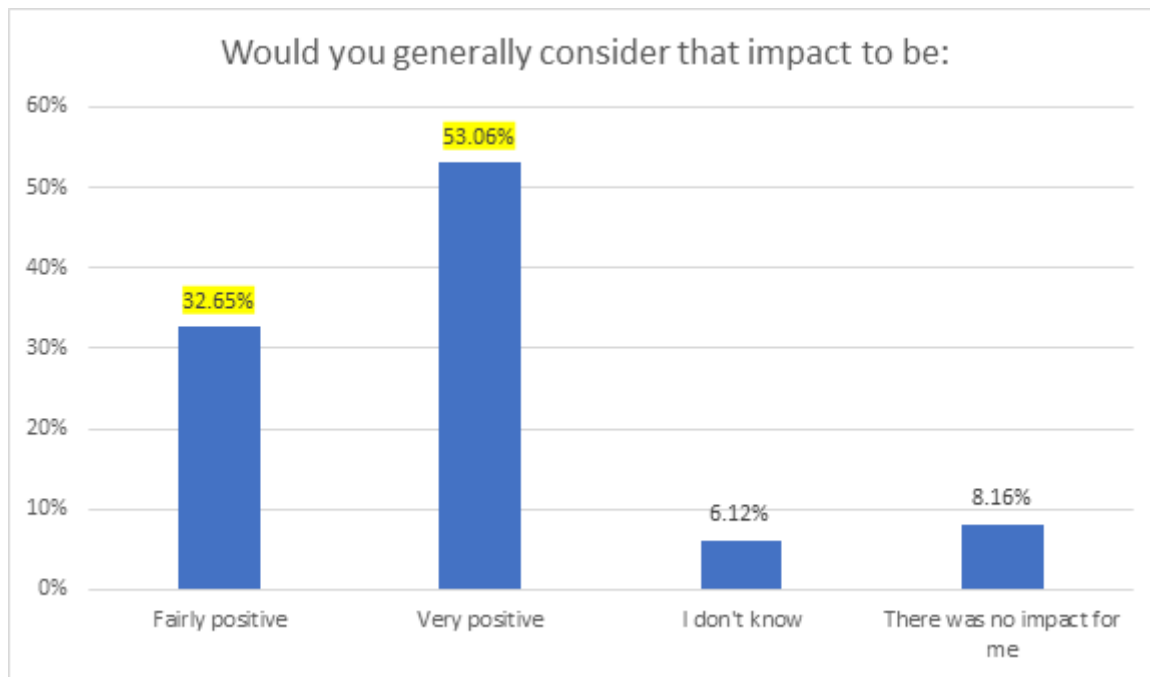


Figure 28. "Pro-Europe" pooled participants' responses to the question enunciated with: Would you generally consider that impact to be:

#### 7.5.2. Profile II: Frequent festival goer

The filters to establish the profile of "Frequent festival goer" within the participants were that they would have attended large music festivals in Europe, in average, at least "Once or twice a year" in the last 14 years; and that they had been attending such festivals for at least 4 years. That way, 39 participants were filtered from the total – a group representing 20,21% of the general respondents.

In comparison to the general pool of participants, the demographic characteristics that indicated differences in the results from the "Frequent festival goer" profile were the percentage of participants aged 28 (15,38%, in comparison to 5,70% in the general pool) (Figure 29), of people with primary nationality/citizenship/residence in the Netherlands (28,21%, in comparison to 16,06% in the general pool) and the United Kingdom (23,08%, instead of 32,12% as in the general pool) (Figure 30) , and who declared their employment situation as being students (56,41%, instead of 66,32% as in the general pool) (Figure 31). In terms of gender, within the "Frequent festival goer" pool, there were exactly the same percentage of participants declaring to be women and men (48,72% each, differing from 66,84% and 31,61% in the general pool, respectively) and 2,56% of this group identified as non-binary (in comparison to 1,04% among the general participants). As for their feeling of attachment to Europe, participants from the "Frequent festival goer" group had no answers differing in around or over 10% in relation to the general pool.

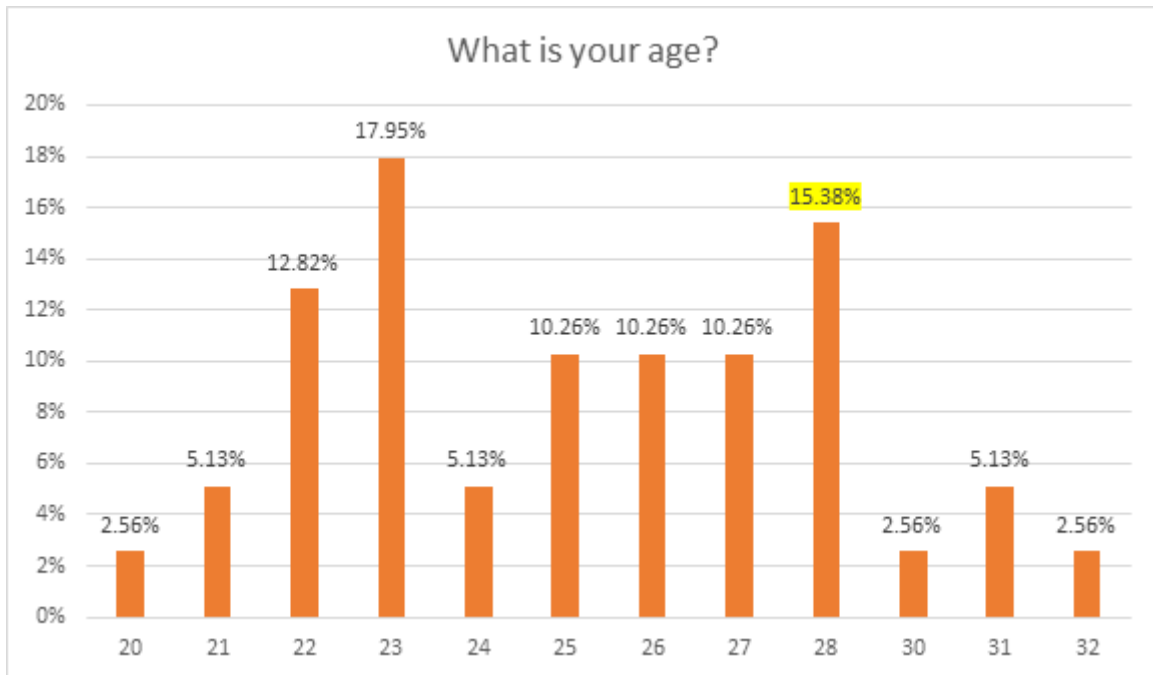


Figure 29. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the question: What is your age?

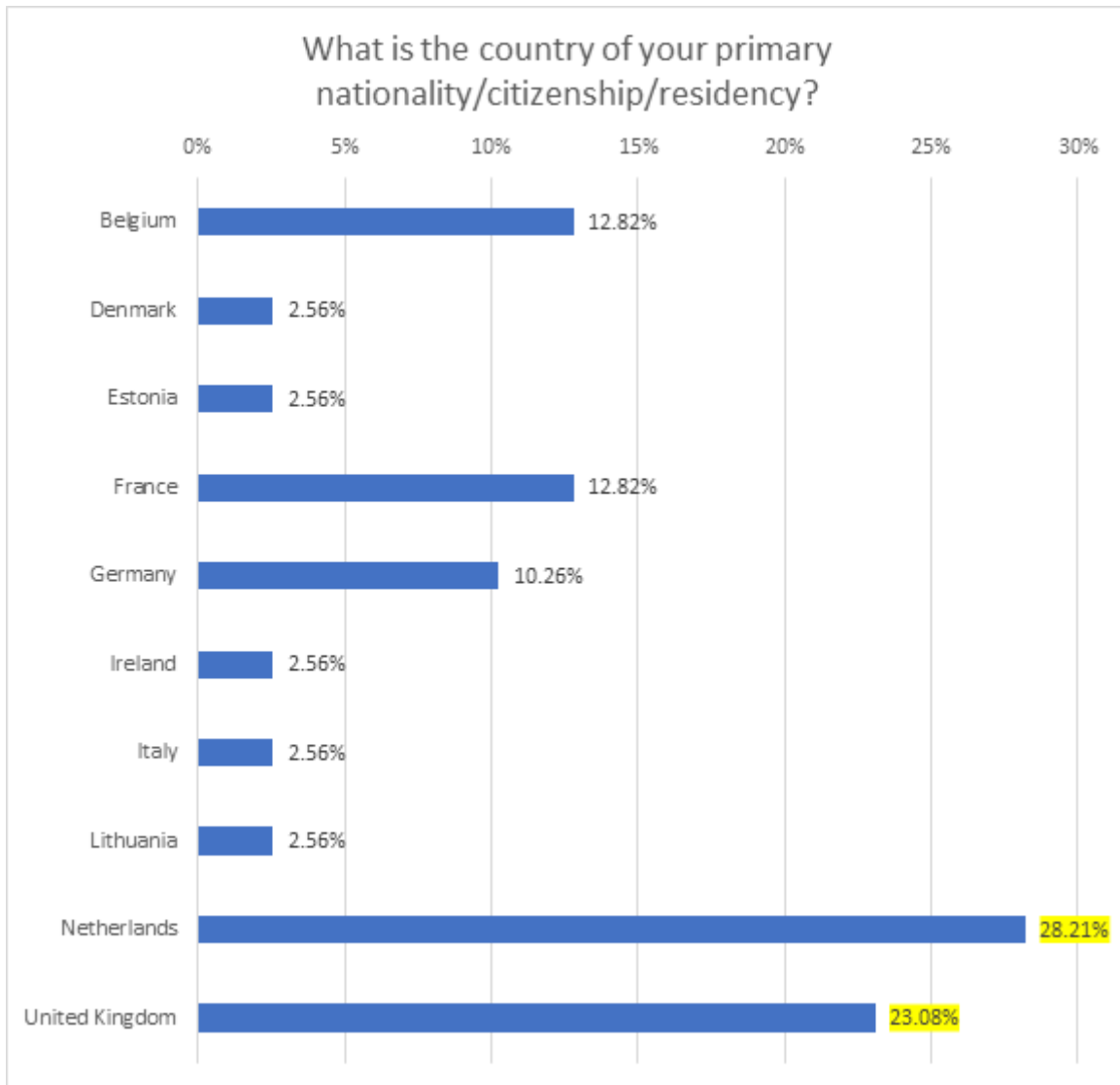


Figure 30. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the question: What is the country of your primary nationality/citizenship/residency?

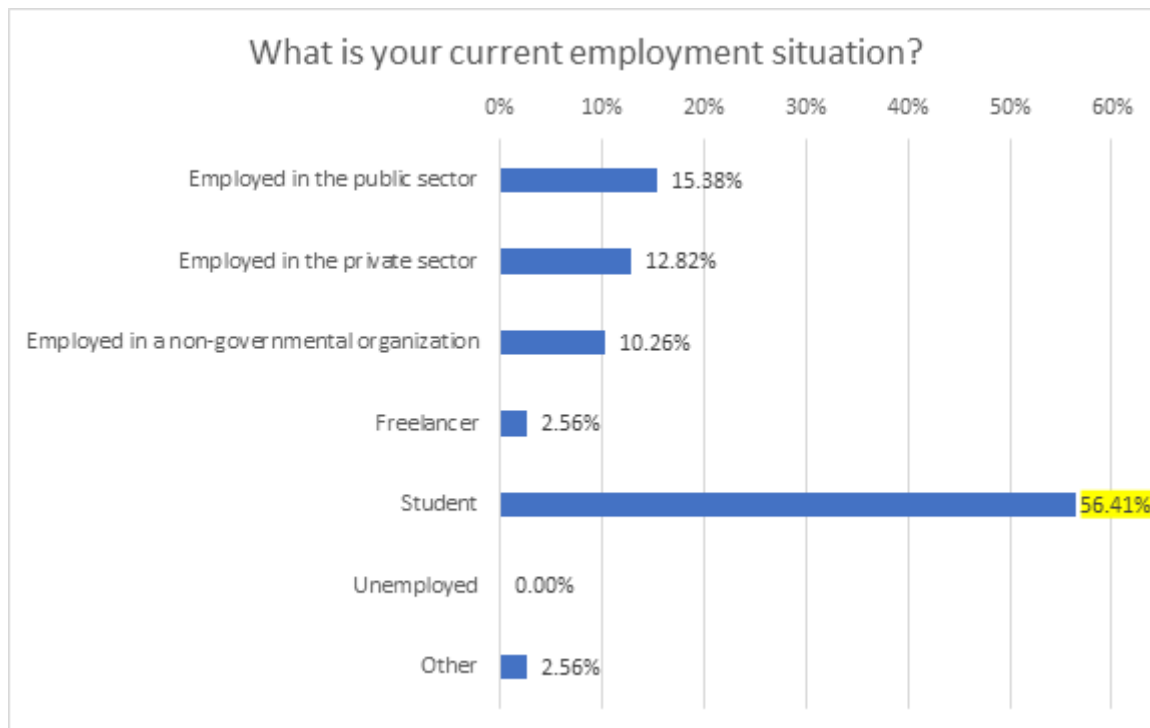


Figure 31. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the question: What is your current employment situation?

Some potentially indicative differences appeared in this group's answers about their festival experience. When asked if they have ever traveled to another European country to attend a large music festival, 48,72% "Frequent festival goers" answered "yes" and 51,28% answered no, as opposed to 34,72% and 65,28% in the general pool, respectively. Therefore, it could be suggested that participants who tend to go to more festivals are more prone to also travel to other countries to do so, since it is a relevant leisure activity for them; and that they could be more inclined to pursue a variety of festivals which could be best enjoyed in diverse locations.

They also chose more often the answer "I usually go to all (3+) days of a festival" when asked for how many of the days of a festival they usually go to, with a resulting percentage of 46,15% within this profile, in comparison to 36,79% in the general participation (Figure 32). This result could logically be expected from the portion of the participants who are more likely to frequently attend festivals, as it would consist with the profile of those who have this activity as a frequent leisure.

Within their festival experience, the "Frequent festival goer" profile perceived more often the audiences as equally international and local/national (43,59%, as opposed to 31,61% in the general pool) (Figure 33); and they said they very frequently met new people

from other countries in festival more than the general participants (35,90% and 26,94%, respectively) (Figure 34). Hypothetically, these findings could be due to the fact that this profile of participants is also more prone to traveling to attend festivals in other European countries, therefore being more likely to meet new people from different countries.

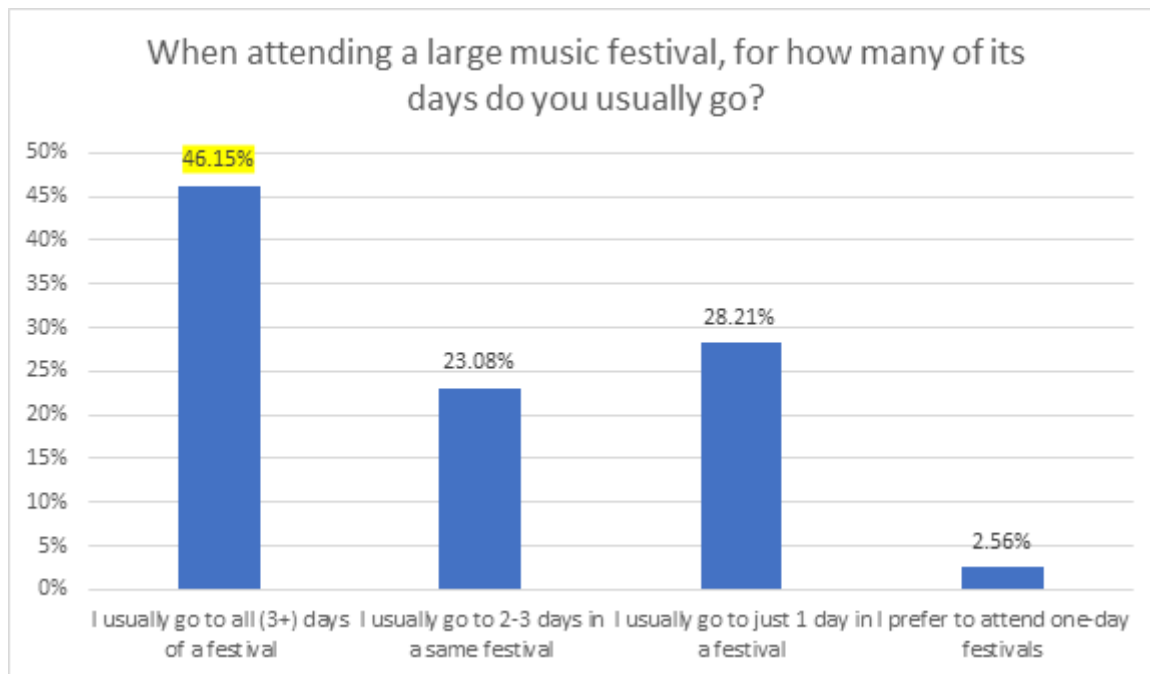


Figure 32. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the question: When attending a large music festival, for how many of its days do you usually go?

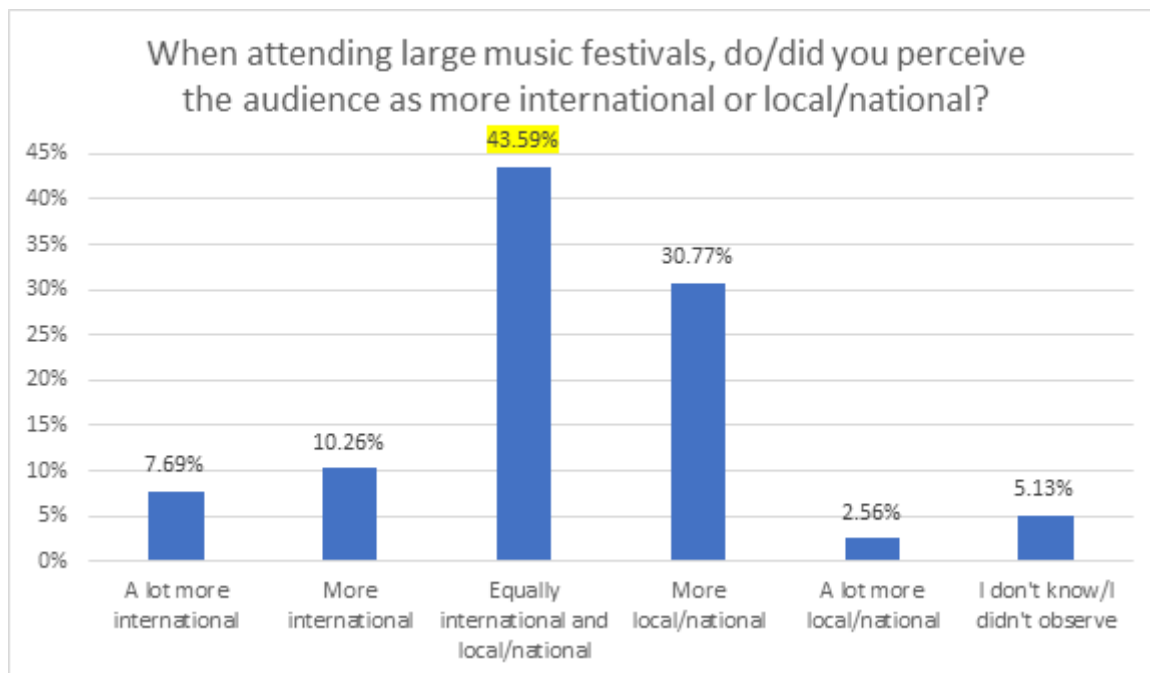


Figure 33. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the question: When attending large music festivals, do/did you perceive the audience as more international or local/national?



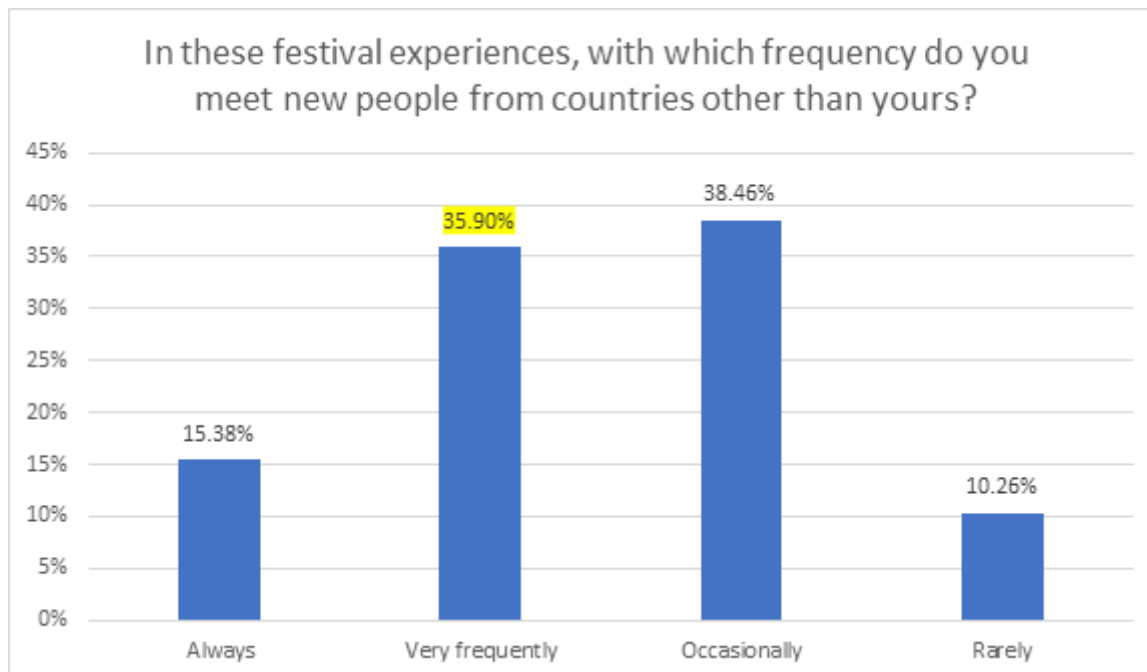


Figure 34. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the question: In these festival experiences, with which frequency do you meet new people from countries other than yours?

When asked about some feelings they experienced in their festival attendance history, differences in results appeared in regard to feeling more positive about other people: 46,15% "Frequent festival goers" said they strongly agreed and 33,33% that they agreed, in comparison to 34,20% and 44,04% from the general pool. They also indicated more often that they strongly agreed that when going to a large music festival in Europe, they felt a sense of community/belonging: 58,97% in this specific pool, as opposed to 47,15% in the general one (Figure 35). These are interesting findings in the light of the fact that they are also the profile most likely to meet new people in festivals, according to the results previously presented. Together with the conclusion that this profile is more prone to travel to attend a festival in a different country, and therefore to interact with foreign audiences and meet new people from these countries, it could be hypothesised that the "Frequent festival goer" profile is the one most likely to have an impact in terms of a sense of community-building with peoples from other European countries resulting from their festival experience.

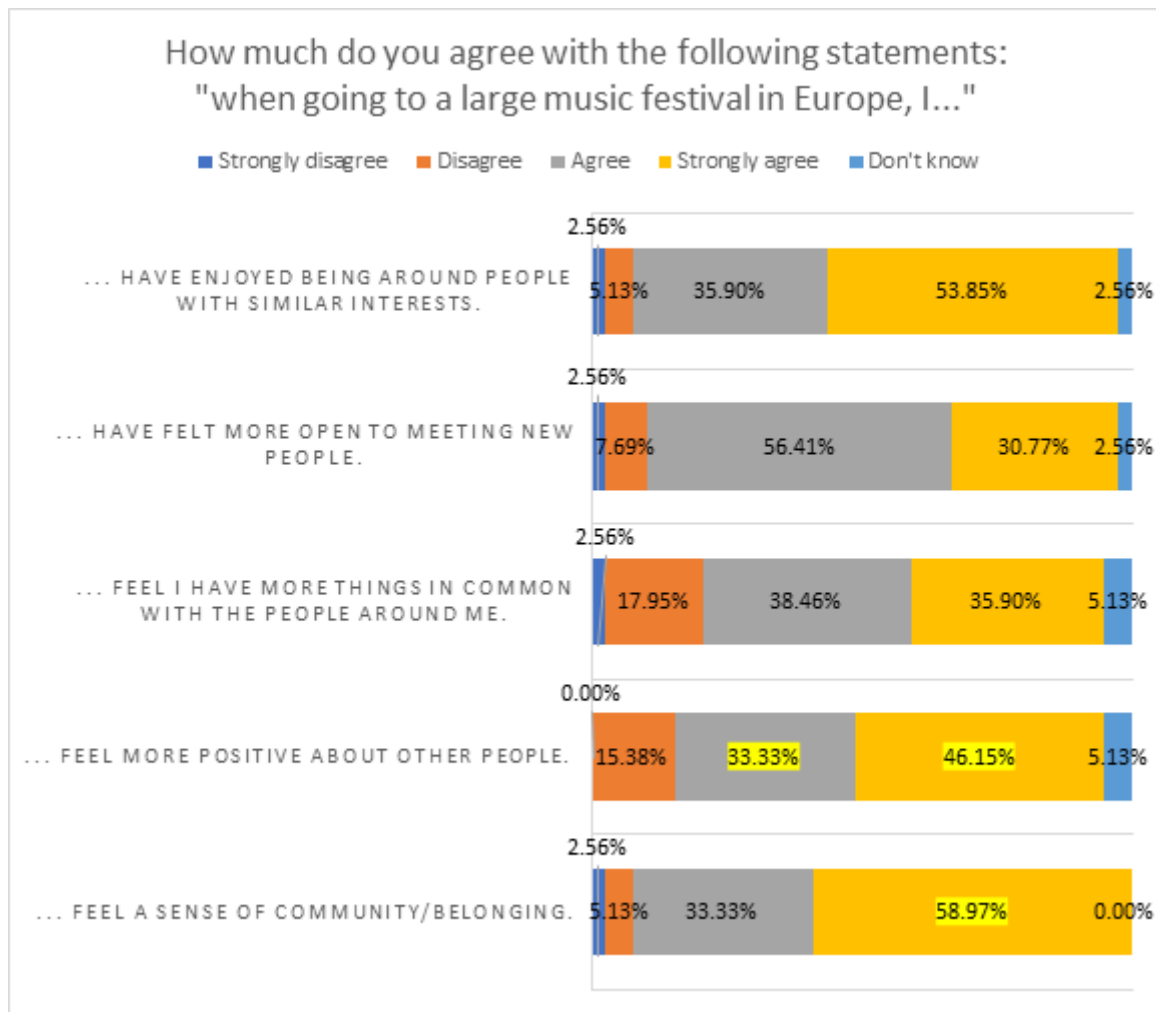


Figure 35. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the question enunciated with: How much do you agree with the following statements: "when going to a large music festival in Europe, I..."

Finally, to the question about the impact of their attendance on how connected they felt to different social/geographical groups of people, 35,90% of the "Frequent festival goers" indicated a level 4 of impact on how connected they felt to the people of the country(ies) in which they attended the festival(s) (as opposed to 25,39% in the general pool); and only 5,13% of the participants of this specific group indicated a level 2 of impact on their connectedness to the people of Europe, in comparison to 21,76% of the general participation (Figure 36). These findings reinforce the hypothesis that, potentially, this group of participants is the one most likely to experience an impact on their feeling of community-building with other European countries as a result of their festival experiences, here additionally expanded to the connectedness to Europe in general. As for the quality of this impact, 53,85% of the "Frequent festival goers" indicated it to be generally very positive, whereas 39,90 of the general pool chose this same option (Figure 37).

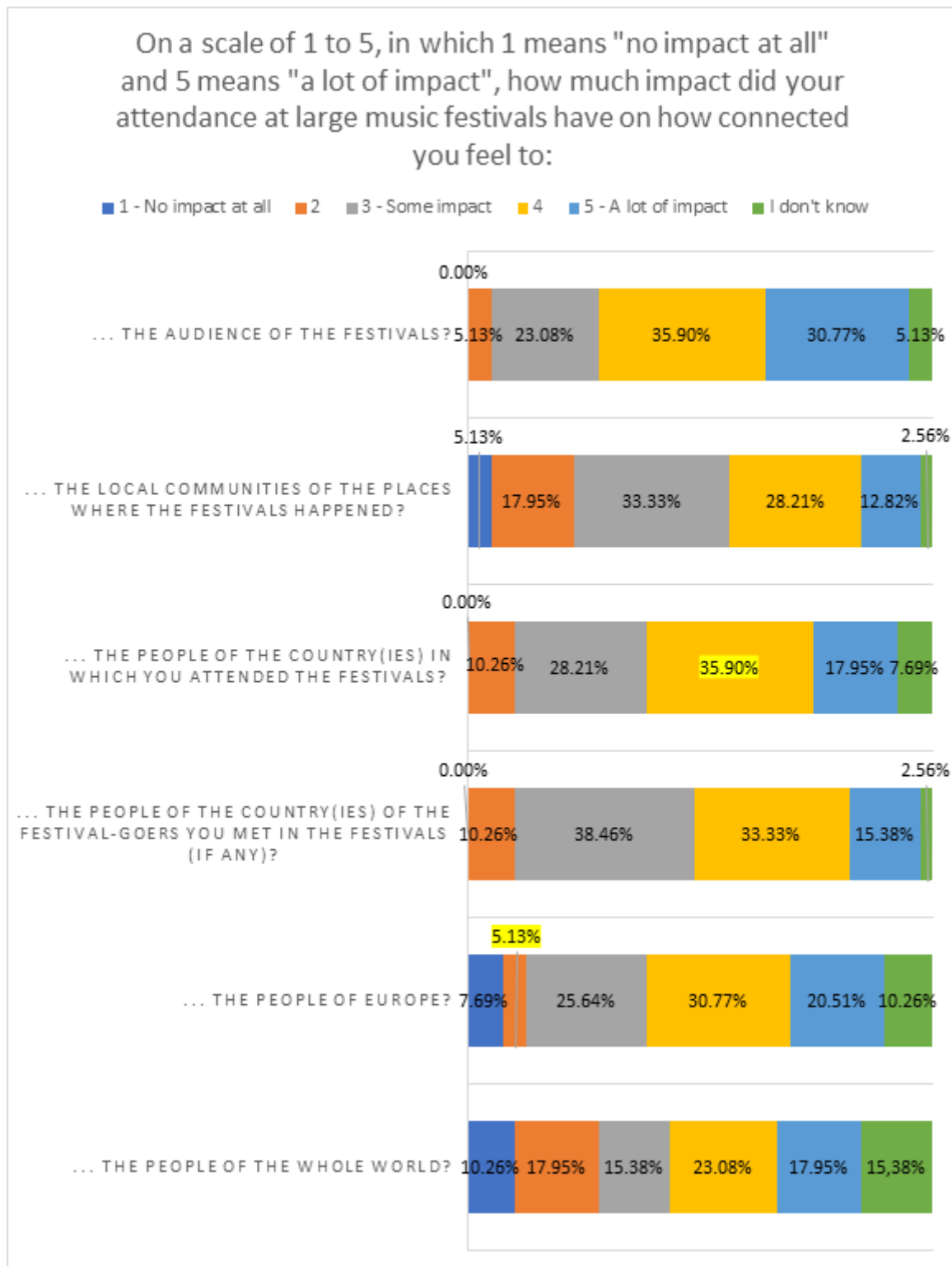


Figure 36. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the questions enunciated with: On a scale of 1 to 5, in which 1 means "no impact at all" and 5 means "a lot of impact", how much impact did your attendance at large music festivals have on how connected you feel to:

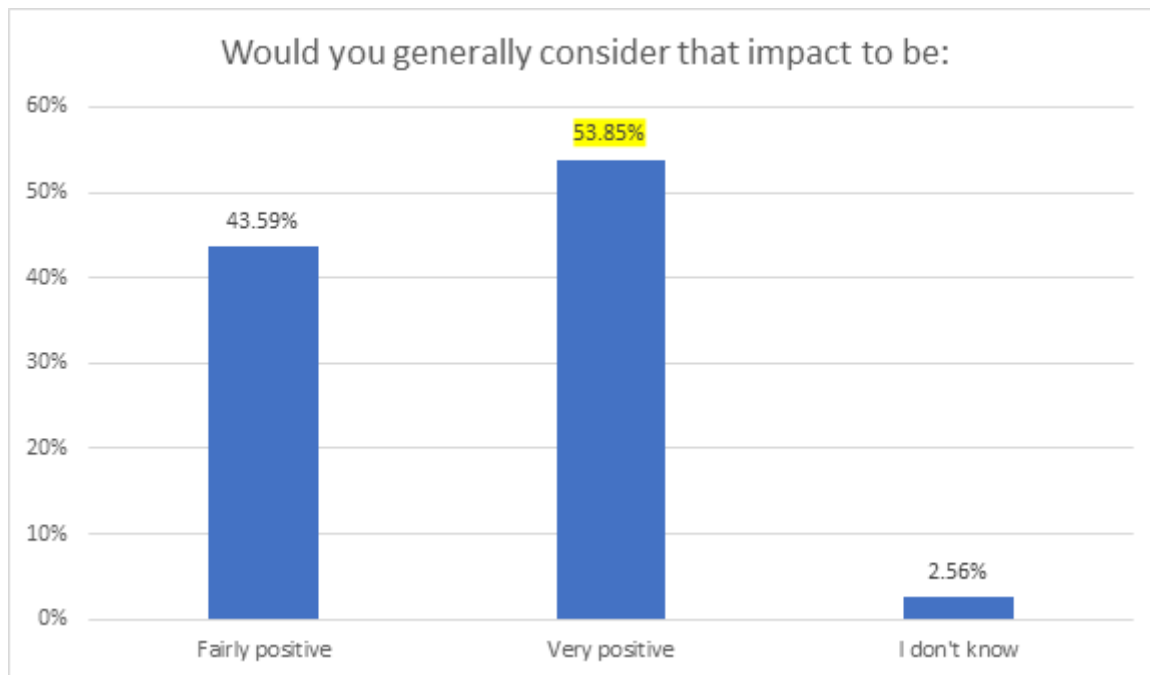


Figure 37. "Frequent festival goer" pooled participants' responses to the question enunciated with: Would you generally consider that impact to be:

### 7.5.3. Impact of profiles

The first profile drawn from the general pool, the "Pro-Europe" profile, presented some noticeable differences within its resulting answers in comparison to the general results. For instance, as could be noticed in the results, it could be concluded that the "Pro-Europe" respondents in this research were slightly less prone to meeting new people when attending festivals. Another particularly noticeable difference in results between the two groups is in their answers about the impact that their attendance to music festivals had in their feeling of connectedness to Europe, which presented a result somewhat less expressive within the "Pro-Europe" group than in the general group. As suggested earlier, it could be hypothesised that this group would not be as affected in regard to their connectedness to Europe due to a potential pre-existing inclination towards a connection to Europe; but it could also be suggested that this group gets affected less on their connection to Europe from festivals, and otherwise does so from other life experiences and events. On the other hand, as they indicated to have more of "a lot of impact" than the general pool on their connectedness to Europe, it could also be suggested that, although the "Pro-Europe" respondents are less likely to attend festivals and to feel a sense of connection to the festival audiences, the ones who do attend perceive a higher impact on their feeling of belonging and connectedness to Europe. As for a hypothesised higher propensity to attend festivals than the general pool, the survey demonstrated that the opposite is what is actually valid for the participants of this study.

The second profile drawn from the general respondents of this research, identified here as the "Frequent festival goers", showed a considerably higher tendency to travel abroad for concerts, or to attend concerts in a foreign country within Europe, which theoretically could emphasise their exposure and connection to different cultures and peoples within Europe. This group was also more likely to go to more days of a festival than the general pool, which could enhance their exposure to plural audiences, especially when the interviewees would attend such events abroad; and which could also expand their possibilities of meeting new people, which is also underlined by this group's higher frequency in their answers about how often they met new people in festivals. Within that idea, "Frequent festival goers" were suggestively more prone to answer that they strongly agreed that they felt more positive about other people in festival contexts than the general pool; and that in that experience they also felt a stronger sense of community/belonging. The results of the question about the impact that their festival attendance has on their feeling of connectedness to the people of Europe could possibly suggest that this profile could undergo a more significant and positive impact on their feeling of connectedness to the people of Europe than the general pool of participants.

#### *7.6. In-depth interviews*

Nine participants of the survey agreed to participate also in an in-depth interview, in which their experience in going to large music festivals in Europe was further explored. The interviews were conducted in an online format, via videoconference meetings with each of the volunteer participants, using the Zoom software. Under consent of all the participants, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed in order to be annexed to this paper, unidentified. Each interview lasted around 10-15 minutes in average, with some extending to up to 25 minutes depending on the responses given by the interviewees. They were mostly structured, following a preset selection and order of questions to be asked to all participants, but with slight differences on the questions made to some participants according to their responses to the first part of the survey. Additionally, when it felt appropriate or beneficial to the research, the interviewer also expanded on some of the questions in order to prompt prolonged responses by the interviewees, but without deviating considerably from the original structure of the interview questions.

The intention of the in-depth interviews was to add their inputs to the research in regard to topics also debated in this paper's literature review, such as the relevance of multiculturalism within their festival experience, how this experience impacted their openness

to new people immediately and in the long term, and their general sense of community building as impacted by their festival attendance, more specifically towards Europe. Additional topics which were frequent and therefore will also be covered in this part of the paper were the impact of music and of the place and size of the festival on their experience. These topics were frequently interconnected in the participants' responses and were mentioned in connection to each other.

#### 7.6.1. Demography of in-depth interviews' participants

Out of the nine interviewees, five identified themselves as women and four as men; three were nationals/citizens/residents of the United Kingdom, two of Germany, two of Portugal, one of France and one of Ireland; three were aged 26, three were aged 25, and other participants were aged 23, 31 and 32 each. Four of them had Bachelor's degrees, three had Master's degrees and two were PhDs; in terms of professional occupation, three were students, two were freelancers, two were employed in the public sector, one in the private sector, and one in a non-governmental organisation.

With regard to their festival experience, seven had already attended a festival within their countries and two had not; the same ratio of answers was valid for attending a festival abroad in Europe. Five participants of this pool said they attended one festival every couple of years in the last 14 years, three said once or twice a year, and one said hardly ever. Five respondents stated they have been attending festivals for 4-7 years, two stated 8-11 years, one stated 0-3 years, and one said they have only attended one of such festivals. Three of them went to a festival for the first time at the age of 19, two at the age of 21 and younger than 18 each, and one at the ages of 18 and 20 each. Seven of them declared usually going to all (3+) days of a festival, one to 2-3 days of a festival, and one to 1 day. Eight of them declared going to a festival for the artistic experience, five for the entertainment, four for community building, and two for an escape from the routine. Seven of them describe it as an artistic experience, six of them as a social experience, three as a spiritual experience, and two a personal experience. One person said they go to a festival with the intention of meeting new people, seven that they do not but unintentionally meet people there, and one that they do not and also do not meet new people in festivals. Two of them declared perceiving the festival audiences as a lot more international, two as more international, two as equally national and international, two as more local/national, and one as a lot more local/national. Three respondents said they always meet people from different countries than theirs in their festival attendance, four said they very frequently do, and two said they occasionally do.

When asked about how much they enjoyed being around people with similar interests, three strongly agreed, five agreed, and one strongly disagreed. As for feeling more open to meeting new people, four strongly agreed, one agreed, two disagreed, one strongly disagreed, and one selected "I don't know". Three participants strongly agreed, four agreed, one disagreed, and one strongly disagreed that they felt that they had more things in common with the people around them. Four strongly agreed that they felt more positive about other people, while one agreed and four disagreed. As for if they felt a sense of community/belonging, five strongly agreed, one agreed, two disagreed and one strongly disagreed.

As for the impact that their festival attendance had on their connection to different group levels, when answering about the audience of the festivals, one a scale of 1 (no impact at all) to 5 (a lot of impact), two chose 5, two chose 4, two chose 3, one chose 2, one chose 1, and one chose "I don't know". In regard to the local communities of the place(s) where the festival(s) took place, one chose 5, three chose 4, two chose 3, and three chose 2. In regard to the people(s) of the country(ies) in which they attended the festival(s), one chose 5, two chose 4, one chose 3, two chose 2, one chose 1, and two chose "I don't know". When asked about the impact on their connection to the people of the country(ies) of the festival-goers they met in the festival(s), two selected 5, three selected 3, three selected 2, and one selected "I don't know". As for the people of Europe, two selected 5, two selected 4, one selected 3, two selected 2, and two selected 1. Finally, in relation to the people of the whole world, two chose 5, one chose 4, two chose 3, two chose 2, and two chose 1.

As for their level of attachment to Europe, five declared being very attached to Europe and four fairly attached; seven stated they ever think of themselves as also European, in addition to a national/citizen/resident of their own countries, in contrast to two who stated they do not. Four of the participants declared they see themselves as European first and a national/citizen/resident of their country second, another four of them as a national/citizen/resident of their country first and European second, and one chose "none of the above". The idea of Europe was considered very positive by five of them and fairly positive by four; the free movement within the Schengen Area was unanimously considered very positive.

#### 7.6.2. Multiculturality

The topic of multiculturalism within festivals was brought as a generally positive and attractive thing by the in-depth interview participants. In this context, eight of the nine interviewees directly or indirectly connected or described the idea of multiculturalism by

mentioning the "international" environment of festivals, and the sharing of a festival space with people from one other or many other countries (European or not) and experiencing them sharing their cultures, music and languages. However, for two of such interviewees, these situations did not necessarily feel like building a community, in spite of this shared experience; and for three of them, in the festivals they went to abroad, they felt exclusively connected to that one country where the festival was hosted, not to a larger scale like Europe or the world.

In detail, participant A stated that, in her experience, "you learn a lot with other cultures", and that when she goes to a festival, "it also attracts [me] if it is a multicultural festival - it does not matter if it is the people that go or the music but it has to have some kind of multicultural vibe". She also added that, even though you might not speak the same language as the people you meet (and perhaps you do not even know which language they speak at all), it "actually does not matter, (...) and you find a way to understand each other and have a good moment, even if it is just for 5 seconds". Participant H mentioned that "[*festival name*] was really cool because you just saw such a pool of people from all over the world and you are all just there in a connecting experience".

These perceptions of multiculturalism as an important part of the festival experience of the in-depth interviewees goes in line with the general findings of the survey, which had a majority of responses declaring that participants somewhat frequently meet people from other countries in festivals. Additionally, it qualitatively expands these findings by detailing how the participants felt like these multicultural environments were generally positive, and something they enjoyed learning from and dealing with.

### 7.6.3. Openness

The influence of the festival environment on their openness to meeting new people and interacting with other members of the audience(s) was an aspect that was frequently described in detail by the interviewees, led to a relevant degree by the interview questions. All interviewees described their enhanced openness, five of them emphasising how they felt differently in the festival context: "I am looking for something new, so (...) I am more open" (participant A); "people are just so friendly, so open, and you just have crazy adventures with people out of the blue" (participant B); "it is easier to get into the conversation because you feel like everyone wants to chat and is really open-minded, and I think this open-mindedness is something that is very, very present in these festival occasions - I never talk to so many strangers normally, but in this festival setting it sort of feels that you are not strangers, but



more connected" (participant C); "I am normally quite a shy person, but when I am at the festival and I am talking to everyone, and I am generally really happy... There is an atmosphere that's quite different" (participant F); "you just start talking to the person next to you very easily" (participant H). These descriptions detail the survey finding that most of the participants felt more open to meeting new people in festivals, and that they also felt like they had more things in common with the people around them and that they felt more positive about others.

To describe the difference in environment, eight out of the nine interviewees highlighted how they felt that the others in the audience were more open to new interactions than people they encounter in their daily lives and contexts, for a plurality of reasons. Participant A, for instance, pointed out "people being tolerant, people being accepting of people's differences, open-mindedness (...); people are more open, more receptive, more friendly"; participant B added the keywords "forthcoming" and "welcoming", even when they were "total strangers", and that the "common reason" for the gathering would result in easier conversations and a "common understanding". Participant E stressed that the openness is not only limited to common interests, but also "towards different personalities". Participant D added the element of familiarity over time, stating that there are "some festivals where you just end up bumping into the same people and (...) making friends, and then you end up sticking with them for the rest of the festival, or (...) cases where I met people in the crowd and I am still friends with them to this day"; and also pointed out that the extra openness could be connected to a frequent use of alcohol by festival audiences, according to their experience.

Another festival characteristic that added to participant D's experience with the additional openness is the camping site of some festivals, where "instantly you just go around talking to everyone who's camping around you", as opposed to "in real life, like a park; usually you would not just go off and talk to every random person". On another note, participant F stated that their experience as a volunteer in festivals enhanced her social interactions, since they would "really get to work in teams with people and so it is really more of a social experience, and it is really, really good".

Participant G expressed their feeling of openness from other members of the audience as based on a general understanding of "trust, open-mindedness, a lack of scepticism, escapism as well"; and that it brought "[a] sense of belonging" that differs from their "daily life - [in which] everybody has their headphones on, somewhere to be, something to do,

schedules being hectic...". Participant I accentuated this difference with the daily interactions due to the lack of "outside worries and other kinds of stimuli".

Nevertheless, this feeling of openness was mentioned by three interviewees as not being necessarily exclusive to the festival context. Participant A explained that "it is the same feeling as when [they are] travelling", and participant G defined it similarly as having "felt the same connection when [they have] done the Camino de Santiago". On top of that, participant H amplified the thought by stating that it is "that openness that comes with being in new environments and not having so much similarity around; [I] do not think it is unique to a music festival". Participant I somewhat summarised this line of thought by declaring "[they are] not sure that festivals are the only place or a place by election where something like that would happen, but [they] think they do give you an *agora*, they do give you a place where people share the same purpose for some time". Participant H also used the concept of a "non-culture" to define one of the aspects of the openness and the experiences assimilated through it in festivals, as well as other sorts of experiences.

Finally, participant H made an interesting comment about how, in the context of festivals, they would feel much more interested in meeting new people from countries different than theirs. As described by them: "when we were at Sziget, we were having a lot of fun meeting new people, and then we ran into a group of British boys and we went like 'aw – no'. [laugh] Like, I do not want to interact with people where you come from".

#### 7.6.3.1. Impact on long-term openness

One interesting aspect to observe in regard to this perceived openness impacted by festivals was whether it had long-term effects on the interviewees. Participant A, for instance, was sure that it had an impact on how open they felt even after the festival itself ended, similar to the impact that travels have on them: "[I] learnt from both experiences how to manage relationships and probably how to talk with people that [I] do not know, and to be more kind, open and tolerant, for sure". Participant B also had their perceptions of other people in general influenced by their festival experience, as they would describe it themselves as a situation that "gives you hope; it gives you the belief that, if you give them a chance, people are good". As described by this participant, the change in how they perceive other people stayed with them until "this day".

Participant C described that the festival experience made them feel connected to the people around them during the events, boosted by the similar interests and goals within that context, but that the feeling stayed with them, especially in the weeks following the festival

itself. Another sort of link with other people was expressed by participant F, who did not necessarily feel a connection to all other people who shared the festival experience with them, but would subsequently feel an automatically enhanced excitement and connection when meeting someone new who either knew about the festival they attended or had been to it. Finally, participant I agreed that the festival context "gets [them] away from certain concerns or from certain inhibitors that would usually impair [them] from simply starting a conversation randomly with someone on the street", and that "it is somewhat easier or more liberating to talk to people after a festival".

On the other hand, other participants expressed feeling like the sense of openness did not stay with them after the festival experience ended. Participant D, for instance, expressed that this openness is very much connected to the festival environment, so once they would be out of it, connecting to strangers goes back to being "a bit weird". Participant F agreed that they did not feel like the openness in festivals had any repercussions in their life.

#### 7.6.4. Community building, feeling of belonging

Almost half of the interviewees expressed in further depth a feeling of community building and/or belonging that they experienced during their past festival attendances. "Sometimes I feel the sense of community even if I am not in the festival, but I nurture that community sense that I gain in the festival - I nurture it within me for my life", was the portrayal described by participant A in this regard. Participant B evoked the perception they got within their festival experience that "the majority of people are really good (...) and, as long as they feel safe, they will act in a reasonable way and you have a lot more in common than you do not with people", which would facilitate a feeling of community with them; and participant C generally commented about how they felt "super connected" to the people around them, explaining: "I could not even recall whom I talked to, but I know I talked to many people from all over the world, and I enjoyed it and I felt connected to all these people".

Participant F described that they built this community not only with the people they met in the festival, but also by bringing people from other spheres of their lives into the festivals, impacting greatly in their social lives in general. Participant G portrayed the social experience within the festivals as being "just people who did not know one another speaking all sorts of different languages, and feeling just one and united", and that this feeling of community would remain with them afterwards, and be connected to all their past festival experiences at the same time.

On a different perspective, participant E expressed that they did not feel a sense of belonging or community in the festivals they attended because they never identified themselves with the festival, especially after the event ended - they indeed would identify with some of the people they interacted with, but not "feel a sense of belonging" to the other people they did not meet. In a similar manner, participant I described that they did feel a sense of community in festivals that promote "stronger interaction" within the audience; however, in festivals that are more commercial, they felt like they were "part of a big mess, without a big community whatsoever - just a big agglomerate". This description provided by participant E, on the other hand, could potentially hint for one of the possibilities to explain why it was more common for survey respondents to acknowledge their festival experiences as a social one, but did not portray having felt a sense of community/belonging.

#### 7.6.5. Impact of music

Music was another topic that was mentioned somewhat frequently in the in-depth interviews, also with regard to its impact on the feeling of connectedness with others, and from a very spontaneous initiative from the participants, since it was not evidently related to any of the interview questions. Participant B, for example, stated that in their experience, "there [in the music scene] was where [I] felt for the first time like [I] belonged"; and that this is because "you feel music (...); when you are at a festival, when you are listening to stuff, you are not thinking (...); primarily you are really feeling the music, you are feeling the experience, (...) [and] if your common ground is that, that kind of starting point based on emotion and feeling, I think that is just another layer down into a friendship". Participant C added to that: "you do not really know the people around you but you sort of feel connected to them because you listen to the same music".

However, from another point of view, participant G declared that, in their perception, during some festivals, "people really go for the music – and it is harder [*to socialise*] because a lot of people are there just to watch and to listen (...) even though you are communally experiencing something". Therefore, given the small number of interviewees who mentioned this topic and that they were split into contrasting perspectives, these declarations cannot lead to any clear conclusions regarding the impact of music on the feeling of community/belonging among the participants.

#### 7.6.6. Connectedness to Europe

All the interviewees expressed some input regarding the impact of their festival experience on their feeling of connectedness to Europe, albeit with different approaches. The majority of them had already responded to the survey indicating that there was at least some impact within that matter, and that this impact was generally positive, so the comments made in the in-depth interviews generally served to further detail this response.

Participant A, for example, described that festivals are multicultural environments and that, for them, "that [multicultural] environment is European"; and their social life was also impacted by their festival experience, which influenced the fact that their closest friends are from other European countries. Participant B reported a similar perception about the multicultural environment:

*[the festivals]* do not even have to be in Europe to make me feel European, because actually what can happen is that if you meet someone from outside of Europe and you are with Europeans there already, you can actually see a cultural difference (...); for instance, I am from the United Kingdom, my friend is from Germany, another friend from Spain, and we meet an American, for example. If we have a conversation, the four of us, it depends on the person but generally speaking you can begin to see some cultural differences, and what you can find is that although you might think that you have a sort of British culture, or Spanish culture and German culture, there is a shared culture within Europe.

The consequence of this sort of interactions, for participant B, was that it "made [them] more conscious of the fact that [they] share a lot of European values, [they] have a lot of things in common with other people that live in other European countries, and you can see that when you speak to someone that is not from Europe".

Participant C highlighted the awareness that it was due to the freedom of movement within the countries of the Schengen Area that they were allowed to attend the festival they went to. Once in the festival, participant C also reported having felt "really similar" to the other members of the audience, which, according to them, does not happen too often, as Europeans "rather see the differences"; the result of feeling similar in the festival context being a "sense of connectedness to the other countries and to all Europeans", in their words.

In a similar thought, participant G told details about their experience in festival camping sites and the shared experiences that happen in those, and that the feeling among these people frequently resulted in a "united" one, in which their places of origin would not matter. They added: "I feel that it celebrated the EU values, like "united in diversity", quite

literally. But beyond that – these are people who were so proud to share their languages, to talk about their cultures (...). I felt definitely very European despite in most cases being in [my country of origin]".

However, for some of the interviewees, the impact of their festival attendance on their feeling of connectedness to Europe was less noticeable. For participant E, for example, their experience in festivals frequently felt like connecting to locals of the country in which the festival took place, so they would not consider it a very international experience; and for participant H, the festivals they went to "always felt either very national or very global". To that, they added: "I really felt like it was more a perpetuation of ideas you have about nationalities, more than this feeling of togetherness in Europe".

Finally, for participant I, there was a variation of that impact depending on where the festival took place or which kind of festival they were attending. They described that, in some festivals, it is very easy to interact with people from different countries in Europe; whereas in others, especially the most commercially-oriented ones, the audience would consist mostly of locals and nationals, therefore feeling less like a "European" environment.

#### 7.6.7. Smaller festivals facilitating more bonds

Four participants of the in-depth interviews mentioned the size of festivals as having some impact on their sense of community within the audience - mostly stating that smaller festivals facilitate connection to other people, in somewhat of a contradiction to what was suggested by the hypothesis of this research. According to participant A, "[festival name] is smaller, so the human contact is easier and you can continue to see those people while the festival lasts (...) and you can create relationships". Participant B connected the ideas of smaller sizes and feeling of intimacy, stating that "if there [are] too many people and it gets too crowded, then it gets uncomfortable - you kind of lose the magic of it". In terms of the impact of the size in their connectedness to other social groups, participant D declared: "if I go to [small] festivals, then it 100% makes me feel more part of Europe".

On the other hand, participant H said that, in their opinion, "the very large [festivals] you are going to go in with a very vague intention, within a social intention. And then the other ones [logically deducing, the smaller ones] I would go more to discover new music". Considering such different points of view, in order to further investigate whether the size of the festivals influence the level of connectedness promoted amongst the audience in relation to different social groups within and beyond itself, further research would make itself necessary.

#### 7.6.8. Impact of the place of the festival

As for the place in which the festival(s) took place, participant A declared feeling "more attracted to festivals in Southern Europe", therefore staying in the part of the continent from which they come from - "probably because of the weather and because [I] feel probably more related to those regions than in Northern Europe", as they explained. Participant G, however, expressed how they would develop attachment to a place due to their festival experience: "there are a couple of places that are close to my heart because I have been there four or five times to the festival so the place itself has a special sense of community too". And differently, participant B described how festivals could create a sensation that would make them even "forget" where they were, being a "totally immersive" experience that would make them feel like they were in a "whole new world". All these different relations to the physical space where the festival takes place portray potentially different social connection possibilities, as participant G, for instance, could have their declaration more in tune with the suggestion of connectedness to the people(s) of the country(ies) where the festival(s) they attended took place; which can possibly be considered one form of international community-building. However, due to the small sampling of interviewees and that this research did not specifically focus on space, more research would be needed in order to understand the impact of the place of the festival in the sense of community/belonging among attendees.

#### 7.6.9. General conclusions from in-depth interviews

In general, what could be deduced from the in-depth interviews is that, for these nine participants, festivals are places where they generally meet and interact with people from other countries, therefore (and within their general understanding) promoting a multicultural environment. In these contexts, they also feel more open to interacting with others, including these people who come from different countries; and in over half the cases, this openness to interactions with others was prolonged after the end of the festival experience. These findings go very much in line with the results of the survey as well, and offer a deeper insight into how these processes of interactions and openness happen in the festival environment.

As for a feeling of community, around three fourths of the interviewees felt it as part of their festival experiences, but they described it in very different ways: either the community included the people of the festival, or the people who enjoyed similar musical genres/events, or the people they directly interacted with, or even people they never directly verbally interacted with but who shared a moment with them (e.g. dancing), among others. For some of the interviewees, however, even though they could feel united with the people

around them during the festival, it did not necessarily create any identification among them, therefore not building a true sense of community; and it could also depend on the size and type of festival they were attending. This majoritarian tendency to have some sort of community feeling during a festival experience differs from the results of the general survey, but the wide variety of understandings of community itself and the feelings related to its building, as well as levels of identification, indicates that this could not be an easily identifiable aspect for the festival attendees.

For almost two thirds of the participants, the interaction with people from other countries (European or not) made them feel more European, either by sensing the similarities they had with Europeans from other countries and/or by identifying differences with audience members from other countries. Some of them simply relate Europeanness to multiculturalism in their understanding, and that made them feel more united/in community with Europe just by being in an environment with people from other countries. For the other third, on the other hand, this connection happened only on a very national level with the country they were visiting, or it did not even happen at all. These findings are also in line with the survey results, and the interviews were highly enriching due to the descriptions of aspects from their festival experience which promoted the feeling of connection with Europe, in some level validating the hypothesis that the interaction with people from different European countries promoted the feeling of a community among some of the audience members.

### *7.7. Limitations of the research*

As already stated previously, the results and analysis resulting from this research paper do not intend to assess the reality of wider populations, and there are many limitations in its realisation that confirm this. For instance, it is impossible within the scope of this research to measure the representativity of the sample given that the total number of individuals within the total population (N) of young Europeans who have attended at least one large music festival in Europe is unknown. Therefore, information such as the precision and the confidence interval that the research results can offer is non-existent as well, which consequently does not allow the assumption of patterns and general conclusions to be drawn from the data here available. Considering also the limitations and academic background of the researcher, more complex statistical analyses were not developed for this paper, and therefore identifying correlations and gauging relations among results were not within the scope of this research.



In addition to the statistical limitations of the research, other aspects also impacted its developments. For instance, this research paper was fully conceived and developed within the context of the Covid-19 crisis of the years 2020 and 2021, which had an influence on how participants could be engaged in the research. All contacts with participants, from their engagement to the survey filling and in-depth interviews (with selected participants), happened over digital platforms, and therefore only the population who had access to these technologies was able to take part in the research. Multiple networks and online survey tools for engaging participants were used, in an attempt to reach the widest audience possible, but the technological and digital limitations of accessibility could not be overcome due to the pandemic. Given that, through these means of contact, people who were reached could spontaneously choose to participate or not, it could also be hypothesised that the results of the survey, and even more emphatically of the in-depth interviews with volunteer participants, are affected by self-selection biases. For instance, it could be that people who found the survey via online survey exchange tools would choose to participate in it if they were interested in the general topic of festivals and/or European identity, and that people who were not interested in these topics decided not to participate at all.

An additional limitation that was highlighted by one of the participants in the in-depth interviews was that there are multiple kinds of big music festivals in Europe. For instance, some of them might be more focused on a commercial side, with lots of advertisements and relevance given to products and services; while others might be more focused on the social experience, promoting interactions and group activities, etc.; and there might even be festivals which are focused on both at the same time, in different proportions. It could therefore be suggested that the survey and interview questions, as well as the research question as a whole, were not so specific as to try and inspect only one of such sorts of festivals; and therefore a wide variety of experiences were considered within the same pool of participants. In future research, this aspect could be more well-defined so as to avoid such a limitation, especially when a participant has been to different kinds of festivals and therefore is unsure about which experience to answer about.

The geopolitical intricacy of Europe is also not considered within this study, which does not take into account centuries-long conflicts between regions such as Western and Eastern Europe,<sup>231</sup> or the division between Southern and Northern Europe,<sup>232</sup> nor the impacts

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<sup>231</sup> Wilfried Loth and M. R. Knight, 'The East-West Conflict in Historical Perspective: An Attempt at a Balanced View', *Contemporary European History* 3, no. 2 (1994): 193.

<sup>232</sup> Garret Martin, 'Europe's North-South Divide - A Stubborn Chasm', *European Institute at the University of Maryland*, no. European Affairs (2009),

that such differences could have on the results of the research. Such impacts could definitely be explored in further research and would potentially demonstrate differences in the perception of attendees of their festival experience according to the region they come from, and even potentially indicate if there are patterns in movements to attend festivals from attendees from different regions within Europe and the impacts of these potential patterns. Furthermore, these divides are also not taken into consideration in the establishment of the concept of European identity/belonging, in the second chapter of this paper.

Furthermore, a potential difference between participants who identified solely as having European citizenship/nationality/residency and others who would also legally identify with countries outside the EU is not contemplated in this study, due to a limitation in the length of the work. Further comparative analysis between these two profiles could potentially generate results that would suggest different impacts and experiences from the festival attendance of both groups, and it is suggested that research that considers such different backgrounds is developed in the future.

Finally, it could be relevant to contextualise the research within the wider scope of its area, and to recognise that, until the beginning of this research project, publications about the topic of large music festivals and their potential connections to feelings of European belonging/identity within the youth in Europe were not many, and the field of research was still considerably incipient. This condition made it difficult for comparisons to be made and methods to be discussed, except if compared to other somewhat similar research projects (for instance, that evaluate the impact of programs like Erasmus on the same aspect of European identity among the youth). At the same time, however, this addition to the research field adds to the suggestion that more research can be made in order to investigate these and similar hypotheses, potentially varying in methods and focuses (for instance, further research could be developed with regard to small festivals, or focusing on a specific generation or nationality/citizenship, etc.).

#### *7.8. Discussion in the light of literature*

The results of the survey and the in-depth interviews can provide further reflections when inserted in the context of the discussion provided by the literature review at the beginning of this study.

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<https://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/ei-blog/155-european-affairs/ea-august-2012/1614-europes-north-south-dividea-stubborn-chasm.europe>

To start with, there are some interesting comparisons that can be made under the scope of the concept of belonging. As presented in the initial chapters of this research, this concept was "about emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home'", with potentially varying degrees of stability and dynamics, generally comprehended in a natural manner and "politicized only when (...) threatened in some way".<sup>233</sup> The findings in this research project do not seem to be in line with this idea, especially since there was no mention of and probably not a very close relation to politicisation, and the feeling "at home" was not once identified. This could also be due to the frequently pointed feeling of the festival experience which is the escape from the routine, a change of environments which by definition would not directly create a feeling of being "at home". The emotional aspect of belonging with the others around you, on the other hand, appeared to be present to some degree in the results of the survey and the in-depth interviews. There was a special emphasis on the aspect of a "common starting point", or a "commonality" which allowed for this feeling of belonging to be more easily identified than in regular daily interactions with others, which relates to the following concept to be discussed here.

The concept of "social identity formation" (or "mechanism of identification"), was in the literature review identified as a "'result of practice' throughout a considerable period of time". The general analysis of festivals impacting more on the sense of connectedness among the participants of the research under the "Frequent Festival Goer" profile could be an indication that, indeed, the length of exposure to this "practice" is directly proportional to its effect as a "mechanism of identification". Consequently, this could possibly indicate that shorter experiences might not be as effective in constructing this sense of connectedness/belonging, or a social identity. These two suggestions would go considerably in line with Benedict Anderson's theory of the mere-exposure effect and familiarity of its symbols explained in the beginning of this research,<sup>234</sup> although in another point, i.e. the expanded feeling of connectedness to all other members of a group, even the ones one does not know, in Anderson's theory, the results identified in this paper would somewhat diverge. In any case, to some extent, the results of this research could indeed suggest that festivals could be "symbolic actions and rituals" that are opportunities for its audiences to strengthen feelings of belonging ("sense of affinity"),<sup>235</sup> which are facilitated by the aforementioned

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<sup>233</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis, 'Belonging and the Politics of Belonging', *Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no. 3 (July 2006): 197–214, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331>.

<sup>234</sup> Apud Waqas Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects: A Quantitative Comparative Analysis' (TU Ilmenau, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.22032/DBT.39483>.

<sup>235</sup> Gabriele Pollini, 'Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging', *International Review of Sociology* 15, no. 3 (November 2005): 497–515, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906700500272483>.

initial commonality and the expanded openness frequently identified among festival audiences.

As presented in the literature review of this paper, this feeling of social belonging could also be related to "an individual's emotional attachment and feeling of belonging within a collective".<sup>236</sup> This understanding of a feeling of belonging was the one which was more commonly identified in the results of the survey and in the in-depth interviews in this research, as many of the survey respondents and interviewees indicated some sense of unity with the festival audiences, and festivals in general as a social (collective) experience. Furthermore, literature indicates this emotional attachment as potentially being either the aim of the other forms of attachment present within the idea of a community belonging, or the very own "structural basis" for them, rendering it a possible higher relevance among them,<sup>237</sup> and therefore indicating a potential significance to the effect that festivals might have on their attendees in that regard. The emotional or affective dimension of identification is additionally described in literature as "identification with" (a place or a people), as opposed to "identification as" (part of a people), which would be more on the cognitive side;<sup>238</sup> and this "identification with" would also be the one most perceived within the results of this research, since the long lasting effect of a community feeling was not necessarily identified within the results, but a sense of unity and belonging during the event and afterwards with the people who participated in it was more strongly perceived.

Finally, when attempting to understand which European culture or identity this paper's results would be more in line with, it would be the description which focuses on "the plurality and diversity of the European culture" and the idea of "unity in diversity", under a "projected future" for the region.<sup>239</sup> This was more clearly identified within the responses related to how their festival experiences impacted the attendees' feeling of connection with Europe, to which they frequently mentioned the multicultural environment of meeting with people from different countries, cultures and languages; not once was an idea of Europe as one standardised unity mentioned by the interviewees. This perspective is also the one adopted frequently by the European Union and many of its projects, as identified in the initial chapters of this research, and it could therefore be suggested that festivals could somewhat be considered to be aligned with them, by offering an environment in which the audiences can

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<sup>236</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects'.

<sup>237</sup> Pollini, 'Elements of a Theory of Place Attachment and Socio-Territorial Belonging'.

<sup>238</sup> Ejaz, 'European Identity and Media Effects'.

<sup>239</sup> Monica Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

overcome "cultural and linguistic barriers" and interact with other European spaces and peoples. Within this research, these sorts of social interactions were mostly identified by survey respondents and interviewees as something positive, and as an opportunity for them to expand their understanding and knowledge about Europe and its peoples, and also to create new social bonds with peoples from different European (and global) countries.

With regard to the concept and impact of festivals per se, the literature cited in this paper had identified that they can be spaces that create "ephemeral communities" and a "shared sense of camaraderie",<sup>240</sup> which was to a considerable extent also identified in the results of the research. Participants of the survey and the in-depth interviews expressed feeling connected to the other members of the audiences upon sharing moments and activities with them, creating a sense of community that lasted more emphatically for the duration of the festival itself, but that sometimes also lasted with them for a prolonged time, sometimes directly connected to the people they met in the events, sometimes not. On the other hand, the academic description of a festival as "a space for the articulation, performance and rediscovery of identity"<sup>241</sup> was not necessarily perceived within the responses of the participants, in either part of the research, especially if focusing on an individual level - which could also be suggested to not have appeared in the responses due to the inclination of this research and its questions towards a collective/social focus. Therefore, the definition which would possibly be more in line with the findings of this paper is the one that points to festival as being at the same time, open to diversity and processes of globalisation and spaces of belonging and community-oriented identities,<sup>242</sup> here at the same time tackling the faces of multiculturalism and openness to the difference and a contemporary event-based feeling of connectedness, both identified in the survey and the interviews within this research. Moreover, the suggestion from literature that festivals would have an impact on the audience's identification with a specific place or community was perceived as true by almost half of the participants of the survey.

As for the characteristics of festivals that could be vectors for boosting this community/collective feeling of belonging, the literature had indicated the interaction among attendees, which was confirmed to be true for the participants of this research, both in

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<sup>240</sup> Julie Ballantyne, Roy Ballantyne, and Jan Packer, 'Designing and Managing Music Festival Experiences to Enhance Attendees' Psychological and Social Benefits', *Musicae Scientiae* 18, no. 1 (March 2014): 65–83, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864913511845>.

<sup>241</sup> Aitchison and Pritchard *apud* Andy Bennett and Ian Woodward, 'Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging', in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 11–25.

<sup>242</sup> Bennett and Woodward.

relation to participation in the audience and to side activities such as camping (as illustrated especially in the in-depth interviews). Other two characteristics identified in the literature were the innate offer in festivals of environments in which attendees would feel more comfortable with the others around, and to coexist with different cultures more intensely than in their regular interactions. Again, these were both confirmed to be true for respondents in this paper, who frequently mentioned identifying a multicultural aspect within the audiences of the festivals they went to, and who perceived in themselves and in others an expanded openness towards meeting new people, an approach which to some extent remained with them after the experience itself ended. A sense of "communitarianism" suggested by literature was also perceived in the results of the research, as already illustrated previously, as well as a "separation from routine" - both also facilitators of a sense of belonging and unity. Finally, the proposed extension of the event through time through recurrent editions, identified in literature, proved to have a practical impact on the capacity of festivals to promote a sense of connectedness, as identified within the profile of the "Frequent festival goer" - an impact that was possibly also boosted by this profile's tendency to participate in more days of the festival, therefore engaging longer as audience and in the side activities as well. The continuous engagement via online environments was not investigated in this research.

## 8. Conclusion

Festivals as vectors for processes of identity formation, both on an individual and on a collective level, have been researched somewhat extensively in the academic literature. However, a hypothesis of the relation between this capacity and a potential effect of festival attendance in the social identity-building of young Europeans had not been identified in academic research until the beginning of this research project, a gap that this study intended to further investigate. Following on key terms such as "large music festivals", "youth" and "(collective) European belonging", the research questions which this study intended to provide answers to were: do large-scale European music festivals have an impact on young attendees' perception of belonging to Europe? If so, how do festivals impact it?

Starting with an introduction that lays out the general scope of the study and its main objectives and methods, the literature review portion of the study began with a review of the idea of European identity/belonging, through which the concepts of belonging and collective identities were established as being more appropriate for the current discussion, bringing a focus on collective/social processes of identification. In this chapter, some of the key aspects and tools for the development of collective belonging were also identified, among which appeared the importance of culture and cultural practices; and the relevance of these concepts to contemporary political issues were also outlined, especially directed towards Europe and the European Union. A second chapter was dedicated to reviewing the already existing literature about the impact of festivals in boosting processes of identity formation, literature which is dedicated to personal identities, and collective ones in a local/regional or festival-based perspective. In this chapter, key aspects of festivals which cooperate to identity formation and development were also established following previous literature, such as more intense interaction, a detachment from daily obligations, the exposure to different cultures, and the prolonged duration of such events over time. A final chapter in the literature review of this research was dedicated to investigating the special relevance of the "youth" years in individual processes of identity formation, helping therefore to establish the target age range for this study as 18-32 years of age, a range that is identified in literature as having strong importance to the formation of one's identity.

Next, the following chapter defines the design and method employed in this research in order to attempt to answer the research questions. The chosen methods were a quantitative survey and a follow-up qualitative, structured in-depth interview. The survey had 30 questions separated in groups focusing on the characteristics of one's festival experience,

their perceptions about it with a social/collective approach, their level of attachment to Europe, and personal demographic information. The in-depth interviews were structured around seven main questions, sometimes followed by more focused "sub-questions", and had the aim of further exploring their responses to the survey as well as the relevance of some concepts such as multiculturalism, openness and community feeling within their festival experiences. 193 valid responses were collected with the survey and nine participants volunteered to participate in the interviews.

The results of the survey were then demonstrated in the following chapter, and subsequently analysed - first in their integrity, then by comparing the general results to two conceived profiles: "Pro-Europe" and "Frequent festival goer". The general findings of the survey indicated that festivals were indeed a social experience for almost 80% of the participants, albeit not necessarily creating a feeling of community, despite the common aspect of festivals as places where the participants frequently met new people (for circa 83% of the respondents), often from countries different from theirs; and from the overall perception of festivals as spaces in which one would feel more open towards other people (for almost 84%). In regard to enhancing a sense of connectedness to Europe, the results indicated that this would be less strongly impacted by the festival experience of most of the participants than a considerably higher (sometimes around 30%) impact on their level of connection with other geographical or social spheres, for instance - although it was also emphasised in the in-depth interviews that the confrontation with cultures from outside of Europe would sometimes make participants more aware of a sense of common European identity. On the other hand, the findings from profiling "Pro-Europe" participants would demonstrate a different understanding, since it was identified that, although this profile was less frequently attending festivals than the general participants, and that when they go to festivals, they would be less prone to meeting new people; they declared having more of a strong impact of their festival attendance on their feeling of connection to Europe. The results from the comparison of the general pool with the "Frequent festival goer" profile, on the other hand, suggest that the latter are more prone to travel to other countries in order to attend festivals, and they meet new people from different countries more often than the general participants. Since the participants from this profile also answered more often (in a difference of around 9%) that they feel a sense of community-building in their festival experience, including with the people of Europe, it could be suggested that a prolonged engagement with the activity of attending festivals would have an impact on how these attendees build their



collective belongings, including with audience members from different countries, and their sense of connectedness to Europe.

The in-depth interviews analysis brought forward a deeper sense of community-building among the participants, although the considerably low number of interviewees makes these findings probably less relevant in quantity than the contrasting one from the survey results. As for a suggested enhancement in their connectedness to Europe, the results of the in-depth interviews provided a similar finding in terms of quantity with what was expressed in the survey, but it was especially relevant to see the concepts they related to a sense of connection to Europe: multicultural environments, and a highlight of similarities and differences promoted by an encounter with the other.

The impact of festivals in one's personal and collective identities had already been explored to a considerable extent, as has been presented earlier in this paper. Therefore, following on such fundamental content, this study contributes to its academic field by approaching the sociopolitical impact of large-scale music festivals, and especially its potential relation to a sense of belonging to Europe. To some extent, it also suggests a new method of exploring this sociopolitical aspect of festivals by relating it to Eurobarometer measurements of attachment to Europe and by including the idea of Europe within the survey questions; and its findings emphasise an important difference between a mere social/collective experience and a sense of community/identity-building, which at times can be inaccurately considered as equivalents.

Clearly, a research developed with considerably limited numbers of participants in both the survey and the interviews could have no intentions of generalising its findings towards the whole of the targeted population, but the findings of this study provide interesting suggestions for the field. It could be suggested, for instance, that the attendance in festivals generally promotes a social experience, through more intense interactions than daily life usually offers and with more openness to meeting new people, frequently from different countries; and it could also be suggested that prolonged experiences in festivals would lead to a stronger sense of community-building in various social and geographical levels, including towards the people of Europe. However, mere attendance to festivals did not seem to indicate a high effect on general participants' level of attachment to Europe, despite their enhanced openness to meeting new people in those environments, and potentially due to a lower sense of community building in direct proportion to the time length of their festival experiences.

This research also provided findings that counterpointed or corroborated discussions offered by the academic literature on the matter. To start with, the concept of "belonging" was

identified within the in-depth interviews as having a somewhat different definition than the one originally conceived for this study; suggesting an idea of "belonging" that would be more closely related to event- or location- or audience-specific emotional attachments and a feeling of commonality than a longstanding feeling of being "at home". The theoretical framework of a "social identity formation", on the other hand, was similarly identified within the results of this study, as the impact of festivals on a sense of community was confirmed among the participants as being related to one's extended practice and exposure. The suggested definition of an European cultural and collective identity that focuses on "unity in diversity" and in multiculturalism as a key aspect of the European identity was also perceived within the results of this study. These plural cultures, in its turn, are one of the key aspects identified by this study's participants in their festival experiences; and this and almost all of the aspects of festivals identified within literature as being the main facilitators for the processes of collective identity formation in these environments were also perceived within this study.

The findings of this research could be immensely enriched by further research, including with the intention of further investigating the impact of long-term attendance in festivals on senses of community building (including with a focus on Europe), and a suggested "subconscious" enhancement of connection to Europe by the mere exposure to different cultures and people from different countries in such events. If these findings would be in line with what was found with this study, moreover, and considering that collective identity and integration are within the scope of the European Union's actions and focuses, it could potentially be indicated that one way to boost a sense of European belonging among the young Europeans would be to develop programs of long-term attendance in international large music festivals, with the intention of boosting this sense of transnational community.

**Appendix**  
**In-depth interviews**

**I: My first question for you is: when you think about your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling while you were attending it? If you enjoyed your time there, or how you felt while you were at the festival?**

A: To give you a bit of a perspective, the festivals that I can include as European or multicultural festivals are the Boom Festival that we have in Portugal in the South, in Alentejo, and our world music festival in Sines, next to Algarve. Both of them are more than music festivals, especially Boom - they involve arts, they involve discussions, so it's more than a music festival. I enjoyed both of them a lot. To the world music festival, I have been going since I was probably 20 years old, so it's been 10 years since I have been going every single year. Regarding the Boom Festival, it's a very big festival with a lot of people and it's a strong experience, you learn a lot with other cultures. You learn different and alternative ways of living, which actually kept me thinking about that the whole time after the Boom festival. The world music festival is a bit different, it's smaller, so the human contact is easier and you can continue to see those people while the festival lasts - so one week - and you can create relationships.

Ah! I forgot to tell you about one other European festival in Germany which stopped (it doesn't happen anymore) which is Freaks of Nature. It's similar to the Boom festival but smaller. I also enjoyed it more than Boom because it's smaller - so again human contact was way easier and relationships could keep being alive after the festival. It's also more of a music and arts festival. For me, when I go to a festival, I go for the music and for the people, and it also attracts me if it's a multicultural festival - it doesn't matter if it's the people that go or the music but it has to have some kind of multicultural vibe.

Another different perspective, for example - Boom attracts some kind of different people than our small world music festival because this world music festival is more affordable for people, so you have more diversity than at Boom or at Freaks of Nature. So I enjoy them a lot but the one that I like the most for sure is the world music festival in our little town of Sines. But I want to go to other music festivals that happen in Europe, European big ones, like in Croatia - I would like to go to Croatia. I'm more attracted to festivals in Southern Europe, probably because of the weather and because I feel probably more related to those regions than in Northern Europe.

**I: And in all of those festivals, do you have memories of interactions within the festival audience that were particularly remarkable for you?**

A: I'm going to recall my last festival that I went to in 2009, the world music festival - so I was also selling jewellery there, and there was an old German woman, she also lives in Algarve... And this was probably very spiritual but she told me that I have an old soul, and she kept coming to our little tent, and we had nice conversations about how she was leaving because she had an eco-village in Monchique. People coming and sharing what they had like beer or food, we also shared... That's my last good memory.

**I: Would you say that the interactions that you have as part of the audience in a festival are more similar or different to the relations you have with people in your daily life?**

A: They're different. People are more open, more receptive, more friendly. I think when we go to a music festival we go to escape something, or to live something different, and with that perspective in mind (I'm talking about myself), I tend to be more open. It's the same feeling as when I'm travelling: I'm looking for something new, so if I'm looking for something new I'm more open, and I also feel that vibe from other people and relationships are more open.

**I: Thinking back about the first part of the research, you mentioned you enjoyed being around people that had similar interests during your past festival experience. Which factors do you think helped the experience to be positive in this regard?**

A: Things like people being tolerant, people being accepting of people's differences, open-mindedness, questioning about life, about politics...

**I: In the first part of the survey you indicated that you felt more open to meeting new people in your festival experiences. Do you think that since then this has impacted how you feel about meeting new people in your life in general?**

A: For sure. Probably when I say that (and it's the same as when I go traveling, they go hand-in-hand) - I learnt from both experiences how to manage relationships and probably how to talk with people that I don't know, and to be more kind, open and tolerant, for sure.

**I: In the survey you also said that you felt a sense of belonging or community in this festival experiences. Would you say that this feeling remained with you afterwards or it has changed somehow?**

A: Can you explain the question a bit better?

**I: You said that you felt the sense of belonging or community within the festival experience; but once the festival experience is past, would you say that this feeling remains with you, or it changes, or it goes away...? What would you say?**

A: That really depends on how I feel about myself in one day. That's a difficult question.

**I: Maybe it could help you to think on - which would be a follow-up question - how you would define that community that you felt a part of, who is that community composed of when you say you feel a sense of belonging?**

A: When I was at Freaks of Nature, I got there and I paid my tickets and I was completely out of money, and people gave me food - not because I was asking, but because they felt like I needed to eat. And I was never again in that situation, but also after Freaks of Nature I was in Berlin and I was alone, and people helped me a lot. So in some places I felt the sense of community - probably because I was different, or I was pumped with a community feeling, and I was in Berlin, and Berlin for me is a special town, and people helped me. Sometimes I feel the sense of community even if I'm not in the festival, but I nurture that community sense that I gain in the festival - I nurture it within me for my life. But the last events for example we had in Portugal with the rise of the extreme right, and the things we see for example in Brazil, or now we don't have Trump but we never know, and things happening in Poland... It makes me question my sense of community because more and more I feel isolated, and with all these conspiracy theories that I'm not part of... So I feel more and more that I'm not part of a community. So if you asked me that question probably one year ago, I'd have a different perspective - but I hope that I can continue to believe in my community belonging.

**I: Sure. With Covid it's not also not the prime time to feel part of a community.**

A: Exactly. [laughs] With Covid, I haven't felt that feeling for a long time because I haven't been moving.

**I: In the survey, you also indicated that attending festivals had an impact on how you felt connected to Europe, and you indicated that impact was generally very positive. Could you elaborate on that a little bit?**

A: I replied to that question because I never thought in that way but for sure I have. Well, I'm a European citizen, I believe in the European project - of course it could be a little bit changed but the world is not perfect -, but I like to be immersed in a multicultural

environment and for me that environment is European. We have more and more foreigners living in Lisbon, and probably after those festivals and some professional experiences, my best friends are not Portuguese. They are from Spain or Greece, so it happened in my life, so for sure I believe that those festivals have an impact. And also my roots - my mom is not Portuguese, I was not born here... So it's a mix.

**I: Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview or are there any points that you think I may have missed?**

A: No... Today I was talking with my parents about the in-depth interview that I was going to have today and we were discussing the impact of festivals in the European feeling, and it has impacts for sure... And because all of a sudden you are in a festival and you don't know which language to speak because you never where the other person comes from - which actually doesn't matter, but probably he doesn't speak your language, and you find a way to understand each other and have a good moment, even if it's just for 5 seconds. And then we discussed how that happened, probably it was Woodstock and then the British festivals had an impact, then they became universalised, because they are cheaper so more people can go - which is important, culture is important for us, as his health (probably I'm putting in the same place but I shouldn't, because of Covid, but it's true, it's important!). It's a tool, we need that. And I was actually thinking, because my parents were like, 'but people need money and probably now the youngest have more money than we had' - and I told him that the numbers don't show that - but I think it's because they became universalised, and cheaper. The first festival that I went to, I was in university; I didn't have a lot of money but we always found a way to go. And thank you for this interview because it reminded me of the festival that I went to and how eager I am to go to one, I miss them.

*Interview 2 - Interviewee 'B'*

**I: My first question is: thinking back to your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling while you were attending it? If you enjoyed your time, and how your experience in general felt.**

B: Is this about the last one I went to or the one that sticks out the most?

**I: I would say it is about your whole experience in general, so all of it, if you can.**

B: It's a lot... [laughs] I've always enjoyed it, always. During the actual festival, it's always been a good time around good people. I found out a lot about myself in lots of different festivals and if there's ever been uncomfortable moments, it's because I've just taken too many substances, honestly. [laughs] ... to be completely honest, and that's just my fault. But the general feeling is great. Music is a great part of my life and I'm a creative person so I've always enjoyed those collectives and I've never been someone that enjoys huge, Glastonbury-style festivals; it's very much about smaller intimate, more music-focused ones and I think that's why I enjoy it. That's what I love and I don't have the need to go to loads of other different types of festivals; I really enjoy those types.

**I: Other than maybe the size, are there other factors that count when you're choosing which festivals you want to attend?**

B: It's very much based on the music, it largely will depend on what DJs will be there, what kind of acts will be there. The price of the ticket, because there were a couple of summers where I was still working in the music sphere or music scene, so I didn't have to worry so much about price because I was getting free entry but that would have been the requirement for me, a reasonable price. And also how many people are going to be with me - is it going to be a big group of us, or is it just going to be me and one person or two people that I already know? I guess it is important as well - is it going to be camping or not? Where are we going to sleep - are we going to sleep in a tent or are we going to sleep in a van, or are we going to stay in an Airbnb and commute back and forth? Also maybe looking at some of the stuff that they have online, and seeing how the pictures and the videos look and the experience that people have had before, which would probably be dictated by testimonials of other people who have been before that I know... So that's probably why I'd be going - by word of mouth. Those would be my criteria.



**I: And after your festival experience, do you usually share this with friends and family somehow or is your festival experience something that ends when the festival ends?**

B: Within the people that I'd be with, it would be a conversation that would go on for months and months. With the people that weren't there that I know that would be interested, then I would tell them about it for weeks. With the people that I'm friends with but maybe that's not really an important thing for them, I'd tell them that I went, tell them it was a good time, tell them what I did, but I wouldn't elaborate on it so much because I know that it's not really something that they care so much about - for instance, maybe my parents fall into that category a little bit. My mom is quite interested in that stuff but there's always a point where it's just like, "then we listened to this person, and we listened to this person, and then we saw this guy, and I bumped into her, and I bumped into him"... So I guess it depends on the types of people. There is a spectrum that goes from talking about it and reminiscing, almost, and also some people that maybe didn't go this year but went the previous year and we compare stories, and that can go on for weeks or whatever... There's a good mix, I suppose.

**I: Thinking back about your most remarkable festival experience in Europe, what was it that made it especially remarkable for you?**

B: The one that comes to my head is a festival in Wales called Gottwood. I think I've mentioned it in the survey probably. I'd say that was really good... I'm sorry - what was the question again?

**I: About your most remarkable festival experience - what was it that made the most remarkable for you?**

B: Why was it so remarkable... The place the festival was held in was stunning, absolutely stunning, it's into a forest and there was a lake there, and I actually wrote a review on it because I was working for a music magazine at the time, and I went there and took to write a review on it - and I think I wrote that it is kind of falling down a rabbit hole for a weekend. The moment we got there, on a Thursday evening, or Friday evening, Friday afternoon, you go in, put up your tent, set it up, come together, and then you went from the tent to almost the border between where you're staying and where the parties are happening, where everyone is... And it was just like night and day - just transformed, and you were underneath the trees, and they were just so high. And there's all these amazing lights to there, and little things that were hidden away in sidealleys and stuff. It just felt like a whole other world and it was so immersive. The music was great the whole weekend and the other people that I met there

were top-notch. I'd say the most remarkable thing was the fact that I was not expecting that at all, so when I walked in and found myself there, as soon as I went into the forest, everything that I'd come from disappeared. And it was like, "ok, now I'm in this whole new world and I've forgotten I'm even in Wales or even in the UK". Just totally immersive. Immersion was probably the thing that was the most remarkable, and I think that's achieved by a good level of attention to detail and management of the amount of people going, because if there's too many people and it gets too crowded, then it gets uncomfortable - you kind of lose the magic of it. There were like 5000 people there or something - it's really not big at all, but it was great.

**I: In this festival, or in other festivals, if you have, could you share an example of a memory or an interaction that you had within the festival audience that was particularly relevant to you?**

B: I have countless memories of so many people just being so forthcoming and so welcoming - total strangers... That's one of my favourite things about festivals: when you're in the right area, and the right kind of festival, everyone is completely equal. And unless you speak about what you do outside of the festival and that kind of stuff, then everyone seems to be treated very equally. Everyone's there for a common reason and as a result the conversations you have start from that particular point, that common understanding - we're on the same wavelength, and that's really refreshing. You don't have to try and figure out who this person is, you're like, "ok, where are our common grounds? Our common ground is here". And that's a great start. And people are just so friendly, so open, and you just have crazy adventures with people out of the blue. I think for me it just reminds me that the majority of people are really good, really great, and as long as they feel safe, they will act in a reasonable way and you have a lot more in common than you don't with people. That is one of the best things about festivals for me - that you find that commonality, not just because you like the same music or have the same interest, but we're all so similar and these things just level the playing field and bring everyone together under the same... I wouldn't say 'common goal', but just a shared interest. It's powerful. And having these kinds of conversations that underline that, and make you go like, "I'm so glad that people like this exist and we share this kind of thing together - people are passionate like me about this". And you meet really interesting people doing cool stuff in the sphere, or they're not doing it in the music sphere but there is a connection there that you could work with. I miss it.

**I: In this thought of feeling more open to meeting new people in festivals, do you think that this has impacted how you feel about meeting new people in your life in general?**

B: I really do, because like I said, for lack of a better phrase or word, it gives you hope, it gives you the belief that, if you give them a chance, people are good. For me, from where I'm speaking and the festivals I've been to, they were mainly electronic-based and they were mainly underground dance music with the roots that are in Chicago house and Detroit techno - this kind of truly underground music disco and all this kind of stuff... That theme that runs through all of that kind of music is community and the fact that when you are on a dance floor with people, you can be next to every single type of person, but it doesn't matter who they are - it's about this common shared feeling that you have, and I find that so powerful - that's my favourite thing about the dance music community and the electronic scene and underground music in general, it's that there is that origin in equality and and just commonality and understanding. So when you're participating in a festival like that, you feel like you're carrying on that baton. I don't know if that answers your question...

**I: You were talking about if this feeling of being open to meeting new people had impacted your life.**

B: Sure. Definitely. I already had this, I believe, from quite a young age because I grew up in London - I was schooled with people from literally every continent from a very young age, so there's nothing that separates us; we are exactly the same. So I never grew up with some weird, irrational fear of Sommalians or Brazilians or Iraqis or whatever, everyone was the same to me. But I think what it can do for a lot of people is that if they do somehow find themselves in a festival mixed with all these different types of people that they might not usually be with, and they have interactions with them and they're positive, surprisingly positive, then that can make a profound difference in someone's life. That can really change the way that they look at the world and go, "wait a minute, I thought I didn't like that type of person, but I had a really nice conversation with them next to the fire, next to a DJ that I like", for example, "I really enjoyed that actually - maybe my assumptions have been wrong all this time". That kind of starts the ball rolling - it might not change them overnight, but at least certainly it plants to seed in some way and just progresses people's understanding of the world and how they fit in and how we're all connected in that sense. These kinds of spaces just allow people to be better people, truly. I strongly believe that if you give people the space to be who they want to be, it gives them confidence that then just vibrates out and it's a knock-on effect. It changes society. You don't have to look so far into the roots of - and I'm

speaking really specifically now about underground music, but it's very much linked to festivals and festivals are very much linked to, for me, the roots of underground electronic music... It's nice to talk about it for a change.

**I: Now you mentioned a little bit of a sense of community and a sense of belonging in your past festival experiences - do you think that this feeling has remained with you afterwards or has it changed somehow?**

B: A good question. I'll explain: I've been actually thinking about this quite a lot recently - I played rugby for 11 or 12 years, and that is a community, that's a team, sport, maybe two times a week you see them, you play with them, maybe you go out, maybe you have events with them during the week or on the weekend as well, you're socialising or whatever - it's the whole thing, it's part of your life. It was my church basically. [laughs] I enjoyed it, I had a good time, and I made some decent friends, and I learned fundamentals about myself. But the thing that I realised actually when I left, when I stopped playing, was that I didn't fully fit in on the social side, I didn't really always buy into this really "boys lad-ish culture", and when I went to university and I basically followed my nose and was like, "I like music, there must be somewhere that I can learn to DJ here" and I just went to the society, met a few people, I realised that there's a few people that like the same kind of stuff as me. Then it just went from there, I started DJing at the university and I was surrounded by people that loved the same kind of music as me, and then festivals and more clubs... There was where I felt for the first time like I belonged. I was like, "I found my people, I totally found my people, this is what I've been missing all my life" - and I hadn't even realised the scene I was accustomed to, which was the rugby team, it was satisfying, it was it was challenging and everything but that was a section of it that was like, "I feel like there's something in this sphere that I'm not getting and that I need". Then when I integrated myself very naturally into the music scene in university, and after that in professional life, I realised, this is exactly it. And I think actually it's not actually so much to do with the music, it's more to do with the mindset of people and how they see the world, and the way that they just look at things in a bit more of a deeper level, a little bit more spiritual perhaps, less physical, more emotion, less logic. Because you feel music - you can make it, you can write it or whatever, but when you're at a festival, when you're listening to stuff, you're not thinking like, "oh, that's a really nice note" - you might be a little bit, but primarily you're really feeling the music, you're feeling the experience, or feeling the dancing around. And that alone, if your common ground is that, that kind of starting point based on emotion and feeling, I think that is just another layer

down into a friendship. For me, I hadn't realised completely that... I knew I needed that, but I didn't know I needed it as much until I had it and I was like, "this is really what I've been missing". So for sure that has stayed with me because I'm still part of Facebook groups, and I'm still listening to mixes that I would have been listening to back then, I still have my eye on festivals to go to maybe not this year but next year, I still have an interest in it; I wouldn't maybe go to seven in one year but maybe do one or two or something, and just choose like the people that I go with - keep it nice and small, not too complicated and everything. The moment I found it, it stuck with me and it's still with me to this day, and the kind of community that I'm part of is nice because you can go to pretty much anywhere in the world and you'll find someone like you. That's really nice - to think that I could just leave Brussels and go to South Africa, and if I did a bit of looking around, maybe just hang out near a record store or something, there's going to be people that I can vibe with. Then I can go from there to, I don't know, Chile or something - and there's going to be more people like that, and it's just like an international community, and that just feels so good. It's so nice to belong in that way, to feel like you have a crew that understands you, I suppose; which, ultimately, we all want to be understood, and we all want to be listened to and we all want to be understood. If someone is deprived of that, that can be really detrimental to their mental health, for example - every kind of health. That's a fundamental human desire or need, and not all people have that, so I'm really grateful that I do.

**I: In the first part of the survey, you indicated that your festival attendance had an impact on how you felt connected to Europe and that this in general was a very positive impact. Could you elaborate more on that, please?**

B: Along the same lines as what I was mentioning before, with the fact that you're in a group of people, and not just your friend group but the people that are also attending the festival, and they're from all over the world... The last festival that I was at, I was chatting to a guy from Saudi Arabia, and then I turned around and started talking to my friend from Germany, and he'd met a guy that was from Canada, and then there was another guy that was from Poland - pretty much everyone had their own nationality. And they don't even have to be in Europe to make me feel European, because actually what can happen is that if you meet someone from outside of Europe and you're with Europeans there already, you can actually see a cultural difference between - like say, for instance, I am from the UK, my friend is from Germany, another friend from Spain, and we meet an American for example. If we have a conversation, the four of us, it depends on the person but generally speaking you can begin to

see some cultural differences, and what you can find is that although you might think that you have a sort of British culture, whatever, or Spanish culture and German culture, there is a shared culture within Europe. I've had a moment like that or a few moments like that before, and it's been like, "actually, I'd never thought of it like that, I'd never thought that was a pretty European thing", or something like that. I think also just generally I identify more with a larger group than just one Island or one nation. I don't really know how to explain that, it's just always been a natural inclination that just makes sense to me. I never never been a majorly patriotic person and I'm not a massive Europe-lover, but my experience at festivals has made me more conscious of the fact that I share a lot of European values, I have a lot of things in common with other people that live in other European countries, and you can see that when you speak to someone that isn't from Europe - and that's not a bad thing, it's just that people have different cultures. I guess that maybe reinforces the fact that there's quite a lot of European elements to my personality.

*Interview 3 - Interviewee 'C'*

**I: My first question is: thinking back to your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling while you were attending it? Did you enjoy your time, how was it?**

C: I was definitely enjoying my time - especially now, it feels so strange to think back to such an event... It was in Budapest in Hungary, and I travelled there just for the music festival. It was outside and it was a really warm and sunny day and I think I felt quite free, and it was just a good experience because you don't really know the people around you but you sort of feel connected to them because you listen to the same music, so I think it was a nice experience even though I didn't make any contacts that I'm still in contact with now. I felt super connected to the people around me, just dancing... Feeling quite free, I'd say.

**I: How did you choose the festival you attended? Were there some specific factors that counted when you chose? How was your choice?**

C: I guess it was mostly about the artists that I wanted to see, some of the artists... and I gave it as a present to a friend and one of the artists was one of her favourites so I think that was the reason... But I think of course it was also more interesting to go to Budapest to attend a festival than for example to go to a German festival. I think it was the whole experience of having this girls' trip to get there, and we spent the whole weekend in Budapest and went to the festival. Also Sziget is on an island in Budapest so I think the location is quite special because you have so many different stages and different inputs to see, and it's just very unique. I went to it because it was special.

**I: Do you usually share your experience with friends and family when you come back or not?**

C: Definitely, especially because for me it was the first time that I attended such a large music festival, and of course when you travel there... And it was a great experience, so I shared it on social media when I came back, with family and friends that I told about the festival and what I experienced.

**I: Could you share an example of a memory or a dear thought that you have of an interaction that you had within that festival audience that was particularly relevant to you?**

C: I think after sometime dancing we grabbed drinks and something to eat and you could just sit down on these tables, and everyone wanted to have a break, so we were just sitting with random people but we had super nice conversations there, because we would just eat together and it felt like the conversation was just going very easily. These conversations in between the listening to the music and dancing and stuff, it was quite nice that you could just catch up with different people and then maybe they would get up and go back dancing but new people would come, and then you just had dinner with strangers but you had these interesting talks. And of course, people came from all over Europe, so it's interesting to just ask where they come from, how did they end up here, how do they like it so far... I think it was quite relaxed.

**I: Would you say that, based on what you said, you would say that those interactions were somewhat different from the ones you have in your daily life?**

C: Yes, definitely, because everyone is more chilled and you know that everyone is there to meet new people, I think, otherwise you wouldn't maybe go there, because of course you attend these festivals with thousands of others together, and you want to attend them. Because otherwise you could listen to the music back home; but you want to go out there. So I think it's easier to get into the conversation because you feel like everyone wants to chat and is really open-minded, and I think this open-mindedness is something that is very, very present in these festival occasions. I never talk to so many strangers normally. [laughs] But in this festival setting it sort of feels that you're not strangers, but more connected.

**I: In the first part of the survey, you had indicated that you felt more open to meeting new people doing your festival experiences. Do you think that this impact remained with you after and affected your life in general or is an openness that stayed within that context?**

C: For me, it's more related to the context. I think I'm open in general to meeting new people but it just felt easier for me in this special context, but I think I can also maybe not tell because I haven't attended many festivals. I think maybe if you attended more festivals, maybe you'll get more in the habit of making these easy-going contacts. Because I was so chilled, everyone was chilled, it was much easier then, than if you just go to a country normally, to visit the country - I think it's much harder for me then to get in contact so easily. But this open-mindedness towards meeting new people certainly stays with you in general if you visit new places and if you just get out there and meet people, I think it definitely helps. But I think it was more the context of the festival that facilitated this conversation.



**I: In the survey, you also indicated that you felt this sense of belonging or community during your festival experience. Do you feel that this has remained with you also or has it changed somehow?**

C: When I think back, I can still feel this connectedness to the people around me because you all came for the same thing and you all dance to the music, listen to the music... So I think this feeling stays with you especially the weeks after the festival. I cannot really say how long-lasting it is but it definitely is an experience that stays with you, that you felt so close to people that you didn't know, because you were just celebrating this atmosphere and everyone was so thrilled. This feeling definitely stays.

**I: So you would say that the community would be composed of mainly the people who were there sharing that moment with you?**

C: Not even necessarily because I don't remember the exact people, so it was more to share an experience with so many people, being so connected to other people. I couldn't even recall whom I talked to but I know I talked to many people from all over the world, and I enjoyed it and I felt connected to all these people - but it couldn't say who the people were, so it's maybe more of a feeling of connectedness to others.

**I: In the first part of the survey, you indicated that you felt the festival attendance had an impact on how you felt connected to Europe, and that it was an impact that was generally very positive. Could you elaborate on that?**

C: I think this freedom of movement, it really struck me because I could just go for one week and to attend this festival, even that was special. Especially now with the pandemic we feel how that is just taken from us again, and that was really special that I could go there and be there with people who could also just come there to Budapest so easily to attend this festival. I think then on this festival, you don't really differentiate, because you feel really similar - and maybe that's something in Europe that we often don't feel that we have something in common but we rather see the differences -, but on the festival we were all there because of the same music and because of the same joy in dancing and listening to the music. So I think that was really something that you could just easily see, 'ok, we all listen to the same music, so we're not so different after all'! That made me feel this sense of connectedness to the other countries and to all Europeans, because we could just dance altogether, and that is something! I think that's why it was special.

*Interview 4 - Interviewee 'D'*

**I: My first question is: when you think back to your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember the general feeling while you attended it? Did you enjoy your time, and how did you feel in general?**

D: Yes, 100% enjoyed it. The biggest thing about it is especially if you're there for a weekend, it's a feeling of sort of escapism, especially a big festival as well. I went to Tomorrowland four times and that especially just feels like a completely different world. I just love it.

**I: How do you usually choose the festivals you're attending? What are the factors that are decisive in your choice?**

D: A big part of it is obviously the acts - it has to have acts that I actually enjoy, otherwise I wouldn't really consider going. Probably the production quality of it; if you compare festivals in the UK where a lot of times it's just a field with an ugly stage, whereas mainland Europe, mostly Dutch festivals, they've got these lavish stages, really incredible designs, same as Belgium as well - that's probably a big part of it as well. The general vibe, you can tell from some festivals what the general attendees are going to be like, as in if it's not like your sort of scene, basically. These are the three biggest things for me.

**I: Do you usually share your experience afterwards with friends and family, or does the festival experience end when it ends?**

D: I wouldn't say so, I'd say that probably less-so family, more-so friends - especially because we've got a group of festival friends that live all over the place, we always share it with them for example. I wouldn't say it ends afterwards, you're always thinking about it afterwards anyway.

**I: When you think back to your most remarkable experience in these music festivals, what is it that makes it especially remarkable for you?**

D: I think it varies because at some festivals, some of my best experiences haven't been actually where all the music is - it's been just sitting in the campsite with friends, playing awful music... [laughs] Also at the same time the big moments - one of my biggest memories is when I've had all my friends with me and we sat at the top of the hill in Tomorrowland, all the fireworks are going off, it's the end of the weekend, and it's such a rush. Except for that,

moreso just discovering the music, it's there as well - you stumble across some bands or DJs that you'd never seen before, and then suddenly there's a new world.

**I: Do you have specific memories or examples of interactions within the audiences in the festivals that were remarkable for you?**

D: I think especially some festivals where you just end up bumping into the same people and sort of making friends and then you end up sticking with them for the rest of the festival, or there's been for example cases where I met people in the crowd and I'm still friends with them to this day. Or like I'm quite short, and there's climbing up on some people's shoulders, which is great, some random people's shoulders. [laugh] Apart from that, I can't think of any specific examples.

**I: Would you say that your interactions as part of the audience festivals are more similar or different to the ones you have with other people in your regular life?**

D: Definitely I'd say so. In festivals, there's usually some sort of alcohol involved, so you tend to be a bit more open and you're kind of all there for the same reason, whereas during your regular life it's kind of hard to open up, so it's definitely different.

**I: In the first part of the research, you mentioned that you didn't really enjoy being around people with similar interests around you in the festival experience. What factors would you say that made your experience be negative in this regard?**

D: I'm sorry - what did I put?

**I: That you did not enjoy necessarily being around them.**

D: I might've answered that one wrong. [laughs] I think it depends on the situation. There are some crowds where you can be in and, if you're towards the front of a crowd, you tend to get this sort of people who are just to be seen on the cameras, and then there can be a lot of pushing and stuff like - but it depends on the crowd to be honest. I probably answered that a bit wrong.

**I: Would you say that you feel more open to meeting new people when you're in a festival? And if so, do you think that this has any impact on your openness to meeting new people afterwards?**

D: I'd say 100% you're more likely to make friends - usually, if it's a weekend festival where you're camping, you get there and then instantly you just go around talking to everyone who's camping around you. If for example you went to something in real life, like a park, usually you wouldn't just go off and talk to every random person or they'll think you're weird. In festivals, everyone's like, "come over, have a bit of whatever". I wouldn't say it affects me outside of the festivals, though, because in that respect, once I come back from the festival, I wouldn't say I tend to be more open to speaking to 'randomers', because - and that's about the same sort of environment - it'd still be a bit weird.

**I: In the first round of the survey you also did not indicate feeling a sense of belonging or community when you were in the festival experience. What would you say is the reason why you don't feel a sense of community there?**

D: I don't think that's completely right - I do and I don't, I think it probably has to do with the festivals I've been to. I've been to more international ones. I think if you go to a local festival, and you sort of know a lot of the people going there, but with the bigger ones... Especially festivals like Tomorrowland, they tend to brand themselves as being this global family when it isn't. [laughs] I wouldn't say I do but I wouldn't say I don't feel part of it - I can't really describe it.

**I: You also said that you didn't really feel an impact on how connected you feel to Europe, from your festival experience. Could you elaborate on that?**

D: I said I didn't?

**I: Yes, you said you did not. You can change your mind if you want to.**

D: Yes, I definitely changed my mind on that. [laughs] When I filled that out, it wasn't long after being back, but I was living in Rotterdam, but now I live back in the UK. So I'd say it depends on the festival - as the ones in the UK don't really count, but... It might be because I was thinking more in terms of Tomorrowland where it's not really Europe-focused, where it's the whole world; I think the biggest attendance there apart from Belgium is either of Americans or Australians, weirdly. If I go to little festivals, then it 100% makes me feel more part of Europe, especially after Brexit. [laughs] Because the crowd is just so different in comparison to the UK. The UK tends to be a lot more *[unintelligible]*, whereas European ones tend to be a lot more open, especially the ones in Germany, people always want to make friends with you when you go to a festival in Germany, the second they hear you speaking

English, it's instantly trying to be your best friends. [laughs] So I'd probably change my answer to that one.

**I: Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview, or any points or issues that you think I may have missed?**

D: I don't think so.

*Interview 5 - Interviewee 'E'*

**I: My first question to you is: when you think back to your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling when you attended those events? If you enjoyed your time and how you felt in general?**

E: You know when you were a kid and you went to this kind of summer holiday camp? Yes - just this for adults, this is the feeling that I had there. Just this really, really big playground and I also saw that people had that same experience there, just by looking at them you can see it easily.

**I: How do you usually choose the festivals you want to attend? Are there specific factors that count in your choice?**

E: For me it's important to have a variety of music but also different kinds of things - so I like to have workshops. Ideally, the location would also be nice. This diversity for me is really important because I am not a person that stays up at night, I don't enjoy it so much - so I get tired all the time, and then I really enjoy it when I have a festival where I don't have the feeling I miss something if I go to bed. It's not so many so far that I've been to but the ones I've been to, they all were like this, so I really enjoyed it.

**I: Do you usually share your experience after the festival with friends and family somehow, or does the experience end when the festival ends?**

E: Do you mean like it if I post stuff on social media?

**I: Also could be, but if you just tell your friends and family in person even about your experience...**

E: Yes, for sure, for sure! I mean, this is the hot topic for a while, because usually I am going with my friends, and the friends that I'm talking to who were not a part of it, I'm trying to convince them to come with me the next time. [laughs] So we do talk about it after the festival, immediately after it sometimes as well, during the year when we feel like, 'oh, it was such a nice time', and you remember it...

**I: I would like you to tell me more about your like your most remarkable festival experience in Europe in regards to music festivals, and if you could, also tell me why you think it's the most remarkable one for you.**

E: One situation or one festival?

**I: It could be one festival or a specific example or a memory that you have in a specific festival, both will do.**

E: That's really difficult, because usually the whole experience was remarkable... I don't know. One thing that comes to my mind right now was one time, we took a bus to go to the location of the festival a couple of days earlier because it was the cheapest option, and we found a camping area that was really close to it, to the festival and the camping areas as well were close to some lakes, and it was really, really nice. It was just so calm, but also everyone was excited, like, 'oh, we're going to the festival in a couple of days', but then still - to have this sort of calmness around you all the time, it was really nice. There are many, many experiences that I had that were really, really funny and really cool, I don't know. Usually I go there and I do many, many different activities and many of them I do for the very first time, for example I was participating in some kind of weird theatre with a friend of mine and then we had to interact and it was really funny and really weird, so... There's a lot of memories connected and I don't really know which one to pick.

**I: Is there one of these memories that is specifically in regards to how you felt as part of the audience? Or is one of these memories while you were interacting with other people in the audience?**

E: You mean as part of a concert?

**I: In a concert, or in the whole festival, or it could even be doing other activities. Just that it is a remarkable memory for you because of your interaction with the others around you.**

E: I understand your question, but... I don't know.

**I: You can take your time to think, or you can just tell me that you don't have an answer for that, both are fine.**

E: My interaction with the others... No, I don't think I have an answer for that.

**I: So in the first part of the research you mentioned that you enjoyed being around people that had similar interests with you in these past festival experiences. What are some of the factors that you believe helped your experience be positive in this aspect?**

E: Like what are the factors apart from them having similar interests?

**I: Yes, for instance, how do you think that the fact that you had similar interests had other consequences, let's say, it made it easier for you to interact and things like that.**

E: So the fact that we had similar interests - similar, not the same, obviously - lead to really, really interesting discussions for example, because sometimes there are lectures, plenary discussions about several topics, and it's really interesting to follow them and to hear also what the other people think about certain topics. Apart from that, what I enjoyed - which is not the interest that we had in common - is more this openness towards the experience and towards different personalities as well, I would say.

**I: In the survey you also indicated that you didn't really feel a sense of belonging or community in your festival experience. Could you elaborate a bit on that?**

E: When I think of feeling a sense of belonging to a community, I feel like I would identify myself with this very festival - but I never did that. It's not that I wasn't a part of it, but I do not identify myself with it after the event.

**I: Would you say that during the event you feel this identification and then it goes away, or it doesn't even exist during the festival?**

E: I would not say that I would identify myself with the other people because of the festival, so I would say that I identify myself with some of the people that I'm interacting with, but I would not feel a sense of belonging to somebody that I didn't meet. I remember reading this question and I thought of a friend of mine, she went to festivals, and she always went to one bigger festival, and she really identified herself with it, and she really was part of it, and I compare myself to this and I realise that I don't feel this way, so that's why I came to this conclusion.

**I: In the survey you also indicated that you didn't really feel any connection to bigger levels, let's say like Europe for instance. Would you say that there is any level that you feel connected to, or is just specifically to the people you talk to and that you interact with in the festival?**

E: I think it's only to the people that I interact with in the festival. So for the European part, it was mostly because there were only Germans, so it did not really feel very international. But yes, I did not really feel connected to everyone.



**I: My first question is: thinking back to your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling while attending the festivals? If you enjoyed your time and how you felt in general?**

F: So, it's one main festival that I've been to - six or seven times, I think, six. Jazz in Marciac, in the southwest of France. And it's different to many festivals in that it's about two-and-a-half to three weeks, rather than just a really intense weekend for example, in which all the scenes are everywhere and going from one concert to the next - it's two and a half weeks (or whatever time you want to spend there) and then there's just a concert in the evening and then the smaller things, but the main event is just in the evening. And so rather than this really... I mean, it is an intensive experience, but rather than the 'sex, drugs and rock and roll' or whatever that is in really packed festivals... And I go as a volunteer as well, which means that I really get to work in teams with people and so it's really more of a social experience, and it's really, really good. Obviously, you're there for two and a half weeks, and it's a festival, so there's a lot of partying going on and you're volunteering and going to the gigs, and everything... It's really exhausting, and as I said it's really intense which means there's ups and downs because you have these moments of ecstasy (not the drug), in which you're just meeting new people - and obviously, everyone's at the festival so we all have common interests... So it's really positive in that way, but then it means also there's lots of things going on and lots of drama and you're exhausted - and I have a friend who I've been going to the festival with since the first year, and I think pretty much every year we've had a fight, for some reason. I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that - because we don't normally fight, we've been friends for 10 years and we never fight, except once a year at that festival - and I think a lot of it has to do with the exhaustion and the fact that we're meeting all these new people, and sometimes we don't like the way one of one of us behaves whenever it is but there's something... So it's a mix of everything. It's a brilliant experience obviously - and I've been back six times so it means that it was that good. And the other thing is that the festival has changed. The first year was absolutely wonderful, so that first year was 2014; and in 2015 is when all the terrorist attacks happened, and that really really changed the festival. I think maybe in the second year wasn't so much security yet, it was still fine, but the next year, in 2016, the military was everywhere, security at the entrance and we couldn't bring our bags into the concert hall zone - and we were volunteers, we're there from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m., and we're not allowed to bring a bag in, and the police started getting stricter and we

would get kicked out from the central squares earlier and earlier every year... And every year there's a bit more of a disappointing aspect to it. So on the whole it remains a wonderful experience, but every year I've been more and more disappointed.

**I: How did you choose this festival that you attended? Were there some specific factors that influenced your decision?**

F: Yes, my brothers, it's clear. My older brother used to play in a jazz trio during his university studies, and so he went as an audience member the first year and found out that he could be a volunteer there, so for the second year he went as a volunteer, alone this time, and then the year after he brought my other brother, and then the next year they were like, "you have to come" and I said "no, I'm going on holidays with my cousin". So I didn't go, and then the next year they were like, "you're coming - we're not giving you a truce, this is the form" - obviously they didn't force me, they sent me the form and said "this is the form, this is what you can write in your cover letter", and there we go. Then I went, and have been going ever since. That year, my sister who's younger than me couldn't be a volunteer because she wasn't 18 yet but she still came for 4 days, and that's an experience that really brought us together as siblings, and it really made us a small group rather than relationships two by two. And so it's really important for us also in this matter; it's this one place where we can all be really close friends together, the four of us.

**I: And after the festival experience , do you usually share it with other friends and family or does it end when the festival ends?**

F: No. Again, that goes back to going with my siblings but it means that obviously we have this massive group of friends, who have been with you for so long... And so there's all these inside jokes and anecdotes and things that we refer to for weeks after the festival. Our parents have told us quite a few times because then we have a cousins' week; so on the way to the cousins' week, we'll pop by my parents' house, and they see the four of us and can't follow anything - they just don't know what's going on. There's such a particular energy that we keep because we're moving as a flock. So we keep this energy and everyone else around us is just lost. Also, since then... I was going to say that we've brought our partners to the festival, but my two brothers met their partners at the festival, so that's not true - but I brought my partner to the festival, and then gradually we brought more and more of our normal life friends to the festival. Not only did he have the festival friends, but the ones from our lives

just come too and add to that large group. I think we're responsible for a large number of volunteers because we're so excited about it.

**I: When you think of your experience as part of that audience, do you have specific examples or memories that are especially remarkable for you as part of the audience?**

F: You mean in concerts specifically or...? Does volunteering count as an audience member of a festival?

**I: I would say it counts in the moment that you take off your 'clothes of volunteer' and you're enjoying yourself as part of the festival audience.**

F: Yes. There's definitely... For example, in one of the years, I was working in a restaurant at a 5-hour drive from the festival, and I would end my shift on a Sunday, drive straight to the festival to be on time for the concert. There was one particular year when it was Brad Mehldau who's a jazz pianist who I absolutely love... I drove as fast as I could - within the law. [laughs] Just to go and see him and then when I got there I needed a badge to get in and I couldn't, I had to negotiate my way in, but then I got in and I got just maybe 10 or 15 minutes of that concert. [mumbles] There are concerts that are quite upbeat and dancey and so, and what tends to happen is that volunteers - and I say volunteers because it's usually us, we're not sitting down, we don't have proper seats - so we're standing on the sides, and usually what happens is that gradually we'll move towards the front of the scene, on the two sides, and there's security there and they block the way; and then at some point they'll open it up and then everyone just gets in front of the stage. There's a couple of acts where you know they'll bring someone from the audience onto the stage or they'll go through the audience as well, and that's quite fun... But I guess the dancey ones are the good ones, those where we can have a general experience, or dance together.

**I: In the first part of the research you mentioned that you enjoyed being around people with similar interests during your past festival experience. What are some of the factors that you believe help this experience to be positive in this regard?**

F: I already mentioned it in the previous question but I don't know if it counts to this idea of the audience in a festival, because it was a concert, but it's me as a festival-goer... I have a friend who directed a choir, and every year - and this is at two in the morning - everybody's... Not necessarily drunk, but quite tipsy; and we'll go on the Central Square and all sit at a table and she teaches songs and we all sing together, and that's really good. It's one

of the moments where, even when she's not there, for example, if she just comes for a week or she just comes for the second week, and everyone's like, "where's Elise? We want to sing!". And that's a really good experience. And obviously, a lot of us are musicians, more or less proficient, but we're all musicians to a certain level and enjoy that; so that's one. There's something very liberating about having these two weeks outside of your life, which is quite strange, because a lot of our festival friends are friends from outside the festival as well, but still - it's like there's something... I'm normally quite a shy person, but when I'm at the festival and I'm talking to everyone, and I'm generally really happy... There's an atmosphere that's quite different. And then obviously enjoying the music together, and volunteering together is a big part of it, working as a team and all the jokes and whatever happens - and obviously all the drama within the friendship group or someone in the friendship group with someone else that we don't know, and all the people getting together; that's very incredible. All the gossip, that's good. [laughs] It's a massive part of it.

**I: In regard to the feeling of being more open to meeting new people during festivals, do you think that this has any impact and influence on how open you feel about meeting new people after the festival, or not?**

F: I'm trying to remember me as a 19 year-old before I went to that festival... I don't remember. No, I think I was like that before, where I can be really either way, I can be incredibly shy - so I think it's when I'm on my own in a group that I don't know or if I just know one person, then I'm really uncomfortable because I don't want to be stuck to that person and just following them around. So I don't want to do that, but also I'm really shy about going up to someone and being like, "hi, this is me". I can be incredibly awkward but also there's certain contacts where I'll just be like, "hello". So I don't know what it is. [laughs] But I think I was already like that before, I guess the difference is that in Marciac, there's this extended period of time when I'm just like that constantly for two or three weeks. But I don't know if it has repercussions in my life, I don't think so.

**I: You indicated you felt a sense of community within the festival. How would you define that community? Is it composed of the people you directly have interactions with, or is it the whole festival community, or is it bigger than the festival community?**

F: That's a really good question. It's funny, it's not a straightforward one. The direct community is my friendship group for sure, and there are people who we grow really, really, really close to very quickly. And then we tend to organise weekends or things outside of the

festival just to meet up all together. So that happens, and so we sort of perpetuate that community throughout the year as well. But then there's definitely... Even if I don't personally feel an affinity necessarily with everyone who goes to the festival, if I randomly meet someone who knows about the festival or who's been to the festival or whatever, then there's just suddenly this excitement and this automatic link that happens. It doesn't mean I get along with everyone after all these years, because there's definitely people I, you know... But what was the question - was it the friendship group or the festival, or...? There was a third one...?

**I: It's really open for you to define who is within that community feeling that you get from the festival.**

F: Well, I guess a larger one would probably be... So I grew up listening to jazz, I listen to a bit of it on my own but not that much and I don't play it or anything, but then it created this thing where anyone who's into jazz in my mind is directly related to that festival, even if they've never heard of it, so it expands there. And what happened was, for example, I know my partner indirectly thanks to the festival, because he was friends with my flatmate who's the choir director that I talked about earlier, and so I met him through her by going to a jazz concert in London - anyway, indirectly he became part of my community thanks to the festival, and then maybe it's not as true now, but maybe the first year that I was in London, at least half of my friendships I could link back to the festival - even though it was people who had never been there, because they were friends of friends, that's how I met people. So it's definitely been responsible for lots of my social circle.

**I: In the survey you also indicated that the festival attendance had somewhat of an impact on how you felt connected to Europe, and that it was generally a fairly positive impact. Could you elaborate on that a little bit?**

F: When I answered this question, I had a moment of, like - because it is an international festival but it's very French, there's not that many international audience members. There's a few and I've met a few, but mainly, it's basically what I was just talking about just now, where it was my ex-flatmate and another friend who was half British, half French who, thanks to him, I got to visit London for the first time in 15 years and I've been obsessed all this time with going back, and he allowed me to do that, and that was through the festival. And then he was also in a jazz society in the university that my ex-flatmate and my partner now were in,

and so... I think it's particularly my relationship - I don't know if it counts as Europe anymore... [laughs]

**I: Yes, it's not the European Union, it's Europe.**

F: Yes, so it's mostly my relationship to the UK because it's what allowed me to build that relationship with the UK that I was so desperate to build and I didn't have a way to. I think it's particularly that.

**I: Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview or any issues or points that I may have missed?**

F: I don't think so.

*Interview 7 - Interviewee 'G'*

**I: My first question is: thinking back to your experience in large music festivals in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling while attending either one or all of them that you went to? Did you enjoy your time there?**

G: I think my general feeling would be one of happiness I think - it's a very vague term, I'm sorry, but just this sense of belonging. There's this one distinct memory I have from Reading I thinking in 2017 that I don't forget, and it's just at the end of a headline set of the music festival, I'm going back to the camp, just feeling at one; hearing people shout out the most stupid things, you know, like some people shouting out like "butt scratcher" or "Fenton" (was a meme at the time), and so people would shout out like "hey Fenton!" and other people would shout out "hey Fenton!" – it's just people who didn't know one another speaking all sorts of different languages, and feeling just one and united. That was one of the few moments I've had in my life when time just stopped. That's what I associate, I think – those moments of everything falling into place and a sense of belonging. And in terms of enjoyment, yes - I've had my fair share of bad experiences but mostly just with toilets breaking on me or something like that. That's not what stops it from being overwhelmingly positive.

**I: What are some of the factors that count, when you're choosing which festival to attend?**

G: First off for me, if it's possible to volunteer - so first of all I couldn't afford them, being 18... I haven't attended recently before the pandemic, but I attended at least one festival between 2016 and 2020, an average of 1 and a half per year. Specifically, music or arts festivals. And I would say that for me, volunteering was important first and foremost - for me selfishly because I couldn't afford it otherwise; but even in the couple of cases I was working, I wanted to go to festivals which had a grassroots approach or at least enabled volunteers to take part. I know it sounds a bit odd, but for me I've had my most positive experiences with volunteers – both as a volunteer and being a volunteer. The second thing is where I am and where the location is; there are some festivals I would love to go to, things like Roskilde, that I've dreamed of, but it's pretty expensive and pretty far away. So cost is also a factor. And generally speaking, each of the festivals I've gone to probably had at least one artist or act I'm very passionate or interested in. So in the case of music festivals outside the headliners

but then in terms of other arts festivals more generally something I'd like to see or do, at least one thing.

**I: You told me about the experience as part of the audience that you remember about in Reading. Are there other examples of memories of your interaction within the festival audience that were particularly relevant?**

G: Oh yes - I mean, I have so many funny memories, but what I remember, there was this one summer - I think it was 2017 again - so I saw the band Foals four times that summer, two times in festivals. And they have this song called 'Spanish Sahara', and whenever that happens, the audience tends to sit down. And I just remember it being packed full, and everybody just asking people to sit down and doing it in complete silence, and so that's a beautiful moment that has happened on the tour year. But this distinct memory I have is of this guy dressed as Jesus immediately after parting the people and people pretending to be an ocean as if he were Moses or something and being parted - it's such a bizarre situation but there was no need to question, it was so fun, you felt united. It's those moments which make you smile and make you laugh. I was in a System of a Down concert in a festival where a guy was in a wheelchair and being carried from the back to the front and got put on the stage - moments like, of just humanity. Of course, festivals have violence - I've seen as a volunteer - and it has its downsides of drunkenness and drugs, but for every negative moment there's a beautiful moment of humanity too.

**I: Could you elaborate and try to find some words to define how these interactions differ from your daily life interactions with other people?**

G: For sure. I would say trust, open-mindedness, a lack of scepticism, escapism as well - but it is this otherworldly atmosphere; it's almost like the world I would like to live in. I felt the same connection when I've done the Camino de Santiago for the last 4 years - I've done volunteering on the Camino de Santiago and part of that is because it's partly the society in which I wish to live, this one that does not judge, but rather accepts. And that's the sense of belonging I feel in these large gatherings, not all the time but in these cases with my experiences. I don't feel that when I go around my daily life - everybody has their headphones on, somewhere to be, something to do, schedules being hectic... There's just a "why not do it? Let's do it". Things don't have to be so complicated.



**I: In the first part of the survey, you indicated the sense of belonging/community during your past experiences. Would you say that this feeling remained with you afterwards or it changed somehow since then?**

G: No, I think it's remained. Each of the festivals I've gone to, there's a memory or something that I have; the feeling is connected with all of them, I would say. Granted if I would go to a festival now, maybe it wouldn't be as strong, and maybe somehow the circumstances that we're living in would have changed it slightly – so I won't know until I get that opportunity, but that sense of community and belonging has remain constant especially as a volunteer. Just because you are always with other people who in many cases are not going with other people, just going by themselves - it's almost like a pilgrimage, as bizarre as it might sound, to turn up knowing that you don't know anybody, but to find yourself through the sense of community.

**I: And how would you define that community, in the sense of who is that community composed of, in your understanding?**

G: Good point. I think, first of all for me it would be the people attending the festivals and the volunteers, partly because of my experience of it is 80% volunteering but still 20% as a consumer too - so the people, first and foremost, who are attending but also assisting. But that transcends that - it goes to the artists, I've had to be part of performances in some cases, like in community theatres, sometimes I've been the butt of a joke or I've been invited on stage or even when that's not happening - sometimes you feel this sense of connection with the artists. The same thing can happen with music too, be it emotionally or even physically, quite literally carrying an artist and feeling this sense of community. So I would say the people first and foremost but then also there are a couple of places that are close to my heart because I've been there four or five times to the festival so the place itself has a special sense of community too.

**I: Also, in the survey you indicated that your festival attendance had an impact on how you felt connected to Europe, and you indicated that this impact was generally very positive. Could you elaborate on that?**

G: Sure. The first festival I went to, I met people from places in Europe I didn't really know existed at the time - I didn't know what the Western Balkans were, I didn't know what the Baltic countries were, and I met a very good friend from Estonia, also met somebody from Finland (I'd never met someone from Finland before). It was just kind of fascinating - I didn't

realise at the time for example that the Western Balkans are not in the EU but there's still this sense of being European. With all the people I've met in festivals, we've tended to cook together or share together, to live with one another, so you feel so close - and then of course it doesn't matter where the people come from and I just happened to spend a lot of time with other people either from the EU or from Europe who feel truly European. And then in 2018 there was one festival I went to where there were Catalan people who I was camping with, and I was also friends with 5 French girls from Paris, and so I introduce them to one another - because I'd been at the festival with the French girls - and it became one huge camp, and we were all interlinked. It was like it didn't matter where we came from or what our ancestors were - there, we felt united. So I feel that it celebrated the EU values, like "united in diversity", quite literally. But beyond that - these are people who were so proud to share their languages, to talk about their cultures, to also recommend musicians from their countries that were there that I've never heard of. I felt definitely very European despite in most cases being in the UK.

**I: Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview or are there any additional points that you think I may have missed while conducting it?**

G: I think it's worth mentioning that I'm very pro-EU and I consider myself proudly European, so that's obviously something which probably got reflected as well in my responses. I tried to answer them as objectively as I could but I can't get away from that bias. Just something to put on the record that all my answers were sincere as they can be but I imagine my answers might be very biased.

**I: My first question is: thinking back to your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling while attending it? Did you enjoy your time there? How was it?**

H: Yeah, I think the biggest ones I went to were Sziget in Hungary when I was younger and then later to one in Paris which is more electronic and specific, whereas Sziget is more general, I think it's the biggest one in Europe actually... That was a really good time. And I went to other ones, still large but smaller ones in Italy, in Turin and close to Pisa – and in those festivals I felt much more like a national, like I was in an Italian music festival. So yeah, the large, large ones – the ones that are supposed to be international – it's a really, really nice environment, of course, always. My purpose in going to music festivals is more for a music narrative, probably, than social – although I think for Sziget you'll go for a party; so I think the very large ones you're going to go in with a very vague intention, within a social intention. And then the other ones I'd go more to discover new music.

**I: How do you usually choose the festivals you want to attend? Are there specific features that are more important for you?**

H: Location, I think for British people warm weather is just so exciting - so we can sleep outside and not be immediately sick. That's a huge attraction for us. [laughs] The artists of course, and the reputation around it. Usually I will just go to whatever I'm invited along to - someone says something 'oh, I'm coming to this, do you want to come?', especially if they're a local, then I trust them and I'll go with that. One that I picked out specifically was one close to Milan called Terraforma and I really liked the philosophy of it, which was one of environmentalism - all the stages were made out of recycled stuff and it was all with fairly unknown artists which is attractive, and in a very natural space. So that was probably why – to discover something new and to go along with an ideology, a setup that I agreed with.

**I: After the festival experience, do you usually share it with friends and family somehow?**

H: Not really, probably not. I'll be going with a specific group that will be there for a specific reason. I used to write for a student music magazine, and I obviously publicized there and talked to the network of people, but... For Sziget, I think we discovered it was a very accessible festival for everybody, so I recommended that before. But apart from that...

**I: I would like you to share with me your most remarkable festival experience in Europe, and what made it so remarkable for you. Do you have examples or memories of interactions that you had as part of the audience, or anything that was particularly relevant?**

H: Well, if we're talking about social interactions, then definitely – Sziget was really cool because you just saw such a pool of people from all over the world and you're all just there in a connecting experience. You just start talking to the person next to you very easily or someone will just say, 'hey, do you want to climb on my shoulders?' and then you would see babies with their ear defenders on - that was the first time I saw that and I thought it was really nice that they'd bring their babies to the music festivals... So yes, the international, multi-aged, different backgrounds combination was really striking.

**I: Do you think your interactions as part of the audience in a festival are in some ways similar or different to the ones you have in your regular life?**

H: In Sziget, we spoke to a lot of people; but in the other ones, I don't know if it was that I was not looking hard enough, but we didn't really make friends – I would come as a group, and I didn't make any new friends at these festivals, except for Sziget.

**I: Do you think your interactions as part of the audience were similar to the ones you have in your daily life or different somehow?**

H: I think it was kind of like being in a club, but in festivals it is more light-hearted. There are festivals to which people really go for the music – and it's harder because a lot of people are there just to watch and to listen. They don't really want to be distracted from that experience even though you're communally experiencing something, they're just not there to start having very superficial conversations either.

**I: In the survey you indicated that you felt more open to meeting new people in your past experience. Do you think that since then this has impacted how you feel about meeting new people in your life in general?**

H: No, because I think the kind of person who travels to go to music festivals is also the kind of person that would travel anyway, and when you're travelling and you're alone or in a small group, you're just going to have to talk to everyone who will talk to you - unless you don't want to talk to that many people. So that openness that comes with being in new

environments and not having so much similarity around, I don't think it's unique to a music festival.

**I: In the survey you indicated that you didn't know if you felt an impact from the festival attendance on how you felt connected to Europe. Could you elaborate on that?**

H: I think it depends on the festival. I really felt like most of the festivals I've been to were very national, it felt like an Italian experience, or that most of the people were local. Sziget felt just like a global experience because there are so many Australians, and North Americans, I don't think there was anything *[created?]*. The nice thing is the freedom to travel to get there as a member of the European Union which I really enjoyed just to take off and go and then to the countries around, which may be the resulting experience of travelling to the festival, maybe. But they always felt either very national or very global - I can't think of an experience that felt very European.

**I: You mentioned the national aspect, especially in the case of the Italian festivals - and you being from the UK, how was that sensation of feeling very national, but at the same time not being a national of the country? Did you feel like you were experiencing it from the outside or you also became part of that community?**

H: Well, the British, even when they were part of the European Union, they always had this unique position where they kind of considered themselves as outsiders - like not Europeans, like 'we're going on holiday to Europe' - as if we're not part of the continent. And when we talk about European festivals in the UK, we're always like, 'oh, it's really cool to go to European festivals because they're half the price' (they were always much cheaper). But there was also this reluctance in the country to go somewhere where you might have a bit of a language barrier problem. So unless it's very obviously a lot in English, people are often quite nervous to leave the UK for festivals - and that's just going for a very specific thing... But I haven't been to a festival since Brexit, so I can't say if it will feel different. But I obviously felt like a foreigner at an Italian music festival. I think it perpetuates stereotypes also, because as you have this idea of the way that people behave - like I noticed when I went to festivals in Italy that people didn't dance, and that was really shocking to me because in the UK we're really silly and are always dancing. And there was this idea that the Italians are too cool to dance, and I saw that. And then in the festival I went to in France, nobody spoke to us and we were like, this is like the stereotype of the unfriendly French - so I don't know, I really felt

like it was more a perpetuation of ideas you have about nationalities, more than this feeling of togetherness in Europe.

**I: Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview or are there any issues or points that you think I may have missed?**

H: No, I just wanted to ask – what festivals did you have in mind when you're asking about European festivals?

**I: I'm mostly working with the large ones because they tend to be the ones that attract a more international audience - and then following some research that has been done in the past, it includes as 'large festival' the ones that have more than 26 thousand attendees per day. So Sziget will be an example and then you have Hellfest in France, you have Reading in the UK, so those well-known and large ones that make people move around to see... Because it's mostly about big, specific artists, and if they're coming to Europe and they're from abroad, they'll likely play large festivals. And it's this movement that makes people interact with more international people, so that's where I'm coming from; the large ones that attract international names that might just go to four or five festivals in Europe, and then people from many countries will come to one place. It is this idea of people moving around to go to festivals.**

H: It's funny, now that I'm thinking about it... I only went to one large music festival in Latin America, it was Rock al Parque in Colombia, the largest rock festival they have. And to me it was like – and I don't know if it's my being from outside the continent, I don't have a feeling of it – to me it seemed like a really Latino feeling, this sort of brother-sister feeling between other countries, and it was referenced by the artist performing - which I definitely haven't felt ever in a European festival, so it's an interesting thing. But I don't know if that's just my outside gaze, where within Europe I'm more sensitive to the differences we have.

**I: If you want to compare both of them, we have a lot less big festivals in South America because there is a lot less funding for arts and culture in general, so once you get to one, you're very excited about it and very happy about it, and people are coming from everywhere to see the one artist that might come this year and not again for another 5 or 10 years... It is a different experience for sure.**

H: Yes, it's difficult to compare... I also wonder – and I don't know again if it's the British experience - but going to a festival in Europe, specifically, and not one in your own country,

is sort of an escape into this sort of like blob culture, that international space. Because I remember when we were in Sziget we were having a lot of fun meeting new people, and then we ran into a group of British boys and we went like ‘aw – no’. [laugh] Like I don’t want to interact with people where you come from. I think you’re open to assimilating to this ‘non-culture’ that comes with festivals as well.

**I: There's a lot of literature on festivals that talks about how it's a non-space, an escape from your daily life – like you're used to the same people in the same routes and the same routine, and then when you go to a festival you're physically and mentally and emotionally displacing from routine into this new place where you have no idea what's going to happen.**

H: And then you have a small reminder for a moment and it's like – disgusting. [laughs] I can totally understand this idea that a European festival or a large music festival would create more of a European feeling but that has definitely not been my experience at all. (...) Maybe it started this Europeanness sort of subconscious – like you don't notice it's because it's, like, maybe the program has this funding from the European Union, but I'm setting in Spain so I'm having a Spanish experience. Then you don't realise, you're not really aware or able to detect the Europeanness of it.

**I: And it could also be that it's just not something you're watching out for at all times, for instance when you're part of the audience, like when you went to Sziget. I hardly think you found a community of South Africans there, or Jamaicans - it's easier in these environments for you to find other Europeans although you might not think, ‘they're almost all Europeans’. But it's harder to have someone come from Africa just for Sziget.**

H: But a lot of people come from the US, so it's more like an international thing. Or from Australia. And those people are oftentimes the chattiest – so they're the ones you will have interactions with, whereas this group from, let's say, France, they're going to say ‘ok, us 10 friends from France are going to go’ and then they just remain there as a group, which is understandable too. Whereas a solo backpacker is maybe more often from somewhere further away.

**I: First question I would like to ask is: thinking back to your large music festival experience in Europe, can you remember what was your general feeling while you attended it? Did you enjoy your time, and how was it for you?**

J: I guess it depends a lot on which festival and when I went - I mean, I was there on multiple levels: I was there as an attendee, just a general person there; I was there as an artist, someone who had been invited to actually promote something (in this case more science-oriented and perhaps other cultural means); so it also depends a lot on that... Can you specify the question again?

**I: I would like to know what was your general feeling while attending a festival - so preferably the music ones, and as you were part of the audience. How did you feel at these festivals?**

J: For me, it's a very broad spectrum to just say how I feel, because it really depends from festival to festival. If you think of one festival like Rock in Rio Lisboa, where you have a huge stage and perhaps two or three others smaller stages, and you have smaller orbits, kind of activities where you have like a giant ferris wheel, or multiple things like that; or if you think of the music festival in the sense of a dance festival where you have a lot of people who gather because of the music, of course, but also to do a specific activity like dancing, and where you also have a main stage, of course - there's also a big stage in the middle, but there the other stages and orbiting activities have a bigger importance for the festival itself. I'm thinking of festivals like Danzas Sin Fronteras in Spain, or Dance in Portugal, where you have these huge festivals which build the specific community (in the sense that they are there to do an activity, more than just to consume but also to express themselves). I guess you are more interested in the first kind of festival, or...?

**I: My scope is more related to large music festivals, so the ones that have at least 26.000 people per day...**

J: I mean, Danzas Sin Fronteras falls into this category, so...

**I: Then both are good! All of them are good.**

J: I also have another example of a Ball in France... I think they are of an 'old typology', even though I think they fall into your niche of large music festivals with 27.000 people a



day. The feeling for me in the first kind, like Rock in Rio Lisboa, I feel more like I'm being a part of a big mess, without a big community whatsoever - just a big agglomerate. People are mostly there to consume something that already exists and in some sort of pre-packaged format, like a CD or something else live on stage, while in the other kind I feel more like a community, of a group of people where you have a stronger interaction. And then again I think it depends also on how you spend the time; if you just are there for this festival itself and then you just commute out of it, or if you're staying there and you actually use the camping grounds that usually come with those festivals (or not)... So to roughly answer your question, I can understand the feeling of community within those festivals and I would say yes, but it all depends on what sort of festival exactly it is and what sort of things are happening in that festival. And personally I feel like the more and more publicised things are, the less you get the idea of community.

**I: How do you generally choose the festivals you're going to attend? What are the specific factors that are more relevant when you make that decision?**

J: Personal interests - the type of activities that I will find there are; the bands that are playing are a big factor; location; and of course when it is. I wouldn't be able to attend something in the middle of winter or something like that because it wouldn't be as nice. I guess those would be the factors that come to my mind right away.

**I: And after you have your festival experience, do you usually share it with your friends and family somehow, or is it something that ends when the festival ends?**

J: I guess I share it in the sense of - I might be still talking about it after the festival has ended. I will not make it an active chore, an active business to actually promote the festival or speak about it, so I will not put it on social media or anything like this. I think that is just not the sort of thing that I would do. But I might be able to - or I might talk about it *posteriori*, after that.

**I: I would like you to tell me about your most remarkable music festival experience in Europe, from these large ones - and tell me also about what was it that made it so especially remarkable for you.**

J: I guess it's the sense of being in a parallel world for a week or something, where people are entirely dedicated to a certain activity of dancing or listening to music, just interacting with each other while they are there without any big concerns about the reality outside of that own

microcosmos. The first time that I went to to [festival name] (I'm not 100% sure that it qualifies for that because I don't know their numbers, but I'm pretty sure they are big enough to qualify - you will tell me), the idea to just be there in this small town, almost, where you just kind of do your day today life around cultural interests, mostly music, lots of dance.

**I: Could you share an example or a memory of an interaction that you had as part of the audience that was particularly relevant to you, that you remember well and that stayed with you?**

J: Not really. [laughs] I guess the existing past the main event where you stay in the staging area or the *plateau* area way past everything being finished, when you realise it's daylight already even though everything has stopped around you - you kind of continue in that cool activity place. That's a nice one - the daybreak.

**I: Do you think that your interactions as part of the audience in a festival are more similar or different, in comparison to your regular interactions in your daily life?**

J: In what regards? I mean - because it is completely dissimilated, so I think the daily life, from a festival life, it's quite different...

**I: That's exactly the question - the interactions with other people that you have as you go on in your daily life, in what sense do they differ or are similar to the ones you have when you're in a festival?**

J: Carrying this idea that I had previously into this question - I think it is exactly that, that you are removed from, you remove certain outside stimuli like stress, like certain concerns with day-to-day living, having a basic timeframe where you're just concerned with the basic needs of hygiene, food and enjoying yourself. I guess that is quite the opposite from day-to-day life where you have many outside worries and other kinds of stimuli where you are needing to pay taxes and so on, which hopefully during the festival are on hold.

Although I can go back to the question you asked about the specific memory, also then and it's different here - there was the biggest car fire in Europe, so there were 450 cars which burnt down at this festival because of the parking space, two or three cars caught fire and everything spread. So that was a pretty shitty festival. [laughs] It was a sub-ideal festival because in the end I spent half of the festival taking care of the bureaucracy of having a burnt car in the parking lot and trying to remove it with at least 5 insurance companies not wanting to take any kind of responsibility and leaving hundreds of people just trying to sort things out

with the local authority who were obviously completely unprepared for that. Like I said, it's a little bit like a town, and suddenly you had police officers set up in a tent somewhere and people were standing in line to get documentation and so forth... So I guess that's also a very memorable experience, during the day at 40 degrees Celsius standing in line to take care of things while the other people whose cars hadn't burned were partying just normally. And then at night when you were completely exhausted and tired and stressed because you still had to take care of the car, not being able to sleep because everyone around you was partying... So I guess that's a little bit how everyday life would look like if you were to have a day-to-day life in a festival. It would be the worst.

**I: That's quite a terrible memory. [laughs]**

J: [laughs] It's fun now, if you look back at it now, the whole action was also a big social experiment, with fire fighting, with big crowd control with people being led away from the fire... The organisation was exemplary, they took very good care of it. But this was an interesting take on things and on when a festival doesn't go the way that it should.

**I: In the first part of the research you mentioned that being around people who had similar interests was something you enjoyed, and I was wondering whether you could tell me what factors you believe helped your experience to be positive in this regard.**

J: It's not necessarily that people have similar more interest, because I think most people will have interest in common - it's that a lot of people gather for specific interests in one place, and so even though you might have people who are very dissimilar to yourself, and who might come from very, very different backgrounds and have very different aspects, it's very interesting to be able to still get to meet them because you have a common topic to talk about. Not necessarily talking, because you're doing other things like partying, watching the concert or doing some sort of activity, but there's an overlap. I think in general that's always nice, but I'm not sure that festivals are the only place or a place by election where something like that would happen, but I think they do give you an agora, they do give you a place where people share the same purpose for some time.

**I: You also indicated that you've felt more open to meeting new people during a festival experience. Do you think that this feeling that you had during the festival experience has any impact on how you felt about meeting new people in your life after the festival experience?**

J: I guess so. I guess it gets me away from certain concerns or from certain inhibitors that would usually impair you from simply starting a conversation randomly with someone on the street prior to the festival, while after you are just so used to speaking with hundreds of people by chance or just because you're sharing an activity on site... So I guess yes, very plainly yes, it has affected, and yes, it's somewhat easier or more liberating to talk to people after a festival.

**I: You also indicated that you didn't really feel a sense of belonging or community during your festival experience. Could you elaborate on that?**

J: Again, here there's a big problem with the dichotomy, because it depends on the kind of festival. For instance, when I went to - and I guess this was my least favourite festival, which was the Rock in Rio Lisbon experience, which I felt was very tailored to make people aware of certain products, and so there was a very emphatic part on the advertisement... Instead of feeling like I have a safe space to enjoy culture, I felt like I was being manipulated to consume a certain kind of culture; and so this is more the kind of thing that would make me less at ease within the community, or within a community spirit, especially because a lot of things and ideas that are being advertised are very individualistic. 'Consume this, consume that; here's a fee for this, here's a fee for that' - instead of being more community-based, where you would share something in common, or where you would sit down and share a meal with other people that you don't know. This is something that would be a more altruistic kind of thing, versus something more individualistic. So for me this experience with the Rock in Rio festival is that you get flashed with a lot of publicity thrown your way, almost to a point where you become numb to certain stimuli... And so I think the publicity is doing a good job but you do not get to enjoy the festival that well. It's just noisy - in the sense that there is too much pollution, noise pollution, sound, visual, everything - you get flooded with so much stuff that you're not really able to enjoy any of it particularly.

**I: You also indicated that the festival attendance had some impact on how you felt connected to Europe, and that it was a fairly positive impact in general. Can you elaborate on that?**

J: Yes. There's the big dichotomy of sorts of festivals we're talking about - all of them are large scale, but some of them are more fragmented, so they get more manageable I guess, so especially the folk music festival, the folk kind of things, you have huge festivals where people come and share traditional dances from their own countries and bands from their own

countries... So very easily you're talking to someone from Italy, next thing you know you're talking to someone who's from France, and all of them are sharing their culture and ideas - as opposed to the huge music festival in Lisbon, which has a mostly Portuguese attendance, so I guess that's less European. Who's going to come on purpose to see a band which is touring throughout all of Europe? Sure, Lisbon is fine and so on, but in this case, if Motorhead is playing in Lisbon and next playing in Berlin, you might just want to wait for it to play in Berlin if you're German and then go to attend that festival instead. But I can imagine that other festivals might not be or might still be a little more exclusive in that sense, where you have a huge going on where people gather from all over Europe. But then again I would reckon that perhaps the impact might not be as big.

**I: Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview or are there any issues or points that you think I might have missed?**

J: Not really. I think it comes down to... You defined large scale music festivals in a very specific way, I'm not sure if it's restrictive enough to frame the window that you want to catch - already in this interview at least for me it might get me thinking about things differently and from different perspectives.

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