



Music industry perspectives on fairness in Europe

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Introduction

Objective: Explore the perceptions and priorities regarding fairness among music industry professionals.

Approach: Political sociological approach to explore the governance of fairness in the European music industry.

Literature Gap: Limited understanding of how fairness is perceived by industry actors, especially in the context of MSS; Lack of an integrated perspective that combines theoretical analysis with real-world experiences and perceptions of stakeholders.

Sociological approach:

Fairness and public attitudes regarding automated decision-making systems (Helberger et al. 2020):
Perceptions towards fairness coming from artists/creators (Ferraro et al. 2021, Dinnissen & Bauer 2023)

- (i) understanding the perceived impact that such music platforms have on artists and music professionals from their perspective and
- (ii) understanding what the artists and music professionals consider fair for them.

Methodology

Mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection

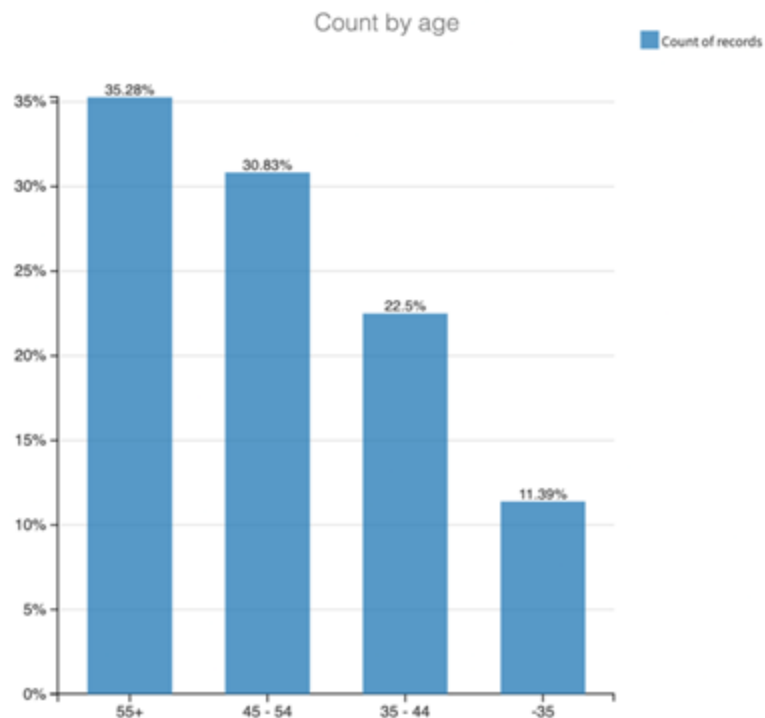
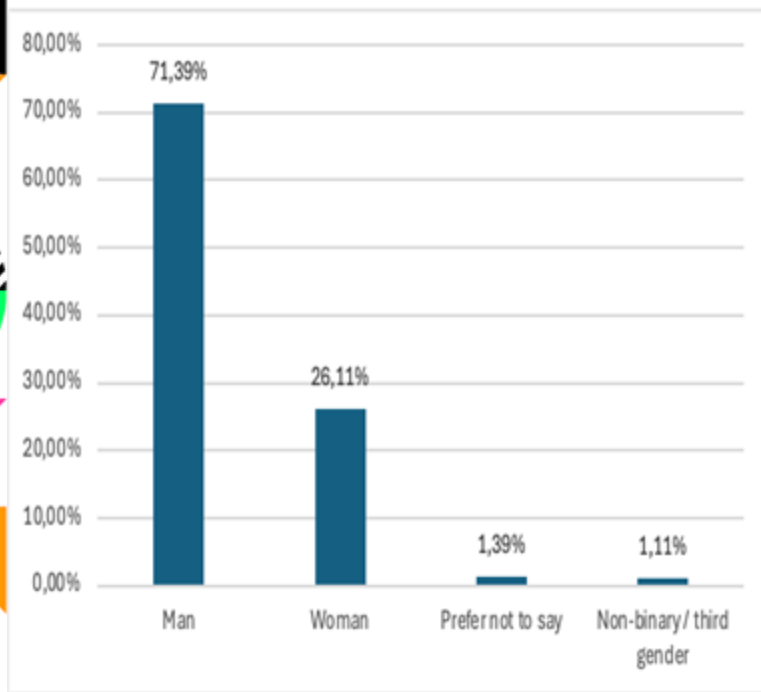
- A survey was distributed across several European countries to gather insights from music professionals about their perceptions towards fairness. Online survey active from end April to mid-September 2024 and available in 6 languages; sending 2440 successful survey invitations/survey sent through representatives of music industry associations; 360 recorded responses.
- The second component of data collection involved 22 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of stakeholders in the music industry, including authors, composers, songwriters, performers, representatives from CMOs, streaming services and record labels. Interviews were conducted in English, both in person and online, from December 2023 to June 2024.

The survey and interview data offer a cross-level analysis that combines a macro perspective on industry-wide trends with in-depth, nuanced insights from individual stakeholders.

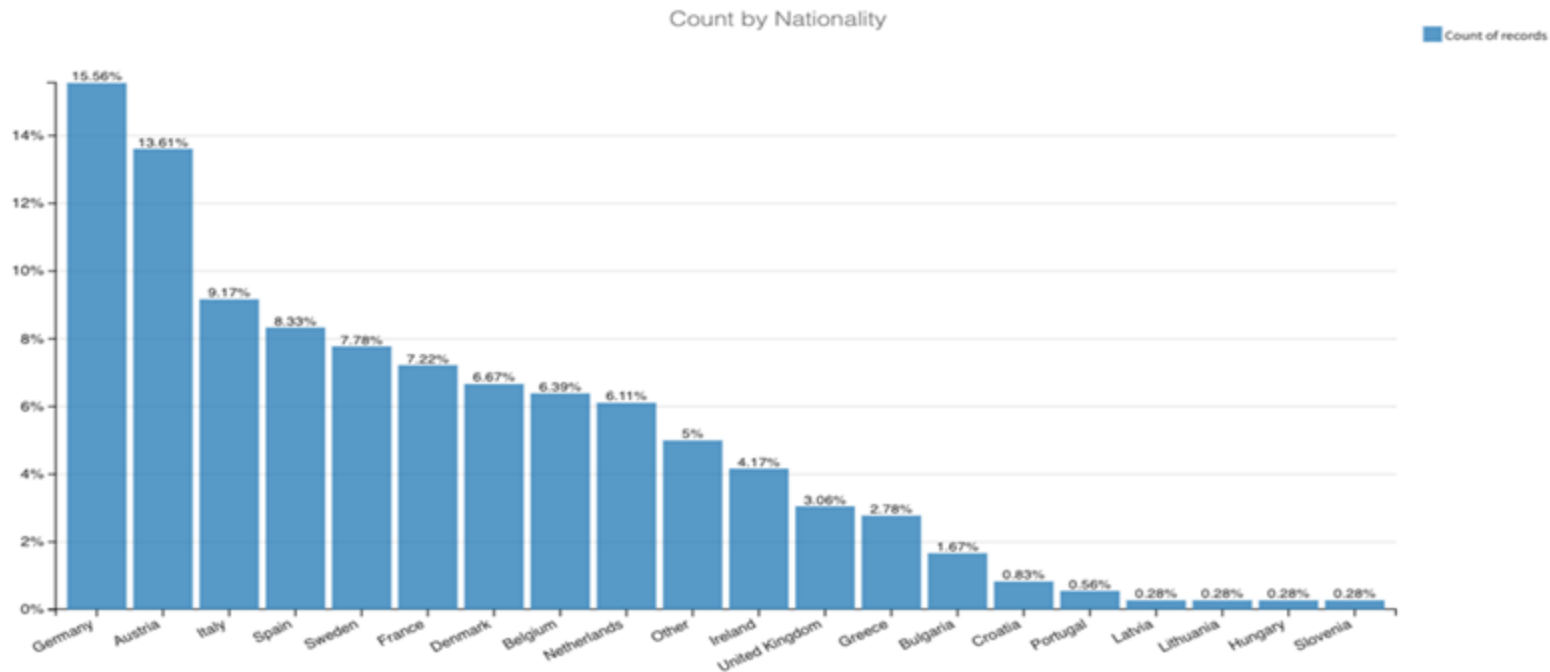
Quantitative analysis

Survey

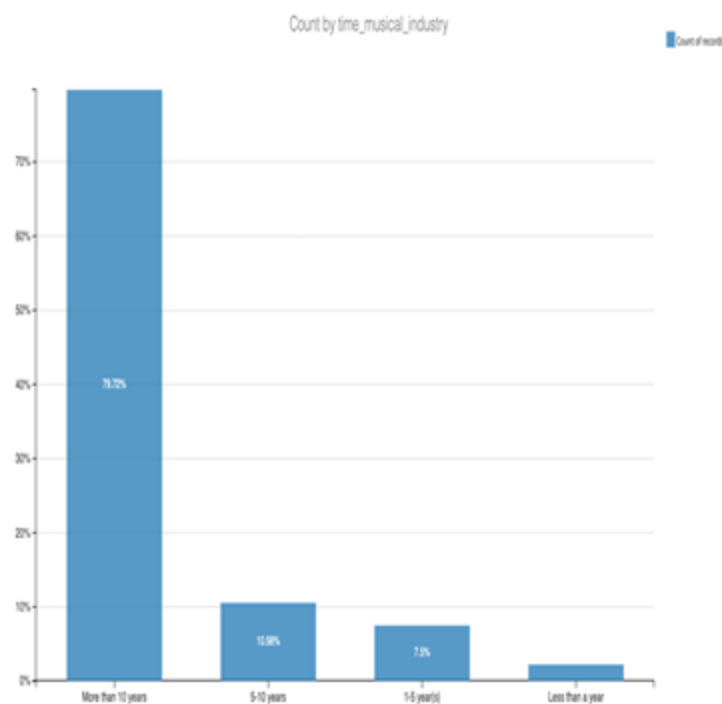
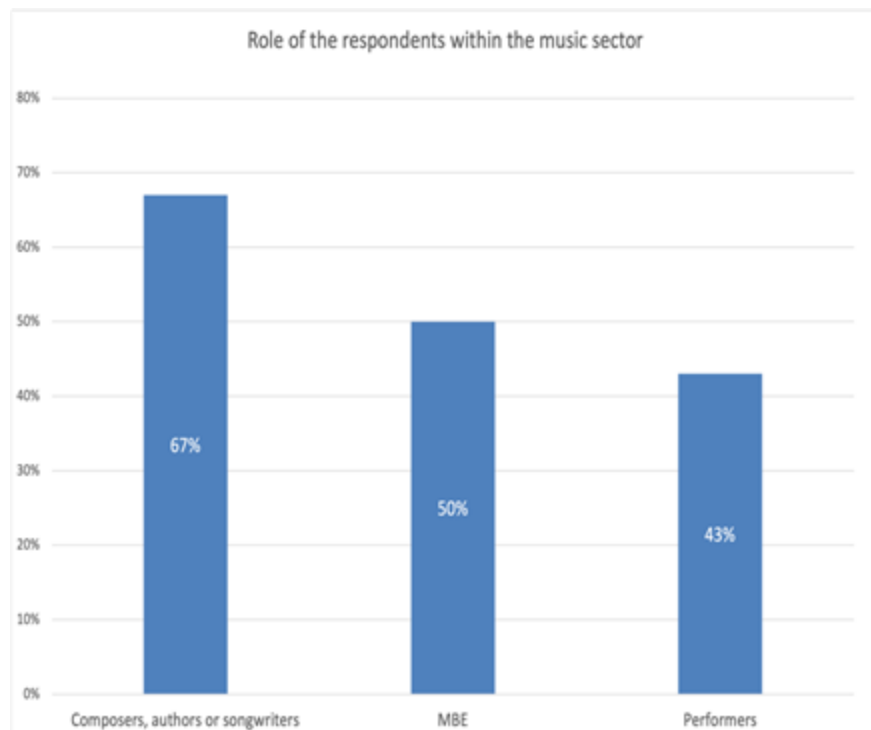
Sample/gender-age



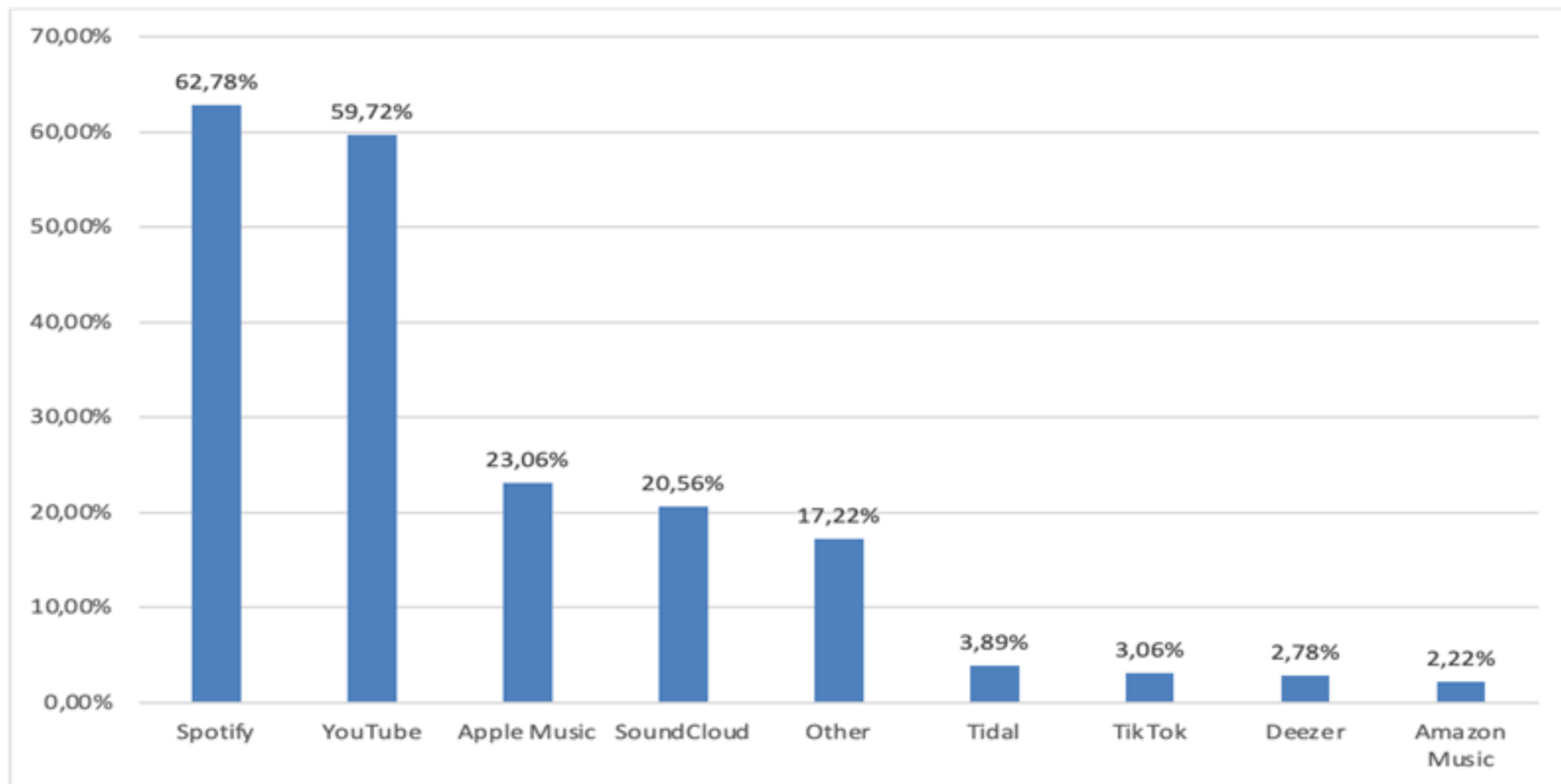
Sample/nationality



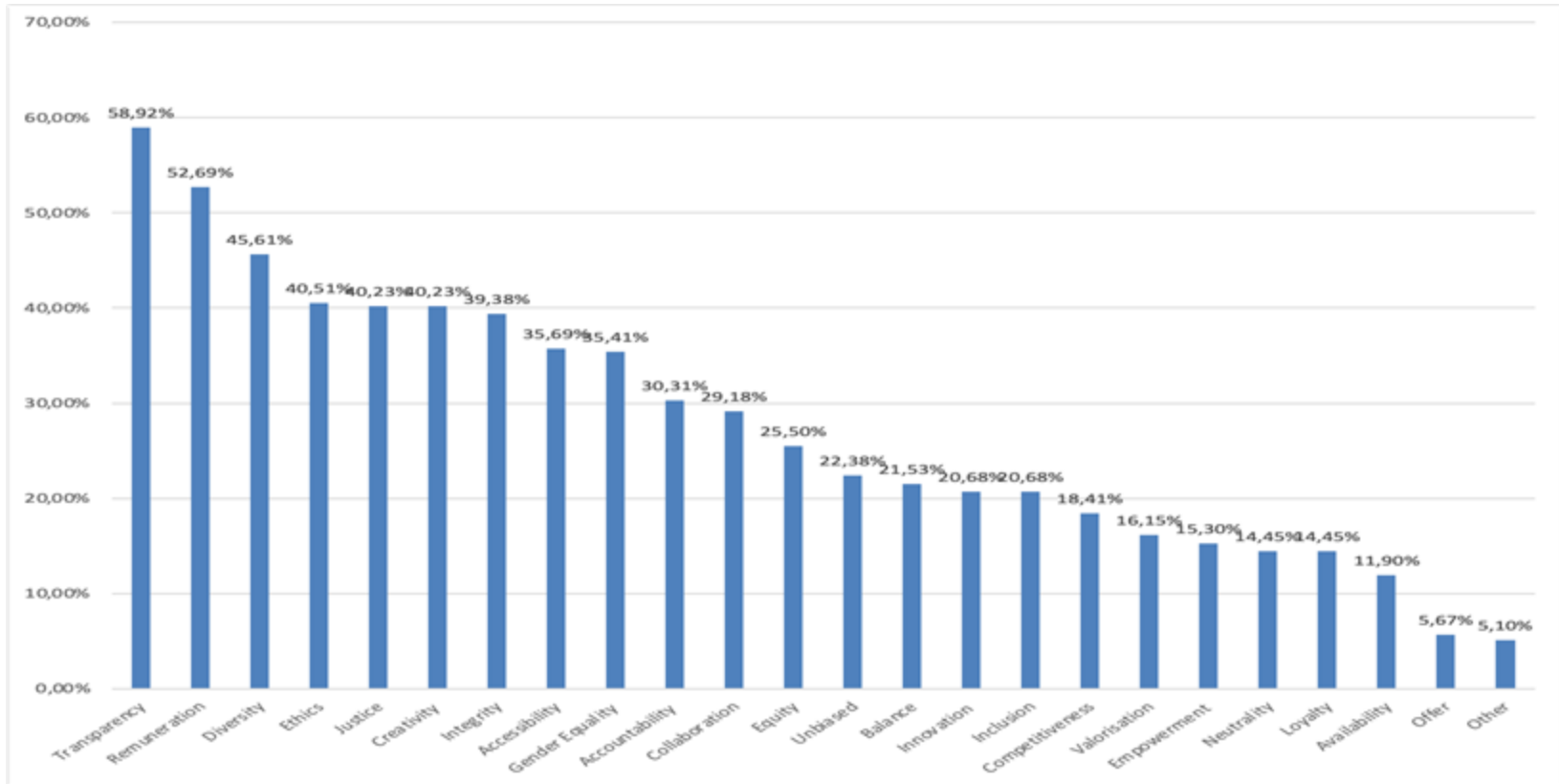
Professional role



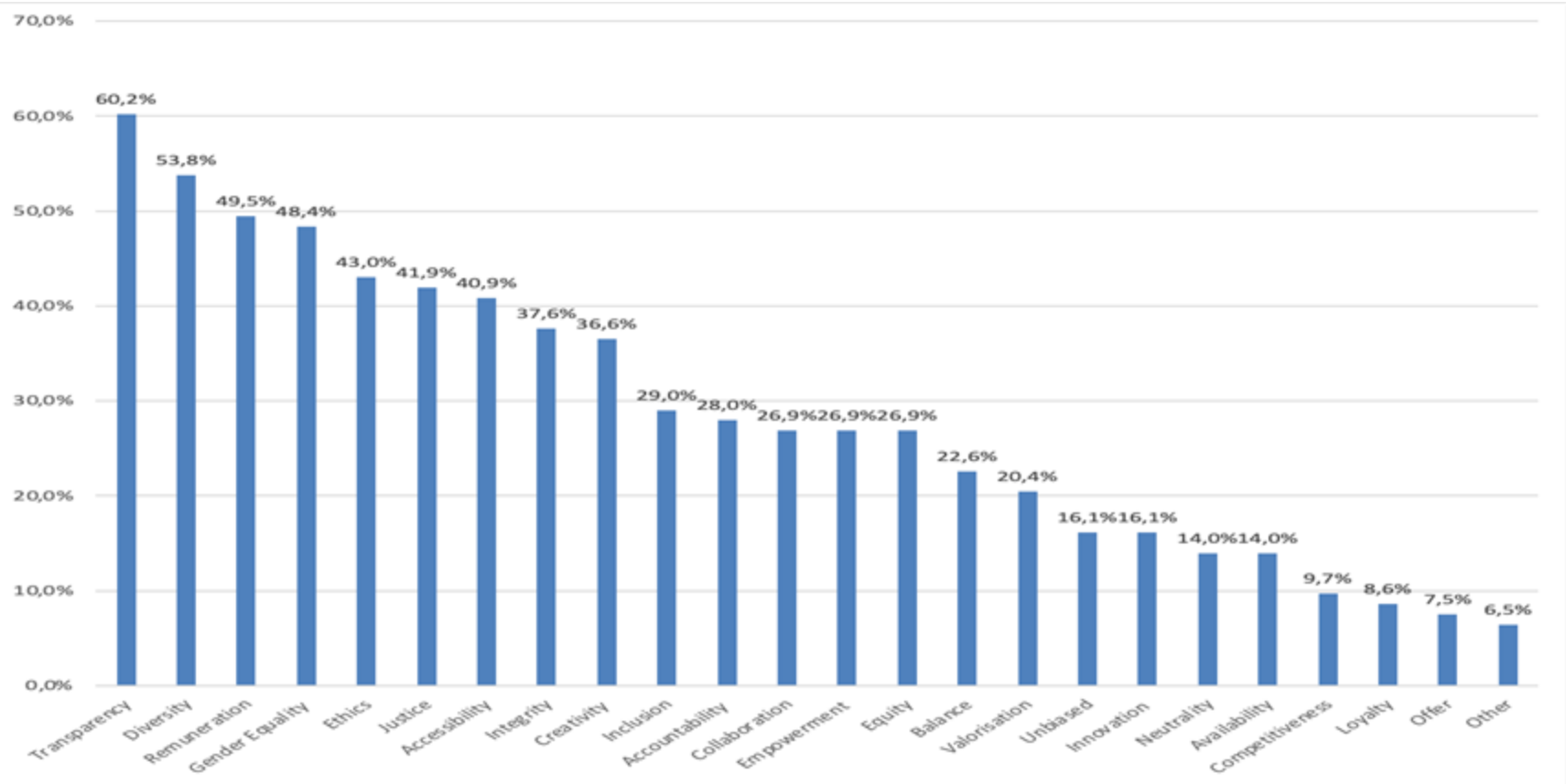
Streaming service used



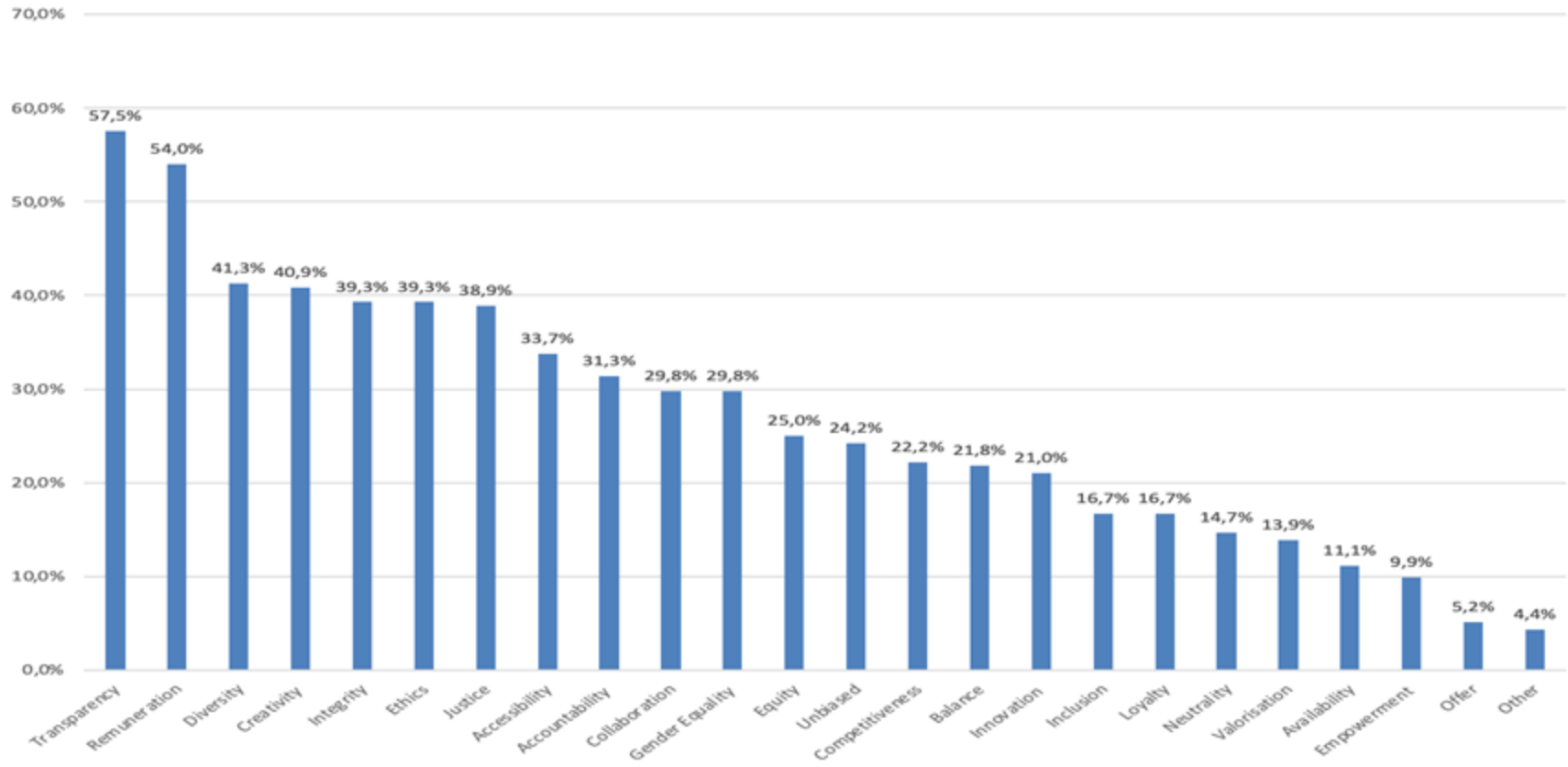
Results/fairness-associated terms



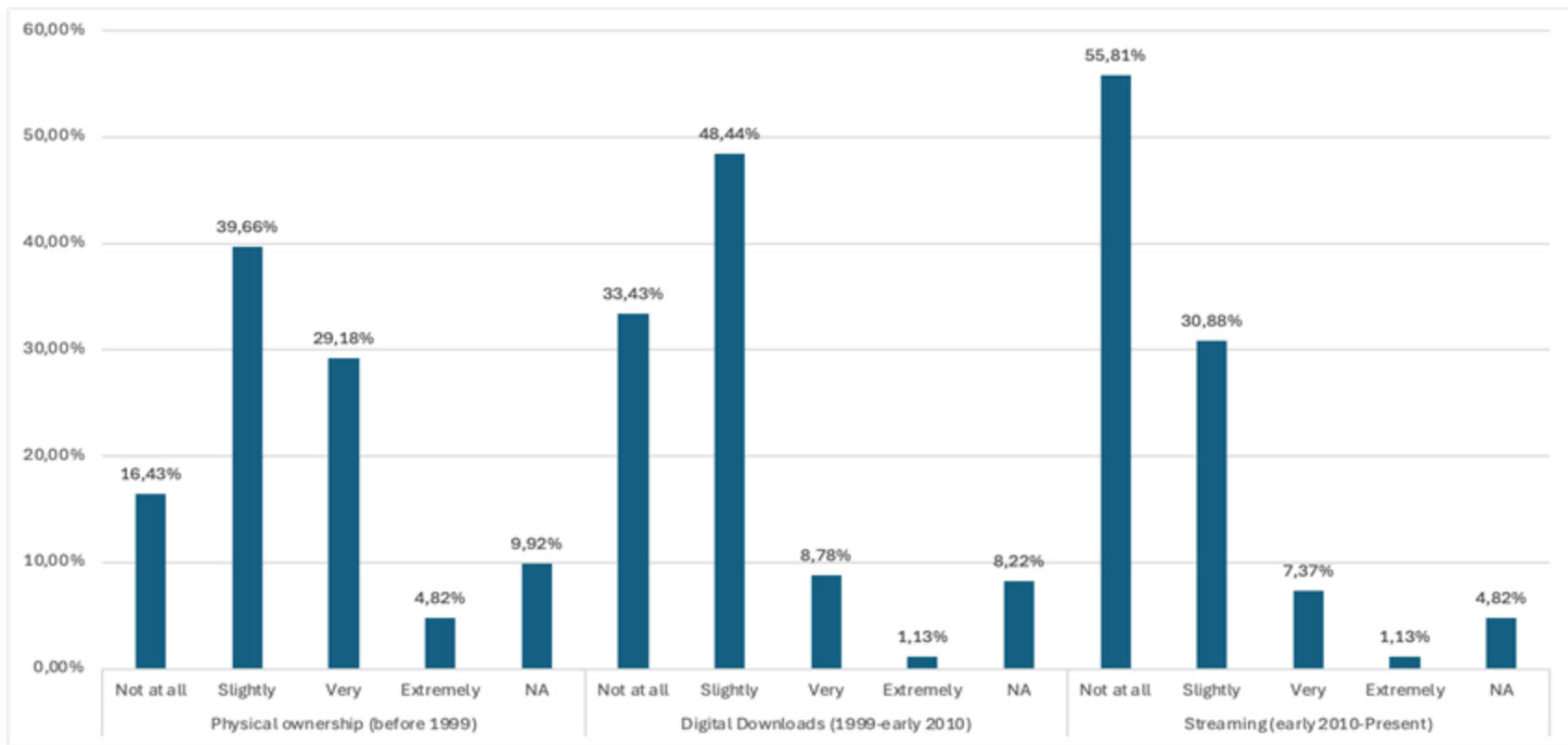
Results/fairness-associated terms/women



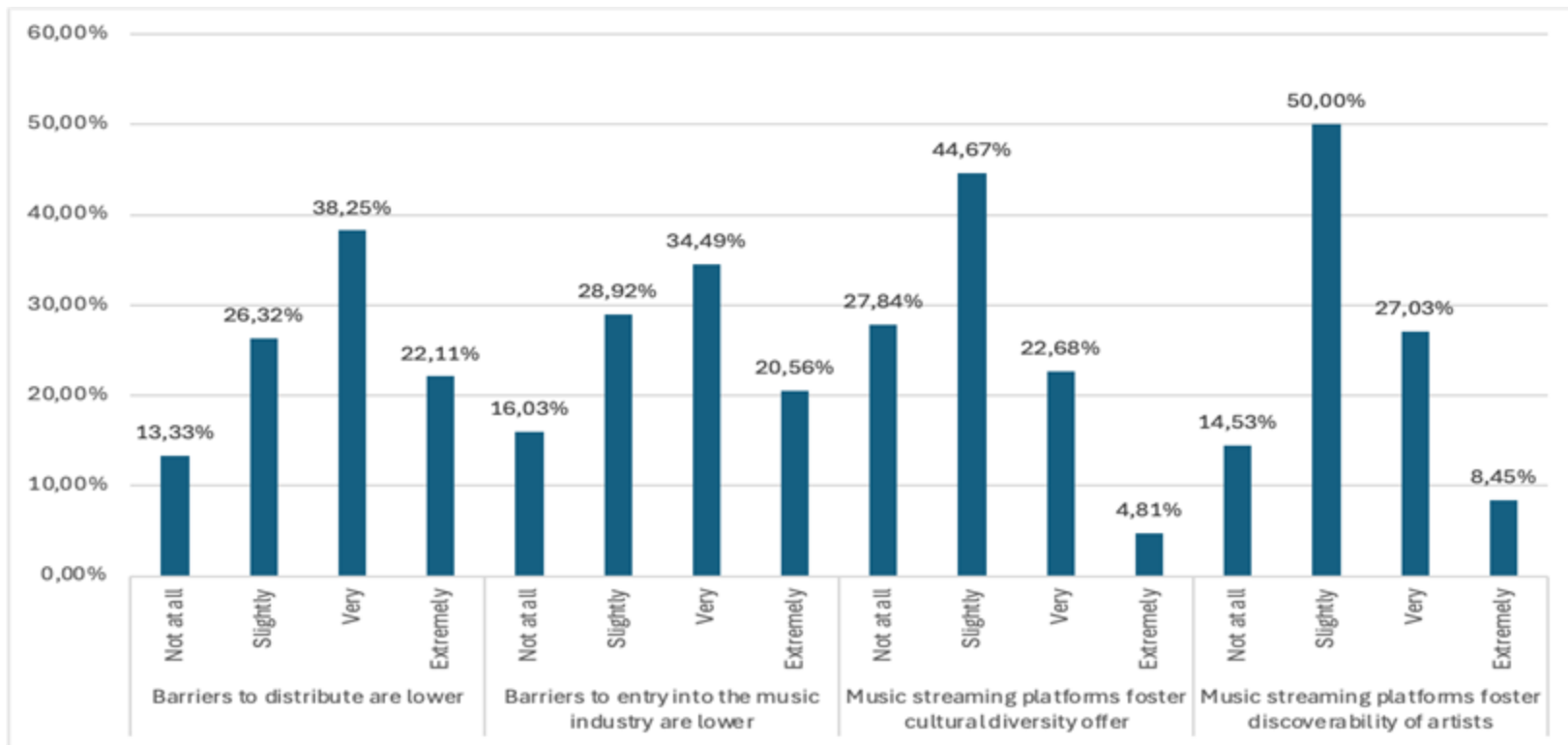
Results/fairness-associated terms/men



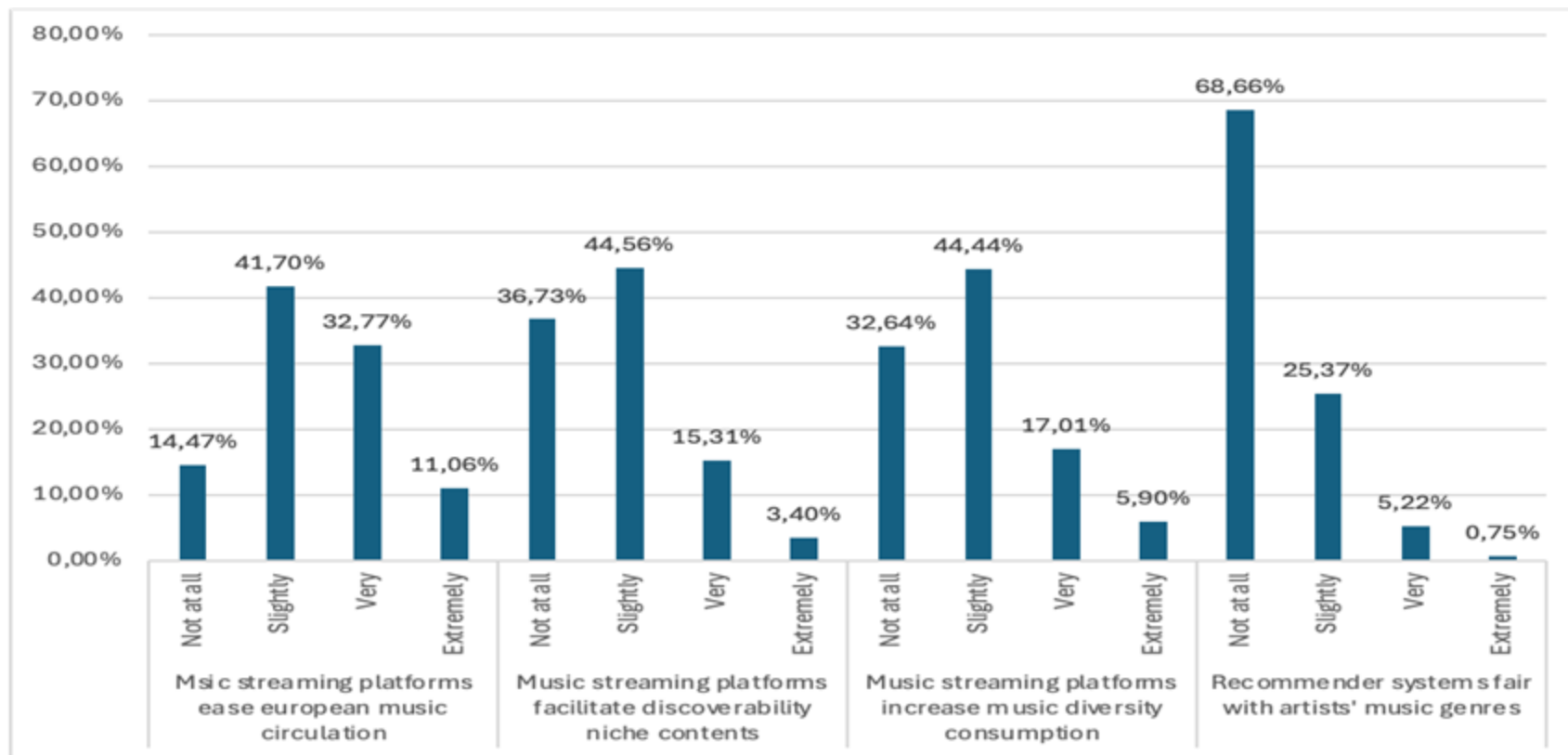
Results/periods-fairness



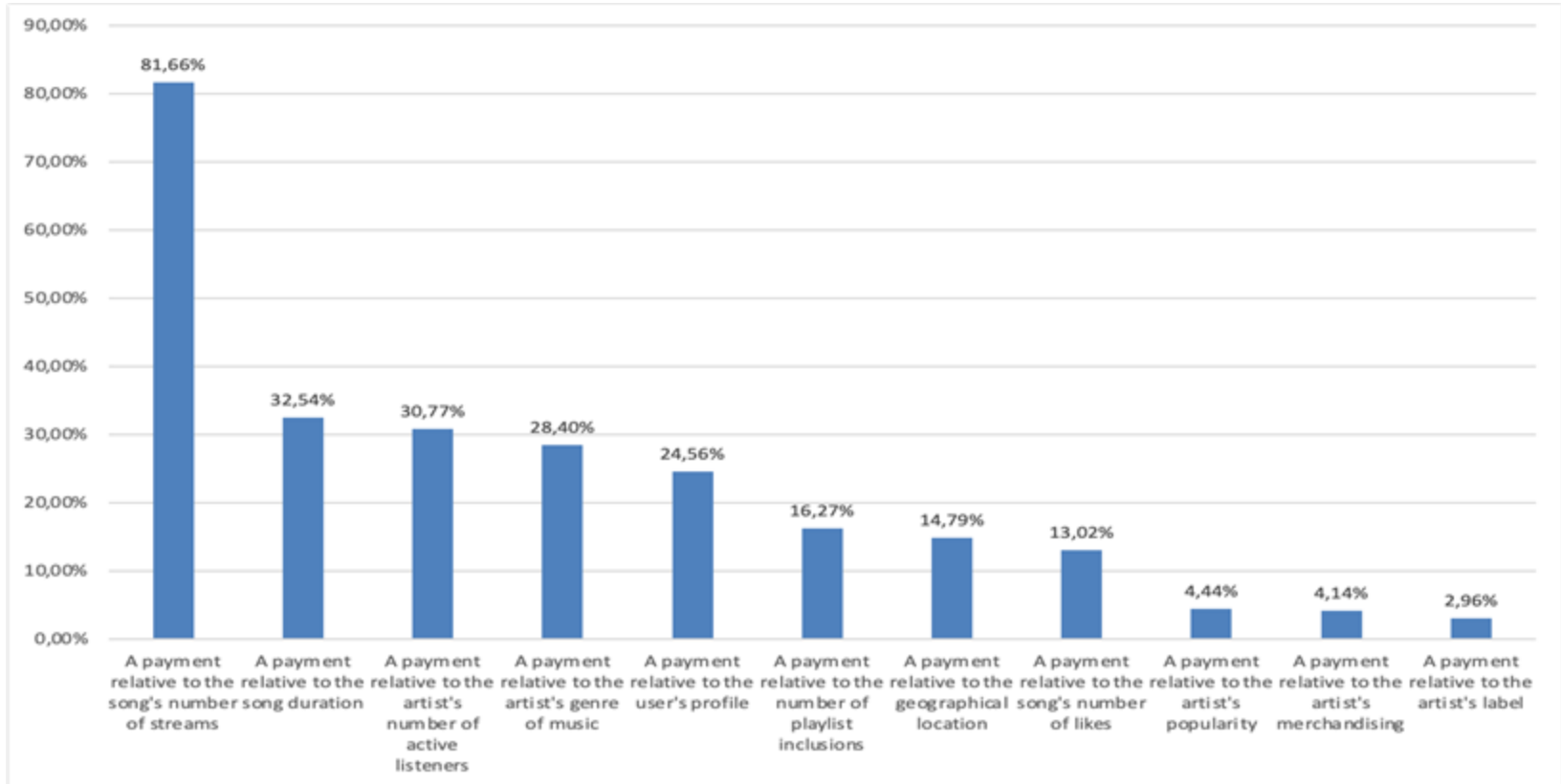
Results/market accessibility



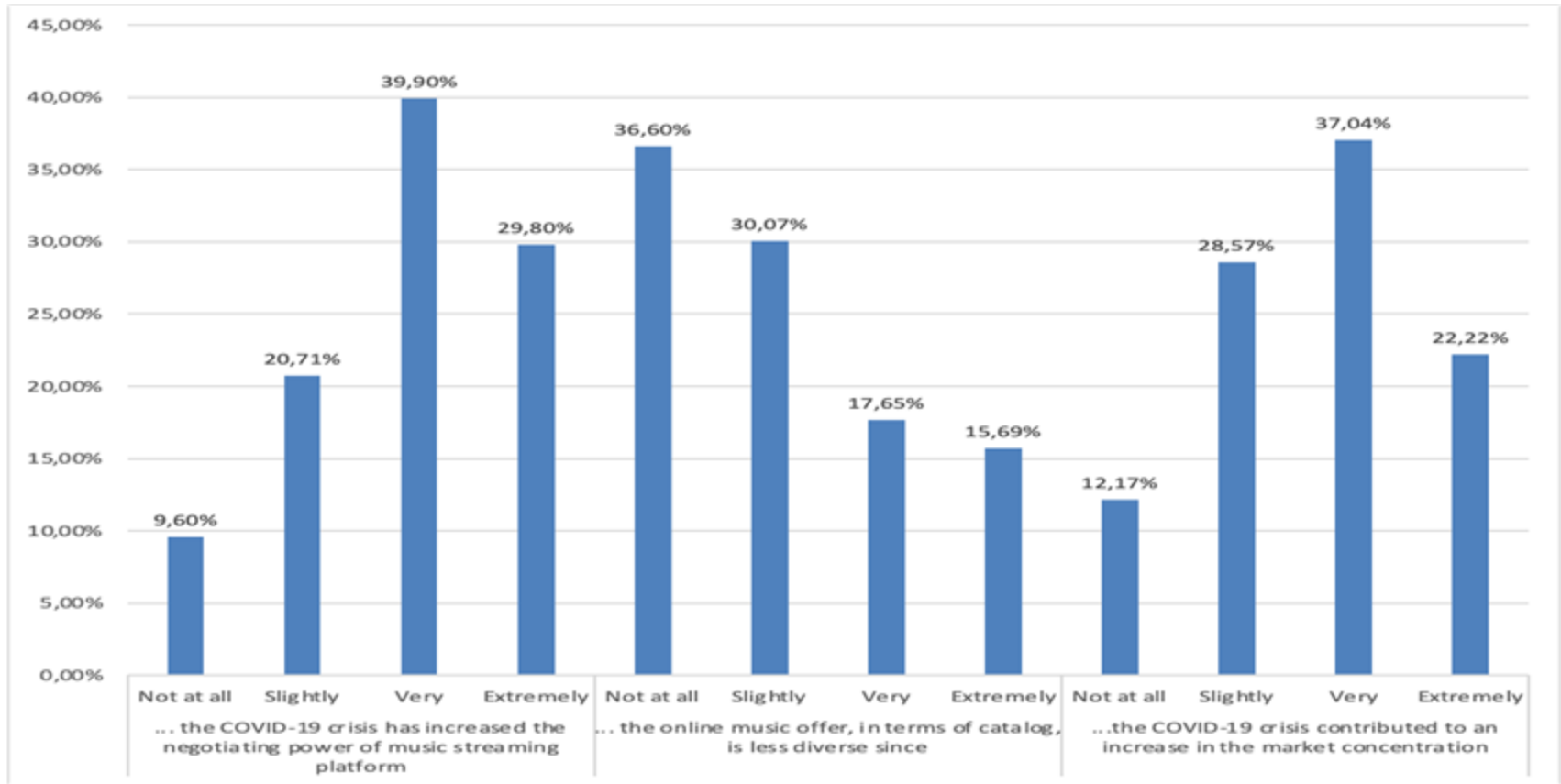
Results/market accessibility

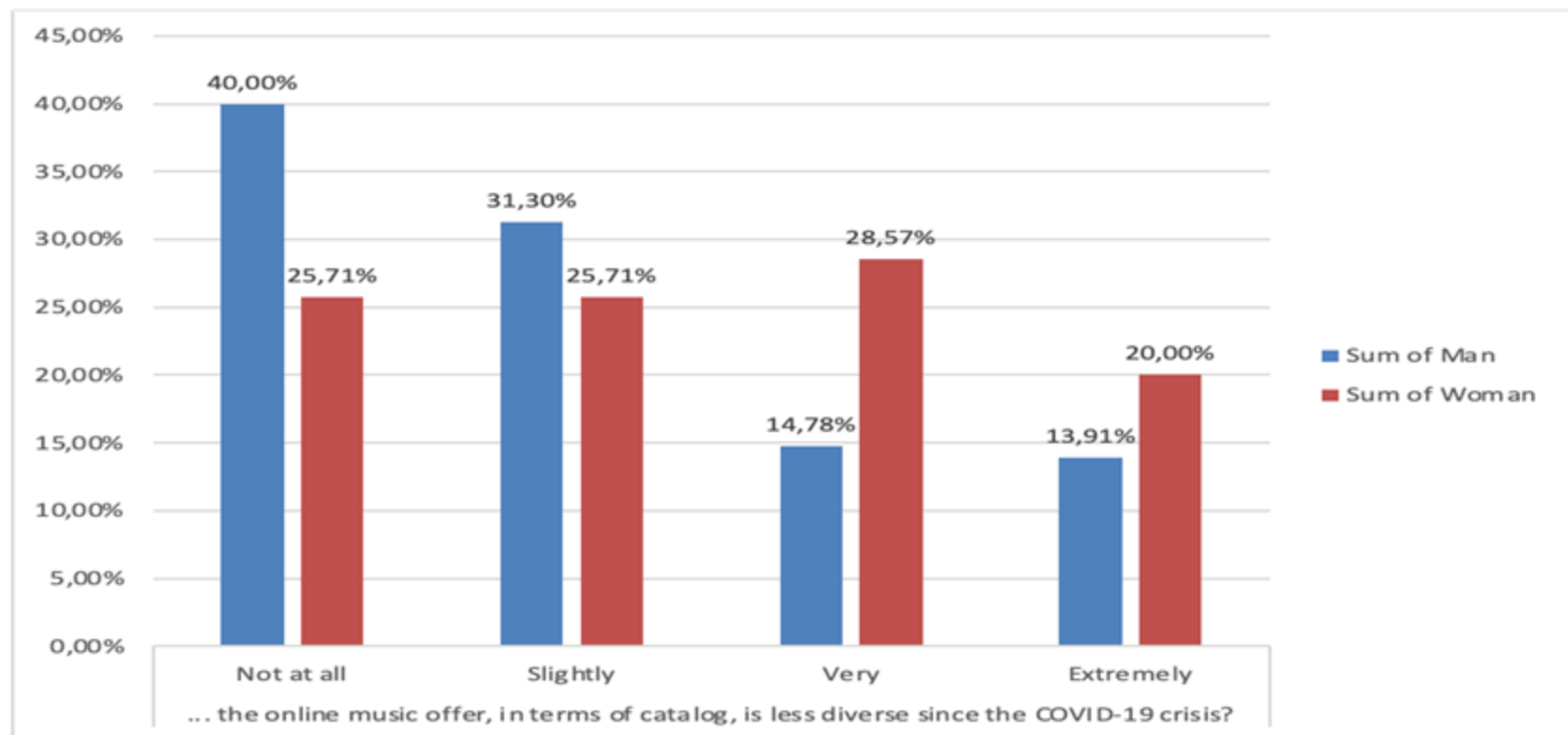


Results/payment system

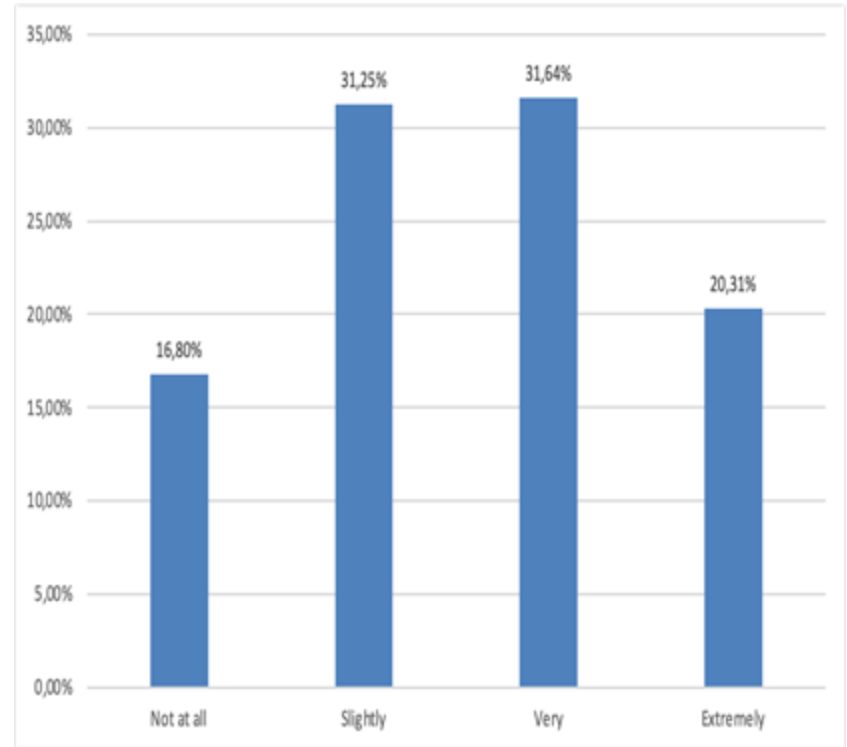
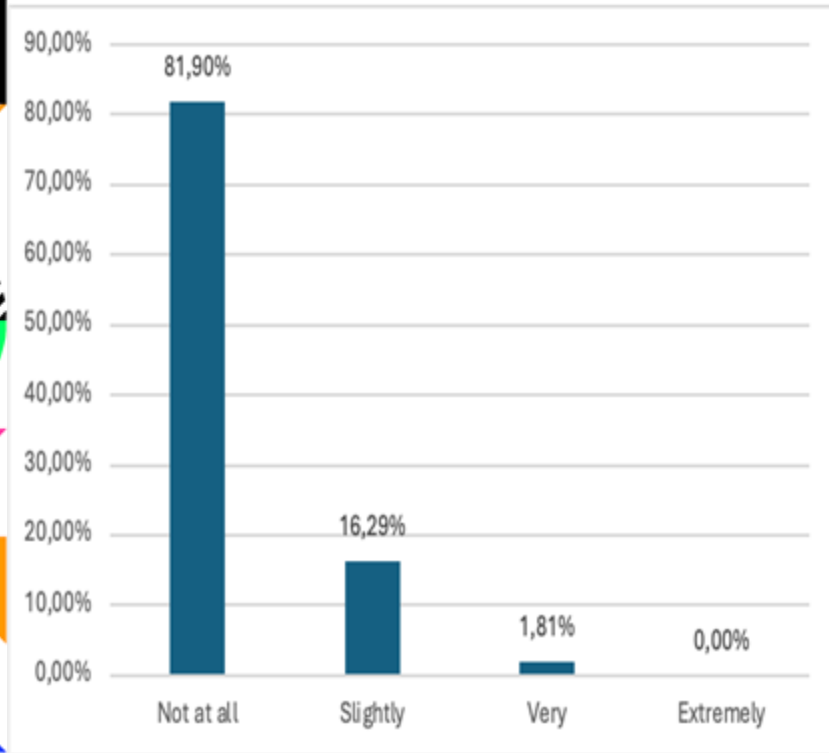


Results/COVID-19 pandemic

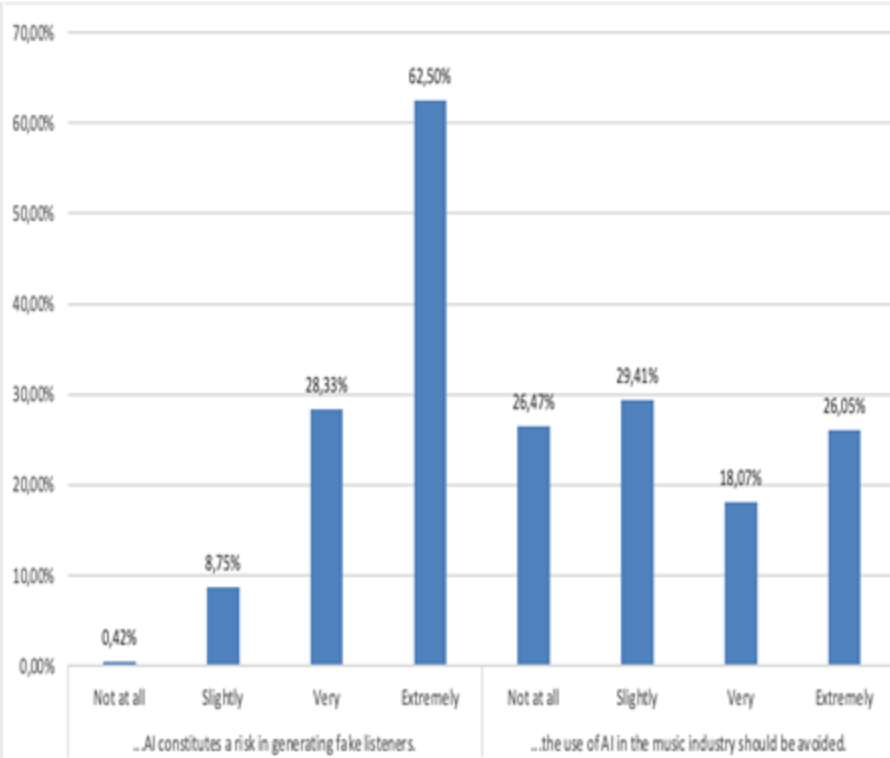
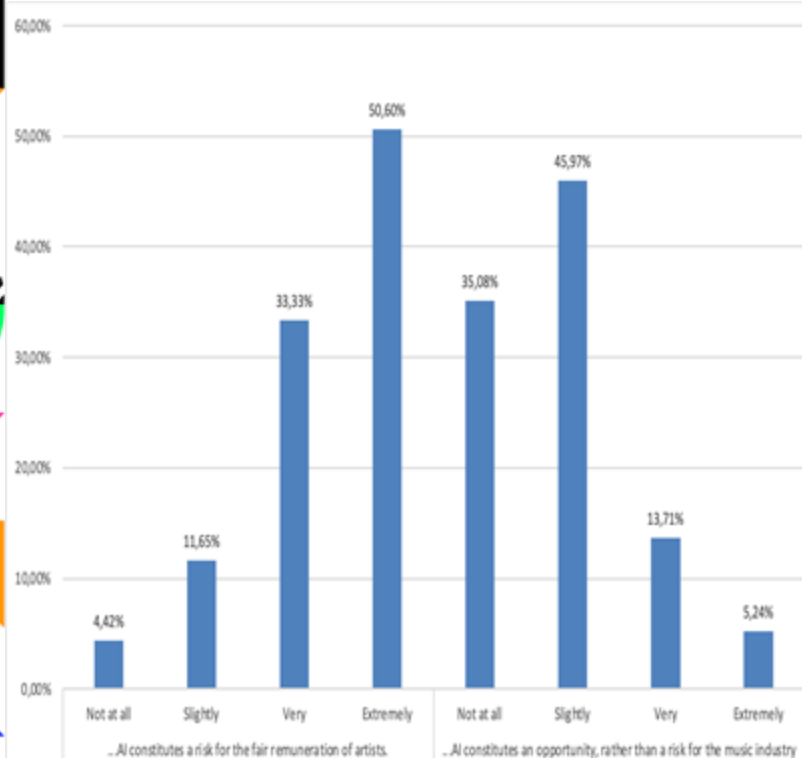




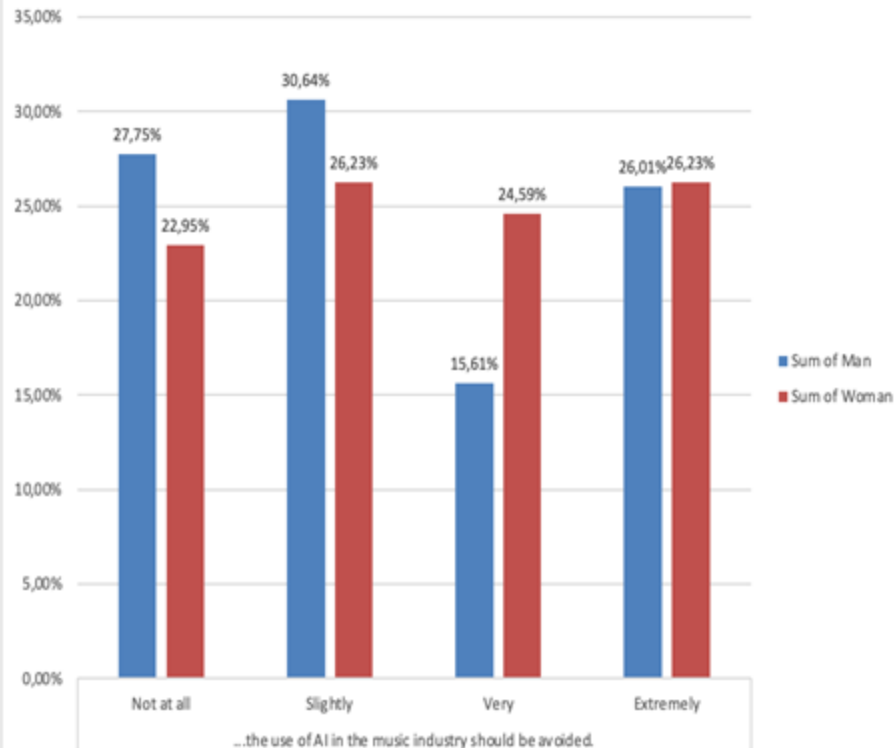
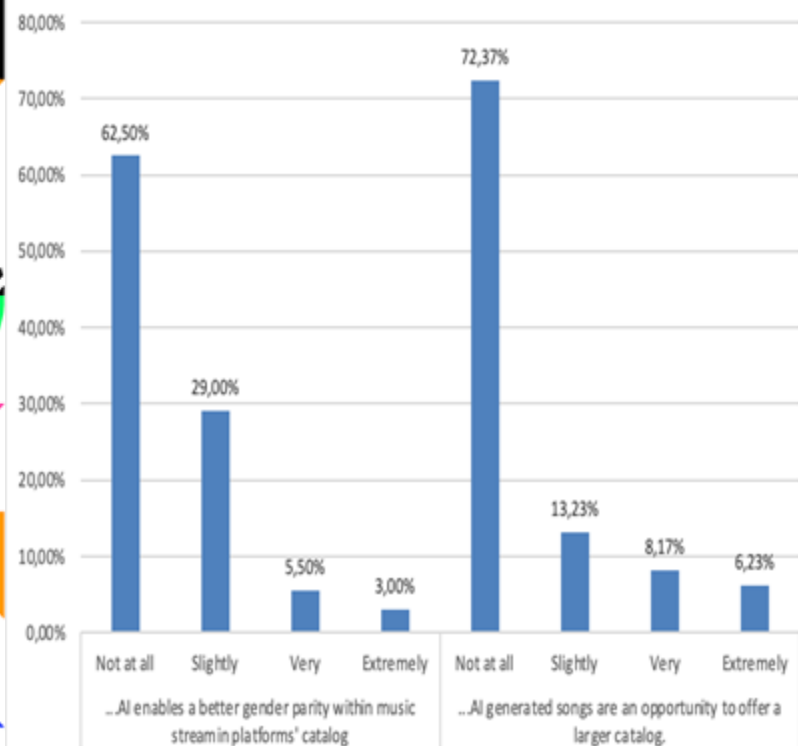
Results/algorithms-recommender systems



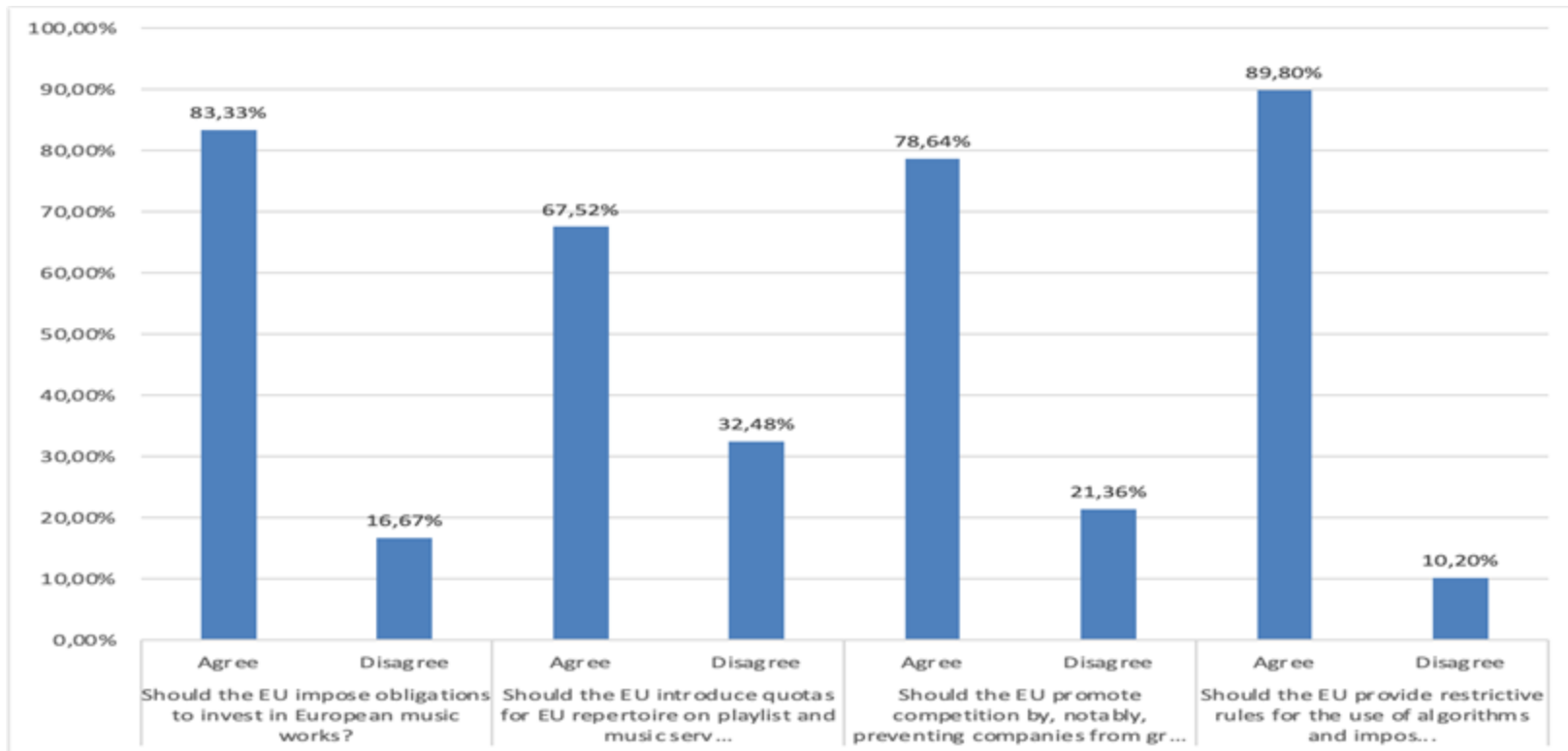
Results/risks and opportunities of AI



Results/risks and opportunities of AI



Results/EU policy solutions



Qualitative analysis

22 interviews

Interviews

Category	Number of Interviews
Artists	7
Record Label	5
CMO	2
MSS	1
MBE	4
IR	3

- **Artists:** This category includes representatives of authors, composers, songwriters, performers, as well as music councils and networks of music organisations and institutions.
- **Record Labels:** This category comprises representatives from both major and independent record labels.
- **CMO:** This category includes representatives from organisations responsible for managing and distributing royalties on behalf of authors, composers, and performers.
- **Streaming:** Encompassing MSS and UGC platforms, this category represents digital services that manage music distribution and user engagement on their platforms.
- **MBE:** A diverse group that includes consultants, lawyers, and professionals providing specialised services to the music industry, such as support to exportation and management of IP.
- **IR:** Independent researcher (IR), working in universities and not representing private companies.

Qualitative analysis - Interviews

- **Competing Notions of Fairness**

Fairness is perceived differently depending on the stakeholder values

market-driven perspective: do not see unfairness

broader perspective: power imbalance, inclusivity and equity

- **Remuneration**

Physical distribution models need to be renegotiated

Consensus that MSS contributed to the decrease in the value of music

- **Transparency**

Overall trust in the MSS data in terms of data usage

No significant difference is perceived among the main MSS players in terms of reporting

Perceived lack of transparency: MSS recommendation system

- **COVID-19 Pandemic**

Accelerated digital transition and the importance of MSS

increased awareness of the fair remuneration debate

No concrete result or shift in power dynamics

Qualitative analysis - Interviews

- **UGC (user-generated content) X MSS**

UGC is perceived as less fair, less transparent and contributing more to devaluing music

- **Recommendation system and algorithms**

perceived as gatekeeping tools

MSS could use to promote content according to economic interest

Call for greater transparency

- **AI: generative**

input: Ensure that the use of copyrighted content to train AI is trackable and can be properly licensed

Overall distrust of AI companies

Discussion on who has the right to license

output: need deals to explore the output

Call for label fully AI-generated content

Challenges: who is responsible for labelling, addressing the nuances in AI usage

Discussion

Remuneration, Transparency, Diversity

Remuneration

Growing the pie

increasing subscription prices: mainly defended by record labels
other stakeholders are not opposed, but believe that it won't be sufficient

Remuneration models

Some MSS and record labels demonstrated openness to experimenting with new remuneration models

Overall support for the user-centric model

Many stakeholders pointed out that the change in this change won't be sufficient

Remuneration

Sharing the pie among stakeholders

Key debate and tension lie in how to distribute the revenue among the stakeholders

perception of financial gap benefiting MSS and record labels

MSS and record labels argue that artists are being better remunerated than before MSS

Negotiation power

as a key dimension of the remuneration debate

Record labels argue that artists can self-release if they disagree with the conditions

Not all artist have the power to negotiate deals with record labels

Transparency

MSS Recommendation Systems

Opacity gives MSS power

The content promoted through recommendation systems will impact remuneration and diversity

Stakeholders argue that without transparency on how these systems operate it is not possible to ensure that they are fair

Transparency

Record labels deals

The call for greater transparency is also about the deals between the players, especially record labels and MSS, since they are protected by NDA

Many stakeholders perceive that they are left behind in the crucial negotiations in the industry

Ex: Deezer remuneration model, negotiated without involvement of all stakeholders

Diversity

MSS playlists + rec. system

Ex: Geotagging - restricts visibility

Quotas - divided opinions

Broader perspective: need to creating an inclusive and representative cultural landscape to support diversity

Conclusion

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Fairness

- remains a contested and multifaceted concept, reflecting the diverse priorities and values of its stakeholders.
- it cannot be reduced to a singular definition but understood as a as a spectrum of principles that encompass economic, social, and cultural dimensions
- 3 key interconnected elements: Remuneration, Transparency, and Diversity

Thank you!

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