

Memory Studies Association Conference

5-9 July 2021 in Warsaw

Online

Conference Feedback Report

Introduction

The survey was conducted to assess the success of the MSA 2021 conference. The event took place from 5 to 9 July 2021 mostly online (with one plenary session held in Warsaw: *European Memory and Politics: A Crisis of What?* Marek Cichocki, Ivan Krastev) and was attended by more than 1200 participants of whom 208 filled out the online survey. The feedback provided by the respondents presents their general impressions and opinions on the conference 2021 and provides insights and suggestions for the next editions of the project.

Table of contents

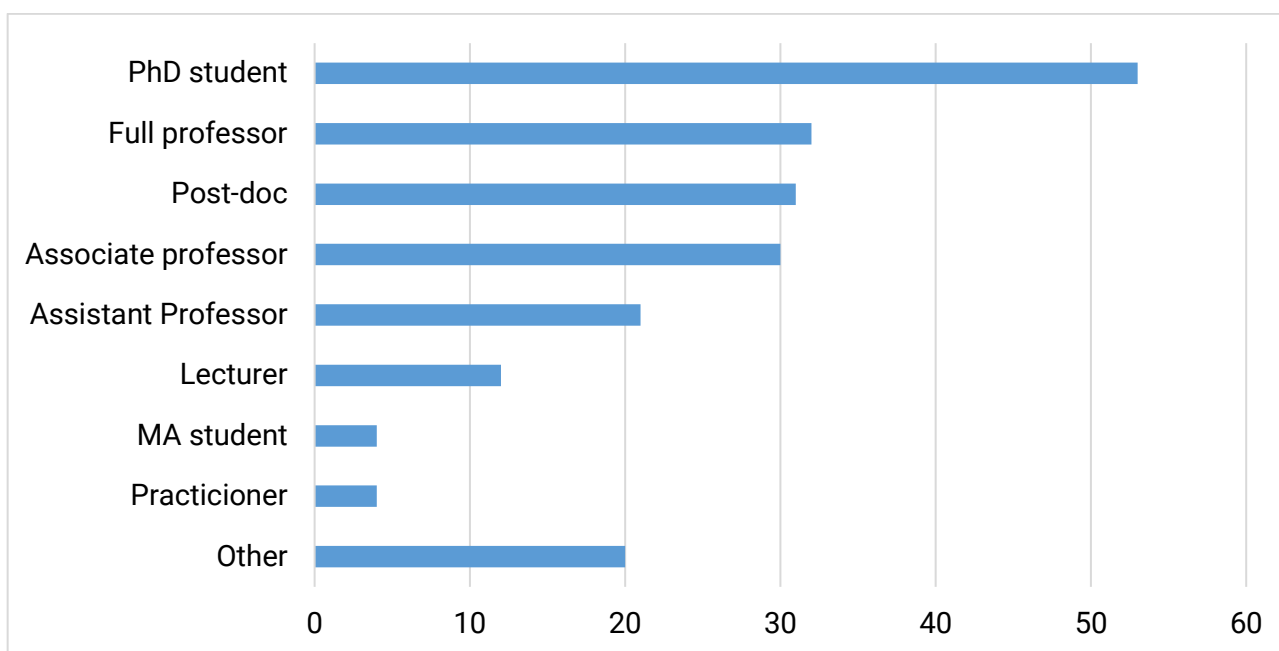
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES	2
RESPONDENTS	2
COMMUNICATION	3
MODES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE	4
CONFERENCE CONTENT	6
ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS	21
THE MSA ACTIVITIES IN THE FUTURE	22
FEE STRUCTURE	30
MEMORY STUDIES JOURNAL	31
ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK TO THE 2021 EDITION	31

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

RESPONDENTS

An overwhelming majority of the 208 respondents declared to be **related to academia**, with *circa* 25.6% PhD students, c. 15.5% full professors, c. 15% postdoctoral researchers and c. 14.5% associate professors. The most common answers among those respondents who marked the answer 'other' and provided additional comments were also linked to education & academia: (independent) researchers, MA graduates, educators, teachers, consultants, retired academics. Only one person mentioned an occupation related to art (visual artist).

What is your current position?



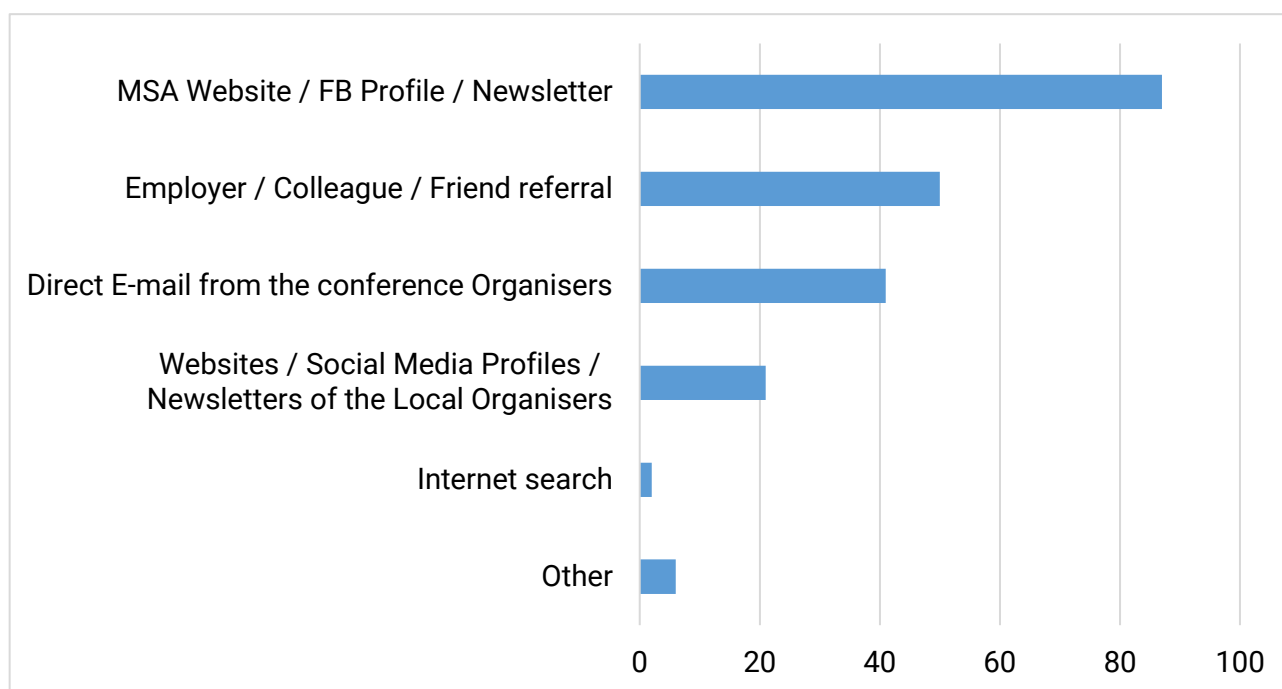
Over 85% of those who responded declared to be from Europe (140 persons, c. 67.3 %) and **North America** (38 persons, c. 18.3%). Other parts of the world were also mentioned, however the numbers of responses were significantly lower: Asia (15 persons, c. 7.2%), South America (9 persons, c. 4.3%), Oceania (5 persons, c. 2.4%) and Africa (1 person, c. 0.5 %).

COMMUNICATION

Most of the 208 respondents learned about the conference via Internet. **The MSA website, newsletter and FB profile** served as a source of information for 87 respondents (c. 42%), while the **websites, social media profiles or newsletters of the local organizers** – for additional 21 respondents (c. 10%). 41 respondents (c. 19.7%) indicated that they learned about the conference via a **direct e-mail from the conference Organizers**, while 2 – via Internet search.

The second most common answer indicated by over 24% of those who responded (50 persons) was the **employer / colleague / friend referral** – this implies the additional networking potential of the event.

How did you learn about this conference?

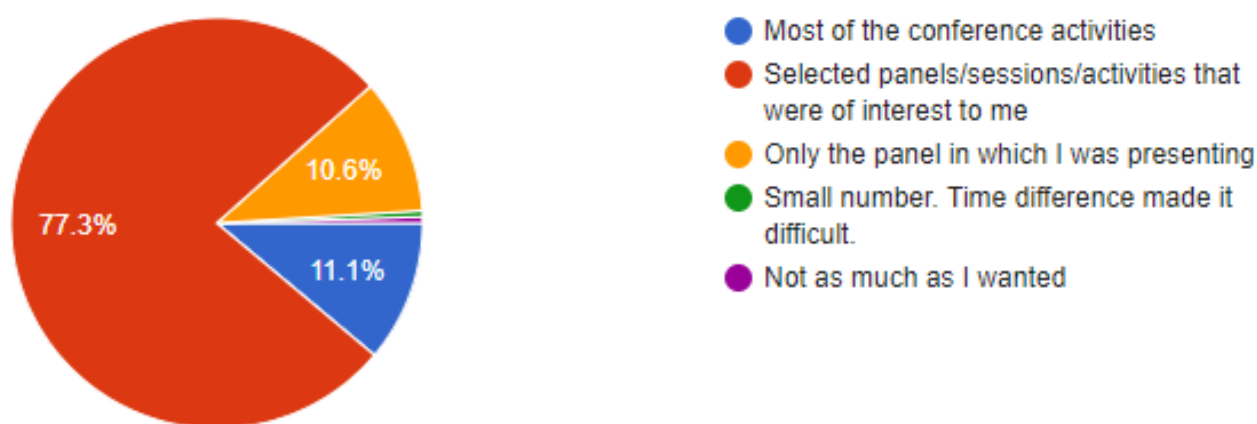


When asked about the means that the Organizers should use to inform about the future MSA conferences and activities, **the majority of the respondents were more than satisfied with the current communication methods**: a combination of social media, website and e-mail/newsletter updates. Those who provided additional comments suggested i.a. to **establish better connections with universities, academic associations & platforms** (such as H-net), **and like organizations** (such as IABA, NEMO, ICOM-MEMO, etc.), to use the **networking and word-of-mouth communication** and to **advertise in traditional media** (newspapers, art magazines, etc.).

MODES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE

The vast majority of the survey respondents (160 persons, c. 77.3%) indicated that they **attended specific panels, sessions and other activities that matched their personal interests**. The number of those who reported that they attended most of the conference activities and of those who marked that they participated only in the panel in which they presented were almost equal and reached c. 11% of those surveyed.

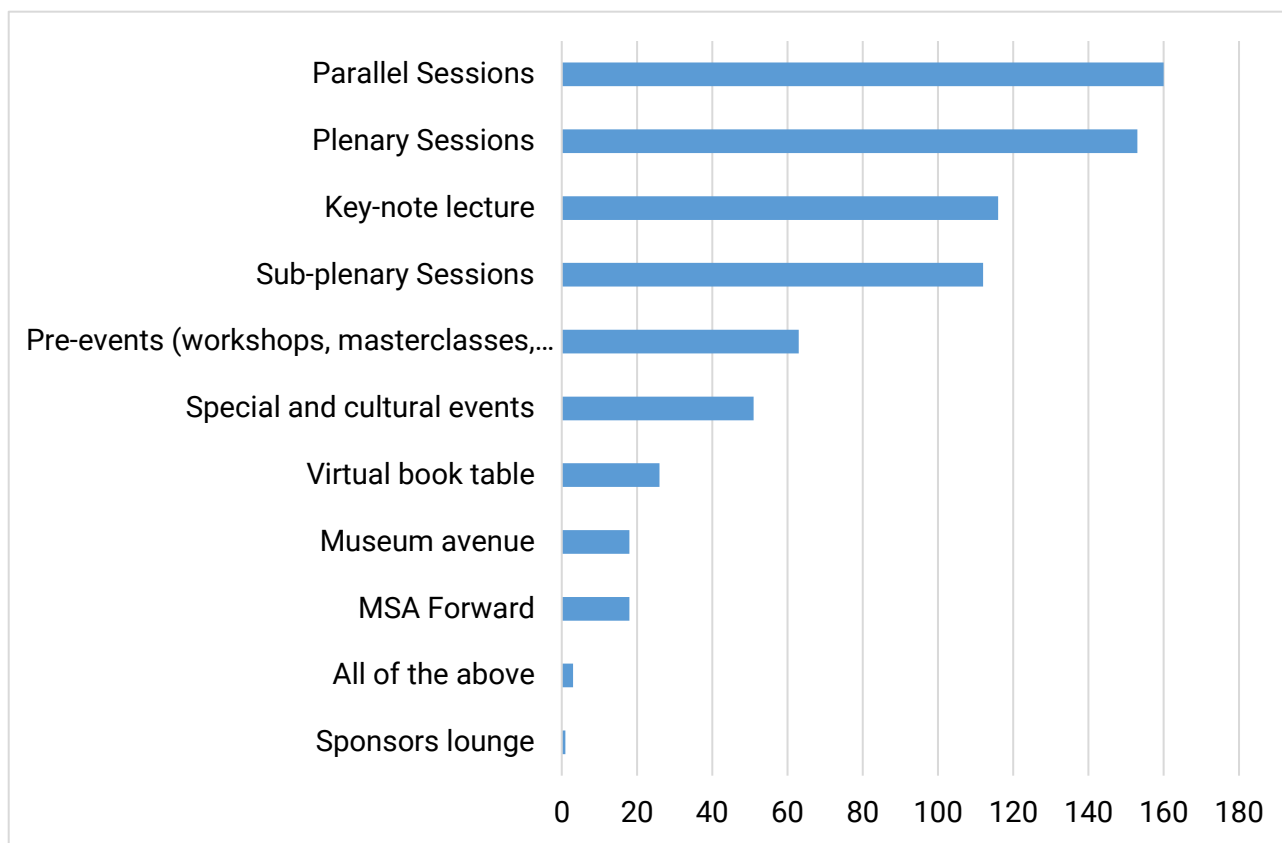
How much of the conference did you attend?



34 respondents (c. 16.3%) indicated that they attended only one type of activity (Parallel sessions – 19 respondents; Plenary sessions – 8 respondents; Sub-plenary sessions – 4 respondents; MSA Forward – 1 respondent; Pre-events – 1 respondent; Special and cultural events – 1 respondent). 27 respondents (c. 12.9%) selected two types of activities, among which the most popular were the combinations of Plenary & Parallel sessions and Pre-events & Parallel sessions. **The highest number of those who were surveyed (47 respondents, c. 22.5%) indicated that they attended 3 types of activities.** 39 respondents (c. 18,75%) reported that they participated in 4 types of activities, while 35 respondents (c. 16.8%) selected 5 types of activities. Only c. 11.5% of those who responded (24 respondents) indicated that they attended 6 or more types of activities, while only 3 respondents reported to have taken part in all of the activities.

In general **the most often selected types of activities were Parallel Sessions** (160 respondents; c. 76.9%) **Plenary Sessions** (153 respondents; c.73.6%), **Key-note Lecture** (116 respondents; c. 55.8%) and **Sub-plenary Sessions** (112 respondents; c. 53.8%)

Which type of conference activities did you attend ? (multiple answer possible)



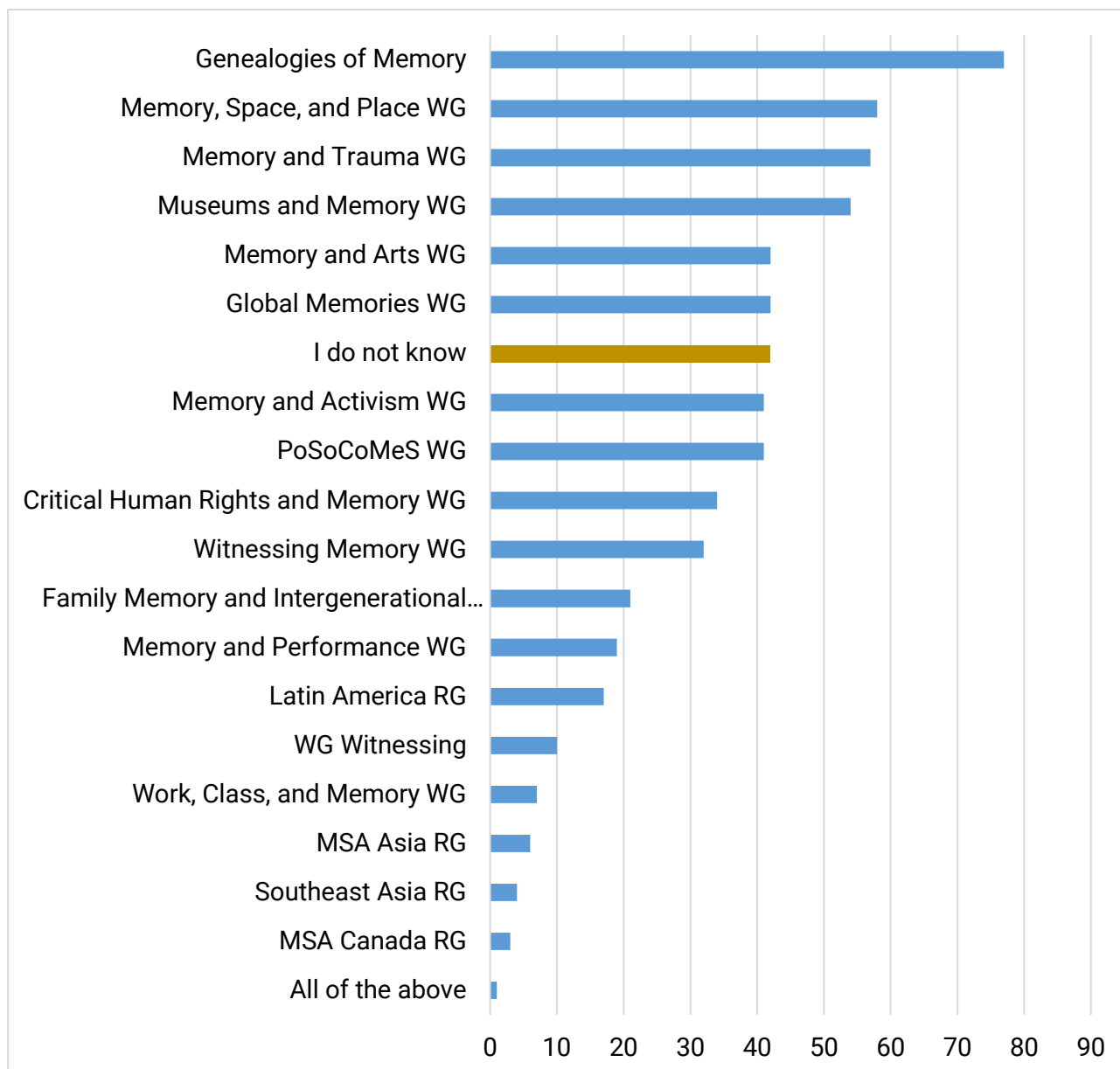
NO OF TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	THE MOST POPULAR COMBINATION OF ANSWERS
1	34 respondents (c. 16.3%)	Not applicable
2	27 respondents (c. 12.9%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary & Parallel sessions (indicated by 8 respondents) • Pre-events & Parallel sessions (indicated by 5 respondents)
3	47 respondents (c. 22.5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary Sessions, Parallel Sessions & Key-note lecture (indicated by 16 respondents) • Plenary Sessions, Sub-plenary Sessions & Parallel Sessions (indicated by 10 respondents)

4	39 respondents (c. 18,75%)	Plenary Sessions, Sub-plenary Sessions, Parallel Sessions & Key-note lecture (indicated by 20 respondents)
5	35 respondents (c. 16.8%)	Plenary Sessions, Sub-plenary Sessions, Parallel Sessions, Key-note lecture & Special and cultural events (indicated by 11 respondents)
6 or more	24 respondents (c. 11.5%)	Pre-events, Plenary Sessions, Sub-plenary Sessions, Parallel Sessions, Key-note lecture & Special and cultural events (indicated by 9 respondents)
All	3 respondents (c. 1.4%)	Not applicable

CONFERENCE CONTENT

Among the regional or thematic streams that the respondents attended the most popular were the **Genealogies of Memory** (indicated by 77 respondents; c. 38.9%), **Memory, Space, and Place WG** (indicated by 58 respondents; c. 29.3%), **Memory and Trauma WG** (indicated by 57 respondents; c. 28.8%) and **Museums and Memory WG** (indicated by 54 respondents; c. 27.3%). It is noticeable, however, that 21.2% of those surveyed (42 respondents) did not know which regional or thematic streams they attended.

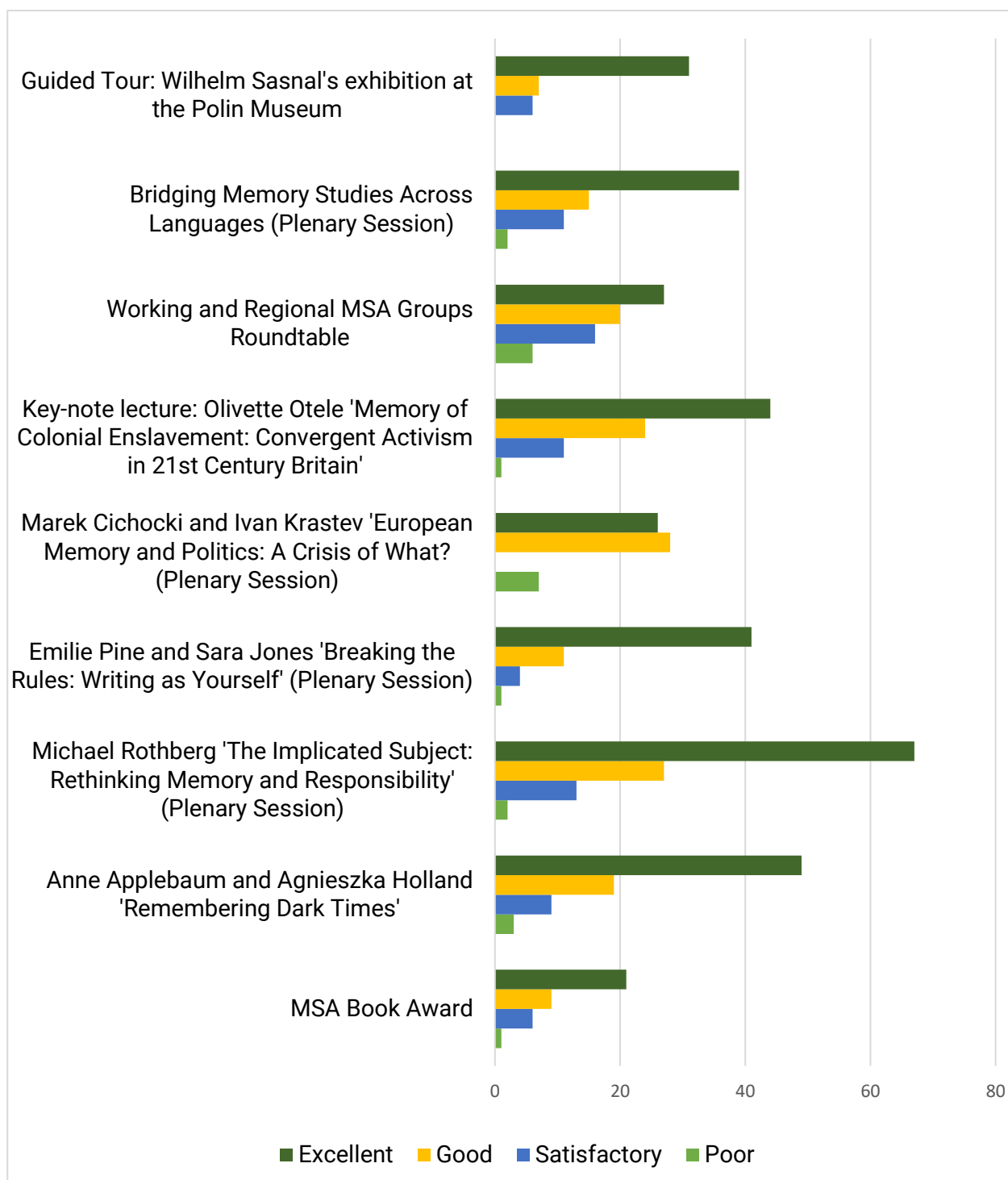
Which regional or thematic streams did you attend? (multiple answer possible)



All the special events received mostly positive feedback from the respondents. The best rated event seem to be the **Plenary Session 'The Implicated Subject: Rethinking Memory and Responsibility' with Michael Rothberg** – c. 86% of those who took part in the session (94 persons) rated it as excellent or good. This was also the most attended event out of those in question.

The **key-note lecture by Olivette Otele 'Memory of Colonial Enslavement: Convergent Activism in 21st Century Britain' was rated equally well** (c. 86% respondents rated it as excellent or good), however the event was attended by slightly less respondents (79). The third most popular event was a **talk with Anne Applebaum and Agnieszka Holland 'Remembering Dark Times'** – c. 85% of those who took part in the session (80 persons) rated it as excellent or good.

Please rate each of the following events



When asked about **the most and least valued aspects of the conference** the respondents provided a wide range of responses, that can be grouped into the following categories. What is interesting **some of the aspects that were highly appreciated by many respondents can also be viewed as problematic by others.**

Most valued aspects	Least valued aspects
<p>DIVERSE AND QUALITY CONTENT; ANIMATED DISCUSSIONS</p>	<p>ABUNDANCE OF EVENTS; UNEVEN QUALITY OF SESSIONS AND LACK OF COHERENCE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a great range of different activities and panels which had been really well put together. The plenaries and sub-plenaries were fascinating and there were lots of really interesting cultural events too. A lot of time and effort had been put in to creating a rich and varied programme. • Diverse topics and lively discussion. • The variety of issues discussed, the possibility of listening some presentations in Spanish, the horizontality between speakers and between speakers and public. • The website was excellent. I also appreciated the high quality of keynote addresses and plenaries. Most of the panel papers/discussions I attended were also of good quality. I was also very pleased with the strong emphasis on Eastern Europe. My area of study is Ukraine and I was able to see many presentations of relevance. I hope that the MSA continues to feature work on Eastern Europe. • Great plenary sessions, high standards of the panels. • I enjoyed the short paper formats for the parallel sessions (something that MSA has done for a while) - it encourages more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think there were lots of sessions, which made it difficult to choose. I also think that 5 days was too long, and maybe that increased the Zoom fatigue, so in the last day, there were significantly less people attending to panels and to the sessions in general. • There was too much going on at the same time, so I felt like I was always missing a lot. But I realize that there's only so much that can be done about that. • There were far too many panels and activities / there was guidance missing that would have helped to choose. In the end a lot of panels I visited had less than or around 10 persons in the audience which is not much and discussion was often a bit slow because of missing reactions from audience. • Way too many parallel sessions, the program was way too packed and to me, it was not encouraging at all to see only very few people attending the panels (especially more than 20 parallel sessions!!). I would have preferred fewer sessions, to hear more people. • Unfortunately, there were some panels with no audience. It's really sad when the panelists have to speak to each other only.

discussion and a focus on shared concerns. I think most of us would rather be in person; however, the technological side of things was done very well and there was loads of support.

- The **diversity of perspectives** and speakers.
- I really appreciate the good mix of cultural events, lectures and plenary sessions, the great organization, the easy and fast communication and the variety of content of the lectures and plenary sessions.
- The **content and composition of the panels was fantastic**. I also appreciated the diversity of format, and the inclusion of discussions like "doing Memory Studies differently - a panel with women" and "Bridging memory studies across languages". I hope discussions continue in parallel to more classic formats.
- The global reach of the participants and conference content; the collaborative work of panels and roundtables and the **convergence of many good minds sharing and presenting knowledge** together. The cross-disciplinary character of memory studies. The generous and open approach of those in MSA leadership and conference coordination. There is a completely different vibe from the MLA convention--competitive, insular, unfriendly, and enormous in general--one gets lost. The open and inquiring tone, the inclusion of the MSA should be nourished. It is rare in an academic environment and it is such a relief.

- For an online model I think it was **too dense and overpacked**. Also I received too many emails before the events. that said, I think it was nevertheless great conference and am grateful for the technical and the organizing team who did a wonderful work.
- A lot of panels happened simultaneously - I felt **overwhelmed** and did not know what to choose.
- It's so big that, especially online, it was **hard to navigate**.
- It's good that the conference was so extensive - however, such a great number of panels made it **difficult to familiarize yourself with the whole offer** and choose what is really the most valuable.
- In my opinion there were **too many parallel sessions** which resulted sometimes in 4-7 participants. knowing how much people prepared for their panel, it felt sad and unjust.
- **Lack of coherence between the title of the session and the talks**, because the talks were not about what was promised in the title, e.g. the session about methodological problems was not about methodological problems; in one session so many different topics and methodologies were combined that the whole session was incoherent; I had the feeling that there was chaos in the thematic planning of the papers. Unfortunately, there were a lot of papers of low quality.
- Sub-plenary discussions were **often overdiscussed and boring**; speakers spoke in an unclear or even gibberish manner. For

- I appreciate the **range of topics** dealt with in the given time frame. The interactions were helpful.
- The preliminary program I took was my favourite – wonderful to work with a small, thoughtful group! It was such a positive experience that I became excited for the conference to begin. The book award session was informative, engaging, and inspiring with a worthy recipient and excellent commentary. Please continue this award! The cultural programs (especially Applebaum/Holland) were also enriching.
- The **opportunity to present, and to do so in a panel that developed helpful questions and food for thought**. Important that a 'paper' could be presented and not just five minutes of thoughts or descriptions of research.
- The shorter presentations allowed for fascinating discussions.
- The opportunity to **get acquainted with the latest research** from around the world, meet people dealing with the issues of memory.
- Variety of events even in digital space.
- The variety in the programme, though the online experience reduces engagement quite a bit, of course. But the **technical infrastructure and support** was by and large good. And this **community is just so supportive and engaging**, it's great.
- Combination of science and arts/museums presentations.

example, some presenters had nothing to present, they were talking about research they were going to do; some were at a very basic, student level of knowledge about conducting research, it was embarrassing to listen to them.

- Some **papers were poor**, stricter selection would be ideal.
- Online sessions. because the way **people can dominate or get dominated within online meetings/sessions** more than other. And parallel communication: chat and presentation: disturbing for presenters and those that want to listen.
- Some of the **discussants failed to comment adequately on all presentations**, which I felt sometimes led the discussion in specific directions which were not inclusive of all speakers. That probably had an impact on the type of questions raised by the audience, too, rendering the whole experience quite disappointing.
- The **quality of chairing and the overall design of the panel** I presented at. The very decision to create a panel with 6 10-minute (sic!) presentations was risky from the start. Such scope is too broad and lumping art-related presentations into one panel makes no sense. More careful programming should have been done to extract more detailed common threads running across a diverse array of presentations. So, unsurprisingly the panel was really chaotic. The chair did little to make the participants at ease and make sure that everybody was included equally. She made no effort

- *The extreme **kindness and openness between colleagues**, the calm and quality of the discussions.*
- *Sub-Planery session on "Doing Memory Studies Different" was just awesome!!!! We need more discussions on equity and inclusion in the profession, for instance when it comes to the conference format itself. Having conferences online or hybrid in the future would be an important step towards equity and inclusion and many other aspects raised during the panel "Doing Memory Studies Differently", in my opinion. For organization with such an international profile, online or hybrid is a must, in my opinion.*
- *The friendly atmosphere, great panels, wonderful speakers.*

to engage more deeply with all the presentations and extract common threads and initiate a deeper and more inclusive discussion. (...) The experience of the panel was altogether excruciating for me, even more so when the chair made the executive decision to extend the panel beyond its normal length (when again only some presentations were prioritised). I am an early-career migrant scholar in precarious financial situation and yet I paid the registration fee of EUR 70, which is a lot for me. The poor quality of chairing, this was a waste of time and money. Furthermore, one more thing that struck me was the lack of sensitivity on the part of the chair on the issues surrounding agency with respect to decolonial research that popped out in two of the presentations. I found it problematic that a white researcher conducts a visual analysis of black visual culture while not drawing attention to any decolonial framework (and instead unproblematically deploys a Greek-derived concept) and not problematizing their own positionality. The same problem was present in a presentation on Indian Caribbean identity in Trinidad. How about etic vs emic research? How about truly critical decolonial research? These questions should have been asked during the panel but I felt it was not my place to ask them. I would like to request that my presentation be removed from the online recording of the panel.

ON-LINE CHARACTER OF THE EVENT AND ACCESS TO RECORDED SESSIONS

- *I thought the moderators of panels and workshops did an **incredible job of reaching "out" to audience members for questions and comments.** In a virtual environment that was not an easy task and it was done with equanimity and great sensitivity to a whole world being on the other side of a screen.*
- *I liked the fact that it was possible to participate online. It **gave a lot of flexibility** for a working parent, like me. I also liked being able to stay in my own environment while presenting. Plus, participating via chat is just less stressful and seems to allow more reserved attendees to contribute to the discussion, which ultimately feels as if **more diverse voices are heard.** And of course, it is always good not having to deal with long expensive and exhausting travels, and sometimes even jet lag. It also allowed me to participate in more events. Due to money and time limitations I can usually not "afford" more than two nights at a conference. This year, I felt I could attend the first event on the program until the last one. **Big thanks to "team Warsaw" for organizing this so well!!!***
- *The fact that the conference was online, made it **accessible to many people** who would otherwise not be able to join due to cost*

ON-LINE EVENT FATIGUE AND TIME ZONE DIFFERENCES

- *Even though I appreciated the online, it was also **really tiring and I suffered Zoom fatigue** by the end of the week.*
- *It is just so hard still being online - the organisers did a brilliant job despite this, but it is hard not to feel slightly **alienated from the format!** Looking forward to the next real life MSA!*
- *The online format was very tiring. I also more than once wanted to attend more than one panel in parallel sessions - maybe there were a bit too many sessions...*
- *The **time zone was difficult** from California to Warsaw, but that was true for many global participants.*
- *Timing - this was very challenging since I am based in North America and attempted to attend live events on European time -- not a lot that you can do about this, I daresay...*
- *I know (hope) that the virtual format was not by choice and I think you did a great job. But somewhat more attention to time differences across continents would have been great. I know of colleagues on the East coast of the US cancelled because they would have had to present at 3a.m. their time. My panel was at 6a.m., which was just doable but not great. Other than that, thank you for pulling off this large event with apparently little problems. Congratulations!*

of travel, but also disabilities or care responsibilities etc. And the technology was excellent and made it very smooth.

- *I valued the diversity of panels, papers and presenters, as well as the possibilities of knowing more about the working groups and regional groups. I also value the **possibility of seeing sessions after they took place**, as living in Australia made it difficult to attend to some panels I was interested in, due to the time difference.*
- *I attended some great parallel sessions and key note. I look forward to listening to a few of the sessions I could not attend.*
- *On-line character that was **excellently organized** and allow me to take part in everything I was interested in.*
- *The structure of the online format was excellent, if needed to be adopted in the future.*
- *Availability of session recordings is a great feature of this edition of MSA conference.*
- *Online sessions gave **new opportunities** (e.g. quick sharing references), it would be great to keep this format (at least partially) in the future MSA conferences!*
- ***Flexibility** of attendance, Recordings to watch later*
- *Having access to recorded events is highly valuable for me, due to my location I couldn't watch them live.*

- Possibility of **virtual participation**. It will be great to keep it mix next edition due to covid restrictions.
- I liked that it was online!!!! So much less stressful and so much less expensive than having to travel and pay for a hotel.
- The possibility of online participation made that there were people from all over the world attending, including those with little time or funding possibilities. Especially if the conference is going to be in Asia next year (YES!!!!), then this might turn out to be important.

EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION

- **Excellent organization**, terrific pre and during conference communication, wonderfully efficient staff/organizing team. Hats off to all of you!!!!
- I really appreciate the way MSA managed such a massive event in a **perfect way**. All the panels and sessions were well organised.
- Dryfta worked very well, it was all very well organized, **quick feedback and responses**. Excellent organization of the online conference
- The very good technical organization and the participation on-line!

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

- There were **no breaks in the program**. Whether online or in person, people need to be able to take breaks without missing a panel, not only for personal well-being but also to be able to be active and involved in the discussions.
- I was missing breaks in the programme. There were very few (if none) scheduled breaks, which meant that in order to take own, you had to miss a panel.
- The **conference website was not very intuitive** and a bit complicated at the beginning, but after a process of getting used to it, it went better.
- The **technical aspects** of logging into the plenaries: logging in, seeing others log in, but then missing the opening of the program because of the need to refresh the screen (or something) and not knowing that that was an issue.

NETWORKING

- *Connecting with other scholars, it was good to see colleagues.*
- *Networking – the **networking features of the website** were amazing although perhaps didn't attract so many participants.*
- *Digital possibilities - it was so great to be able to "meet" and share this way...*
- *Excellent **community building** and field building opportunities.*

FEWER NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES AND LACK OF REAL-LIFE MEETINGS

- *Due to the online format, it was really hard to network, esp. for me as an early-career scholar.*
- *Fewer networking possibilities due to the online format. I did not feel that this conference was welcoming to students. It was hard to meet other students and discuss work.*
- *I really **missed the possibilities for networking**, at least for me it is hard to do that virtually. In addition, I am in Australia so I was not able to attend most of the activities live so that hinders my opportunities for interaction.*
- *I was **not aware that the conference offered opportunities for connection**. I learned about it only later, when talking to colleagues from one working group. I would appreciate if, on the first day of the conference, all panel moderators reminded participants about the opportunities for networking, and perhaps the organizing team could post on the conference website an instructional video on how to connect through the virtual platform. That being said, I commend organizers for their extensive work. I'm sure that organizing a fully online conference must have been more demanding than a face-to-face one.*
- *The impossibility of being physically in Warsaw, of really meeting people, the **lack of accidental encounters and chats** in unofficial*

places etc.... something that obviously didn't depend on the organization... I am convinced that especially speaking about memory and sharing experience related to memory, the body language is a pivotal medium of communication...

- Apart from not being able to attend in person, and therefore the **lost opportunities for networking and conversation**, I did not sense the overall theme of convergence. But perhaps I have not yet engaged with enough of the manifold offerings.
- At the same time, I **missed the chats with people between sessions** and going out for meals etc. Although I appreciated that there was a chat function and a "match-making" facility, I didn't make use of it (and nobody contacted me either) as I needed breaks away from the screen.
- I really **missed the in-person networking and socializing** - it's just difficult to recreate that kind of energy and serendipity in the digital sphere.
- More mingling opportunities where one can **talk "informally"** with colleagues.
- I think it would be great to have a "**online mingle**" gathering where people can connect and chat. I thought the WG/RG Roundtable did provide that to a certain degree. More of such events would be great. For instance, I have attended them at other conferences where the platform "Wonder Me" was used for this purpose.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The organisers obviously put a lot of thought in the website as a compensatory space for the lack of exchange in person. But some features, such as the chat/mailbox were not performing well (at least not in the Chrome browser).</i>
<p>INTERESTING LOCAL CULTURAL PROGRAMME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Getting as sense of the place where the conference is taking place; this was difficult in an online environment, but it worked! I really appreciated the museum and city tours, and the theatre performance-discussion.</i> • <i>I think the local focus on Warsaw history, even virtually was really good. I think conferences should value the history and context of the hosting location.</i> • <i>Focus on the local venue and the relevant memory issues (museum tour, walking tours, Polish scholars and topics).</i> 	

The organizers asked also about the **topics missing from the conference programme**. While the majority of respondents **appreciated the already diverse offerings**, some respondents provided valuable feedback:

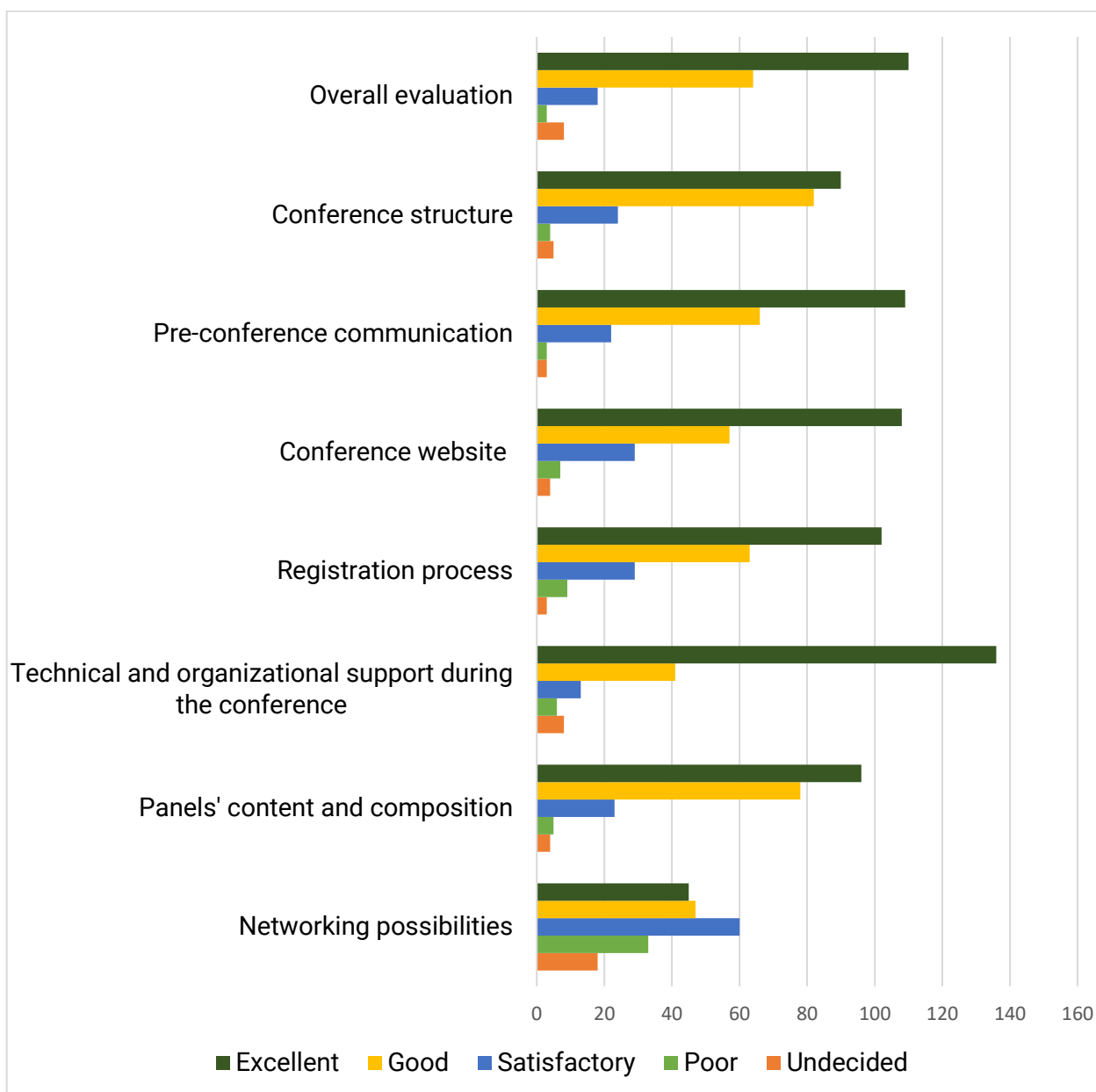
- Truly **methodological problems** in memory studies and quantitative analysis in memory studies.
- **Art and art history**
- Lack of in-depth engagement with **visual arts/contemporary arts/media studies** methodologies insofar as they tackle memory.
- Great if there could be more focus on **feminist approaches**, including intersectional, affect, queer approaches etc. They are amongst others a good combination with the postcolonial and decolonial approaches which this time received deservedly more attention (and I hope this continues).
- I think the one panel on women doing memory studies was a phenomenal success. I would have liked to see more such workshops, **more women focused events**, looking at the particular challenges women have in publishing, contributing, and balancing lives with work – in addition to the novel ways women can contribute/how they “see” things.
- **Queer/LGBTQ memories.**
- How to **de-center the Eurocentric format**. The discussion of future events is quite uncomfortable for me because I don't think I have been addressed.
- More presentations on **communities of colour**, especially North & South America
- I hope there will be more panels/workshops on **the Global South**. Memory studies as a research field has been heavily Europe-centric.
- There was an **under-representation of the Global South** and its concerns in contrast to those of Europe; this can be understood in the context of the host country.
- More space should be given to **war and culture studies**.
- I think **education** and the role of young generations in mnemonic practices.
- **Open educational resources** in memory studies. That would help people like me to learn more about it and share it with learners across the globe.
- I would like to see **more transregional work**. Most panels focused on specific regions.
- Interdisciplinary approaches at the edge with natural sciences.
- Memory and **biopolitics**.
- Sometimes I miss the **political and social contextualization** of memory.
- More creativity perhaps, more focus on **digital technologies**. The programme didn't seem to have changed much over the years in terms of topics.

- Some more topics on **Digital Humanities** in connection with Memory Studies would have been welcome.
- Probably a specific focus on **communities and memory** (although there were several aspects of this question considered in a different panels/conferences).
- Would like to have heard **more psychology**; the Time and Memory panel brought in memory from cognitive psychology via a historian's use of it but was otherwise less visible.
- **Pilgrimage** and memory.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

It turns out that the respondents **highly appreciated the organizational aspects of the conference** with the majority of them rating all of them either excellent or good. The only aspect rated significantly **lower than the others were the networking possibilities** with almost 30% of the respondents (60 respondents) rating it as satisfactory.

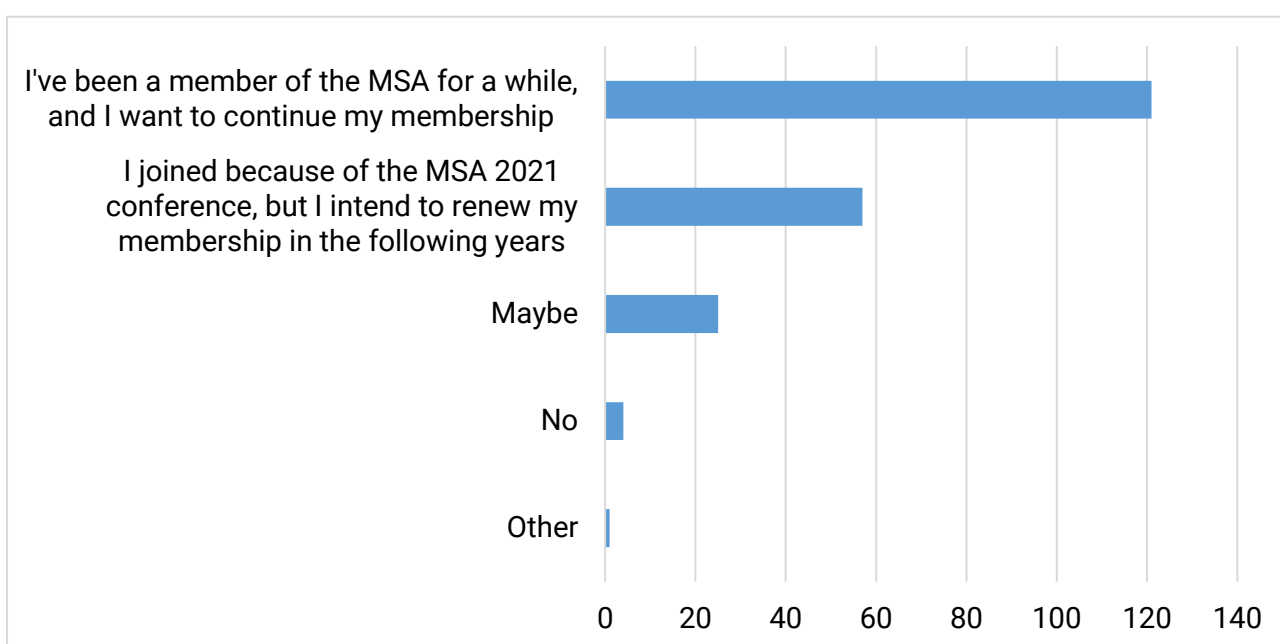
Please rate each of the following aspects related to the conference:



THE MSA ACTIVITIES IN THE FUTURE

Over 85% of those surveyed intend to engage in the MSA activities in the future. 121 respondents (c. 58%) indicated that they've been a member of the MSA for a while, and they want to continue their membership, while 57 respondents (c. 27.4%) noted that they joined because of the MSA 2021 conference, but intend to renew their membership in the following years. 24 respondents (c. 11.5%) would consider their membership in the future, while only 4 (c. 0.2%) have no intention of renewing it.

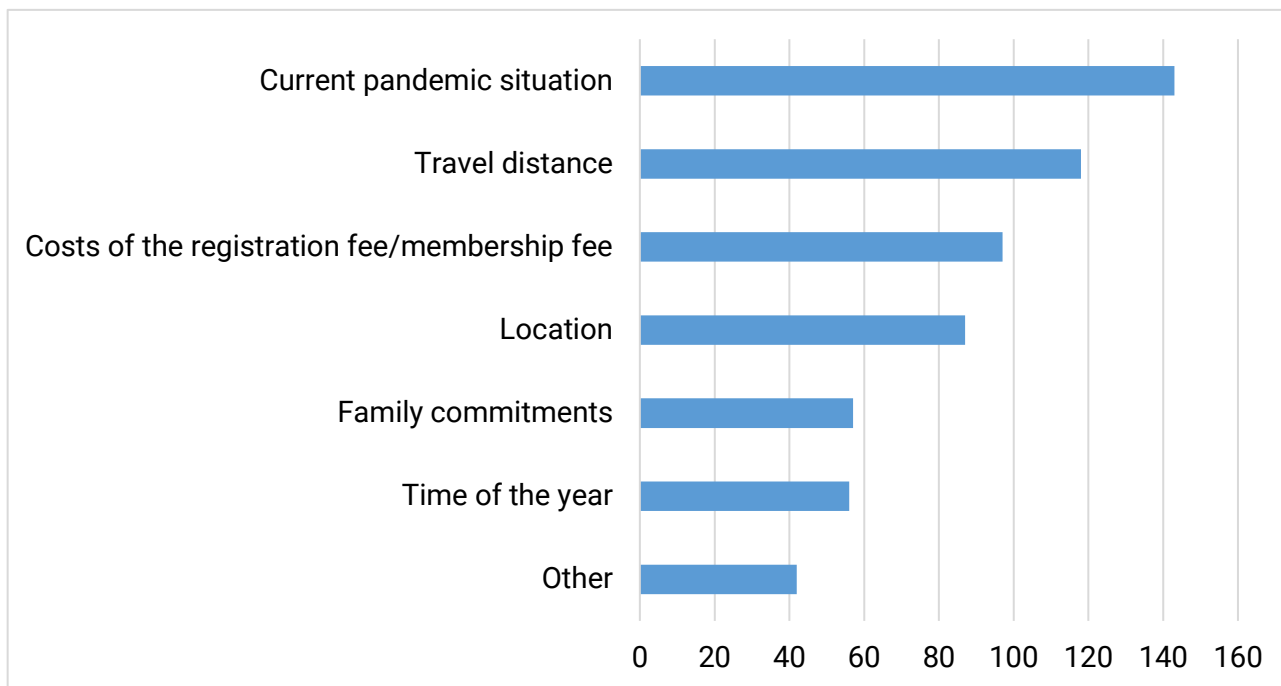
Are you planning to engage in the MSA activities in the future?



When asked about the factors determining the decision about attending the future MSA conferences, the majority of those who responded indicated multiple answers with the **current pandemic situation** (143 persons, c. 70.1%) and the **travel distance** (118 persons, c. 57.8%) marked most often.

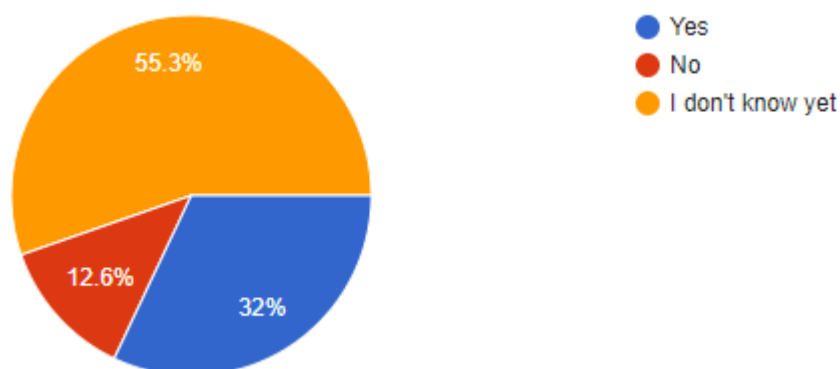
The respondents mentioned also other factors, including the **travel & accommodation costs**, availability of **online/hybrid format** (*the guarantee that online attendance will provide rich and sustaining engagement in panels, key notes, events, etc.*), availability of **institutional funding**, other **academic commitments**, current **research interests** matching the conference theme, **environmental issues** and **health conditions**.

What would determine your decision about attending the future conferences? (multiple answer)



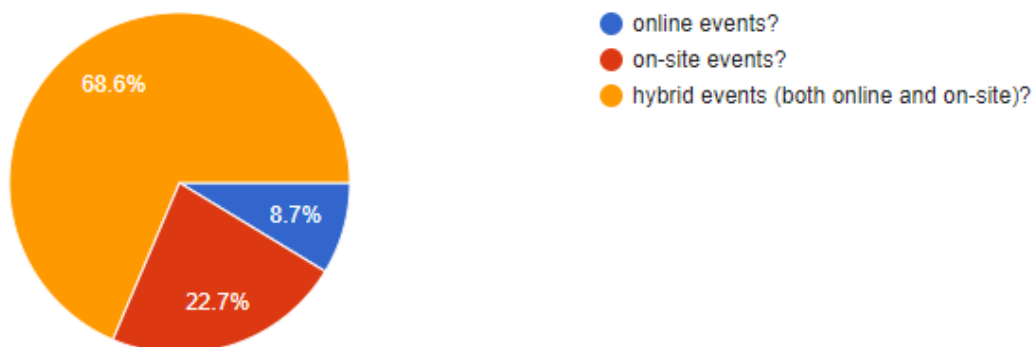
More than a half of respondents (144 persons, c. 55.3%) **remain undecided when asked about their plans towards the next MSA conference in Seoul.** 66 respondents (c. 32%) confirmed their willingness to join the event in Korea, while 26 respondents (c. 12.6%) claimed that they would not take part in it.

Do you plan to attend the next MSA conference in Seoul, Korea (3-8 July 2022; Solidarity)



Almost 70% of those who were surveyed (142 persons) would prefer the MSA conferences to be organized in a hybrid version (both online and on-site). 47 respondents (c. 22.7%) indicated their preference for on-site events and only 18 respondents (c. 8.7%) would choose a fully online event.

Would you prefer the MSA to organize its future conference as...



Global virtual conferences require the difficult choices from their organizers. In view of the many time zones, the organizers decided to ask the respondents about the main criteria for planning the conference panels. **Almost 80% of respondents (157 persons) indicated that the panels should be organized thematically** (which might require from some participants to sacrifice their sleep), rather than be adjusted to the time zones most suitable for participants (45 persons; c. 22.3%).

Global virtual conferences require the difficult choices from their organizers. In view of the many time zones, do you think the papers should rather be organized in panels by:



When asked about the key-note speaker whom the respondents would like to see at the future MSA conferences, the most often provided names included: **Ann Rigney, Astrid Erll, Aleida Asmann, Jeffrey Olick, Marianne Hirsch, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jay Winter**. More general suggestions included: **interdisciplinary speakers** (even from as far as psychology, biology); **artists**;

writers and directors; activists; climate change experts; Nobel Prize winners; scholars representing new directions in Memory studies research; women and members of under-represented groups; scholars with interest in museums and memory; scientists or even writers from India or Africa. Next to the abovementioned names, the respondents listed also Sarah Ahmed, Jeffrey Alexander, Jan Assmann, Ruha Benjamin, Michael Berry, Rosi Braidotti, Cathy Carruth, Alin Coman, Alan Confino, Stef Craps, Lea David, Irit Dekel, George Didi Humerman, Ewa Domańska, Erica Doss, Daniele Hervieu-Leger, Robert Eaglestone, Silvia Federici, Sarah Gensburger, Catherine Gilbert, Paul Gilroy, Carol Gluck, Avery Gordon, Irena Grudzińska-Gross, Hans-Henning Hahn, Anna Hajková, Saidiya Hartman, William Hirst, Eva Hoffman, Andrew Hoskins, Emma Hutchison, Patrick Hutton, Andreas Huyssen, Elizabeth Jelin, Bogumil Jewsiewicki, Ananya Kabir, Wulf Kansteiner, Siobhan Kattago, Emily Keightley, Padraic Kenney, Yukiko Koga, Jan Kubik, Heonik Kwon, Marie-Claire Lavabre, Per Leo, Jie-Hyun Lim, Elizabeth Lira, Achille Mbembe, Sharon McDonald, Katherine McGregor, Eric Mension-Rigau, Kyoko Murakami, Jean-Luc Nancy, Olivette Otele, Jordan Petersen, Emily Pine, Valentina Pisanty, Robert Pogue Harrison, Martin Pollack, Alessandro Portelli, Paul Preciado, Anna Reading, Gillian Rose, Valérie Rosoux, Michael Rothberg, Arundhati Roy, Hans Ruin, Jörn Rüssen, Sarah Schulman, Theary Seang, Rita Segato, Christina Sharpe, Sir Simon Schama, Laurajane Smith, Timothy Snyder, Maria Stepanova, Dan Stone, Nathan Sznajder, Robert Traba, Enzo Traverso, Jose van Dijck, Ban Wang, James Wertsch, Karolina Wigura, Jeremy Yamashiro, Barbie Zelizer, Eviatar Zerubavel.

Over 80% of those who responded indicated that it is important or very **important to include regional themes and speakers in the MSA annual conferences.**

In order to program the future MSA conferences in a way that meets the participants' needs, the organizers asked what **other types of events or activities the respondents would like to see included in the subsequent editions.** The proposals of those who responded were very diverse and included suggestions applicable to both online and on-site conference formats:

<p>Exploring the history, memory and cultural offer of the host city (region)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided tours to relevant locations & museums • Sessions focusing on the host site's history, memory controversies, public initiatives, etc.
<p>Facilitating networking & dynamizing the event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More roundtable discussions / workshops • More time for debates / discussions after sessions • Special sessions devoted to informal networking • World café with project presentations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners' corner • Games (e.g. treasure hunt)
Broadening the thematic scope & ensuring accessibility and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions on working with memory studies outside of the academic / GLAM sectors • Talks with "non-academic" authors, filmmakers, artists, psychologists, etc. – those who keep memory studies grounded in "everyday life" • Workshops on memory and artistic research & practice / performance / activism • Publication of conference recordings
Enhancing cultural programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film screenings & debates with well-known writers, directors, journalists • Exhibitions / performances
Strengthening the publishing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book fairs • Conversations between book authors published on the conference year • Publication of conference paper proceedings
Increasing the sector's professionalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job market preparation • Activities directed to graduate students & young researchers (e.g. graduate student roundtables, best presentation given by graduate student, workshops) • Sessions on how to get published in the journal of Memory Studies, how to get published in the book edition of MSA, etc.

The additional **comments and suggestions on how to develop the MSA** in the following years that the respondents offered, can be divided into 4 categories: format, audience & themes, structure and communication.

Format:

- **A plenary conference every other year and the year in between, 3 or 4 (smaller) regional conferences (cheaper).**
- **Conferences every second year instead of every year, every second conference outside Europe.**

- Maybe **more local/regional events** and conferences.
- Maybe **not one big conference but two smaller ones?!**
- 1/ select thematic papers into one session; 2/less sessions ,3/ higher control of quality of presenters, 4/more time for discussions.
- It could be interesting to make **a conference or seminar in which people from the different regional or working groups present the research** they are working on or that they wish to highlight.
- **More space for networking** among people; organizing maybe some online Reading Groups? and also some **more informal meetings** (eg. online coffee breaks open for people to join and then to talk in small groups)?
- Maintain a sense of intimacy if the conference is going to continue growing to mammoth proportions. I actually had much more of **a sense of connection** for this conference online than when I went to the Madrid conference where I knew no one. I knew no one for this conference either, but the zoom calls allowed some real interaction, which seems counter-intuitive, I know...
- Offline meeting are crucial for **team building**.
- Do things **more online**, including conferences. As a global organization that is necessary in order to include all members. It is a matter of fairness (equity).
- Offering some **online courses** on research methodologies and/or theoretical approaches to memory studies.
- **Online or hybrid conferences** are a great way to move forward as a global organization.
- I would love if the MSA could **include an option to publish paper submissions on a special edition of the Memory Studies journal**. This would require setting up a conference-specific peer review process.
- Support of WG/RG **develop strong ties with journals** to have one annual issue devoted to the MSA. I think that would help with the question of languages. For instance, RG Latin America could edit such special issue annually which would publish be in Spanish.
- MSA can **bring in its own journal** and a bi-annual workshop would be interesting.
- Could a **substantial conference report/annual report** be published in Memory Studies? A record and an indication of trends in thinking/publishing? Something that brings attention to directions in the field(s).
- The **questions around language** use discussed at the business meeting are important and I'm glad to see MSA pursuing them. I'm always surprised at the number of colleagues who do

memory studies, but are not members and I think part of that is a (mis)perception that it is Europe-focused and English-focused.

Audience development & suggested themes to tackle:

- Consider **audiences beyond the scholarly community**, for example, those who are working independently but would be inspired by the research and resources shared by MSA members.
- I would like to see MSA **include more social scientists**. I feel most memory scholars are from literature, history, and cultural studies (perhaps I'm wrong). **More political scientists, international relations scholars, sociologists, and psychologists** should be engaged.
- Perhaps **include more artists, educators and heritage makers** from the working field too.
- Providing **opportunities for early career researchers**, particularly PhD candidates from many different disciplines to meet within the MSA, would be a fruitful way to develop memory studies' future.
- I would **share with art landscape** if appropriate programs and opportunities are offered.
- **Representations of all parts of the world** should be ensured.
- **More women/academics in precarity**.
- Every effort should be made to engage people from the global south.
- Adding **more opportunities specifically for graduate students and young scholars**, but I think there is already work happening towards this based on what was discussed at the AGM.
- Create **sub-groups within campuses, connect universities as well as art academies** around the world.
- Current undergraduates are the future of the field – some welcoming for them (e.g. **student session**) might encourage faculty to create class projects that would be useful for conference presentations and/or be a good outlet for thesis research. **Welcoming talented students** early may tip the balance for them to pursue memory studies over alternatives.
- It will be great to have **volunteer groups in universities and institutions around the globe**. So we will be able to **mobilize more passionate young scholars** to this wonderful stream. On my behalf I will do whatever I can to support MSA. Like sharing about MSA through my projects to schools, libraries and institutions here in India.
- The MSA has already developed fast! Maybe through **more activities** (classes, masterclasses, gatherings) **for graduated/PhD students and unemployed PhD**.
- **Encouraging local initiatives; involving students and PhD students in some activities;** perhaps developing a link with didactic experiences throughout the different countries.

- I would **target scholars from the US, Australia, NZ, Canada** working on topics not much covered by the MSA (**race, indigeneity, climate**) besides the regional foci which have been very successful so far.
- Try to involve **more interests in a global scale**.
- **Focus on memory and place; issues of contemporary concerns**, e.g. role of Franco in today's Madrid, Holocaust memory in Poland today.
- Increase the **focus on pedagogical tools/idea sharing**.
- Further integration of memory institutions. In addition to regional groups, **theme groups such as Holocaust, colonialism, long durée** and so on could be considered.
- Putting a stronger emphasis on **colonial memory**.
- I think the conference in Seoul illustrates your **commitment to expanding to areas outside Europe** and I hope to see this continued. In the coming years, I hope to see **conferences in South Africa and Canada**, along with European locales.
- **Digital memories**.
- Content wise, more projects like the one on "contested sites".

Structure:

- I am co-chair of a working group and involved in the regular RG/WG meetings and hope that in future there could be **more collaboration between the groups and the executive**.
- Remove the usual suspects from the decision making positions – it has been years now that we hear the same voices propagating a particular view and realm of memory studies that have changed a few times since their elevation to those positions.
- I think the MSA is sensitive to comments and suggestions, and I hope that will continue. **The leadership of the MSA has been strong**.
- **Establishment of a scientific institute or academy with unpaid fellowships**.
- **Offer special membership to specific large organizations** (but without giving them too much influence).

Communication:

- **Enhance online presence and social media**.
- Maybe it would be good to have a **radio station or online broadcast** as a cooperation partner.
- Get an **Instagram!**

FEE STRUCTURE

While the majority of respondents were **satisfied with the current fee structure** (appreciating the multiple levels of fees, simplicity of the system and the fee waivers), others noted that the fees were too high for an online conference and, potentially, prohibitive for staff not receiving funding from their institutions. They also disapproved of the double payment (required membership and conference registration fee).

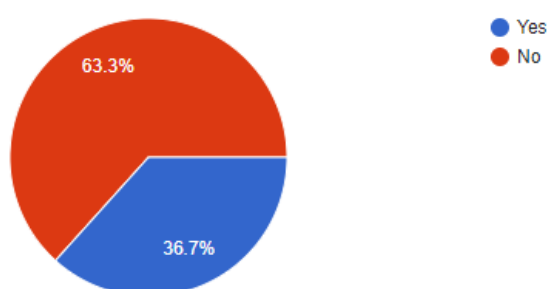
The respondents provided the following additional recommendations:

- *It's great, just make it as flexible and welcoming for the young scholars, disadvantaged scholars. Differential rates for TT faculty/faculty with research grants who can afford to pay more might also help.*
- *Work with sponsors and foundations to offset costs for participants from poorer countries.*
- *Ask for university subsidies (as for ECPR etc., a kind of institutional membership).*
- *Maintain the possibility of paying several months with some reduced fee.*
- *Fees should be lessened for regular participants/members in subsequent years.*
- *Speakers should be exempt from the conference fee.*
- *Please be mindful of the difference in \$\$ currency when determining fees. For some of us, the pound or euro or even the US \$\$ makes payment substantially more.*
- *There should be more choices for members who do not have access to funding (regardless of location or rank).*
- *They are okay and affordable for those (like myself) who have a paid job next to the PhD Thesis. And there is the opportunity to pay less if one cannot afford it: living/work situation/region...*
- *It could be relevant to explain better the fee waivers, and the scenarios in which is important to consider applying to fee waivers.*

MEMORY STUDIES JOURNAL

Of the 199 those who responded to this question, only 73 (c. 36.7%) claimed to have institutional access to the Journal Memory Studies other than through the MSA membership.

Do you have institutional access to the journal Memory Studies other than through your MSA membership?



ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK TO THE 2021 EDITION

Below please find just a selection of all the appreciative reactions and comments that the organizing team received from the respondents:

- *The conference organizers and moderators of cultural events and sub/plenary sessions did an **amazing job**, considering that everything was online. I really appreciated the museum and city tours, and the theatre performance-discussion. THANK YOU!!!*
- *The **format was excellent**. In fact in many ways this conference was stronger than many of the face to face conferences I have attended. I am relatively new to memory studies and was able to learn a great deal about the field that will aid me in my future research. Based on the quality of this conference I plan to become a member and to attend future conferences - Seoul will be difficult for me to travel to so it would be good if the conference were in a hybrid format.*
- *A big thank you for doing this **difficult but paramount work**! Keep on doing what you've been doing!*
- *It was **near to perfect**... Continue like this!*
- *It was a great event! and great challenge! Many congratulations, you did a great job!*

- *I think the more we can do to diversify participation and build membership in areas of the world that are unrepresented, the better. I thought the discussion of languages and memory studies was an important one to keep thinking about.*
- **Impressive organization**, but finally a bit disappointed to don't have the chance to exchange more with the people.
- *It was extremely well organized and the ability to access panels after they took place was also great. Interesting speakers, and lots of excellent panels.*
- *I have never been added to such a well suiting panel before - thank you!*
- *As a 'veteran' now of three conferences, I am eagerly looking forward to MSA 6 and MSA 7. Within MSA I have found an inspiring and valuable interdisciplinary home that helps me as a practitioner, writer, and researcher.*
- **An excellent online conference** - well done to all the organisers!
- *I am an educator from India and a member of Indian Network for Memory Studies,(INMS), IIT Madras. I would like to **thank the organizers of the conference for giving me a chance to attend it for free** and also given me a sponsored membership to the association. It was a great gesture. I am eagerly waiting for the next edition. Organizers were also prompt in sending the certificates to the attendees. And I am running an open education project which delivers OERs to the underprivileged learners for free. It will be great to have OERs associated with the memory studies. So that I can share it with learners here. Thank you so much! Project's mail is projectsmart.edu@gmail.com*
- *It was for sure challenging to organise it, thanks and congrats to the team who did it.*
- **Kudos to the conference organizers! You did a heroic job of coordinating this massive virtual conference.** Thank you!
- *MSA managed the **online event so hassle-free**. I want this option to be continued in coming years as it will be helpful for scholars coming from poor economic backgrounds and early career scholars.*
- *Thank you for making such a **wonderful conference** possible online!!! What an achievement! I hope I will be able to attend next year, and learn more about Korea, its culture and memory politics. Having all conferences online or hybrid in the future, would allow organizers "off the center of Europe" to reach as big of an audience as conferences hosted in Europe. This would be an important step towards making memory studies less "Europe centered" and truly including all of its (international) members. Thank you very much for considering.*
- **One of the best conferences I have ever attended**, in terms of quality content and organisation! Thanks a lot!

- *The best online conference I have attended.*
- *Presenting as part of a panel at 3:30 a.m. was tough. I was grateful for the opportunity and recognized that scheduling on a global scale with multiple time zones was challenging for the organizers, so I did not inquire about a time change. Should a virtual event occur in the future, perhaps greater clarity from the organizers on what might and might not be possible in terms of schedule adjustments would be helpful. Overall, the organizers did an excellent job and utilized a very efficient platform in Dryfta. As a first-time participant, I learned a great deal from the panels, plenaries, and all the programming. Sending my deepest appreciation to all -- am so pleased to be a member of the MSA.*
- *TERRIFIC JOB, if you have the energy and resources hope you'll organize it again in the future when hopefully we'll meet ON SITE. You deserve all congratulations in hugs in person! I have attended several major conferences this year and your **organization was really outstanding**. Enjoy a deserved break and cherish your achievements!*
- *the organisers have done a **fantastic job** considering the circumstances and opened up an important power relationship issue set up by the organisational framework that is overwhelmingly Western and since the start creates dissatisfaction among the members.*
- *The organising team did an absolutely **amazing job in difficult circumstances**. I was very impressed with how well things ran and enjoyed the conference very much. I realise there are financial implications, but in terms of accessibility (for those with disabilities and caring responsibilities, but also in terms of funding/location) and out of concern for the climate, it would be wonderful if future conferences could have a hybrid element.*
- *Continue as you are - this is a great organisation and I hope it will continue to blossom in the years to come!*
- *Based on the annual members meeting, I am hoping we can hold online forums, that are language specific (e.g. Spanish for the Latin American WG). I would also appreciate if future conferences could select a few panels (not the whole conference) and offer simultaneous translation to the most widely spoken languages among members. For instance, offer simultaneous translation for the plenaries or the keynote address.*

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