

 Kraków



# Diversity of LARP Cultures Survey

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ZADANIE PUBLICZNE WSPÓŁFINANSOWANE ZE ŚRODKÓW MIASTA KRAKOWA

CENTRUM  
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PARALLEL WORLDS  
PÁRHUZAMÓS VILÁGOK

  
LARP BULGARIA



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# Who am I?

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- ❖ Education: Political Science
- ❖ Experience: 18 years in social and political surveys
- ❖ Larper: 14 years
- ❖ LARP organizer: 12 years, producer of The Fog LARP series
- ❖ LARP community building

# Why am I here?

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We made a survey.

My objectives here are:

- to tell you about the survey;
- to show you some fancy charts;
- to sabotage the next panel.



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# THE CONTEXT

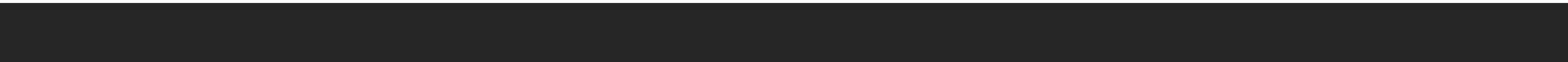
# The Survey

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- ❖ The idea: “wtf is Balkan LARP?”
- ❖ The team: Patrycja Paula Path, Marcin 'Słowik' Słowikowski (Nausika, Poland), Iliana Konakchieva (LARP Bulgaria)
- ❖ The objective: pilot study to describe the diversity of LARP cultures

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**THE TOPIC**





# Pink Boffer Sword

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- ❖ Does it have a purpose in our larps?
- ❖ Is it safe?
- ❖ Is it aesthetically pleasing?
- ❖ What kind of people would use it and do we think of them?
- ❖ Should it exist at all?

# LARP Culture

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## ❖ Culture

*the values, beliefs, behaviour and material objects that together form a way of life*

## ❖ LARP culture

*The perspective on the pink boffer sword (or the perception and interpretation of what is LARP and how it is done)*

# Diversity of groups

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Culture is a group thing.

People form groups.

Groups form group (collective) identities.

In the context of "LARP culture" we deal with group perceptions (*as in the way in which LARP things are regarded, understood, or interpreted*) and stereotypes (as in generalized beliefs about LARP things).

In the context of LARP culture we do not deal with diversity of individuals, but with diversity of groups.

# Specific topics of the survey

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- ❖ Game content – what specific activities are typical or not typical of the LARPs in different cultural contexts.
- ❖ Style of play – what is the dominant style of play in different cultures
- ❖ Group identity – what kind of groups and communities do players form
- ❖ View on others – what stereotypes do groups have on the others.

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# THE METHODOLOGY

# Survey Limitations

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- ❖ Online questionnaire
- ❖ Biased sample
- ❖ Qualitative information – use with caution

# The respondents

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- ❖ 119 total respondents.
- ❖ Irregular distribution by nationality.
- ❖ Overqualified: 74% are LARP writers/creators/producers; 27% regularly attend LARP conferences; 32 years old and have been larping for 10 years on average. \*Experts

# Grouping the respondents

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- ❖ Reminder: the survey is dealing with group perceptions and stereotypes. We will find different perceptions and stereotypes depending on what attributes have been used to define the groups.
- ❖ Grouping had to neutralize as much as possible the effect of the sample flaws.
- ❖ Grouping has to make sense in the context of the survey objectives (clear distinctions by groups, which need to be significant).
- ❖ Respondents are grouped as follows: Western (37 respondents), Eastern (41 respondents), Balkan (31 respondents).

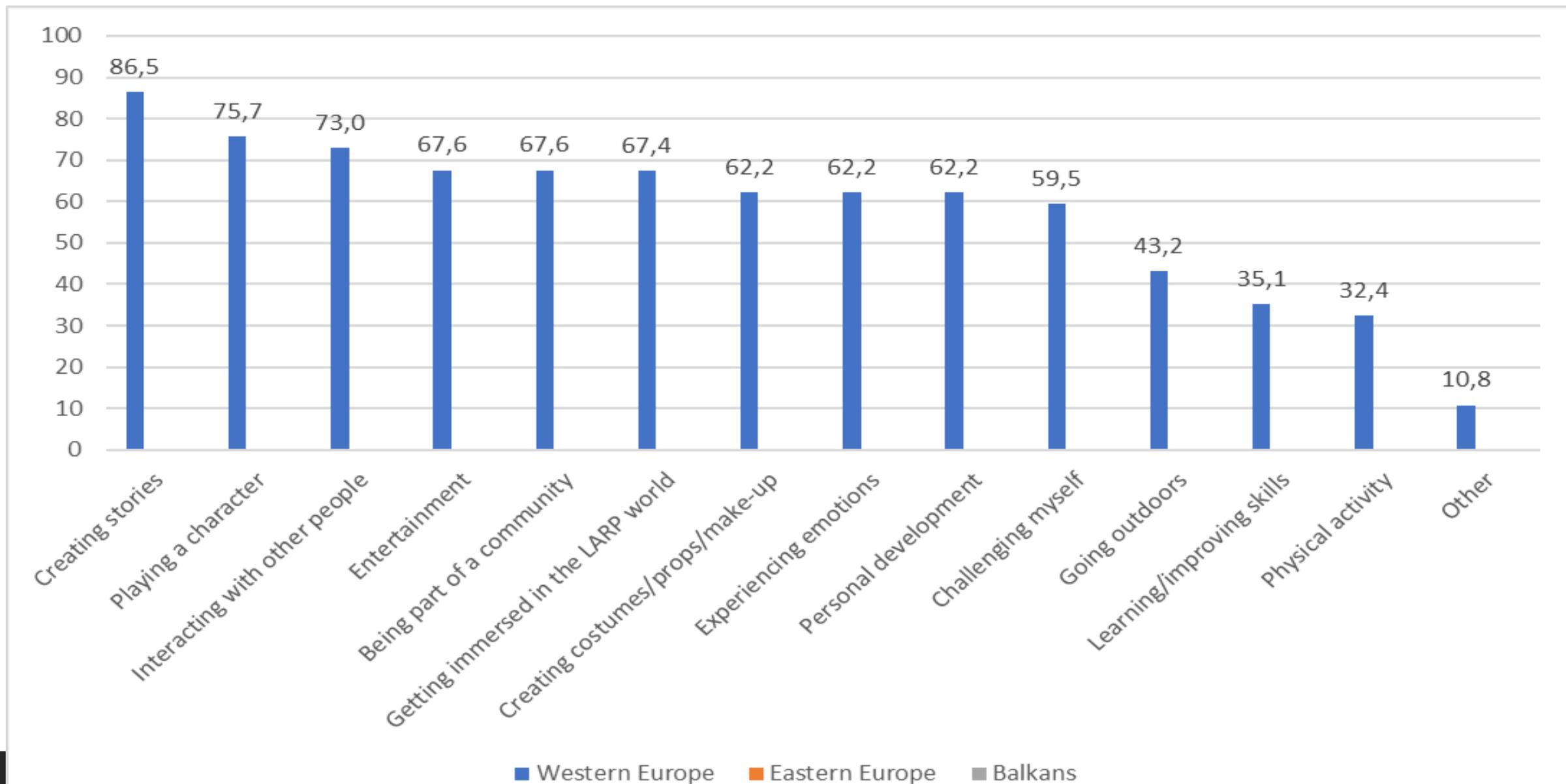
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# RESULTS

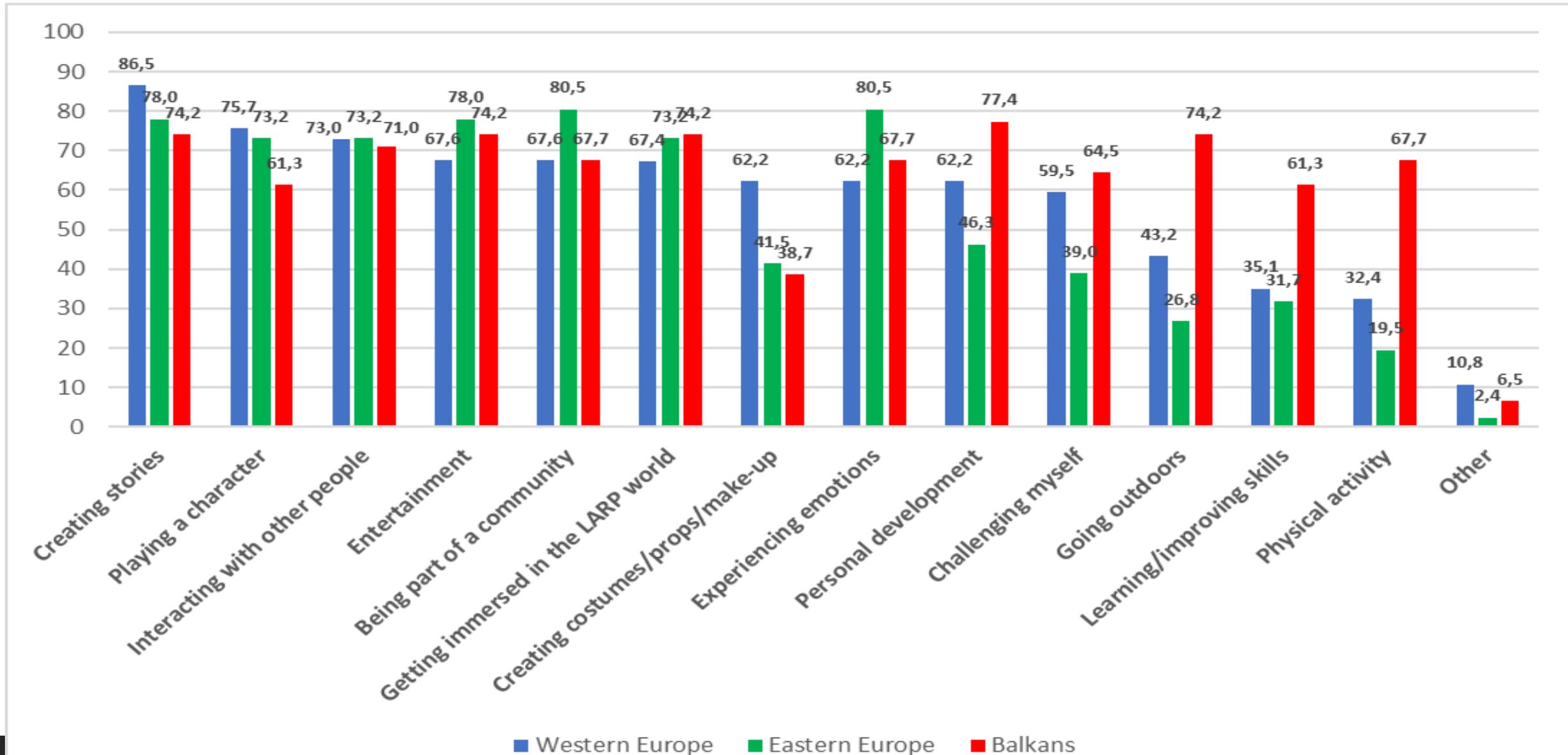
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# MOTIVATION TO PLAY

# Personal motivation to play LARP



# Personal motivation to play LARP



# TOP 3

## Western

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Creating stories

Playing a character

Interacting with o. people

## Eastern

Being part of a community

Experiencing emotions

Creating stories

Entertainment

## Balkan

Personal development

Creating stories/  
Entertainment/  
Immersion

Interacting with other people

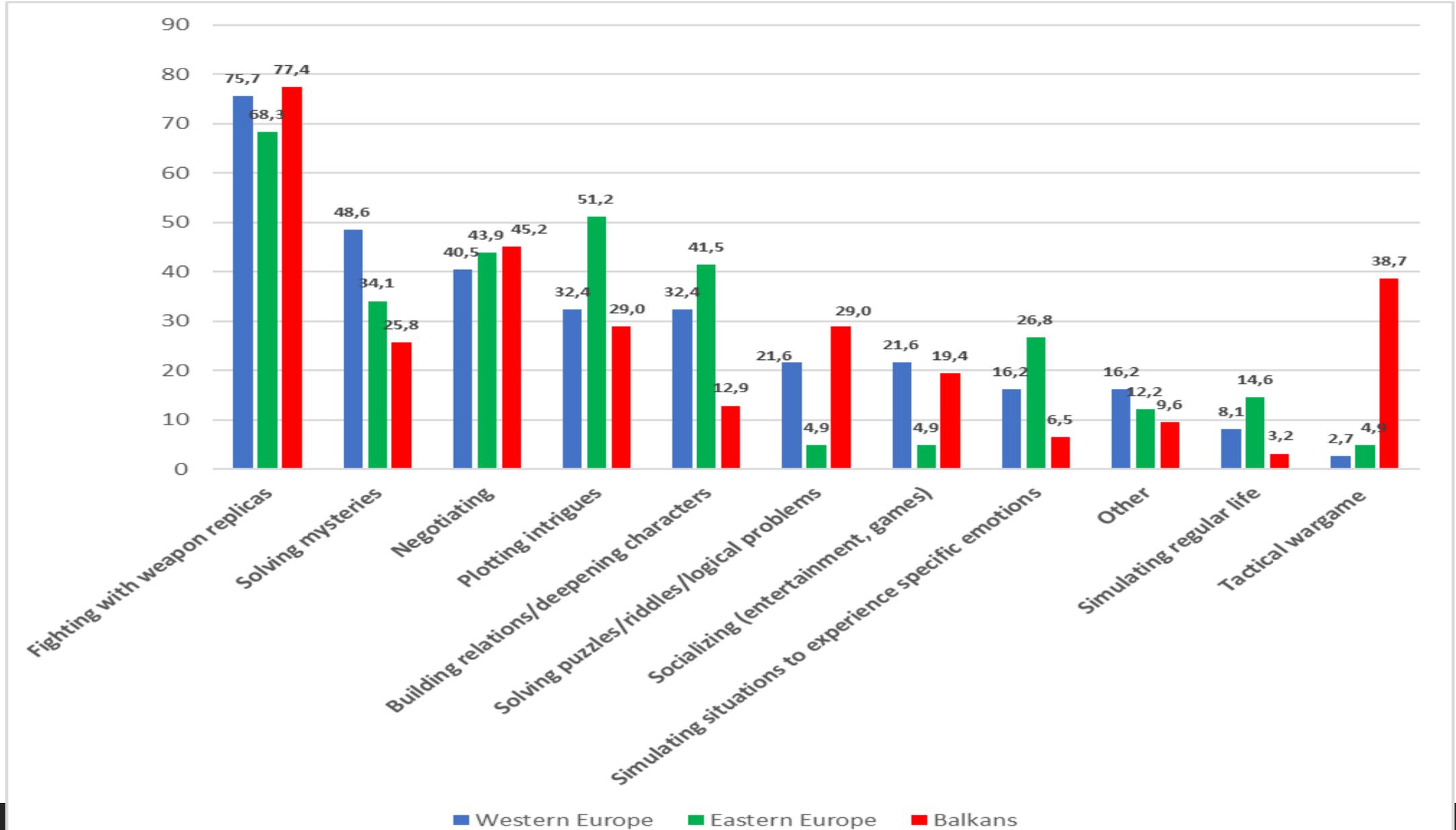
# Major differences

	Western (%)	Eastern (%)	Balkans (%)
Physical activity	32	20	68
Skills	35	38	71
Personal Development	62	46	78
Challenge	60	39	65
Outdoors	43	39	74

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# TYPICAL ACTIVITIES

# Most frequently used activities by game designers



# TOP 3

## Western

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Fighting with  
weapons

Solving  
mysteries

Negotiating

## Eastern

Fighting with  
weapons

Plotting  
intrigues

Negotiating

## Balkan

Fighting with  
weapons

Tactical  
wargame

Negotiating

# Major differences

	Western (%)	Eastern (%)	Balkans (%)
Solving mysteries	49	34	26
Plotting intrigues	32	51	29
Building relations/ deepen characters	32	42	13
Solving puzzles	22	5	29
Simulating emotions	16	27	7
Tactical wargame	3	5	39

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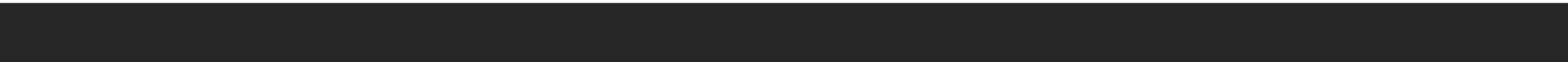
# EMOTIONS

# Most often experienced emotions at LARP

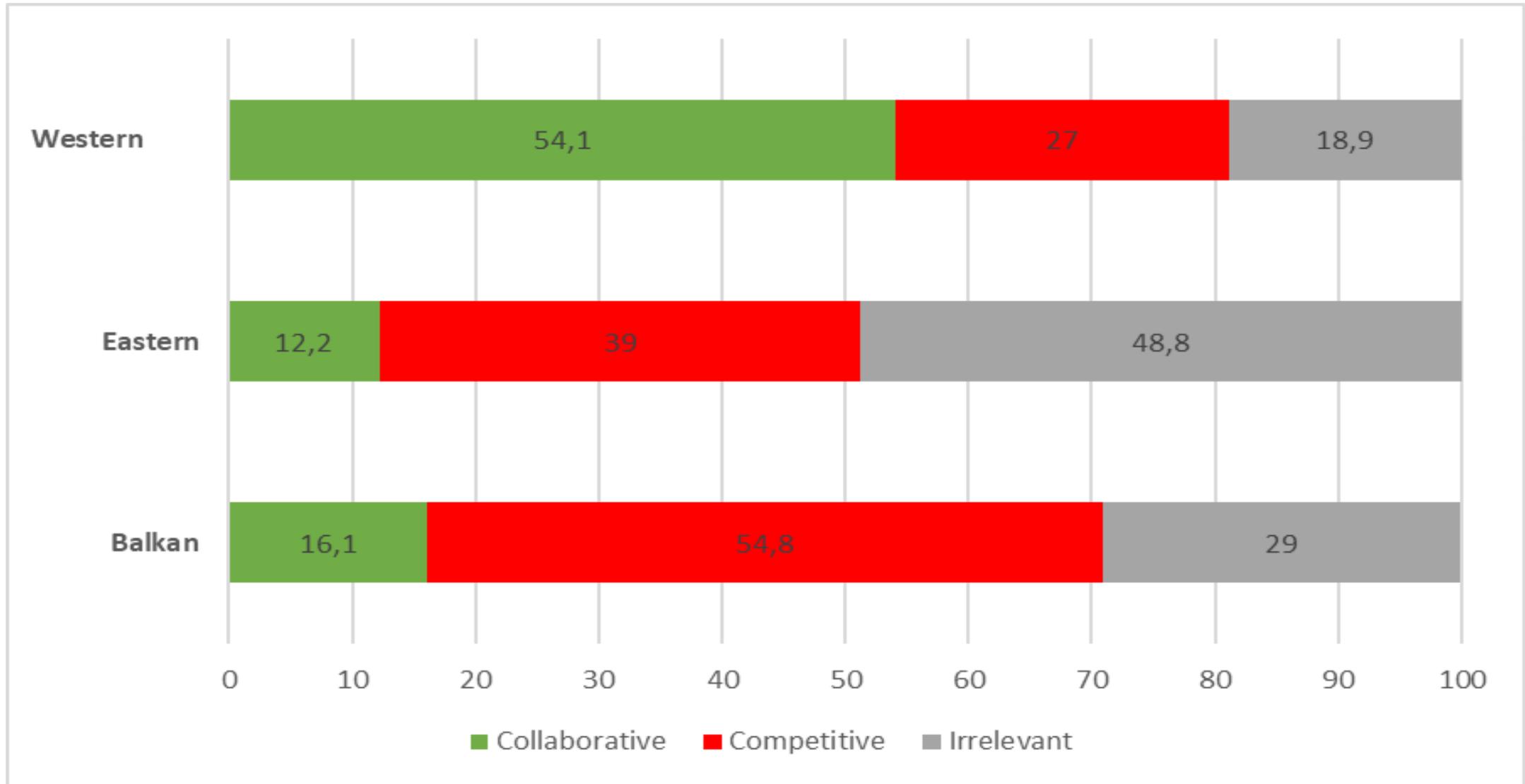
	Western (%)	Eastern (%)	Balkans (%)
<b>Excitement</b>	<b>44,4</b>	<b>61,5</b>	<b>40,0</b>
<b>Joy, happiness</b>	<b>27,8</b>	<b>15,4</b>	<b>40,0</b>
<b>Grief/sadness/sorrow</b>	<b>27,8</b>	<b>12,8</b>	<b>3,3</b>
<b>Fear</b>	<b>22,2</b>	<b>10,3</b>	<b>16,7</b>
<b>Anger/Rage</b>	<b>11,1</b>	<b>12,8</b>	<b>26,7</b>
<b>Frustration</b>	<b>11,1</b>	<b>5,1</b>	<b>10,0</b>
<b>Fun, entertainment</b>	<b>8,3</b>	<b>10,3</b>	<b>16,7</b>
<b>Curiosity/interest</b>	<b>5,6</b>	<b>5,1</b>	<b>10,0</b>

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**STYLE**



# Dominant style of play

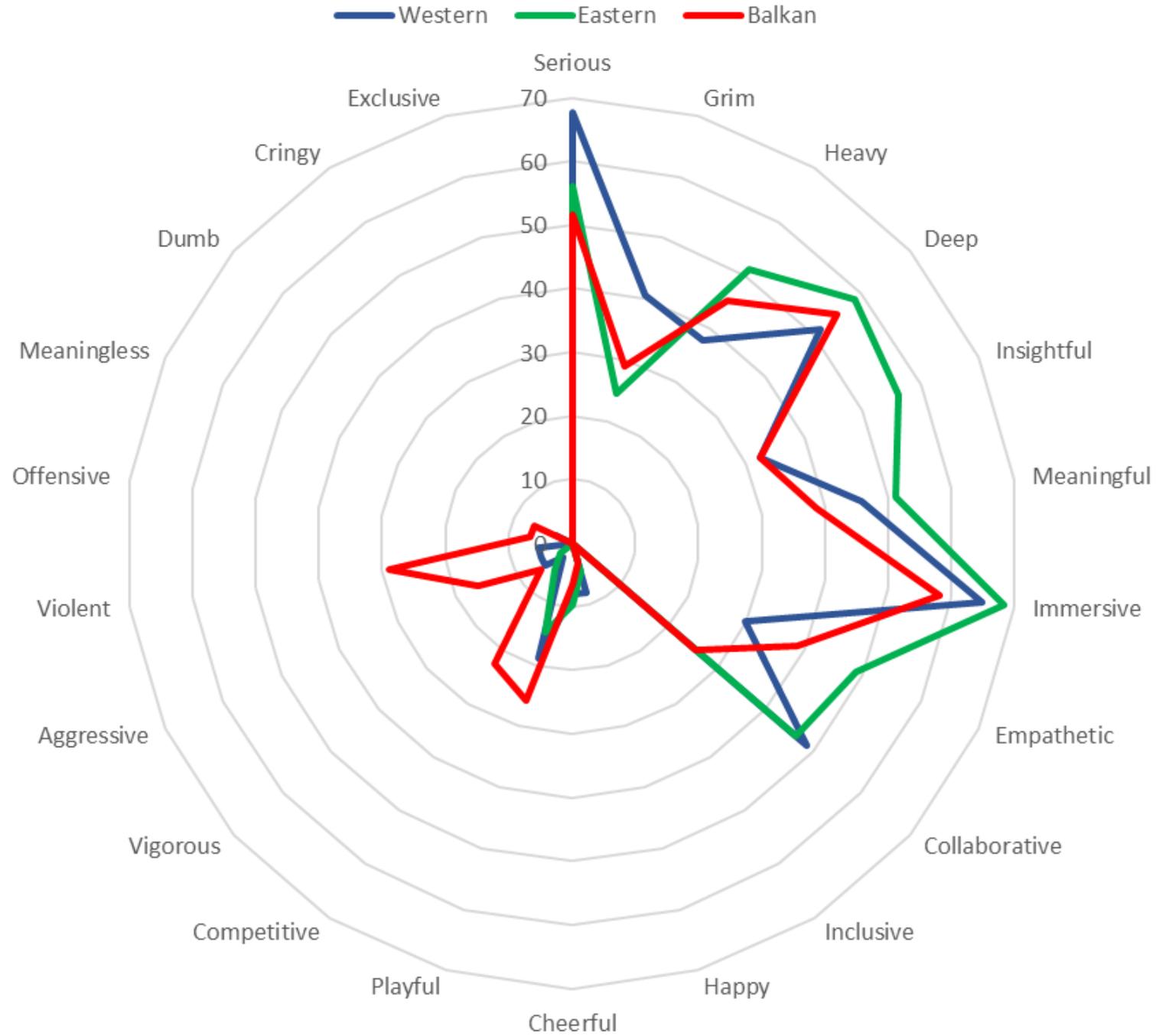


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# STEREOTYPES

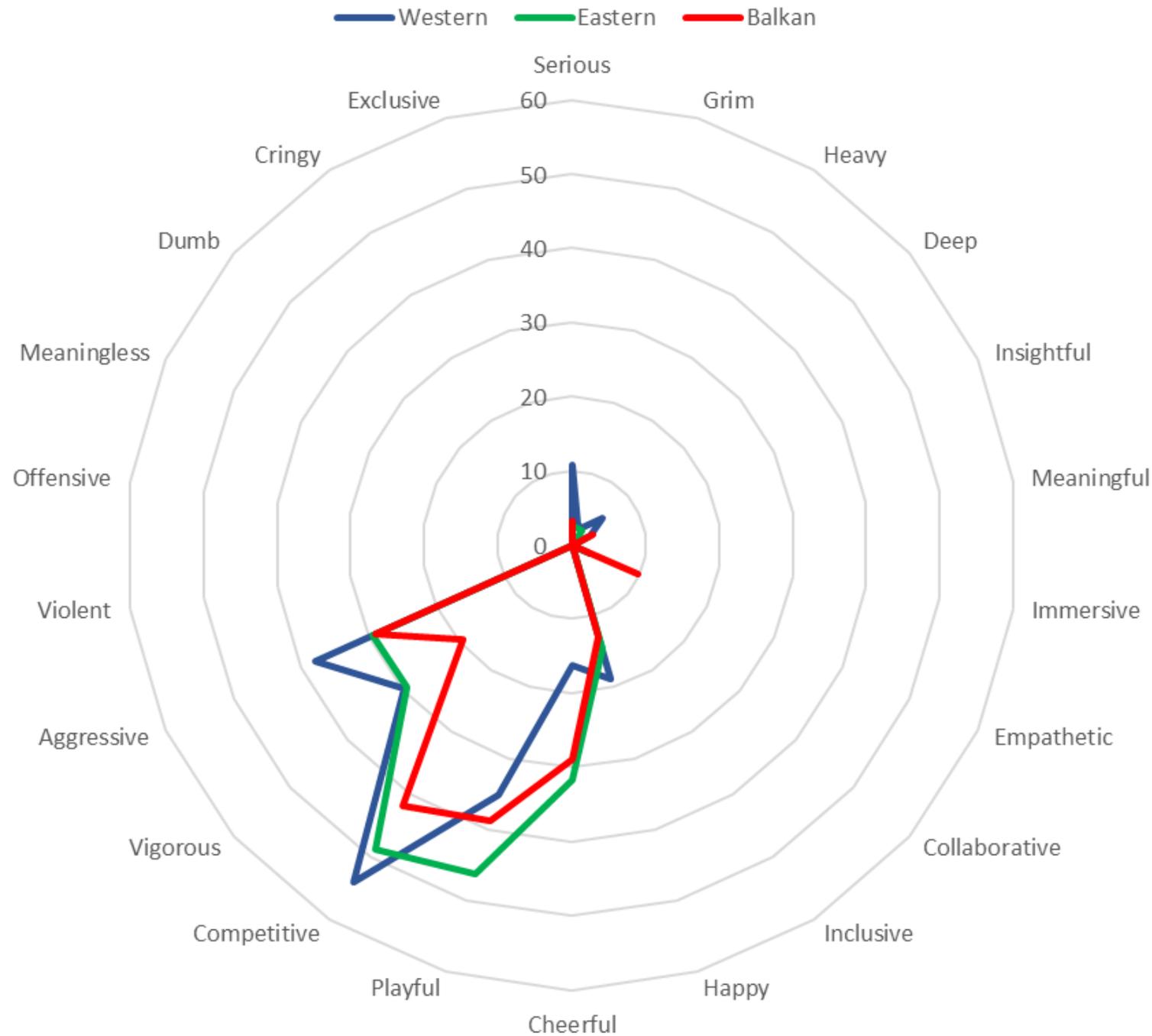
# NORDIC LARP

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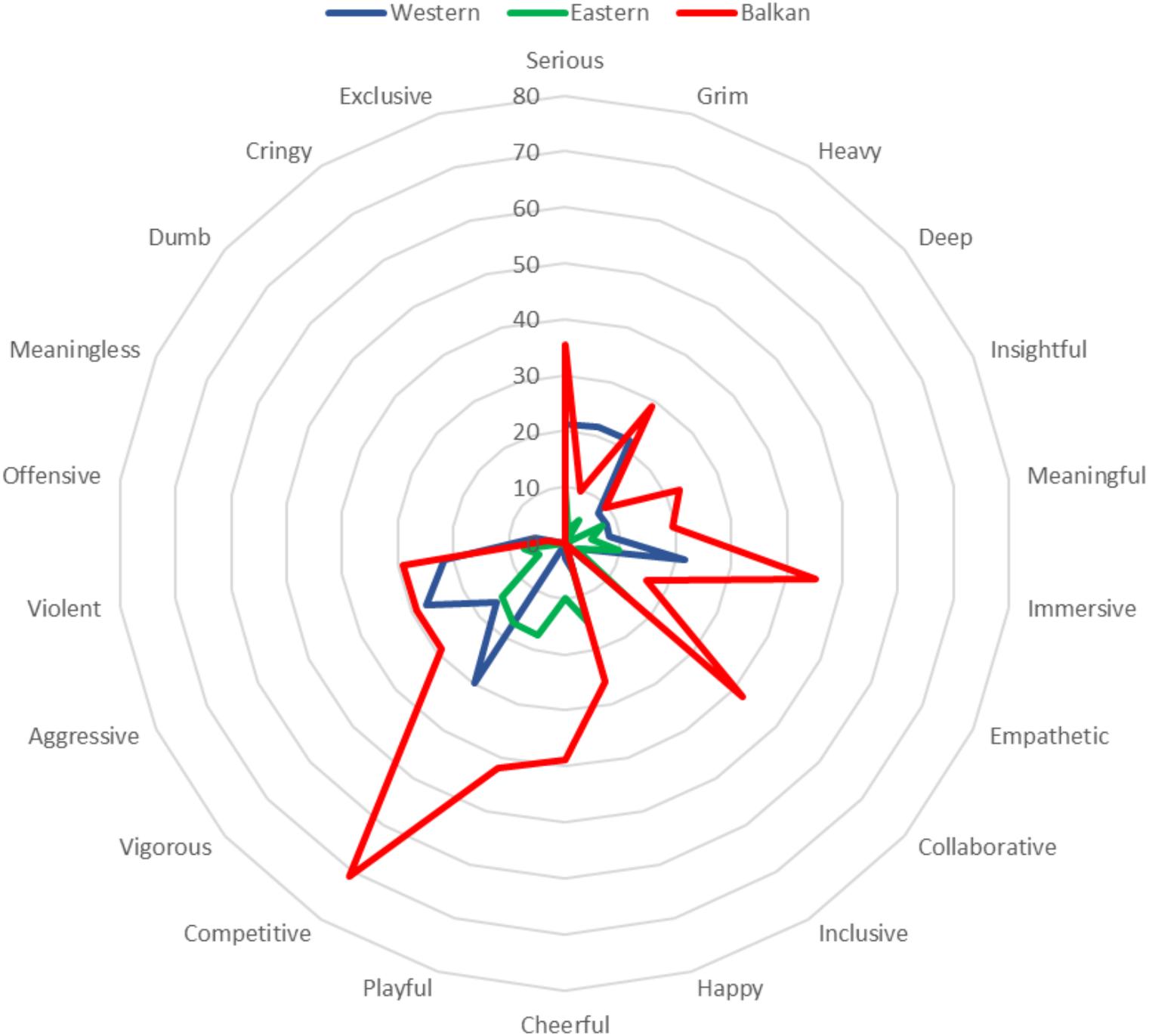


# AMERICAN LARP

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# BALKAN LARP



# Main Conclusions

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- ❖ Things in common: play to create stories, play for excitement, battle larps are the main mass thing
- ❖ Differences:
  - play to interact/play for emotion/play for ambitions
  - communities are more of a thing the more we go to the East (tribalism)
  - mysteries/plotting/wargame
  - sadness/anger
  - political views

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# BLOOPERS

# What do you think they do at a Nordic LARP?

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Crying

Suffering

ALL. THE. EMOTIONS.

Project their view on things they have no idea.

Touch

Drink (ale), fight (with axes), socialize (in a feast hall), work on quests (about nordic mythology) and maybe pretend to pillage and raid

# What do you think they do at an American LARP?

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Waving with boffers in parks

Calculate hit points and swing pillows on a stick

Throw fireballs ;)

Our stereotype mostly goes about their shit costumes and sometimes also goes that they reenact famous scenes from movies and call it larp.

Either low-kit rules-heavy games with heavier fight contact than we'd use, or non-contact rules-heavy Vampire-style games

# What do they do at a Balkan LARP?

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Beat each other

Competitive plotting

a mix of battles and drama

they gain experiences related with ego and practical skills

I've never heard of BalkanLARPs. I assume this means RussianLARPs? In which case the only thing I've heard is that they're hardcore and people fight with wooden weapons