

'Alternative' film exhibition and cultural policies in Portugal: challenges and opportunities of digitization

EM EXIBIÇÃO

Luísa Barbosa: Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation, Lisbon (aluisabarbosa@gmail.com)
Helena Santos: Faculty of Economics, University of Porto (hsantos@fep.up.pt)

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'Alternative' film exhibition (non and semi-commercial exhibition)

Most developed countries have **policies for film exhibition and distribution 'beyond commercial cinema'**

promoting **national/regional filmographies** (EU), and/or
stimulating **cultural diversity** through cinema, and/or
reducing **territorial inequalities**, and/or
countering the US hegemony (Hollywood)



Film societies have been the key-players of 'alternative' exhibition

Digitization: A new agenda?

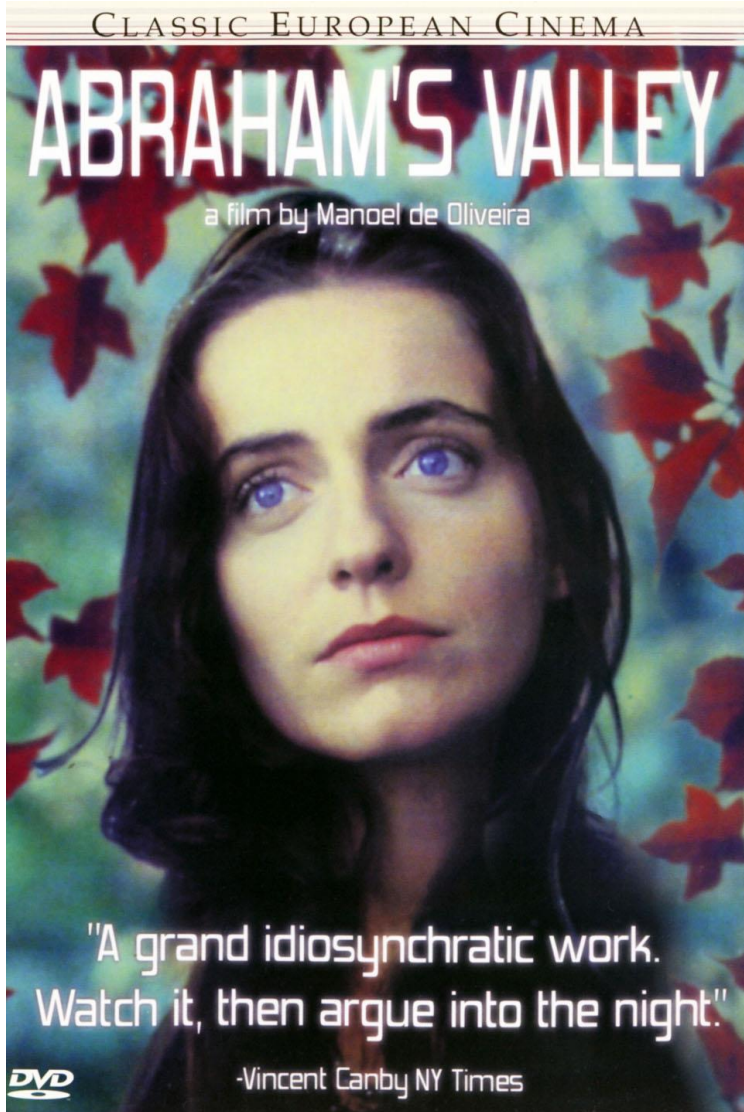
British Film Institute
Conference, 2014



- * Despite some crisis in film attendance, **young people** remain an important segment, and in some countries young theatrical attendance has been growing
- * **Digitization of screens** is close to 100% in developed countries. Nevertheless, **equipment is expensive**, and **non-commercial exhibition requires public intervention**
- * The case for 'European cinema' and the European Single Digital Market
- * **New possibilities** for 'alternative' exhibition (non-theatrical venues, 'community' exhibition, rural exhibition...) – need for **changes in exhibition and distributing policies**



Portugal



10.3 M (2% of EU28)	Residents
21.3% (EU28: 19%)	Pop. aged 65 and over
16% (EU28: 17.2)	Young people (individuals aged 15 to 29)
48% (EU 28: 77.5%)	Pop. with upper secondary education or over (individuals aged 25 to 64) (2015)
27.3% (EU 28: 33.4%)	High level of educational attainment (%; individuals aged 25 to 54, ISCED 5-8)

2017 (exc. when mentioned)
Source: Pordata/Eurostat

Cinema in Portugal (1)

Public policies for cinema: 1971
(Minister of Culture: 1995)

Main support programs address **production**

A special support for **European and other minority filmographies**; and for the **internationalisation of the Portuguese films.**

Support for **festivals** (3-years program)

Support for the "**Network**" ("Alternative exhibition circuits"; mainly film societies), since 2004



The Alternative Network is not really a network

A per year amount of c.100.000€ for c.20 entities

Minimum n. of sessions: 30/year

Fragile entities, in terms of conditions (space, human resources, financial resources, programming)

Recent strategies: exhibition of (relative) contemporary (feature) films, and preview releases



Chaski Group -
Communitarian Cinema,
Peru



Parallel initiatives:

- **Portuguese Cinema in Motion** program (since 2012, ICA)
- **National Plan for Cinema**, since 2013 (partnership between the Minister of Culture - ICA and the Portuguese Cinematheque - and the Ministry of Education).

Cinema in Portugal (2)



Abi Feijó (1995) *Lusitanian Fado*,
5'30", PT/UK

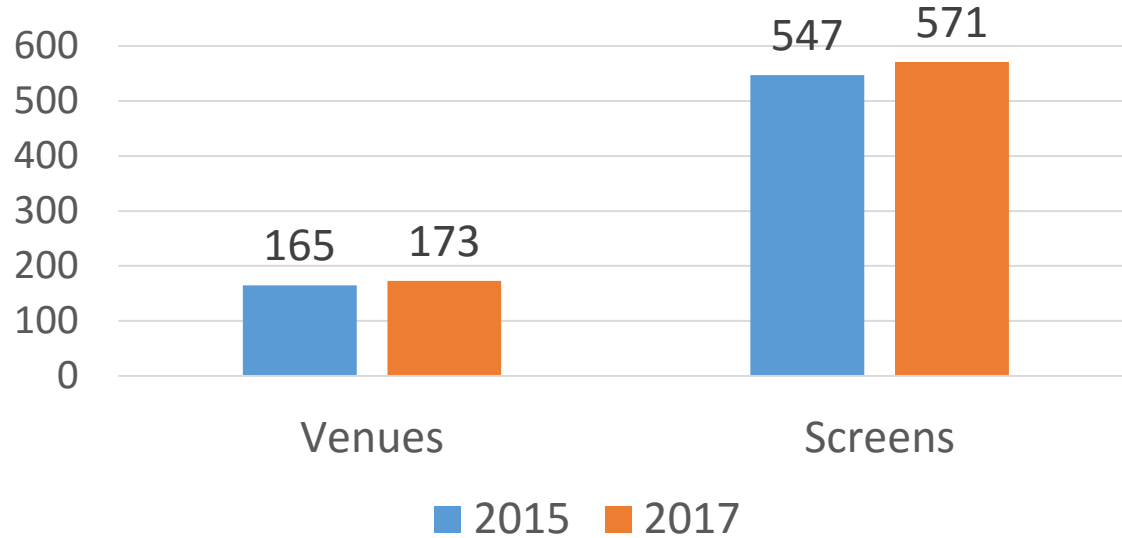
High reputation of the Portuguese (art) cinema...

Theatrical venues all over the country – **no programming policies**

High territorial inequalities – also regarding commercial exhibition

Cinema is not accessible to all people

Venues and screens, 2015 and 2017 (ICA)



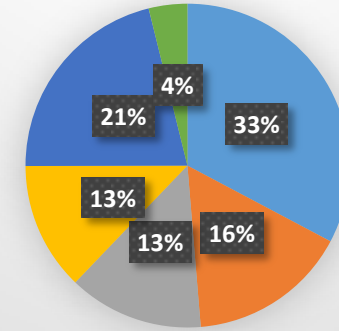
2017

5 screens per 100000 inhabitants

Average audience per session: 23

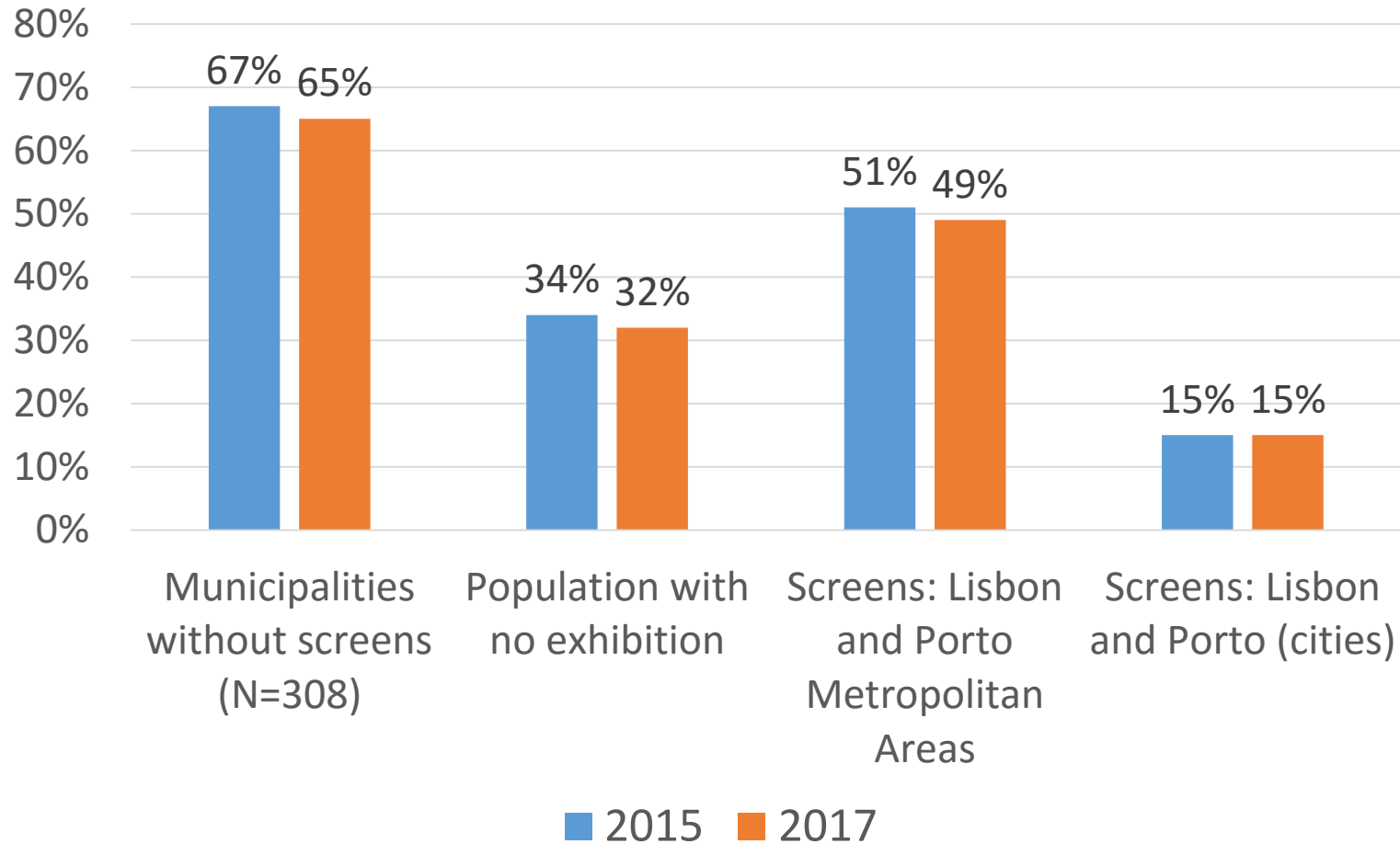
A small market: max. audience/film, 2017: 787 724 (*Fast & Furious 8*)

N. of screens, 2017 (% N=571)



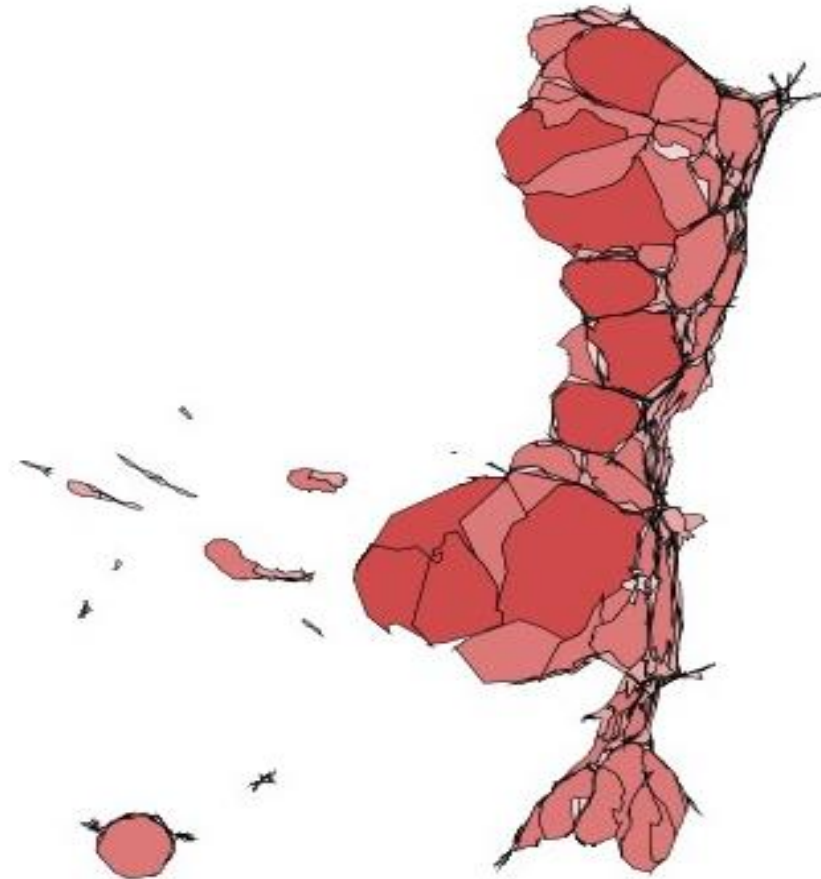
- Lisbon Metropolitan Area
- Porto Metropolitan Area
- North Region (exc. PMA)
- Central Region
- South Region (Alentejo + Algarve)
- Islands (Açores + Madeira)

Film exhibition in Portugal, 2015 and 2017 (ICA)



Note: Digital screens

Coastal vs Inland municipalities: N. of screens, 2017*



* The area of the municipalities is proportional to the value of the variable

Our study (2013-)

Non-commercial exhibition
remains poorly studied within the
EU, including in Portugal

Mapping and characterising the entities:

Who are they?

How do they work?

**The 'Alternative
Network and beyond'**



Porto Film Society

Phase 1: Production of empirical data (2013-2014)

Internet search on multiple sources: 558 entities that had organized a film screening at a certain point

Phase 2: Qualitative analysis of the entities previously identified

more than half the entities (52%)
were left out

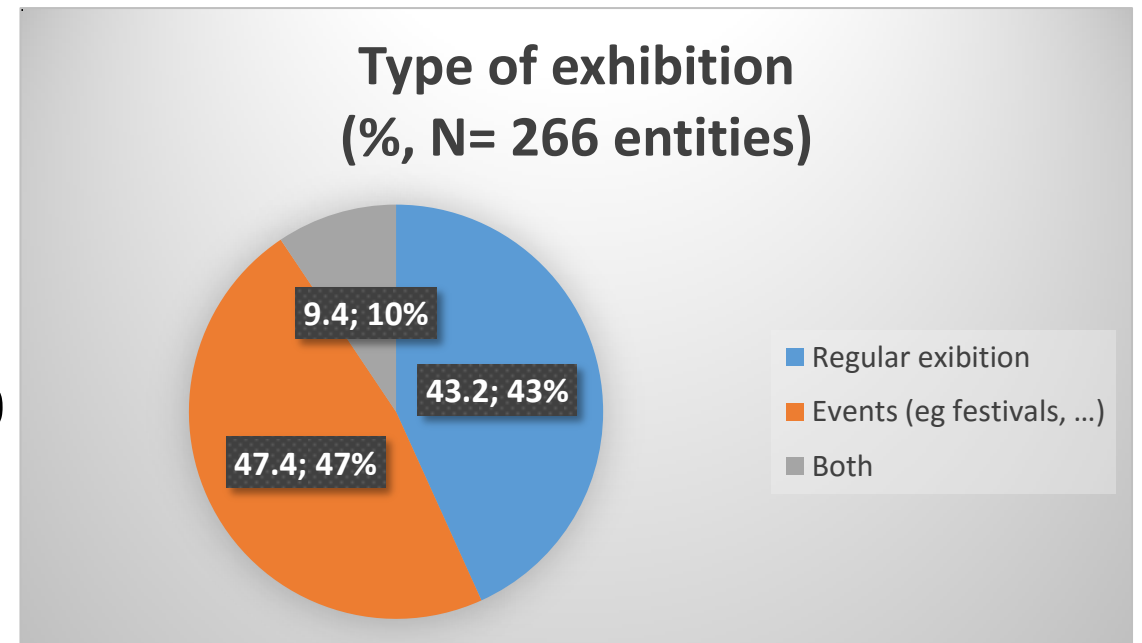
final sample: 266 entities

Entities with regular exhibition: 140

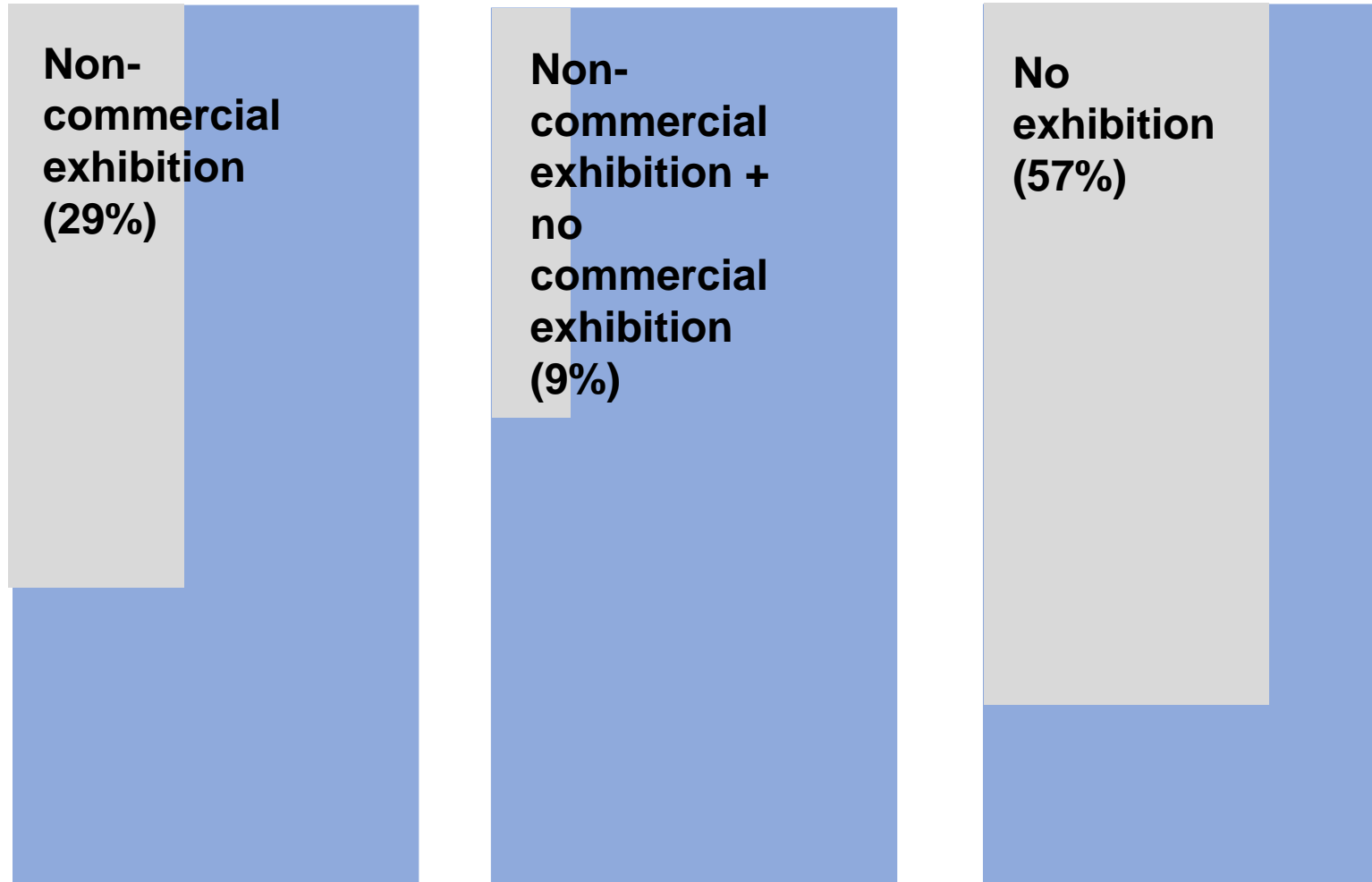
Phase 3: A survey (Nov 2015-May 2016)

In-depth characterisation

N=75 (validated responses)



Phase 1



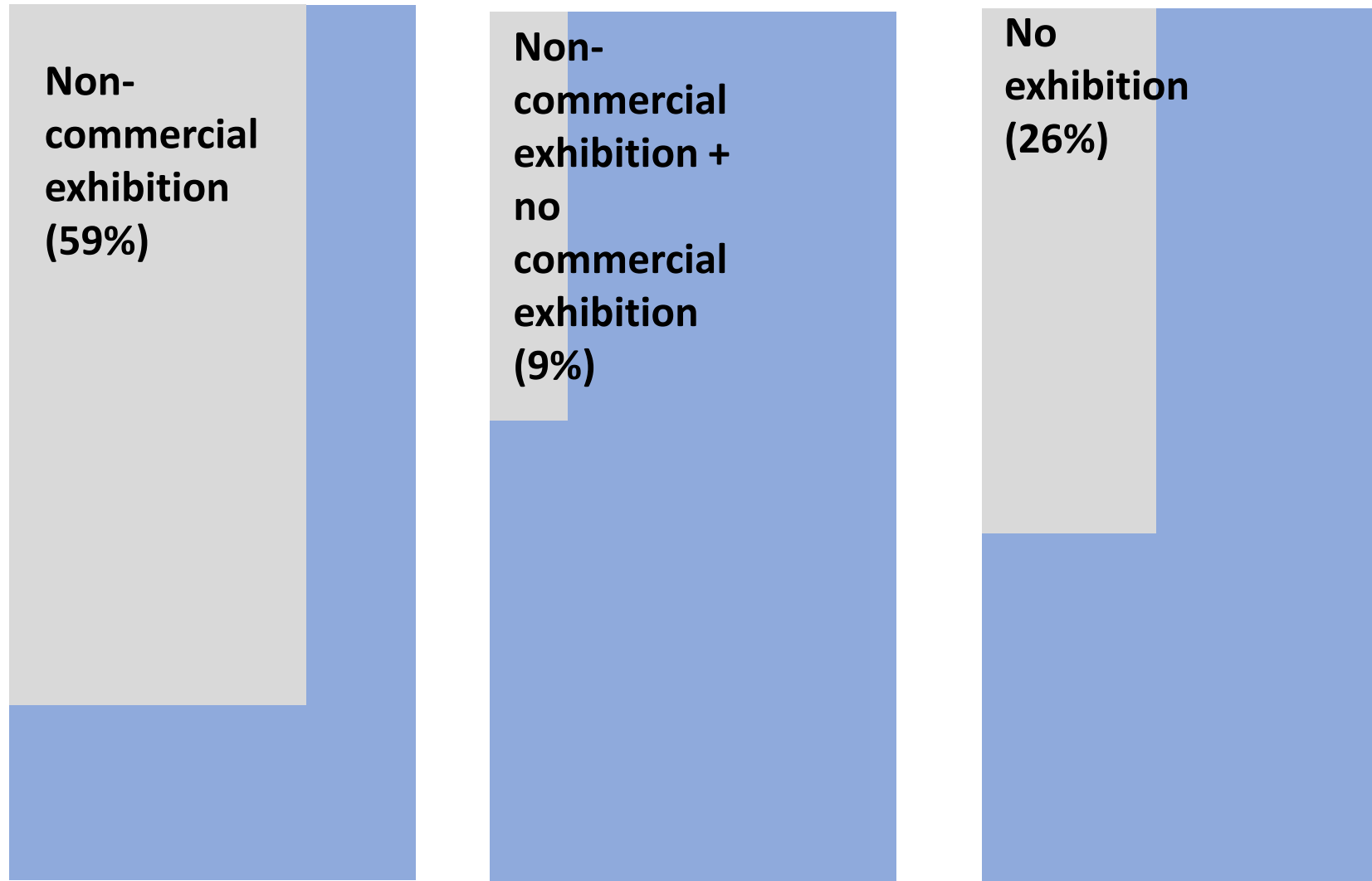
Film exhibition in Portugal, 2016:
% municipalities
(N=308)



See:

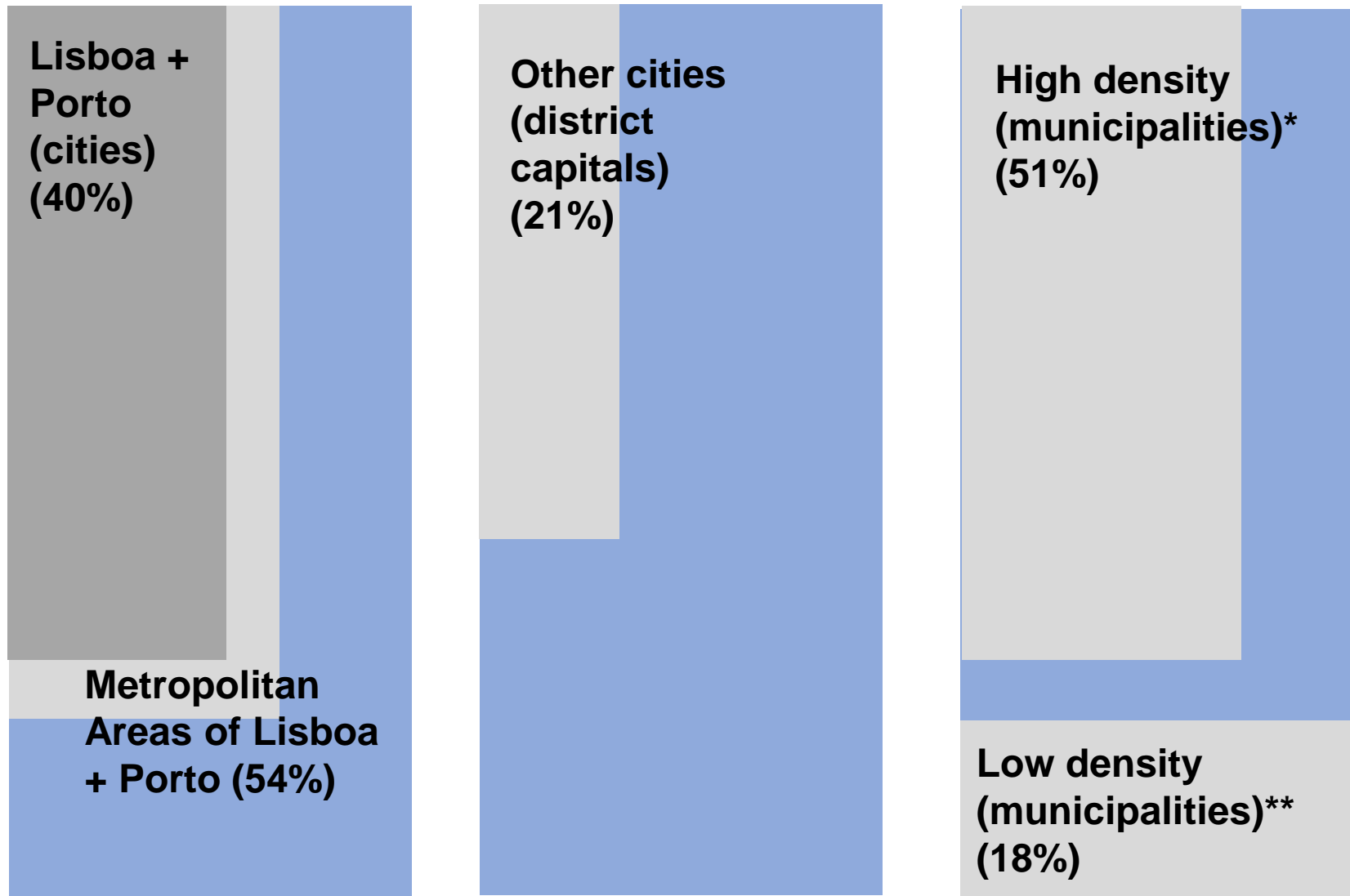
<https://exibicaoacomercialdecinema.weebly.com/> (English version soon...)

Phase 1



Film exhibition in Portugal, 2016:
% population

Phase 1



Alternative exhibition in Portugal, 2012-2014:
% agents (entities) with regular exhibition, **N=140**

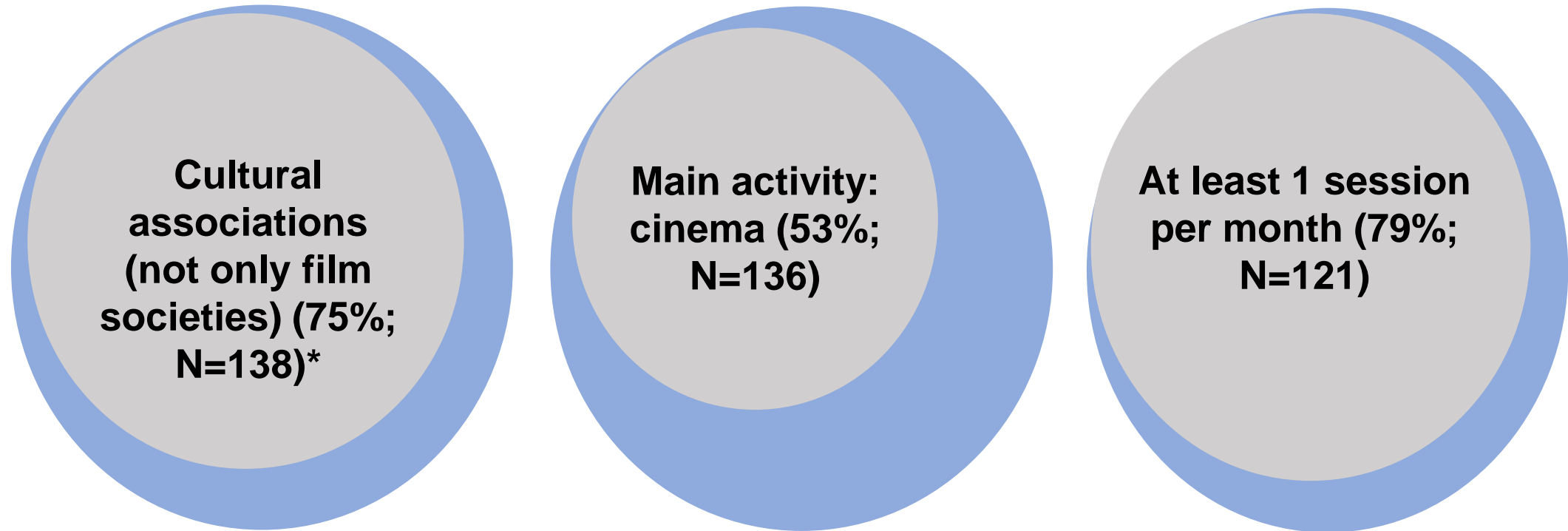
* 1500 inhabitants per km² or more + total population of at least 50000 inhabitants

** < 100 inhabitants per km² (rural areas)

Phase 1

Alternative exhibition in Portugal, 2012-2014:

% agents (entities) with regular exhibition (respondents)



* Broader category: 87% (not for profit) (of which 15% [18] are university students' associations)

Persistence of **high territorial concentration**:

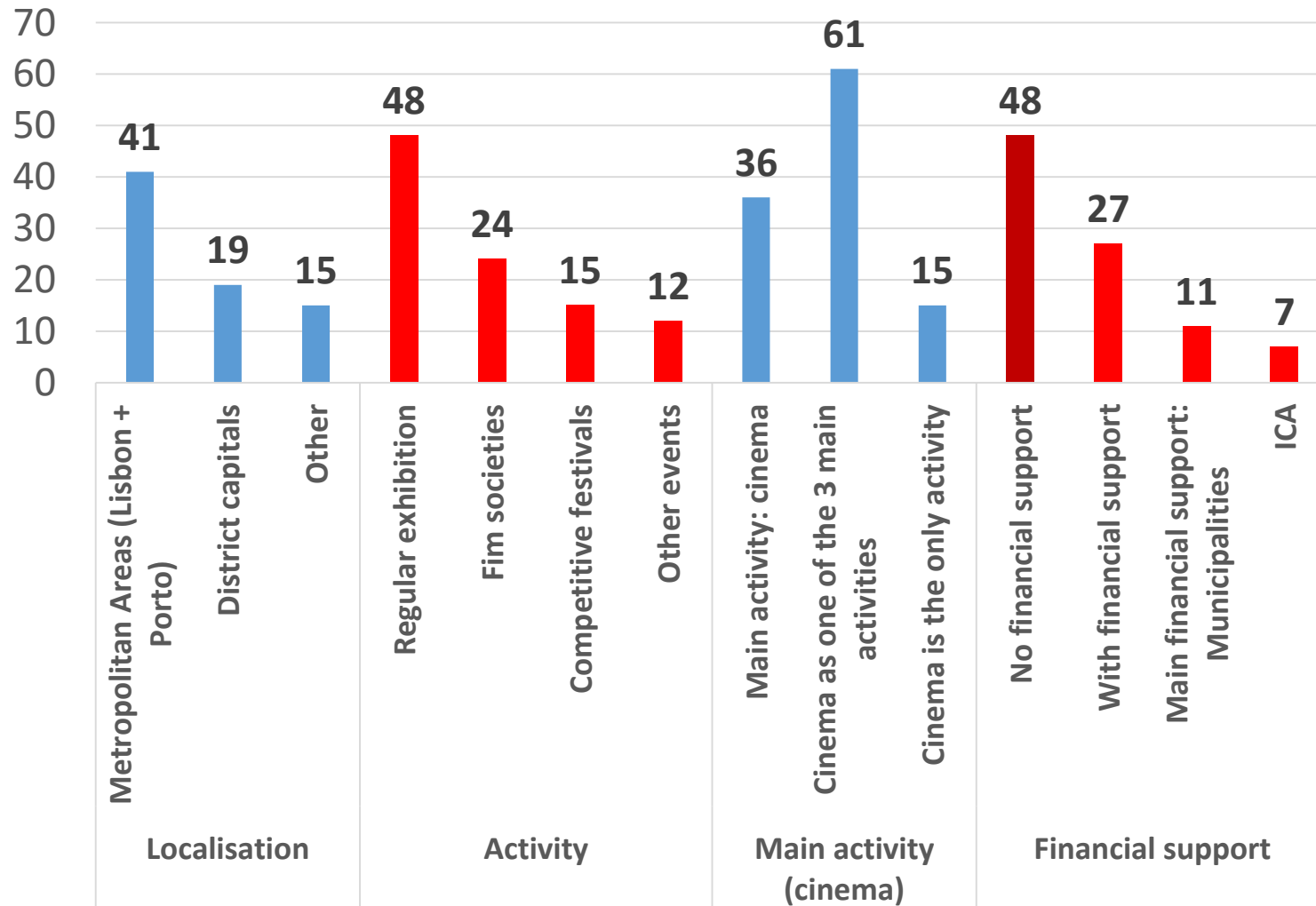
North Region (except Porto Met Area) as an exception: 38% of the entities



Only 15% (28 entities) have been **subsidised** by the Portuguese Film Institute (ICA)

12 entities have been granted since the beginning of the ICA program (2004)

Some results of the in-depth characterisation (1) (N. of entities: 75)



Urban concentration (and Met Areas)

Regular exhibition (minimum 1 session/month)

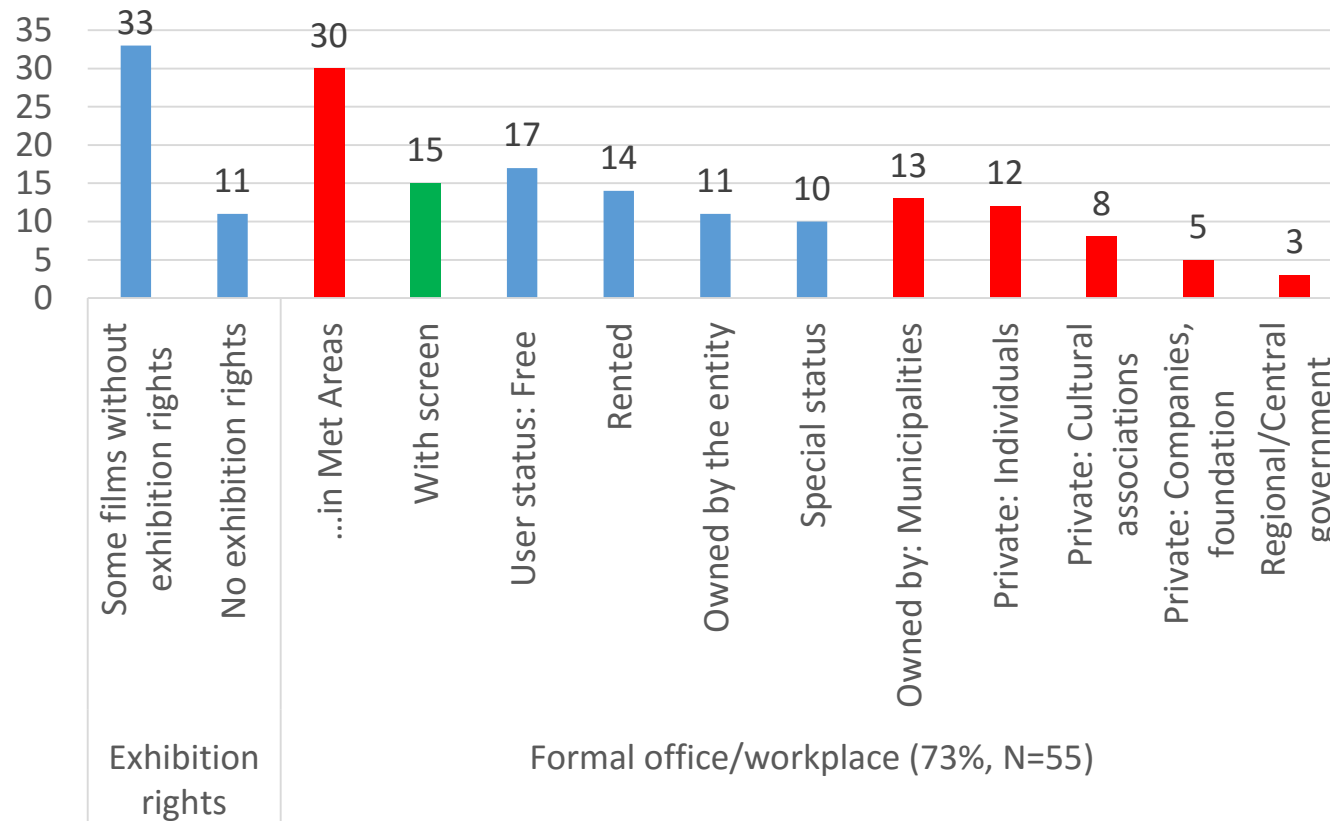
Cinema as the core activity (exclusively or not)

No financial support

The role of the local government (municipalities)

Film societies in Northern Region: 19, of which 13 outside Porto Met

Some results of the in-depth characterisation (2) (N. of entities: 75; with formal workplace: 55)

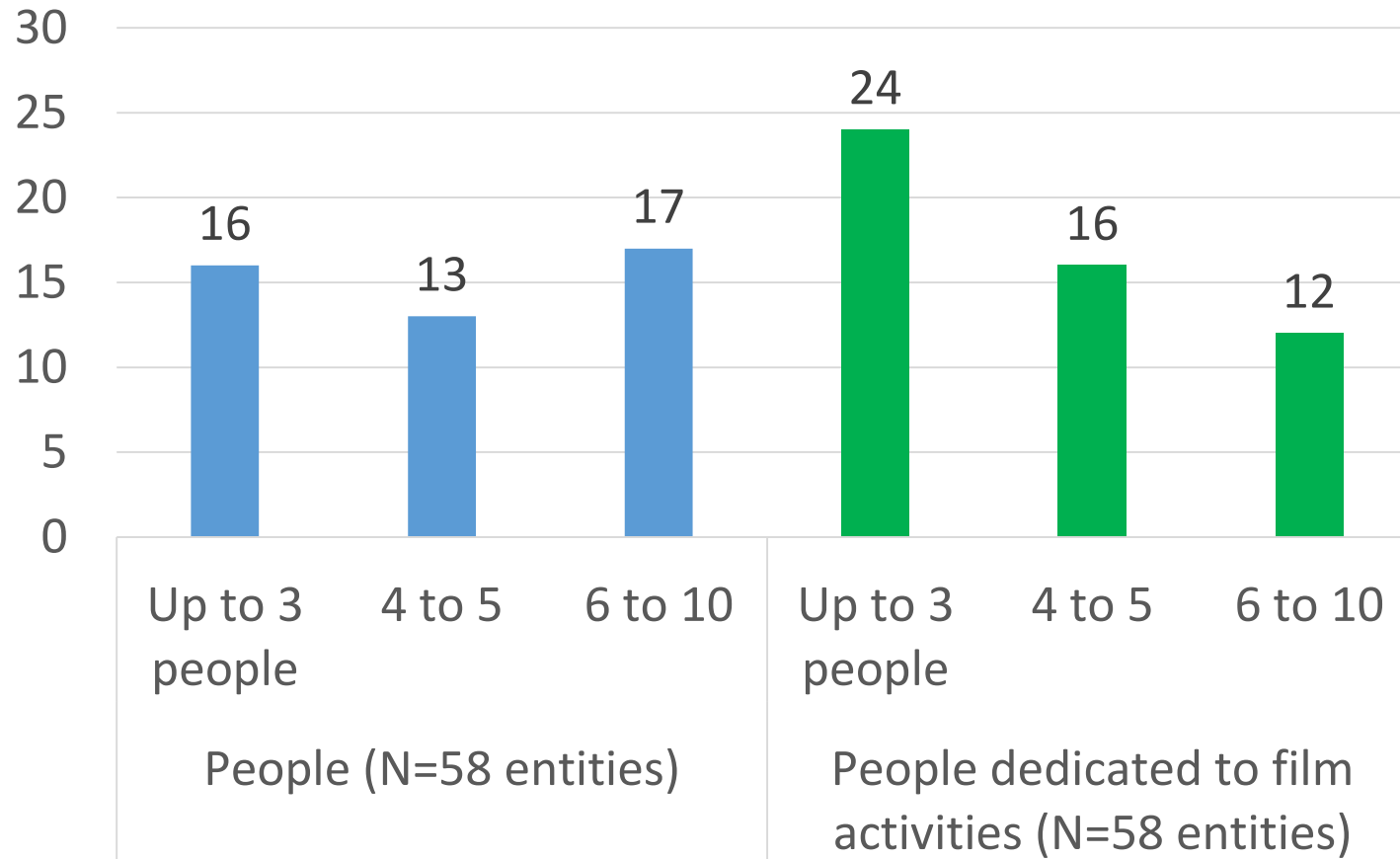


Exhibition 'on the fringes' (problems with distribution)

Informal conditions (equipment, workplace)

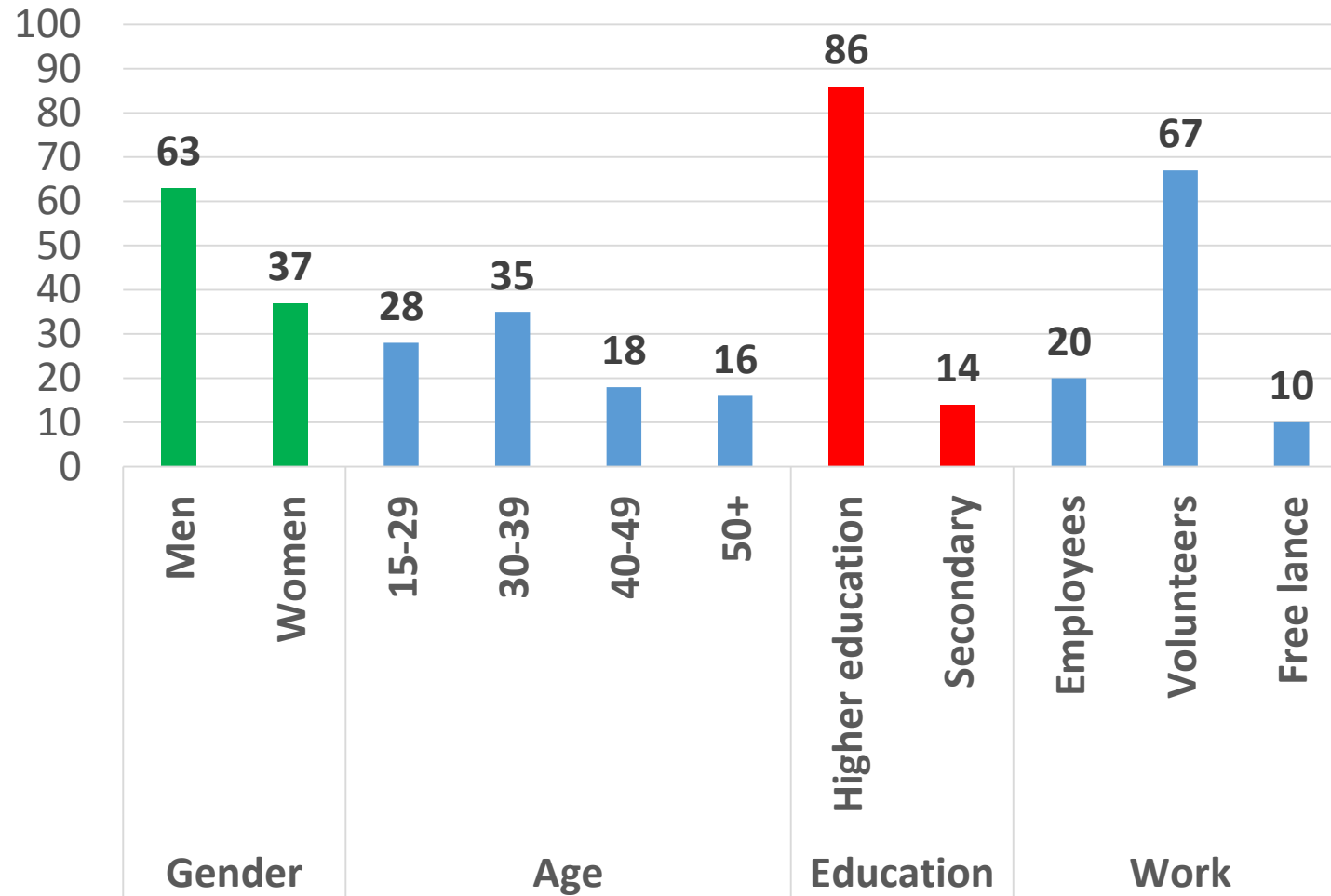
Role of (some) municipalities (local government)

Some results of the in-depth characterisation (3): Human resources 1 (see N - entities)



Small organizations
People are related to cinema (skills/ expertise)

Some results of the in-depth characterisation (3): Human resources 2 (%, N= 203; 61 entities)



Male

Young (average age = 38)

Highly educated

The role of volunteers

A new agenda?

Analysis still in-progress

There is alternative exhibition beyond the 'Alternative network' -

Need for a real network (even within the 'Alternative network')
Programming policies and partnerships at **local levels** (public venues all over the territory)

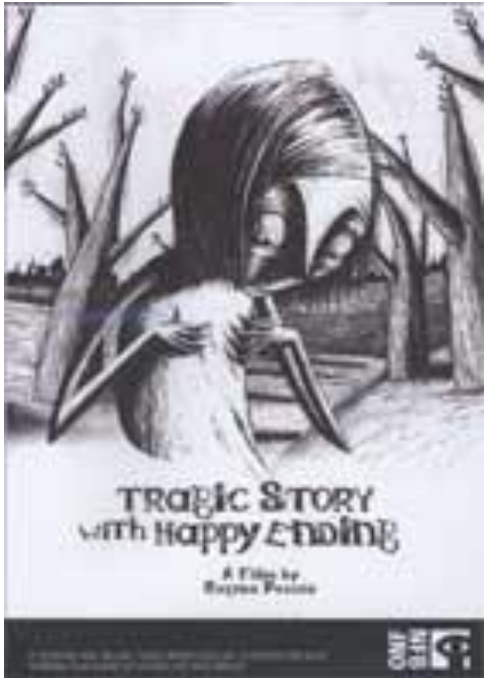
Distribution and exhibition policies
(Digitization policies)

Precarious and informal practices - Dependency on distributors

Audience and community embeddedness

International comparison (EU and outside) + good practices

Integrated and differentiated policies



Regina Pessoa (2005),
PT/Can, 7'53"