

Cinema of small nations in international film festivals

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CresCine Symposium

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research direction & relevance

- **Small countries**, particularly in Europe, produce increasingly more content as their film industry **production capabilities expand** (Ibrus and Rohn, 2019)
- However, these countries face the challenge of **limited international distribution**, resulting in many films remaining solely within their domestic markets (Hjort, 2007)
- We suggest this problem could be addressed by utilising **film festivals**
- As a sub-industry **shaping film marketing and distribution processes**, festivals can offer a way for small-country productions to reach **international audiences** and **secure distribution deals** (Czach, 2004)
- In this context, our research aims to understand better:
 - the **extent of film festival participation** for films from **countries of different sizes and income levels** and
 - the **origin diversity of the film festival circuit**



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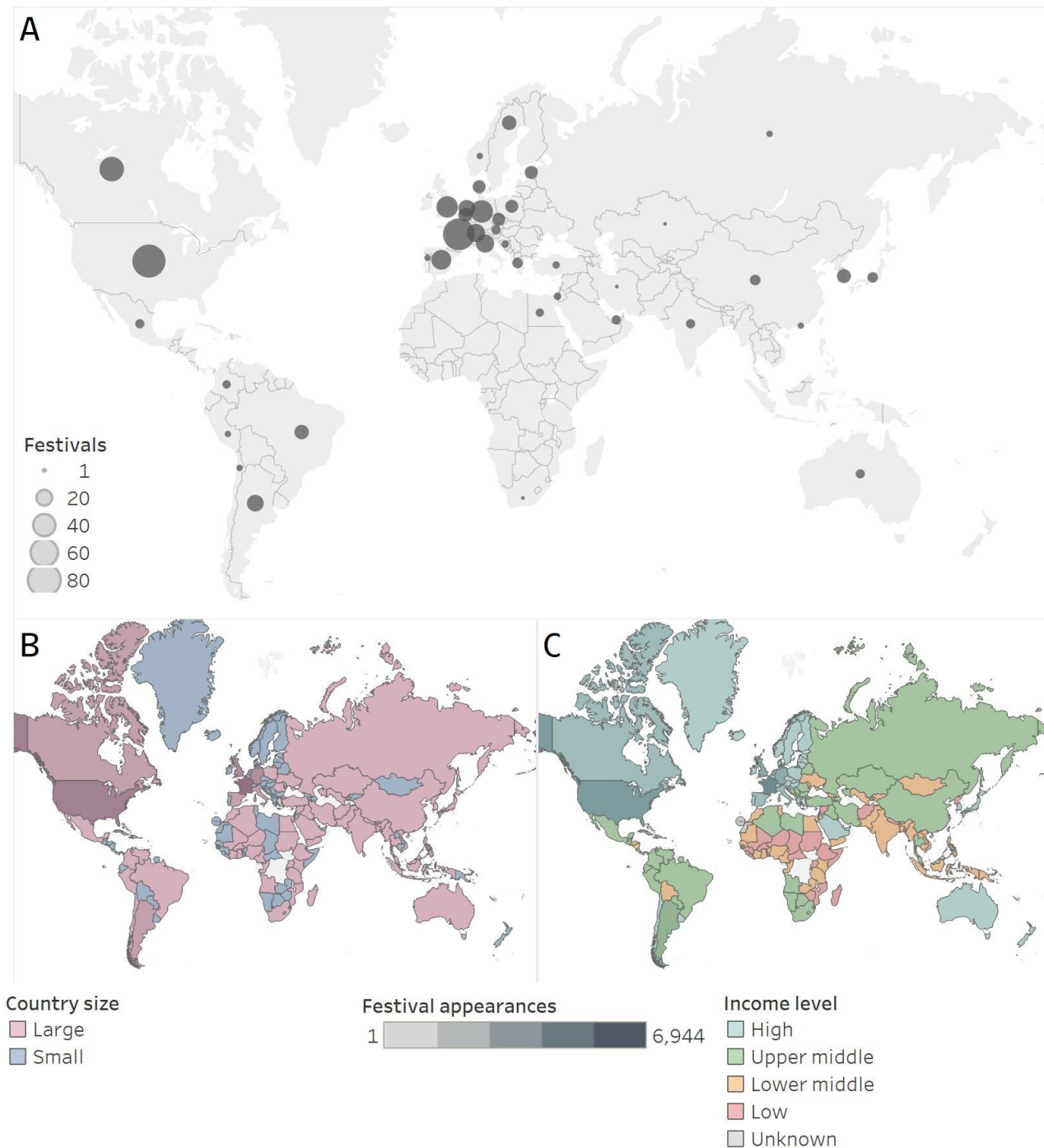
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Cinando data

- Our work builds on our access to data behind the **Cinando** platform operated by the Cannes Film Market (Marché du Film)
- Cinando offers film professionals tools to navigate the industry, such as information about contacts, films, projects in development, market screening schedules, market attendees, screeners, etc.
- Our sample includes:
 - 26,240 unique films showcased at
 - 578 festivals
 - from 2009 to 2021, representing
 - 170 film-origin countries and
 - 40 festival-host countries across all continents

- We use Cinando metadata on:
 - Film production year
 - Film origin country
 - Festival series title
 - Event year
 - Event country
- We classify films based on the population size of their origins into:
 - Small-country productions (<18M)
 - Large-country productions (>18M)
 - Small/large country co-productions
- We classify festivals based on FIAPF accreditation into:
 - competitive A-list feature film festivals
 - others

locations of festival events and film production countries



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research questions

1. How do the rates of festival participation differ for films made in countries of different sizes?
2. How have these rates developed from 2014 to 2021?
3. How do these rates differ between the competitive A-list and other festivals?



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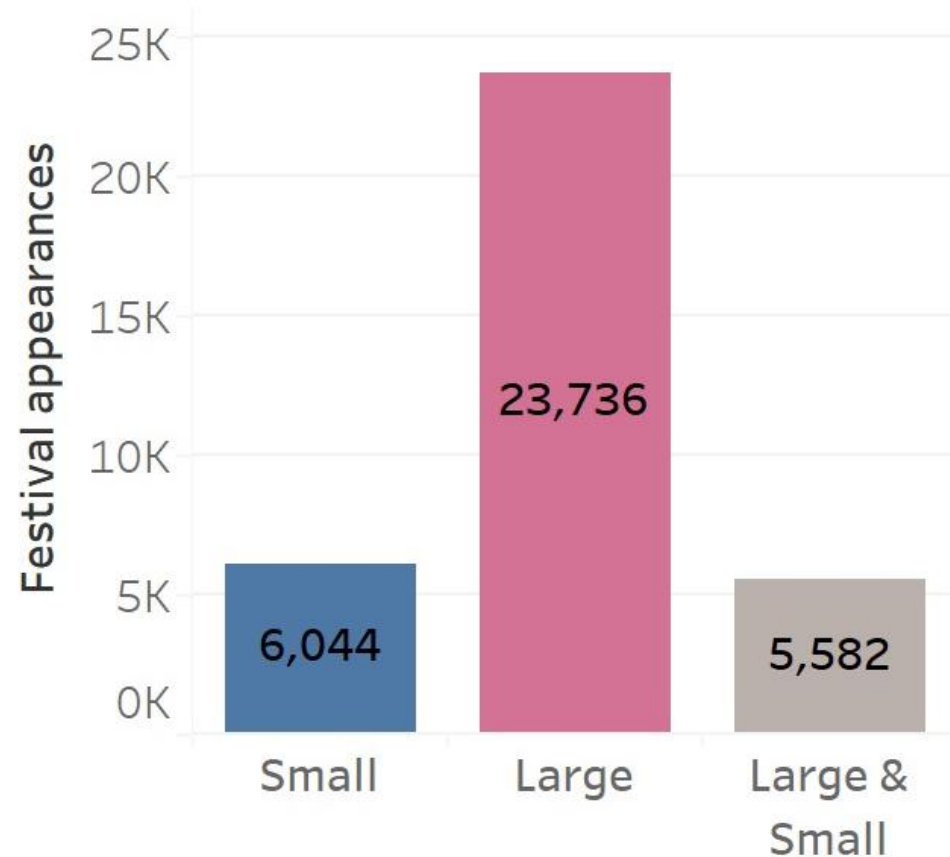
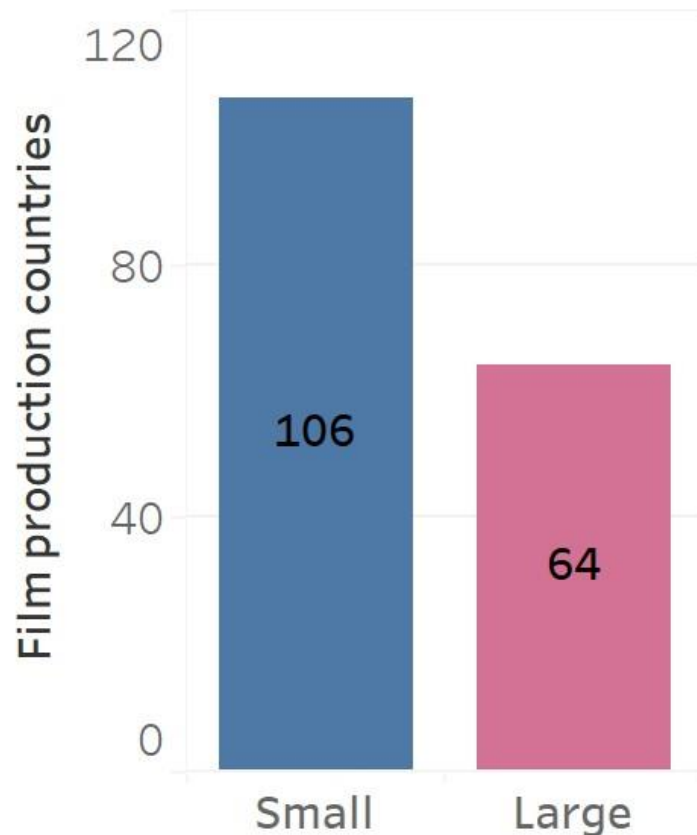
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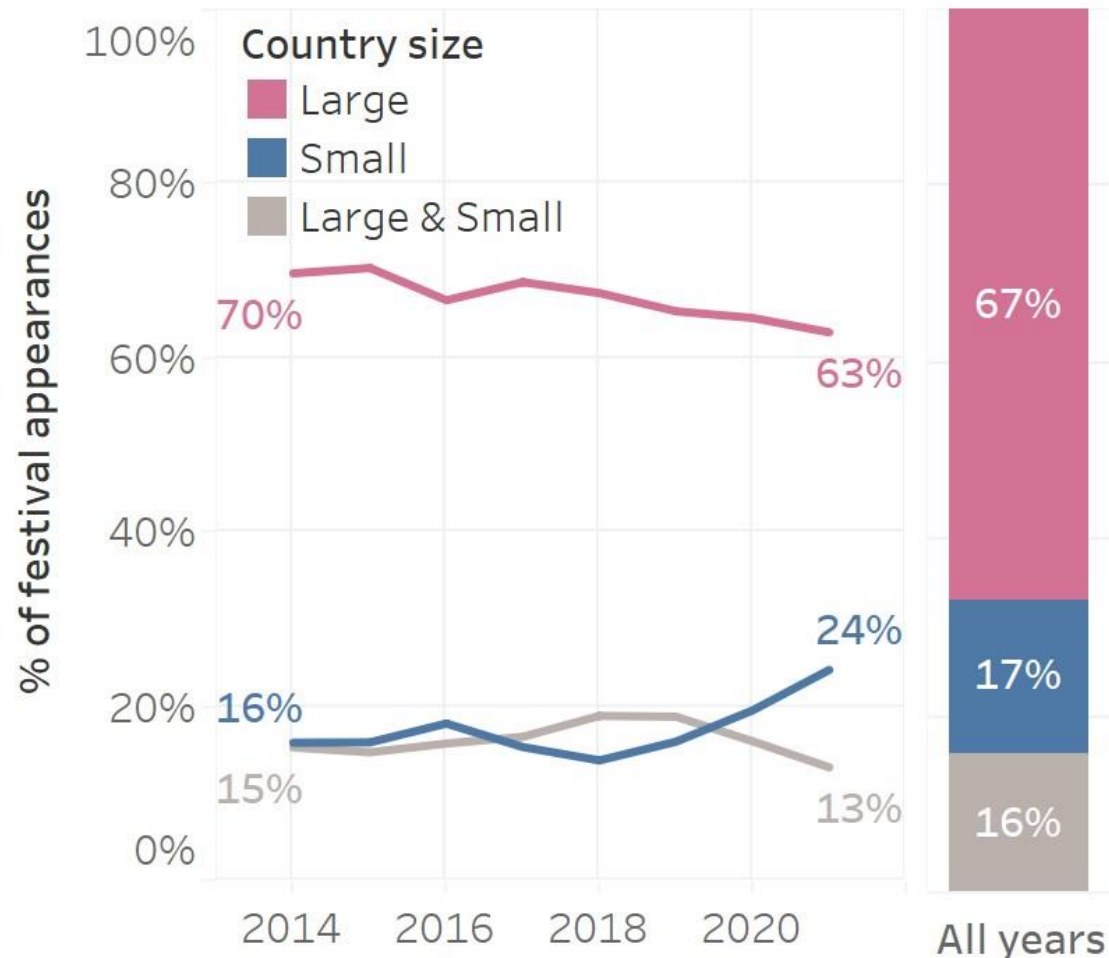
film origins in festival programming (2009–21)

- Most unique film origins featured in festivals are small
- However, large-country films appear in festivals nearly 4 times more often than small-country films



change in festival participation of different origins (2014-21)

The share of festival appearances by small-country films has increased by 8% since 2018



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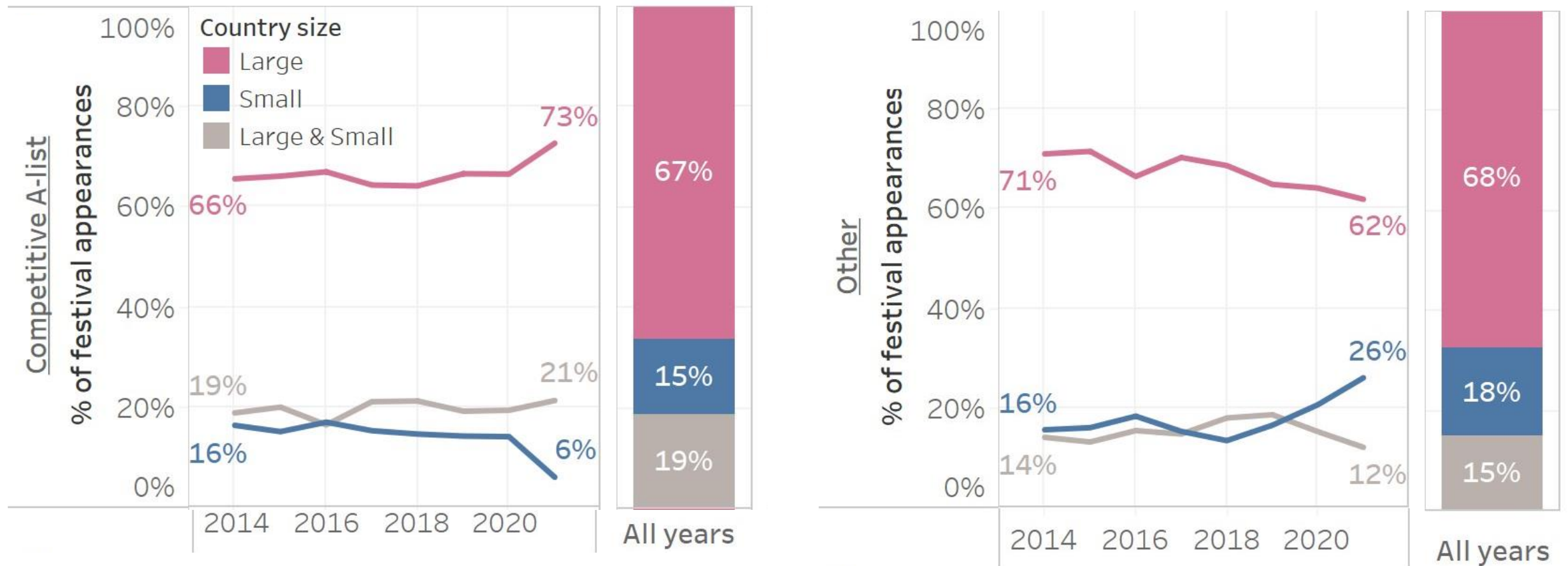
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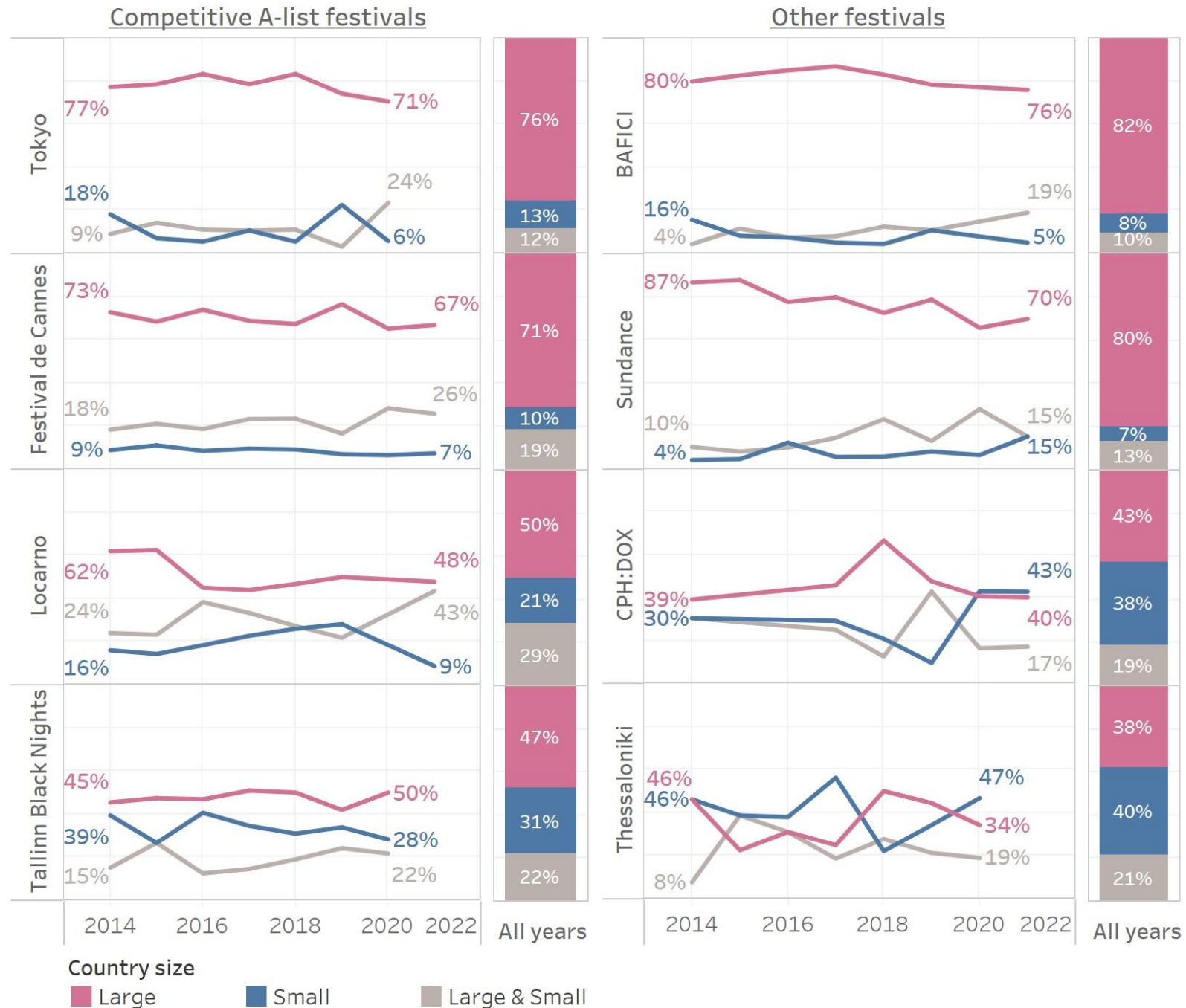
change in participation in the competitive A-list festivals vs. others (2014-21)

However, the increase in small-country film participation in festivals happened primarily outside the competitive A-list events



change in the programming of selected festival series (2014-21)

- Naturally, the preference towards origins of different sizes differs per festival
- But examples suggest that festivals held in small countries tend to allocate more programming to small-country films (>50%):
 - Locarno
 - Tallinn Black Nights
 - CPH: DOX
 - Thessaloniki International



preliminary conclusions

- While films made in large countries tend to dominate international festival programming, small-country productions have gained traction in recent years, particularly outside the competitive A-list festivals
- However, it is unclear whether this increase in small-country representation observed primarily during 2020–2021 will continue in the post-pandemic years, given the unusual circumstances of the film industry operation during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the shift to online festival formats
- Nonetheless, measures should be taken to facilitate the inclusion of small-country films in competitive A-list events where major sales deals are made to tackle the problem of limited international distribution adequately

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