

News Deserts Europe 2022:

Portugal Report

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Foreword

“We are only in the news in the summer when there are wildfires, and, in the winter, when there’s snow. Other than that, what other stories are there to report?” This question erupted in one session of the 4th Congress of Portuguese Journalists, held between January 12th and 14th, 2017, in Lisbon, when a journalist from a local radio station in the interior of Portugal decided to question a colleague about when would their shared territory appear in the national media. What news do we get from small territories and communities?

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As fate would have it, this report emerged from that same territory, more specifically from the University of Beira Interior, in Covilhã, and at a time when Serra da Estrela, a UNESCO World Geopark, was burning in a massive wildfire. Fortunately, for those people, there are media outlets that accompany the daily pulse of small territories and communities. Although they couldn’t do anything about the scourge of the fires, they are there all year round. But what about the rest of the national territory? This was the motto for the study presented here: to find out which municipalities in mainland Portugal and islands have journalistic projects, be they newspapers, radios or exclusively digital media, as long as they are registered in the ERC - the Regulatory Entity for Social Communication. This is not an analysis of the content produced by them – although that is a suggestion for future studies – but rather an in-depth analysis that constitutes an initial contribution for the study of the “news desert(s)” in Portugal (Ramos, 2021).

For three months, and through data available in ERC’s database on May 31st, 2022, we tried to find out which municipalities have media outlets, and which ones have none or the ones they have are at risk of closing. A process that involved multiple research and contacts, in addition to the collaboration of several entities, journalists and other citizens, to whom we thank in advance. In short, we tried to present in this report the most faithful information about each municipality. We hope that it will help to better understand the media landscape in Portugal and perhaps serve as an aid for the definition of public policies for the sector. Spaces left empty by journalism are quickly occupied by other realities, less or even not at all committed to the truth, ethics and deontology. Perhaps that is why the European Commission is so concerned about the possible growth of these gaps and, with them, disinformation. In this perspective, this report is an initial contribution to the study of “news deserts” in Europe.

Introduction

Journalism is undergoing a process of transformation, which we can assume to be permanent, given the multiple emerging challenges. The revolution in information and communication technologies (ICTs), especially the internet, has changed business models, consumption habits, and the entire journalistic production and distribution system around the world.

The flight of advertisers to other internet platforms, the new generations' lack of interest in print journalism and the economic crises appearing in the world since 2008 broke the media business models and resulted in the closure of several publications.

Only in the United States of America (USA), more than a quarter of all newspapers have closed since 2005, which means approximately 2,500 publications. Between the end of 2019 and May 2022, more than 360 newspapers stopped circulating in that country. 70 million people are living in 208 counties without a newspaper (6.6%), while 1,630 counties have only one (51.9% of US counties). These publications usually come out once a week and cover several communities, often scattered over a vast and dispersed area (Abernathy, 2022).

In Brazil, the most recent Atlas da Notícia identified that there was, in 2021, a 9.5% reduction in the number of municipalities considered news deserts compared to 2020 – that amounts to five in each 10 Brazilian municipalities. The country has 2,968 cities in these news deserts, where 29.3 million people live, which corresponds to 13.8% of the Brazilian population.

In Portugal, legislation defines what regional press is and provides incentives to the media that fall into this category. Nonetheless, the reality of local journalism in the country is plagued by financial difficulties, given the changes in the market advertising and public media consumption (Ramos, 2021).

The crisis scenario was aggravated from 2020 onwards, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The situation caused governments to adopt lockdowns and other types of restrictions favouring digital and remote work.

On one hand, journalism can prove its importance fighting disinformation about the disease. On the other hand, the pandemic has caused many companies to cut newspaper and radio ads and readers to become increasingly digital. At the time, many printed editions ceased to circulate and there were even cases of local newspapers that definitively abandoned the printed version, starting to publish exclusively online (Jenkins & Jerónimo, 2021).

The crisis in journalism went through an even more delicate situation in local media. The so-called regional press did not keep up with the globalization of information undertaken by the major media outlets, ending up being the last to start the process of digitization and having to adapt to life in an environment that uses global scales for evaluation and performance metrics (Shabir et al., 2015).

Small media were the most affected by the major economic crises and, in Europe, many of them lost their sustainability after 2011 (Quintanilha, 2018). Despite the financial situation of local media, the study Digital News Report Portugal 2022 revealed that local news are among the three news types that mostly interest Portuguese internet users, being cited by 53.9% of respondents, behind international news (55.6%) and information about the coronavirus and the pandemic (55.2%) (Cardoso, Paisana & Pinto-Martinho, 2022).

News deserts are one of the major consequences of the local journalism crisis, especially in small communities. In this report, we will present the Portuguese scenario of news deserts, revealing the municipalities where there are no local media or where there are no media covering local news on a regular basis.

**What are
news deserts?**

The expression appears in the United States (“news desert”) at the end of first decade of this century, in studies on the impacts of the journalism crisis in regional media. Penelope Abernathy, main researcher in this area on the USA, defines News Desert as:

“A community, whether rural or urban, with limited access to the sort of credible and comprehensive news and information that feeds democracy at the grassroots level”.

The Expanding News Desert report, published by Abernathy in Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economic, in 2020, points out that in the US most residents living in a news desert are poorer, older, and less educated than most Americans. This is because communities far from metropolises, with low economic activity are most susceptible to the journalism crisis. Local media has few readers and revenues to keep their structure running. These communities are likely to be the first to have their newspapers closed during an economic crash (Abernathy, 2020).

Most of these newspapers are aimed at an older audience and therefore, they struggle to make their transition to the digital environment in times of economic downturn. The local media struggles with another problem in this transition: the difficulty of generating revenue online due to the distrust of local advertisers and conversion metrics of monetizing tools, that demand high audience numbers that a small community newspaper can't reach (Hindman, 2015).

Thus, the news deserts emerge in regions far from metropolises, with low economic activity, where old local newspapers can no longer survive and the community is not attractive for new journalistic projects.

This scenario is particularly challenging as misinformation and disinformation spread fast through digital media in local contexts (Jerónimo & Sparza, 2022). The study “Local News Deserts in the UK” showed that with the decline of regional printed media, attention to local events migrated to the internet and to digital media. Social media became central in the local news distribution systems, both for information produced by communities within social groups and for the distribution of news produced by local media. In this context, digital social media is seen as the main source of local disinformation, due to the lack of verification in these networks (Barclay et al, 2022; Correia, Jerónimo e Gradim, 2019).

What are news deserts?

Brazil and USA

In the United States and Brazil, the mapping of their respective news deserts has been carried out over the last few years. The most recent data are from 2022 (USA) and 2021 (Brazil).

In the USA, the report “The State of Local News 2022” shows that out of a total of 3,143 counties and equivalents, 208 don’t have local newspapers (6.6%). There are about 4 million people affected. Only six of these counties have a digital alternative, which offers regional or local news.

A fifth of the country’s population, that is, around 70 million people, live in a news desert or in a community at risk of becoming one. This results from the fact that there is only one media outlet located in their geographic area. More than half of the counties, out of a total of 1,630, have only one newspaper (51.9%) – usually a weekly with a small editorial staff. Only 70 of these counties have a digital alternative.

Since 2005, approximately 2,400 of the 2,500 newspapers that have disappeared and about 380 of the 400 that have closed in the last three years were small weekly or non-daily newspapers, some with sales of as little as a few hundred copies. Since 2019, 64 sites focused on local and regional news have emerged, while 45 have disappeared. Almost all outlets that closed were looking to make a profit relying primarily on revenue from digital advertising by small companies that were also affected by the pandemic.

The report also points out that in 2022 the newspaper ecosystem comprises 150 regional or metropolitan dailies and 6,227 dailies and weeklies serving smaller communities.

In Brazil, the 2021 “Atlas da Notícia” highlights that 2,968 municipalities or 53.3% of the 5,570 municipalities in the country did not have any media at all. In 2019, there were 3,280 municipalities without news outlets, a number that represents a reduction of 9.5% compared to the previous report. Thus, news deserts affect 29.3 million people, 13.8% of the Brazilian population.

The almost deserts, that is, those municipalities with one or two media outlets, correspond to 26% of the municipalities, with a total population of about 32 million people. In 2021, 79 Brazilian news outlets closed. Conversely, 642 new journalistic ventures were created between the two reports, 449 of which were digital.

The study revealed that news deserts are more frequent in smaller communities with lower economic activity. On average, cities in news deserts have 9,800 inhabitants, with a median of 6,600 people. The almost deserts have an average of 21,700 and a median of 14,800 inhabitants.

Methodology

The mapping of news deserts in Portugal was made for the first time in September 2020 (Ramos, 2021), with an update released in September 2021. In these first two studies, it was used data from the ERC - Communication Regulatory Entity, from August 31, 2020, and August 31, 2021. Two tables were used: a list of periodicals, printed and digital, and a list of radio stations.

For this analysis, exclusively printed and digital periodicals classified as regional were considered, and from the radio stations' list, only the ones labelled as local were selected. In the official Portuguese municipalities' list, it was verified which ones were absent from both of the previous records.

Government-owned periodicals, such as civil parish bulletins, non-regional specialized content and radios that only broadcast national network content were excluded from the analysis.

For 2022, data from ERC comprising periodicals and radio stations was used, dated May 31, 2022. This is the data contained in this report.

In the list of periodicals, the following were excluded:

- Publications not classified as regionals;
- Publications that belong to public agents as City Halls and Civil Parishes;
- Non-journalistic publications including science journals, professional associations' magazines and tourism promotion magazines;
- Specialist publications without "regionalized" content, despite being labelled as regional;
- Publications of doctrinal contents even those classified as regional.

In the radio stations' report, the following were excluded:

- Exclusively musical or doctrinal radio stations – only generalist radios stations classified as local were used in the report;
- Radio stations not classified as local;
- Stations transmitting national or non-regional content, despite being classified as local;
- Specialist radio stations (e.g. sports radios).

A third table was composed, listing all Portuguese municipalities ("concelhos"), district, region (NUTS II) and the total number of:

- Printed newspapers (daily to fortnightly);
- Printed newspapers (published every three weeks or less frequently);

- Total printed media;
- Digital newspapers;
- Local radios;
- Radios without local newsrooms (special cases in which the news coverage is considered insufficient);
- Total local media;
- Total local media excluding less frequent media (every three weeks or more and radios without local newsroom).

The third table was shared with Portuguese news media representative entities (printed press and radio) for a round of checking. It was also verified if these news outlets were still in business in municipalities with only one or two media outlets registered.

The analysis time frame comprised the period between July 1 and August 31, 2022, and the data presented in this report refers exclusively to this period.

In the case of newspapers (printed and digital), verification was carried out by accessing the websites of each publication and, in some cases, their social networks (in particular, Facebook) and also by making telephone calls to newspapers' editorial offices.

The following were checked: a) the editorial policy of the publication; b) whether the publication continued to exist; c) how often the publication was updated. For the printed media, the news coverage updated daily, weekly and fortnightly was considered satisfactory; in digital media, were considered media outlets daily updated or, at least, weekly updated. Digital media without updates for more than 90 days were not considered.

It was understood that, given the transformations in information and communication technologies, especially with the internet, publications with a periodicity lower than fortnightly are considered insufficient or unsatisfactory. Even in very small municipalities in terms of population, it is understood that it is necessary to create news at least every 15 days.

It is also important to refer that monthly newspapers with daily or weekly periodicity on the internet were included as regular and satisfactory digital publications. In these cases, it is not a news desert.

The methodology does not include an assessment in regional media newsrooms of whether the news content is produced by journalists with a professional license. Nor was the characteristics of the published news analysed, whether it is an original production or reproduction (with or without alterations) of material sent by communication offices to the press, etc.

In the case of radios, due to the greater difficulty assessing which contents are broadcasted, three verification steps were deployed. It was considered that the radio stations belong to the municipality where they are licensed, which is not always where they are based. In the first verification level, the 250 local radios were listed, and their websites were checked. It was checked: a) if the website exists; b) if the website has updated local news; c) if the editorial policy mentions the existence of journalists or local news. For the radio stations without a working website, social media channels were checked, especially Facebook, where the same issues were investigated. In this first check, it was possible to assess that 180 local radio stations had journalists and local news.

The remaining 70 radio stations went through the second verification step: the list was shared with ARIC (the Association of Christian Inspired Radios) for verification. Out of these, 15 were associates and had local news and journalists. After these two steps, nine radios were excluded from the list: five local stations that distribute national content and four sports radios, of which two no longer exist.

In the third verification stage the remaining 46 radios were contacted by telephone. The contacts were obtained from the ERC list, on the websites and social media of the outlets and, in some cases, it was obtained through the town halls. The telephone survey took place between July 22 and August 5, 2022, and in it they were asked if they had local news and journalists, and where the newsrooms were located.

At the end of all these steps, it was not possible to verify the existence of three local radio stations. Therefore, in total, the amount of local radio stations checked was 247.

Municipalities that have radio stations with professional journalists located in the municipality (or in a neighbouring municipality) and that broadcast local news were considered as having satisfactory news coverage. After this analysis, some situations were identified that were considered as having infrequent or unsatisfactory coverage.

These were:

- a) radio stations with journalists outside the municipality, with studios/newsrooms in a municipality that is not bordering;
- b) radio stations with only one journalist covering multiple territories and being responsible for more than one radio station at the same time;
- c) radio stations with one journalist designed to cover municipalities located in different islands (special case of Azores);
- d) radio stations that have news production carried out by an external agency;
- e) radio stations without journalists at the time of the analysis.

Again, in the case of radio stations, the methodology did not include an assessment in the newsrooms of whether the news content is produced by journalists with a professional license, nor an analysis of the characteristics of the news published.

Previous data was updated with these answers, creating the series of maps that constitutes the core of the current study.

Categorization

The classification of news deserts in Portugal was based on the methodologies used by the “Atlas da Notícia” in Brazil (2022) and on the reports “Expanding News Desert” in the USA (Abernathy, 2020) and “The State of Local News 2022” (Abernathy, 2022).

The following definitions were considered:

News desert. Portuguese municipality without local news. Radio stations without local news and doctrinal newspapers without local news were not considered. Print and digital publications not registered with the ERC are also excluded. Municipalities with only one specialized communication outlet were also included as deserts.

Semi-desert. Portuguese municipality with less frequent or unsatisfactory news coverage, fits into one of the following situations: a) the only media is a newspaper with frequency inferior to fortnightly; b) the only media is a radio licensed for the area, but without journalists in this territory (newsroom located in a non-adjacent municipality).

At risk. Portuguese municipality with only one media outlet creating local news.

Out of the desert. A municipality with two or more media outlets creating local news.

Executive Summary

More than half of the Portuguese municipalities are news deserts or are on the verge of becoming so. Out of the 308 existing municipalities, 166 (53.9%) are news deserts or semi-deserts or at risk of becoming one. These are municipalities in a red flag situation regarding news coverage.

Over a quarter of Portugal's municipalities are in some type of news desert, which means they don't have frequent or satisfactory news coverage. Out of the 308 municipalities, **78 (25.3%) are in some type of news desert**, that is, they do not have media outlets based in the municipality that create local news or the ones they have, have insufficient news coverage. Out of these 78 municipalities, **54 (17.5%) are in a total news desert**, which means that they don't have any media outlets producing news about these territories, and **24 (7.8%) are in semi-desert status**, that is, they only have less frequent or not satisfactory news coverage. It should also be noted that **88 (28.6%) are at risk of entering into the status of news desert**, as they have only one media outlet with regular news coverage.

The North, Center and Alentejo regions concentrate over 80% of news deserts and semi-deserts in Portugal. In these regions, there are 63 of the 76 municipalities that are news deserts and semi-deserts. Specifically the districts of Beja, Bragança, Évora, Portalegre and Vila Real are those with the highest number of municipalities in some type of news desert.

In Bragança and Portalegre over half of the municipalities are in news deserts or semi-deserts. The district of Portalegre comprises 15 municipalities, of which 9 (60%) are considered news deserts. In Bragança, 7 (58.3%) out of 12 municipalities have the same status.

The lack of local news creation affects more heavily the interior municipalities. The districts of Lisbon, Porto, Braga and Aveiro, where the 20 most populated municipalities of Portugal are located, have only three towns in the news deserts (located in Lisbon, Braga and Aveiro). The district of Porto has no municipality in the desert, semi-desert or even under threat (with only one media outlet). In Continental Portugal, only three coastal municipalities are in a semi-desert: Aljezur, in Faro; Albergaria-a-Velha, in Aveiro; and Obidos, in Leiria; and none are in a total news desert.

There are no printed newspapers covering local news regularly in 182 Portuguese municipalities (59%). It is considered, in this report, that frequent updates correspond to daily, weekly, and fortnightly news reports. Out of the 182 municipalities, 106 (34.4%) don't have frequent printed media updates but have other media updates. A total of 15 towns only have printed monthly

publications, without other media present, and thus, are considered semi-deserts. 54 only have monthly publications but have other media outlets (digital and/or radio). A total of 106 municipalities (34.4%) have at least one frequently updated printed media and one digital media. Six municipalities have as their only news source one printed newspaper.

Digital media are present in 151 municipalities (49%), while there is no digital media in 157 municipalities (51%). 16 municipalities host only one digital media, without any other publications available, and therefore are considered at risk of becoming news deserts. In 77 towns, there are frequently updated printed media, digital and radio stations.

A total of 118 municipalities (38.3%) do not have any radio stations broadcasting local news. 17 municipalities have licensed radio stations but don't have local news coverage (no journalists locally and/or the newsroom is located in another non-border municipality). Of these, nine have no other news outlets and one has only one less frequently printed newspaper, therefore these 10 cases are considered semi-deserts. In the other seven municipalities, there are frequently updated printed or digital media. Meanwhile, there are licensed radio stations in 175 municipalities in Portugal (56.8%) with newsrooms and journalists in the same territory. In 59 municipalities without frequently updated printed and digital media, radio stations are the only local news source. In two municipalities with only one radio station as their local news source, it was not possible to assess their existence, and thus, these municipalities were classified as not rated. Despite that, these two towns, Castelo de Paiva (in Aveiro) and Azambuja (Lisbon), have other local media besides radios and are not, overall, to be considered news deserts.

More than half of the 50 less populated municipalities in the country are news deserts or semi-deserts. Among the 50 smallest municipalities in terms of population, 29 (58%) are news deserts or semi-deserts. Out of the 100 less populated towns, 53 (53%) are desert or semi-deserts. In total, 647,422 people live in some kind of news desert, or 6.3% of the population. Meanwhile, more than 13.4% of the citizens live in news deserts or communities at risk of becoming one. There are 1,390,493 people living in the 78 municipalities with less regular news coverage and in 88 municipalities with only one media outlet that covers local news more frequently.

42 of the 100 municipalities (42%) with the lowest purchasing power in the country are news deserts or semi-deserts. Of the 50 towns with the lowest purchasing power in the country, 22 (44%) are in deserts or semi-deserts. Comparing the purchasing power map in

2019 and the news deserts map in 2022, the correlation by regions between purchasing power and the creation of local news is evident.

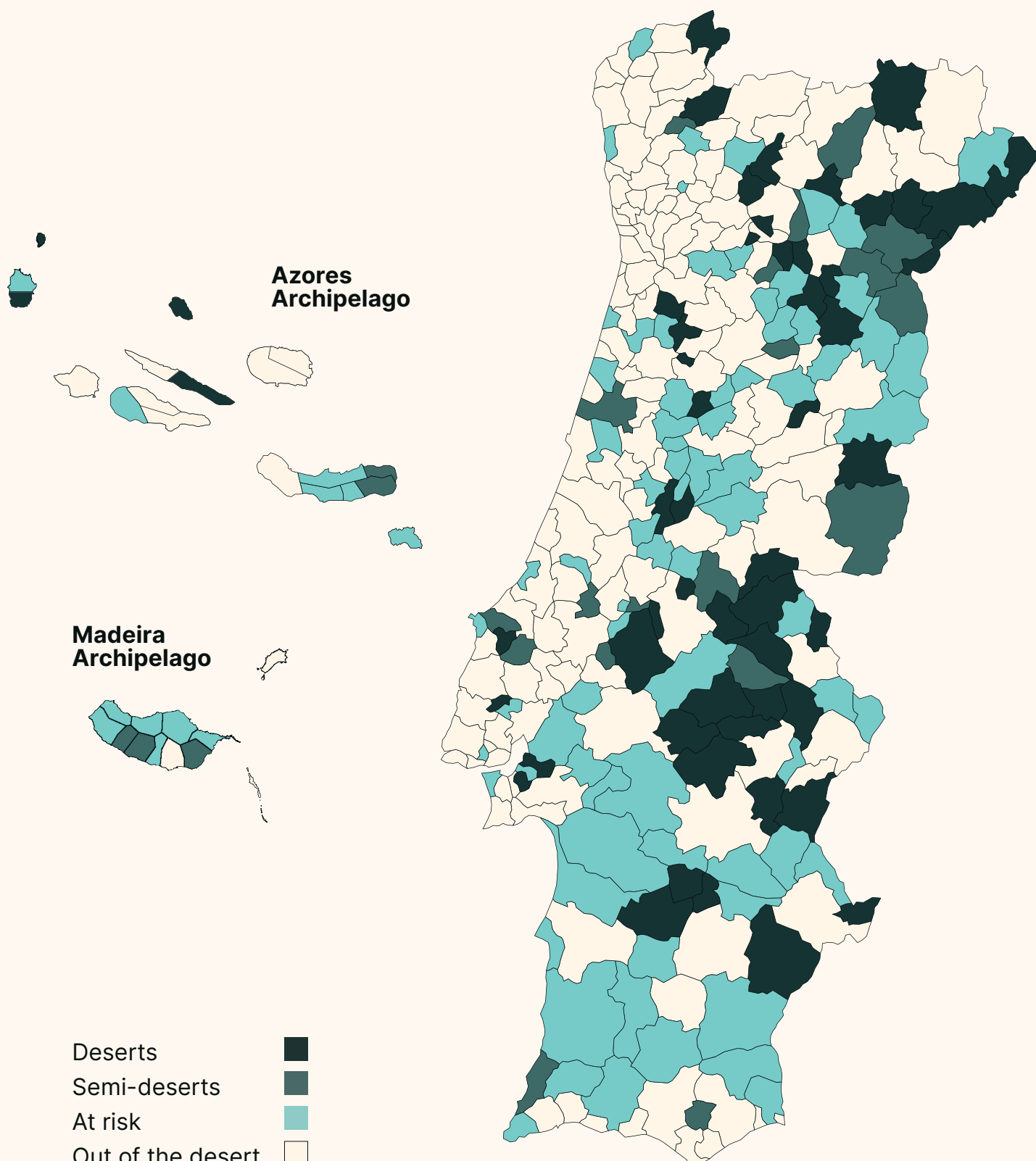
A low correlation was found between the absence of local news and abstention in Portuguese elections.

In the list of the 50 municipalities with the highest abstention rate in the 2021 municipal elections, only three are in the news deserts or semi-deserts. When considering the 100 municipalities with the highest abstention in the same election, only 11 are in the news deserts or semi-deserts. Considering the 2022 legislative elections, among the 50 towns with the highest abstention rate, only 16 are in news deserts or semi-deserts, while in the list of the 100 municipalities with the highest abstention rate in the 2022 election, only 27 are in news deserts or semi-deserts. Finally, it should be noted that abstention was not considered in a stratified manner, namely by age. This type of analysis, which future studies will seek to carry out, will help identify possible differences and impacts of the presence or absence of news deserts.

News Deserts Maps Portugal

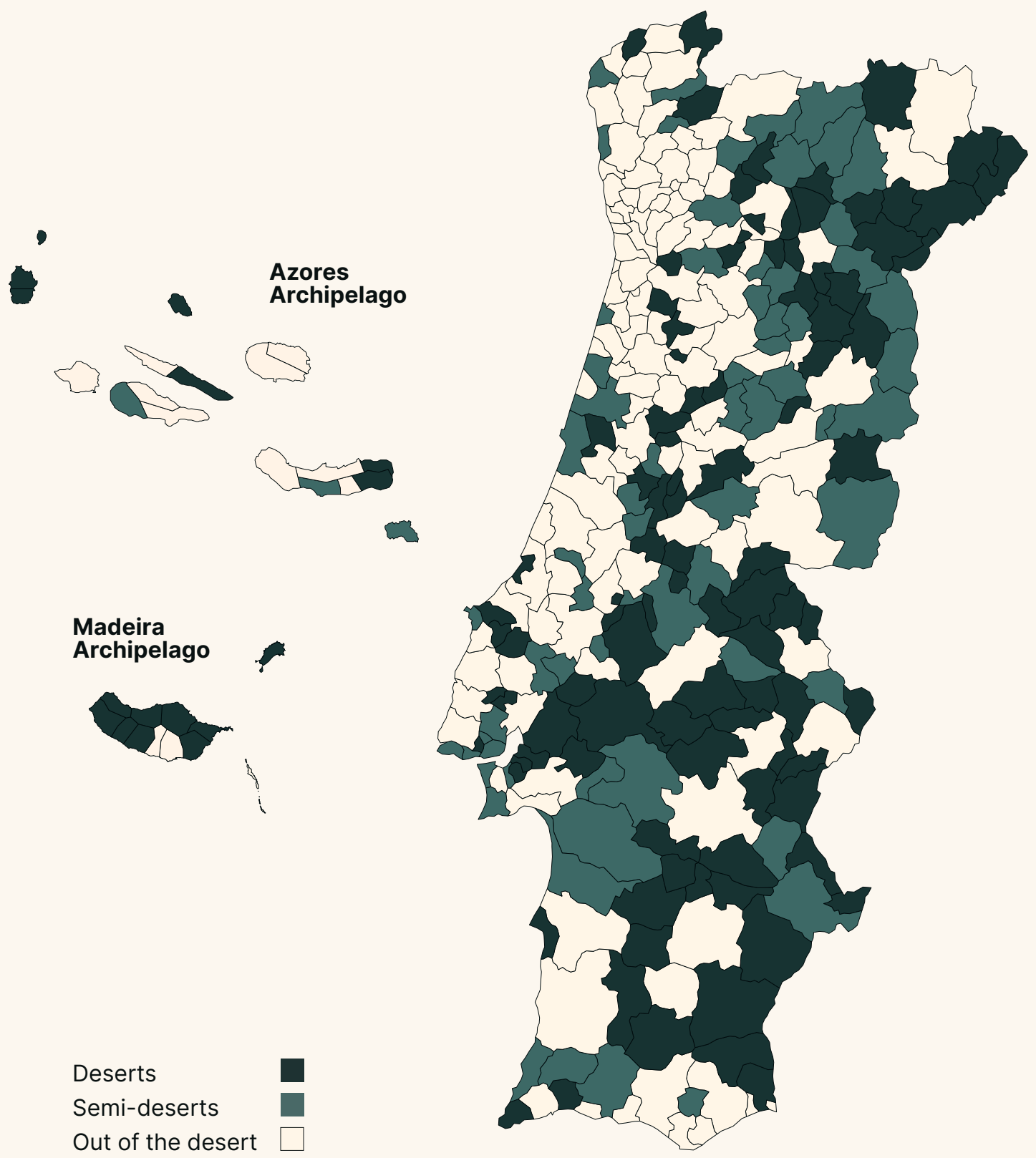
News deserts

Distribution by municipality



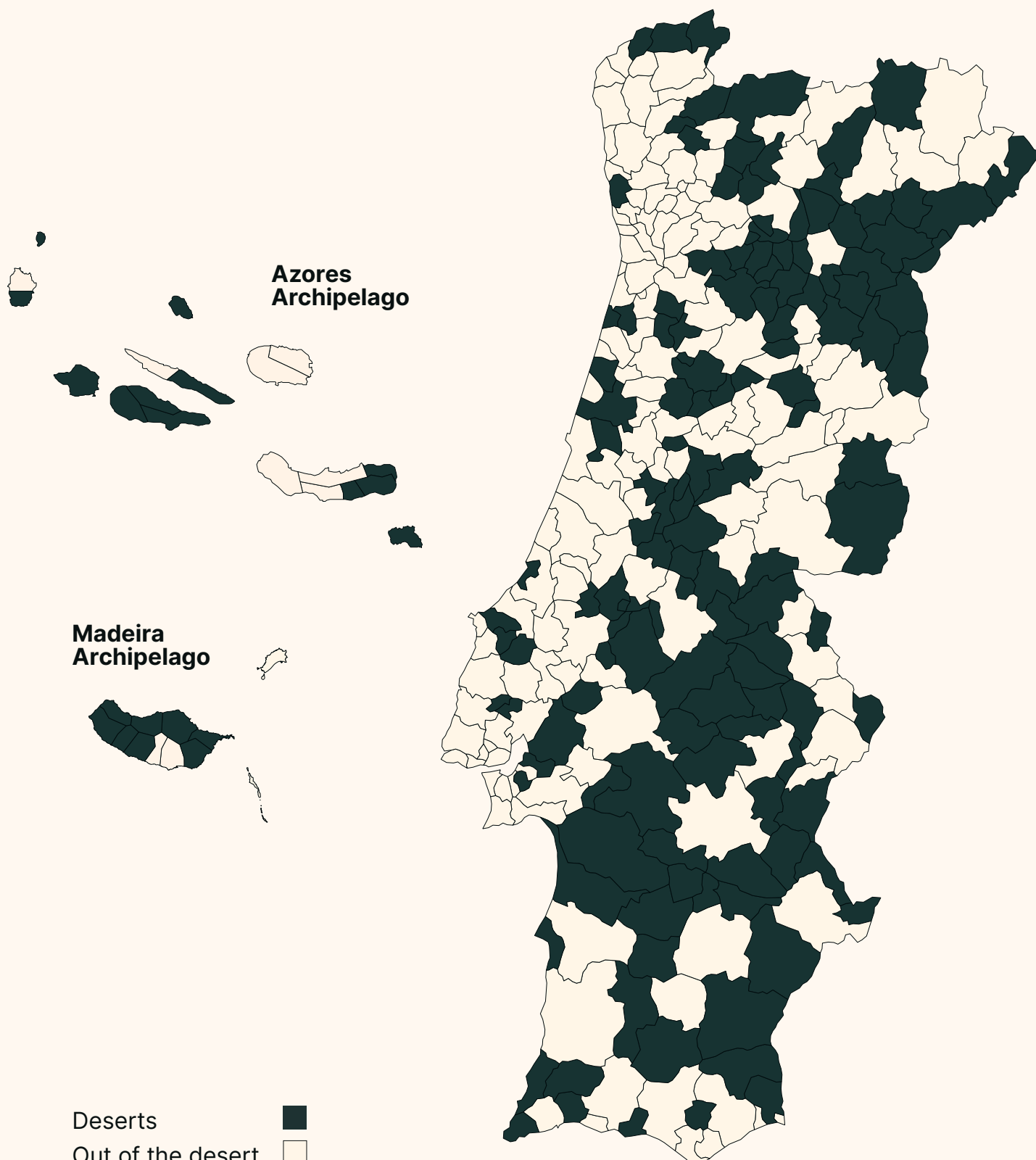
News deserts

Printed media



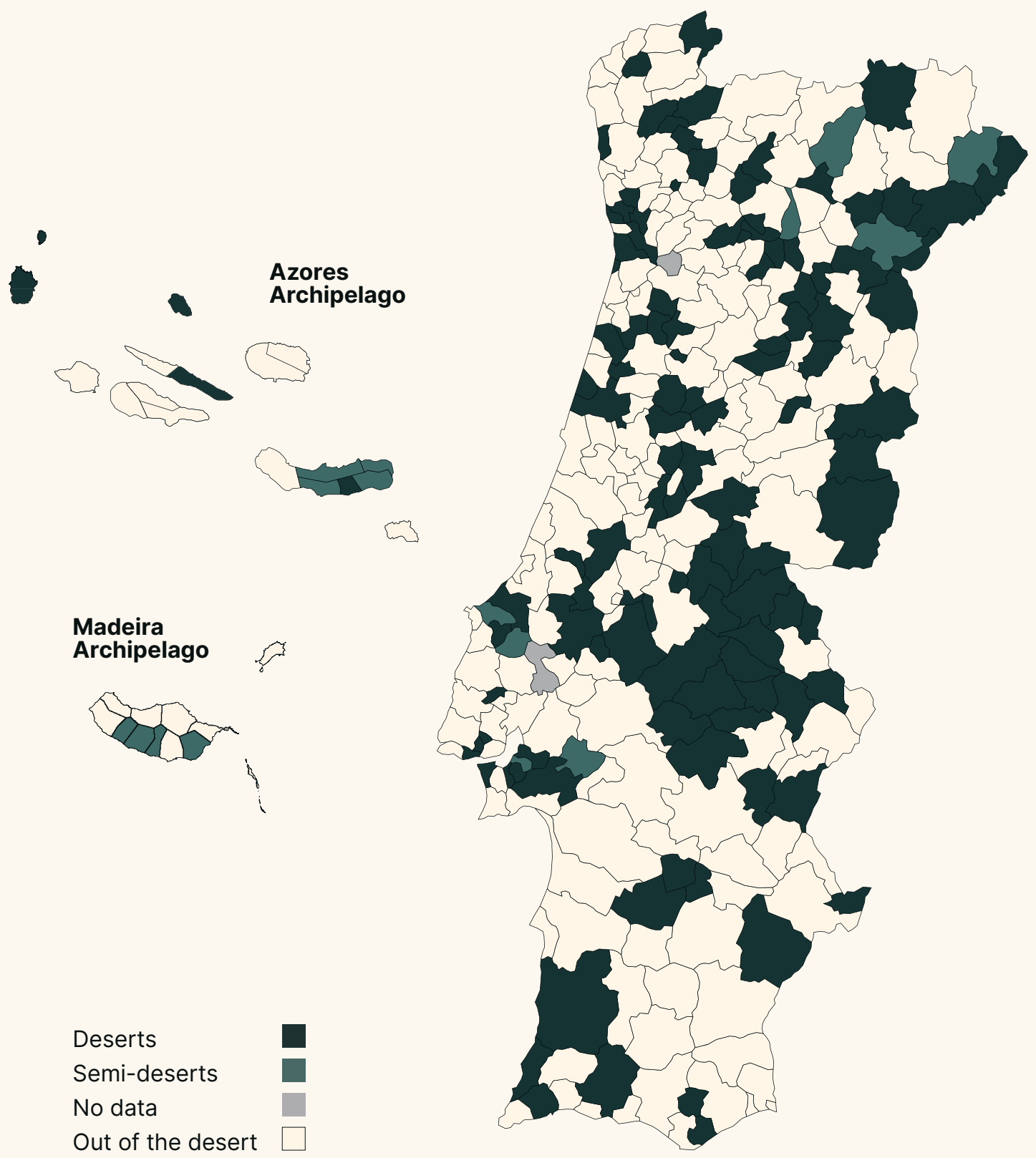
News deserts

Digital media



News deserts

Local Radio Stations



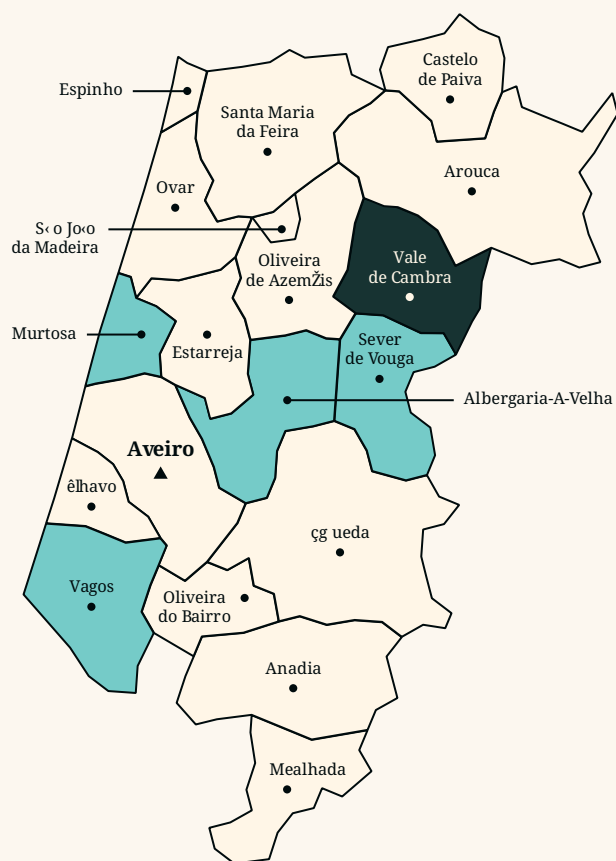
News

Deserts Maps

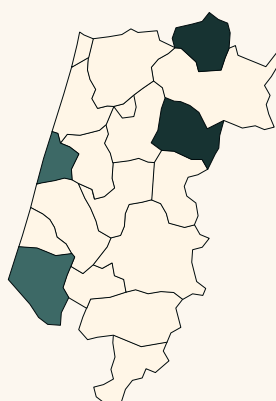
Regional maps

Aveiro

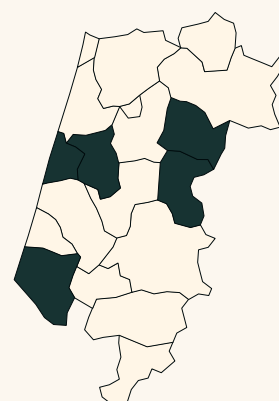
District: 19 municipalities / 2.808 km² / 698.634 inhabitants



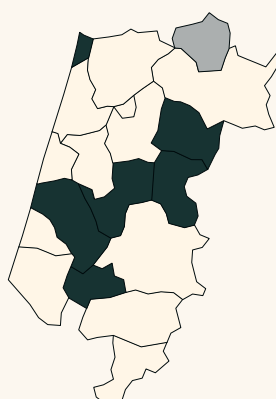
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations

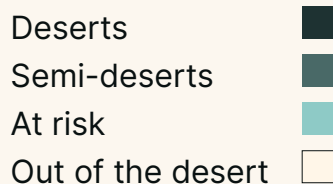


Deserts
Semi-deserts
At risk
No data
Out of the desert

- In Aveiro, only one municipality (5%) is a news desert and four are at risk of becoming deserts (21.1%), with only one media outlet reporting the news.
- Almost 80% of the municipalities (15) have frequently updated printed media. Three without frequent publications have other news media. Digital media are available in 14 municipalities (73.7%).
- Radio stations broadcast in 13 municipalities (68.4%), and all of them have their own local journalistic production.

Beja

District: 14 municipalities / 10.263 km² / 140.500 inhabitants



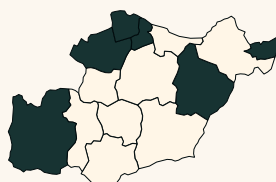
Printed media



Digital media



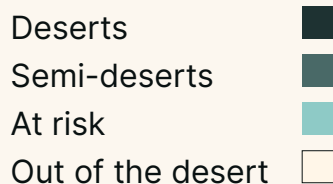
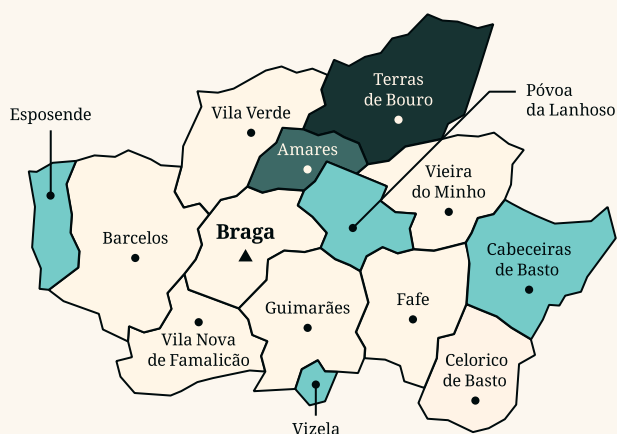
Local Radio Stations



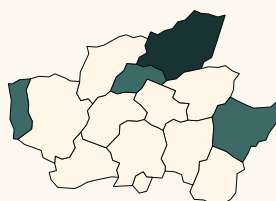
- Five municipalities (35.7%) are news deserts in the district of Beja, and another six (42.9%) only have one news source and are in danger of becoming deserts.
- Only three municipalities (21.4%) have printed media frequently updated while six councils (42.9%) don't have any but have other news sources. Digital media are present in four municipalities (28.6%).
- Eight municipalities (57.1%) have radio stations with local news and six do not. The radio is the only means of social communication broadcasting local news in five municipalities (35.7%).

Braga

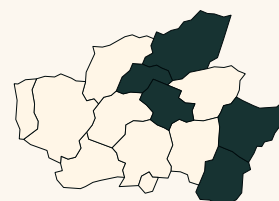
District: 14 municipalities / 2.673 km² / 827.252 inhabitants



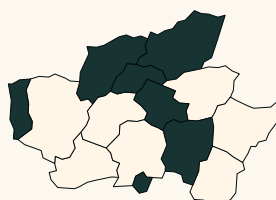
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations



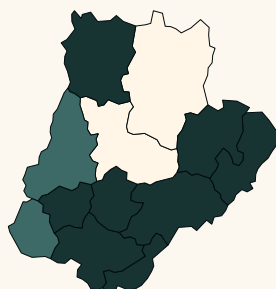
- In Braga, two municipalities (14.3%) are news deserts or semi-deserts, and four municipalities (28.6%) are at risk of becoming deserts.
- Printed media frequently updates are available in 10 municipalities (71.4%) and digital media in nine municipalities (64.3%). In two municipalities (14.3%) there are no frequently updated printed media, but there are other news sources. In one municipality (7.1%), there is only one less frequently updated newspaper.
- Half of the municipalities (7) have radio stations producing news, all with local journalists.

Bragança

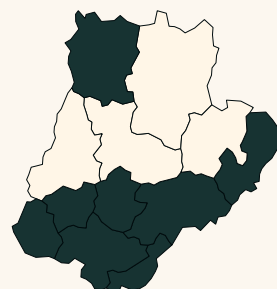
Distrito: 12 concelhos / 6.608 km² / 123.572 habitantes



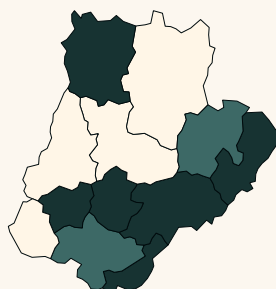
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations



Deserts
Semi-deserts
At risk
Out of the desert

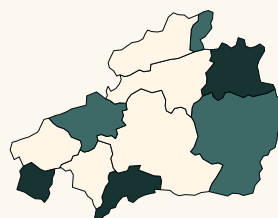
- In Bragança, more than half of the municipalities (58.3%) are news deserts or semi-deserts, most of them located on the border. In six (50%) there are no local mass communication outlets. Two municipalities are at risk of becoming deserts (16.7%).
- Only four municipalities have digital media (33.3%) and in one municipality, the digital media is the only news source.
- In two municipalities, the radio stations have news created at a distance, in non-adjacent municipalities, and so are considered semi-desert.

Castelo Branco

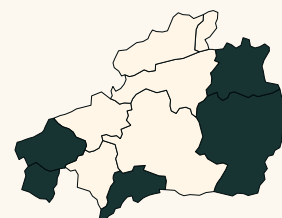
District: 11 municipalities / 6.675 km² / 177.689 inhabitants



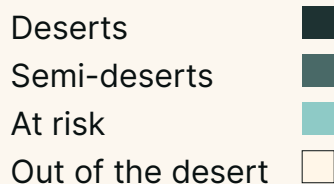
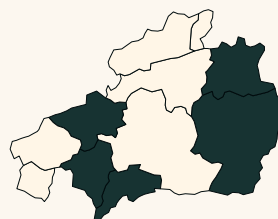
Printed media



Digital media



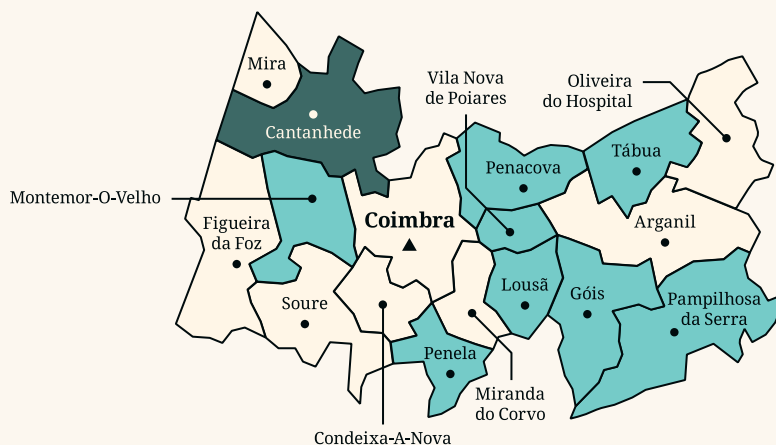
Local Radio Stations



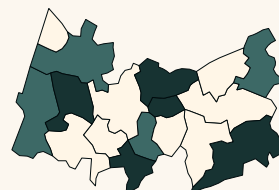
- Three municipalities (27.3%) in Castelo Branco are some type of news desert. Of these, two (18.2%) do not have any outlets with local news.
- In five municipalities (45.5%) there are frequently updated printed media, and in six (54.5%) there are digital media. There is only one less frequently updated print outlet in one county (9.1%). In three municipalities where there is no frequently updated print media, there are other news sources.
- Radio stations are present in six municipalities (54.5%), all with local news production.

Coimbra

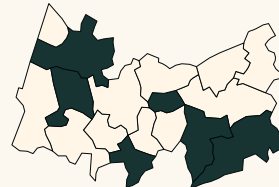
District: 17 municipalities / 3.947 km² / 405.977 inhabitants



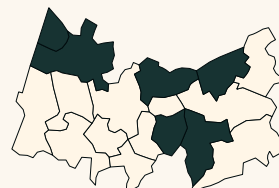
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations



Deserts



Semi-deserts



At risk



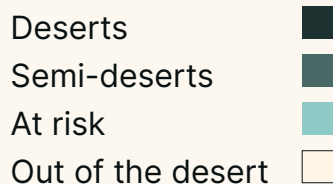
Out of the desert



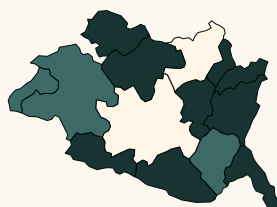
- In Coimbra, only one municipality (5.9%) is a news semi-desert, with only one less frequently updated printed media. In all other municipalities, there is some kind of local news creation. However, 8 eight municipalities (47.1%) have only one news outlet and are therefore at risk of becoming deserts.
- Frequently updated newspapers are present in eight municipalities (47.1%) while 11 have digital media (64.7%). In one municipality (5.9%), a digital outlet is the only news source.
- There are radio stations with local news creation in 11 municipalities (64.7%).

Évora

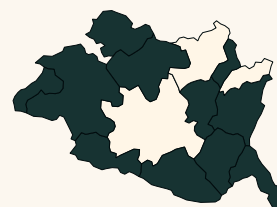
District: 14 municipalities / 7.393 km² / 151.624 inhabitants



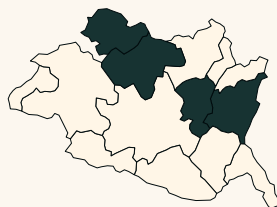
Printed media



Digital media



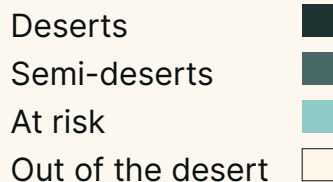
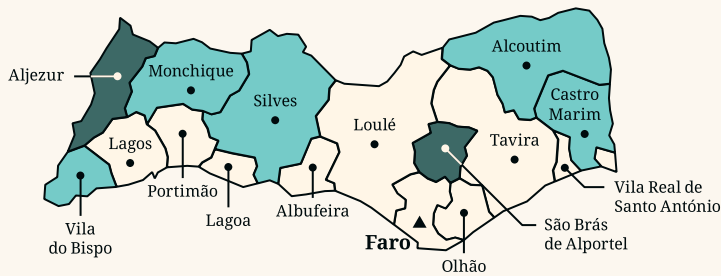
Local Radio Stations



- Évora has four municipalities (28.6%) that are news desert, two of which in the vicinity of Portalegre, and has seven municipalities (50%) in danger of becoming deserts.
- There are frequently printed media in only two municipalities (14.3%) and in eight (57.1%) there are no frequently updated media, but there are other news sources. Digital media are available only in three municipalities (21.4%).
- Radio stations are the only frequently updated news outlets in seven municipalities (50%), although there are 10 municipalities with radio stations (71.4%).

Faro

District: 16 municipalities / 4.960 km² / 438.188 inhabitants



Printed media



Digital media



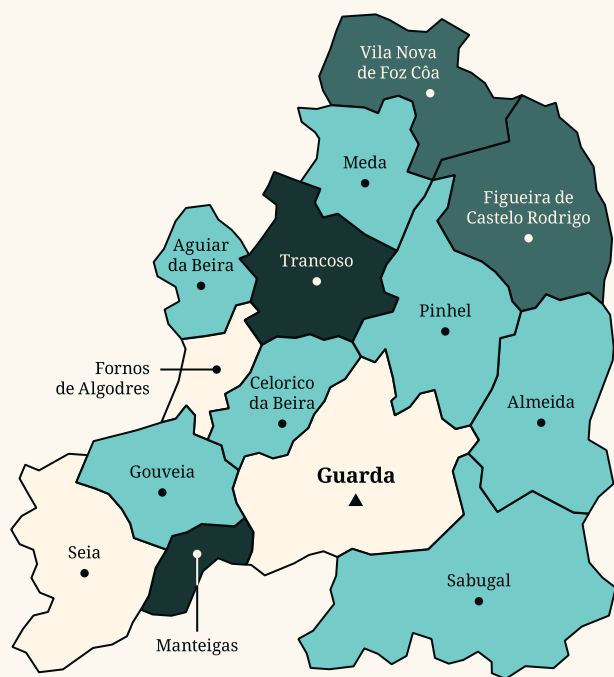
Local Radio Stations



- Faro has two municipalities that are news semi-deserts and it has no news deserts. The two semi-desert municipalities (12.5%) only have less frequently updated printed media. Five municipalities (31.3%) are in danger of becoming deserts.
- Frequently updated newspapers exist in eight municipalities (50%) and digital media in eight municipalities. In six municipalities (37.5%), there are no frequently printed news sources, but there are other media.
- There are radio stations with local news in 11 councils (68.8%) and in four, they are the only source of news.

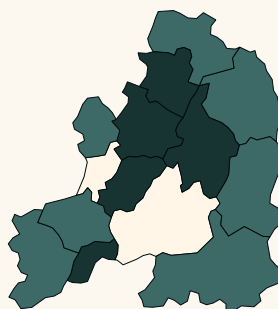
Guarda

District: 14 municipalities / 5.518 km² / 143.013 inhabitants

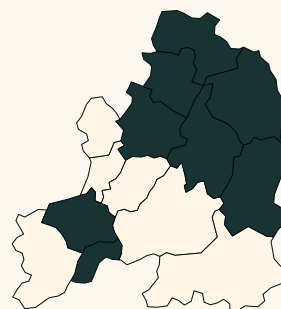


Deserts
Semi-deserts
At risk
Out of the desert

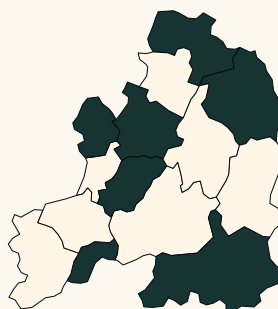
Printed media



Digital media



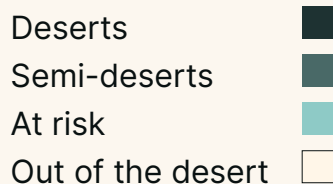
Local Radio Stations



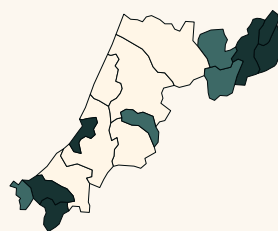
- Four municipalities (28.6%) are some type of news desert. Two of them (14.3%), both in the vicinity of the Viseu district, do not have any media reporting news. In two counties considered semi-deserts, there are only less frequently updated print media covering news.
- Half of the municipalities (7) have only one news source and are in danger of becoming deserts.
- Only two municipalities (14.3%) have frequently updated media, and 10 municipalities that do not have frequently updated printed media have other news sources. Digital media are in six municipalities (42.9%) and radio stations in seven municipalities (50%).

Leiria

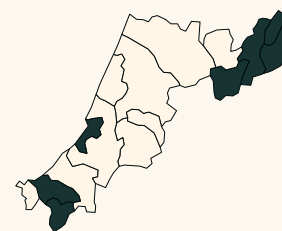
District: 16 municipalities / 3.515 km² / 456.925 inhabitants



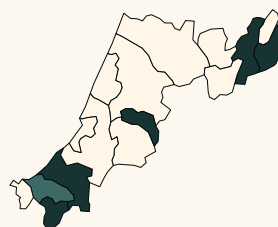
Printed media



Digital media



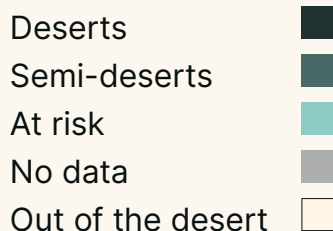
Local Radio Stations



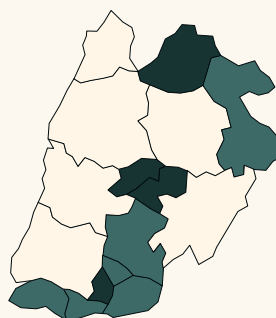
- In Leiria, four municipalities (25%) some type of news desert, three of which have no news media at all. Five municipalities (31.3%) are in danger of becoming news deserts.
- Frequently updated printed media are found in six municipalities (37.5%), while another six that do not have any print media rely on other news sources with local production.
- Digital media exist in nine municipalities (56.3%), with one municipality having only this digital outlet as a source of news. A total of 10 municipalities (62.5%) have radio stations with locally produced news, and one municipality (6.3%) has a radio station with remote news production. Thus that municipality is considered a semi-desert.

Lisboa

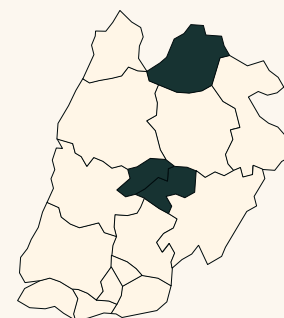
District: 16 municipalities / 2.761 km² / 2.293.748 inhabitants



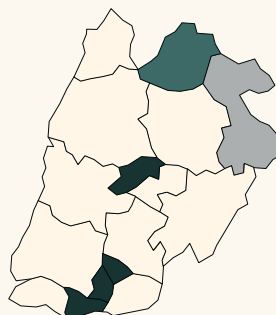
Printed media



Digital media



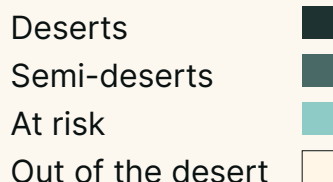
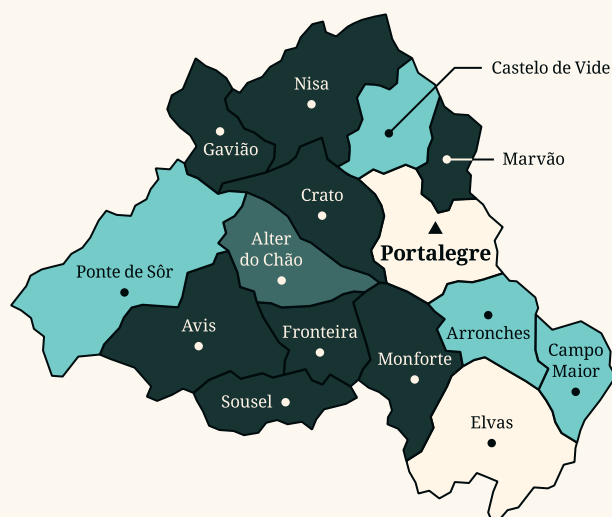
Local Radio Stations



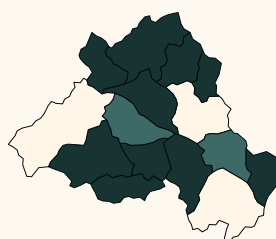
- Two municipalities in the district of Lisbon (12.5%) are some type of news desert, one of which has no registered news outlets at all. Two other municipalities (12.5%) are in danger of becoming deserts.
- There are six municipalities (37.5%) with frequently updated printed media, while 13 municipalities (81.3%) have digital media. Eight municipalities (50%) that do not have frequently updated newspapers have other news sources. One municipality (6.3%) has only one digital outlet.
- Radio stations with local news produced in the municipality are available in 10 municipalities (62.5%), while in one municipality (6.3%) news broadcasted by radio stations are not considered frequently updated. In one county, there is no information about the available radio stations.

Portalegre

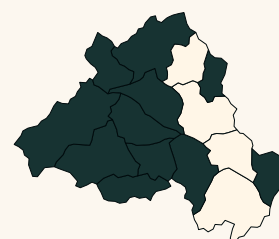
District: 15 municipalities / 6.065 km² / 103.855 inhabitants



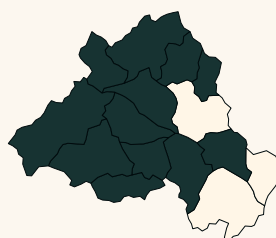
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations



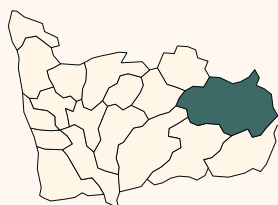
- More than half of the councils in the Portalegre district, specifically nine (60%), are some type of news desert, most of them in the vicinity of the Évora district. Eight of them (53.3%) do not have any means of social communication. Another four municipalities (26.7%) are in danger of becoming news deserts.
- Only three municipalities (20%) have more frequently updated newspapers, while one (6.7%) has only one less frequently updated print news source, with no other media outlets. In two municipalities that do not have frequently updated newspapers (13.3%), there are other news sources.
- Digital media are available in four municipalities (26.7%) and in three (20%) there are radio stations with local news. In two municipalities, digital is the only type of news source.

Porto

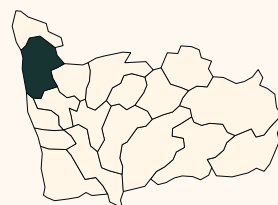
District: 18 municipalities / 2.395 km² / 1.782.419 inhabitants



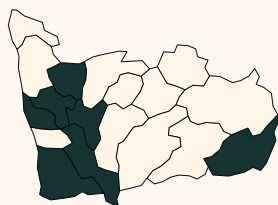
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations



Deserts



Semi-deserts



At risk



Out of the desert



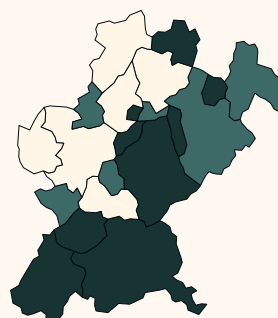
- No municipality in the Porto district is a news desert or semi-desert. There are also none at risk councils.
- There are frequently updated newspapers in 17 municipalities (94.4%) and, in the municipality where there are no frequently updated newspaper, there are other news sources. Digital media are also present in 17 municipalities (94.4%).
- Radio stations broadcast in 11 municipalities (61.1%), and in all of them there is local news production.

Santarém

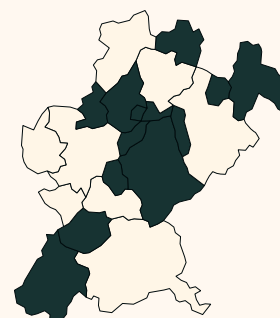
District: 21 municipalities / 6.746 km² / 429.657 inhabitants



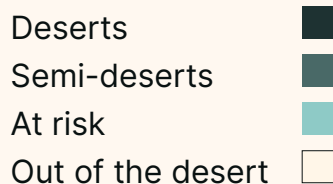
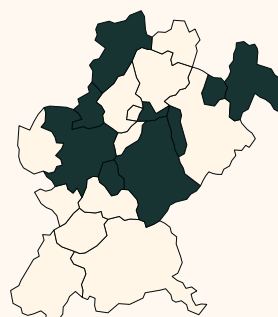
Printed media



Digital media



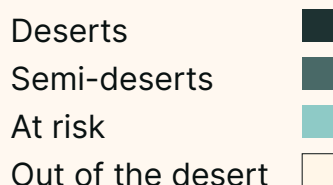
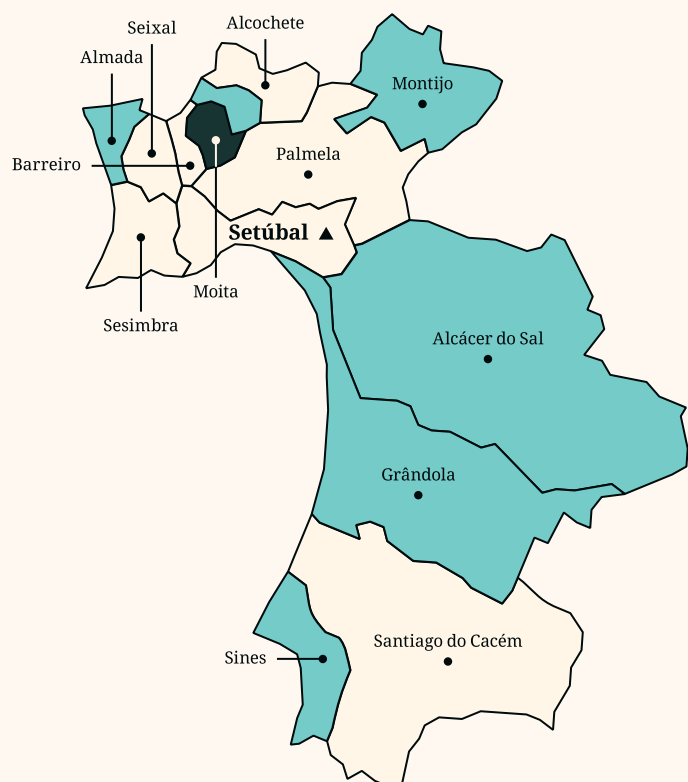
Local Radio Stations



- In the district of Santarém, one third of the municipalities (33.3% or 7 municipalities) are some type of news desert. Three of them (14.3%) do not have any media in the municipality and five municipalities (23.8%) are at risk of becoming deserts, that is, they have only one news outlet.
- Only six municipalities (28.6%) have frequently updated printed media. Four municipalities (19%) have only a less frequently updated newspaper and are semi-deserts. Of the municipalities that do not have frequently updated newspapers, six municipalities (28.5%) have other types of media.
- Digital media are found in eight municipalities (38.1%) and radio stations in 12 (57.1%).

Setúbal

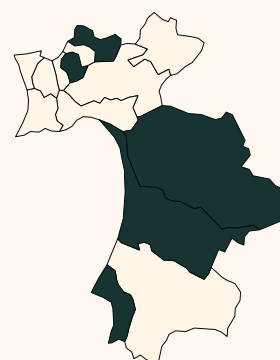
District: 13 municipalities / 5.064 km² / 853.175 inhabitants



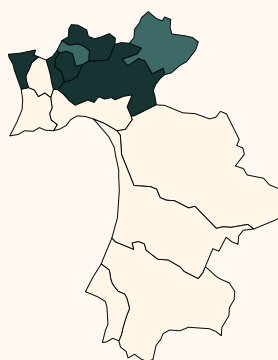
Printed media



Digital media



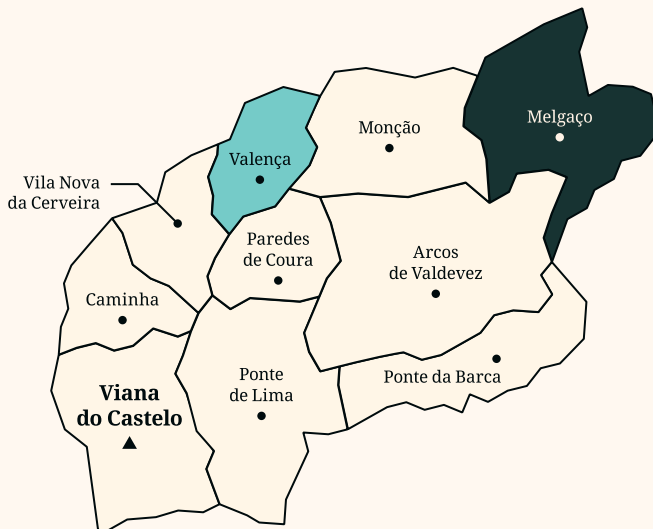
Local Radio Stations



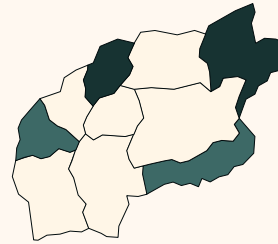
- In the district of Setúbal, two municipalities (15.4%) are news deserts and five municipalities (38.5%) are in danger of becoming one.
- In only four municipalities (30.8%), there are more frequently updated newspapers, while seven municipalities (53.8%) that do not have frequently updated newspapers have other news sources. In eight municipalities (61.5%) digital media is available and in two (15.4%) digital media are the only news media.
- In seven municipalities (53.8%), there are radio stations producing local news in the municipality. In one municipality (7.7%), the radio team does not carry out local news production.

Viana do Castelo

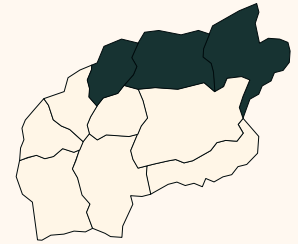
District: 10 municipalities / 2.255 km² / 229.739 inhabitants



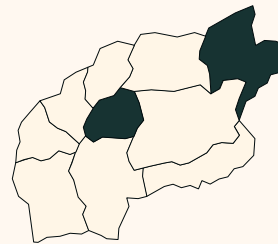
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations



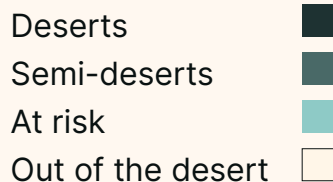
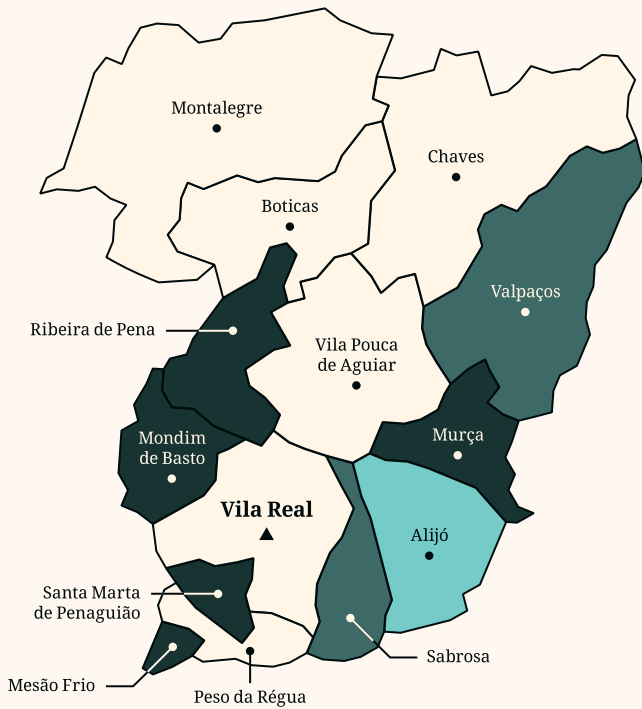
Deserts
Semi-deserts
At risk
Out of the desert



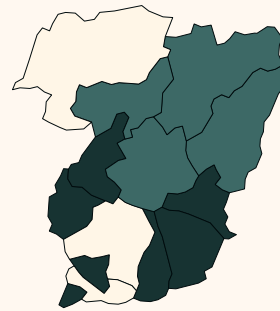
- Only one municipality (10%) in the district of Viana do Castelo is a news desert and one (10%) is in danger of becoming one.
- There are frequently updated publications in six municipalities (60%), while in another three (30%) there are no frequently updated publications, but there are other news sources.
- Digital media are available in seven municipalities (70%), while radio stations broadcast in 80% (8) of the municipalities.

Vila Real

District: 14 municipalities / 4.328 km² / 190.813 inhabitants



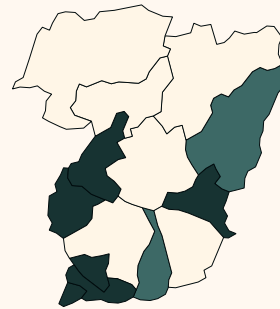
Printed media



Digital media



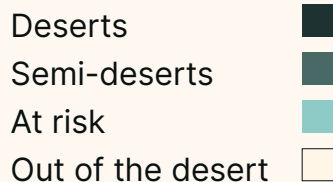
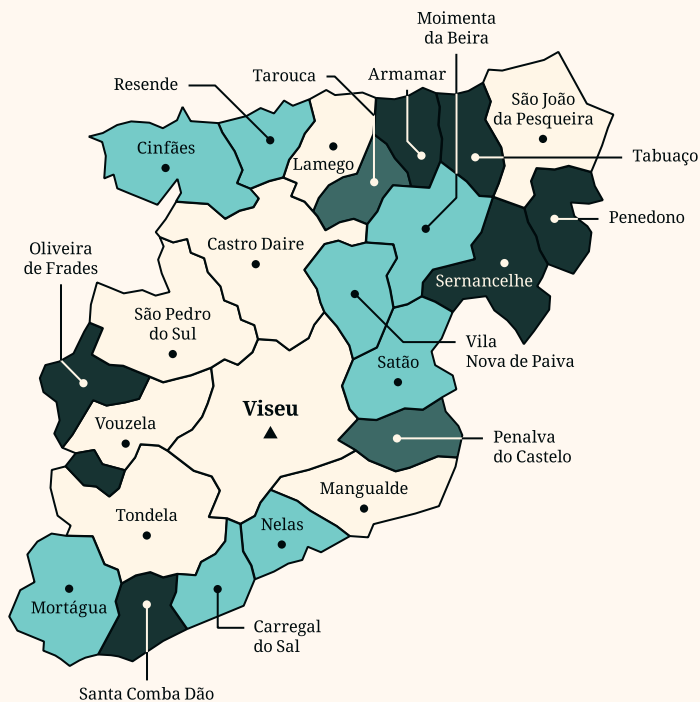
Local Radio Stations



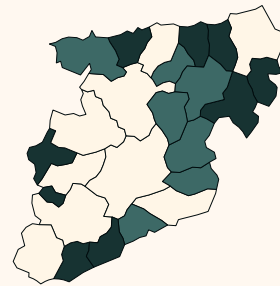
- In the Vila Real district, half of the municipalities (7) are some type of news desert. Five of them (35.7%) do not have any media and one municipality (7.1%) is at risk of becoming one.
- Only three municipalities (21.4%) have more frequently printed media outlets, and four municipalities (28.6%) that do not have frequently printed media have other types of news sources.
- There are digital media in four municipalities (28.6%) and radio stations in six municipalities (42.9%). In two municipalities (14.3%), local news is produced remotely, in non-adjacent municipalities.

Viseu

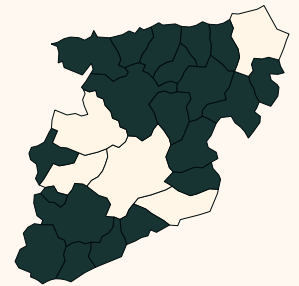
District: 24 municipalities / 5.007 km² / 353.718 inhabitants



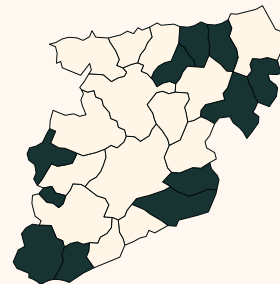
Printed media



Digital media



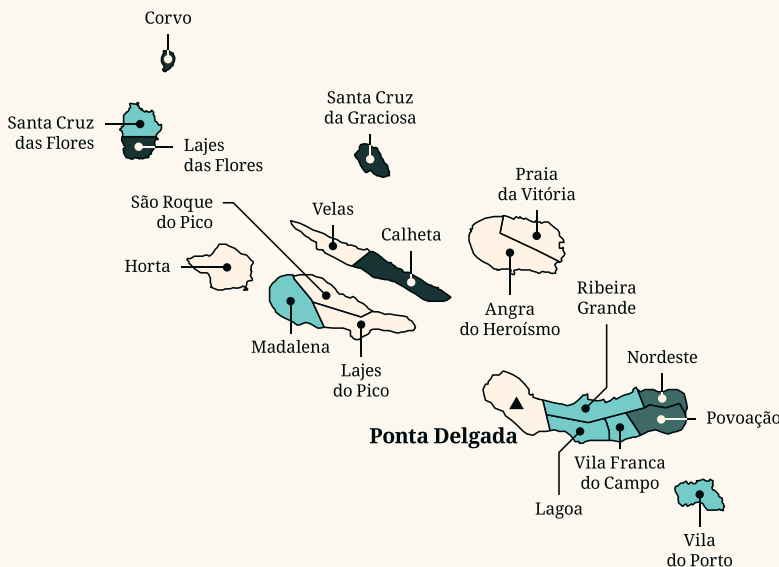
Local Radio Stations



- One third of Viseu's municipalities (33.3%), are some type news desert. Six municipalities (25%) do not have frequently updated news media. In two municipalities (8.3%), there is only less frequently updated printed media and they are considered semi-deserted. Eight municipalities (33.3%) are at risk of becoming deserts.
- In nine municipalities (37.5%), there are frequently updated print media covering local news, and in seven of them (29.2%) there are no frequently updated print media but there are other media outlets.
- Digital media are available in only five municipalities (20.8%) and radio stations with local news in 14 municipalities (58.3%).

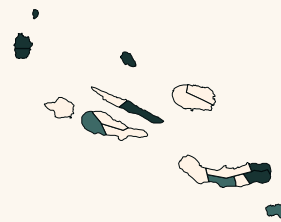
Autonomous Region of Azores

District: 19 municipalities / 2.333 km² / 242.499 inhabitants

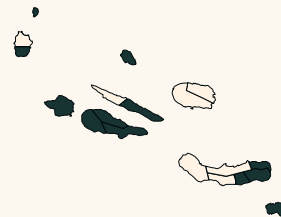


Deserts
 Semi-deserts
 At risk
 Out of the desert

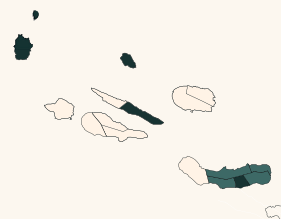
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations



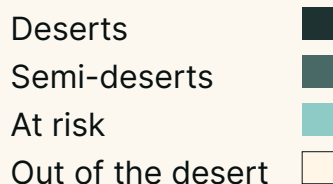
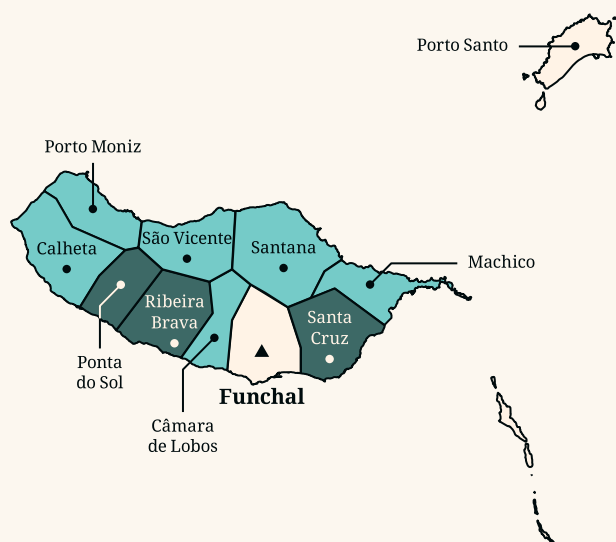
- In the Autonomous Region of Azores, 31.6% (6) of the municipalities are news deserts or semi-deserts, while another six (31.6%) are at risk of becoming deserts. There are frequently updated printed media in almost half of the municipalities (47%), and digital media in 37% (7) of the municipalities.
- Radio stations with local news are available in nine municipalities (47%), while in four radio news is less frequently updated. In

Azores, radio stations in different islands have the same journalist responsible for their news coverage, which is not considered sufficient.

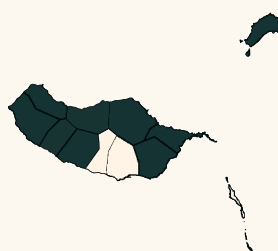
- Ponta Delgada, the administrative capital of the Azores archipelago, is the municipality with the highest number of media (nine frequently updated news outlets). In two municipalities, the only local journalistic coverage is carried out by a journalist who is located in another non-border municipality.

Autonomous Region of Madeira

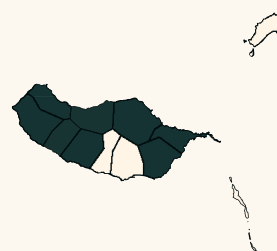
District: 11 municipalities / 801 km² / 254.089 inhabitants



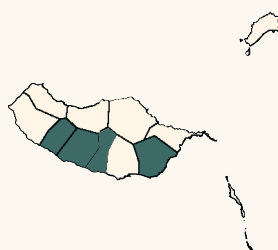
Printed media



Digital media



Local Radio Stations



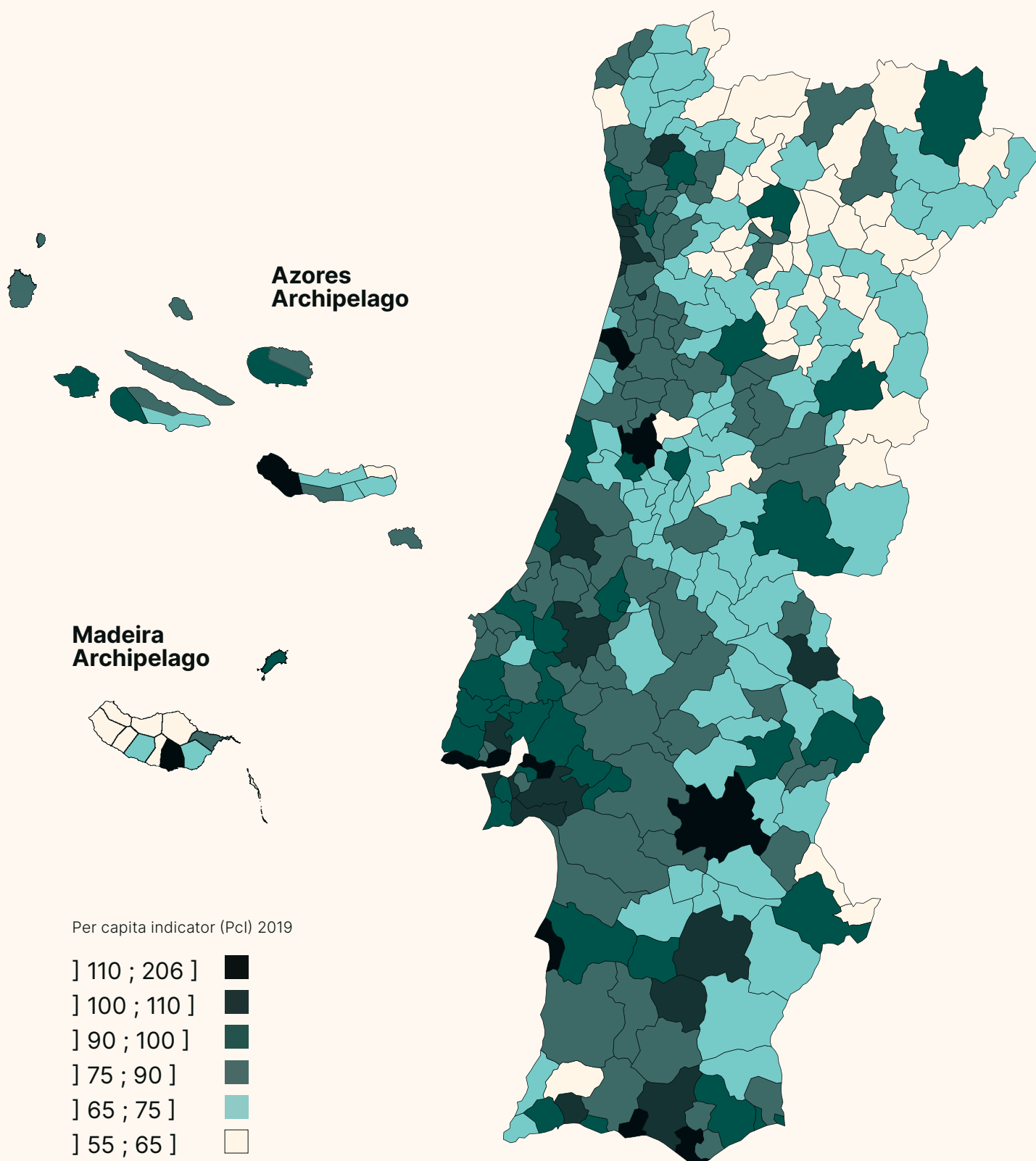
- In the Autonomous Region of Madeira, three municipalities (27.3%) are news semi-desert while no municipality is a total news desert. Six municipalities (54.5%) have only one news source and are therefore at risk of becoming one.
- Only two municipalities (18.2%) have frequently printed news outlets, and six municipalities (54.5%) do not have frequently updated newspapers but have other satisfactory coverage from other types of outlets.
- Digital media are available in three municipalities (27.3%) and radio stations with local news production in seven (63.6%). In four municipalities (36.4%), radio news is produced remotely, that is the radio is licensed for one municipality and the newsroom is located in another non-border municipality.

Annex

Per capita indicator

Purchasing power by municipality (2019)

Source: National Statistics Institute (INE).



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