

**THE SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DIMENSION OF  
SUSTAINABILITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL:  
THE CASE OF THE OESTE REGION,  
PORTUGAL**

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# **STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION**

**INTRODUCTION**

**METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

**THE RESULTS**

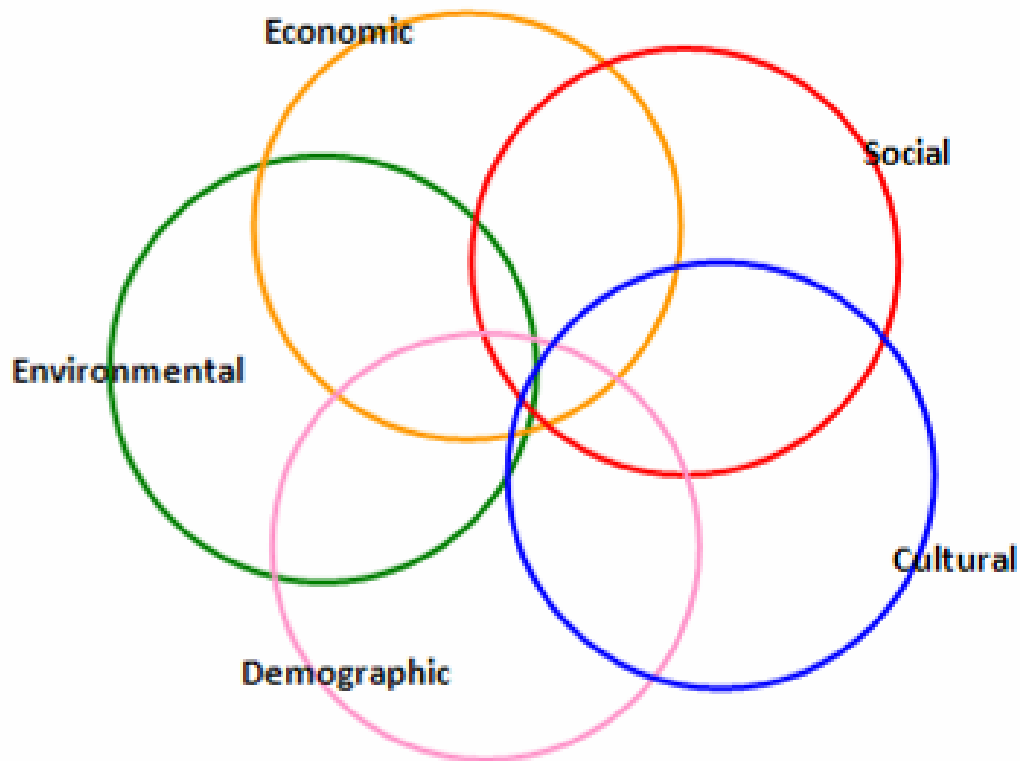
**The main features of sociodemographic sustainability**

**A spatial typology of sociodemographic sustainability**

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

## INTRODUCTION

### Systemic approach to sustainable development



The decision-making process involving individual **development stakeholders**, the most important endogenous resource, almost always takes place within **family households** and, thus it is influenced, for example, by education and income levels, and activity of their members. So, it is essential to learn more about such features because they **affect** development sustainability.

A territory is socio-demographically sustainable when there is an optimal relation between **sexes and age** groups in terms of their **size and growth**, as well as when an optimum level of **education and skills**, and **labour force participation** of the **members of the family households** is reached.

**In Portugal:**

**Aggravation of sociodemographic disparities among areas with different degrees of urbanization at all spatial scales**

## Most **rural areas**:

- **Depopulation, ageing and social marginalization**
- **Lack of social infrastructures for the elderly**
- **Bad housing conditions**
- **Low educational level**
- **Dependence on social welfare**
- **Weak diversification of the economic base**

## Most **urban and peri-urban areas**:

- **Population densification**
- **Concentration of human and social capital**
- **Growing pressure on land use for housing, health and educational facilities**
- **Increase in the number of single-parent and unstructured families**
- **Unemployment and social marginalization**



## Most **urban and peri-urban areas:**

- **Employment function concentrated in large and mid-sized urban centres**
- **Strong expansion of commuting areas**
- **Central parts: depopulation, ageing, housing degradation, gentrification**

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

### **Assumption:**

- **Urban, peri-urban and rural areas differ concerning indicators of socio-demographic sustainability**

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

### **Objectives:**

- to produce a spatial typology according to such indicators and
- to suggest measures for sustainable local development, taking into account its sociodemographic dimension.

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

**Study area:**

**The Oeste**, a rural region, NW  
of the Lisbon Metropolitan  
Area,  
marked by spatial disparities  
which has been subject to  
intense demographic, social  
and economic changes.



## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **VARIABLES**

#### **Population**

- **distribution**
- **age composition**
- **spatial mobility**
- **level of education**
- **economic activity**

#### **Family households**

- **size**
- **composition**
- **marital status**
- **social welfare provision**
- **communal infrastructure**  
**connections to households**

## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Level of analysis:**

**Local – parish, the smallest territorial-administrative unit, classified into:**

- **Predominantly urban**
- **Medially urban (peri-urban)**
- **Predominantly rural**

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

### Statistical Models

- **Factor analysis: principal components - varimax rotation**
- **Cluster analysis: Ward's method – Squared Euclidean distance**

## RESULTS

### Factor Analysis

The main **features** of sociodemographic sustainability:

Five factors



## RESULTS

### Factor 1: Urbanity vs. Rurality

- Population density, population with at least upper secondary education, economically active population, daily commuting by private car, recent in-migration from other parishes, single-parent households

**versus**

- Illiterate population, family farm population, households without piped water and/or sewerage

## RESULTS

### Factor 2: Age structure

- Younger population and families with small children

**versus**

- Older population and families with elder members,  
particularly farmers

## RESULTS

### Factor 3: Job Market

- Recent immigration of non-Portuguese descendents
- Unemployment rate

## RESULTS

### Factor 4 : Mobility

- Inter-county mobility

versus

- Intra-county mobility

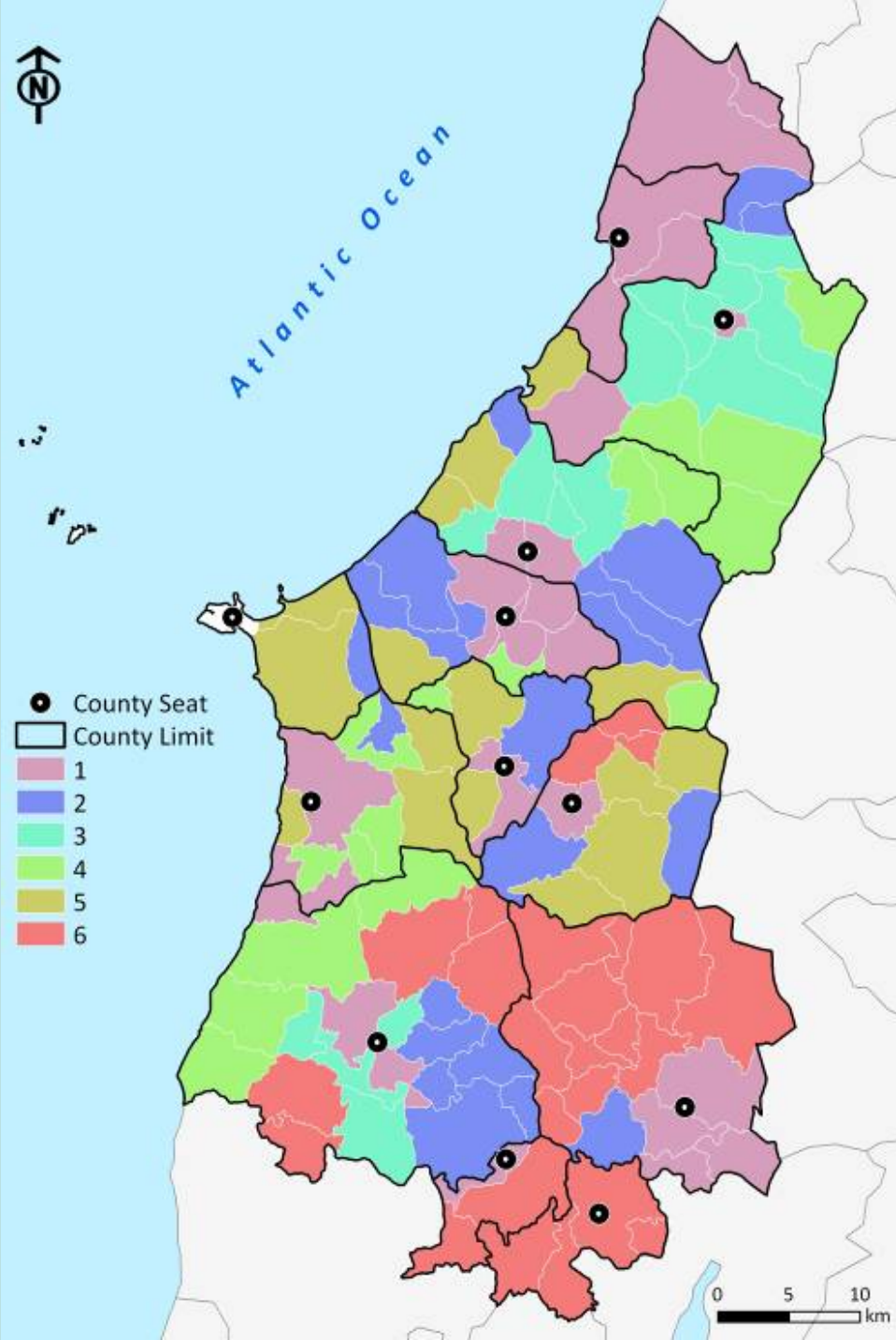
## RESULTS

### Factor 5: Pluriactivity

- Pluriactive farming
- Daily commuting

## RESULTS

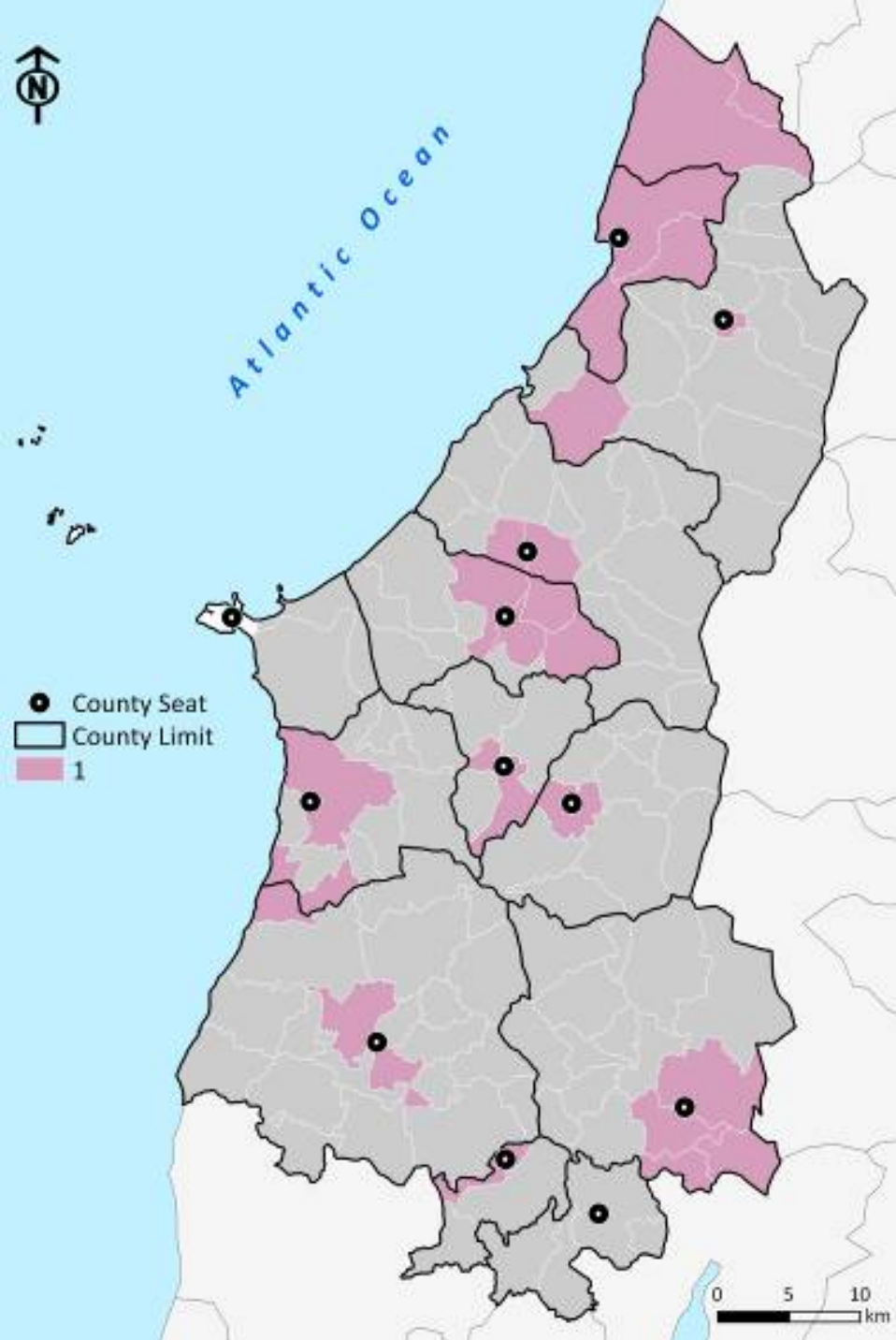
**A spatial typology of  
sociodemographic  
sustainability**



## RESULTS

### Cluster 1

- Quite **strong** socio-demographic sustainability
- **Urbanity** features
- Almost all parishes that are county seats or parishes contiguous to them

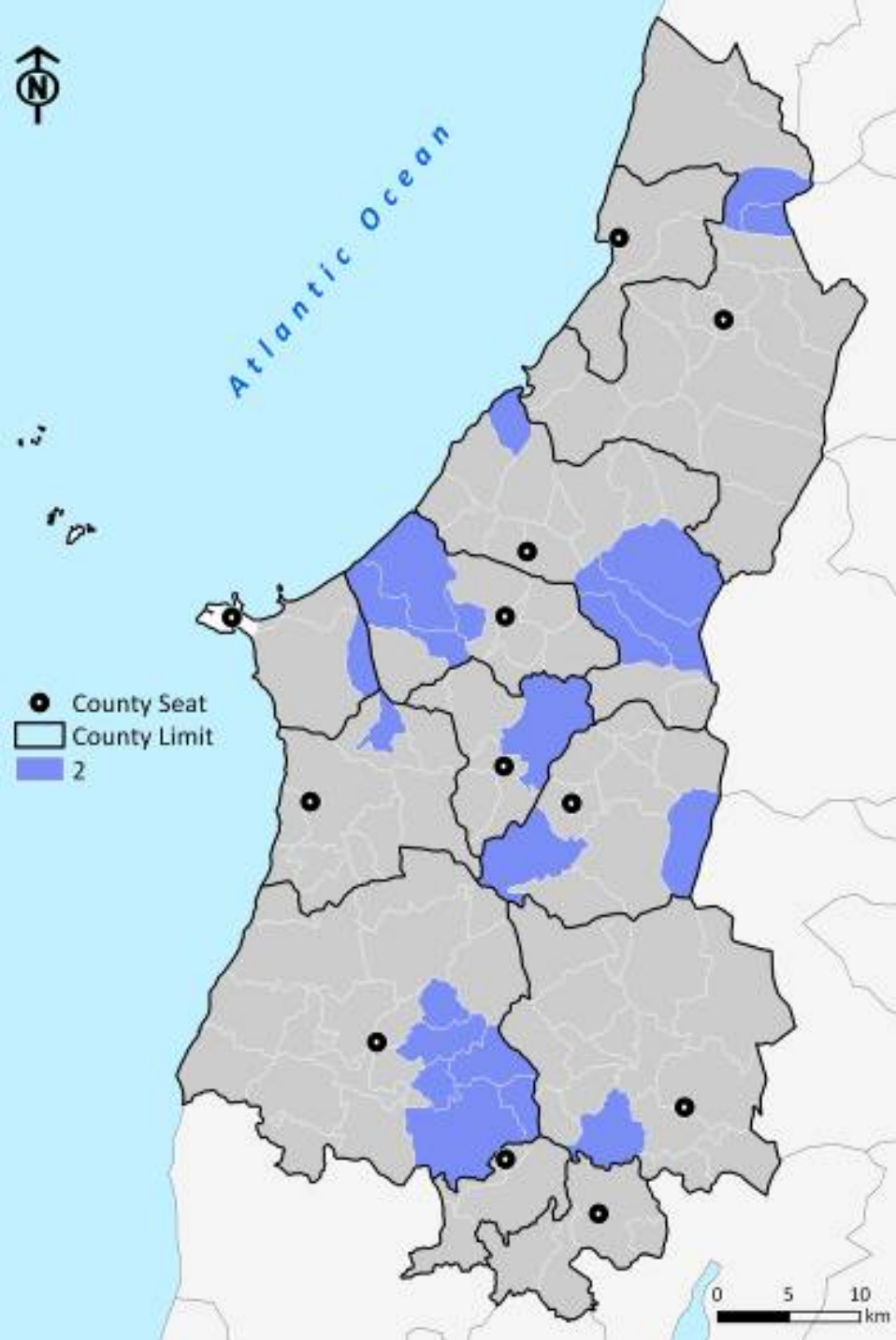




## RESULTS

### Cluster 2

- The **lowest level** of sociodemographic sustainability
- Most of the parishes are **rural** and located in the mountainous or hilly interior with weak market-oriented agriculture

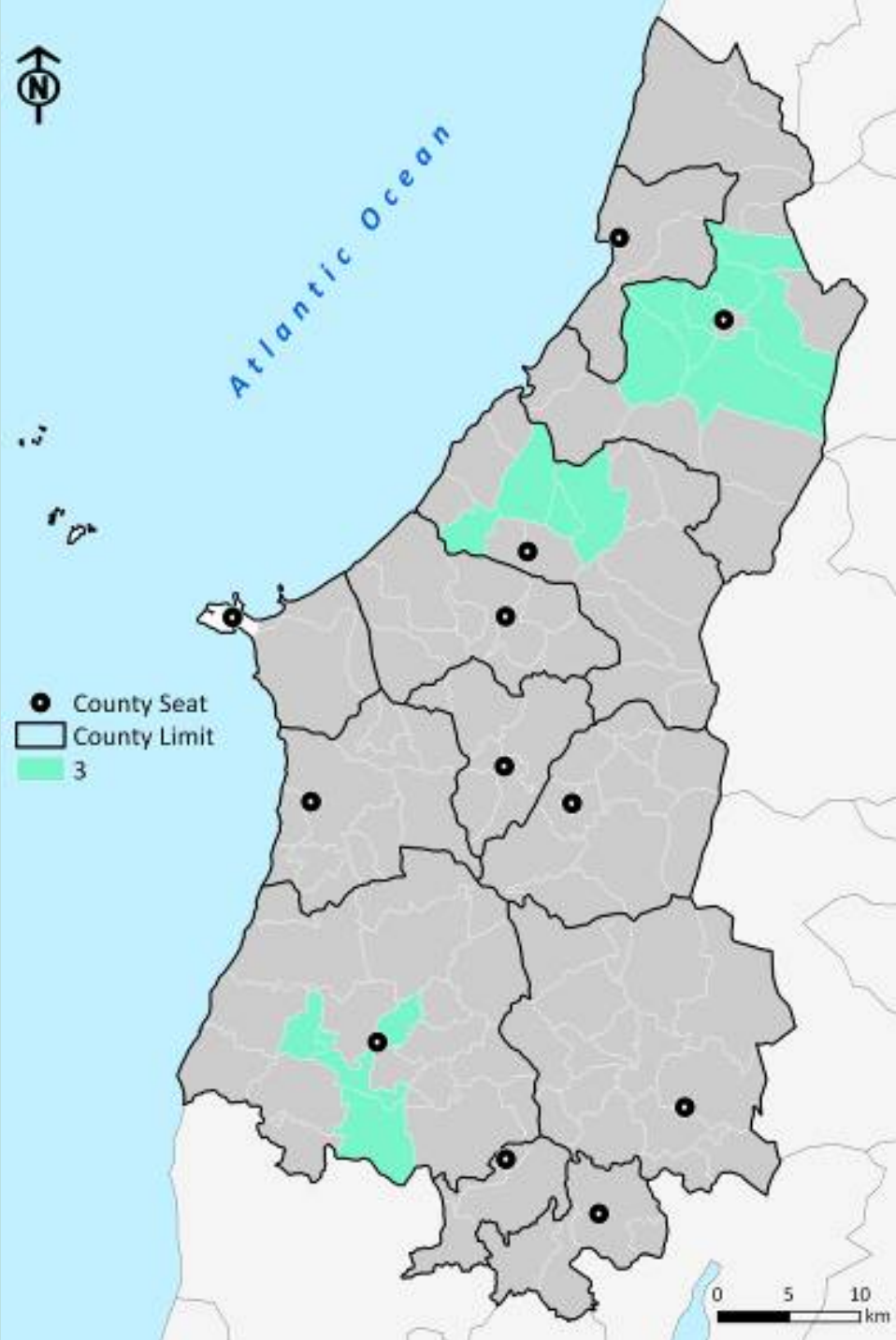




## RESULTS

### Cluster 3

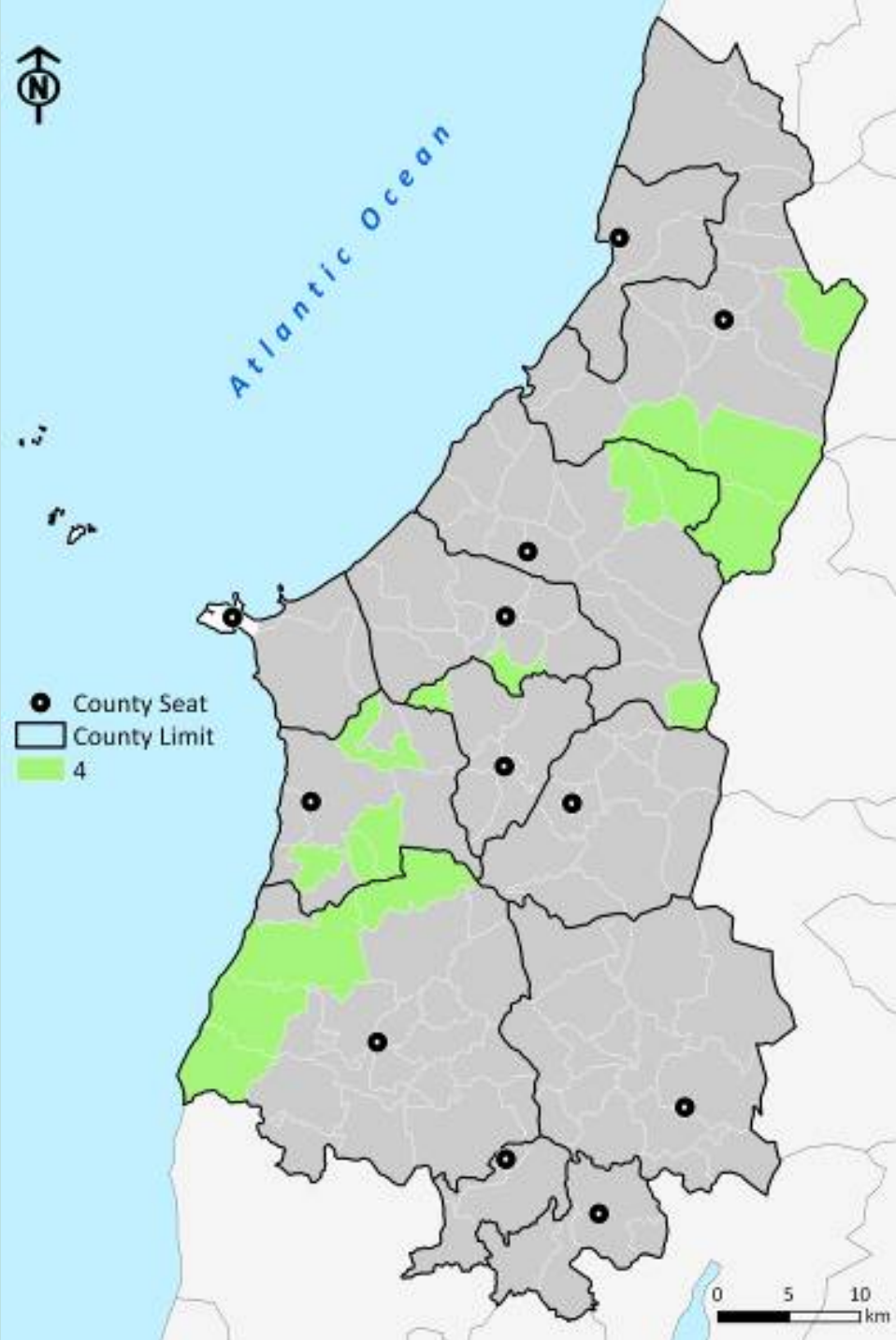
- Sociodemographic sustainability depends on **intra-county in-migration**
- Urban and peri-urban parishes located in the three counties with the largest urban centres near the county seat



## RESULTS

### Cluster 4

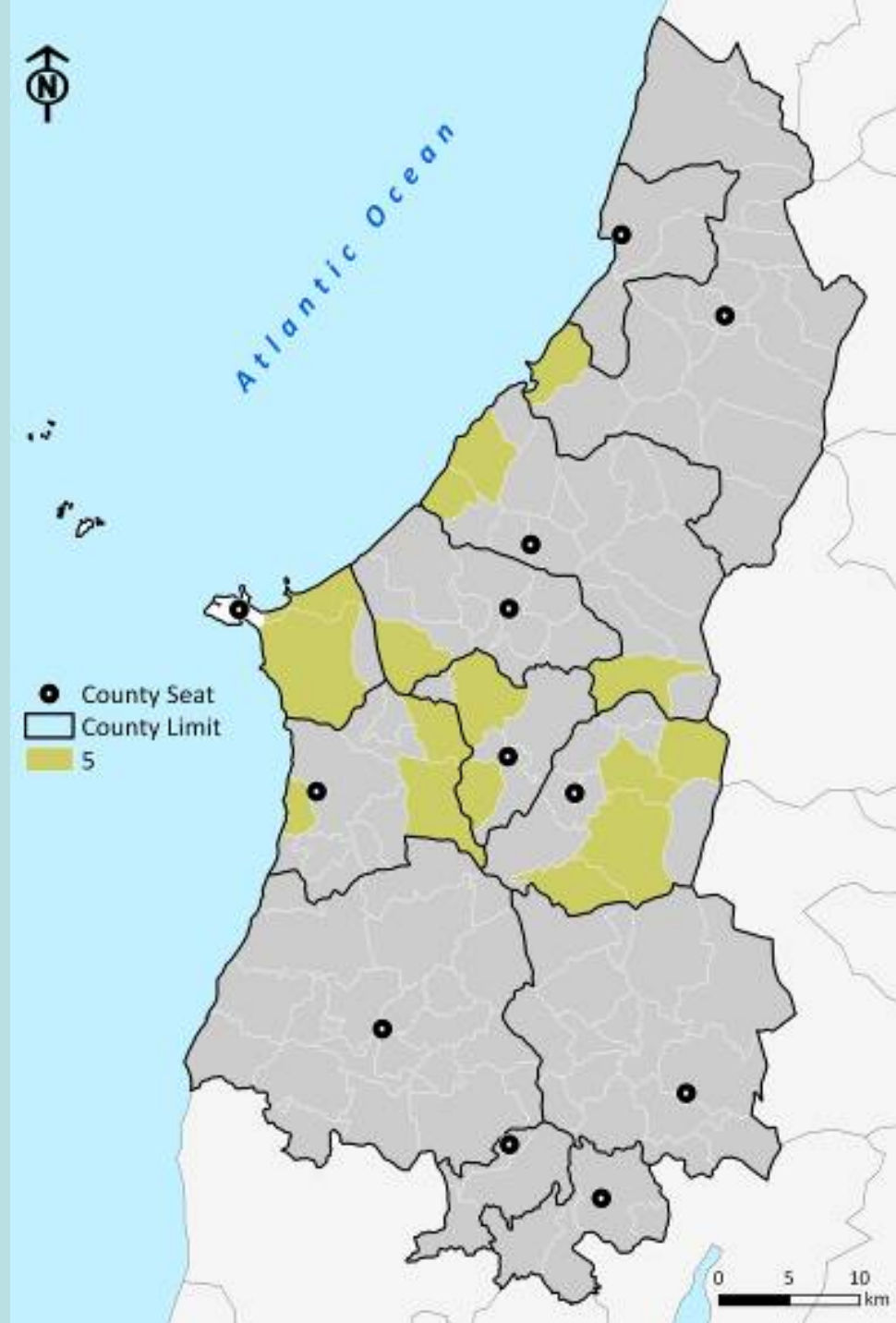
- Highest degree of sociodemographic sustainability
- Highest shares of younger population and younger families
- Parishes with considerable urbanized or urbanizable areas in the counties' Spatial Master Plans



## RESULTS

### Cluster 5

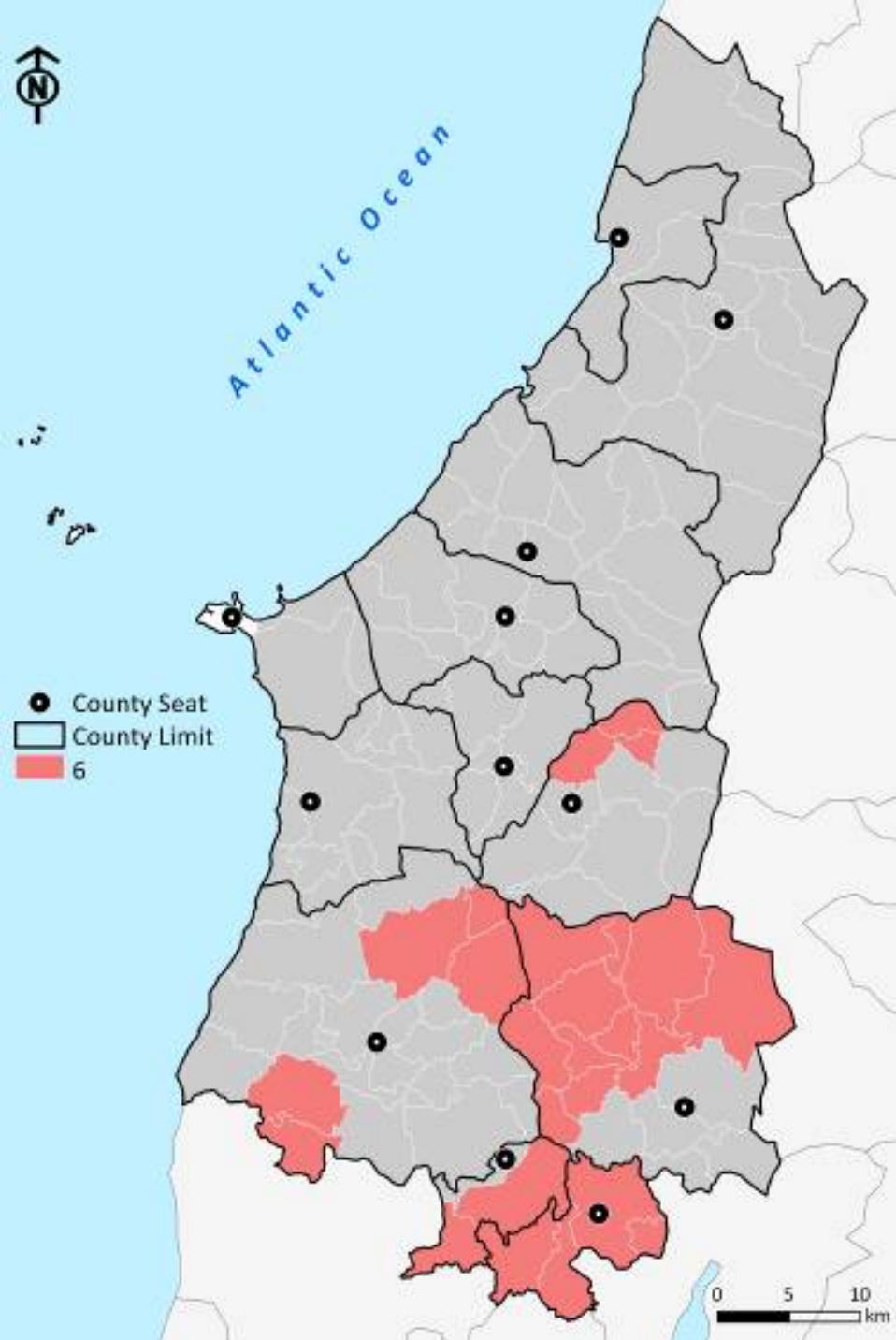
- Highest share of immigrants, specially from Eastern Europe
- They can compensate for the quite weak sociodemographic sustainability of the parishes
- ✓ Rural parishes in the interior – work in agriculture
- ✓ Peri-urban parishes mostly coastal - fisheries and construction



## RESULTS

### Cluster 6

- **Farming pluriactivity**
- Considerable number of family members **commute** daily to work
- Peri-urban parishes, mostly within the commuting zone of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area





## CONCLUSIONS

- In the majority of the territory of the Oeste Region **sociodemographic sustainability is guaranteed, at least, in the short run.**

## CONCLUSIONS

- **Strong dichotomy** between urban/peri-urban and rural parishes:
  - ✓ Almost all urban and in three quarters of peri-urban parishes: **socio-demographically sustainable**
  - ✓ More than two thirds of rural parishes: **weak sustainability**

## CONCLUSIONS

- The assumption that urban, peri-urban and rural areas **differ significantly** concerning sociodemographic sustainability was **confirmed**.
- Such differences have to be taken into account while **designing and implementing spatial development policy measures at the local level**.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Suggestion of measures:

#### For urban areas:

- incentives to job creation in smaller urban centres that could be an alternative to job concentration in the three main cities of the Region and could also prevent further expansion of commuting zones;



## CONCLUSIONS

### Suggestion of measures:

#### For urban areas:

- institutional support to family households aiming at diminishing the number of single-parent families and, thus preventing social disaggregation;

## CONCLUSIONS

### Suggestion of measures:

#### For urban areas:

- to expand and/or improve public transport as an alternative to the private automobile in the commuters' journey to work, promoting environmental sustainability.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Suggestion of measures:

#### **For peri-urban areas:**

- to create mechanisms to control real estate pressure on land use, specially second housing developments, in order to make agricultural and other land uses competitive;

## CONCLUSIONS

Suggestion of measures:

**For peri-urban areas:**

- to give incentives to young farmers to invest in competitive agricultural sectors such as horticulture, fruitculture and viticulture;

## CONCLUSIONS

Suggestion of measures:

**For peri-urban areas:**

- to create alternatives in the local job market to long-distance commuting to work and thus, promoting the use of the local human resource bases.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Suggestion of measures:

#### For rural areas:

- to attenuate ageing through the creation of alternative job opportunities to young farm household members, for instance, in rural tourism and in the ceramics industry;

## CONCLUSIONS

Suggestion of measures:

**For rural areas:**

- to encourage multifunctional agriculture by means of incentives to farmers to preserve cultural rural landscapes or to invest in organic farming;

## CONCLUSIONS

### Suggestion of measures:

#### **For rural areas:**

- in attractive rural landscapes, to attract second home users in order to help rehabilitate the built heritage, as well as to expand the local consumption market for goods and services oriented towards older population.