Spatial variability in the relation between fire weather and burned area: patterns and drivers in Portugal

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Abstract. Fire weather indices are used to assess the effect of weather conditions on wildfire behaviour and the high Daily Severity Rating percentile (DSRp) is strongly related to the total burned area (BA) in Portugal. The aims of this study were to: 1) assess if the 90th DSRp (DSR90p) threshold is adequate for Portugal; 2) identify and characterize regional variations of the DSRp threshold that justifies the bulk of BA; and, 3) analyse if vegetation cover can explain the DSRp spatial variability. We used wildfire data, weather reanalysis data from ERA5-Land, for the 2001 – 2019 period, and the land use map for Portugal. DSRp were computed for an extended summer period and combined with individual large wildfires. Cluster analysis was performed using the relationship between DSRp and BA, in each municipality.

Results revealed that the DSR90p is an adequate threshold for Portugal and is well related to large BA. However, at the municipality scale, differences appear between the DSRp linked to the majority of accumulated BA. Cluster analysis revealed that municipalities where large wildfires occur in high DSRp present higher BA in forests and are located in coastal areas. In contrast, clusters with lower DSRp present greater BA in shrublands and are situated in eastern regions. These findings can support better prevention and fire suppression planning.

1 Introduction

Wildfire incidence depends on weather, especially in regions with a Mediterranean-type climate, where mild and rainy winters and springs favour vegetation growth, while dry and hot summers promote thermal and hydric stress of live fuels and dryness of dead fuels (Romano and Ursino, 2020). The Iberian Peninsula is the European region with the highest wildfire incidence and consequently, suffers large property damage and fatalities (San-Miguel-Ayanz et al., 2020). In particular, Portugal has been severely affected by wildfires in the last decades, especially in 2003, 2005 and 2017 (Gouveia et al., 2012; Trigo et al., 2006; Turco et al., 2019).

The impacts of droughts on vegetation can create favourable conditions for the ignition and spread of wildfires, especially in summer (Pausas and Fernández-Muñoz, 2012; Russo et al., 2017), but also in winter (Amraoui et al., 2015; Calheiros et al., 2020). Heatwaves and droughts have a strong influence on fire incidence, as shown by several studies in the last years in Mediterranean Europe (Duane and Brotons, 2018; Sutanto et al., 2020). In addition, fire incidence increased dramatically with the combined effect of prolonged drought and heatwaves in Mediterranean France, as pointed out by Ruffault et al., (2018), or as occurred in the catastrophic fires of 2017 in Portugal (Turco et al., 2019). Other studies identified weather types, most of them connected with heatwaves or droughts in the western Iberian Peninsula, associated with the occurrence of large wildfires (Rodrigues et al., 2020; Vieira et al., 2020).

In Western Mediterranean, the influence of climate variability on fire incidence became more evident after the 1970s, following a fire regime change, from fuel-limited to drought-driven (Pausas and Fernández-Muñoz, 2012). The main factor for this change was the increase of fuel load and continuity due to rural depopulation and land abandonment (Moreira et al., 2011; Moreno et al., 2014). These changes in landscape and population favoured the occurrence of large wildfires (Ferreira-Leite et al., 2016), which tend to occur with severe fire weather conditions, being rare in other meteorological conditions (Telesca and Pereira, 2010). The contribution of landscape-level fuel connectivity for wildfire size was evident in the 1998 – 2008 period (Fernandes et al., 2016). These changes in the landscape, together with socioeconomic changes, impact the fire regime (Pereira et al., 2014; Parente and Pereira, 2016; Parente et al., 2018). Future climate change will increase fire incidence in Mediterranean Europe (Sousa et al., 2015; Turco et al., 2018).

Fire regime can be defined, in a strict sense, as a statistical concept described by the spatial and temporal patterns of wildfire characteristics (occurrence, frequency, size, seasonality, etc), as well as, in a broad sense, vegetation characteristics, fire effects and fire weather in a given area or ecosystem, based on fire histories at individual sites over long periods, generally result from the cumulative interaction of fire, vegetation, climate, humans, and topography over time (Crutzen and Goldmammer, 1993; NCWG, 2011; Whitlock et al., 2010). Cluster analysis for the Iberian Peninsula has identified several regions with similar fire regimes, using several variables related to fire, such as the intra-annual pattern of burnt area (BA) (Trigo et al., 2016; Calheiros et al., 2020; Calheiros et al., 2021), fire activity and weather risk (Jimenez-Ruano et al., 2018), large fire-weather typologies (Rodrigues et al., 2020) or BA spatio-temporal trends (Silva et al., 2019).

Fire weather danger indices are commonly used to assess the current and/or cumulative effect of atmospheric conditions on fuel moisture and fire behaviour. The Canadian Forest Fire Weather Index (FWI) System (CFFWIS) consists of six components that account for those effects (Van Wagner, 1987), including the Daily Severity Rating (DSR). The 90th percentile of the DSR (DSR90p) is often used as the threshold for severe fire weather that is associated with large fires (Bedia et al., 2012; Carvalho et al., 2008; Fernandes, 2019; Silva et al., 2019). More recently, the 95th percentile of DSR was also identified as a good indicator of extreme fire weather and well related to the BA in the Iberian Peninsula (Calheiros et al., 2020; Calheiros et al., 2021). BA and extreme fire weather days have a strong link, noticeable in the similar intra-annual variability pattern in the four pyro-regions of the Iberian Peninsula (Calheiros et al., 2020). This robust link was used to anticipate fire regime changes caused by future climate change, revealing the potential displacement of fire regimes to the north (Calheiros et al., 2021).

Wildfires in Portugal were the subject of several studies that developed zoning approaches to identify regions with similar fire regimes using burnt area data (Kanevski and Pereira, 2017; Scotto et al., 2014), combined with fire weather indices (Calheiros et al., 2020; Calheiros et al., 2021), population density, topography, land cover changes (Oliveira et al., 2017) and net primary production (Fernandes, 2019), or fire prevention policy decisions (Parente et al., 2016). Generally, clustering results indicate that Portugal can be divided into two (dividing the north and south of Tajo River) or three main clusters (the north part further divided in western and eastern). Oliveira et al. (2017) added a fourth cluster in the central littoral region. Actually, the spatial and temporal distribution of wildfires presents clustering patterns, suggesting that small fires are more dependent on local topographic or human conditions, while large fires are a consequence of infrequent causes or with shorter periods such as weather extreme events (Pereira et al., 2015). The temporal pattern is characterized by periodicities and scaling regimes (Telesca and Pereira, 2010) including a main summer fire season and a secondary spring peak, both driven by the type of climate and the occurrence of extreme weather conditions (Amraoui et al., 2015; Trigo et al., 2016; Calheiros et al., 2020).

There have been important changes in land use since the 1960s in Portugal which are related to wildfire occurrence. Arable cropland decreased from 40% to only 12% of the total area in 2006, at the national level; and forest declined since the 1980s, as a result of forest fires, in Central Portugal (Jones et al., 2011). The analysis of Corine Land Cover maps for 2000 and 2006 and EFFIS BA perimeters, from 2000 to 2013 in Portugal, revealed an increase in the area of shrublands, a decrease in forest areas, 51% of total BA in shrublands but a much higher wildfire proneness in shrublands than in forest areas (Pereira et al., 2014). Other studies have confirmed that shrublands are more susceptible to wildfires, whereas agricultural areas and agroforestry systems are less likely to burn, as revealed by several studies (Carmo et al., 2011; Nunes, 2012; Meneses et al., 2018). Barros and Pereira, (2014) identified shrublands as the most wildfire-prone land cover, followed by pine forests while, on the contrary, annual crops and evergreen oak woodlands tend to be avoided by wildfire. Ferreira-Leite et al., (2016) concluded that uncultivated land (shrublands, grasslands, and other sparse vegetation) was the most important factor affecting burnt areas, considering large wildfires, greater than 100 ha. Topography and uncultivated land were significant factors determining burnt area, in a study for the 1980-2014 period conducted at the municipal level (Nunes et al., 2016).

Another essential element for fire incidence is the vegetation and land use type. For example, land use interfaces, that are generally between forests and other land use types (shrublands, agricultural and urban), have a significant effect on human-caused wildfire occurrence in Mediterranean Europe, showing that larger interfaces have a larger risk of fire happen due to human causes (Vilar et al., 2016). Fuel removal can be a solution for the extending area of wildland-urban interfaces (Elia et al., 2016). Wildfires can also modify the landscape in the Mediterranean region (e.g. Stamou et al. (2016)) influenced by regeneration patterns, topography and local fire histories. In the Iberian Peninsula, shrublands and pine forests have registered larger burnt areas (Barros and Pereira, 2014; Pausas and Vallejo, 1999). This fact can be explained by the increasing landscape homogenization, due to shrublands expansion and agricultural abandonment, as observed by Lloret et al. (2002), in eastern Spain. In Portugal, eucalyptus expansion has not modified the fire regime, but the rising undermanaged and abandoned forest plantations, especially after large-fire seasons, is a concern for the future (Fernandes et al., 2019).

There is evidence of an extending urban-rural interface in Portugal, due to an increase of the urban area to double since 1990, which contributes to an increase in fire incidence (Silva et al., 2019). Results obtained for the entire territory of Continental Portugal in the 1990 – 2012 period reveal that the rural-urban interface increased by more than two-thirds, the total BA decreased by one-third, but the BA within the interface doubled (Tonini et al., 2018).

Although the incidence of fire has several factors with variable influence, this study focuses on the relationship between extreme fire weather and high BA, resulting from large wildfires in Portugal. A previous study, assessed the recent evolution of spatial and temporal patterns of BA and fire weather risk in the Iberian Peninsula (Calheiros et al., 2020) and concluded that the DSR90p is a good indicator of extreme fire weather and is well related to the BA in the Iberian Peninsula.

Given the role of extreme weather on BA resulting from large wildfires, the common use of DSR thresholds and the effect of other factors, namely land use/land cover, the objectives of this work were:

1) to assess if the DSR90p threshold is adequate for mainland Portugal;

2) to identify and characterize regional variations of the DSRp threshold that justifies the bulk of BA, and;

3) to analyse if vegetation cover can explain the spatial variability of the DSRp.

2 Data and methodology

2.1 Study Area: Portugal

This study focuses on mainland Portugal, a territory divided by 23 NUTS III provinces themselves subdivided into 278 municipalities and characterized by mountainous areas in north and central regions and vast plains in the south (Figure 1). The BA variability is mainly influenced by the precipitation anomaly in spring and the occurrence of abnormal atmospheric patterns that generate very hot and dry days in the western Iberian Peninsula during summer (Pereira et al., 2005). In fact, 97% of the total number of extreme wildfires (with BA $\geq$5000 ha) were active during heatwaves (Parente et al., 2018) while almost 90% of extreme wildfires during the 1981-2017 period occurred within a region affected by drought (Parente et al., 2019). Fire weather in Portugal has usually been characterized using the CFFWIS (Calheiros et al., 2021; Calheiros et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2019; Nunes et al., 2019; Pereira et al., 2013; Carvalho et al., 2008), which provides good results in comparison with other methods of fire danger evaluation (Viegas et al., 1999).

2.2 Fire Weather Index and Meteorological Data

We used the DSR which is an additional component of the FWI system to rate more accurately the expected efforts required to suppression/control the wildfire and is based on the FWI which, in turn, rates the fire intensity and is frequently used to inform the general public about fire weather danger conditions (De Groot, 1987; Van Wagner, 1987). The indices of the FWI system were computed with the equations provided by Van Wagner and Pickett (1975) and daily values at 12h00UTC of air temperature and relative humidity (at 2 meters), wind speed (at 10 meters), and accumulated total precipitation.

The meteorological variables were obtained from the fifth generation of ECMWF atmospheric reanalyses of the global climate (ERA5-Land). The ERA5-Land dataset (Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), 2017) has a much higher spatial resolution (0.1°lat x 0.1°long; native resolution is 9 km) and temporal (hourly) resolution than the previous reanalysis data service, that were widely used and with good performances for different purposes, including FWI calculation in Portugal (Bedia et al., 2012). The ERA5 is recognized as the best or one of the best global atmospheric reanalysis datasets (Huai et al., 2021; Muñoz-

Sabater et al., 2021; Urban et al., 2021) and used worldwide (Chinita et al., 2021; Sianturi et al., 2020). Therefore, it is one of the most used meteorological datasets in the world.

Land use and land cover (LULC) map for 2018 (COS2018) and wildfire data, for the 2001 to 2019 period, were provided by Portuguese national authorities, respectively, *Direção Geral do Território* (DGT, 2019) and the *Instituto Nacional da Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas* (ICNF, 2020). These datasets were used in many other studies, by a large number of authors for a wide variety of purposes (Bergonse et al., 2021; Tarín-Carrasco et al., 2021). Only wildfires larger than 100ha that occurred during the extended summer season (defined between 15th May and 31st October) were investigated. When a given wildfire affected more than one municipality, the resulting BA extent was allocated to each of the administrative units burned by the wildfire.

The starting and ending dates of each wildfire were fundamental information to attribute the DSR to each BA. This process was accomplished using MODIS satellite data, computed using the same method as in Benali et al. (2016), with start and end dates and ignition location estimated for circa 92% of the total BA, for large wildfires. Daily DSR was computed for the same period (2001 – 2019) and all ERA5-Land grid points within continental Portugal. The size of Portuguese municipalities is relatively small, so there are no major weather variations within.

The DSR percentiles (DSRp) considered in the analysis carried out for the entire territory of mainland Portugal was the maximum value of DSR recorded during the duration of the wildfire. In the case of the analysis performed based on the municipalities, the considered DSRp was the maximum value of DSR during the duration of the wildfire in each municipality. Afterwards, we computed the and assigned to the BA within the administrative unit.

BA data were normalized using both the decimal logarithm and fraction of the total burnt area (FTBA), in percentage. Exploratory analysis showed that the BA extent of individual small fires was poorly correlated with DSRp and, consequently, sorting was performed. Afterwards, BA data for the entire mainland Portugal territory were sorted by assigned DSRp and the logarithm of accumulated Burnt Area was plotted against DSRp to assess if this relationship is linear. Subsequently, we analysed if a fixed threshold of DSR for extreme days - DSR90p - is adequate to estimate extreme fire weather and is well related to large FTBA, for the entire territory. We considered the correspondent 80% and 90% of FTBA as sufficient to classify DSRp as the extreme threshold, justified by the results of Pereira et al., (2005), which showed that 80% of TBA occurs in 10% of summer days.

We selected 175 municipalities (from 278) affected by more than three individual wildfires and a total BA>500 ha in the studied period (2001 – 2019). Restricting the analysis to the administrative units with sufficient data aims to increase the robustness of the results and to prevent possible interpretation errors. Figures assessing the relation between DSRp and FTBA were produced, for all the selected municipalities, concerning the second objective.

In each municipality, the selection of the maximum spatial value of DSR to associate with fires is justified by the low spatial variability of the DSR, the small size of administrative units and the native reanalysis data resolution (Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), 2017). The BA division between municipalities can produce noise in the data. This procedure artificially generates wildfires, some of them with relatively small size but high or very high DSRp. To circumvent this difficulty, we decided to analyze BA percentages, which reduce the influence of small wildfires on the final results.

It is important to address some methodological options. Only wildfires that occurred in the extended summer period, from 15th May to 31st October, were studied because of two main reasons: (i) BA within this period accounts for 97.5% of TBA, assuming only large fires; and, (ii) the secondary peak of fire incidence in Portugal occurs in late winter early spring, with low DSR values and depends more on drought than on high air temperature (Amraoui et al., 2015; Calheiros, et al., 2020). Only large wildfires (BA>100 ha), similarly defined by the Portuguese forest authorities (ICNF), have been included also for two reasons. First, wildfires in Portugal are mainly (99.4%) caused by humans, by negligence (about one-quarter of the total number of wildfires with known cause) and intentionally (about three quarters), associated with the use of fire, accident and structural/land use (Parente et al., 2018), i.e., small wildfires can occur with relatively low DSR. Second, mainland Portugal registers a very large number of small wildfires but they account only for a small amount of TBA. For example, wildfires with BA>100 ha are just about 1% of all wildfires but account for 75% of total BA (Pereira et al., 2011).

LULC data can limit the analysis and affect the obtained results. LULC changed during the 19 years (2001 – 2019) of the study period in many locations, including in the BA polygons. Effectively, Meneses et al., (2018) observed that the main land-use changes, for the 1990 – 2012 period, are related to reductions in forests and agricultural areas, together with increases in urban areas, with relatively small changes between 2000 – 2006 and 2006 – 2012 periods. Therefore, LULC changes do not significantly affect the findings, knowing that we only use LULC data for one year/inventory to assess wildfire selectivity. Understory vegetation is also a very important factor in fire vulnerability, spread and intensity (Espinosa et al., 2019; Fonseca and Duarte, 2017). Consequently, wildfires only tend to occur and spread in managed forests with very high DSR, higher than in unmanaged forests (Fernandes et al., 2019). However, land use data does not include forest management information. Despite the small fraction of managed forested areas, roughly 20%, as estimated by Beighley and Hyde, (2018), this lack of information can influence our results, particularly in the municipalities with a significant share of managed forest area.

2.3 Cluster Analysis

Potential clustering was assessed using the curves of FTBA *vs.* DSRp for all the selected municipalities. The high number (278) of these administrative regions difficult the interpretation of the results. Therefore, cluster analysis was performed to identify the major macro-scale spatial patterns and to objectively and statistically assess the significant differences between the results obtained for different municipalities.

The following notation was adopted to describe the linkages (the distance between two clusters) used in the *complete* clustering method (The MathWorks Inc, 2021):

- Cluster *r* is formed from clusters *p* and *q*.
- n_r is the number of objects in cluster *r*.
- $x_r i$ is the *i*th object in cluster *r*.
- *Complete linkage (d)*, also called the *farthest neighbour*, which uses the largest distance between objects in the two clusters (Eq.1).

$$d(r,s) = max(dist(x_r i, x_s j)), i \in (1,\ldots,n_r), j \in (1,\ldots,n_s) \quad (1)$$

A distance metric is a function that defines the distance between two observations. The Matlab function *pdist* used in this study, which computes the pairwise distance between pairs of observations, supports various distance metrics. We used the correlation distance because it provides a more easily interpretable dendrogram.

Given an m-by-n data matrix X, which is treated as m (1-by-n) row vectors $x_1, x_2, ..., x_m$, the correlation distance between the vector x_s and x_t are defined as in Eq.2:

$$d_{st} = 1 - \frac{(x_s - \overline{x_s})(x_t - \overline{x_t})'}{\sqrt{(x_s - \overline{x_s})(x_s - \overline{x_s})'}\sqrt{(x_t - \overline{x_t})(x_t - \overline{x_t})'}} \tag{2}$$

where $\overline{x_s}$ is described in Eq.3:

$$\overline{x_s} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_j x_{sj} \; and \overline{x_t} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_j x_{tj} \tag{3}$$

The selected $(1 - r^2)$ threshold was 0.35, meaning that the coefficient of determination in the municipalities within the same cluster is higher than 0.65. This value was selected after a benchmarking analysis of the obtained dendrograms and results from an intended balance between the correlation between municipalities and the total number of clusters. For example, on one hand, if we have chosen 5 clusters, the correspondent correlation between municipalities within the same cluster will be larger than 0.5, a value that we considered too low for this analysis. On the other hand, for a higher correlation, for example, 0.75, which corresponds to $(1 - r^2)$=0.25, the number of clusters will be much higher, increasing the difficulty of interpreting the maps and dendrogram.

Algorithms were processed with Matlab software.

2.4 The influence of the type of vegetation

The burnable area (BNA) in each municipality was computed as the total burnable area (sum of the land cover types that are susceptible to burn based on the land cover map) in the 2001 - 2019 period, divided by the total area of the municipality, and presented in percentage. LULC was related to TBA by computing the TBA in the 5 classes of vegetation, namely: forests, shrublands, agriculture, agroforestry and others. Computations were made for each analysed municipality and cluster, to accomplish the third objective. Two additional ratios were computed for each municipality, the first between forest and shrublands BNA and the second between forest and shrublands TBA. Moreover, the spatial distribution of prevailing land-use types that were most affected by wildfires was investigated to identify which municipalities have a BA in forests larger than 50% or BA in shrublands larger than 40% of TBA. The adoption of different thresholds for BA in forests and shrublands is due to a much lower area of shrublands (12%) than of forests (39%) (IGT, 2019).

A contingency table, accuracy metrics and statistical measures of association were used to analyse the influence of the type of vegetation cover on the relationship between DSRp and TBA. The contingency table contains the number of municipalities that are characterized by diverse DSRp thresholds at 90% of TBA (DSRp90TBA) and, therefore, a different group of clusters. The objective was to relate the municipalities (within the groups of clusters) with TBA in diverse vegetation cover types, taking into consideration that pre-conceived relationships must be made. These statistics were used for classification accuracy against a reference as, for example, municipalities with higher DSRp90TBA will have the largest TBA in forested areas, compared with other land use types; and accuracy metrics were computed according to this initial classification. A contingency table needs, at least, two rows and two columns and, therefore, two relationships. The list of accuracy metrics includes: (i) the Overall Accuracy (OA), which represents the samples that were correctly classified and are the diagonal elements in the contingency table, from top-left to bottom-right (Alberg et al., 2004); (ii) the User's Accuracy (UA), or reliability, that is indicative of the probability of a sample that was classified in one category belongs to that category; and, (iii) the Producer's Accuracy (PA), represents the probability of a sample being correctly classified (Congalton, 2001). Statistical measures are: the Chi-squared ($\chi 2$) test (Greenwood and Nikulin, 1996), which test the independence of two categorical variables; the Phi-test (Φ) or phi coefficient (David and Cramer, 1947) is related to the chi-squared statistic for a 2×2 contingency table, and the two variables are associated if Φ>0. Lastly, we computed the Cohen's Kappa coefficient, firstly presented by Cohen (1960) and recently analysed by McHugh (2012), that measures the interrater agreement of the two nominal variables. This coefficient ranges from -1 to 1 and is interpreted as < 0 indicating no agreement to 1 as almost perfect agreement.

3 Results

3.1 Patterns at the national level

The scatter plot of DSR vs BA does not reveal a simple robust relationship between these two variables, as visible in Figure 2, where the logarithm of the BA - Log(BA) - is plotted against the percentiles of DSR. Effectively, the coefficient of determination, r^2, is very low (0.04).

However, the scatter plot of the decimal logarithm of the accumulated BA versus DSRp for the entire mainland Portugal territory (Figure 3) showed a linear relationship, with a very high coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.94$) and p-value lower than the significance level. Nevertheless, the increase of Log (accumulated BA) is exponential (with $r^2 = 0.92$) for DSRp extreme values (DSR>DSR90p), meaning that BA rises suddenly with extreme meteorological conditions.

The analysis of the dependence of FTBA with DSRp in the entire mainland Portugal territory (Figure 4) revealed that most of the TBA occurred with very high DSRp values. For example, for days with DSR>DSR50p the FTBA is almost 100%, meaning that fires in days with lower DSR have a negligible impact on TBA. Fires in days with DSRp between 85 and 95 were responsible for more than 80% of TBA in the 2001 – 2019 period, making this a good DSRp threshold for extreme days. This justifies using the DSR90p at the national scale, which is widely used for a threshold of extreme values (Bedia et al., 2012; Carvalho et al., 2008; Fernandes, 2019; Silva et al., 2019). However, if the analysis is performed at a higher spatial resolution, namely at the municipality level, some differences become apparent (Figure 5).

The spatial distribution of DSRp for FTBA=80% (DSRp80TBA) or FTBA=90% (DSRp90TBA) (Figure 5) in each municipality presents important differences between regions, together with more visible contrasts in DSRp90TBA than in DSRp80TBA. The much lower values of DSRp in the north-eastern (*Alto Tâmega*, *Terras de Trás-os-Montes*, *Douro* and northern *Beiras e Serra da Estrela*) and in the southern interior regions (*Alentejo Central* and *Baixo Alentejo*) should be highlighted. DSRp90TBA is very high in most of the coastal and in some of central hinterland municipalities (portions of *Área Metropolitana do Porto*, *Viseu Dão-Lafões*, *Região de Coimbra*, *Beira Baixa* and *Região de Leiria*), reaching values similar to the mean country level value (85 – 95). In some NUTSIII provinces of the northern and central hinterland, DSRp90TBA is between 60 and 70 in most of the municipalities, particularly in *Douro* and *Terras de Trás-os-Montes*. It is important to underline that DSRp80TBA > DSRp90TBA which is a consequence of the adopted methodology to perform this analysis (please see section 2.2). This also helps understand why DSRp=50 is associated with FTBA=100% (Figure 4). The spatial distribution of DSRp80TBA and DSRp90TBA suggests the existence of municipality clustering.

3.2 Patterns at the municipality level

We explored other features of wildfires in mainland Portugal, to explain the differences observed in DSRp at the municipality level. Burnable area (BNA), the ratio of Forest/Shrublands BNA, and the ratio of Forest/Shrublands TBA in each municipality were assessed and analysed (Figure 6). Additionally, the number of wildfires and the TBA/BNA ratio in each municipality were also evaluated (see Appendix).

Burnable area (Figure 6a) is much lower in coastal municipalities (except in Algarve) and in most of the northern and central hinterland, particularly in *Terras de Trás-os-Montes*, *Douro* and portions of *Beiras e Serra da Estrela*. Those relatively low values are explained by the high density of population and urban areas near the coastline and by agriculture patches in the countryside. On the other hand, higher burnable areas are present in the mountain ranges, especially in the northwest (some municipalities located in *Alto Minho*, *Cávado* and *Alto Tâmega*) as well as in some specific forested regions in central hinterland (within *Área Metropolitana do Porto*, *Viseu Dão-Lafões*, *Região de Coimbra*, *Região de Leiria*, *Médio Tejo* and *Beira Baixa*) and one municipality in *Algarve*. These patterns are justified by low population density, low availability of land suitable for agriculture, and, in some regions, extensive forest plantations.

Results (Figure 6b) also show that forest cover is prevalent in most of the analysed municipalities, with special intensity on the west coast. Conversely, shrublands BNA is more dominant in a few municipalities located in the northern hinterland, particularly situated in *Alto Minho*, *Alto Tâmega*, *Douro* and *Beiras e Serra da Estrela*. Results are considerably different analysing the Forest/Shrublands TBA (Figure 6c), with an extensive amount of municipalities at the north, including coastal and inland, that have larger TBA in shrublands (a large number of municipalities are located in *Alto Tâmega*, *Tâmega e Sousa*, *Douro*, *Viseu Dão-Lafões* and *Beiras e Serra da Estrela*). Nevertheless, the municipalities with higher Forest/Shrubland BNA correspond with those with larger ratios of Forest/Shrubland TBA. Results of both maps are similar when analysing the southern provinces of the country (*Alto Alentejo*, *Alentejo Central*, *Alentejo Litoral*, *Baixo Alentejo* and *Algarve*), where almost all municipalities are characterized by higher forest BNA and TBA.

Other municipalities also highly affected by fires are located in the extreme northwest (*Alto Minho*), surrounding mountain ranges in the northwest (*Área Metropolitana do Porto* and *Tâmega e Sousa*), and in the south (*Alto Alentejo* and *Algarve*). By contrast, the lower BA percentages occur in most of the southern provinces (except *Algarve*) and the northeast (*Terras de Trás-os-Montes*). The largest TBA/BNA is observed in mountains ranges and forested regions of central hinterland, particularly in parts of *Viseu Dão-Lafões*, *Beiras e Serra da Estrela*, *Região de Coimbra*, *Região de Leiria*, *Médio-Tejo* and one municipality in *Algarve*. In some of these municipalities, this value is >100%, meaning that in the 19 years TBA is larger than BNA and, consequently, there were a large number of recurrent wildfires in those areas.

3.3 Cluster analysis pattern

Based on the relationship between TBA and DSRp the municipalities were grouped in ten clusters. However, the dendrogram (Figure 7) discloses that cluster 10 is isolated, with only one municipality, and, therefore, can be eliminated from further analysis. Cluster numbers are sorted by descending order of the DSRp90TBA, i.e., 90% of TBA was registered with DSRp larger than this value. Cluster 2 includes the largest number of municipalities (23% of total) and highest TBA, almost 500,000 ha (26% of total). Generally, clusters group 13 or more municipalities, except for clusters 3 and 8, with only 5 and 6 municipalities, respectively. Each cluster represents between 8% and 16% of the total TBA for the study period, except for the two smaller clusters, where TBA is only 1% of the total.

The spatial pattern of Figure 8 reveals a relatively homogeneous distribution of the municipalities of equivalent clusters, meaning that municipalities with similar DSRp are often neighbours. In general, patches of municipalities belonging to consecutive clusters are observed. FTBA=100% occurs for DSR90p in cluster 1, confirming that large wildfires in these municipalities only occurred with very extreme meteorological conditions. The FTBA vs. DSRp curves for the first three clusters present a very steep slope for the highest DSRp values (Figure 9), revealing that large wildfires take place in the municipalities of these clusters in days with high DSRp (above 90). Moreover, the FTBA vs. DSRp plots for these clusters present very low dispersion suggesting that the curves for the municipalities of each of these clusters are very similar. These municipalities are located in north and central western coastal areas, also include mountain ranges (predominantly in *Alto Minho*, *Cávado*, *Área Metropolitana do Porto*, *Tâmega e Sousa*, *Região de Aveiro*, *Região de Coimbra* and *Alentejo Litoral*), within some central and south hinterland regions (parts of *Viseu Dão-Lafões*, *Beiras e Serra da Estrela*, *Médio-Tejo* and *Alto Alentejo*) and in the south coast (almost all of *Algarve*).

Clusters 4, 5 and 6 are prone to burn with less extreme conditions, where the median of DSR90p corresponds to 85 – 90% of TBA. The slope of FTBA vs DSRp curves is less steep than the previous clusters, and dispersion is higher in these clusters, with more municipalities where wildfires can occur with lower values of DSRp. Both features suggest that in these clusters, wildfires tend to occur in a widest range of meteorological conditions. These clusters are spread throughout the country and can be viewed as a transition between the group of clusters with extreme (1, 2 and 3) and less extreme (7, 8 and 9) DSRp80TBA or DSRp90TBA.

Clusters 7, 8 and 9 can be considered as the group of lower DSRp clusters, due to the relatively lower values of the DSRp80TBA or DSRp90TBA, which range from 70 to 80%. Additionally, higher curve dispersion is also apparent, especially in cluster 9, which integrates municipalities where large wildfires can occur with lower values of DSRp (in some cases, below DSR50p). In this group of clusters, the slope of the FTBA vs DSRp curves, at higher values of DSRp is the lowest, especially in clusters 8 and 9. Nevertheless, the median curve of cluster 8 has a different behaviour, compared to the other two clusters: the steeper interval is between 70th and 80th percentile, meaning that a larger amount of BA occurs in less extreme conditions. The municipalities within these clusters are mostly located in the northern and central hinterland, particularly in *Alto-Tâmega*, *Terras de Trás-os-*

Montes, *Douro*, *Beiras e Serra da Estrela* and *Beira Baixa*. Additionally, a few municipalities within these clusters belong to *Alentejo Central* and *Baixo Alentejo*, two provinces with a scarce number of fires and BA.

Box-plots of the DSRp80TBA and DSRp90TBA for the municipalities of each cluster (Figure 10) are consistent with the previous results. Dispersion is considerably higher in the latter than in the former case, especially in clusters 3, 7 and 8. In some municipalities of clusters 7 and 8, large wildfires, with the ability to exceed FTBA=10% (Figure 9), start to occur with relatively low values of DSRp. Another notable difference is the boxplot medians: for DSRp90TBA they decrease with the ascending number of clusters as expectable, but not for DSRp80TBA, where they increase between clusters 4 and 5, between 6 and 7, and between 8 and 9.

3.4 Major drivers

The spatial distribution of the clusters resembles the general pattern of LULC in Portugal (Figure 11). In general, municipalities with high DSRp90TBA are located in regions of forests while municipalities with lower DSRp90TBA are located in regions where shrublands tend to be predominant. LULC type analysis, made for each cluster, indicates that BA in forests (BAF) is notably higher than in shrublands (BAS), for the first five clusters than for the last four clusters (Figure 11, top panel). This means that BAF is higher for clusters with higher DSRp90TBA while BAS is higher for clusters with lower DSRp90TBA. In addition, there is an increase in the fraction of BA in agricultural land associated with the decrease of DSRp90TBA. This amount is larger or very close to 10% in clusters 6-9 and lower in clusters 1-5.

Results show marked pieces of evidence between most coastal and northern/north eastern hinterland municipalities, which present similar DSRp90TBA and, therefore, similar cluster distribution. Highest BAF characterizes the majority of the municipalities with the observed highest DSRp at 90% of TBA (generally above 85) while the territory with higher BAS is also characterized by lower DSRp90TBA (below 85). These clusters (7-9) also present relatively high percentages of BA in agriculture (mostly between 10 and 20%). It is also worth mentioning that some municipalities present similar BAF and BAS, although being located in the coastal regions, usually characterized by higher forest cover.

The land cover also helps to understand the DSRp80TBA and DSRp90TBA boxplots for each cluster, especially the higher dispersion in the latter in comparison with the former (Figure 10). These dissimilarities are especially evident in cluster 8, which is the cluster with the highest BA in shrublands and agriculture (twice the value of clusters 1 – 5) and less in forest (half the value of clusters 1 – 5). Additionally, cluster 8 is the one with a less burnable area (not shown). The combination of these factors could explain the high dispersion: high BA in shrublands can occur with low DSRp, high BA in agricultural lands is much more likely to occur with high DSRp; and, finally, low burnable areas prevent very large wildfires to occur, even with extreme DSRp.

A contingency table permitted to objectively and quantitatively assess the influence of vegetation cover in the spatial distribution of the clusters and, therefore, also in DSRp90TBA. Table 1 is based on the results illustrated in Figure 11 and aims to assess if the differences in groups of clusters or DSRp90TBA can be explained by the BA prevailing in forested areas or shrubland+agricultural zones. Specifically, it purposes to assess if municipalities of clusters 1 – 5, with DSRp90TBA>90, have higher BAF (BAF>50%), and, on the contrary, clusters 7 – 9, with DSRp90TBA<90, present higher BAS+BAA (BAS+BAA>50%).

Results reveal that the number of municipalities of clusters 1-5 and BAF>50% is 4.6 times higher than the number of municipalities in clusters 7-9 and BAF>50%. However, the number of municipalities of clusters 7-9 and BAS+BAA>50% is 1.3 higher than the number of municipalities of clusters 1-5 and BAS+BAA>50%. Consequently, the OA (71%), UA (71% – 70%) and PA (82% – 55%) reveal moderate to high accuracy. The BAS+BAA>50% threshold is probably a too demanding criterion for DSRp90TBA=90 limit, as shrublands and agricultural land cover will also burn with higher DSRp in a large number of municipalities. For forests (BAF>50%), the accuracy is better, i.e., this threshold has been accurate in more than four times of the municipalities that were incorrectly classified. The Cohen's Kappa test allows to conclude a fair agreement (κ=0.3828) and reject the null hypothesis: observed agreement is not accidental (Landis and Koch, 1977). The Φ and C tests also corroborated that variables are dependent, with similar values, 0.39 and 0.36, meaning moderate correlation (Frey, 2018) and the existence of a relationship (De Espindola et al., 2009), respectively. However, the $\chi 2$ test results indicate that we can claim that the samples are independent (Frey, 2018), with an error risk of about 4e-06.

Thus, three out of four computed statistics prove a dependent relationship and, consequently, we can state that the cluster's spatial distribution patterns are correlated with vegetation type.

4 Discussion

The scatter plot of DSR vs BA does not reveal a simple robust relationship between these two variables (Figure 2). This fact can be explained by several reasons (e.g., firefighting activities, geographical/landscape features, fuel breaks, limitations of the Fire Weather Index System, etc.) but, in essence, the most important one is that the wildfire activity does not only depend on the weather. This means that: (i) wildfires can occur in days with relatively low values of DSR; (ii) small wildfires can occur in days of high DSR, due to rapid fire-suppression activities or other constraints (especially fuel). However, it is well known that extreme wildfires only occur in days of extreme fire weather (Fernandes et al., 2016). These facts are validated by our results, revealing that only 6% of the Total Burnt Area (TBA) occurs with DSRp<80 and 12% of TBA are registered in wildfires with DSRp<90. These reasons explain all the main features of Figure 2, namely: small wildfires are registered in days with almost all values of DSR, although the much small number of wildfires in the lower left quarter of the plot area, and the huge number of events near the right vertical axis, especially for DSR>DSR90p. In effect, DSR seems to act as a limiting or conditioning factor of the maximum BA.

The plots of Log (accumulatedBA) and FTBA versus DSRp (Figure 3 and Figure 4) suggest that DSR90p is a suitable threshold for the entire territory of mainland Portugal which is in line with previous studies (Bedia et al., 2012; Carvalho et al., 2008; Fernandes, 2019; Silva et al., 2019). The importance of extreme weather for the occurrence of large wildfires in Portugal has been already pointed out in several studies (Calheiros et al., 2020, 2021; Parente et al., 2018a, 2019; Trigo et al., 2006). Large wildfires (BA>100 ha) are essentially dependent on the existence of extreme fire weather and small and medium size wildfires are much more dependent on the daily and annual (weather/vegetation) cycles (Telesca and Pereira, 2010).

However, analysis performed at a finer spatial scale (Figure 5) discloses interesting deviations, namely differences between coastal areas and the hinterland municipalities. Large wildfires/high BA can occur in most of the inland municipalities in the northeast and parts of southern Portugal with DSRp<80, but can only occur in coastal and some mountainous municipalities with higher DSR (DSR>DSR90p).

Differences in DSRp throughout the territory are expected due to distinct characteristic factors, including climate and landscape features. Mainland Portugal has two slightly different types of temperate (group C) climate, namely Csb (dry and warm summer) in the north and Csa (dry and hot summer) in the south, which promote different fire regimes in these two regions (Parente et al., 2016). In fact, patterns of DSRp80TBA or DSRp90TBA (Figure 5) strongly resemble the spatial distribution of the type of climates in Portugal (please see Fig. 1 of AEMET (2011)), in the sense that regions with higher (lower) DSRp80TBA or DSRp90TBA present Csb (Csa) type of climate.

LULC is also an important wildfire factor in Portugal (Barros and Pereira, 2014; Leuenberger et al., 2018; Parente and Pereira, 2016; Pereira et al., 2014; Tonini et al., 2018). Therefore, it is not surprising the high similarity between the spatial patterns of DSRp80TBA or DSRp90TBA and the LULC maps for Portugal (e.g., please see Figure 4 of Parente and Pereira (2016)). Other wildfire-related landscape features were assessed to explain the heterogeneity of DSRp80TBA and DSRp90TBA maps (Figure 6). The ratio Forest/Shrublands BNA shows higher BNA in forests in most of the territory but the ratio Forest/Shrublands TBA reveals higher TBA in shrublands, especially in regions of lower DSRp80TBA and DSRp90TBA. We did not analyse different types of forest or shrublands separately. Land cover proneness to wildfires is higher for shrublands and pine forests than for annual crops, mixed forests and evergreen oak woodlands (Barros and Pereira, 2014; Pereira et al., 2014). Those authors also observed that, as wildfire size increases, selectivity decreases for all land cover types. These findings may be a consequence of the different impacts of the fire weather on the different land cover types which motivates further research on the role of vegetation in the spatial distribution of DSRp associated with a larger fraction of TBA.

As expected, the spatial distribution of the clusters (Figure 8) is also very similar to the DSRp80TBA and DSRp90TBA maps (Figure 5), especially the marked differences between the coastal and hinterland municipalities of the northeast and south-central. The curves of DSRp vs FTBA for the clusters (Figure 9) show decreasing derivatives and increasing variability with the decrease in the DSR, which means a trend for large wildfires to occur with less extreme weather conditions and greater variability between the municipalities of each cluster.

The cluster analysis based on the DSRp vs FTBA curves aimed to find groups of municipalities with similar fire-weather relations. Contingency tables account for the municipalities of two distinct groups of clusters in terms of DSR. Contingency tables, accuracy and statistical tests led us to conclude that vegetation types, particularly forest and shrublands, influence the spatial distribution of DSRp observed in Portugal.

In addition to the type of climate, the different vegetation cover justifies the spatial distribution of DSRp within mainland Portugal and, therefore, explains clusters' dissimilarities (Figure 11). On one hand, DSR extremes are strongly influenced by long-lasting severe droughts (before and during fire season), heatwaves (during fire season), or both. Heat waves and droughts are important extreme weather/climate events, promoting wildfires occurrence and spread, and, therefore, for TBA (Russo et al., 2017; Parente et al., 2018; Parente et al., 2019). On the other hand, shrublands are more likely to suffer from droughts than forests. As observed by Gouveia et al, (2012), during drought shrublands presented higher levels of dryness, whereas broad-leaved forests exhibited lower water stress. Coniferous forests are more resistant to short-term droughts than broad-leaved forests, because of their decreased vulnerability to xylem cavitation (Allen et al., 2010). Consequently, forests tend to burn only under extreme DSR values, typically caused by simultaneous drought and heatwave, while shrublands (and also agricultural areas) can burn with lower DSRp. These facts can be additionally justified by biological features. In the Mediterranean region, precipitation is the main constrain to photosynthesis and growth (Pereira et al., 2007). This is particularly critical for shallow-rooted species, like those of the herbaceous vegetation and some shrub species, which are unable to access groundwater. It is less critical for the deeply rooted species such as cork oak, and other drought-resistant Mediterranean species (Cerasoli et al., 2016).

It is important to underline that this study is not about the relationship between LULC and weather and fire occurrence. In summary, this study is about the relationship between extreme fire weather and high BA resulting from large wildfires which is spatially affected due to LULC (among other factors). Additionally, while LULC, topography, population statistics, etc. are structural (essentially fixed or stationary) wildfire hazard factors, the meteorological conditions are conjunctural (essentially variable or dynamic) wildfire hazard factors. Despite a few space-time analyses (e.g., Parente et al., 2016; Pereira et al., 2015; Vega Orozco et al., 2012), usually, and for obvious reasons, the influence of these two types of factors on the fire incidence is studied separately.

However, it was precisely as a result of an in-depth analysis of the relationship between extreme fire weather (specifically DSRp) and fire incidence (specifically BA) that it was possible to conclude that LULC - a structural factor - influences the impacts of meteorological conditions - a conjectural factor of fire risk. As far as we know, this is the first study that identifies and establishes that the relationship between fire weather and fire incidence depends on LULC, for Portugal.

It is also important to underline that, to establish this relationship, we used objective methods and adequate statistics that ensure the robustness and statistical significance of the results. The description of the study carried out also includes the chronology of the performed analysis. In a previous study (Calheiros et al., 2020), the relationship between fire weather and fire incidence was analyzed in-depth for the entire Iberian Peninsula. Among other results, they found that the DSR90p is a good indicator of extreme fire weather and is well related to the BA in the Iberian Peninsula. In this study, we started by verifying whether the relationship between DSRp and BA found, in general terms, for the Iberian Peninsula, was also verified in mainland Portugal, at municipality level, and what is the spatial variability of the extreme value of DSRp above which most of the burned area is registered. To objectively interpret the obtained spatial patterns (Figure 5), we complemented and deepened the analysis with the use of clustering algorithms, to classify the municipalities into statistically different groups in terms of the relationship between FTBA and DSRp. The emerging patterns showed that all of those most likely factors, such as topography, altitude (Figure 1), slope (please see Figure 5 of Parente and Pereira, 2016), population density (please see Figure 2 of Pereira et al., 2011), rural and urban area type (please see Figure 3 of Pereira et al., 2011), road density/distance to the nearest road (please see Figure 2a of Parente et al., 2018b) and climate type (please see Figure 1a of Parente et al., 2016) were not able to explain the obtained spatial patterns. The only factor with a similar spatial pattern was the LULC, which is the reason why we decide to explore this possibility more deeply, with contingency tables and several accuracy metrics to assess the influence of the type of vegetation cover on the relationship between DSRp and TBA.

5 Conclusions

The relationship between DSR and BA was investigated, initially revealing low correlation but presenting the highest values of BA with extreme DSR. Those results lead us to differ the analysis to accumulated Log (BA) vs DSR, revealing that they are strongly correlated and the DSR90p is an adequate threshold for an extreme BA in mainland Portugal. Nevertheless, at higher resolution, relevant differences appear among DSRp thresholds that explain 90 and 80% of the TBA. Cluster analysis shows that these differences justified the existence of several statistically significant clusters. Generally, municipalities where large wildfires occur with high or very high DSRp values are located in the north and central coastal areas, central hinterland mountainous parts and in the extreme south. In contrast, clusters where large fires were registered with low DSRp values mostly appear in the north-eastern. The type of climate and vegetation cover explain the clusters' distribution pattern and the relationship between DSRp and total BA. Large wildfires tend to occur mostly in forests with very high or extreme DSRp while, in shrublands, with relatively lower DSRp. This fact is explained by the different species features, which causes that shrublands are more suitable to dryness and heatwaves than forests. The relationship between vegetation cover and DSRp was statistically validated with the contingency tables and statistical tests. Results indicate an overall accuracy of 71% and a statistical relationship between dependent variables. BNA highest values are visible in the mountainous regions between the coastal and hinterland municipalities and, oppositely, lowest values are present in urban municipalities near the coast and some hinterland regions, due mostly to agricultural patches. BNA also can influence DSRp vs FTBA curve in the municipalities and explain the high variability in DSRp in the clusters.

In summary, this work disclosed that the usual 90th percentile of DSR is a good indicator for the extreme BA in mainland Portugal. However, at higher resolution, this threshold presents regional variations that should be considered, namely for landscape and wildfire management. These findings could help firefighters and civil protection in prevention and combat planning, more importantly knowing the reputation and operational use of DSR in Portugal. Climate type and vegetation cover explain the DSRp spatial distribution dissimilarities, highlighting that landscape and forest management are key factors for the adaptation to future climate change.

Data availability. This research was developed using three public data sources. The meteorological variables were obtained from the fifth generation of ECMWF atmospheric reanalyses of the global climate (ERA5-Land) dataset (Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), 2017). Land use and land cover data were provided by Portuguese national authorities (DGT, 2019), and the wildfire database from the Portuguese Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Forests (ICNF, 2020).

1 APPENDIX

In this section, we present the results that were important but not fundamental for this manuscript. The Number of fires in Portugal (Figure A1), in each analysed municipality, were assessed. The distribution of the number of wildfires, between 2001 and 2019, discloses a notable contrast between north and southern provinces (the last ones considered as *Alto Alentejo*, *Alentejo Central*, *Alentejo Litoral*, *Baixo Alentejo* and *Algarve*). Wildfires were more frequent in the extreme northwest (*Alto Minho* and *Alto Tâmega*) and some municipalities located in *Beiras e Serra da Estrela*. Wildfire frequency is much lower in the south and on most of the western coast.

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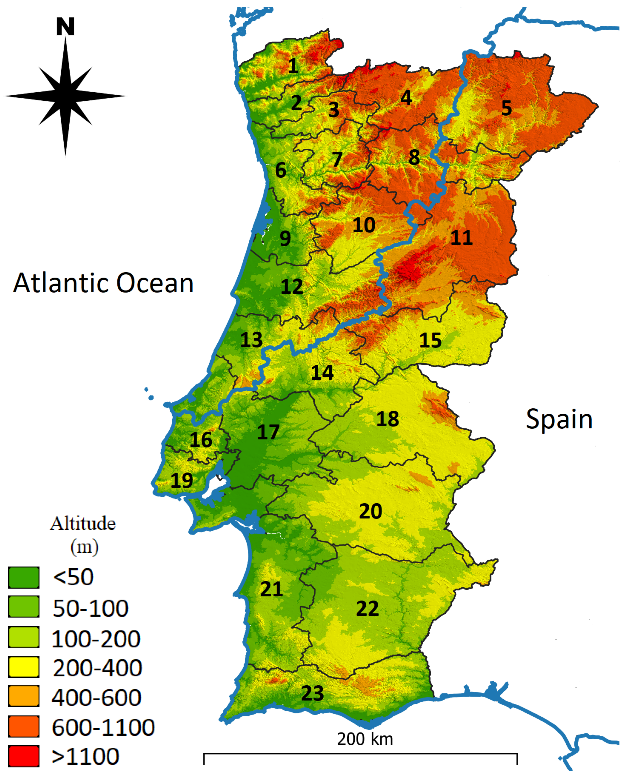

Figure 1. Mainland Portugal topography and NUTSIII provinces: *Alto Minho*(1), *Cávado*(2), *Ave*(3), *Alto Tâmega*(4), *Terras de Trás-os-Montes*(5), *Área Metropolitana do Porto*(6), *Tâmega e Sousa*(7), *Douro*(8), *Região de Aveiro*(9), *Viseu Dão-Lafões*(10), *Beiras e Serra da Estrela*(11), *Região de Coimbra*(12), *Região de Leiria*(13), *Médio-Tejo*(14), *Beira Baixa*(15), *Oeste*(16), *Lezíria do Tejo*(17), *Alto Alentejo*(18), *Área Metropolitana de Lisboa*(19), *Alentejo Central*(20), *Alentejo Litoral*(21), *Baixo Alentejo*(22) and *Algarve*(23). Data from European Environment Agency (2021) and DGT (2010). Pyro-regions limits from Calheiros et al., (2020), for comparison purposes, were also added, at blue: NW pyro-region is located in northwestern Portugal and SW pyro-region in southwestern and eastern of the country.

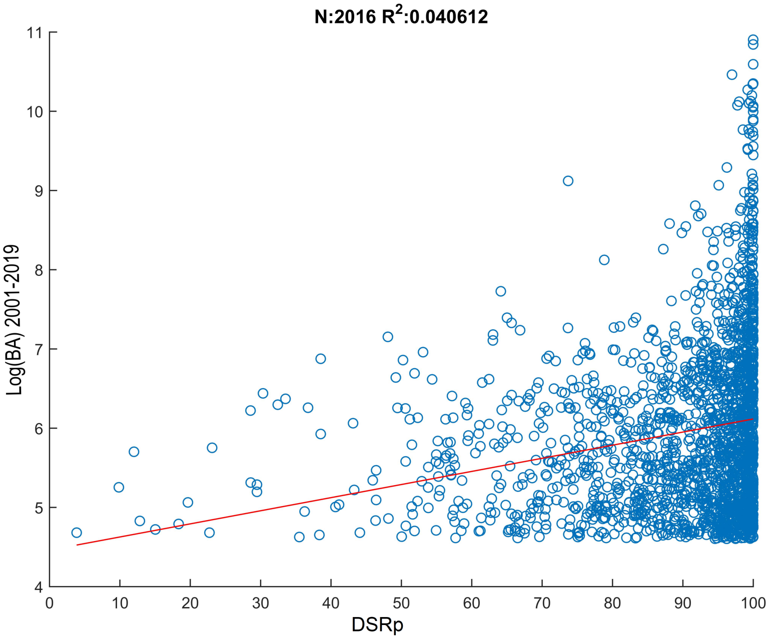

Figure 2. Scatterplot of the decimal logarithm of the burnt area (Log(BA)) vs DSR percentile (DSRp), for each individual fire (blue circles), considering the fires with an area larger than 100 ha that occurred between May 15 and October 31, in the 2001 – 2019 period. Best fit (red line) and r-square are also presented.

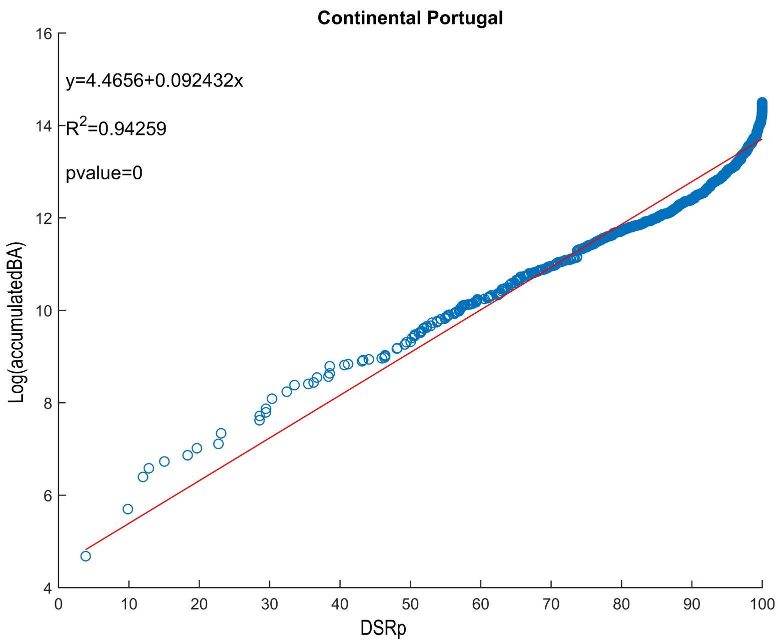

Figure 3. Scatterplot of the decimal logarithm of the accumulated burnt area (Log(accumulatedBA)) vs DSR percentile (DSRp), considering the fires with an area larger than 100 ha that occurred between May 15 and October 31, in the 2001 – 2019 period. The blue circles represent each individual fire, with respective accumulated BA, after being sorted by the assigned DSRp. Best fit (red line), respective equation, r-square and p-value are also presented.

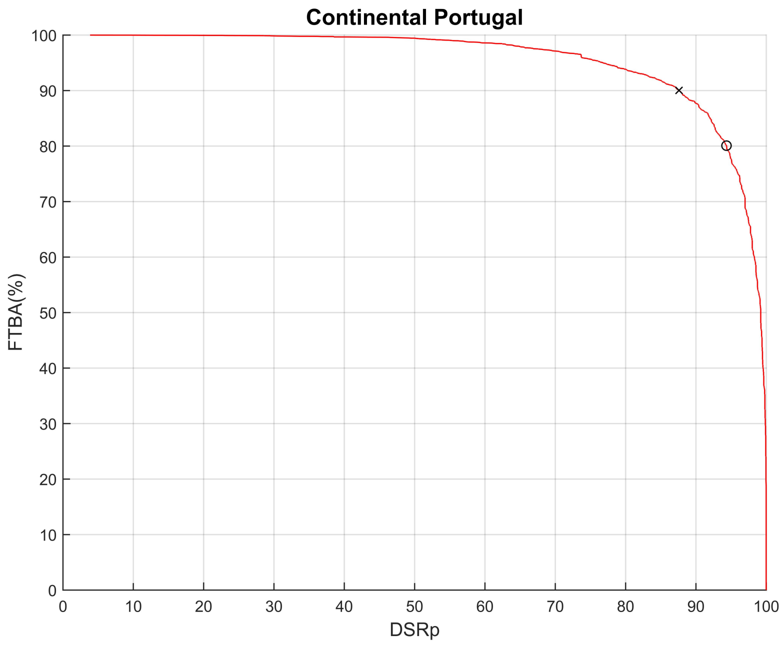

Figure 4. Fraction of total burnt area (FTBA) vs DSR percentile (DSRp), computed for mainland Portugal, in the 2001 – 2019 period. The circle (cross) is the DSRp when the FTBA reaches 80% (90%).

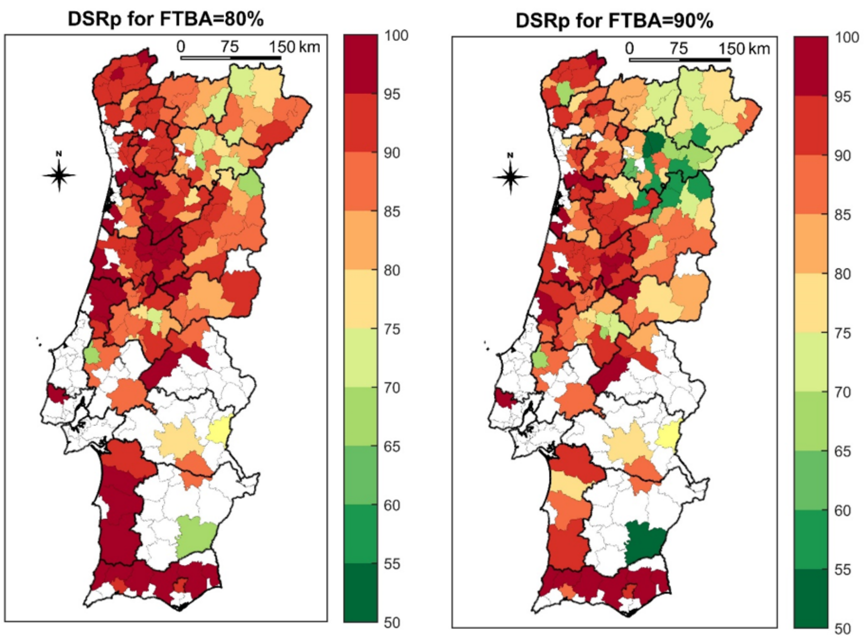

Figure 5. DSR percentile (DSRp) for 80% (left panel) and 90% (right panel) of the fraction of total burnt area (FTBA) in each municipality.

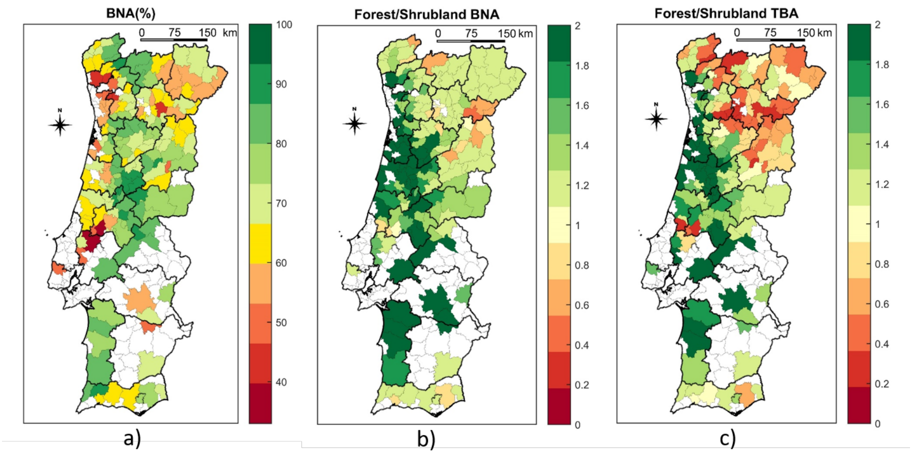

Figure 6. a) Burnable area (BNA), in percentage; b) Forest/Shrubland BNA and c) Forest/Shrubland total burnt area (TBA); all in the 2001 – 2019 period, for the selected municipalities.

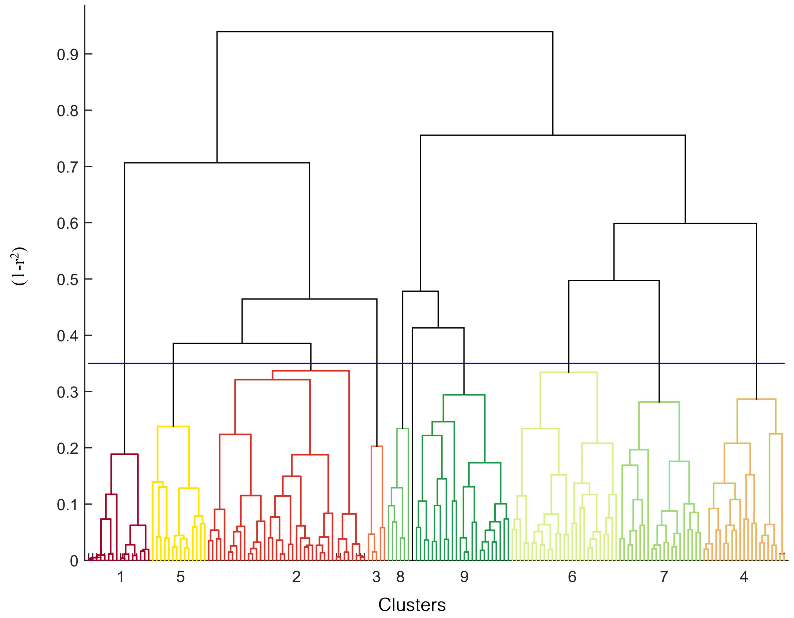

Figure 7. Dendrogram results: cluster colours are the same as in Figure 6, for better identification. X axis numbers are the cluster numbers. Y axis is $(1 - r^2)$, where r is the correlation coefficient between FTBA and DSRp. The blue line is the clustering threshold, at 0.35. Each vertical line is a municipality.

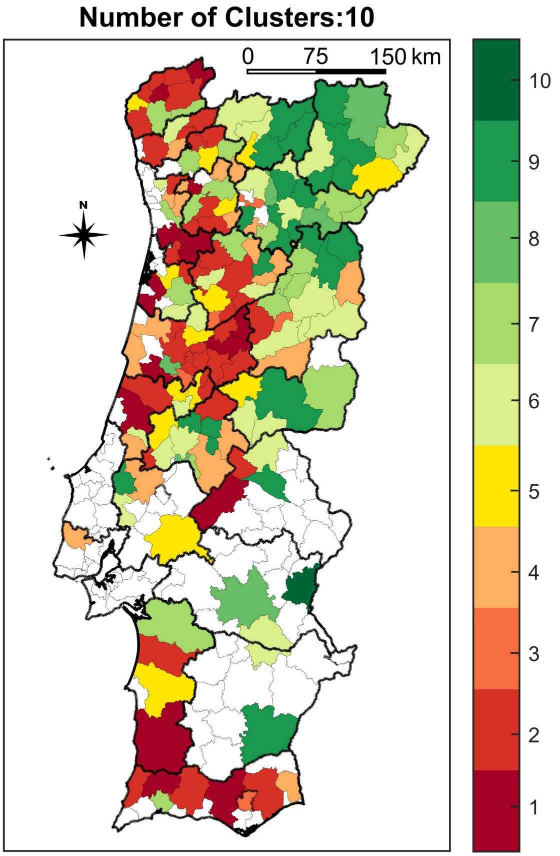

Figure 8. Clusters spatial distribution. Cluster colours are the same as in Figure 7. Municipalities without colour were excluded from the cluster analysis, justifying only 5.2% of TBA.

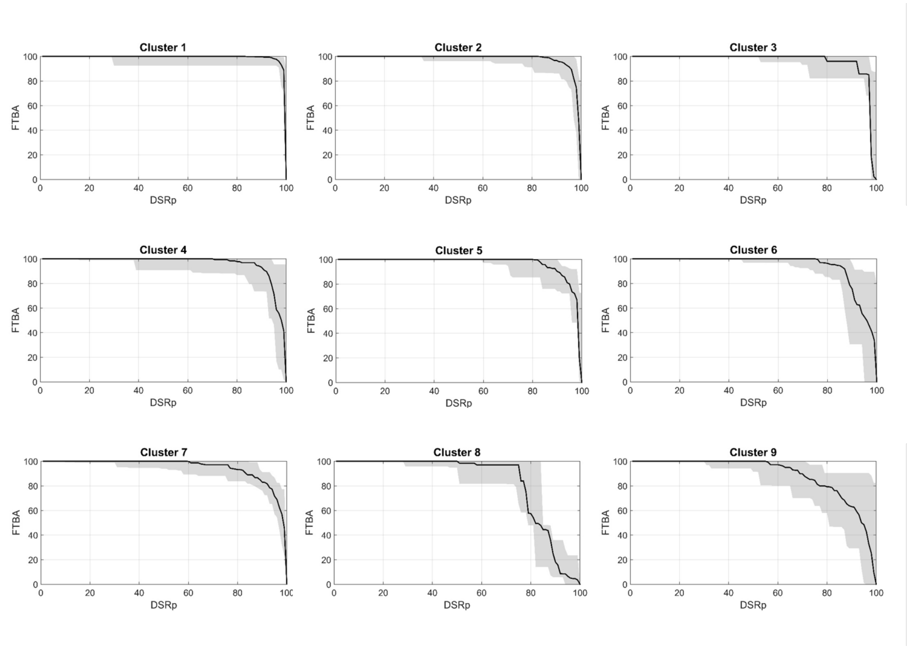

Figure 9. Fraction of total burnt area (FTBA) vs DSR percentile (DSRp), for the municipalities of each of the 9 clusters. the black line is the median of all curves in each cluster. The shaded area is defined by the maximum and minimum curves in each cluster.

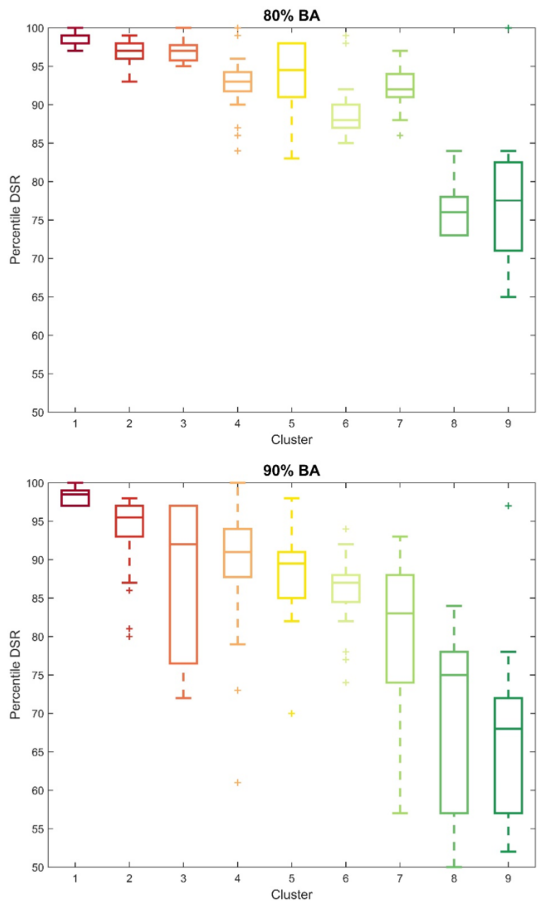

Figure 10. Boxplots for the DSRp when the municipality curves reaches 80% (top) and 90% (bottom) BA, for the 9 clusters. The central line is the median; the edges of the box are the 25th and 75th percentiles; and plus sign are the outliers.

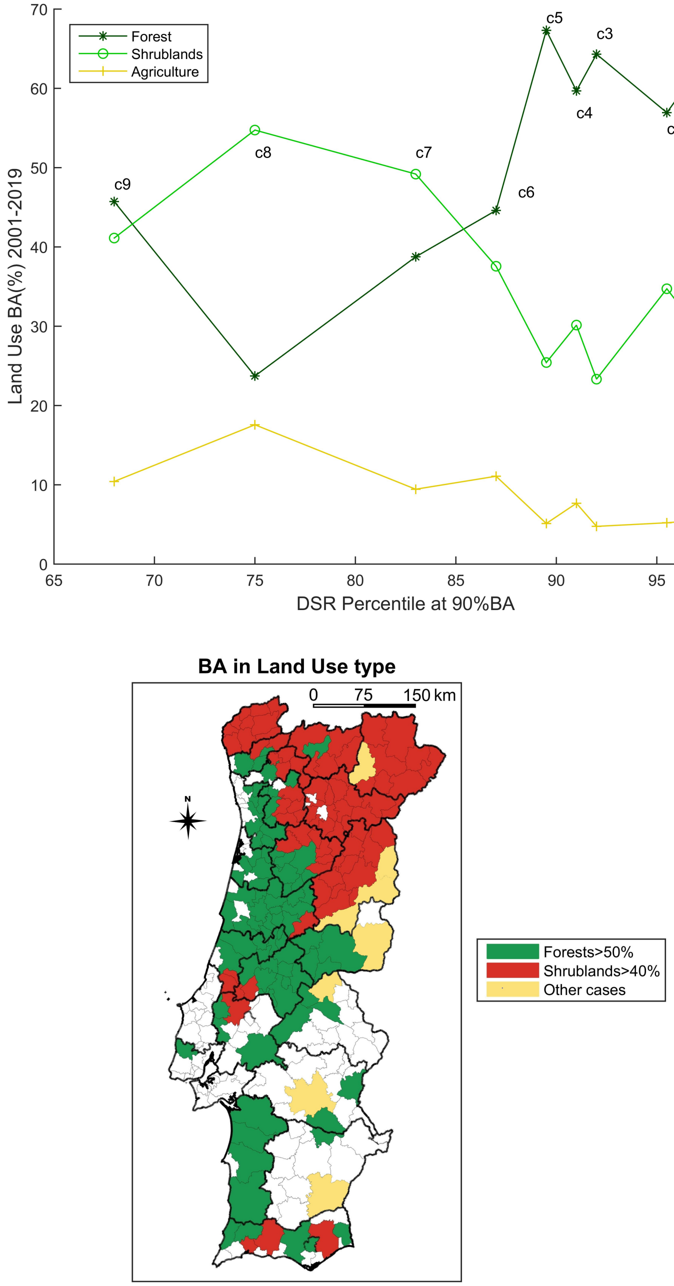

Figure 11. Top: Burnt area in three land use types: forest, shrublands and agriculture; represented for each cluster, identified by the respective DSRp and also by letter c. Bottom: Municipalities with Burnt Area in Forest>50%, Shrublands>40% or other cases Municipalities without colour were excluded from the cluster analysis.

Table 1. Contingency tables and accuracy metrics to assess the role of vegetation BA assessed with DSRp90BA thresholds, for the municipalities used in cluster analysis. The contingency tables computed the number of municipalities (NM) for the following criteria: CLUST 1-5 (CLUST 7-9) and BAF>50% (BAS+BAA>50%). Overall Accuracy (OA), User's Accuracy (UA) and Producer's Accuracy (PA) were the calculated accuracy metrics, together with the statistical tests Chi-squared ($\chi2$) test (with p-value), Phi coefficient (Φ), Contingency coefficient (C) and the Cohen's Kappa coefficient (κ).

NM	BAF>50%	BAS+BAA>50%
CLUSTERS 1-5	65	27
CLUSTERS 7-9	14	33
OA	71%	
UA	71%	70%
PA	82%	55%
$\chi2$	21.175 (4E-6)	
Φ	0.390	
C	0.363	
κ	0.383	

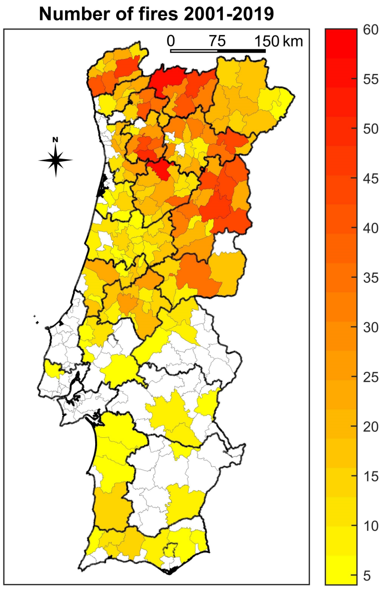

Figure A1. Number of fires larger than 100 ha, all in the 2001 – 2019 period, for the selected municipalities.