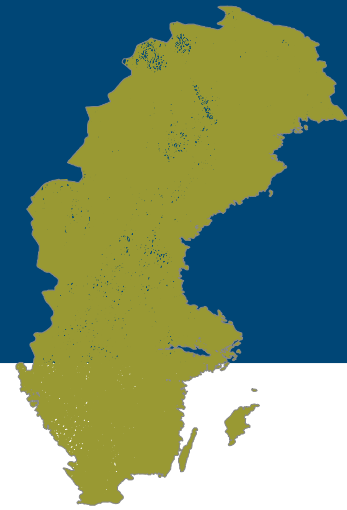


Country fact sheet

Sweden



Key findings

The debate on news deserts in Sweden can be traced back to **2002**, with a study on the impact of local media in Stockholm and its suburbs. The study found that local news coverage was insufficient and even absent in the suburbs, and named this phenomena ‘**medieskugga**’ (media shadow).

Today this phenomenon has spread all over the country in different forms. The most affected areas are smaller cities and communities in the countryside where the traditional established regional press has reduced its presence, cutting down on local newsrooms and reporters.

A trend toward media centralisation

Over the past decade, there has been a decline in the presence of media services in rural areas and smaller cities.

Traditional local papers have been **re-organised** and are nowadays doing most of their news work at **central newsrooms in the capital or larger regional cities**.

Only occasionally journalists leave the newsroom to report on bigger events in rural areas.



35-40 % of local reporters have disappeared from the local media market



The mapping in the Mediestudier database reveals that there are more blank spots in the north of Sweden than in the South

Decline of the local and community media revenues

According to ‘Svenska trender 1986-2022’, the **consumption of local news in local papers and local broadcasting has fallen from 78% to 61% in these years**. The decline of the market is also visible in a **continuing decrease** in the proportion of **households subscribing to a daily newspaper**.



High levels of market concentration

In recent years there has been a decrease in the number of local media companies, with **large media companies** such as *Bonniers, Norrköpings Tidningar, Gota Media, and Stampen* **acquiring smaller, local media outlets**.



Reduced investment in commercial advertising

Lately, there has been a **sharp decrease in commercial advertising** revenue for local media.

Between 2005 and 2021 the investment fell **from 8.3 to 1.7 billion SEK**. This affects the economy of the local press, which is heavily dependent on income from advertising.



Fewer deliveries

The **distribution of press has decreased** over the past five years, especially in the countryside where people depend most on the national postal delivery.

Over recent years the delivery procedures have changed from five days a week to sometimes once a week.

Editorial independence under review

There is the risk of reduced supply and reduced media diversity within the segment of Swedish news and local journalism. There are fewer unique local news reports and more that are produced using ready-made information from other actors, i.e. identical news published by several different publishers.

A look into the working conditions of Swedish local journalists

The working conditions of employed local journalists are regulated by agreements made between the journalists' trade union Svenska Journalistförbundet (SJF). **SJF negotiated a new agreement on working conditions in 2015**, which has strengthened the working situation of freelancers in the country.

However, **attacks and threats to the physical safety of journalists**, including those online, **have increased in the last 5 years**.

