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Do Frictions Ignite Serra de Monchique?

Perceptions of Neoliberal Globalization and Complications for Sustainable Citizenship in the Changing Landscape of the Portuguese Countryside.

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In Memoriam

Willem Tonk

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Abstract

This thesis explores the way Serra de Monchique is connected to global processes, by positing the concept of landscape, on a local scale, opposite the global interconnectedness of the countryside, often assumed to be relatively isolated. In this way it portrays the frictions experienced by locals, and analyzes how these frictions contribute to local perceptions of powerlessness and precarity. Even though frictions are indeterminate, not inherently good or bad, most of the frictions that contribute to a local experience of powerlessness can be analytically attributed to debates surrounding neoliberalism. Furthermore, the residents depict how they experience inadequate rights applying to them in their landscape, while the responsibilities imposed on them through neoliberal narratives are unjust and cumbersome. Subsequently, the residents of Monchique attempt to negotiate their citizenship through acts of citizenship, as reactions to local perceptions of powerlessness and governmental neglect. These local acts of citizenship are contrasted with theoretical debates on sustainable citizenship, pursued by some residents of Serra de Monchique. Finally, in an attempt to expand on the concept of sustainable citizenship, and to further its applicability in the context of Serra de Monchique, this thesis critiques existing literature on sustainable citizenship. That is to say, it falls prey to common limitations in sustainability discourses, inhibiting it from being applicable and effective on a more local scale.

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Introduction

The old Nissan Patrol 4x4 is going up the slope away from the permaculture farm, growling as it finds its way on the dirt track towards the paved road that will take us to the mountain village of Monchique. Ella is at the steering wheel, driving me and my wife into town to visit the office of A Nossa Terra, the local environmental organization. We pass gorgeous panoramic views in the comfortable warmth of the Mediterranean Spring sun (Figure 2) as we drive towards the town of Monchique, set between Mount Picota and Mount Foia in the Algarve of Portugal. However, the concerns I have been hearing from locals in the few days staying here are clearly visible in the landscape.

Spring is delivering new green to the forest floors, and the black tree trunks and burnt bushes make it painfully clear that the landscape is still recuperating from the devastating fires of 2018, which burnt over sixty percent of the lands belonging to Serra de Monchique. Some patches of land look more like a devastated warzone (Figure 3) than the blooming forests I had imagined in the years before visiting the farm. The seeming prosperity of the notorious eucalyptus tree, which visibly covers about fifty percent of the landscape, is remarkable, as new green shoots (Figure 4) at the bottom of the burnt trunks make them easily discernible from the rest of the forest, even for an untrained eye like mine. Ruins (Figure 5) are sprawled left and right, buildings that would have served as cozy homes in the not too distant past, but now seem more ready for destruction than restoration. These show the diminishing population in the rural parts of the area as a result of the recurring wildfires and the rural exodus, frequent topics of conversation when I visited *Monchiqueiro*, the rural residents of Monchique.

We reach the outskirts of the town with a population of around five thousand people, which many locals tellingly refer to as the 'city'. During conversation, my wife, sitting in the back seat, notes that people are building new terraces downhill. Ella is seemingly agitated, and replies that 'this area is designated a nature reserve area, Serra de Monchique, part of the Natura 2000 program from the EU. But most of the area is still used for forestry and business, which is why we see all these eucalyptus everywhere.' A rant follows, surrounding a sentiment that seems omnipresent in the area. Locals are prohibited from building structures like goat houses and lodges on their own properties, but entities like the multinational Navigator Company seem to get free reign to plant eucalyptus wherever they can lease private land.

The anecdote above is indicative of the way locals perceive encounters between the landscape they inhabit and globalized and neoliberal processes, which contain such powerful forces that residents themselves are left with feelings of powerlessness. Indeed, in the experience of the residents of Monchique, forces of neoliberal globalization, supported by the Portuguese government, affect their environment in such a way that they provoke the contemporary hazards of the Monchiquean landscape. Simultaneously they see the responsible actors, situated in the cities, reap the benefits off

the lands. Seemingly unavoidable and intensifying fires, in combination with the powerlessness to change the landscape for the better, reinforce a sense of, what Anna Tsing calls, precarity, meaning “life without the promise of stability ... [a] condition of our times” (Tsing 2015: 2). As this thesis will show, powerlessness and precarity induce considerations to leave the Monchiquean landscape altogether. However, they also motivate local residents to oppose the powerlessness by negotiating their citizenship, and in this way solve the problems that create their increasingly precarious landscape.

Hence, this ethnographic study will attempt to answer the following question: How do the residents of Serra de Monchique attempt to negotiate sustainable citizenship in a landscape increasingly experienced as characterized by processes linked to debates on globalization and neoliberalism? The concepts embedded in this question are explored in four chapters.

The first chapter explores the way Serra de Monchique is connected to global processes, by positing the concept of landscape, on a local scale, opposite the global interconnectedness of the countryside, often assumed to be relatively isolated. In this way I portray the frictions experienced by locals, and analyze how these frictions contribute to local perceptions of powerlessness and precarity (Woods 2008; Tsing 2011). Chapter two describes how, even though frictions are indeterminate, not inherently good or bad, most of the frictions that contribute to a local experience of powerlessness can analytically be attributed to debates surrounding neoliberalism. Accordingly, the residents of Monchique depict how they experience a form of neoliberal citizenship, with inadequate rights, and unjust and cumbersome responsibilities imposed on them through neoliberal narratives. Subsequently, in the third chapter I elaborate on the way the residents of Monchique attempt to negotiate their citizenship through acts of citizenship, as reactions to local perceptions of powerlessness and governmental neglect. Finally, chapter four contrasts local acts of citizenship with theoretical debates on sustainable citizenship, which is pursued by some residents of Serra de Monchique. In an attempt to expand on sustainable citizenship and further its applicability in the context of Serra de Monchique, it critiques existing literature for falling prey to common limitations in sustainability discourses. These limitations inhibit sustainable citizenship from being applicable and effective on a more local scale.

In order to gather data I have spent two and a half months at a permaculture farm in the Algarve, going around Serra de Monchique. I interviewed 30 people, and spoke to many more. I also performed participant observation activities and interviews in cooperation with A Nossa Terra, Monchique Alerta, and members of the organization formerly known as Ajuda Monchique, three associations aimed at improving the local environmental and socio-economical environments in the area. Furthermore, I interviewed staff members of the local municipality and cooperative, in order to get a more encompassing image of the way these two institutions are embedded in the local community. To safeguard my informants, their names have been anonymized using pseudonyms.

Moreover, it is important to address some more general points of consideration before heading to the main body of this thesis. First, this thesis is written with the purpose to convey local concerns in the Monchiquean landscape from the perspective of the *Monchiqueiro* who participated in the research. While I did manage to interview representatives of the local government, the perspectives of other actors critiqued here, like the national government and corporations, were not taken into account during the writing of this article, mostly due to limitations like time constraints. That does mean, however, that I do not assume the ability to be entirely objective with regards to the critique given to these entities, as the *Monchiqueiro* perspective is intended to show the duress experienced locally. Secondly, the concept of the rural is by some seen as problematic, since it reinforces a urban/rural dichotomy, and can entail connotations of backwardness and underdevelopment in reference to center/periphery models of modern globalization (Inda and Rosaldo 2008). Nevertheless I will use the concept of rurality in this thesis, since it proved a useful category of expression for my informants, and, as some of my informants explained to me, does not carry a bad connotation in the Portuguese language.

Finally, I want to remind the readers of this article that the research in this thesis is in some ways limited by time and language constraints. Three months ethnographic fieldwork is in any case brief to produce a comprehensive study, but I do feel I was in that time able to reach a substantial part of the population of Monchique. My lack of ability in the Portuguese language is a potential influence in the results of this study, since parts of the local population, especially the older rural residents living on farms, were difficult to reach with only the English language at my disposal. However, I have attempted mitigate the influence of language barriers by cooperating with translators to conduct interviews with the share of the local population that only speaks Portuguese. Ultimately, I feel like I have been able to create a representative account of residents' experiences living in Serra de Monchique after the wildfires of august 2018.

In order to depict the local situation, and sketch an image of Serra de Monchique, every chapter starts with an anecdote referencing particularly relevant interview and participant observation situations in locations representative of the local landscape (See Figure 1). The following chapter will portray global entanglements in the countryside of Monchique, laying the concept of frictions in global/local interactions as a foundational framework for this thesis.

Chapter 1: The Local Landscape of the Global Countryside

After a short ride from my interview location I drive my rented Fiat Panda to the local agricultural cooperative, Coopchique. Set at the Southern edge of the village, the building of this *cooperativa* is one of the central meeting points for local farmers to buy their goods and materials, and indulge in lengthy small-talk. The industrial looking building has several floors, the first for selling products, with the upper floors consisting of offices and conference rooms. A middle-aged man comes up to me and, seeing that I am a newcomer seemingly not there with the intention to buy anything, he points up to the top floor. He guessed correctly that I am here to attend the meeting on the ways people can apply for EU funding for their agricultural projects through the PDR 2020 program, seemingly unsurprised that a foreigner who doesn't speak the local language would attend such meetings.

I go up two flights of stairs, when a short, stocky man with a cap addresses me in English, leading me into the conference room where the meeting has already started. Some twenty people are in the room, listening to the man standing in the front of the room explaining the formalities of filling out the EU grant forms displayed on his beamer. Some people take notes, others are nodding off, when suddenly an older man three chairs to my right starts speaking to the man presenting the form, in a rather different tone than had been the case in the last fifteen minutes. Although I do not understand much of the language, it is clear from the expressions of the man, stepping just a little bit closer to the front of the room every time he makes a new remark, that the man fervently disagrees with something. He is arguing with the man in the front of the room, who is seemingly unsettled by the sudden rouse. Some people laugh at the situation and the arguing man's remarks, while others sit in silence and look annoyed by the situation. The argument continues for some time, going back and forth from the front to the back of the room, when I see the man with the cap leaving through the door to my left, at which point I decide to follow him out of the room to ask him what all the fuss is about.

I ask the man with the cap what the meeting is about. He introduces himself as Adao, a recognizable name, as many of my interlocutors talked about him in interviews. 'These [meetings] are about little investments in farming' he states, 'but people are very worried and traumatized by the fire of last year, and sometimes in these meetings people want to discuss that, the fires and the damage. And it's important because it is an opportunity to release people's pent up emotions.' He walks me over to some boards with topographical pictures of the burnt areas, and I ask him if it is difficult to discuss other things right now because of the recent fires. He answers 'yes, of course. [The fires] were very heavy and twenty-two percent of the area burnt. [People] had a lot of cork and forest, and it all burnt. This area has been burnt three times in fifteen years ... in the same space! And this fire was big, but in 2003 it was even bigger, eighty-two percent of the area. It's a problem ... so now [people] discuss the fire and not the subject of the meeting, which happens very much.'

This anecdote is evocative for one of the most discussed subjects surrounding the local landscape. Wildfires have been part of the landscape for as long as my interlocutors can remember, but changes in the local environment have made for fires that are unlike the ones anyone can remember from their past. Growing in scale and intensity, the fires make for highly precarious and stressful summer months for the residents of Serra de Monchique.

People that grew up in Monchique often stress the way their mountainous landscape is now different from what it once was, and that the fires are a big concern for residents. As Manoel told me while we were having lunch, 'I am 65 now, and I notice the difference from back then. There were not these fires. There were smaller fires but we could always stop them. We had permission to make a fire every year, every summer as well, but the fire never escaped, and if it escaped a little bit ... we could still stop it [with] only the *bombeiros* (fire department) from Monchique. They could handle the fires.' Because my interlocutors often stressed their interaction with the landscape, it has become an important analytical point of reference throughout this thesis. Mathews' definition of the landscape takes away from Olwig's (1996) and Tsing's (2015) assertions that a landscape is a site of human and environmental cohabitation and interaction. Hence, landscapes entail "particular legal, cultural, and economic histories," which emerge through undetermined encounters between humans and non-human entities, including the forest, soil, and indeed fire (Mathews 2018: 389). That is the contextual premise I will build much of my argumentation on. As the exchange with Manoel shows, to him the landscape of Monchique is not only the sum of human and non-human entities present in its direct environment, but equally so the interactions these entities undergo, and the changing effects that these interactions can have.

Some of my interlocutors experience their changing environment as part of a more globally observed phenomenon, that of climate change, as most interlocutors speak of a past when 'it rained a lot of the winter'. As Raquel explains, 'when I hear the rain coming from the roofs it is music for my ears, but we don't have that much anymore. An umbrella used to be something that you needed in the winter but now I never take it anymore. I have the same umbrella for 5 years now, normally I lose my umbrella. I am sure it rains much less, that much I can say.' In similar vein to how Michael Vine (2018) describes Californian's active awareness of their changing local habitat due to global climate change (Vine 2018), many residents of Serra de Monchique perceive changes in their environment. Contemporary consequences of global climate change, uniformly shared by both California and large parts of Portugal, cultivate summers with increasing drought, heatwaves and wildfires, which fabricate the need for changes in the way people conduct interactions with the environment in their landscapes (Light 2017; Vine 2018).

These shifts are not surprising, at least from an anthropological perspective, as much literature has focused on changes perceived on the ground through processes of globalization. Although the

majority of academic research on globalization has been equated with the rapid development of urban spheres, Michael Woods shows that rural areas have been equally affected by increasing global interconnections. Through studying the spread of trade, mobility and information in various localities, research shows different outcomes to the effects of globalization. When defining the “global countryside”, Woods comes remarkably close to describing Monchique in terms of the characteristics that can be found in and around the Serra according to its inhabitants (Woods 2008: 486). The distancing of Production and consumption, increasing corporate concentration and integration, employment of migrant labor, abundance of international tourism, the attraction of high levels of commercial and residential foreign property investors, the transformation of the “discursive construction of nature and its management,” the replacement of native forest for the planting of commercial forestry (and the inscription of other marks of globalization into the local landscape of Serra de Monchique), increasing social polarization, the formation of new sites of political authority, and finally the contestation one can find in the global countryside, as it is “always a contested space,” are the key characteristics of the global countryside (Woods 2008: 492-494). These characteristics are all observable to those paying attention and interacting with locals when residing in Serra de Monchique. As such, while these parts of the country are often imagined as ‘off-grid,’ as some of my interlocutors stipulated, they are by no means isolated from globalizing forces and tendencies, even for those residents who say they actively try to procure ‘self-sustainable’ lives.

The inherent contestation present in the global countryside, referred to by Woods, could be a result of the frictions encountered in local-to-global interactions, as conceptualized by Tsing (2011). She argues that the initial idea of globalization, entailing processes of increasing and indiscriminating interconnectedness across the globe, provided an attractive discourse for late twentieth century western development projects to purport the formation of global betterment and equitization. As everything was deemed equally and indiscriminately interconnected, developmental projects would allow for remaking the world exactly the way its developers intended it. However, this view made for a tendency to see globalization as a set of unidirectional flows, moving from the western centers of the world to its peripheries (Tsing 2011; Inda and Rosaldo 2008). Subsequently, this perspective is contemporarily criticized, as the global flows envisioned by advocates of globalization and its supporting institutions (like the UN, and conceptualizations like human rights) have proved to be inconsistent in producing a fair world for everyone. Rather, globalization often produces awkward interconnections, formulating power relations that empower some, yet set others up for subjugation (Björkdal and Höglund 2013; Inda and Rosaldo 2008). Universalized tendencies in the rhetoric of globalization can essentialize culture, norms and values, reinforcing structural abuse and marginalization. These changing circumstances portray frictions, providing insight in the claims that the effects of globalization are indeterminate, rather than solely positive (Tsing 2011; Sylvain 2005).

Instead, the indeterminate frictional effects of globalization can produce, in addition to its optimistically imagined outcomes for some, negative sentiments for others encumbered in its transformative potential. Often the normative ideas and perspectives accompanying global flows clash with local conceptualizations of norms and priorities, creating friction in the process. (Inda and Rosaldo 2008; Tsing 2011). Tsing portrayed this process by showing how, during her fieldwork in Indonesia, different perceptions of the local environments created issues as a result of friction. Forests were seen as production resources by globalized actors, while locally they constituted the foundation for livelihoods. In this way, global trajectories produce novel power dynamics between the different actors entangled in the interactions that steer local landscapes in new directions, warranted by some, contested by others (Björkdal and Höglund 2013). That is why, in this thesis, it is indeed imperative to look at the frictions encountered in the field, exemplified by the experiences and nostalgia depicted at the start of this chapter. In line with Mathews' argument that stories can inform a way of engaging the local in "the politics of global environmental change", this thesis portrays the perceived changes in the local landscape by analyzing locally encountered frictions (Mathews 2018: 386). Taking frictions as a focal point opens up the possibility to analyze where the residents of Monchique perceive problems and opportunities to arise from outside their local environment, in the interactions between the local landscape and increasingly global forces.

A remarkably discernible point of friction present in Serra de Monchique is the prevalence of the aforementioned eucalyptus. The blue gum tree (*Eucalyptus globulus*), native to Australia, is dominant in the Portuguese countryside, covering about seven percent of the entire Portuguese territory. Globally regarded as the "El Dorado of forestry," it was introduced in Portugal in the nineteenth century, providing easy, fast, renewable crops for fuel, construction materials, and paper production, in diverse spaces, quickly becoming one of the primary forces of the Portuguese economy (Bennett 2010, 27; Mallinson 2018; McGuire 2013).

As Anna Tsing notes, the capitalist trope of plantations, as discovered by the Portuguese, was a foundation for mythical expansions of production. Through the introduction of self-contained, exotic crops, like eucalyptus, which the endemic species of the local environment had not evolved with, and could thus not interact with, the Portuguese established a new way of scaling up production in varied environments around the world. Yet these projects of scalability create complications that eventually support the formation of 'capitalist ruins' (Tsing 2015). Over a hundred fifty years of records on the global spread of eucalyptus have provided a perspective on problems concerning the relative isolation of eucalyptus in local environments, producing detrimental effects for local biodiversity. The eucalyptus trees seem to have a negative effect on environmental hydrological situations, and outcompete other species of native vegetation. Most native animals cannot feed on, let alone establish reciprocal interactions with eucalyptus, consequently leaving the eucalyptus dominated areas to find

more suitable and hospitable living conditions. This makes for environmental changes that has severe complications for ecological diversity around the world (Bennett 2010; McGuire 2013; Willemse n.d.).

Eucalyptus is one of the first things many residents will talk about. One night, when Mark invited my hosts, my wife and me, to his neighboring farm, the conversation during dinner quickly turned to eucalyptus, with my host Nico stating that 'the way they plant it, the fire brigade cannot get in. If a eucalyptus forest burns it burns to hell, and that is the problem!' Yet, eucalyptus is a good example to show how frictions are in fact indeterminate, and can promote tensions in a divided landscape.

Some are clearly against any more planting of eucalyptus, and would rather see it all removed as quickly as possible, as did Hans:

Eucalyptus is the worst you can plant, because it takes all the water out of the soil, it is not possible to integrate it into another forestry concept of biodiversity, it is always monoculture. It goes maybe with *medronho* (strawberry tree) or other bushes, and here and there you will have cork oak. [But most things] can't grow because the eucalyptus is growing quicker, [a] very quick growing tree, and of course it is very dangerous, because it has this oil and with an ignition it starts to burn at around 55 to 60 degrees. They made tests in Australia about that, so when you have high temperatures in the summer [everything will burn]. And with climate change we will see more high temperatures in the future. ... Last year we had 46 degrees in Monchique on some days, so between 46 and 55 there are just 9 degrees left.

Yet, most locals are more nuanced, especially seeing the economic dependence on eucalyptus for many rural residents. Cloe was of the opinion that the problem was connected to the density of the eucalyptus, and the lack of ability to control it in the area:

I don't mind that people grow eucalyptus per se. It's a fast growing tree, we all need paper and cellulose, it makes money. I'm not against eucalyptus that way. The problem is that when it's not controlled, when it's miles and miles of eucalyptus ... it's a matter of organization. It's dumb to have it the way it is now ... If there is land full of eucalyptus, everything around it should just not be eucalyptus and that should be the law. It is a matter of equilibrium. I am not against it, I don't think anyone should be against it, but it's about not succumbing to the pressure of big corporations [because] now it is thousands [of] square miles. Every time you drive out of here going around the hospital you see *Picota* here and ... everything there is dark because all of that is eucalyptus that burned. You just need to be smart about how you exploit it and I think

there is no one in power here to say 'you want to plant eucalyptus? Fine, these are the rules to do so.'

Others still, do not see eucalyptus as the problem. Diogo for example, dryly spoke about how he has 'a little farm with some fruits, apples and cherries. And I have eucalyptus to make paper, and cork trees, and *medronho*. With eucalyptus you can work the land so it doesn't spread as quickly, but it is a lot of work.' Diogo sees, like many others, merit in eucalyptus, because alternatives native to the land are not as realistic or profitable, as '[eucalyptus] is a tree that grows very quickly and in 10 years you can cut it. ... Cork takes a lot longer, it takes 40 years if you plant it, and then you can harvest the first cork and after 10 years you can harvest it again. And it makes about the same money.' In this way, eucalyptus is part of frictions clearly visible in the landscape of Monchique, both from an environmental and a social perspective. Diogo saw the problems of the wildfires not stemming from eucalyptus, but from yet another friction that can be found in Monchique, the rural exodus.

Often talked about with certain melancholy is the rural exodus that unfolded over the end of the twentieth century. Rapid urbanization and international mobility, subsequent to processes of globalization, left areas like Monchique on the other end of the rope that pulled people away from the countryside, into the cities. This friction is felt by some in the way public services and governmental investment disappeared in the town of Monchique, as the hospital and higher grade school moved to Portimao, and the authorities overseeing agriculture and forestry are created in cities, where the very things they oversee are absent (Carr 2009; Woods 2008). Yet, as is the case with frictions, they are indeterminate, leaving residents with differing opinions on similar subjects. Aileen, for example, stated that there are sides to it that are 'actually really good ... My kids always looked forward ... to go to [school] Portimao to meet new friends. ... Because things here can always be a little bit close-minded and whatever, so it benefits the kids.'

Nonetheless, many people see, as Jack put it, 'a tendency to leave the countryside ... [as] lack of economic sustainability leads to lack of a social one, and without a vibrant or a social community to care about the environment, then the sustainability just falls through.' Manoel told me about a Monchique of the past, which 'was a lot bigger back then. All the small houses you see in the valley, they are ruins now, but there were people living there before and there are so many of them. These people that just left or died ... many went to the town here so, the town grew a little but in the rural area people left, so there are way fewer people on the lands.' Many locals observe that this change has led to the gradual change of the landscape, as formerly inhabited lands are now used in different ways, bringing new environmental circumstances and hazards, a correlation well documented in the discipline of human geography (Carr 2009). In Monchique, this has led to a move away from agriculture, towards forestry, and many lands are now entirely neglected. People talk about their neighbors who

moved to the coast or the capital, and leave their ancestral lands entirely unmanaged, or lease their lands to the paper companies for easy money, simultaneously increasing the amount of eucalyptus plantations in the area. Most Monchiqueiro see this as one of the main reasons for the escalating intensity, uncontrollability and spread of wildfires.

The outmigration of people from the countryside does not only affect the landscape as a whole, but also the social cohesion that people experience in the town and the surrounding areas. Raquel, for example, talks about her memory of Monchique as feeling 'really more alive. Money was rolling more, there was noise on the street which I miss now. [There were] more cars, more people, and more shops too. Now there are little shops ... but back then there was a shop in every door. Not when I was young, or when my mother was young, but in 1997, not long ago!' This emptying of countryside areas is a well-documented phenomenon of contemporary times, not unique to Monchique. Dace Dzenovska, for example, shows how similar processes of emptying of the countryside have been continuously going on in Latvia since the post-Soviet era, with comparable characteristics. The overgrown ruins are a tangible reminder of a once sprawling countryside, the town is inhabited mostly by the elderly, and a broken down social life is a reoccurring theme of conversation. Even the way Dzenovska describes how jobs have moved to the cities, followed by people, while the town only has public services and municipal employment available, is reminiscent of the "emptiness" portrayed by my interlocutors (Dzenovska 2018: 18).

While these sentiments could be representative of an idealized vision of a nostalgic past, there is an abundance of literature on the changes to the local landscape, of Portugal in general, and Monchique in particular, which back up many of the claims people have put forth in the way they themselves observed local changes from the past into the present. (See Barrocas, Da Gama, Sousa, and Ferreria 1998; Brouwer 1995; Feliciano et. al. 2015; Krohmer and Deil 2003; Mitchell et. al. 2009; Simonson, Allen, and Coomes 2013; Stanislawski 1962; Tedim, Remelgado, Borges, Carvalho, and Martins 2012). However, the question whether these seemingly nostalgic claims are true is not as relevant here, as the question of what these forms of nostalgia mean for the locals. The changes perceived by the locals through nostalgic stories, rather than depicting a better past, seem to make people aware how fragile the livelihoods of their rural existence actually are. As Dzenovska describes it, contemporary rural livelihoods entail the perception of "a shift that was experienced as detrimental to one's ability to go on with life" (Dzenovska 2018). As such, I argue that locals do not merely portray nostalgia, but also a rupture, experienced through their changing environment. What could be dismissed as nostalgia is actually an awareness of the fragility created by local social, economic, and ecological shifts, frictions sensed by those people living through and with a changing, increasingly precarious landscape that they have less control over.

One effect of the reoccurring wildfires, and the subsequent experienced fragility on the relatively old population in the Serra's countryside, of which many people are astutely aware, is the increasing mortality, mental instability and even suicide rate in the area. Luciano talked to me about his parents situation during lunch one afternoon:

My father is [feeling depressed] because of his big worries about his properties. After the fires he has not been the same person. They had the same in 2003 and 2004, and this one in 2018 was the same but with an intensity that was really strange ... and people suffered a lot. People didn't die in the fire, but we have already seen deaths because of the fire, old people in Alferce, because of the stress ... and I am worried about my father because my father is different now. He is 85 years old and ... he is very stressed and my mother told me that she saw him one night in the corridor, and he was saying to her 'it was the fire that defeated me.' Because you have your life planned, and suddenly everything changes. Your source of income and [living situation]. And if you are young you will be able to get back up again, but for my father and for all these people being 70 or 80 years old it is difficult to do.

Similarly, Martim, a fire fighter at the local fire department, who was part of the force fighting the fires of 2018, stated that he thinks 'that many people will die because of the fire, old people' explaining his concerns for the older population that lost their income and livelihoods. Many people, as a result, complain that the local, and governmental, tendency is to ignore mental health problems. For example, one day there was a funeral in front of the office where me, my wife and one of my informants, Alan, were working. Alan disclosed with my wife that word around town was that there had been a lot of suicides since the fire, being one of the reasons we saw so many funerals during our short stay in Monchique. As "changes in the way death is understood and discussed are one means of gaining insight into the ways in which individuals experience loss and uncertainty," these narratives depict an aspect of the experienced precarity of the landscape shared by the town's residents (Kaneff 2002: 90).

While the decline of the population was often cited as one of the bigger problems in the area, informants also quoted more optimistic social and rejuvenating processes. The village and its countryside is characterized by a population which is divisible in broadly two groups, the native rural residents, and residents immigrated from Portuguese urban or international domains, whom I will call neo-rural residents, in line with Michel Chevalier's distinction of *rurals* and *neo-rurals* (Chevalier 1993). While going into the field, I expected to find strong tensions between the rural Portuguese residents and the neo-rural part of the population, since neo-rural residents in rural areas bring the potential for renovating villages previously on the brink of abandonment, while their movements toward rural areas are also subject to problems. In literature, the restorations performed by the intra- and international

neo-rurals, often characterized as second-home owners, old-age pensioners, executives, neo-peasants or neo-artisans, are well intentioned, but draw unfavorable reactions from the rural community, experiencing it as a threat to the authentic village life (Chevalier 1993; Robertson 2011). However, what I found differed from the expectations I had assumed from the literature.

One of the negative frictions I expected to encounter from a changing environment with globalization in mind would be the permanent and upcoming presence of foreigners buying up land. Occasional conflicts occur, such as Alex's neighbor causing trouble for the family after it bought a sizable plot of land in the area, which the neighbor had wanted to buy but could not afford. What I found however, was that these incidents seem to be individual cases of, as my interlocutors said, 'resentment or discrimination' which are by no means representative of the sentiments I encountered most frequently in the field. Most native rural residents spoke with respect for these new neighbors, as for example Manoel spoke of 'all the [rural] people from Perna da Negra who left that area, and there were only ruins around. These [neo-rural] citizens come here and renovate the houses and live there, and they like to stay there and clean the lands. That is important, it's very good.' As such, frictions stemming from interactions between the neo-rural residents and the native rurals are present, but they are indeed indeterminate in character, disparately bringing up negative and positive sentiments.

While the sentiments towards the foreign community are generally not bad, neo-rural immigration does still configure frictions with real effects for the native population of Monchique. And while the rural population is subjected to these consequences (even though they are usually the ones asking for high land prices, for example), the neo-rural population are in many cases not as fixed to the area, often having a source of income outside of the Serra, and generally having more options to leave the area should the need arise. Some foreign residents told me they only live in the area half the year, and others told stories of neighbors who moved back to their home country due to the insecurities caused by the fire. Some neo-rurals are not bound as much by a common language, or a solid social network (including me, as a short term researcher who does not speak the local language), something that native rurals are aware of. As Jaco noted: 'Everyone is welcome here, but it is striking when you meet with an association to discuss important matters, and we speak English because many don't speak Portuguese, and people do not want to commit because they are only here for six months a year.' According to some of the native rural residents I spoke to, this is discouraging when trying to socialize and organize with new people in the area. Nevertheless, in their interaction with each other, the present frictions did not seem to turn into more than the sporadic conflicts exemplified by Alex's story, and for most people the positive effects that neo-rurals bring, such as cleaner lands and younger people, were more important than the problems that might arise through them.

As shown here, where landscape interacts with global forces, frictions start to surface and become reality in residents' perceptions. Since local-global interactions are indeed indeterminate, they interact in such a way that both humans and non-humans are affected by these frictions in disparate ways (Tsing 2011; Tsing 2015). However, in the wake of the recent phenomena of reoccurring wildfires, these frictions make for a landscape that is perceived as a highly precarious habitat for both humans and nature, especially when compared to residents' imagined histories. Hence, I will show in the next chapter that there is a recognizable pattern of interaction with neoliberal capitalism where these frictions leave the residents of Serra de Monchique with a sense of a precarious landscape that they are powerless to change.

Chapter 2: Neoliberalism and Powerlessness

Ella stops her Nissan Patrol at Ribeira Grande, spotting Bram's Mitsubishi SUV, and me and my wife get out of the car to meet Bram, who will take us up to his house. After waiting at the Mitsubishi for a few minutes, wondering where Bram is, he suddenly appears from an overgrown rammed-earth ruin by the side of the road. 'Look what I found, it's a newspaper from the '60's' he says with a smile on his face. While we are marveling at the Portuguese local newspaper that has turned yellow over the years, several cars arrive with some 18 people in them. Alan gets out of his car, and introduces us to the group of booking.com employees there to spend the day planting trees for their care day, part of the company's corporate social responsibility program. We join Bram and several volunteers in the Mitsubishi, and we start driving up the mazelike dirt tracks that eventually lead us to Bram's house, twenty-five minutes away from the closest paved roads.

'We decided to come here because of last year's fires' Tiago tells me while we are shaking in the backseat of the car. 'It was a big shock for the Algarve.' He explains to me that their department had gone to a different charity the years before, but that they wanted to help the environment of the Algarve by planting native and fire resistant trees. He goes on to say that 'people don't really like all the eucalyptus, but it's a big industry so we don't really have much power over it ... and the government will be corrupt to help the company, sell the place here to the companies to make more money. ... It doesn't make sense, some things are legal, but nobody knows why, you know. Sometimes the small worker will be punished, but [the companies] will not be, you know because they know someone who knows someone, or they just get a fine, but they have all the money to pay the fine so nobody cares.' The Mitsubishi slows down as we arrive at the edge of Bram's lands, and we get out to be greeted by an island of green in the middle of the ocean of charred eucalyptus trunks we had been driving through to get there.

While Tiago arrived from the city of Faro and is not a resident of Monchique, he was able to describe to me the way people perceive the countryside to be connected to the national sphere and beyond it, reminiscent of the narratives deliberated by the residents of Monchique. My informants often reiterated that they feel subjected to forces out of their control, witnessing companies wielding the power to enact whichever practices they deem most valuable, while avoiding responsibility for their actions and its byproducts. Simultaneously, many interlocutors note the willingness of the Portuguese government to conspire with these companies, even though the residents themselves feel pushed by the national and local government to comply with the rules, sometimes in ways reminiscent of the authoritarian Salazar regime of Portugal's past. This experienced injustice instills a lack of trust

in the government and large corporations for many of my interlocutors, invoking a local sense of powerlessness.

Although frictions are indeterminate in character, this chapter will go about exploring and analyzing the frictions behind my informants' experiences of powerlessness and precarity in their current livelihoods. The contemporarily reoccurring large-scale wildfires are the biggest source of this perception, but through complaints and deliberations my informants lay bare many other issues they are concerned with, revealing the way the residents of Monchique perceive their own (individual and collective) political power and the precarity in the landscape of Serra de Monchique. More importantly, I cannot avoid to link many of the frictions that reinforce the sense of powerlessness among my informants to neoliberalism. However, I will try to avoid falling in the trap of utilizing neoliberalism to explain, as James Laidlaw alleges in the excellent debate on neoliberalism in the anthropological context, "everything I don't like about the world" (Eriksen, Laidlaw, Mair, Martin, and Venkatesan 2015: 912). Thus I will first present my interpretation of neoliberalism, and why I think it is important to use it in the context of my research in Serra de Monchique.

First and foremost, neoliberalism entails the politico-economic structures which are geared towards support for capitalist markets, privatization, commodification and decentralization. Hence, neoliberal capitalism requires the withdrawal of direct government intervention from internal market affairs, only intervening "at the outset, to construct the market itself" (Fletcher 2010: 174). These structures were advanced in Portugal through "the interventionist policies and privatization drives emerging in the crisis-ridden "PIGS" of southern Europe (Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain)" after the bailouts of these countries in the 2008 crisis, by what some of my informants identified as 'the troika' (EC, ECB and IMF), "implying obligations to new empires and multinational aristocracies" (Argenti and Knight 2015: 797). The obligations that are implied with the austerity measures taken in Portugal make for an explicitly perceived neoliberal state where my interlocutors often expressed similar concerns to what Argenti and Knight noted in Greece. There, increasing inequality forms the basis for transnational exploitation in the local landscape "that [citizens] feel, now more than ever, powerless to contest" (Argenti and Knight 2015: 797).

Therefore, I argue that neoliberalism does not unequivocally cause the misfortune of a group of people living in the mountains. However, the perception of powerlessness in the face of inequality is the main reason for my notion that neoliberalism is essential to explain the reasons that the residents of Monchique explicitly link their increasingly precarious landscape to the experienced powerlessness in contesting gradual local changes. As Soumhya Venkatesan states in the previously named debate on Neoliberalism, proponents of the idea that neoliberalism can, and should, be used for anthropological analysis argue that "there is a pattern to the ways in which relations between states, corporations, and the public are being modified around the world." This pattern reaches further than solely the market

neoliberal capitalism was intended to improve, touching upon behavior and aspirations of the individual, and the rights and duties of 'citizens' too (Eriksen, Laidlaw, Mair, Martin, and Venkatesan 2015: 911).

With this in mind, I will attempt not to abuse neoliberalism as a general term that explains all of the misfortunes of the residents of Serra de Monchique, as the frictions found there are indeterminate in their interactions. Undoubtedly, many in the area, and beyond, have benefitted from its implementation, for example through monetary incentives and industrial development. As Manoel stated, 'it is better now of course [than during the authoritarian regime]. We have more freedom to talk, we can try to change things, and we can move.' However, I do argue that neoliberalism can be traced throughout my fieldwork observations and responses, and is indeed entangled with my interlocutors' narratives of powerlessness to change their increasingly precarious situation. Since I am exploring those narratives in this chapter, I cannot ignore the interplay of neoliberalism within the frictions perceived by my informants, even when the term neoliberalism was only sparsely referred to. Compellingly, Manoel followed up the remark quoted above distinctively, stating that contemporary political and economic developments '[do] not resolve all ... for the politicians it has been good, because they can change things, but for the citizens no. [The politicians] only look out for themselves and for money.'

Fletcher explains that, "while a disciplinary governmentality operates principally through the internalization of social norms and ethical standards to which individuals conform, due to fears of deviance and immorality ... a neoliberal governmentality seeks merely to create external incentive structures within which individuals, understood as self-interested rational actors, can be motivated to exhibit appropriate behaviors through manipulation of incentives" (Fletcher 2010: 173). As other studies have shown, in Italy, United States and Latvia, people "exhibited affective attachment to a form of life that had entailed stability, sociality, and a promise of a future, despite the violence that it may have also wielded," through the move away from post-Fordist and post-socialist regimes towards societies informed by neoliberalism (Dzenovska 2018: 20). My informants acknowledge that the move away from the disciplinary and violent Portuguese Salazar regime after the 1974 carnation revolution has generally brought improvements to their lives. Yet, many, especially older rural residents, simultaneously exhibit a sense of absence, of a "stability, sociality, and a promise of a future" they once experienced in the past (Dzenovska 2018: 20; Lloyd-Jones 2001). Through interaction with the native rurals, even neo-rurals tend to express this sentiment, as the feelings of stability, sociality, a viable future, and even care, have contemporarily been largely replaced by feelings of powerlessness and precarity for citizens in the Monchiquean countryside. This leaves frictions that are for many connected to the economic and social tendencies which are analytically entangled with debates on neoliberalism, and its constituents of capitalism and governmentality.

The Portuguese landscape is, in a way, very well suited for the implementation of neoliberal economic policy, since the majority of the land, including its resources, is privatized through the Portuguese tradition of hereditary land ownership (Brouwer 1993). In this way it is easy for the government to keep their hands off as long as there are no calamities like the fires, and for companies to gain footing on the private lands without regulation or state interference. Subsequently, in a neoliberal fashion capital is easily moved away from the local toward the global flows of capitalist companies, like the Navigator Company, with local residents not seeing much economic gain from these practices (Woods 2008). Many frictions thus stem from the landscape that has changed from a local pastoral and agricultural landscape to one dominated by forestry, incentivized by (inter-)national government for multinational corporations.

The primary site of frictions representative of the feeling that economic interests surrounding corporations are prioritized over the residents of Serra de Monchique are found in the tensions surrounding the previously discussed eucalyptus. While there is a general consensus among residents that eucalyptus is a factor in the devastating fires, the tensions actually stem from the economic importance many feel towards the tree, as it is sometimes an important part of the annual income, especially for the native rural landowners. On the other hand, some residents claim that the 'miserable' income of 'some six hundred euros a year for two hectares', do not nearly outweigh the dangers of the tree, especially its quantity and invasiveness. The alternatives, many of which are based around the planting of native or less invasive trees, would, as Charlie and Jack explained to me, yield 'much higher returns. We ran the numbers and chestnuts and walnuts and various other things ... nine grand a year. So if you had two hectares you literally have a living wage.' However, a bigger problem for many is the way this is established economically, where someone with a two hectare plot of land earns hardly anything, while the companies making money off of it become rich by feeding on the countless small land owners that reside in the area.

The most notorious of these companies in Serra de Monchique is the Navigator Company, referred to by many as Portucel due to a change of brand name. Nico, for example, stated in an association meeting that 'there was a woman from the Navigator Company with leaflets there asking the people on the terrace and inside the restaurant "do you want to sell your land for eucalyptus?" only a week after the fire. They came with Navigator forms, and people were willing to do it sometimes because when you have a burnt piece of land that is now useless, and you can certainly get a few hundred Euros from it, it suddenly becomes attractive, but it's perverse.' Although the company's actions are understood by many as performed 'just because of earning money', it is actually the corporate power and the involvement of the national government which is most frustrating according to many of my informants.

Historically, the paper industry has been essential for the national government to develop the Portuguese economy, starting in the times of the Salazar regime. As such, large land-owners and the paper industry, much of which was nationally owned, benefit from government subsidies and incentives to plant eucalyptus. The result is that the paper industry's revenue still accounts for a substantial part of Portugal's national GDP (Willemse n.d.). Subsequently its perceived influence on political and social matters, like plantations, consequent dangers, and responsibility for damage, is considerable, as shown in the opening vignette of this chapter, and often stated by my informants, even after the privatization of the company itself. Thus, as Manoel shows in the quote above, there is serious concern over the difference in treatment of the big companies and the small rural resident by governing actors. Many residents, for example, heed the fact that almost all the subsidies that are available go to large land owners and companies. Raquel told me about her experience trying to get a subsidy for the removal of eucalyptus from her lands:

The project is to plant 1 cork tree, and two *medronho* (strawberry tree), but ... we have to put in five thousand euros at least, and we are selling our cork for that price. If the project is accepted, because the experience from the past years has been that all the money for these sort of projects go to the big companies and they get all the funds. The paper companies, Portucel, they have rented a lot of land here in Monchique, that is why there are so many plantations. And they need to maintain that so they apply for this project and they get it all. Last year after the fire in 2018 I went to the Camera to ask the engineer to help me with the project, and he said it was not worth it. I don't know how I didn't complain about this answer, because you don't go there and ask for help and they say 'no don't even bother', can you imagine? ... This project, it's PDR 2020, they have many areas of interest [and] they only work with subsidies now, there are no other ways.

Many of my informants reported how difficult it was to get any of these subsidies, for example from the EU funded *Programa de Desenvolvimento Rural 2020* (Rural Development Program 2020, or PDR 2020), because they would almost exclusively be handed out to the large companies and landowners. These larger entities can set up projects that are more professional and controlled, and have the start-up funding needed to initiate them. This is a prime example of European Union subsidies and projects being perceived as merely entailing neoliberal incentives, characterized by the sole availability of subsidies to shape development and conservation projects by private institutions and individuals (Fletcher 2010). As is the case with neoliberal policy "directed first and foremost towards encouraging economic growth as the means to include concerns for social justice", locals perceive development

initiatives being treated as requiring a cost-benefit analysis, instead of using moral guidelines (Fletcher 2010: 174).

Hence, my informants often felt bypassed, by the 'big guys,' like corporations and large land owners, an effect of a constituent in neoliberal governmentality that can be extrapolated towards a consciousness of the utilization of biopower. In the Foucauldian sense of the word, biopower describes the power particularly associated with modern western societies, which does not seek to simply impose sovereign power on a group of individual subject bodies. Rather the sovereign legitimates its authority through the assertion that the governing bodies know what is best for the society as a whole due to its disciplines of expertise, "whose task is to calculate, Interpret, and predict the overall health of the society writ large." In short, governmental decisions are made based on statistical evidence pointing towards those actions which are most beneficial for the largest parts of society. (Cisney and Morar 2015: 5). In a neoliberal context, this biopower becomes an exercise where focus is less placed on nurturing and sustaining the life of subjects directly, rather aiming attention at supporting economic growth for society as a whole (Fletcher 2010: 175). This form of biopower is felt by my informants where their projects and ideas are neglected in lieu of the larger corporations that are perceived, both by the investing governments and my informants, as safer bets to get economic returns, even if my informants are left with a sense of disregard as a result. Several of my informants have noticed this trend, and it leaves them with a sense of powerlessness against 'bigger players', as Cloe called it. While EU sustainable development policies are made with reference to popular sustainability rhetoric, including social equity, the social impact of EU funded programs often go unreviewed. That leaves these programs, like PDR 2020, evaluated according to guidelines of neoliberal biopower, which means that actors too small to be considered are frequently neglected (Mills 2012).

Monchiqueiro perceive a strong contrast in power between large corporations and the locals, as shown when Silvio quipped that 'the big companies, Portucel and everything, have their own forest department and firemen. So the [police], they should go there, but they don't ... it's kind of a separate country. Portucel country, ha-ha.' On top of that, Silvio sees 'no responsibility, no consequences, for the electric company who started this fire', as the former national electricity organization turned private corporation, EDP, is not held accountable, because unmanaged lands are the primary culprit of dangerous fires according to common discourse, even when there is considerable evidence that it was their electricity cables starting the 2018 wildfires (Publico.pt 2018). That is precisely where the residents of Monchique experience a particular inequity, as locals often struggle to gain the economic and physical capacities to take good care of the land. Still, locals who are not able to manage their own lands well are held accountable in the case of calamities due to not cleaning the lands, while the likes of the Navigator Company and the EPD can purport to be doing everything correctly, diverting most of the responsibility for calamities. Consequently, residents of the fire struck region perceive companies,

that should be held accountable, enjoying a certain immunity from needing to take responsibility, due to their overwhelming economic and political power. (Willemse, n.d.).

The perception of discrepancies in the power relations between corporations and the residents of Serra de Monchique are depicted in the common occurrence of conspiracies. Luciano casually deliberated 'if I had the power to decide over this, it would change completely. We would have the eucalyptus removed and you have to plant seeds of other trees. I would but I can't. It is very complicated to change this, and if the government is afraid to organize, because they want [money] and they don't want to get the [country] angry, nothing will change ... In 20 years this is going to burn again a few times, because of the big problem, the fire industry. They come here not every summer but every 3 years, and it is very lucrative'. The fire industry is, according to some informants, a consequence of the neoliberal privatization of firefighting institutions on a national level, prompting unknown actors to pay individuals for starting fires across Portugal so that these private firefighting airplanes and bulldozers can earn a lot of money in a short time.

Nico repeatedly stated that many residents of Monchique 'don't like all those conspiracy theories, although they make me laugh, because they distract from actual analysis,' and can delegitimize local communities. While that may be true, what could easily be dismissed as erroneous imaginations, similar to the nostalgia discussed in chapter 1, could in fact be illustrative stories signifying the sense of powerlessness in the changing countryside landscape of Monchique. Jean and John Comaroff's example of occult economies shows that witch hunts are delegitimizing due to their inferred imaginary nature, similar to conspiracies, and are dismissed by way of abstraction of these actions as barbaric superstition. However, according to the Comaroffs, witch hunts actually signify an awareness of "the spread of a macabre, visceral economy founded on the violence of extraction and abstraction." Whether witchcraft, or a conspiracy for that matter, actually exists, or how long it has been around, should not be the focal point of analysis, because "the fact that none of this is truly new makes it no less significant to those for whom it has become an existential reality" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999: 293).

Thus, I argue that conspiracies can constitute portraits of the perception of neoliberal forces. In Monchique, these portraits are most commonly represented in, what Cloe described as, 'the they conversation' where people state that 'they started the fire' or 'they are happy because they made a lot of money.' Cloe deliberated that she thought that these conversations stem 'from the lack of being able to be responsible for who you put in power. It comes from not knowing who is in power, it comes from the need to talk about it, but not knowing what you are talking about, or who you were talking about.' Locals, in the authoritarian past of the relatively isolated and aspiringly self-sufficient Portuguese nation-state, might have been able to point to the state as the seemingly 'natural' source of the powers that brought both development and misfortune (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Stanislawski

1962). However, contemporarily “the conflicts engendered by neoliberal globalization have brought the disjuncture between spatial and scalar orders into the open, revealing the profoundly transnational character of both the ‘state’ and the ‘local’ and drawing attention to crucial mechanisms of governmentality that take place outside of, and alongside, the nation-state” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; 955). This blurs the lines of causation and responsibility as other, boundary transcending actors like private corporations and global climate change are brought into the mix.

In effect, conspiracies become manifestations of a perceived conflict of interest, as the Portuguese government cannot, or does not want to, heed the needs of its citizens over those of corporations, as Manoel ranted to me:

The big companies came to invest on the land to plant the eucalyptus. And I think the government wants that, because they don't create new jobs for people, they are happy that the people go up [North] because they want the big investment companies for the paper factories. ... The government knows that it's not good for the environment but they do nothing, they only see the money. It's the big companies who make money and not the people here ... the owners of the land. And all the autochthonous trees, they don't want them [even when] those trees save the climate and save the world ... The eucalyptus is not from here but from Australia, and they know that it does not belong to this place and that they are very bad for us, for the climate, for the local people, but only a few people from this region advocate for this, because the people who have money are the big companies, the multinationals ... and that is why the fires happen. Because the eucalyptus take all the water from the ground and when the fires begin they cannot stop them because they are moving so fast. And we cannot do anything about it.

Manoel perceives a lack of intervention by the government for the protection of the locals and their landscape, instead noting that the government rather supports the companies in their dangerous practices. Residents, thus, not only perceive the lack of protective intervention from the state, but also interpret this as an intervention to actively “construct the market itself,” making the government and the companies a single neoliberal front over which the residents perceive a serious lack of power (Fletcher 2010: 174). In this way, their citizenship rights cannot reach these companies and their actions, even when the companies’ actions are seen as a main cause for concern in the local landscape.

Furthermore, my informants perceive trends of neoliberal privatization overflowing into the rest of society, to such a degree that citizens experience privatization of care for themselves and their environment, exceedingly becoming their own responsibility. Even where globalized forces produce potentially harmful economic processes, countryside residents see minimal governmental intervention

for their protection. Hence, Fletcher describes how neoliberalism is not merely a model to guide behavior within the domain of the economy (Fletcher 2010: 174). Local perceptions of governmental narratives are characterized by the experience of a neoliberal citizenship, where lack of state interference equals the absence of rights, as national and regional economic gain receive priority over local livelihoods through entrusting individual responsibilities. As such people perceive a distance between local needs to reproduce sustainable livelihoods and the ability of the Portuguese government to provide them. Despite the government's supposed representativeness of the people's interests and wellbeing, Portuguese politics is thus regarded corrupt and aristocratic, evoking feelings among locals of being seconded by corporations (Willemse n.d.).

The pressure on locals of individual responsibility can be clearly observed in the frequency that conversations turn to the fines that residents have to pay if the local authorities decide that lands are not cleaned properly. Many people complain how it is impossible to take responsibility for clearing land when so much neighboring land is abandoned, like Mark stating that 'they've started enforcing the law and threatening us with fines while we are here ... doing our best to [clean], but the people that are not living on their land, they are not threatening them with fines, they just get away with doing nothing.' Furthermore, Luciano explained the fines as one of the many reasons his father, and other rural residents, had been distressed lately, as they 'have some points that we need to clean, and we have time to clean until the 15th of March, but ... it is already almost April. And if you get a fine It is a problem because most of the people don't have enough money to do this work, this cleaning. And there are people that don't get any income from the properties right now because the fire destroyed their crops, so it is a problem.' Meanwhile, people experience a big contrast between the responsibility for the locals and the corporations in cleaning the lands. Bram reflected upon his experiences with his neighbors repeatedly getting fines, stating that 'people righteously point towards the large corporations and big guys owning land here. Because the police comes to all the small residences to warn or fine them for not cleaning their lands, and then you look ten meters behind you and you see these "great eucalyptus plantations" where they don't abide by the rules. ... Look at Valerio's father, he was like "I will plant a few eucalyptus trees here to have some shade over my terrace" and then the police comes, gives him a fine, and takes the trees out again. And all the while the entire mountains are full of eucalyptus! That is an example of targeting the little guy and not the big corporations, because they rule the lands here!'

Individual responsibility for citizens was complicated even further when Renata introduced me to *senhor* Heitor, a middle aged man living on a relatively isolated farm in the countryside. Having worked on his family's farm his entire life, as a strong handshake with a callused hand (Figure 6) imparted, the emotional heft of the fire was abundantly clear. The evacuations left a mark on his life, as his house burnt down after he left (interview with a translator):

On the night of the fire there were a lot of policemen around. They asked him to evacuate, but he came back and they told him to evacuate again. [When he stayed] they brought in five policemen and he decided it was better to leave with the policeman than to resist. ... But he thinks that if he stayed he probably could have saved something, even if he didn't save the whole house. He is saying that it is only people who have lived through something like that, who can know what it feels like to lose everything. Now he has nothing from his parents, no photographs, he had a watch from his father and a necklace from his mother, but that has all disappeared. So the only thing he has got now are his memories. He has nothing, no papers or anything left.

Being evacuated left Heitor with nothing, yet he imagines being able to save some of his more sentimental things had he not been evacuated. After the fire destroyed his house and all his belongings, Heitor was left to sleep in his goat shed, he developed a depression and even suicidal tendencies as a result of his circumstances. Thus, while the Portuguese government was able to claim that nobody died, according to my informants, dozens of residents lost their old lives in the process. Some of my informants linked the deaths and suicides discussed in chapter 1 precisely to the absence of governmental support since the wildfires of 2018. As Kaneff describes, changing local narratives surrounding death can provide insight into experiences of uncertainty regarding a nation state that was “once of central importance, [while] the relationship between the individual and the state is now under dramatic renegotiation” (Kaneff 2002: 90). Seemingly then, this is one way the absence of the state in the contemporary neoliberal era indeed reinforces feelings of precarity in the residents of Monchique.

According to my interlocutors, the government entirely retreated from any and all responsibility to help those affected by the fires after the evacuations, even if government officials do not fully agree with that observation (TVI24 2019). As of the time of this writing more than eleven months after the fire, governmental support has not arrived. The only support Heitor, and other locals in similar situations, have received has been from local residents, and like him several dozens of others face a similar situation. Locally this is thus perceived as having to take individual responsibility for the damages of a fire, not in the nearest caused only by the residents of Monchique. Simultaneously, the government is seen legitimizing their lack of responsibility for the consequences of the fire under the guise of already having taken their share of responsibility combating the fire, leaving vulnerable individuals like Heitor to fend for themselves. How locals perceive this is in line with debates on neoliberal biopower, where the population as a whole is protected by government intervention, while

the individual citizens in more situational troublesome circumstances need to take responsibility by themselves (Fletcher 2010).

From the local's perspective, the state only cared about public performance of power and responsibility, which made the fires of 2018 especially troublesome for the residents of Monchique. While the prime minister of Portugal declared the state's response to the fires a success on national television because nobody had died in the fires, the people who had lived through the fires had experienced nothing but disaster. Silvio vehemently recalled his experience of the latest fires to me, when I asked about the prime minister's statement. 'The first thing the [prime minister] said when he arrived in Monchique was, "this was a big success." And everybody was very pissed off with him because after everything had burnt, what a success it was! This was not a success, this was a disaster! So why was he saying this? It was just a show because the year before there were a lot of people that died in the center of Portugal, so he had to show, "ok now we're going to do this well.'" Thus even if it seemed to the public that the government took it upon themselves to protect their citizens from the fire, the residents afflicted by it tell a different story. My informants interpreted the governmental reaction to the initial fire merely as a response to the harsh criticism on the deaths that had occurred in the fires of 2017 in the middle of Portugal. However, It is not only the locally interpreted causes of the fire, but as much the effects of the fire that are seen as resulting from contemporary politico-economic factors analytically attributed to debates on neoliberalism.

However, not only the relationship between local residents and the state changed, but the governmental actions had changed relationships within the community as well. Silvio deliberated to me that 'fifteen years ago there was a big fire, everybody was helping everybody and there was no-one dead and there were no houses burnt. ... People were helping the neighboring lands and when the fire was on our land the neighbors would come and help us. This was very positive, and they just cut all this solidarity between people, and that is very bad in my opinion.' In these calamities, there was a certain culture of solidarity. This is hardly peculiar, since communities traditionally perform fire control in Mediterranean regions where wildfires have been entangled with the landscape throughout history, and can be argued to be part of a local identity (Candea 2008). The biopower inherent in the evacuations coordinated by the government during the wildfire of 2018, left locals with a sense of lost sovereignty that invoked feelings of powerlessness, as numbers needed to show that all persons had survived the dramatic events of the fire. The power that they once perceived in their landscape, to defend oneself and one's neighbors from the tragic loss of life and livelihood had been taken by the Portuguese government.

What is presented in this landscape is a neoliberal contradiction: the need for the political performance of citizen protection, meant that people fell prey to losing their right as citizens to defend their own land, through the violence of the authorities in this state of exception. This gives locals the

feeling of losing, being excluded from, their own political agency through these violent outbursts during evacuations, even if neoliberal models of living should emphasize finding self-organized solutions. As Foucault observed, in contrast to disciplinary power, where the sovereign decides whether to “take life or let live”, biopower legitimizes the authority to “make live and to let die” (Fletcher 2010: 175). Informed by the biopower of the neoliberal national citizenship replacing traditionally experienced rights and responsibilities in rural Monchique, this legitimizes the state's absence in the aftermath of the wildfires, such as reparations and psychological help for locals, as there are no deaths, and thus according to this rhetoric, no victims of the fire. In this way the practices of evacuation, and the prime minister’s address of the importance of not letting anyone die this time, becomes a performance insinuating the loss of the right to protect oneself and one’s own livelihoods, while simultaneously not having the right of governmental care for livelihoods. Since dying is not the only consequence of the wildfire, especially in this case as the fires resulted in no direct casualties, this leaves the locals themselves to take responsibility for the actual consequences of the fire.

In the face of the frictions described above, feelings of powerlessness and precarity endure among the residents of Serra de Monchique. They perceive immunity of the market and corporations, and a seeming disinterest of the governmental authorities to change entrenched neoliberal configurations. As James Holston explains, “empowerment happens when a citizen’s sense of an objective source of right in citizenship entails a corresponding sense of subjective power—power to change existing arrangements (legal and other), exact compliance, compel behavior. In turn, such citizen power establishes the liability of others to it. However, when some people lack citizen power in relation to other people, the latter benefit from an immunity, an absence of liability. The one is powerless, the other immune.” (Holston 2009: 252). Hence, the way power relations embedded in citizenship are relevant to explain the sense of powerlessness among the rural residents of Monchique, living in an increasingly globally connected landscape, shaped by neoliberal capitalism and governance. The next chapter will thus look at the ways the residents of Serra de Monchique have been, and still are, renegotiating their citizenship in order to overcome that sense of powerlessness, and gain the ability to fight the perceived precarity in the landscape.

Chapter 3: Negotiating Citizenship

I was driving in the small Fiat towards Alferce, commonly cited as the area that was hit the hardest by the fires, as Heitor, a resident of the Alferce area, attested several times. I could recognize some of my informant's cars parked near bar Al-Faris, as they joined the sixth meeting of the newly forming association Monchique Alerta. It takes a while before everybody is seated in the informal bar, tables dragged together to accommodate the entire group. Then Gloria, elected as secretary in the last meeting, initiates the meeting.

We are a bit worried, me and Jaco, because this is not easy. We need more Portuguese people here, but where are these people? It is difficult to do these things, setting up the goals and the statutes for this association ... In her e-mail Lucy speaks about important things, these are the points people are very sad about. She asks 'where is the three hundred sixty million euro, where does it go?' Anybody see the money? I don't see the money. I made this project, and proposed it to the PDR2020. I did everything they asked, according to the rules. I have no house since the fires because it was all destroyed, and then they send me a letter denying me anything, telling me to do things differently if I want to rebuild. ... But they tell me to get a license to rebuild if I want to get the subsidy. So I go to the *camara* (municipality), but I cannot get the license at the *camara*, because my land is in *Rednatura* 2000. My land is about ecological protection, not to live in, it's about something else. So I need to get another license ... and now if I try to rebuild my house I must make a special project, and I went to the counselors, it is very difficult to do. I don't have the money that I would need for rebuilding, but if I ask for subsidy I will have to [invest in] the project, and I am not sure if they will give me [back] the money. So then I give up this path ... [Setting up this association] is a lot of work, this involves all the people, because with this [association] we have the rights of citizens. On our own we have nothing, but as an association the Portuguese state can respect us.

Her audience replied to Gloria's monologue with acknowledging nods and agreeing cheers. Most people in the room showed compassion, because it is what they too had experienced. They truly shared the goal of the association, 'to promote awareness, education and information, sharing knowledge among citizens who want to be vigilant, attentive and focused on the sustainability of Serra de Monchique.' The goal of attaining more sustainable livelihoods, threatened mostly by reoccurring and intensifying wildfires, and other issues found in the surrounding landscape, as discussed in the first

two chapters, is attempted through the formation of a new form of citizenship. However, the residents of Serra de Monchique face varied troubles in its attempts to attain this imagined citizenship.

However, before we look at concrete examples it is important to delineate here what I mean by citizenship. The common connotation surrounding citizenship is defined in its relation with the state. However, official national citizenship of an individual, what Engin Isin categorizes as “citizenship as status,” is not the sole aspect of citizenship one can observe (Isin 2009: 369). Consider that the landscape examined here is nationally diverse, and that nationalities among the research population range from possessing Portuguese, German, English, Dutch, and Irish citizenship. Some of my interlocutors have officiated residency permits, while others stay in the country on EU free travel arrangements. The iteration of citizenship as bestowed upon a subject is most commonplace in popular narrative, yet if we look at the substance of citizenship, namely rights and duties, these actually consist of reciprocal relations. That means that the substance of citizenship can be negotiated, through what Isin calls “acts of citizenship,” in which case one can observe “citizenship as practice” (Isin 2009: 377). Citizenship as practice and status are thus connected through the acts of citizenship which might move the substances of rights and responsibilities from one to the other. This also means, however, that the logics of biopower in neoliberal governance make for a citizenship with less negotiating power in the less populated rural areas, as opposed to the more densely populated urban areas of the cities. Applying the logics of neoliberal biopower, rights should comprise the largest part of the population, which can best be catered to in the cities (not all too surprising, seeing as citizenship etymologically refers to a rightful resident of a city), while individuals in the less densely populated rural areas are expected to take responsibility for themselves (Fletcher 2010). This is one of the concerns Manoel picked up on when stating that ‘the government has to support you, to give you what you need. What the government gives to the citizens in Portimao, or in the big cities, you need to have the same here, you understand?’ This discrepancy between the rights of Portuguese citizens in big cities and rural areas like Monchique reaffirmed in Manoel a sense of futility that depicts his experienced powerlessness.

Even if many local rural residents are discouraged to proactively attempt to change their perceived powerlessness, this does not mean that the locals’ attempts to renegotiate their rights and responsibilities with the state are futile. Holston shows how marginalized citizens in the urban peripheries of Brazil have been able to negotiate more equitable rights through forcing recognition by the state. By proactively acquiring the knowledge and skills to strategically utilize their citizenship rights, something Holston calls insurgent citizenship, these marginalized communities succeeded in constructing “a new realm of participation, rights, and citizenship” for the urban spheres of Brazilian society (Holston 2009: 254). In fact, after the wildfires of 2018, the ‘civil platform’ called Ajuda Monchique took matters upon itself to provide the rights and needs of those most affected by the fires,

as the local and national government were not able to provide the appropriate support for their citizens, according to the locals. This made Ajuda Monchique highly supported and incredibly popular locally, accounting for the frequency it was brought up in conversations and interviews.

Ajuda Monchique was an organization established 'to organize an effective distribution of help and to carefully report on all the damage that the fires have caused'. Initially it provided relief for fire damage, redistributing donations like clothes, food and bedding, because locals perceived a lack of government support. The movement gained momentum and, operating from the local school, coordinated several dozens of volunteers to distribute help to victims of the fire. The organization was a remarkable contrast to the operations of the official authorities at the time, which informants often characterized as 'chaotic,' lending legitimacy to the local popularity of Ajuda Monchique. Renata, one of the more involved volunteers of Ajuda Monchique explained that they 'went everywhere. There was no person left that they didn't go to their house to assess and to bring stuff, and to see if the person was okay, all around Monchique. This was all done with our cars, our gas, our paper, our printer, our internet, everything from the logistic point of view was from our own pockets, our own means, our own initiative. There was no help from the municipality, we got absolutely nothing from no one there. Apart from the chaos of the situation, our part was actually very well organized' (interview with translator). Ajuda Monchique went on to map more than three hundred eighty cases of severe fire damage to individual properties, all of them requiring help to recover, with the intention to hand this information over to the local municipality or the right authorities to handle these cases officially.

Yet, the official governmental authorities, local and national, never took over their responsibilities of care, according to my interlocutors. Rather, the municipality was found working against Ajuda Monchique and its volunteers, prompting several volunteers to leave the organization because they were not willing to deal with the 'politization,' which was according to Jaco where the mayor 'divorced the population.' When asked, the municipality responded that 'we must forget and go on,' signaling that the aftermath of the wildfires is indeed not its primary concern, even if it is an important factor of distress for the majority of my informants. Subsequently, what my informants referred to as their 'rights as citizens', were taken up by local volunteers as their own responsibilities, in lieu of a lack of any governmental institutions taking up that role.

Similarly, the local residents initiating the Monchique Alerta association act in reaction to a perceived lack of governmental action for the prevention of future wildfire occurrence. However, they actively resist the idea that it is primarily the responsibility of locals to manage their private lands and in that way prevent forest fires, or that the damages uncovered in the aftermath of the fire are the responsibility solely for locals to repair. Monchique Alerta is an example of an attempt for locals to increase rural community resilience, and create more sustainable livelihoods by 'getting a voice heard by the government,' as Jaco explained, engaging community resources to "thrive in an environment

characterized by change, uncertainty [and] unpredictability” (Skerratt 2013: 38). In this way the residents of Monchique negotiate their “citizenship as practice” less in terms of the neoliberal characteristics that have guided the excess of duties and lack of rights, which locals perceive their current neoliberal citizenship to entail. As such, “citizenship can be both domination and empowerment separately or simultaneously” (Isin 2009: 369).

That is why the members of the association, during one meeting, discussed activities they could organize in order to gain the power needed to negotiate their rights. Nico, for example, suggested a plan to garner national attention and gain some negotiating power:

Everybody who has one burnt tree goes to the police saying ‘someone tried to burn my land,’ and you fill in the form in the police office, and you combine it and bring it to the newspaper. And [from] the newspaper [it goes] to the national media. ... If there are hundreds of people in Monchique who do this, that will be media attention, and there is a possibility of changing a mindset and giving us some power ... This will not be an attempt to get the truth because this is just a publicity stunt I am talking about, this is just to change the mindset. When everybody goes to the police and the police have to investigate two hundred cases with a lot of publicity ... it's the same as a friend of mine who is living close to Monchique next to an illegal mine. She had to fight it because she couldn't have a guesthouse anymore, because of the noise and the dust. Four years she has been fighting this until she went to the television, to the RTP, and they did a broadcast and immediately the mine was shut. That is what I'm talking about!

What Ajuda Monchique did for the people of Monchique would fit the description of an act of citizenship, as Isin intended, and what Nico is talking about is the planning of such an act, in which “actors ... enact themselves to claim certain rights, assume obligations and constitute themselves as citizens.” Instead of being “active citizens” who merely follow the responsibilities and accept the rights bestowed upon them, these actors define themselves as “activist citizens,” trying to make a change, a rupture which might broaden the scope of rights and responsibilities their citizenship can entail, producing “actors that become answerable to justice” (Isin 2009: 381-383). Through activist citizenship, the members of Monchique Alerta try to negotiate their rights. As one member explained, he wants to question ‘the legal base of evacuations because I do not want to be evacuated. We need an Association who clarifies what is the basis of these evacuations, I want to have the right ... to go to my neighbor and help him if I want to!’ This characterizes acts of citizenship, as there is a reoccurring phenomenon where subjects who experience insufficient citizenship “constitute themselves as those with ‘the right to claim rights’” (Isin 2009: 371)

However, is the necessity for acts of citizenship that Ajuda Monchique and Monchique Alerta take up on, in reaction to neoliberal governmental and corporative lack of taking responsibility, not just another manifestation of the self-responsibility rhetoric bolstered by neoliberalism? Would it not be in the interest of a neoliberal state for locals to take responsibility themselves without much state interference? While this might be true, that does not necessarily mean that it is a futile attempt, or even one that would reinforce neoliberal practices. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) show how the powers stemming from “neoliberal globalization ... are being challenged and undermined by a transnationalized "local" that fuses the grassroots and the global in ways that make a hash of the vertical topography of power on which the legitimation of nation-states has so long depended” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 995). And even if these local actors do not always win their fights, it is through their acts of citizenship that they can contest the local senses of powerlessness, which are similarly felt by many of the residents of Serra de Monchique. As such, the effects of these acts are disassociated from the feelings of powerlessness customarily generated by the consequences of neoliberal globalization (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Isin 2009).

Yet, in defining themselves as activist citizen, the other, non-activist actors are defined too (Isin 2009). Some of my informants from Ajuda Monchique noticed this contrast through the opposition of the municipality against their work. As Ajuda Monchique helped a myriad of victimized residents of the Serra, these acts simultaneously defined and delineated the municipality as an actor not capable of granting residents their rights, even if for Cloe ‘this resistance of the *camara* ... was extremely strange. No one was trying to steal anyone's jobs or anything.’ This simultaneous definition of Ajuda Monchique and the *camara municipal* (Municipality) were revealed through abundant praise for Ajuda Monchique and simultaneous tensions with the municipality in many of the interviews I held in Monchique, and the subsequent expectation of Monchique Alerta to become ‘the enemy of the mayor’.

Similarly, although most of the rurals I spoke to discerned a similar sense of powerlessness and precarity as did their neo-rural counterparts in the landscape, there was a general consensus that the rurals dared not be as proactive in challenging the authorities cultivating this environment, defining the rural resident as an active (non-activist) citizen. The reason for this discrepancy was clear for Manoel, cautiously explaining to me that ‘You need everyone to support your work, you need it to live. If you are critical maybe people won't come to [your business], because they don't like to hear the critique. Before, if you were a Social Party member or Social Democrats Party member, it would be easier for you to get a job or you would get easily something you need. But if you were against, or if you were from another party, they don't protect you if you need them, they would be like “we don't need you”, and it still happens.’ The level of integration into the local community, and the subsequent political landscape, can produce “submissive responses to everyday negotiations of public standings [which] occur when citizenship disempowers citizens” (Holston 2009: 252). This is locally seen as a

dynamic stemming from a powerful authority following the a long authoritarian regime, yet seems contemporarily informed by perceived corporate and state immunity in the face of heightened self-responsibility through neoliberal dynamics.

Thus, reasons for rural residents to abstain from local activism do seem to stem in the assumption of futility portrayed with Manoel earlier this chapter, as the powerful entities, represented by the ‘they conversation’ in conspiracy theories, are not going to listen to locals like them anyway, often depicted in responses like ‘what can we do about it?’ However, that is not to say that the native rural residents do not act in their own way on the rights they feel they deserve. Throughout my fieldwork residents told stories of themselves, friends, family and neighbors avoiding the local authorities, while planning and building constructions on their private properties. The bureaucratic and logistical restrictions were for many so obstructive that they would rather avoid governing bodies altogether, just to go ahead with their projects by themselves.

The newer neo-rural residents were more reluctant to avoid the official channels, and often went through great lengths, spending a lot of time, to attain formal consent from the government to realize a project. For example, while I was waiting to have an interview with the mayor of Monchique, I had a lengthy conversation with Mason, who had come to the municipality to ask for permission for a small expansion of his house. He was all but enthusiastic about Portuguese bureaucracy, as he explained that his project plans went from the municipality to the environmental ministry to another office of which he could not recall the name. He concluded that ‘hopefully we will go forward slowly, we seem to be quietly edging our way towards an agreement. But a lot of people say to me, “why do you even go [to the municipality]? Just do it yourself!”’ And indeed, some of the neo-rural residents who had been in the area for a longer time told me they started doing what the rurals had been doing for all along, carrying out their plans informally. These are not acts of citizenship, since they take place in a private sphere, away from the public spheres where acts can make a lasting change to the citizenship of a group of people. However, these independent acts, which are officially illegal, do bring a sense of power to locals, even if it is only power over one’s isolated autonomy. Unfortunately, in the case of a calamity like the wildfires, or when imposed projects like Natura 2000 are in effect, these acts are sometimes laid bare. The formal reaction from local authorities is in some cases to fine residents, even if the damages dealt by the fire were bad enough for the residents to begin with, and companies accused of similar acts are seemingly left without consequences. Where in the past local livelihoods could be isolated from globalized and governmental processes, this is no longer possible in contemporary times, and cases show that, for example in nature reserves like Natura 2000, frictions develop between involved actors, creating “areas of contestation” (Cellarius 2004: 64).

Throughout my fieldwork, the acts performed by the people of Monchique to negotiate their citizenship can be seen to be undertaken with regards, and in reaction, to the Portuguese state. Yet,

as Dzenovska explains, “the territorial logic of the state continues to shape conceptions of modes of power in relation to which particular forms of action gain meaning. This seems analytically insufficient in conditions when it is widely recognized that people’s lives are shaped by reterritorialized and multiscalar forces, with states serving as connectors of power rather than - or in addition to being - containers of power” (Dzenovska 2018: 17). And that is where one of the more troublesome factors may lie for building up a form of sustainable citizenship. What the first two chapters described was that indeed, the state is no longer (and maybe never was) the sole mediator of power. Globalization, neoliberalism, multinational companies, climate change, and international governmental organizations, to name a few, are all powerful mediators to the feelings of powerlessness and the perceptions of precarity that shape the contemporary landscape among residents of Serra de Monchique. In this way “people’s discontent continues to be framed in national terms in public and political discourse, because representative democracy is still predominantly linked with the nation-state model. However, this framing should not be reproduced in scholarship that seeks to understand the political as a ‘wider field of contingency and struggle that exceeds established regimes of politics,’” something I attempt to avoid when framing frictions and the residents’ senses of powerlessness in their pursuit of more sustainable citizenship (Dzenovska 2018: 17).

As Ferguson and Gupta elaborate, “processes of globalization have disturbed the familiar metaphors and practices of vertical encompassment (still taken for granted by the participants in debates on globalization, including journalists and academics), and the new landscape that is emerging can be understood only through a rethinking of questions of space and scale. To accomplish such a rethinking, it will be necessary to question both commonsense assumptions about the verticality of states as well as many received ideas of ‘community,’ ‘grassroots’ and the ‘local,’ laden as they are with nostalgia and the aura of authenticity” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 990). Thus, although the State is often the mediator for the local and the global stage, indeed the connector of power, that also means that it cannot control, or take responsibility for, the factors that move local landscapes toward more precarious circumstances as “the diminishment of state authority is as likely to undermine the position of subaltern groups as it is to enhance it” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 995).

Even if the nation state has become a mediator in global power relations, rather than the container of power, governments still perform state operations “central to the functioning of states” to convey to its citizens that it is the holder of power and responsibility (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 994). Luciano revealed to me that this is a sentiment still present among people in the Portuguese countryside, as he explained the old Portuguese saying ‘*Portugal é Lisboa, o resto é paisagem* (Portugal is Lisbon, the rest is landscape), which means Lisbon is important and the rest is just there.’ According to Ferguson and Gupta, states convey this rhetoric through public performances like an “embeddedness in a host of bureaucratic practices” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 994). Considering the

frequency of complaints I encountered about slow and inadequate bureaucratic processes during my fieldwork period, as described above, this does not seem too farfetched.

Furthermore, my interlocutors are aware of the government's lack of power over many of these globalized forces that shape Monchique's increasingly precarious livelihoods, with some talking about the forceful austerity measures from the EU or 'the Troika,' which indeed have the potential of devaluing citizenship (Pipyrrou 2014: 538). Others have stated that they see the government allowing 'corruption in the name of economic production, to avoid the problem of losing jobs.' Yet, the state is seemingly the only site where local actors can negotiate rights and responsibilities that, according to them, are required to reign in remote forces that influence the local landscape.

However, in the next chapter, I propose that sustainable citizenship calls for a disengagement from the state as the main container of power for citizenship. The state, as a mediator, is required to aid the formulation of citizenship in the global countryside of Serra de Monchique, in order for it to be sustainable, and together with local residents, challenge the outside forces that have taken part in formulating the precarious circumstances of manifold landscapes today.

Chapter 4: Sustainable Citizenship and Collaboration

The small Renault delivery van I borrowed from Alan in the last couple of days steadily drove down into the valley just below town. I stopped the car after arriving at the house, and parked right behind an old-timer tractor that looked like it had just serviced the lands. Silvio came around the corner of his house and quickly guided me to follow him onto his farm. Soon we were walking around and talking about the farmlands that had been in the family for several generations. During the elaborate tour, along the riverbanks and up the terraces, Silvio explained to me his perspective on the problems of the wildfires:

There is a teacher in the Algarve University and she is completely against it, but there is a guy in Coimbra University, and [he] is the advisor for the government ... [who] wants all these [lands] clean, to make sure nothing can burn. ... But the problem is, we need everything here, we need a solution not without the trees, and not without the insects, we need a solution with nature. [Now] everything has to be moved out of the way so it cannot burn, [and] if I followed the rules I would have to clear all this area right around my house, clean all these flowers away, even though it's very good for the insects and they can pollinate the lands. You need this ... it is a very nice environment and the nature is beautiful. The problem is at some point, not just in Portugal but everywhere, people were more concerned about money than about these things, so they were like 'agriculture doesn't make money', and stopped [farming]. And then the European Union starts to support the big guys because they have a lot of land, and the small farmers were not supplied by that because they were too small. But they are more important than the big ones, because they are the ones who can make the environment sustainable. They can connect agriculture with nature. And now they don't do that. ... [But] I am not very afraid of the fires, first of all because I am an optimist and I presume one of these summers they will get the solution to fight the fire better. But another thing is that I think they are going to realize we don't have to clean every month ... because that doesn't solve any problems. And I think people need to improve, because this is not something you can support for a long time. people are very angry with these fires and so there must come a solution. ... And like I told you, this university teacher in Faro, maybe the government will start listening to her and they start making solutions more suitable with the local nature ... because we are nature actually, so nature is really part of it, and you have to preserve it if possible.

When talking to Silvio, a native rural resident whose family has lived in Monchique spanning several

generations, it was clear that he was aware of the interconnectedness of the local landscape with the broader processes discussed in this thesis, explicitly connected to perceptions of neoliberal globalization and its constitutive entanglements. Yet he also imagines a future where the residents of Monchique can inhabit the landscape without feelings of precarity that simmer in a majority of the locals, after the wildfires of 2018 confirmed to them that these large-scale fires are part of the new landscape.

With the Monchique Alerta's objective, and Silvio's standpoints in mind, it seems fitting to look at the concept of sustainable citizenship. As a concept, sustainable citizenship is particularly suitable to the situation in Monchique, since it focuses on a citizenship as practice, where citizens are responsible to take care for their environment through their daily practices. Yet, in line with Isin's assertion that citizenship fundamentally entails a relationship, the citizens envisioned with sustainable citizenship are not just individual persons. All actors who can take responsibility through conscientious practices that safeguard social justice and protect nature, like individual persons, corporations, NGOs, associations, cooperatives, universities and governments, can be sustainable citizens (Micheletti and Stolle 2012). This is fitting in a landscape that, as I have argued throughout this thesis, is thoroughly interconnected, and cannot depend solely on individual local persons to take responsibility to solve the obstacles that make local livelihoods ostensibly precarious. In order to develop a theory, that ideally might help the residents of Monchique and other people in similar situations to formulate less precarious futures, this final chapter is designed with the fieldwork site of Monchique, and the theory of the former chapters in mind, but will be more focused on a theoretical expansion of the concept of sustainable citizenship.

Not much has been published on the concept of sustainable citizenship explicitly, and the discipline of anthropology has remarkably not produced much on the topic (which is striking, as the master's degree assigning this thesis is called 'Cultural Anthropology: Sustainable Citizenship'). The literature that does exist uses several terms interchangeably when conceptualizing more or less the same approach to citizenship, most notably ecological citizenship, environmental citizenship, and the term that I utilize here, sustainable citizenship. All of the literature on these concepts surround a basis of sustainable consumption and production as individual initiatives from a "voluntarist perspective," indeed taking into account larger entities than the mere individual person, as in Dobson's environmental citizenship (Dobson 2007: 277). Seyfang states that an important part of, what she calls ecological citizenship, is that it is comprised of "a highly motivated group of ecological citizens, certainly conversant in discourses of sustainable consumption," which reinforces market transformation (Seyfang 2006: 390).

On the one hand there is the individual citizen as sustainable consumer, who can perform sustainable citizenship by conscious consumption, and can even actively contribute to more conscious

market developments. For example, through actions like “boycotting and buycotting ... commonly practiced forms of political consumerism involving individualized practices of sustainable citizenship that allow consumers to gauge for themselves their level of involvement,” activist sustainable citizens can negotiate more responsibility from corporations and other consumers alike. On the other hand, larger institutions like corporations and governments can act as sustainable citizens, for example through establishing sustainability policies for conscious resource exploitation and corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices (Micheletti and Stolle 2012: 93).

Yet sustainable citizenship is, like the more popularized concept of sustainability, plagued with several generalizations that make it, for many, a fruitless façade. In line with popular critiques on the sustainability rhetoric, theory on sustainable citizenship almost solely focuses on the way its effects can influence the global spheres of economic, social and ecological development and protection. The local is, just like in popular sustainability rhetoric, in many cases left out in the evaluation on whether sustainable citizenship could be effective at protecting physical spaces of our interconnected world. Solutions grounded in popular discourses surrounding sustainability ask everyone to be equal bearers of the responsibility, to be “caretakers for the planet” (Micheletti and Stolle 2012: 89). This brings up issues due to the normative assumptions made in the process, according to Stephen Gardiner, with the way the sustainability rhetoric is portrayed as a global problem. As implied by the nomenclature of concepts like Anthropocene, we as humans all have the equal responsibility to find solutions for the problems that we as humans have created. This narrative displaces much of the responsibility from those who have seemingly created the problems in the first place toward individuals. Conceptualizations of an inherent nature/culture divide, neoliberalism, and practices of production and consumption, primarily prevalent in western urban spheres and corporate sectors, arguably play the biggest roles in creating the problems that we can observe throughout the world. However, the discussed sustainability rhetoric puts an equal amount of weight on everyone’s shoulders (Gardiner 2001).

Sustainable citizenship, according to the existing literature, is deemed sustainable through evaluative consumerism and life-style practices, as the individualized responsibilities of individual actors, the sum of which will produce sustainable results. And as this thesis and other literature shows, sizable groups of actors, like the Monchiquean residents, practice what Micheletti and Stolle call, sustainable citizenship (Micheletti and Stolle 2012). In one of my earlier essays, though, I wrote about the Navigator Company, which could be seen as practicing their fair share of sustainable citizenship as well, through the CSR practices they pertain (Willemse n.d.). The existing literature is hardly critical on the effects of these supposedly sustainable practices, while there is valid critique to be given in response to such practices. Corporate Social Responsibility, for example, is easily utilized as a public relations performance to increase local support and legitimize corporate practices, rather than actually

having the intention of innovating its practices to be socially and ecologically sustainable as part of active participation in sustainable citizenship, as proposed in literature. This, I have argued, is similarly the case with the CSR practices of the Navigator Company (Knudsen 2018; Willemse n.d.). So while, in a novel way, companies and other actors are embedded in this form of citizenship, through “good citizen practices,” the potential for these practices to reach sizable localities is ambiguous. As shown in the chapters above, power discrepancies between different ‘citizen actors’ are significant, and the detachment between different actors make for local individuals experiencing futility in any influence they may pursue on the more powerful dimensions like governments or multinational corporations. The power that is to supposedly stem from conscious consumer choices is outside any tangible reach, to be somehow performed by the masses of consumers, most of whom certainly do not know about the perils encountered by the residents of Monchique.

A theoretical approach to sustainable citizenship should also be cautious of the tendency in common sustainability narratives to uphold a nature/culture dichotomy. As Rojas describes, sustainability oriented policy proposals frequently advocate “strategies designed to protect nature ... [where] there [are] experts who [see] themselves as capable of knowing and protecting self-sustained systems whose properties are understood to be invariant, like those of a well-tuned machine” (Rojas 2016: 28). As the alternative nomenclature of ecological citizenship implies, sustainable citizenship repeatedly describes its acts in conformity with an inherent human/nature divide, where the individual acts of citizenship are considered to be in service of the global ecological protection (Seyfang 2006). Yet, this thesis has attempted to show throughout, that humans and nature are inextricably linked in a mutually shared landscape. Michael Vine (2018) argues that, through “communities of practice... the potential emerges for a politics that embraces the connection between living and non-living things”, a potential that is recognized by interlocutors I encountered in the field. However, this is never realized by the local community, the local government, or the national government, as policies and practices often stay in the territories of human control (Vine 2018: 414). Hence, theoretical explorations of sustainable citizenship would benefit, just like other sustainability projects, from approaches “that differ from projects that strive to preserve conventional forms of authority which are premised on Nature/Culture dichotomies ... [with] an emerging type of climate politics whose problems are *not* derived from striving to preserve the world as it is or to improve it as it should be” (Rojas 2016: 28, emphasis in original). This means that the Portuguese government should no longer rely on citizens to clean everything off of their lands to remove fuel for future wildfires, as Silvio stipulated, but should search for solutions with most of the actors possibly influencing the wildfires involved, including local and national government itself, the local community, companies, and nature.

Because of the critiques on popular sustainability discourse, sustainability is often contested and seen as sanctimonious, entailing, as Cloe called it, a certain ‘emptiness,’ which spills over in some

ways into theory on sustainable citizenship. Thus, sustainable citizenship as it is currently theorized, is not adequate to describe the formation of a novel citizenship that is genuinely sustainable. What I am proposing for sustainable citizenship to ideally be, and what Monchique Alerta aspires for their citizenships rights to entail, is to encompass both individual responsibilities for global environmental protection, and collaborative responsibilities for local environmental protection, where actors outside of the local carry responsibility for local problems perceived in landscapes. It should go beyond focusing on the importance of economic justice, social equity and environmental protection for the globe as a whole. Sustainable citizenship cannot only encompass, in some contradictive neoliberal fashion, the responsibilities of citizens as a relationship that involves the advocated “individualized practices of sustainable citizenship that allow consumers to gauge for themselves their level of involvement,” (Micheletti and Stolle 2012: 93) reinforcing the individualized local responsibilities of people on the premise that other actors like governments and companies will do the same. That is why I attempt to build upon the existing literature and expand the concept of sustainable citizenship, utilizing an anthropological lens.

Due to the stark emphasis on individual activity in theory on sustainable citizenship, there is an extensive focus on the responsibilities that actors should take in order to conscientiously take care of the globe (see for example the “measures of individual and institutional citizenship (Micheletti and Stolle 2012: 100)). However, citizenship is not all about responsibilities, as the factor of rights received in return for taking these responsibilities, is intrinsically linked to citizenship as well. While the right to a sustainable environment could be argued to be an automatic result of the responsible action taken, this cannot be warranted in the current version of sustainable citizenship. However, in taking citizenship a step further towards the right to a reciprocal relationship, a collaborative dimension could provide ground for negotiating rights as well as responsibilities between actors. A relationship does not necessarily have to be reciprocal, but I would argue that one that entails balanced reciprocity is healthier than a relationship that is not. In this vein, Luke Eric Lassiter provides a compelling argument for the practice of collaborative ethnography, which has great potential for creating awareness and addressing issues of unequal power-relations between researcher and interlocutors, to the point that it can function as an “act of citizenship and activism that has long figured prominently in various ethnographic approaches” (Lassiter 2005: 96).

Thus, to truly address the issues with power dynamics stemming from the frictions that arise through operating in such sustainability narratives, besides the characteristics of sustainable citizenship described above, channels need to be opened between the actors operating on local levels (i.e. the residents of Monchique), global levels (i.e. the Navigator Company), and in between (the Portuguese government), where tension filled undetermined encounters between them can be (partially) put aside. In this way, state governments can fulfill the roll of mediator in this collaboration.

That is to say, if Isin is indeed correct that citizenship as status, and citizenship as practice are both inextricably connected, it might be time to actively incorporate this dimension of citizenship in the theoretical basis of sustainable citizenship (Isin 2009). Accordingly, citizens who deem themselves powerless can claim (as a function of citizenship as practice) membership (as a function of citizenship as status) in the rights and responsibilities that globalized actors already enjoy, indeed through collaboration.

One might say this all sounds rather idealistic or utopian, and that may be correct. But remember that this is more so a request to expand on existing literature, to go beyond a seemingly neoliberal individualistic rhetoric, rather than to immediately force the Navigator Company to invite the people of Monchique over for a conversation about the hazards in their shared environments. Realistically the residents of Monchique will still need to fight for a claim to sustainable livelihoods within their landscapes. However, that is not to say that the residents of Monchique would not be open for such conversations. In fact, as stated before, most of my informants see value in the eucalyptus economy. However, as Ella elaborated, 'if it goes wrong time after time, can you still legitimize the claim that it's safe you know? If telling people to tend to their eucalyptus ridden lands better, and it still doesn't happen, can you still say Eucalyptus is safe? [the Navigator company] cannot keep pretending to be doing everything correctly, and that we are the ones causing these fires, if time after time they are involved in it. Their lands are burning too!' Thus, where residents of Monchique convey contestation is in the feeling that responsibility is put solely on them when things do actually go wrong, by both government and corporation, even when so many other factors come into play in the formation of large disasters like wildfires.

Of course the Navigator company is taken as an example here, and they too are not the only actors responsible for these fires, but there is also no denying that they are part of it (Willemse n.d.). That is why only collaborative solutions will suffice, where multiple involved parties, like the residents, companies, municipality and government, take responsibility for the problems encountered in landscapes. And the residents are not necessarily powerless here, especially if they can band together with other communities or associations in Portugal or Europe facing similar situations. Accordingly, Ferguson and Gupta depict "a time when new forms of transnational connection are increasingly enabling "local" actors to challenge the state's well-established claims to encompassment and vertical superiority in unexpected ways, as a host of worldly and well-connected "grassroots" organizations today demonstrate," (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 988-989). Hence, the state may well be persuaded to act as a mediator between the local associations and communities, and the more global actors like the corporations involved.

Indubitably, it would be naïve to think that everyone, can or wants to, collaborate. However, the original premise of sustainable citizenship can be utilized to combat one part of the solutions for

the wildfires, as sustainable consumption practices might, for example, lead to a lessened effect of global warming in the formation of wildfires. Simultaneously, directly involved actors can collaborate as sustainable citizens on a more local scale, to combat individual cases of environmental precarity. Local groups, as we have seen, already attempt to organize ways to formulate the power necessary for such acts of sustainable citizenship. Monchique Alerta, for example, has been hard at work, and at the time of writing organized an event in cooperation with Coimbra University to discuss the landscape and the fires. One of the attendees of the event commented that 'the event was very fruitful, with great participation of the population and with constructive and positive interventions both in the prevention, combat and above all measures to be taken after a fire,' concluding that suitable solutions like fire resistant flora could be utilized in the area to decrease the likelihood of new fires. In this way, responsibility can even be taken from nature to address the nature/culture dichotomy, as expecting individualized responsibility from nature seems odd, yet in breaking a nature culture divide discourse, nature can in a way participate in taking responsibility for care if we are able to, as Silvio suggested, collaborate with it.

Furthermore, platforms already exist for corporations to do the same, by enveloping open conversations with those deeming themselves affected by corporate actions in CSR policies. Still, corporations could use its CSR practices as primary part of public relations. But in the case of the Navigator company for example, embedding a collaborative dimension in sustainable citizenship discourse would validate critique regarding its use of CSR, now not constituting acts of sustainable citizenship. Additionally, after a disaster like the fires, at least a line of communication would be open for locals to ask some form of responsibility to be taken by the company. Furthermore, even if PR is the primary goal for a corporation in its utilization of CSR policies, the opened up forms of communication can actually alleviate feelings of powerlessness, and bring considerable influence from the local community in corporate affairs, as Knudsen shows (Knudsen 2018). Thus, borrowing from the anthropological practice of collaborative ethnography, I propose that sustainable citizenship needs a collaborative dimension, in order to restore equity in the relationships entailed in citizenship, and carefully divide the rights and responsibilities that different actors can call upon.

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that Serra de Monchique is a unique location, but is not isolated from the flows and forces of globalization. Rather, Monchique is entangled in the processes of globalization, so much so that some might identify it as global countryside (Woods 2007). This interconnectedness with the global makes rural Monchique a prime location to observe the frictions that stem from the interactions between local and global mechanisms, which affect the local landscape (Tsing 2011).

While these frictions are undetermined in nature, neither inherently good nor bad, some frictions bring about the potential to produce perceptions of a precarious landscape, and feelings of powerlessness to change this landscape towards one that is more sustainable for the residents of Serra de Monchique. I argue that for the residents of Monchique, the frictions which invoke senses of powerlessness and precarity most regularly, are those which can be conceptually linked to debates surrounding neoliberalism. That is not to say that neoliberalism is the sole cause of precarious circumstances in Serra de Monchique, but it does seem to be behind many of the contemporary perceptions of local peril that was absent in the past.

This, then, becomes the contradiction of neoliberal globalization hinted at throughout this thesis. The prescribed neoliberal model for society emphasizes self-sufficiency as a responsibility for the citizen, in landscapes so thoroughly connected with the global theatre, and indeed the effects of neoliberal globalization, that the isolation necessary for this self-sufficiency is in no way attainable. The most notable and tangible of these shaping factors are the reoccurring and devastating wildfires, something that is often pushed on the local residents as their own responsibility to prevent, by the state (and by proxy the EU) through fining and refusing reparations, and by the companies stating that the problem lies with the land management of the locals. In reality the causes of the fire are much more complicated than the mere neglect of land by a few locals.

However, the residents of Monchique and its countryside do not sit idly by the sidelines, waiting to be defenselessly removed from their habitats. Rather, they attempt to renegotiate their citizenship through active and activist practices, such as those performed and planned by Ajuda Monchique and Monchique Alerta. Nonetheless, the standard to negotiate citizenship is still characterized by neoliberal visions of individualized care for the population, one they have to be responsible for themselves, conducted through negotiations primarily vis-à-vis the Portuguese state. However, this misrecognizes the fact we have seen throughout this thesis, that the circumstances of these people's well-being and livelihoods are not isolated to their own practices. In reality the local situation is entangled with other, globalized and neoliberal facets that are embodied in their environment, and thus in turn shape it in ways outside the control of merely these two actors, being the local community and the state.

While it is the goal of Monchique Alerta to build sustainable citizenship for the residents of Serra de Monchique, even the theoretical foundations of sustainability and sustainable citizenship are too limited in their scope to produce a sustainable citizenship as such. That is why this thesis proposes that, to truly construct a sustainable citizenship in Serra de Monchique, it is necessary to go beyond traditional negotiations with just the state. Collaboration is essential, with as many actors involved in the formation of the landscape as possible, including corporations and even nature, to divide responsibility in an equitable manner.

Admittedly, this research has been too limited in time and data collection to formulate a concrete basis of what this form of sustainable citizenship should entail, in order to help local domains like that of Serra de Monchique actually obtain sustainable landscapes in which feelings of structural powerlessness and precarity are largely absent among its residents. As such, there is much room to further expand notions of sustainable citizenship, through the anthropological lens, but also in other disciplines. Examples of this expanded form of sustainable citizenship can be explored, but it could also be applied to analyze or inform sustainable policy orientations.

As such, the goal of this thesis has not been to identify a particular culprit for the causes of the precarious landscape that the residents of Serra de Monchique contemporarily find themselves in. It has been to show that, if the residents can find a way to gain the ‘rights of citizens ... [so] the Portuguese state can respect us,’ as Gloria put it, then that would be a step in the right direction. And the state can, through that, recognize that local livelihoods are not the sole responsibility of locals, precisely because they cannot control the neoliberal environment of this global countryside, meaning that they need to take the role of mediator between all the local and global forces involved. This recognition cannot be limited by state formations, as the forces encountered in the Serra are not restricted by its borders. What would be necessary for these people in Monchique, and in other places around the world where similar effects of neoliberal capitalism and climate change are felt, is for the actors on this global stage, including state governments, companies, and the locals, to all be recognized as responsible for their actions, and thus having certain rights and duties on the effects of this interplay, to tackle these problems together. However, until such an equilibrium is found I am of the opinion that sustainable citizenship crumbles under the weight of the ‘emptiness’ similarly inhibiting contemporary sustainability rhetoric, easily imagined but never realized.

Hence, I am sure that Ella will drive her Nissan Patrol 4x4 up the slope many more times, alongside the ever more regreening hills taking over the sprawling ruins, past the recuperating oak fields and flourishing Eucalyptus plantations. But I am also certain that she will follow through on her suggestion that ‘we’ll see if it’s still good to live here in a few years ... but if another fire comes, then I think it is time to leave.’ And she is not the only one.

Figures

Figure 1. Partial map of Serra de Monchique. The pins correspond roughly to the areas in which the start of each chapter takes place.

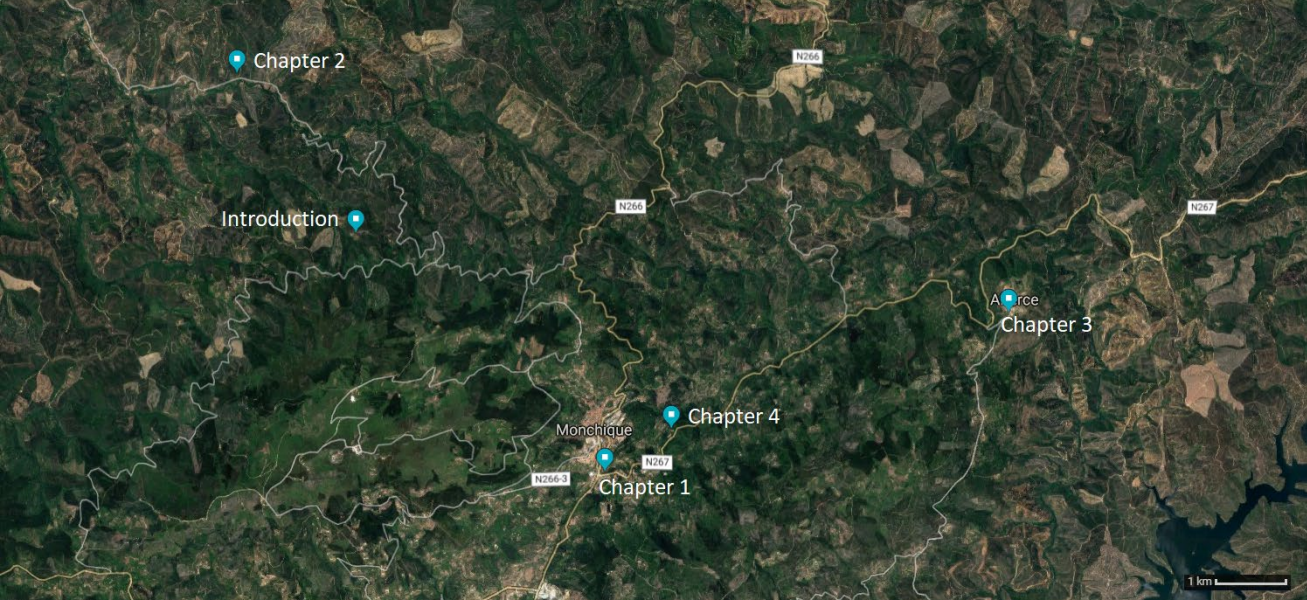


Figure 2. A panoramic view from the mountains of Monchique, reaching all the way to the sea.



Figure 3. The burnt landscape of Serra de Monchique.



Figure 4. Eucalyptus recovering quickly from the fires.



Figure 5. One of the ruins sprawled around Serra de Monchique



Figure 6. The callused hand of a man laboring the lands since he was 14.



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