

From the abandonment of small agriculture to the drama of rural fires

Abstract

On a recurrent way we verify annual rural fires in Portugal namely since 1975 by combination of natural factors, negligent and criminal behaviors and failure of (para) State entities. In 2017 the Portuguese were confronted with two enormous tragedies in the North and Centre of the country with losses in goods, animals and especially 112 human lives. Over two centuries the forest had a huge increase in a uneven agrarian structure, being most possessed by small owners. However, in addition to the forestation process imposed by the Salazar regime in the years 40-50, the rural exodus and correlative massive emigration since the '60 caused a relative depopulation, leaving the villages inhabited by elderly people, vulnerable and unable to make the cleaning of the forest once held in the traditional agricultural cycle. On the other hand, the interests of the of large cellulose companies and paper pulp production planted profitable monocultures as the eucalyptus at the expense of indigenous trees more resistant to fire. Finally, the common agricultural policy of the EU and the abandonment of agriculture and closure of forest service's by the State plus the decapitalization of infrastructures and public services contributed to the territorial disordering, creating conditions for an explosion of rural fires.

Keywords: agriculture, forestry, agrarian society, Portuguese

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Introduction

On a recurrent way, especially since 1975, we have witnessed annual losses of hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest, frequently leading to social dramas. In 2017, Portuguese in general but particularly the inhabitants of Pedrógão Grande, Castanheira de Pera, Figueiró dos Vinhos, as well as several municipalities in the North and the Center of the country, were confronted with two enormous tragedies: more than 450,000 hectares burned, destruction of companies, goods and animals, more than 250 people injured and, the more serious and irreparable damage, 112 human lives annihilated by the fire.^{1,2} The uncontrolled expansion of the fire ravaged large forested and rural areas around urban districts and caused enormous losses of assets. The annual scourge of fires occurs due to natural causes (the edafoclimatic constraints of mediterranean characteristics), certain human behaviours (delays in burning bonfires, firecrackers, cigarettes, criminals setting fires), as well as the failures of (para) State entities. It is the case of the Integrated Service of Emergency Networks and Safety of Portugal (SIRESP), a public-private partnership that is configured as a business. The State payed this entity an outrageous amount of 485 million euros and continues with the payment of big rents. In summary, despite the existence of natural factors and human conduct, this scourge is not a fatality. Then, facing the recurring national calamity, how do we explain this situation and what can be done to reverse it?

If keeping the situation of forestry (and territorial) disordering can benefit some specific agents and group or individual interests, also the option for the nationalization of the forest does not appear to be consistent with the reality of the agrarian structure of the country, in particular of the regions North of the Tagus and the Algarve, which have a prevalence of smallholders. Indeed, it is important to remember the national panorama at a structural level: except 2.6% of state forest area and 11% of communal area, namely common lands (*baldios*), about 86% of the forest area in mainland Portugal is private, in which medium and especially agroforestry smallholders stand out, operating in a family basis.^{3,4} This set of small and medium-sized units holds over half of the utilized agricultural area (SAU) and is responsible

for 42% of the national agricultural economy (in total production value). Moreover, under the strict forest optic, the extension average per owner is about 2,000 m², distributed in plots, with several heirs, many of them emigrated or in eventual dispute of land segments. In this picture, despite the growing process of abandonment of forest plots by endogenous and exogenous factors, especially since the 80s and 90s of the last century, there still persists peasant rationality with a strong connection to the land and to the memories of the people and of the families.

Several studies on rural communities held in Portugal over the past 35 years are very clear in this respect. These are works on issues of rural society, which identify the problems of rural populations, the specificity of their economies and their ways of life. This is, however, an old question, already begun in the 19th century and early 20th century, over which many classical theorists dealt, and which continues to be argued today.^{5,6} Indeed, if for the liberals, obsessed with the rationality of market economy and for its modernizing 'virtues', the peasants were a hindrance on the march of industrialization and the modernization,⁷⁻⁹ to Marx¹⁰ the peasants, in addition of an unbreakable hieroglyph and an atomistic 'sack of potatoes', constituted a class in disaggregation and to be sacrificed in the process of proletarianization in the altar of industrialization. Several Marxist authors subsequently supported this thesis, namely Lenin.¹¹ However, it should be remembered that Marx,¹⁰ at the end of his life—in correspondence with the Russian populist, Vera Zassoulitch,—recognized the specific rationality and the positive potentialities of rural communities. Facing these theoretical shortcomings in understanding and explaining the peasant behaviour, Silva,^{12,13} in the wake of several classic specialists on the peasantry,¹ advocates another approach based on the thesis of moral economy, also advocated by Chayanov,¹⁴ Wolf,¹⁵ Shanin,¹⁶

¹In terms of theoretical framework about the specificity of the peasant economy, cf. Chayanov,¹⁴ Wolf,¹⁵ Shanin,¹⁶ Tepicht,²² Mendras,²³ Guzmán¹⁷ and, in Portugal, Cabral,^{24,25} Pinto,²⁶ Almeida,²⁷ Baptista²⁸ and especially Silva.^{5,6} Although without assuming or develop, as the authors mentioned above, assumptions and the specificity of peasants rationality, we must remember, in the Portuguese case, several relevant contributions on the 'small' agriculture: cf. Barros and Mendes,²⁹ Abreu,³⁰ Carvalho,³¹ Lima,³² Portela,³³ Reis.³⁴

Guzmán¹⁷ and Scott,^{18,19} but taking into consideration some elements of the mature thought of Marx¹⁰ and above all, of Weber.²⁰ In other words, the main leitmotiv of rural actors, particularly peasants, facing risk situations, is to take as basic principle the security (*safety first*).

The long transition of an agrarian society

It is known and widely accepted the thesis sustained by several authors about the traditional duality of agrarian structure,² deeply asymmetric, namely until the changing of the political regime in 1974, predominating the big landowners mainly in Alentejo and Ribatejo and the smallholdings in the Algarve and, in particular, in the Northern and Central regions. However, unlike another thesis, also mainly current in the seventies and defended by the already mentioned authors,³ the setting wasn't of a high degree of centralization and concentration or monopolization of capital in the fields, like other advanced capitalists societies. Indeed, if the capital formation is not checked into the wholesale of the small and medium-sized farm or property, obviously it also did not happened in the big landowners of the south. The country was then feebly industrial and predominantly agrarian,⁴ where various types of pre or not capitalist economies coexisted, particularly the artisanal and specially the peasant economy in the north and centre of the country, and the landowning economy on the south that does not mean capitalist. The country was, in the expression of Silva,²¹ before industrial 'islands' in the craft-agrarian-peasant 'sea'. On the other hand, as the same author refers, the great estates of landowners, in addition to not be object of investments in capital (fixed and variable), practiced extensive monocultures, were often rentiers, or salarient eventual workers in the same way as in the time of mercantile capitalism, combining a commercial bourgeoisie (*compradore*) and rent latifundism.⁵ It was indeed this alliance, together with the support of rural craft and peasant classes,^{5,6} which provided, throughout the 20th century and especially under the *Estado Novo*, the conservative block remain in power so durable, assisted by Salazar's repressive apparatus.

The place of the forest in the local economies: a retrospective

Taking into consideration this uneven structure, we look now for the forest that, despite some loss (-4.6% between 1995 and 2010), revealed in 2010, according to the National Forest Inventory (IFN), a dimension on the Portuguese mainland of 3,154,000 hectares. Over

two centuries the forest had a huge increase from 7% to 35.4% of the territorial areas of the mainland^{6,47} reproducing *grosso modo* the structure of inequality of land structure, above mentioned. A brief retrospective of the evolution of forest area, in the context of the other uses of soil, reveals, according to Radich and Baptista,⁴⁸ a short increase until the end of the Middle Age and, then, from the second half of the 19th century a huge increase, passing from about 700,000 hectares in 1875 to 2.500.000 hectares in 1938, i.e. an increase of 1.800.000 hectares. In the increase of afforestation, either during the liberalism, either during the first Republic and especially during the *Estado Novo*, although part of this forest has been usurped by the Central State and the Municipalities, the great part was more taken by the private occupation and ownership, following the "demortisation" (*demortização*) process started in 1869, with the '*aforamentos*'⁷ movement and appropriation or alienation of common lands, allegedly justified by the educated liberal elites as a way to liberate the land of anachronistic obstacles to economic progress, namely agricultural. In fact, what happened was the expropriation, in the south carried out mainly by the large State and in the north and the center by medium and wealthy owners, some of whom took advantage of their place in local power in the parish or their influence in municipal meanders to seize such 'uncultivated'/vacant land, common or community land, and register them as their own agricultural property, eventually converting them into forest mainly pine production.

Indeed, in 1886 the forest service's had been created, which being remodelled at the beginning of the twentieth century, would meet a regulation of the State intervention and later, already under the Salazar regime, would gain new strength and more repressive action. Thus, in the several periods since the nineteenth century, passing through the I Republic, up to and above all after the 40s under the Salazar's regime, such process of afforestation, by usurping more than 360,000 hectares of wastelands and communal lands, forbade or hindered the use of pastures and, with this, reduced the pastoralism, the livestock, the cutting of firewood for domestic consumption and of undergrowth for the beds of animals. It is to be taken, especially in a second period between 1938 and 1968, the increase of afforestation following the approval of the Forest Settlement Plan (Law 1971 of 15/6/1938), which supported not only the afforestation of private land, as above all, between 1940 and 1960, the abused (re)afforestation of wastelands and communal lands by action of State Forest Services.⁸

Despite the attack on rural communities, in particular until the 60s,

²Arising from various currents since Barros³⁵ passing by Freitas et al.³⁶ and Cutileiro,³⁷ until Cunhal,³⁸ Martins³⁹ and, in a somewhat different perspective, Rodrigues⁴⁰ and Cabral.⁴¹

³Indeed, Cunhal³⁸ and Martins,³⁹ if, on the one hand, presented consistent data of a stagnant and almost-feudal agriculture (almost-feudal is more debatable designation), on the other, held the thesis a high and intensive development of capitalism in agriculture. As Silva⁶ argues, if the first thesis is based on a comprehensive and worthwhile study about the unequal structure in Portugal, however the thesis of a high capitalization of agriculture has the footprint of the thesis of Dimitrov policy in III International, which characterized the fascism as an instrument of the great monopolies, which, if it was sustainable for the German capitalism under the Nazi regime, was not for the case with the Portuguese economy and society under *Estado Novo*. By their turn, Freitas et al.³⁶ and especially Rodrigues,⁴² Costa⁴³ and Cabral³⁶ exaggerated, in an ideological bias, the penetration of capitalism in agriculture and boost the subsequent process of proletarianization, although in subsequent writings it is important to note that is Cabral,^{24,25} as mentioned, one of the authors most attentive to rationality and specificity of the peasant economy and the behaviour of peasants.

⁴As sustains Silva⁶ in the wake of AS Nunes,⁴⁴ Silbert⁴⁵ and Godinho.⁴⁶

⁵Bourgeoisie *compradore* is an expression conventioned in Italian language to designate these bourgeoisie which extract rent or profit differentials between the import and/or export and, as such, set in opposition to the interests of other fractions of the bourgeoisie more development-oriented investment in agricultural and industrial production at national or regional level.

⁶According to this author, in the forest space it is possible to identify four types of forests: (i) mounted of Mediterranean type and low intensity (cork, holm, stone, pine); (ii) Pinus pinaster forest, as native specie, and the eucalyptus as allochthonous species for timber and paper pulp; (iii) forest with intensive forestry as the eucalyptus, together with native chestnut; (iv) forest of natural regeneration more often with the abandonment of agriculture.⁴⁷

⁷*Aforamento* is the right of tenants to the use and fruition of immovable property against the payment of rent and with the right of retrieval recognized as such in the law.

⁸This operation raised resistances, disputes and local protestations of highland populations. Ribeiro⁴⁹ in his work 'The wolves howl' offers a detailed record regarding the prepotency of the Salazar's regime. In 1956, the dictatorial regime here also demonstrated its repressive character when, with the publication of D. L 39.931 of 24 November and of a Reglement of the Forest Service, delegated police competence to officials of forest services, which, armed of a weapon, they could not only arrest as they were exempt from any criminal proceedings without prior authorization from the government. Although without the posterior pressure of the years 80, already in the years 60 and 70 were drawn interests of industries by raw materials such as cork and wood, wood sawing and celluloses mediated by local loggers. Several are the authors who analyze this process over time and, in particular, denounce the arbitrariness of the Salazar regime in the expropriation of common lands (*baldios*): cf. Estevão,⁵⁰ Rodrigues,⁴² Abel,⁵¹ Gralheiro,⁵² Baptista,⁵³ Radich and Baptista,⁴⁸ Bica,⁵⁴ Louro⁵⁵ and, in a case study in Lindoso in High Minho, Silva.

without idealizing the pastoral regime and community practices such as mutual assistance and the care of cattle (*vezeiras* system)—which, according to O’Neill,⁵⁶ temporarily suspended local inequality and, according to Silva,⁵ expressed not only convergences such as divergences of interests and unequal benefits, but constituted, in the context of strong inter knowledge relationships, rational and efficient forms of self-defense and the use of collective resources among neighbors. The same way, the communal lands represented an indispensable component to the family-crafted and peasant economies, notably by providing firewood, coal, matos for animal beds and subsequent manure (*estrume*) as fertilizer of the land, food for livestock in the context of pastoralism, accumulating or not with livestock (cattle, sheep and goats).^{5,6,33,57–63}

The turning point between 1960-1980: emigration and the demission of political power

The system of mutual help, although asymmetric, begins to go into crisis in the 70s, precisely following the massive emigration wave. Other sources of income of families arise, as an alternative to the provision of work, in a situation of submission, to the medium and wealthy farmers.³⁹ Several authors account for this gradual change in agrarian society, in which old forest activities and functions, already mentioned, decreased, disappeared and were replaced by functional equivalents such as chemical fertilizers, gas consumption and electricity. However, it was mainly the emigration in the 60s and 70s that came to change the social relations and the local economies. If, as Silva³⁹ refers, the traditional emigration to Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela did not alter the basic structure of the villages, notably in the north and center of the country, the massive rural exodus from the 60s, especially towards European countries, constituted a considerable structural change not only in the social composition of the primary sector but in its relationship with the secondary and tertiary sectors. Furthermore, this change not only affected the relationship between the villages and the surrounding society and the host countries of the emigrants, but also with the State itself, its institutions and the representatives of the local authorities. More, they have changed considerably and in particular the activities, the economic exchanges and the social behaviors among the residents themselves, particularly when emigrants did not depend as once deprived families in the access to goods, whether the local production, other functional substitutes coming from outside.⁹

For this massive emigration and gradual depopulation it had also contributed the forestry policy mainly since the years 50s, which however worsened mainly from the 80s and 90s with the exponential increase of eucalyptus and maritime pine at the expense of varied autochthon species, the disorderly growth of bush without its cleanliness, as above all the loss of much of the workforce, especially young, and, consequently, a worsening of the coastal-interior imbalance, an ageing of the rural world and a growing decline or even depopulation of the Portuguese villages.

The situation of poverty in the Portuguese fields and the weak industrialization, unable to absorb the surplus rural labor force, if there was any relief from other sources of income and rights acquired in post 25 April 1974, those who stayed in the villages were object of abandonment for decades from the 80s to the present, not having glimpsed any policy of positive discrimination for the fixation of population in the interior. This situation would even worsen in the last decade with the emergence of the crisis beginning in 2007-2008

⁹Cf. namely Pinto,²⁶ Almeida,²⁷ Iturra,⁶⁹ Silva,⁵ Wall,⁶⁵ Sobral,⁶⁶ Silva and Cardoso.²¹

and then, during the Government of the Social Democratic Party and the Democratic and Social Center (PSD/CDS) in 2011-15, in which the departure of young people for training and work abroad multiplied exponentially. As far as the rural world is concerned, the relevant factor in this process is the expansion of forest monocultures (pinus pinaster and above all eucalyptus), mainly since the 70s and 80s, not only by the emergence of sawmill factories and intermediate loggers to various purposes, but also by the pressure made by the interests of large cellulose companies and paper pulp production which, in addition to the risks of fire and impoverishment of forest diversity, have had environmental negative externalities, notably rivers pollution. However, this pressure from the interests of the pulp industries and their respective collection of rents and profits had the endorsement and incentive of the State itself, which, according to Devy-Vareta,⁶⁴ publicly assumed the ‘forest vocation’ of the country, that is, that the monocultural forestry policies constituted one of the key parts for the country’s industrial start-up and development.

Last but not least, it is important to mention the abandonment and devaluation of agriculture thanks to the measures of the Common Agricultural Policy (PAC) and the successive national governments, starting with the Prime Minister, Cavaco Silva, who only attributed high subsidies to large property, often unproductive and/or non-production oriented. On the other hand, in addition to the policies of territorial disordering and the closure of forest services, there has been an abandonment of infrastructures, notably secondary road and railways, and a decapitalisation or even closure of equipment in education, health, post office and other public services. In this context it is difficult to imagine a ‘rural full of futures’⁶⁷ or a kind of ‘return to the land’ of young farmers.⁶⁸

The current situation: legislation, reality and political positioning

The growing desertification of the fields and the territory and the abandonment of the rural populations to the aims of the market were to foresee the social ruptures that are visible today. At the present time, we can see that the fires plaguing the country are the result of the State’s unaccountability to the fragility of the populations and their territories and the lack of workplace perspectives. Only those who ignore the failure of various visions and prejudices, namely the liberal economists and policymakers, on the peasantry and other rural groups, only those who do not know the strategies and the logics of the operating of small rural producers—many of them already ‘depeasanted’ and often without resources to operate a cleaning of their forests—may think magically solve the problem of fires and forestry management only by fiscal or fines or, worse yet, by any devastating State intervention, indifferent to the specific economic rationalities of the agents in attendance. However, what cannot be ignored today is that, on ground or pretext of abandoned land – for which it obviously matters, after notification, to seek a solution – there are strategies on the part of certain economic groups linked to the business of eucalyptus and pulps oriented to increase the eucalyptus and concentrate to this effect the property by buying very cheap of the designed ‘abandoned lands’.

The political parties responsible for governance over the last 40 years have an added responsibility for the state of abandonment of the rural, in particular by the forest’s unprotection. Contrary to policies of benefits and tax exemptions to large economic groups and, in particular, to insolvency banks, the rural inhabitants, in addition to being abandoned to their fate, are now faced with the introduction of an undercover tax. This tax is substantiated in costs by coercive

enforcement of the cleaning of forests at the ends/confrontations with public spaces (paths, roads, villages) to populations with very low income, notably those arising from pensions. A non-compliance with the cleaning of the forest areas of these small owners may lead, as Bica⁵⁴ says, to judicial proceedings with the probable execution of their pieces of land or forest in the short or medium term or, more crude and cruelly, expropriations without compensation in favour of the State, the municipality or other creditors, funds or private entities that are profiled in this context.

The defenders of the *statu quo* in forestry policy, namely the PSD and CDS, without proposals of law and without political will, recently proclaimed, in 2016-2017, that the legislation available was sufficient or that it could not “legislate in rush and without quality”. Despite the shocks and promises made in 2015 and subsequent intentions or proposals, we see, already within the framework of the PS government, the existence of two legislative initiatives: a decree of the PS government approved in the Council of Ministers¹⁰ and a bill of Left Block (BE) presented at the Parlement.¹¹ Both initiatives seek to overcome the situations of inertia in forest management, whose parcels are largely owned, as mentioned, by tens of thousands of small landowners, who have now been abandoned and are subject to strategies of immediate gain in the predominant production of eucalyptus without complying with any territorial ordering or forest planning, even if only indicative. However, PS and BE initiatives were inspired by different assumptions and aimed at economic and political objectives of a diverse nature. The PS government initiative, opting for the creation of the legal figure of the Forest Management Entities (EGF), did not exclude cooperatives, but did not envisage associations and preferentially pointed out the establishment of companies around an investment in capital or species, whose owners or shareholders could also buy or manage other landowners’ land, without requiring geographical continuity. For its part, BE, assuming that a forest planning policy needs scale and territorial continuity, considered to be more appropriate to the national objectives and the interests of the small owners in the form of aggregate management under the juridical figure of Forest Management Units (UGF), consisting of cooperatives, associations or similar organisations, in which the owners themselves and producers would have a identical voice and the results or incomes would take place according to the parcels possessed.

In fact, the legislative initiatives of the PS and the BE contain, as we mentioned, significant differences. The EGF, by inducing that the integrated small owners of them lose the right to directly influence the management of the forest space, tend to facilitate the concentration of the property, but not necessarily the geographical continuity. In turn, the UGF, requiring territorial continuity, aggregate the management of the property, without the owners losing the right to participate in the decisions about the joint forest space that they integrate. Despite the differences between the two proposals, the negotiations between the PS and the partners-support in the Parlement in this respect have enabled to make viable the two legislative initiatives, benefiting both juridical figures of support for their constitution.

On the part of the PSD and the CDS it would matter to keep such projects in the drawer or not to discuss them under the pretext of not being invited by the government to do so. This attitude, in view of the negative annual externalities of forest fires, even more considering the super coming disastrous consequences in the summer of 2017, means a total political irresponsibility. Indeed, from the PSD and CDS, strongly

involved with the interests of large owners or large pulp companies in favor of which liberalized the concessions of eucalyptus plantation,¹² we would not expect another positioning. However, on the part of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), given its history of recent decades in the defence of the comuns lands and small rural producers, the positioning of non-convergence with BE on the creation of a public land bank¹³ is difficult to understand, except for non-explicit reasons. Indeed, in BE proposal for the establishment of a public land bank, the rights of ‘unknown’ owners were insured and claimed at any time and could not be alienated to third parties non-public property integrated into the public land bank.

Conclusion

Very often the country has been thought and analyzed from certain aprioristical dogmas or current fraseslogies around the virtues of the market economy to which are unduly associated the peasants and other groups driven by logic of survival—or even from the urban world, especially settled in the central power circuits. The rural populations were seen as a ‘hindrance’ at the altar of industrialization and modernization or were given as residual, backward and ignorant in the ‘civilizational march’ of progress. Even today, if the conservative positioning and defense of the *statu quo*, by interests installed or to defend, prefer the inertia, other bearers of certain allegedly revolutionary delusions in the sense of nationalization of the small property forestry – and they also assume that small peasants are a ‘hindrance’. In the current context they don’t seem to understand that the demoralization and the abandonment of the small estate will tend to be used for the concentration of property in the financed sectors and linked mainly to the pulp industry. In fact, in addition to the lack of social and political conditions for a profound political change, any sign in the sense of the collectivization of the forest would likely have as counterproductive effect the lifting of populations traditionally given as passive.

In the current political and socioterritorial framework, the alternative shall be embarking on a mixed route of state intervention and associative entities, corporate or cooperatives of producers through one of the existing legal figures, notably on the basis of provided legislation that has recently created Entities and Forest Management Units. This to the condition that it is approved by the owners themselves under the principle of one vote by each owner and with redistribution of costs and gains according to the proceeded parcels, being however necessary new legal instruments that unlock or overcome the inertia of the undivided inheritance. Defined a plan of registration of the owners, a program of planning, utilization, treatment and joint management of the forest, in terms of protagonists (State, municipalities, associations/cooperatives and owners organized in Management Forest Units) and considering the biodiversity of species to be reforested (autochton and other more profitable), such indicative State-municipal planning will eventually imply the consolidation or intervention on a scale and with the use of national and European funds. More, it should aim to implement measures for structural prevention and containment of fires (firebreaks, ecological corridors, forestry tracks, fire-cutting bands). Only in this way can fires be rare in the future; and the villages, which have suffered a human bleeding, will be able to renew themselves demographically and economically on the basis of the diversity of activities: agricultural, forestry and others focused on renewable energies, in the defense of heritage and rural culture, in

¹⁰Decree Law 66/2017, 12 june: <https://dre.pt/application/file/a/107507282>.

¹¹Project of Law 465/XIII, 23 march 2017: DAR II série A N.º84/XIII/2017.03.24 (pág. 14-22).

¹²Decree Law nr. 96/2013, 19 july: <https://dre.pt/pesquisa/-/search/498122/details/maximized>.

¹³Project Law 500/XIII: DAR I série N.º78/XIII/2017.04.21 (pág. 3-18).

crafts, tourism, leisure and festive celebrations. Only in this way and with the participation of people is it possible to avoid a new exodus of populations this time afraid of new disasters, further worsening the already structurally weak situation.^{70–74}

The forest, being an economic and indispensable good for the conservation of biodiversity and the minimization of climate changes, must comply with efficient and preventive (collective or mixed) management of fires. In addition to turn to emergency situations for people and communities who are victims of fire, a more integrated territorial approach is needed in the medium and long term. It is required to correct the duality between coastline and interior and the country's structural inequality. It is necessary that society and, in particular, policymakers take on the relevance of the rural, valuing their economies and functionalities—where the smaller family units are not marginalized—including for the preservation of nature and, in the circumstance, of the forest ecosystems. For this reason, the combination of efforts between central and local authorities is essential, the (re)creation of infrastructure and public services of proximity (education, health, banking and postal services). However, these purposes require resources, investments and jobs through municipal, national and community programs (Municipal Board Plans, Regional Development Plan, Permanent Forest Fund, Horizon 2020 and other funds).

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Conflicts of interest

Author declares that there is no conflicts of interest.

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