

Foucault in the Landscape: Questioning Governmentality in the Azores

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Abstract This article focuses on the use of governmentality as a technique of government and its effects, with reference to a protected landscape. Drawing on ethnographic materials from the Azores, it demonstrates that governmentality is not always practiced by governments in the way it is meant to be. Although the state's conservation efforts in Sete Cidades meet the accepted criteria of a governmental programme, they do not transform local subjectivities as intended. The protected landscape of Sete Cidades is a government initiative, but also a tool used strategically by certain social groups living and working within this landscape to object to the appropriation of the space upon which their livelihood relies, and to understand, communicate and legitimize their place in the world.

Keywords Governmentality, environmentality, protected landscapes, land uses, Azores

Introduction

Associated with the modern government of population – including “the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick” (Foucault, [1994] 2002, p. 341) –, the most basic definition of governmentality is a “conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1991). Conduct of conduct can be inspired by “technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, [leading to] an objectivising of the subject; and technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect . . . a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and ways of being, so as to transform themselves” (Foucault, 1988, quoted in Agrawal, 2005a, p. 165). Understood in this way, government entails “not just the activities of the state and its institutions but more broadly any rational effort to influence or guide the conduct of human beings through acting upon their hopes, desires, circumstances, or environment” (Inda, 2005, p. 1). Intellectual knowledge and the plurality of agencies involved in government play crucial roles in this perspective (Dean, 1999; Gordon, 1991).

Foucault's approach to governmentality has been adopted by researchers working on topics such as economic development (Escobar, 1995; Ferguson, 1994; Li, 2007), environmental conservation (Darier, 1999; Rutherford, 1999), globalization (Ong, 1999; Ong & Collier, 2004), cultural heritage (De Cesari, 2010; Smith, 2004), and landscape (Vergunst, 2012; Waage & Benediktsson, 2010). Anthropologists have reworked the concept of governmentality to overcome its Eurocentric character and exclusive focus on sovereign nation-states. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) have developed the concept of “transnational governmentality” to designate the new transnational practices of government that coexist with the older system of nation-states without replacing it, in which transnational entities, such as non-governmental organisations (hereafter NGOs), and institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the

World Bank, play an important role. Appadurai (2002) foresees the possibility of a “deep democracy” or a “democracy without borders” in the “counter-governmentality” or “governmentality from below” of Third World activist groups and transnational networks.

The concept of “eco-governmentality” was developed by expanding Foucault’s examination of power to include ecological rationalities of government (Malette, 2009). Although the term was coined by Luke to suggest that, in the United States of America (hereafter USA), “most environmentalist movements now operate as a basic manifestation of governmentality” (Luke, 1999, p. 121), Agrawal (2005a, 2005b) has developed the concept of “environmentality” to designate the relations between technologies of government and the forming of environmental subjects. In his discussion of forest management in India, the author argues that environmental subjects are individuals “who have come to think and act in new ways in relation to the environmental domain being governed” (Agrawal, 2005b, p. 7) by governmental activity.

In addition, studies in governmentality have been called into question by several researchers. Weir, O’Malley and Clifford (1997) argue that analysts of governmentality focus on politics as “mentalities of rule”, ignoring “the messy actualities” of social relations through which politics and technologies of power are shaped, exercised and contested. Ethnographers raise similar concerns. In his study of a Zimbabwean resettlement scheme, Moore (2000, p. 659) notes that “ethnographic anemia and historical amnesia” characterize the analysts of governmentality who ignore the historical trajectories, cultural intricacies and micro-political struggles that influence state interventions. In a similar vein, in her analysis of the improvement schemes in Indonesia, and “[c]ontra scholars who separate the study of governmental rationalities from the study of situated practices”, Li (2007, pp. 282–283) argues that “engaging with the ‘messy actualities’ of rule in practice is not merely adjunct to the study of government – it is intrinsic to it”. While examining audit cultures in China and the USA to develop a critique of Rose’s (1996, 1999) conceptualization of “neoliberal governmentality”, Kipnis (2008, p. 285) similarly points out that only “ethnographic studies of the interrelations among written plans, official pronouncements, off-the-record comments and observed social practice” can reveal the extent to which governmental activity shapes local subjectivities.

In an outline of a “Foucauldian anthropology of modernity”, Inda highlights three dimensions of government for ethnographic analysis: the “reasons” of government, which encompass all forms of knowledge, expertise and calculation that render human beings reasonable and manageable; the “technics” of government, or the mechanisms, instruments and programmes that authorities use to determine human action; and the “subjects” of government, that is, the “selves, persons, actors, agents, or identities that arise from and inform governmental activity” (Inda, 2005, pp. 2–10).

Cepek (2011) focuses on the theme of subject formation to question the analytical utility of Agrawal’s (2005a, 2005b) theorisation of “environmentality” and, thereby, cast doubt on the utility of governmentality theory for the analysis of the complexities of cultural difference, intercultural encounter and direct change. Drawing on ethnographic materials from Amazonia, the author argues that, “although the Field Museum’s community conservation projects constitute a regulatory rationale and technique, they do not transform Cofán subjectivity according to plan” (Cepek, 2011, pp. 501–502).

Elsewhere (XXX), I have questioned the effectiveness of the use of governmentality as a technique of government, with reference to cultural heritage

making in a rural village in mainland Portugal. This article expands on this point. The article tackles the use of governmentality as a technique of government for the management of a protected landscape and its outcomes to demonstrate that governmentality is not always practiced by governments in the way it is meant to be. The study is focused on the protected landscape of Sete Cidades, in the Azores archipelago, one of the two autonomous regions of Portugal. After a description of the study methods and a brief outline of the local context and background, this article puts forward an analysis of the collected materials.

Study Methods

In what is one of the hallmarks of ethnography's distinctive approach to governmentality as an object of study, this study is based on ethnographic field research conducted in the rural parish of Sete Cidades in April – June 2011. Though staying in Ponta Delgada, the author worked on a nearly daily basis in Sete Cidades, gradually expanding the networks of acquaintances and respondents. The main methods of data collection were participant observation, a set of 20 semi-structured interviews with residents and detailed field notes. Of the 20 interviews, which lasted 30 minutes on average, eight were recorded and notes were taken on the remainder. I had numerous other informal discussions with residents and participated in family and village events. The aim was to investigate the local response to the conservation efforts promoted by the state in Sete Cidades.

This was complemented by six (recorded) semi-structured interviews with the directors of four public agencies working in Sete Cidades (namely, the Regional Directorate of Forest Resources, the Department for Spatial Planning, the Department for the Environment of São Miguel, and the company *Spraçores*), as well as the presidents/representatives of the environmental NGOs, Friends of the Azores and Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds. I had several other informal conversations with some of the scientific experts and workers who participate in governmental activity in Sete Cidades.

Context and Background

Sete Cidades is a dormant volcanic caldera – with an area of 19 square kilometres – located on the Western side of the island of São Miguel, some 30 kilometres from the city of Ponta Delgada. Inside the caldera there are two ecologically different lakes connected by a narrow passage and crossed by a bridge, locally referred to as *Lagoa Azul* and *Lagoa Verde* (“Blue Lake” and “Green Lake”).¹ There is also a rural parish (created in 1971), also called Sete Cidades. Currently, farmlands, mainly pasturelands (which cover 26% of the caldera), are located around the village and the lakes. The remainder of the caldera is forested (37%), although the southeastern side also has some pastureland, while other areas are uncultivated (7%), particularly those of more difficult access (see Figure 1).

According to Queiroz, the caldera of Sete Cidades was formed by successive collapses of the mountaintop – the first of which occurred about 21,000 years ago and the latest of which occurred in the late thirteenth century –, which created the four cones and the lakes that we know today (Queiroz, 1997). Although the human settlement of the caldera had begun earlier, it became more pronounced from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, when a rich landowner, António Borges (1812–1879), decided to build a vacation home there, bought vast tracts of land, and promoted land clearance and plantations (Albergaria, 1996). Much of his work was destroyed by floods that occurred between the late nineteenth century and 1937, when the construction of the tunnel for

discharging water from the Blue Lake directly into the Atlantic Ocean was completed. After António Borges' death, properties were passed on to his stepson, Caetano de Andrade (1844–1900). However, it was the heir of this landowner, an agronomist also named Caetano de Andrade (1913–1982), who most promoted the settlement of Sete Cidades, by encouraging his workers to dwell inside the caldera.

In the past, the most common occupations in Sete Cidades were the harvesting of moss, grazing livestock, washing clothes and the production of charcoal, an activity that entailed a significant deforestation of the caldera. In the 1960's and the 1970's, coinciding with a wave of emigration to Canada and the USA, inhabitants lived mainly from agriculture, both as workers and small-scale farmers (DEPD & SREC, 1987). In the early 1980s, supported by funding from the Regional Government, dairy farming became the predominant activity, and the area of pastures has substantially expanded to fields which, according to inhabitants, were previously covered by corn and endemic vegetation.

In the last two decades, but especially since the mid-2000s, Sete Cidades has witnessed a complex transition from an economic model based on production to an economic model based on consumption, or, in other words, the so-called “post-productivist” transition characteristic of many other rural areas in the Western world, in which agri-environmental schemes and tourism play important roles (e.g. Evans, Morris & Winter, 2002; Silva & Figueiredo, 2013). This transition has been strongly encouraged by the Regional Government of the Azores in line with orientations from the European Union, which Portugal joined in 1986.

Landscape Protection and Governmentality in Sete Cidades

The Regional Government of the Azores has been trying to control landscape change, to preserve it for posterity, in Sete Cidades since 1980, when the site was designated as a “protected landscape”, and the first spatial system dividing it into sections with prohibited and permitted activities was devised. Regulations were successively revised in 1989, 1995 and 2005, when that determination was strengthened due to two factors – the designation of the lakes (which cover 24% of the caldera) as a “protected body of water”, following the adoption of the European Union Water Framework Directive (2000), and the approval of the Management Plan for the Hydrographic Basins of Sete Cidades.

Designed by a consortium of experts (mainly biologists and geographers) from the University of the Azores and two engineering firms (one of which is based in mainland Portugal, the other in the United Kingdom), in cooperation with government representatives and NGO agents, the specifications presented in this plan were adopted for the management of the “protected area” in which the “protected landscape” of Sete Cidades was re-designated in 2008, as a result of the creation of the Natural Park of the island of São Miguel.²

The conservation efforts by the state in Sete Cidades can be described as a governmental programme. Using the terms of Inda (2005), the “reason” of government is to remedy the perceived lack of sustainability of the resource-uses (including the land and the lakes) for the benefits of landscape/environmental conservation and commodification through tourism. The “technics” of government encompass the expert knowledge, the above-mentioned practices and measures, as well as the concomitant educational and scientific activities that function as pedagogical and disciplinary tools that help to determine the conduct of individuals. The “subjects” of government are the people of Sete Cidades. As the next section will show, it is in this aspect of

ethnographic scrutiny that the effectiveness of governmental activity is especially questionable.

Resistance and Counter-Conduct in Sete Cidades

Research inside and outside Europe has shown that landscape or environmental conservation measures often transform resource-use rights and give rise to conflict and resistance by local communities (e.g. Newman, 2001; Tsing, 2005; West, Igoe & Brockington, 2006). Sete Cidades is in no way immune to this impact. In fact, although they are relatively powerless to protest in an organized way, the people of Sete Cidades in general adamantly object to the state's conservation efforts in the caldera and resist changing their thoughts, conduct and ways of being, or, in other words, their subjectivity, "which overlaps with more familiar notions of value, desire, belief, and identity" (Cepek, 2011, p. 512).

Experts, public authorities and NGO agents working in Sete Cidades are entirely cognizant of this reality, and are concerned by the limited enforcement of regulation and violations regularly observed in the caldera, mainly with respect to the uses of land (e.g. Monteiro, 2010). Cases of fines levied on offenders have been rare. In the words of the director of a public agency during an informal conversation, in which the existence of interference in governmental activity is also clear, "it is difficult to impose fines on offenders in Sete Cidades, because politicians are against that practice in order to win votes for their political contests, [in the same way that] they exert pressure upon experts to influence the technical decision-making processes" (*Field Journal*, May 2011).

The position of the "subjects" of government is grounded on multiple factors, among which the lack of legitimacy of the state's interventions in Sete Cidades occupies an important position. It is maintained that the governmental programme constitutes an unacceptable form of appropriation of private land and the landscape upon which the livelihood of the traditional users – and shapers – of that landscape rely. As a resident in his late 40s put it, "The government never worried about Sete Cidades. It was the agronomist Caetano de Andrade who made Sete Cidades as we know it today, including the school. [...]. And now the government comes and declares, 'This landscape is very beautiful, and hereafter we will take charge of its protection'. This is unacceptable, also because Sete Cidades has legitimate landowners and land tenants" (*Field Journal*, April 2011).

In fact, most of the land in Sete Cidades is privately owned. As it was in the late 1990s (Calado, 2000), nowadays, the agricultural area is very fragmented, and it is based on a system of tenancy, not on an equitable distribution of property. Traditionally, residents are tenants of a large and a medium landowner, possessing 52% and 7% of the area respectively, neither of whom are residents. Reminiscent of feudal systems of land tenure, this includes both agricultural and urban land. About 75% of the approximately 800 permanent residents do not own the land upon which their houses are built, since the landowner yielded the right of construction, but retained ownership of the land.

Recently pressured by public authorities to sell urban land, landowners set the sale price at 59 Euros per square meter, a price that most residents cannot afford and that helps to reproduce the tenancy system, giving rise to a phenomenon of co-habitation and stimulating housing construction that clashes with the regulatory measures adopted for architecture in the caldera. Tourism contributes significantly to this situation, as the vacation homes – which are owned by outsiders who use them infrequently – account for 26% of the houses available in Sete Cidades.³ Land tenancy is transmitted from generation to generation, much like pastures and cows.

In addition, the “subjects” of government believe that their practices and rules are sustainable. This is particularly the case of forestry producers, discussed below in this article, but it also includes farmers, particularly since the construction by the state, in 2006, of a drainage channel that carries pollution from pastures directly to the tunnel that discharges water from the Blue Lake into the ocean. As a farmer in her 50s put it, “cows do not pollute the water of the lakes. We always had cows and pastures in Sete Cidades, and we washed clothes in the Blue Lake, and the lakes have never been as polluted as they are now” (*Field Journal*, May 2011). This is consistent with the statement of the director of the public company of the Azores responsible for the implementation of the management plan in Sete Cidades during an interview at her office in Ponta Delgada, to whom “claims about the past are a strong barrier to changing people’s mentality and behaviour”.

Accordingly, they challenge the accuracy of expert knowledge mobilised by the state for resource management. There is a widespread opinion that scientific experts design plans from their offices in the city, based on maps and computerized information, without really knowing the terrain, thereby creating absurd rules for the uses of land. This perspective is fuelled by the perception that both current and previous state action in the caldera has proved to be environmentally harmful. In particular, residents contend that the eutrophication of the lakes’ water seen in recent decades in Sete Cidades results not so much from silage effluent and cattle slurry, as from the introduction of algae for the protection of pike by a public agency in the 1980s. Moreover, in what makes them accomplices of governmentality, they accuse public authorities of acting counter to the interests of environmental conservation, on the grounds that they do not remove the litter from the lakes/caldera.

The people of Sete Cidades also feel that, historically, they have been marginalized in the decision-making processes related to their parish. The management plan approved in 2005 is an example frequently mentioned to substantiate their point. The plan was subject to a public consultation process, but participation has been very poor, as it is in many similar processes in Portugal (e.g. Lima, 2004). Residents complain of the conditions set for the implementation of the public consultation, on the grounds that hearings served to inform the public rather than to debate with them. In the words of a member of the local government at that time during an interview, “The public consultation process was a fraud, as everything was already decided. The Regional Government and the environmental engineers want to impose the plan instead of negotiate it with us, the people who actually live here”.

In fact, most residents think and claim that the conservation efforts promoted by the state in Sete Cidades run counter to their own interests, wishes and identity. As in many other places where environmental or biodiversity conservation strategies collide with the development aspirations of local communities (Blangy & Mehta, 2006; Clerici *et al.*, 2007), it is maintained that the state’s conservation efforts in Sete Cidades actually restrict local development. The idea of prohibiting the construction of new housing and creating certain new businesses, such as gas stations or hotels, is a common complaint in the residents’ discourses. Another is expressed in the words of a farmer during an interview:

We are the shapers of this landscape, but the government and the environmental engineers do not let us govern our lives; they do not take our interests into consideration. The land tenure contracts stipulate that we have to keep the pastures clean. Incense-cedar is an invasive species: if it is not cut down it spoils all the pastures. But now it is prohibited to cut down the incense-cedar [...]. Land re-

parcelling is also prohibited. Some farmers have exchanged pieces of land to cultivate larger properties, but the environmental agency has prohibited the removal of fences, arguing that they are buffer zones. (Male, 52 years old)

In addition, where experts, public authorities and NGO agents see a “strong attachment to a lifestyle based on farming” and “an entrenched mindset”, most residents see the preservation of a lifestyle and a personal/collective identity as farmers. For example, this is the case of an interviewee in his late 20s: “I am the son of farmers, and I like this life, working with cows. Although I work every day, without weekends or holidays off, and it’s a dirty job, as you deal with cows and their dung, here I’m self-employed and work according to my own free will” (*Field Journal*, June 2013). Farming of dairy cows is a crucial source of income for the people of Sete Cidades – 60% of whom live off primary sector-based economic activities –, both as the main activity for farmers and as a complementary activity for individuals working in the tertiary sector as domestic workers and civil servants, or in the tourism sector, or public administration – including most of the seven residents who work for the environmental public agency responsible for the management of Sete Cidades and, thereby, collaborate directly with the governmental programme.

Although Sete Cidades is a major tourist attraction of the island of São Miguel and the Azores,⁴ the number of local residents living off tourism activities is fairly small, as occurs in many other nature tourism destinations worldwide (e.g. Schellhorn, 2010; Silva, 2013; West & Carrier, 2004). The two restaurants and the ecotourism shop located in the caldera provide jobs and increased income to 12 individuals, eight of whom are residents. There are no hotels or other tourism facilities and services in Sete Cidades. As residents point out, the aesthetic and touristic qualities of the site are explored mainly by social groups and individuals from outside.

The people of Sete Cidades are fully aware of the high importance accorded to the site by people from outside, including those from Portugal, the European Union and the tourism sector. Obtained in 2010, the designation of Sete Cidades as one of the New Seven Natural Wonders of Portugal is a good example. At the same time, and once again making them accomplices of governmentality, they claim to be the best custodians of the landscape. This is particularly the case of dairy farmers, who are willing to carry out their activity in a less intensive way but only if compensated by the state for the loss of productivity and income, or else, rewarded directly for shaping that landscape. They further claim that their activity should not disappear, because pastures are accepted ingredients of the landscape’s beauty and are consensually considered an integral part of the protected and tourist landscape of Sete Cidades, conveying the fascinating distinctiveness of the place identity.

Cattle farming is also important to the people of Sete Cidades for defining their identity, a sense of community and belonging in spiritual terms. Though internal competition and tension are not entirely absent, the celebrations of the Cult of the Holy Spirit play an integrative role in Sete Cidades, by establishing solidarity among members of the local community and highlighting their uniqueness. In this respect, residents are also of the opinion that, by stipulating the obligation to kill cattle in licensed slaughterhouses, the state is destroying local tradition and culture, as the calves of cows offered by residents (and, in recent years, also by outsiders) to the brotherhoods of the Holy Spirit in Sete Cidades should be killed on a specific day in the caldera. Here one sees more clearly that the people of Sete Cidades consider themselves as constituting a culturally specific collective identity, simultaneously included in and separate from wider collective identities (Azorean, Portuguese and European).

Objection to governmentality is also the position of social groups and individuals involved in the forestry sector in Sete Cidades. This sector of economic activity is different from that of farming, in that it does not affect a high number of residents. In fact, most of the forested areas are owned and cultivated by a single large landowner, and the forestry sector provides a second job for only four residents. However, the case of forestry producers is similar to that of farmers, as it also reflects the existence of a gap between the aims and outcomes of the governmental programme under analysis in this article. Forestry producers object to the state's conservation efforts in Sete Cidades and resist changing their opinions and actions about forestry with regard to land-use rights and remain convinced that their practices and rules – based on knowledge accumulated throughout decades of practical engagement in forestry production – are sustainable. As the manager of the largest forested area stated during an interview, while commenting on the management plan approved in 2005:

The plan is unacceptable, for various reasons. First, this is private property [...]. Second, we know that we can, and we really want to, plant more trees than the plan permits [...]. We are also not willing to convert forest production into forest protection by using endemic species as stipulated in the plan, since the endemic species are unprofitable. [...] The selective cutting of trees, stipulated in the plan as an alternative to clear cutting, is also no good. We are not going to transport machinery to cut down a few trees, and leave other trees unprotected from the wind, right? [...] And yet, the government does not want to pay a single Euro for our loss of productivity and income. (*Field Journal*, May 2011)

The words of this informant also provide a good reason to refer to what Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) called “naturing the nation”. As in other European countries (e.g. Olwig, 2003), in the Azores, pushed by environmental governmental agencies and NGOs, there is, nowadays, a renewed interest in native flora, of which the Laurel forest is a good example, and fauna, such as the Azorean Bullfinch. Some islanders even advocate that the hydrangeas traditionally used in the tourist image of the Azores, should be replaced by an endemic species, because it is an exotic, “alien” species.

In Sete Cidades, although experiments in forest plantations started in the second half of the nineteenth century (Albergaria, 1996), forestry has developed in the twentieth century through the industrial exploitation of *Cryptomeria*, which is endemic to Japan. Currently, in Sete Cidades, *Cryptomeria* represents 55% of the forested area, and most of the trees have already reached the harvesting age of 30 years. In this context, in what demonstrates the existence of friction between competing rationalities and technologies of government, whilst the public agencies of the environment and the Natural Park of the Island of São Miguel – as well as the environmental NGOs – strive to increase the area of endemic species and to decrease the area of alien species in protected areas such as Sete Cidades, the Regional Directorate of Forest Resources – and the private forestry producers – support the more profitable industry of *Cryptomeria*.⁵

In addition, there is a clash between the aesthetic consumption of landscape and its material production, which finds in the cutting down of forest trees its greatest expression. Although protests are less overt than those studied by Willow (2011) at Grassy Narrows First Nation, in Canada, both the governmental and non-governmental environmental organizations, as well as many residents and the tourism sector, object to the cutting down of forest trees in Sete Cidades, mainly (but not exclusively) by clear

cutting, on the grounds that they constitute an attack on the aesthetic qualities of the protected landscape of Sete Cidades that should be prohibited by public authorities. The people involved in the forestry sector have a different opinion.

Conclusion

Governmentality is fertile ground for research and debate in the research literature, both as a tool for analysis and as a technique of government used at certain times and places. As other scholarly concepts, governmentality shifts according to different readings and contexts in which it is applied (see also, for example, Ellison, 2009). The case of Sete Cidades has allowed the author to provide an ethnographic account of the use of governmentality as a technique of government and its effects, with reference to a protected landscape.

The research has shown that the state's conservation efforts in Sete Cidades meet the accepted criteria of a governmental programme, embracing the "reasons", "technics" and "subjects" of government (Inda, 2005). As occurs in governmental programmes generally (Gordon, 1991; Dean, 1999), here scientific knowledge (biology, geography) functions as a technology of government through its mobilization by the state for resource management. The set of rules and interdictions, as well as the scientific and educational activities, play a similar disciplinary function in the caldera.

However, it is clear that the implementation of this technique of government is being conditioned by a number of factors. In Sete Cidades, there is not only friction between competing rationalities and technologies of government – in relation to the environment, on the one hand, and in relation to the forest, on the other hand –, but also political interference in the technical rationalist calculation processes, as well as persistent local subjectivities.

Though in some circumstances they are accomplices of governmentality, the traditional users and shapers of that landscape not only explicitly object to the state's intrusion in the management of local resources, but they also challenge expert knowledge and its mobilization as a technology of government, interfere in the conduct, and develop forms of counter-conduct, resistance and subversion. They do not internalize the aims of the governmental programme as their own or as part of their own code of conduct, even considering them as contrary to their interests, beliefs, wishes and identity. In other words, in Sete Cidades, governmental activity does not transform the ways "individuals think and act in relation to the environmental domain being governed" (Agrawal, 2005b, p. 7), i.e., the landscape. Ethnographic literature presents a wide range of similar cases worldwide, where there is a gap between the aims and results of governmental programmes (e.g. Cepek, 2011; Ferguson, 2004; Li, 2007; Silva, 2011; Smith, 2004). Thus, there is a good reason to conclude that, frequently, governmentality is not practiced by governments in the way it is meant to be (or in line with its theoretical formulation).

In Sete Cidades, as in many other places (e.g. Newman, 2001; Tsing, 2005; Willow, 2011), landscape is a contested political arena (Mitchell, 1996), a battlefield between different social groups and individuals with competing interests over the same resource, including the public authorities who initiated the process of landscape protection, the scientific experts who intend to guide the conduct of individuals, and the traditional users and shapers of the landscape. This is due to the existence of dissonance in the perception of landscape. To public authorities (except for the parish government), this landscape represents an economic resource as a tourist destination. To experts, the resource that the landscape of Sete Cidades represents is centred on the lakes and biodiversity. To the people of Sete Cidades, it represents an economic resource as the

basis for material production and the foundation of a culturally specific collective identity.

Similar examples are described in the ethnographic literature. Smith (2006, pp. 187–188), for example, describes a landscape of dissonance – involving palaeontologists, tourist operators, local government, mining companies, the Waanyi Aboriginal community – at the Riversleigh World Heritage Site, on the Northwest side of Queensland, Australia. According to the author (Smith, 2006, p. 188), “[e]ach of these groups constructs a sense of place from the landscape that sustains their sense of identity, which in turn legitimizes the understanding of the landscape as a particular resource that can be used in particular ways”. Likewise, Vergunst reveals the dissonant character of the farming landscapes at Orkney, in Scotland, “where institutional designations of ‘nature’ tended to invoke a generalised temporal stasis, local and regional understandings of ‘landscape’ emphasise specific histories, transience, and movement” in line with local cultural logics (Vergunst, 2012, p. 173).

The case of Sete Cidades can also be taken into consideration in the debates on nature conservation, environmental conservation and landscape conservation. It is maintained that the (agri-)environmental or biodiversity conservation schemes that many Western governments and NGOs are currently seeking to implement, work better when local opinion is taken into account and when local communities are active participants in the process (Evans, Morris & Winter, 2002; Vergunst, 2012), especially when they see tangible benefits (Wunder, 2006). Sete Cidades is a case in point. The protected landscape encompasses a territory that is owned and worked by certain social groups and individuals struggling to make a living, and for whom, up to now, public efforts for landscape/environmental conservation have brought more losses than gains.

In addition, the case of Sete Cidades can be taken into account in governmentality studies. There is evidence here that to fully understand how governmental projects actually work out on the ground requires attention to the messiness of social relations and situated everyday practices, for the study of which an immersed ethnography is essential (e.g. Kipnis, 2008; Li, 2007).

Notes

1 All translations by the author.

2 Despite its re-designation as a “protected area” in 2008, Sete Cidades continues to be referred to by its residents, the Azoreans and the Portuguese people in general, as well as the tourism sector, as a “protected landscape”.

3 The Regional Government is implementing a project for the construction of 27 new houses in Sete Cidades, designed by the prestigious Portuguese architect Souto Moura. Nevertheless, based on their experience with the six houses constructed in previous years, with a selling price of 80,000 Euros, which they could not afford, residents believe that the houses will be occupied by outsiders.

4 A location at the top of the caldera known as the *Vista do Rei* (“King’s View”) receives more than one hundred thousand visitors per year, of which only a residual number visit the lakes or the village. This location was named in honour of the appearance there of the Portuguese King Dom Carlos I (1863–1908), during his visit to the island of São Miguel in July 1901, seven years before being murdered in Lisbon.

5 Currently, in the Azores, *Cryptomeria* is the most important element of the forestry sector, which employs about 1,800 people.

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