Semiotic operators and politics from the Argentina research (Buenos Aires – New York, 2001-2002)

The first task of a theoretically informed anthropological approach to the issue would be the deconstruction of several of the terms being used. That means to revert the reification of some key categories in the discourses involved. As Daniel stated, “there is a danger in finding meaning before the full effects of discordance are appreciated” (1996: 31). There are two important outcomes of the effort pursued here: the first one is the change from a “naturalistic” perspective, which states that violence is in the “nature” or “essence” of people or processes involved, to another one that privileges history and context, in all their fluidity and dynamism, as key elements to understand the phenomenon in question. The imperative here is to dispel the view that violence is a “natural” thing, and also that it is chaotic and irrational. This is done by showing that there are no “violence” but different and context-specific “violences”, and that particular forms of domination and resistance, attending to specific historical contexts of social relations, cultural forms and memory, give social and historical nexus to violence (Besteman, 1999: 8). Nevertheless, the theoretical necessity of contextualization does not deny the fact that some of the processes involved are articulated with domains that go far beyond the limits of the local. For the limited purpose of this work, although trying to be as sensitive as possible to the influence of factors external to the universe observed in the fieldwork, the main focus will be on the local and particular aspects of the studied phenomena.

The second important outcome is related to the “effects of discordance” that Daniel talks about: the fact that discordance is always imbued in social processes, that there is always a struggle for the control and manipulation of material and symbolic things, and that these struggles are shaped and by its turn help to shape the social and cultural configuration of

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1 Nordstrom reminds us that there are no “local” wars, in the sense that massive interlinked and very international war-related industries make war possible in every spot of the globe (1997: 5). That applies also for “low intensity conflicts”, an aphorism used by militarized states to legitimize their existence using military tactics against parts of their own populations in situations of no (declared) war. Argentinean security forces are part of this environment, buying and selling surveillance technologies in the international market and using them to control crowds of soccer fans.
the social groups and social fields in which they take place. Conflicts create a deconstructive environment that highlights the relationships of self, identity, socio-cultural processes, and power configurations (Nordstrom, 1997: 9). Our intent here is to present a view “from the margins”, to use Besteman’s expression (1999: 5), and to analyze what institutions, discourses and forces of the state and of the civil society look like from this view point. Looking at the way people imagine the society in which they are inserted “illuminate structures of domination, the effectiveness of its discourses, the nature of its hegemonic representations, and the extent of its popular support.”

In presenting an ethnographical account of the struggles around soccer fandom in Buenos Aires, our intent is to generate an alternative account in a discursive environment where the disparity in power is enormous, and in which the hegemony of the dominant part depends on the “naturalization” or invisibility of this disparity, where the ideological basis of the inferiority of some groups, which rests in cultural and racialized definitions of status, finds structural expression in the Argentinean social organization, while the dominated strive to maintain itself materially, symbolically and discursively alive.

One of the problems of this position is that there is not a “they”, the “dominated”, but several “they”s in different situations with different goals, what increases considerably the complexity of the problem. The trouble starts with the very use of the word “hooligan”. Examples of the academic literature not related to soccer seem to use the concept in the sense of “group of youths acting, or ready to act, violently”. Tambiah cites in his book about the 1983 ethnic riots in Sri Lanka a passage in which Sieghart define the word goondas as “essentially organized gangs of hooligans available for hire by anyone whom it happens to suit to foment trouble in the streets. It is freely admitted that every major political party has its own rented or rentable goonda contingent.” (Tambiah, 1986: 51). We will abandon the concept altogether here for now, and we will reconstruct it later in the text, analyzing some social processes present in the soccer universe in Buenos Aires as they were observed.

Reframing the issue: violence and soccer fandom as social and cultural constructions

According to Nordstrom (1997), there is a tendency in the Western epistemology to posit a fundamental naturalness to violence. Its roots are searched in the depths of human nature, and violence as a fixed phenomenon becomes res, a thing – it is therefore reified. It is concrete and enduring, it exists as any other thing. But there is also a different conceptualization of violence as something constructed, made, a fluid cultural construct crafted into action and through action inside the social dynamics (Nordstrom, 1997: 217).

Debates around politically loaded issues like violence tend to concentrate opinions on what Walley called “either/or” terms, i.e., around cultural relativism or politically-informed outrage (1997: 406). Both sides often share a hardened view of “culture” based on an essentialist notion of difference “that can be historically linked to the colonial era.” This view does not take in consideration the fact that members of any social group have often contradictory and ambivalent positions, that there are always internal conflicts over

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2 Besteman, 1999: 5.
meanings. The first step in the effort to transcend the either/or reactions to politically loaded issues is to recognize that usually the phenomenon debated does not exist as a category. Talking about “female genital operations”, Walley comments that to lump together the diverse forms of the practice into a general category is to obscure the geographic diversity, as well as the diversity of meanings and the politics in which such practices are embedded, and “rhetorically constitute a generic “they” who conduct such practices and a generic “we” who do not” (1997: 429). The reasoning works for “violence” and “hooliganism” as well. There is a powerful implication in this refusal to use general common-sense categories as a theoretical guide. In several places, combating hooliganism was interpreted as “eliminating hooligans”, in the same way that the we can see in the television American, British, Israeli, or Indian officials defending the idea that combating terrorism means literally “eliminating terrorists”. In Romero’s account, the police and private security forces are responsible for 68% of the almost two hundred killings related to soccer matches in the last five decades in Argentina (Romero, 1994). My informants told me that they believe this number of deaths is severely underestimated, once in neighborhoods where the soccer team is closely related to community life, soccer fans meet much more frequently than once a week and problems with the police, outside stadiums and without any connections to matches, are frequent. Besides that, the media just do not report several of the deaths, and the police records don’t link them to soccer fandom activities. “When the police came to the neighborhood, the media and the statistics came with them”, an elder informant told me about the official production of statistics.

Abandoning the concept of hooliganism and getting inside the real life of the groups associated with the issue reveals what seems obvious from an anthropological perspective but is absolutely absent from the middle class newspaper-based common-sense about the issue: that hinchadas worry about violence and aggressive members and try to control them, that random violence is not part of the objectives and goals of these groups but a secondary and mostly undesirable outcome of their activities, and that members of hinchadas are ordinary people, indistinguishable from the rest of the population, striving to survive, fighting unemployment and poverty in a context of national impoverishment. A monocausal and materialistic approach would easily link hooliganism as resistance to a harsh economic and political environment, but that seems also too simplistic. Both approaches, the strict materialistic and the “hooliganism is bad and should be eliminated” one, stupendously flattens our understanding of what the lives of the members of these groups are about, and what the specific patterns of cultural production associated to soccer fandom are about.3 In this sense, much more than to map the culture of a group, what we want is to understand strategies of survival, and how it dynamically constructs and deconstructs social and cultural relations. In abandoning hardened conceptions of culture and identity, we try to avoid transforming the anthropological enterprise in part of the reification process we try to combat. In Valentine Daniel’s words, “the desire to find culture, either as a present reality or as a deferred ideal, to find it in any case, as a coherent whole, true and beautiful, is the desire to find a corpse” (1996: 201).

In trying to avoid the pitfalls of the thinking through too-general categories and “essences”, we are aware that history of facts are inseparable from the meaning of history – as it is, or is not, remembered, used, altered, contested, debated, revitalized, or rejected in the present,

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as Besteman reminds us (1999: 35). The politics of meaning and representations seems to have in the production of categories of representation (and the struggle for the control of this production) one of its most important processes. We have several anthropological accounts on how history is emptied from its historicity and filled with essentialism when substituted by the idea(s) of clan/race/lineage/social class as explanatory categories. People are transformed in a “race”, are objectified, individualities are erased into general categories, filled with fictional characteristics, like the magic power of the group, their questionable integrity, dirtiness, their distinct physical characteristics, their “foreignness”, their lack of “proper education”, and this easily takes us to the path of scapegoating, making them perfect suspects for any crime, from the most banal one to the nation’s economic crisis. It was common to hear in the streets of Buenos Aires, during the Argentinean winter of 2001, that the high unemployment rates in the city are the fault of Bolivians and Paraguayans immigrants, once they accepted to work for half of the wage an Argentinean would take, and with no papers, which means no benefits.

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“ It is … clear that the victimizer needs the victim to create truth, objectifying fantasy in the discourse of the other”, wrote Taussig about the rubber colonial exploration in Southern Colombia. But isn’t it lack of coherence to use the word “victimizer” in our endeavor of attacking these same kind of generalizations? Victim and victimizer, oppressed and oppressor, good and evil, right and wrong, left and right, aren’t those terms examples of the binary oppositions that go against our intent here? As Derrida reminds us, it is not the word, but the metaphysical content of the word, the presumed “essence” of the meaning, what Derrida calls center, what we are willing to avoid. Not the word “victimizer”, but the acceptance of the existence of a quintessential victimizer. As stated Timerman, cited in Taussig, “We victims and victimizers, we’re part of the same humanity, colleagues in the same endeavor to prove the existence of ideologies, feelings, heroic deeds, religions, obsessions.” (1987: 5). The same social group, throughout the course of its social life, can be, in different moments, vanguard, victims, and victimizers (Bornstein, 2001). Definitions of social roles and identities are flexible, fuzzy, and mutable. The desire for linguistic precision in sociological accounts is itself part of a politics of meaning and knowledge.

“We would do well to pause and ask ourselves why it is always the rebellion that is termed disorderly and not the system against which it is aimed.” (Taussig, 1987: 231)

The social construction of deviance

Among the several categories strategically produced in the struggles that integrate the politics of meaning and representation of a given society, crime and criminality occupy a special and central position. But what is crime? The common sense conception of crime

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6 Another interesting example of how racial and ethnic categories are manipulated in the politics of identities is the fact that some of these immigrants were usually called indios in their homelands and became bolivianos and paraguayos in Argentina. Bolitas (“small balls”) was a common blackening term used for Bolivians, and paraguas (“umbrellas”) for Paraguayans.
consists of a violation of agreed-upon rules. In Talcott Parson’s understanding of crime, it would be a product of either imperfect socialization of members inside the society in which they belong, or the diversity of people in relation to the moral rules, due to personal idiosyncrasies. That means that not all people respect norms and values sufficiently, and behavior which logically falls outside the accepted standards will inevitably be produced by somebody and considered deviant or criminal (Collins in Hilbert, 1992: xi). This understanding of crime and deviance is dependent of an independent and sovereign existence of the set of rules, codes, laws, to which the individual adapts or not. This independent ontological existence of the morality is not only questionable, but in fact was considered mistaken by several academic developments, from philosophy (see Wittgenstein, 1953) to the social sciences (see Hilbert, 1992).

Durkheim presents us with a very different understanding of deviance and crime. It is the social process itself that creates crime, as it does in the process of creation of punishment. The groups better identified with the moral standards in use will frame some behavior as criminal, so they can punish it, and the punishment is a ritual which reminds everyone of the power of society and of the ideal of following its rules. In this sense, the principle of rebellion is the same as that of conformity. For Durkheim, crime is not only normal, but also healthy, in that it is a primary means through which the society protects itself against the withering away of what he called “collective conscience”, of the shared values and beliefs. Therefore, crime cannot be eliminated, once whatever behavior is erased, something else would immediately take its place and fit the role of “outermost” extreme. But more important than that, it is the ritualized action of recruitment of criminal behavior from the margins that recognizes, reaffirms, and celebrates society and the “collective conscience” (Hilbert, 1992: 85). The recruitment, trial, and punishment of crime within a society are essential to the experience of order within a given society, and the process works as a ritual anomie\textsuperscript{–}prevention practice (1992: 182).

We see in the Durkheimian thesis an important argument in favor of the idea that crime and deviance are socially constructed. That means that there is no essential crime or bad behavior, but that the criminality of the act is meaningful only against the background of social and political processes in which it is inserted. Behavior that is criminal for one social group is not for another, and the same social group may frame something as normal and sin in different times. But how to address these processes of construction of social relations?

Two further theoretical developments, both under influence of Durkheimian ideas, throw lights in our understanding of the social construction of criminality. One comes from Michel Foucault’s theorization about how social truths are created through discourses and what he called power technologies; the other comes from Harold Garfinkel’s works in ethnomethodology.

In very brief terms, Foucault’s theoretical interest is to understand the mechanisms through which power exists and is reproduced in society. Throughout his work, he approached the

\textsuperscript{8} See Collins in Hilbert, 1992: xi.
\textsuperscript{9} Collins in Hilbert, 1992: xi.
\textsuperscript{10} Anomie, in Durkheim’s terminology, refers to the situation in which the social fabric starts to decompose and the social basis for community life starts to fade.
\textsuperscript{11} In making this association between Foucault and Durkheim, our point is that one doesn’t need to see the anomie-rituals so optimistically as did Durkheim to find it theoretically useful.
theme through two points of reference: one, the rules of right that provide formal delimitations for power, and two, the effects of truth that this power produces and transmits, and which in their turn reproduce this power. According to this author, there are, in every society, manifold relations of power, which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body. “These relations of power”, said Foucault, “cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.” In this sense, one specific truth on madness is associated to the creation of sanatoriums and clinics; a truth on crime and deviance is associated to present day configuration of western penal systems, and so on and so forth.

Garfinkel approaches the issue through a very different angle. His attempt is to understand how order is constructed in social relations. Garfinkel first introduced the term “indexical,” which describes the property of semantic expressions that vary their specific sense or meaning according to the context, being imprecise and equivocal in general. For Garfinkel, all expressions are indexical, including those used to clarify and remedy the indexicality of other expressions. The indexicality of concepts and expressions might counter with the attempt to standardize meanings, what usually comes accompanied by a listing of contexts and possible types of use. The whole enterprise of standardization is ruined because contexts themselves are specified with indexical expressions, and a long-term project of standardization and definition of meanings would be endless. Indeed any element of linguistic expression, be it a term, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire text, are cultural resources for making sense, and their use is not determinate, yet neither is it arbitrary (Hilbert, 1992: 50). According to Garfinkel, their use is constrained, as Durkheim wanted it, but the constraint comes not from an inherent logical integrity of the cultural resources, but manifests itself in the action of people making use of them. Not any arbitrary usage is allowed in practice, and specific situations with the participation of specific actor engaged in what Hilbert called “artful usage of cultural resources” or “artful productions” generate specific sets of constraints.

Besides meanings, this constructionist view of social relations applies also for rules and values. In this sense, problems are constructed around practical goals that count as solutions, and values are mobilized on behalf of claims, rather than originating them (Hilbert, 1992: 186). Claims-making activities are rituals for problem recognition, and those activities end up reifying (temporarily) a specific moral order. That is why, according to Durkheim, the factual and the moral spheres are one and the same: society is morality, and morality is society. In Hilbert’s words,

“[Claims-making activities] are devices for saving the appearances of objective social order in the absence of other corroborative evidence. Just as the meaning of the law in maintained by the recruitment of its violators, just as professional competence is maintained by the

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12 See Foucault, 1980: 92-93.
13 Foucault, 1980: 93.
recognition of incompetence, or meaningfulness by the recognition of nonsense, so does
social order stand in relation to its constituted exceptions.”

One of the most insightful experiences done by Garfinkel in his explorations of the
principles by which social categories are produced is his study of what he called
degradation ceremonies. To use the Durkheimian hypothesis, a degradation ceremony
takes place when the necessity to start the process of finding a criminal or deviant arises,
and it prepares the “victim” to be criminalized without doing harm to the social group, but
to the contrary, fortifying its existence, by operating a transformation in the victim’s
identity. In Garfinkel’s definition, the grounds and the behavior that the grounds make
explicable as the person’s conduct constitute his identity (Garfinkel, 1972: 202). In order
to be victimized, the person should be expelled from the group (if she is not already an
outsider), and this process is done through an identity transformation. “The work of the
denunciation effects the recasting of the objective character of the perceived other: The
other person becomes in the eyes of his condemners literally a different and new person”
(204). But what are the programs of communicative tactics that will get the work of status
degradation done? Exploring this tactics is the task Garfinkel put to himself. Interestingly,
the first transformation that takes place in the process is in the realm in which the involved
are situated. Event, denouncer and denounced (“perpetrator”) must all be removed from the
ordinary everyday life and made to stand as “out of ordinary”. Persons and events are
essentialized; types of people and types of events become units of analysis. The unique and
distinctive character of people and events, any sense of accident, coincidence,
indeterminism, chance, should all be lost. The qualities of types, nevertheless, are defined
in a polarized way: “the profanity of an occurrence or a desire or a character trait, for
example, is clarified by the reference it bears to its opposite, the sacred. The features of the
mad-dog murderer reverse the features of the peaceful citizen” (205). By the same logic,
the status of pariah that is being imputed to the denounced is countered by the close
identification between the denouncer and the witnesses as to transform him into a public
person, a representative of the collectivity. As a public defender of the order, the denouncer
then makes salient the supra-personal values of the collectivity, and his denunciation is
delivered in their name. The distance between the denouncer and denounced are also
experienced by the witnesses. Finally, “the denounced person must be ritually separated
from a place in the legitimate order, i.e., he must be defined as standing at a place opposed
to it. He must be placed “outside”, he must be made “strange”” (207). The conditions are
then set for his victimization in the ritual construction of crime.

In a very specific sense, Garfinkel’s and Foucault’s works can be seen as complementary,
for our present purposes. Garfinkel stated that indexicality takes the full control over
meanings out of the hands of subjects, but that not any usage of terms would be allowed in
practice. Foucault addressed these sets of discursive constraints, their nature and the
processes that form them throughout history. By the other hand, the study of the
microphysics of the production and reproduction of these constraints (“microphysics of
power”, in Foucault’s account), a crucial aspect of the study of the social world, according
to Foucault, was brilliantly developed by Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology.

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15 Naturally, there are several points of conflict between ethnomethodology and Foucault’s work; yet it is not
our interest to discuss these points in this work.
Moral panic and the degradation ritual

The phenomenon of moral panic, linked in many ways to the subject of this ethnographic study, is at the same time a direct result of the degradation ritual and a communicative technology used to spread its effects beyond the limits of the social group in which factual actions take place. Sullivan and Miller, in a study published in 1999, analyze the moral panic of a community of New York City around youth criminality. These authors define moral panic as a reaction disproportionate to the phenomena that cause it. This definition states that the problem is founded in a sense of scale (the “disproportionate” exists in the same semantic space of the “proportionate”), and is grounded in the factual reality of the material and political circumstances in which it occurs: “At both the national and local levels, moral panics over adolescent violence are connected to a societal withdraw of public resources from children. Moral panics serve to demonize all adolescents as resources are being withdrawn from them” (Sullivan and Miller, 1999). The processes of demonization, as well as the withdrawal of resources, are deeply embedded in racially, ethnically, and class related lines, and disproportionately target poor children of minority ethnic and racial groups. In this panorama, national moral panic is compounded by several local level reactions to youth violence. What are the discursive instances and processes that articulate these local struggles into a general and national text of moral panic? Among the several instances, processes and organizations we find police reports, newspaper and TV coverage, governmental social work agencies, health department reports, and NGOs.

In the analysis of the authors, based on the actual situation analyzed in the article, in practice moral panic processes do not fill the role prescribed by the Durkheimian model of crime constitution as ritual of anomie-prevention. Contrary to that, moral panic and youth demonization exacerbate actual community problems, undermining public safety, sense of community, and the positive development of youths of minority groups across society. Not only the real dangers are increased, but also inequality increases. The authors affirm that theirs and previous studies of moral panics over youth violence make clear that the disjunction between the public imagery concerning the phenomenon and the situations and behaviors as they are observed empirically is not simply a matter of faulty information or random hysteria, but rather a process in which anxiety over social change becomes focused on specific phenomena. In this sense, they state that the causes of the moral panic must be traced not just to the specific phenomenon of overt public concern, but to broader patterns of social change, specially changes in racial and ethnical compositions of communities, as well as in situations of political and economical instability. The contradiction between the Sullivan and Miller’s account of the problem and the Durkheimian understanding of deviance as socially constructed and intending to reinforce the core of the social group lies in the fact that the Durkheimian idea does not take in consideration the multiple layers of social relations taking place at the same time. The increase of the fragmentation and rupture in the community life of a specific location may be the result of a process of demonization that intends to maintain the status quo and stability in other realms of social life. The struggle for the survival of the military ethos in democratic nations can be an example of that: the endless process of reaffirmation of legitimacy that the military forces need to sustain themselves, and all the instability needed for that, may make strategic use of moral panics, including with use of violence, what can be very disruptive for the

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communities involved (see Sluka, 2000; Schirmer, 2000). The relationship between the stability and legitimacy of the state and the ritual recruitment, trial, and punishment of crime and deviance is clearly implied in the passage that follows:

“The legitimacy of the state, at both national and local levels, is buttressed and redefined by this shift of resources to intensified internal social control, in a number of ways. [In the United States] the specter of domestic youth violence displaces the Cold War specter of external threat. The reduction of overall social investment in public education, social welfare, and urban development is counterbalanced by the image of the state as guarantor of safety against the enemy within” (Sullivan and Miller, 1999).

The article exemplifies how some steps of the degradation ceremonies occurred in the specific situation described, and how the scapegoating is not only a natural outcome of the situation of crisis, but also generates specific diagnoses for the existing problems. In the mentioned article, an officer involved in a school meeting organized to discuss the problem of the rise of youth violence in the area around the school stated that the problem was mainly a perceptual one, once the crime rates did not increase in reality as people believed it did. The principal of the school them answered that the elderly of the area were scared with the large groups of kids on the streets, stating, “it’s scary whether they’re doing anything or not!” The officer then insisted that they might just be play fighting, and that the problem was not real, but a perceptual one. Latter, an assistant of the school suggested that the police should just get the kids inside the buses immediately after school, so they could leave the area. The officer said the kids were legally allowed to be in the area, and he received as an answer that the kids didn’t have to know whether it was legal or not. Here the hypothesis that some of the kids lived around the school was discarded from the very beginning; the problEmatic youths are youths “that are not ours” (Sullivan and Miller, 1999). By the same time, the school tried to maintain the image of a trouble-free institution by creating informal kinds of punishment that didn’t figure in the official statistics about problEmatic behavior. The intent of the manipulation of numbers was to keep the kids from the “good white families” from moving out of the area.

**Playing different games, multiple realities in conflict**

The coexistence of the ritual constitution and punishment of deviance with the degradation of the conditions of community life is explained by the complexity of the social relations, organized in multiple and usually disarticulated layers. In several modern nation-states, where the official legal apparatus is considered the proper agent to promote and maintain the “order”, legitimacy crises prevent it to happen as Durkheim theorized. Whole communities are frequently victimized; too often the legitimacy of the ritual is destroyed by the lack of recognized moral authority, capability, or efficacy of the agents in charge. The impulse that asks for the initiation of the ritual is left unfulfilled, and local and unofficial rituals of anomie-prevention start to appear; in some cases, they were never fully substituted by the official ones. The benefits of the results of the action of the state apparatus related to the maintenance of order – from law enforcement and police work to

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17 These two things together, in the Durkheimian anomie-prevention hypothesis, would constitute a contradiction. The argument that follows points to the fact that the two things can coexist without the abandoning of the Durkheimian hypothesis.
the highest juridical instances – follow patterns of concentration that correspond to the patterns of concentration of the power and material and symbolic resources of each society. In diverse and mixed urban centers, the typification and reification of (imagined) identities make representative minority contingents to feel identified with the denounced, the criminal, rather than with the denouncers, what transforms then in candidates for future condemnations. Victimized groups are left with no more than the political, economical and social implications of being destitute of their social integrity through the social degradation ceremonies. These implications vary as much as possible: from marginalization and impoverishment of entire contingents (Untouchables in India, Palestinians in the territories occupied by Israel) to being victims of genocides (Tutsis in Rwanda, Tamils in Sri Lanka, Natives in the Americas, Jews in the Holocaust).

One of the important features of this multiplicity is the disarticulation of meanings and interpretations. The several elements of the picture very often interpret differently not only what they are doing, but also what the whole thing is about and what are the proper ways of going on with it. Playing different games, or different language-games, living situations of différend, are different metaphors and concepts used to deal with this disarticulation. Lyotard’s concept of différend, for example, is the situation in which there is no possible communication between two parts once the terms one of the parts recognizes as proper and identifies with are, before hand, defined as illogic or unintelligible by the other. This incommensurability among discourses, once conjugated with the heterogeneous configurations of power attached to them, transforms specific characters of this discursive clash in perfect candidates for victims of degradation ceremonies and social scapegoating processes. In the discursive struggle, the weak is silenced, his discourse is pre-diagnosed logically impossible, even his condition of victim is denied (through complex discursive juridical technologies), if he could be legally beneficiated by it (as in discussions over the definition of what and who is a refugee, for example); there is also a kind of silencing that comes from what Rothleder called the “paradox of acknowledgement”: “To have one’s pain recognized and recognizable within language is to make it commonplace and seemingly comprehensible and therefore less awful” (1999: 98).

The notion of différend explores the relation between the language-games and vocabularies in conflict and the idea of transcendental justice. Justice, in the metaphysical sense, becomes an unreachable metanarrative: inside a multidiscursive and multicultural panorama, justice in the terms of one of the participant discourses may not be justice in the terms of another one. Justice (as closure) for one discourse relegates the others to silence or rebellion. Oppressive epistemes, as showed Foucault, or acts of invisible symbolic violence, as studied and described in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, exemplify domains of the social realm inconsistent with the idea of communicative dialectical solutions for the struggles in question. The linguistic exchanges, wrote Bourdieu, are relations of symbolic power where power relations between speakers and their respective groups are updated and actualized (Bourdieu, 1982). Only the effort to think the unthinkable, to hear the silenced, the will to leave the world of reason for long enough to listen what usually would be considered insane, would make the language a proper medium for justice, in Derrida’s opinion.

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19 See Rothleder, 1999.
In the postmodern fashion, we could extend the similarities between the social dynamics and the elements of literary criticism a little bit further. If discourses, narratives, and social processes as well are texts, Morris reminds us that there is no genreless text (1997: 33). The genre imposes demands on the speaker; it is the genre that tells us what language game we are playing. The genre, in this sense, is not only a detail, but works as an underlying logic that organizes experience. The idea of genre here parallels with Alfred Schutz’s conceptualization of finite provinces of meaning. In Schutz’s model, these constitute the foundations of the multiple worlds in which we live (world of the work, world of dreams, world of science), and are defined by specific cognitive styles, which contemplate a tension of consciousness (from wide-awakeness to sleep) specific for the world in question, a specific epoché, a specific form of experiencing one’s self, a specific form of sociality, and a specific time-perspective.

Schutz made clear that the individual could change from one world to another in the velocity of the synapse. He transits from one world to another as he wishes or is led by the circumstances. It is obviously impossible, in the practice of the empirical social sciences, to use Schutz concept of finite provinces of meaning in any way other than as ideal types. Yet, they will help us to make visible and describable one feature of the phenomenon studied that is not always clearly detachable, for analytical purposes, from the messy and complex observable reality. It is the fact that very often groups engaged in a conflict are not fighting the same conflict, i.e., are not playing by the same rules, and sometimes situate the conflict in different provinces of meanings. According to Mahmood, that is one of the real and most important problems of conflicts, “as obvious as it is frequently overlooked – the parties to it are playing different games” (Mahmood, 1996: 203). She comments on Rosaldo’s work on Ilongot headhunting rituals:

“[In the situation of an Ilongot killing other Ilongot in headhunting rituals], we can in some way understand the killing as part of an implied contract, much like that of soldiers who agree to be part of a system based on killing and then are killed in battle. [In the case an Ilongot kills a stranger in the mentioned kind of ritual], however, we see a real conflict, for the meaning of the act of murder is differently understood by the killer and the victim. This scenario is true in many criminal cases of murder, of course, which we may resolve by labeling the murder as insane, as outside of the range of conventional normality. It’s harder when the whole cultural system, Ilongot or Khalistani, has made murder in some way normative” (1996: 203).

It is needless to say that the underlying foundations of the cultural systems, provinces of meanings, genres, narratives, discourses, are themselves hardly put to test. Instead, they are used. Yet they almost always appear coherent from an internal viewpoint. Hilbert, for example, discusses the courtroom and the rationality that its members believe sustain the courtroom logic and authority: on these matters, legitimization devices are based on teleological strategies.

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21 In the ethnographic case studied on this text, soccer fans and police officers in combat may be said to be acting in different provinces of meaning, as we will discuss later.
The concern over how incommensurable different discourses or cultural systems are, over the possibility or not of communication between different language games, already became a classical issue for disciplines like linguistics, anthropology and philosophy, not only in matters related to war and conflict but also in very theoretical ones. We have no pretension to get into this debate; what we intend is to focus our attention in situations in which, as the theoretical hypothesis as well as empirical data suggest, identities are reified, and notions of culture, race, social class and other essentialities are hardened along the political strategies of the contenders. It is important to say, with Daniel, that we are here dealing with the human condition, and not with the human nature (1996: 9); in these situations, it seems that the intercommunication between language games is lowered, and sometimes disappears, giving space for the situation of conflict, overt if the victim is in situation to offer declared resistance, or covert, symbolic, transferred, if there are no means to openly resist. In the last case, the retaliation assumes the form of fantasy and finds in myths and art its perfect medium (Besteman: 1999: 135). New narratives of resistance are produced, and they domesticate the experience of the elements of the victimized group, finding a way of maintaining the sense of dignity and honor (Nordstrom, 1997: 22). In some cases, agonistic playfulness, associating humor with the grotesque, elements that are abundant in the soccer fandom culture, are transferred narratives of resistance. In Kiefer words, “to feign agonistic conduct playfully presupposes that others recognize the “real thing” as a capacity in themselves” (Kiefer in Knauf, 1991: 413). Playing war is also part of the politics of power and meanings.

In this context of no intercommunication but intense production and reproduction of representations of the other and of the self, it is these representations that give content to both the logic and the unconscious actions and strategies used by the contenders. As Taussig stated about the relationship between the colonial forces in Southern Colombia and the natives,

“What stands out here is the mimesis between the savagery attributed to the Indians by the colonists and the savagery perpetrated by the colonists in the name of what Julio César Arana [the owner of the rubber company] called civilization, meaning business” (1987: 134).

Police reports produced under the ethos of the militaristic control of order (and, as we will see later, part of a profitable business for the police corporation in the Argentinean case), newspaper sensationalism and moral panic are elements that retro-aliment themselves and that sustain the fabulation and the fictional accounts of the marginalized groups. The crucial feature of work of fabulation, again according to Taussig,

“[L]ies in the way it creates an uncertain reality out of fiction, giving shape and voice to the formless form of the reality in which an unstable interplay of truth and illusion becomes a phantasmic social force. All societies live by fictions taken as real” (1987: 121).

The representations are produced in the conceptual lines of moral essential oppositions, and the existence of the conflict and of the contenders themselves becomes structured along these typifications. Order and disorder, crime and law… “The colonial propounded and still effervescent image of the Indian depends precisely on this combination of opposites in which wildness and Christianity sustain and subvert one another” (1987: 193). Yet there is another element in this panorama, the fascination that one side has for the other. The
tension between fascination and disgust, binding the fantastic to the credible, finds its most important medium in the newsprint (1987: 33).

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So far, we have been discussing the ritually constitution of crime and deviance according to the Durkheimian hypothesis, with its associated degradation ceremonies and production of moral panics; the fact that different provinces of meanings/genres may structure the acting of different characters; the fact that this difference may be accountable for some incommunicability between contenders, leaving each alone to construct a representation of the other that fits best in their political agendas. We believe that, instrumentalized with these theoretical notions, we can approach the ethnographic data to produce an account of the soccer related fandom environment in Buenos Aires, focusing in the processes that produce meaning and reify identities. That is what we will try next.

**Struggle for symbolic existence**

As we stated in the first part of this text, we believe that Durkheim’s theoretical model for the relationship between crime and society, Garfinkel’s degradation ceremonies and the idea of moral panics, together can provide an insightful framework in our effort to understand the dynamics of social processes in conflict situation.

Opponents understand their struggle and base their actions and strategies in fictional accounts of each other. These fictional accounts are produced as part of the Durkheimian anomie-prevention ritual, in which it is fundamentally important that the denounced is cast as representing the embodied danger and evil that threatens the individuals identified with the core of the social group, the denouncers. (fans’ representation of police through actions and songs, police and media representation of fans) Representation and action are produced simultaneously, one engaged in the legitimization of the other; the body is full participant of this production, once in tense conflictive environments contenders tend to “think” with their bodies, in what Scheper-Hughes called “somatic cultures”, much more intensely than in peaceful contexts. Speaking of the Israeli police forces’ representation of Palestinians, Peteet notes: “Palestinians were cast as possessing a fundamentally different set of morals and knowledge – commonly stated as “they only understand force”” (1994: 37). In the same tune, in situations in which state violence is implied, large contingents of the population acquiesce the existence of the state and the police as contrary of their class or race interests (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: 225).

There is an important implication in the belief that “they only understand force”, and that is related to “their” exclusion from the symbolic universe of dialogic communication. That is accomplished in two different ways. The first one is through the destruction of the ontological security and the filling of everyday life with terror and the feeling of chaos, i.e., through the promotion of chaos and disorder as strategy (Taussig, 1992: 17), trying to destruct de facto the symbolic universe of the other. Interestingly, chaos and disorder is exactly what the aggressor fears most, and he sees the victim as the embodiment of the chaos he himself promotes while combating it. As defender of a particular orderly state of affairs, he sees whatever exists outside the limits of the logical grounds that give sense to this state of affairs as chaotic, wild, dangerous, and his panic is not related to the fear of
loosing whatever power he has, but the fear of loosing the very grounds that structure his world. His war is not the continuation of politics, as stated Clausewitz\textsuperscript{23}, his war is against the possibility that the grounds that sustain his politics and the Clausewitzian wars disappear. That is why his violence is so intense: in Brecht’s words, fear rules not only those who are ruled, but the rulers, too\textsuperscript{24}.

“Wildness … raises the specter of the death of the symbolic function itself. It is the spirit of the unknown and the disorderly, loose in the forest encircling the city and the sown land, disrupting the conventions upon which meaning and the shaping function of images rest. Wildness challenges the unity of the symbol, the transcendent totalization binding the image to that which it represents. Wildness pries open this unity and in its place slippage and a grinding articulation between signifier and signified. Wildness makes of these connections spaces of darkness and light in which objects stare out in their mottled nakedness while signifiers float by. Wildness is the death space of signification” (Taussig, 1987: 219).

In his panic and fear, the aggressor produces also his demons and phantasms, blending elements of what he fights for and against. The colonist of the rubber boom in Southern Colombia, described by Taussig, feared the \textit{tigre mojano}, the soul of the Indian witch that passed into the body of a jaguar. “Some colonists have told me that this jaguar can be identified because it has the testicles of a man. It cannot be killed” (Taussig, 1987: 77).

(ultra-professionalized structure of the Argentinean soccer, economic interests, AFA power hold, etc.)

The second way in which the exclusion of the other from the symbolic and dialogic realm of communication takes place is through the creation of an ideological blindness to suffering that excludes the other from what Morris called \textit{moral community}, a domain that defines the borders inside of which humanity, suffering and morality are valid concepts (Morris, 1997: 39). The other may be reintegrated into the symbolic and dialogic realm if he accepts the discursive limitations that the moral community imposes, and usually as a “second-class citizen”. Limitations are imposed on the variability of the cultural environment by making available a vocabulary that strongly marks the boundaries of permissible discourse. These limitations are imposed by force, but also by consent, subtle and complex. Consent is a fundamental element of hegemony; it is not a simple mental state, but it rather entails a contradictory consciousness in the subaltern, where approbation and apathy, resistance and resignation, are mixed (Daniel, 1996: 100).

The imposition of boundaries and limits in discourse and in space, the imposition of order through the reduction of the specter of the possible, is what Daniel called \textit{simplex} history. “A simplex history is more likely to assert, with impetuosity, its independence, shrilly proclaiming its exclusive claim to truth. Its story tends to be unitary,” stated Daniel (1996: 53). Multiplex histories, by the other hand, are more easily accommodated within the multiplicity of lived experience, once they have no pretension of being fixed and immutable. History, sharply defined and clearly instantiated, even if only in the imagination, is reclaimed by simplex discourses. Multiplex discourses are more often

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{23} See Mahmood, 1996: 17.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Brech cited in Taussig, 1987: 122.
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associated with tradition, which is a specific kind of consciousness of the present, the present heritage of the past, rather than an account of the past as part; that makes them a “vague, though rich, potentiality” (1996: 27). Myth, folk art, carnival, play, as ways of being in the world, are multiplex, and in structural grounds that means that the likelihood that they would join a discordant relationship with a simplex history (“single-minded”, to use Daniel’s term) – “state-ism”, nationalism, racism, are paramount examples of simplex discourses in our present context - is greater than it would be with a multiplex discourse. Daniel sees in the contradictions between these two kinds of discursive practices one of the structural conditions for collective violence. The pacific coexistence with neither friction nor conflagration is possible if the two are consonant with each other (an example lies in the fact that the totalitarian regimes of the 1970’s and 1980’s in Latin America found ways to coexist and even take advantage of the multiplex universe of soccer, when tens of thousands of people were allowed to meet in stadiums while a meeting with half dozen of individuals outside a stadium would be seen as dangerous and potentially subversive), or if they are mutually irrelevant or indifferent. Nevertheless, the political centralization that is a tendency of the modern nation-state very often makes indifference impossible, due to the shrinking of the political pie it implies; the alarming rise of the number of war refugees during the 1990’s seems to confirm the fact that indifference and political centralization are antithetical concepts.

**Resistance**

Yet there is no aggression without resistance, even when the resistance is no more than the strategic creation of cultural resources to maintain a minimum degree of dignity necessary for the survival of the social group. That usually involves the reframing of the aggression inside a discursive background that reverts the content of the act. In the context of soccer fandom in Buenos Aires, the spine cord concepts that will define how these actions will be apprehended and interpreted are honor and masculinity.

Honor has been referred to as a defining frame for masculinity in several anthropological accounts. Peteet cites Abu-Lughod’s work on the Egyptian Bedouin, to whom the notion of control is crucial in signifying “real man.” Control, in this context, is the lack of fear of anyone or anything, once to display such fear implies that it has control over the fearful person. Exerting respect and commanding the obedience of others, while at the same time resisting submitting to other’s control, are abilities of the “real man” (Peteet, 1994: 34). Among the Berbers of Algeria, according to Bourdieu, it is in the context of challenge and riposte that the honor and manhood are constructed. A challenge directed to a man is a sign that this man is considered honored, once there is a cultural assumption that a challenge requires a riposte and can only be addressed to man deemed capable of articulating the necessary riposte, of “playing the game of honor.” Challenging and being challenged are elements of the ritual in which males prove their belonging to the world of men; by the other hand, a challenge directed to men who are unable to take them dishonors the challenger. Peteet noticed how the concept of honor framed the local understanding of the beatings that Palestinian men had to suffer in the occupied territories, creating a polarization between masculine, honored, and therefore just, and dishonored, overaggressive, and of dubious masculinity:
“Only men of little honor and dubious masculinity would beat unarmed youths while they themselves are armed with and trained in the use of modern implements of warfare (...) Palestinians construe these aggressions as cowardly and immoral, rather than a challenge (...) Manhood (in this context) comes from a “riposte” not to a challenge but to what Bourdieu distinguishes as “mere aggression”” (1994: 41).

In that sense, the beatings, public performances created with the intent of humiliating, have been recast as part of a local ritual that reinforces the notions of manhood, honor, and the moral superiority of the victims over the aggressors, and also as rites of passage from the boyhood into manhood, as well as from the private realm of family to the realm of the public life of political activism (1994: 31).

Through bricolage, the artful combination of unlikely elements, new practical solutions are created to maintain the sense of control and dignity. As Nordstrom noticed, sometimes no sophisticated cultural apparatus are needed: “in the sheer act of remaining in the face of danger, they defy danger, and defying equates to a sense of control” (1997: 14). (aguante) Yet, very often it is through the appropriation and transformation of the symbolic content of the aggression that resistance takes shape. Resistance narratives are produced, in the form of rites of passage, myths, fantasies of retaliation, jokes, and the reconstruction of the aggressor and of the whole situation inside the genre of the grotesque. When the historical narratives of a group emphasize dignity and equality, humiliation is usually overcome in the poetics and fantasies of retaliation produced by the group. Besteman, analyzing the marginal situation of the Gosha people in Somalia, realized that in the resistance tales of that group, “they were not imagining a revolution or a magical role reversal; rather, they were fantasizing about having a magical ability to demand equality and status” (1999: 155).

Being able to quickly withdraw from the realm of reality that Schutz called world of working, and to take refuge in the world of phantasms, of jokes, play, and myths, seems to be a major defense mechanism that individuals and collectivities have to protect their identities and the grounds of their worlds under attack. Garfinkel, in one of his experimental settings, prevented subjects being exposed to situations of symbolic chaos to turn the situations “into a play, a joke, an experiment, a deception, and the like,” therefore producing a profound and marked anxiety in the subjects (Hilbert, 1992: 96).

Changing the genre that frames the account of the situation is more than self-protection, though. Using the concept of the grotesque, from Bakhtin, several authors analyzed how the power of terror is dependent of a set of symbolic-structural conditions, without which it looses its efficacy. The grotesque is at the same time an account of an act of oppression, and a means of resisting it. It gives form to the unspeakable, framing it under the category of the ridicule. Since medieval and renaissance times, the images of the Romantic grotesque, expressing the fear of the world and seeking to inspire this fear in the reader, were appropriated by the folk culture, and the element of terror was substituted by comic monsters that were defeated by laughter. Terror was turned into something gay and comic, absolutely fearless, and communicating this fearlessness to all (Nordstrom, 1997: 172n).

Individuals and groups that rely on barbaric and disproportional aggression are ridiculed and stigmatized in folk tales and jokes; to Nordstrom, to give moral voice to these stories is “to take the sting – the terror – out of terror-warfare” (1997: 156). In this way, the
grotesque is one of the cultural strategies for survival of victimized people in what Taussig called the “invisible terror of the everyday life”, terror as usual (Taussig, 1992: 12).

**Counterattack**

“While the experiences of state kidnapping, extortion, police bias, and unfair laws were very much part of the Gosha villagers’ conceptualization of the state, they also knew that they could sometimes receive state distributions of food during floods or droughts, that they could sometimes use governmental machinery (which government publicity claimed was for local villagers but which usually was commandeered by state officials), and that they could utilize the state rhetoric of equality as a matter of personal pride and community defense” (Besteman, 1999: 150).

Symbolic and covert forms of resistance does not exist isolated, but most of the time are accompanied by the group’s attempts to play by the rules (as they are made in practice), i.e., to participate in the struggle using similar strategies as those of the other contenders. Laws, the state rhetoric, governmental agencies, the attention of TV shows and newspapers, NGOs related to human rights, unions, may all be used in very specific ways, in favor of their individual and group interests.

(Quilmes’ combat of 1999; Momia’s case; Fabian and the officer argument in the gas station)

Yet there is a negative side in this process, that rests in the fact that this mimetic impulse may produce, in the long run, a new habitus in which the brutality of the aggressor is perpetuated by the victim, that applies the same brutality in other realms of his life. The use of guns, of illegal traffic of substances, of bribes and extortion, may be integrated not only in the way of fighting of a group, but in their way of life. This is usually associated with contexts in which the traditional ways of group life were severely damaged, and in which the grounds that sustained the constraints that guided community life vanished.

(Infliction of fear as political tool: Guillermo’s boxing fight, apretos, extortions – players, coaches, vendors, car caretakers -, bribes to the police, falsification of tickets, of coins, etc.)

Violence as constructor/deconstructor of social and cultural relations

**Social constitution of violence, violent constitution of social reality**

What interests us now is the constitutive aspect of conflict, and the role violence plays on it. As Besteman reminds us, environments are made, defined, utilized, and contested in our world of nation-states and their dissolutions (Besteman, 1999: 227). In the ceaseless making and remaking of reality, people generate their own solutions; “They create themselves in resistance” (Nordstrom, 1997: 189). Nordstrom offers us an account of the constitutive character of violence:
“Violence, then, is not some thing simply formulated in terms of historical conditions of conflict played out along a conflict trajectory to affect the present. Violence is culturally constitutive. Its enactment forges, in fact forces, new constructs of identity, new socio-cultural relationships, new threats and injustices that reconfigure people’s life-worlds, new patterns of survival and resistance. These emerge in interaction as the idiosyncratic (the personal) and the immediate (the contextual) both shape and are shaped by historical knowledge and forces” (Nordstrom, 1997: 141).

We will not touch the issue of the psychological impact of violence in the individual mind, nor the question of trauma; we will focus instead on the problem of how violence and conflict shape and are shaped by social and cultural patterns, using our ethnographic case as analytical example.

Detached from the greater context inside of which it takes place, isolated violence is meaningless. From the viewpoint of the site in which violence unfolds, violence is an axiom, an element that does not need definition but that is part of the background against which everything else is defined; reacting to it is part of a bodily “intelligence” that is in operation even before the cognitive conditions for semeiosis are fulfilled. Once semeiosis begins, nevertheless, violence acquires symbolic content; it is located inside a social and cultural universe that is dynamic, and therefore transformative and discursive, playing a central part in it. The spectacle of violence is understood against past, present and future, i.e., through its experience, its aftermath, its enduring reality and the transformation it causes in previous socio-cultural configurations. In Nordstrom words, “Dirty-war specialists know the actions of today define the truths of tomorrow” (1997: 130). In some international recent conflicts where violence reached high levels of intensity, like Mozambique or Bosnia, the conflicts involved the attack to the foundations of the social organization of the enemy, in which the aim was to destroy the society, the creation of the nonsociety – in these contexts, war strategies like the castration of men in Mozambique, or the raping of women in contexts that could result in her expulsion from the family group, in Bosnia, barbaric as they are, add socio-cultural significance to the psychological and material destruction.

As any other element of the human socio-cultural universe, violence unfolds in symbolic and material fields that need to be constantly reproduced to exist, and that are full of indefinite spaces, of symbolic gaps that are fought over and filled by meaningless actions (yet inside the field of the available possibilities) and that have their meanings constructed post facto to fit the prevailing narratives and discourses of the context. It is the conflictive nature of the reproduction of these fields that leave them open for transformations. Speaking of shamanism and healing in Colombia, Taussig states that

“The life of the icon and hence of the reality of the miracle depend upon the social reproduction of a constantly inconstant reality in which meaning both

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depends upon and destroys its opposite in a ceaseless confrontation with the formally institutionalized source of truth” (1987: 197).

Where there exists the truth (closure) there can be no politics, and therefore no society either, reminded us Arendt. That makes conflict, together with (and an outcome of) Schutz’s fundamental anxiety, a requirement for the existence of the human culture-based society.

The appearance of a new problem is concomitant to the expansion of the symbolic and material fields to domains not previously created. As we have discussed before, problems and categories of problems are constructed around practical goals that count as solutions, in the same way that values are mobilized on behalf of claims, rather than originating them. That makes of claims-making activities rituals for problem recognition, what ends up temporarily reifying a specific moral order. The struggle over who has the power and authority to operate these constructions is an important element of political struggles. Nevertheless, inside the complex and multi-layered modern social organizations, different actors and groups of interest find niches in which they can develop their actions and interests, and antithetical actions and interests may coexist inside the borders of the same city, within a managed level of conflict.

The drastic reduction that the modern tendency of political centralization operates in the specter of the possible, hardening the boundaries that mark inclusion and exclusion of individuals and groups from specific social and political realms, is one factor that enhances the level of the conflicts. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted as fundamental text by the United Nations in 1948, sets the stage for the rights/violence dilemma in its opening passages, Mahmood reminds us:

“‘It is essential’, the document states, ‘if man is not to be compelled to have recourse (…) to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law’. The clear implication here is that where human rights are in fact not protected by law, people may be ‘compelled’ to rebel. But when they do so, they are then not entitled to the refugee protections laid out in other conventions” (1996: 265).

Social construction of violence

“As Hoffman puts it, “violence educates [one] to the inescapable reality of others”; it helps one ‘gain a perspective broader than, and independent of, one’s particular self’; it helps one realize that there are values, beliefs, and subjectivities other than one’s own (…) The transcendence of narcissistic particularity, along with its corollary, the emergence of a universal/communal being, is the mark of becoming truly human. The threat of violence is the catalyst for this rite of passage” (Daniel, 1996: 68).

“Social definitions of violence revolve around culpability, victimization, and what is deemed socially appropriate behavior in particular contexts” (Richardson and May, 1999:312) (deserving victims)

Public and private spheres of violence

Characteristics of the victim, plus social and interactional contexts are important factors in the social construction of violence (Richardson and May, 1999: 324)

Social and cultural norms of violence provide an interpretative framework for understanding and evaluating violent episodes (Richardson and May, 1999: 326)

If violence is a property of social relationships, power inequalities should elicit violence and power equalities should elicit affection, in the context of domestic life – against Girard/Durkheim (Handweker, 1998: 201).

Age-sex status differentiation and accompanying relations of social inequality are frequent mechanisms for developing strong warriors among male initiate class” (Knauf, 1991: 406).


“Beating and detention are construed as rites of passage into manhood. Bodily violence is crucial in the construction of a moral self among its recipients, who are enabled to juxtapose their own cultural categories of manhood and morality to those of a foreign power. Ritual as a transformative experience foregrounds a political agency designed to reverse relations of domination between occupied and occupier. Simultaneously, it both reaffirms and transforms internal Palestinian forms of domination” (Peteet, 1994: 31).

Beatings as a common occurrence; an anticipation of an encounter with police that might lead to a beating influences the daily mobility of youth men. Parent’s fears. (Peteet, 1994: 35).

“A young man of ten” (Peteet, 1994: 37).


“What if the public routinization of daily mortifications and little abominations, piling up like so many corpses on the social landscape, provided the text for and blueprint for what only appeared later to be aberrant, inexplicable, and extraordinary outbreaks of state violence against citizens?” (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: 220).

“This volume does not draw a firm line between what might be called ‘hard’ violence (physical) and ‘soft’ violence (symbolic or psychological) (…) Such division would be artificial, arbitrary, and even dangerous. (…) The working of psychic and symbolic violence are often more elusive but may be equally devastating in the long run” (Suarez-Orozco and Robben, 2000: 5).

Chaos and disorder as everyday routine, as state strategy (Taussig, 1992: 17)

“I have found that the body sites targeted for torture do vary from regime to regime, and in each case correlate with strong cultural themes” (Nordstrom, 1997: 173).

“Hated and feared, objects to be despised yet also of awe with evil understood as the physical essence of their bodies, these are just as clearly objects of cultural creation, the leaden keel of evil and mystery stabilizing the ship and course that is Western history” (Taussig, 1987: 9).
“The managers lived obsessed with death, Romulo Paredes tells us. They saw danger everywhere. They thought solely of the fact that they live surrounded by vipers, tigers, and cannibals. It was these ideas of death, he wrote, that constantly struck their imagination, making them terrified and capable of any action. Like children they had nightmares of witches, evil spirits, death, treason, and blood. The only way they could live in such a terrifying world, he observed, was to inspire terror themselves” (Taussig, 1987: 122).

“What is conveyed is a Hobbesian world, brutish and short, in which rites such as torturing the wild but defenseless Indians were what held the camp personnel together. Otherwise they fought over food, women, and Indians” (Taussig, 1987: 43).

“It is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge” (Foucault in Taussig, 1987: 69).


Implicit social knowledge: “What makes people without their knowing quite why or quite how, with what makes the real real and the normal normal, and above all with what makes ethical distinctions politically powerful” (Taussig, 1987: 366).

“I take implicit social knowledge to be an essentially inarticulable and imageric nondiscursive knowing of social relationality, and in trying to understand the way that history and memory interact in the constituting of this knowledge, I wish to raise some questions about the way that certain historical events, notably political events of conquest and colonization, become objectified in the contemporary shamanic repertoire as magically empowered imagery capable of causing as well as relieving misfortune” (Taussig, 1987: 367).

In practice

Criminal justice: “progressing from a position of “systematic suspicion,” rather than from of innocence, and, relatedly, the judge’s “interrogation” of the accused relying on information produced by prior police investigations that are “inquisitorial” in nature (…) Police interrogations entail a “proceeding against everything and everyone to find out the truth of the facts” (with the use of torture). “The legal proceedings are represented as a punishment in themselves” (Lima Kant)” (Schepers-Hughes, 1992: 227).

Hegemony

“Explaining historical factors which have rendered normal an acceptance of the hegemonic order; it demands processual, not structural thinking. It also requires a rejection of the reductionist view that “hegemony equals false consciousness” in favor of continually remembering that the concept refers to a historically situated (and shifting!) state of affairs that is more or less unquestioningly accepted by most members of society (including both beneficiaries and the subaltern) during a particular time period.
William Roseberry (1989) emphasizes the mutual constitution of power and culture when noting that it is not only dominant groups that produce culture (to which subordinate groups must adhere), but rather that dominant and subordinate groups participate together in the process of cultural production. This process, however, takes place in a context of inequality, of “unequal fields of power” (Besteman, 1999: 174).

“Hegemony emerges as a process of contradictions; not as ideological glue, as false consciousness, as docile compliance. Hegemony takes form in the process of coming to agreement about what to contest, what to struggle over” (Besteman, 1999: 232).

Ontological security

“Luhrmann, Ewing, and C. Suarez-Orozco suggest that, on the sociocultural level, the work of healing also involves the issue of “basic trust” – this time reconstructing trust in the social institutions and cultural practices that structure experience and give meaning to human lives” (Suarez-Orozco and Robben, 2000: 5).

“Hypervigilance is a survival technique, but one that takes its toll. As well as alerting people to potential dangers, it is a constant reminder that the world people occupy is not a safe one. Ontological security, in its most basic sense, is undermined” (Giddens in Nordstrom, 1997: 182).

“In the murk, an eye watching, an eye knowing. Here you can’t trust anyone. There’s always one who knows. Paranoia as social theory. Paranoia as social practice. Note the critically important feature of the war of silencing is its geographical, epistemological, and military-strategic decenteredness – yet we cannot but feel that it is organized from some center no matter how much the general denies his knowing” (Taussig, 1992: 21).

**Bureocratic terror**

Terror through lack of papers, bureaucracy (Taussig, 1992: 23).

“In the opinion of Herbert C. Kelman, moral inhibitions against violent atrocities tend to be eroded once three conditions are met, singly or together: the violence is *authorized* (by official orders coming from the legally entitled quarters), actions are *routinized* (by rule-governed practices and exact specification of roles), and the victims of the violence are *dehumanized* (by ideological definitions and indoctrinations)” (Bauman, 1989: 21).

Violence as a key for the legitimacy of the state. “Violence, its representations, and its social control are central to the image, hegemony, and legitimacy of the state. Weberian social theory in particular has defined the state in terms of the legitimate monopoly of the means of violence” (Sullivan and Miller, 1999: 1).

Low-intensity conflict as means to erase or blur boundaries (Taussig, 1992: 22).

Cultures of militarization operating throughout the world today (Nordstrom, 1997: 49).

“The logic is that war against one’s opponents never ends because the state can never be totally secured. If there is no peace, which is the “climate of justice”, then *one must opt for order within a war of minimum force*” (Schirmer, 2000: 259).
“Totalitarianism (…) is a tendential property of modern state” (Giddens, 1987: 295).

“Whether we like it or not, tendencies toward totalitarian power are as distinctive a feature of our epoch as is industrialized war” (Giddens, 1987: 310).

“The successful monopoly of control of the means of violence in the hands of the state authorities is the other face of surveillance in the work-place and the control of deviance” (Giddens, 1987: 312).

“Surveillance is the necessary condition of the administrative power of states, whatever ends this power be turned to” (Giddens, 1987: 309).

“According to Gramajo, “those who trained us a lot in intelligence were the Argentines” (Schrimer, 2000: 161).

“Le Bon/Freud psychological theory of leadership suggests, there is a strong tendency to identify with leader figures, on the basis of regressive features of personality (…) The messianic quality that often characterizes upsurges of nationalistic sentiment here becomes attributed in an extreme form to a demagogic (sic) leader, trusted because of his very authoritarianism not in spite of it” (Giddens, 1987: 305).

“The fear of subversive or simply of criminal activity can become obsessional, and torture may be used in an attempt to assert, as Elaine Scarry put it, the “incontestable reality” of a particular state’s control over the population. “It is, of course”, she continued, “precisely because the reality of power is so highly contestable, the regime so instable, that torture is being used” (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: 225).

Civil rights as a problem. “When an officer said there are no longer any loitering laws because of ‘civil rights’, an assistant principal from the high school suggested making it ‘mandatory for them to have to get on the bus instead of having pizza with their friends [on Lark Avenue]. They don’t have to know we’re not allowed to do this” (Sullivan and Miller, 1999: 13).

“Isolation by rural distance, the war, illiteracy, and tribal alliances means that the idea of a “nation” is lost on many” (Nordstrom, 1997: 82).

“The process of democratization has been painfully slow and has yet to challenge the local presence and the fearful psychological hold of the military police over the poorer populations” (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: 223).

**Violent constitution of peace**

“Why are the Sinhalese still impelled to victimize the Tamils, with the result that, in desperation, increasing numbers of alienated Tamil youths engage in suicidal mission of violence, which in turn gives the majority the justification for a total extinction or expulsion of the Tamils?” (Tambiah, 1986: 58).

“It really seems as though it is necessary for us to destroy some other thing or person in order not to destroy ourselves, in order to guard against the impulsion to self-destruction. A sad ? for the moralist!” (Freud in Suarez-Orozco and Robben, 2000: 27).
“A sense of injury is often a prerequisite to mobilizing group hatred into violence. In some cases, when there are pressing economic or political objectives, it may be strategically necessary to create a sense of outrage to provide the psychological background for the organization of violence. There are reports, for example, that the Argentine intelligence service actually planted bombs and otherwise created some of the terror imputed to the leftist insurgents, to mobilize the rage necessary to conduct their ‘dirty war’” (Suárez-Orozco and Robben, 2000: 34n).

“Cognitively displaced and projective aggression may also occur as violent scapegoating of persons within the community” (Knauft, 1991: 400).

“There is no question of “expiation”. Rather, society is seeking to deflect upon a relatively indifferent victim, a “sacrificeable” victim, the violence that would otherwise be vented on its own members, the people it most desires to protect” (Girard, 1977: 4).

“Once we have focused attention on the sacrificial victim, the object originally singled out for violence fades from view. Sacrificial substitution implies a degree of misunderstanding” (Girard, 1977: 5).

“The celebrants do not and must not comprehend the true role of the sacrificial act” (Girard, 1977: 7).

“The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from its own violence; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself” (Girard, 1977: 8).

“The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric. Everything else derives from that” (Girard, 1977: 8).

“The role of the sacrifice is to stem this rising tide of indiscriminate substitutions and redirect violence into “proper” channels” (Girard, 1977: 10).

“Sacrifice is primary an act of violence without risk of vengeance” (Girard, 1977: 13).

“Vengeance (…) is an interminable, infinitely repetitive process” (Girard, 1977: 14).

“Vengeance is a vicious circle whose effect on primitive societies can only be surmised. For us the circle has been broken. We owe our good fortune to one of our social institutions above all: our judicial system, which serves to deflect the menace of vengeance. The system does not suppress vengeance; rather, it effectively limits it to a single act of reprisal, enacted by a sovereign authority specializing in this particular function. The decisions of the judiciary are invariably presented as the final word on vengeance” (Girard, 1977: 15).

“The function of the ritual is to “purify” violence, that is, to “trick” violence into spending itself on victims whose death will provoke no reprisals. Because the secret of this mechanism is unknown to the participants in the rites, religion tries to account for its own operation metaphorically, using for that purpose the objects and materials involved in that operation” (Girard, 1977: 36).

Harshness of juvenile law – Girrad’s and Durkheim’s idea prevailing over educational purposes (Sullivan and Miller, 1999: 5).

“Revenge ensures continuing cycles of violence, both revenge by the dead – restless because of the violent death – and revenge by the family and friends of the person killed. War or not, death is a personal issue. But personal does not translate into individual:
responsibility for injustice is not solely an individual concern. Responsibility is a social issue” (Nordstrom, 1997: 215).

“The sense of responsibility people held toward solving the cycles of violence confronting them often extended beyond a concern solely with the personal. This sense of responsibility was often born of moral imbroglios” (Nordstrom, 1997: 214).

“Although there was much concern with redrafting a legal system, almost no research was conducted on community systems of justice that developed to mitigate the abuses of war” (Nordstrom, 1997: 216).

“While acknowledging the differences, both functional and mythical, between vengeance, sacrifice, and legal punishment, it is important to recognize their fundamental identity” (Girard, 1977: 25).

**Conclusion**

Cynthia Mahmood, in her book about the dialogues she had with militants of the Sikh Khalistani movement, wrote:

> “Concepts like “fundamentalism” and “terrorism”, which form the cornerstones of most discussions of Khalistani Sikhs, are to my mind words we use to comfort ourselves about our own civility, while excusing our inability to actually grapple with radical others. They are accusatory and dismissive, and therefore not useful in the endeavor to understand” (Mahmood, 1996: 247).

One of the goals of the kind of anthropology this research intends to integrate is to show that in reality there are no fundamental radical others, but people labeled as such are most of the time ordinary people living extraordinary situations in which extraordinary (and sometimes radical) strategies are used. In trying to look into these kinds of concepts, the intent is to show that we are dealing with the human condition in distinct contexts, while trying to analytically explore this condition, unstable as it is. By providing a new frame to the problem, i.e., a new schemata of interpretations that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify occurrences and render events meaningful, this kind of engaged anthropology try to affect and transform in specific ways the processes of reproduction of reality. Narratives mediate concept and practice in the reproduction of the everyday world, organizing experience and guiding practice, whether individual or collective. Through reframing phenomena in order to create different understanding of familiar issues, anthropological narratives act to expand the borders of moral communities, sharing Morris’ optimism about the political power of artistic creations. It is important, in my opinion, for the anthropologist to have a sense of and take in consideration the political implications of his work, something that extends much beyond the much-debated issue of the ethical implications of fieldwork. Ethics and morals cannot exist outside the realm of the politics of meanings, and much of the debates around the necessary prescriptions for the anthropological work regarding ethics are ill-faded attempts to standardize something

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29 The term frame is borrowed from Goffman by Jenness (1995: 158).
31 See Morris, 1997: 41
essentially indexical – a graduate student does not need more than a Summer to understand that the reality of the field, ethically and politically speaking, is complex to the point of making such standardizations look like fairytales. A remarkable example of this situation was given by Taussig (1992: 34), who saw himself caught in the symbolic and political net of political terror, when one of his informants, a politically persecuted Colombian journalist, took him to his hiding place and asked him for help. In feeling the panic of being in such a dangerous company, and the anxiety of the risk of endangering his family members in helping the journalist, he saw himself, in that moment, as an *agent of silence*.

Caldeira discussed another important aspect of this relationship between anthropology and politics. She commented on the challenges of having to write her doctoral dissertation in English and in what she called the anthropological “international” style, as opposed to the Brazilian “national” style of making anthropology, in Portuguese, her mother language and the language spoken in São Paulo, the city in which she had done fieldwork for two decades, much before the moment in which she had to write her doctoral dissertation. In her opinion, due to historical and contextual factors, intellectuality in Latin America, marked as it is by the Marxist tradition, is more active in the political life of each society, and in making the option for doing anthropology at home, there is no fixed otherness, no external point of view. Having the feet wet with home mud makes it hard to dissociate the strong existential experiences of the fieldwork from one’s view of how the political world is structured. It happens with even more intensity when the research deals with crime, violence, poverty, or oppression, as we see in Caldeira, Taussig, and Bornstein, among so many others that are not reluctant in making their political positions clear in their anthropological works. Here also we see violence playing important role in the shaping of the anthropological universe. (Hamlet’s citation about the nutshell and the nightmares)

An important feature of the logic of analytical deconstructionism for anthropology is that it helps us to revert reifications that common-sense, media, political outraged activism, and also anthropology produces in their accounts of politically loaded issues. As Walley notes, there has been a tendency in Euro-American oriented literature opposing female genital operations to characterize African women as thoroughly oppressed victims of patriarchy, ignorance, or both, not as social actors in their own right (1997: 419). In the issue of human rights abuses in Latin America, by its turn, the cultural and political conceit remains as to the “backwardness” of Latin American legal structures, the “unprofessionalism” of the military institutions, and the congenital affinity of Latin Americans for “authoritarianism” (Schirmer, 2000: 5).

“But rather than naked military rule based on emergency measures, juntas, and coups – instruments of power that have lost their legitimacy internationally – it is the appropriation of the imagery of the rule of the law, of the mechanisms and procedures of electoral democracy, that is perilous to the human rights of Guatemalans. The immersion of a security doctrine within a traditional constitutional order signifies the structured and violent denial of human rights and dissent. This book rests on the assumption that if a thoroughgoing and authentic democratization of a society in which the military holds political power requires a major erosion and disarming of that power, then as understanding of the reasoning of those who hold such power is also required” (Schirmer, 2000: 2).

“Preferential action on behalf of the Sinhalese is interpreted as an affirmative and positive corollary of the arithmetic of democratic politics” (Tambiah, 1986: 77).
“There appear to be two concepts of law operating in Guatemala: first, the law enforcement theory, based more on the imperative positivist theory of law, which assumes a rule by law and not under law (Mathews, 1986: 1). Usually, by formalizing legal inquiry, “by the reclassifying the problem into a supposedly doctrinal category” (Horwitz, 1977: 40), one is able to defuse its political significance in the name of promoting an objective, professional, and even scientific rule of law, known as legal positivism (cf. Hart, 1961). This theory legitimizes the rule of many coercive governments as being in accordance with the rule of law because their actions are covered by law. It is the imagery of the regularity of law that can be comfortably convened to illustrate that the government is in accordance with a legal order that it helped to produce. A 1983 interview with Rios Montt reveals this of law enforcement” “When the [1965] constitution was in force, I could not search for someone in a house. So, I had to establish a legal framework so that now I can enter a house [and] be within the framework of the law” (New York Times, 15 July 1983)” (Schirmer, 2000: 126-7).

“The role of [Western] feminists is not to be in the front, leading the way for other women, but to be in back supporting the other women’s struggles to bring about change” (Walley, 1997: 430).

“Anthropological accounts that focus on how such practices either function or provide meaning, without attendant focus on how practices are transformed and given new meaning, discourage activism by implying that if such practices ceased, a social ‘need’, symbolic or material, would be left unfulfilled” (Walley, 1997: 417).

“Less evident, of course, are the many forms of uprooting that are part of modern life and that play havoc with personal morale – the loss of our moorings in faith and tradition; the loss of a sense of connection with the earth; alienation form meaningful work; and separation from a nurturing family and communal setting. And since many of our institutions no longer function to instill a sense of social unity and interdependence, each individual struggles to make it against the odds, and many are victimized in the process. And so we face an uncertain future of accelerating technological change with reflexes weakened by a sense of cultural disorientation, isolation, and impotence” (Shkilnyk, 1985: 242).

11.02.2002 – New York, NY

Proposal: The metapragmatics of political disputes over water in Ceará, Northeast Brazil.

Objectives

In 1994, the water agency of Ceará, a Brazilian state located in that country's "drought polygon", began to introduce new participatory approaches in water management. One result of this has been that small farmers and landless peasants, in unprecedented ways,
began to gain voting power equal to that of large landowners and agribusiness in matters related to the allocation of water resources. Local political dynamics were deeply impacted by these changes and the previous quasi-feudal power relations of the Ceará hinterland (locally referred to as the *sertão*) have been and are being reframed into the institutional context of western-like democratic negotiations. The primary research issue to be pursued is what and how are semiotic and discursive elements being played out during such power reconfigurations. More specifically, how the semiotic and metapragmatic dimensions of the political universe of the *sertão*, this dominantly rural area, are being disrupted and reformed by the creation of participatory water management committees.

The new political configuration was created by the local water authority during a major water crisis of 1994 as a conflict resolution mechanism to prevent the invasion of towns by those elements of the rural population most affected by the water shortage (something that happened systematically in past droughts [Neves 2000b]) and to prevent massive migration to Fortaleza, the state capital, and to other cities to the south such as Brasília, Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo. The effort was moderately successful in avoiding peaks of social unrest in the state’s hinterland but it also deposited the seeds for the creation of a new consciousness at the worker level regarding power over water allocation and other political issues.

Water allocation committees became arenas in which different conceptual frameworks are played against each other. Technicians from the state water agency rely on climate forecasts to predict the future state of water reservoir levels at the end of the coming rainy season - if the forecast points to a rainy season (i.e. above average levels of precipitation), that allows for more water to be taken from reservoirs *before* the anticipated rainy season. Local populations tend to strongly oppose that approach, since they do not recognize the authority of climate agencies and forecasts relying instead on traditional-religious frameworks in matters relating to climate. Of particular interest here are indigenous technologies of climate prediction through the semiotic reading of the ecosystem (behavior of animals, flowering of specific plants, etc.) In fact, local “rain prophets”, individuals knowledgeable in those indigenous technologies, are held in great account by the local peasantry.

In some communities, the level of conflict over management of local water supplies has been very high with some interest groups able to appeal to high state juridical authorities even, at times, to the federal police. More often, however, the conflict remains in the discursive realm, in the domain of water allocation committees. As a consequence, a principal focus of this research will be the semiotic aspects of the political struggles related to the activities of these committees - how moral content, values and percepts relate to natural resources and to the environment and also how different understandings of the social and political universes are played out through rhetorical attacks and counterattacks in these committees. Employing terms used by Parmentier, this research intends to study how the political universe is disrupted and reformed through political conflicts, through “the contextual play of conventional vs. innovating symbolic forms, at the second level of semiosis” (Parmentier 1994: 110), i.e., at what Silverstein has called the metapragmatic level (Silverstein 1993).

Relevant to this research are the facts that current climatologic monitoring indicates a moderate El Niño phenomenon is developing and widely accepted is that El Niño is a key
factor in the occurrence of droughts in the Brazilian “drought polygon”. It would appear that 2003 will be a drought year, which will most likely lead to the lowering of reservoir levels in Ceará, and to the significant intensification of political conflicts over water allocation.

**Justification**

The research proposed is related to the work of many social theorists and anthropologists who focus on the relationship between semiotics and politics. The key elements of this line of research revolve around the semiotic mechanisms through which conventional and arbitrary elements of the social “order” are naturalized and sometimes made unconscious (what Bourdieu has called *doxa*; see Bourdieu 1977, 1990) and also the opposite in which previously naturalized conventions are exposed as arbitrary or rationalized. Several scholars contributed to the development of a theoretical understanding of the “naturalization of the arbitrary” phenomenon. Our interest here lies in the theoretical developments that help us comprehend how politically motivated reifications and naturalizations are strategically created and questioned, and in what circumstances these processes take place. Silverstein, through a series of seminal works, proposed the basis for the study of the semiotic operators that organize social life, in special what he called “metasemiotic regimentation”, semiotic processes of stipulating, controlling, or defining the contextual, indexical, or pragmatic dimension of sign function in “discursive texts” by means of construction of relatively fixed or coherent “interactional texts” (Silverstein 1987, 1992, 1993; Parmentier 1994). Working along similar lines, Judith T. Irvine and Susan Gal (Irvine 1989; Gal and Irvine 1995; Gal 1998) proposed a powerful conceptual scheme, a set of semiotic operators that account for the fact that not only linguistic contrasts, but also systems of social categories, are elaborated, systematized, and rationalized. Their semiotic operators are 1) *iconization*, the process by which an “ideological representation fuses some quality of the linguistic feature and a supposedly parallel quality of the social group and understands one as the cause or the inherent, essential, explanation of the other” (Gal 1998); 2) *recursiveness*, the projection of an opposition salient at one level of the relationship onto some other level; intragroup distinctions, for example, may be projected onto intergroup relations, and vice-versa; and 3) *erasure*, which occurs when an ideology simplifies a sociolinguistic field, forcing attention on only one part or dimension of it, thereby rendering some linguistic forms or groups invisible or recasting the image of their presence and practice to better fit the ideology (Gal, ibid.) The phenomenon here termed erasure was earlier analyzed and developed by Lyotard, who called it *différend* (Lyotard 1988). Silverstein would add one more semiotic operator, what he called *ideological regimentation*, the action of a metasemiotic discourse that creates a decontextualized atmosphere of perception, as enforced by scientific (and therefore climatologic) texts.

Parmentier, in turn, presented important contributions to the semiotic treatment of sociopolitical dynamics. According to this author, power is to be viewed as the harnessing of forces through innovative semiotic tropes, rather than as the direct manipulation of cultural conventions by differentiated social hierarchies (Parmentier 1994: 124.) He also points to the connection between the ideology of texts and the pragmatics of performances, a key element in political rituals as the ones that will be the object of this research, and notes, as Bourdieu stated before him, that the legitimization of power relations is achieved
by increases in the systematicity of the symbolic order. This implies that changes in the political universe that generates reorganizations in the symbolic order may lead to the questioning of the legitimacy of current power relations. This is also part of the processes of tropic obviation he analyses, processes in which innovative symbolic meanings are created out of the raw material of conventional normative associations, which cause the motivations for the original associations to be either exposed or rationalized (the exposure of the fissures of the doxa, in Bourdieu’s terminology). Parmentier defends the idea that the universe of exchanges is a productive realm for tropic obviation, due to the playing out of asymmetrical series of transactions in which various media invoking conventionally normative values are rendered contextually equivalent (1994: 112). This idea is highly relevant for the study here proposed. Other scholars explored other mechanisms through which aspects of the metapragmatic universe are exposed, like Jacquemet’s analysis of “metapragmatic attacks”, in which indexical elements of the social order are brought into discourse and questioned (Jacquemet 1994).

The need for further research

Semiotic anthropology, metapragmatics, ethnosemiotics, are all relatively recent developments, immersed in what sometimes is seen as obscure terminology and the number of anthropologists working in these fields is not large despite the brilliance of figures like Gumperz and Silverstein, among others. It is clear that there is an enormous potential for development in this field. One index of this is the fact that only a very small part of Peirce’s classification of signs was developed farther than what Peirce himself did, and not from the perspective of how people ought to think, (Peirce’s philosophical obsession) but applied to how people really think. From his nine categories of signs, only icons (generating phenomena like iconicity and iconization), indices (inspiring studies of indexicality), and symbols were productively explored. Peirce’s phenomenology was rarely taken into consideration (the teleology of semiosis, what Peirce called thirdness, being particularly important), as well as another promising element of his work: the forms of reasoning – induction, deduction, abduction, analogical reasoning, metaphoric reasoning, restriction, determination, descent, depletion, extension, precission, abstraction, and ascent (Peirce 1931: 2.422-2.430; Liska 1996; Parker 1998). For lack of space, I will not analyze these forms of reasoning here. Suffice it to point out the fact that some of these are parallel with recent developments. What Peirce called depletion, for example, has clear connections with what Silverstein called regimentation and Irvine and Gal called erasure. Yet most of these original insights of Peirce were not yet developed in association with the current research agenda connected to metapragmatics and semiotic anthropology. Being myself a student of Peirce, I expect to be able to contribute to the field of semiotic anthropology though the ethnographic research proposed here.

Methodology

The documentation of the contiguity between the usage of specific metaphors, speech genres, tropes, rhetoric strategies, semiotic metapragmatic strategies, on the one hand, and the advances and retreats in the play of the local political game, on the other, will constitute the key data to be collected during the fieldwork. If correlations between elements of the two parallel universes can be established, through systematic and recurrent appearance in
the transcriptions of recorded communicational exchanges, the necessary evidence will have been collected. Nevertheless, there are many complexities in this enterprise.

The first one is the fact that in order to be able to grasp the contextual relevance, meaning, and variations of the semiotic constructs being employed, the researcher will have to be familiar with many elements of the cultural and sociopolitical local universe and that will require an extensive period of ethnographic research, from July 1st, 2003 to August 30, 2004. A preparatory visit to Fortaleza, Ceará’s capital, will take place in December 2002, when the International Annual Climate Outlook Forum will take place. This is an academic meeting of climate scholars and technicians which generates the forecast for the coming rainy season, a period usually between February and May. This forecast is anticipated with considerable anxiety by both the state government and population and is source of many debates and disputes in the hinterland. About the same time, many local 'rain prophets' meet in the municipality of Quixadá and they too produce their forecast. The International Research Institute for Climate Prediction (IRI) will fund participation to both these events.

A second complexity can also be seen as providing a possibly great boon for this research - the fact that current knowledge on the metapragmatic life of sociopolitical dynamics is limited and has many gaps and, therefore, the analytical tools available have to be tested, adapted, and some cases even invented on the way, as stated in the previous section of this proposal.

Fieldwork activities will include attendance at all water committee meetings, recording communicative exchanges taking place within them, interviewing committee members as well as following the relevant actions of the technicians and political operatives of the state water and meteorology agencies in the state capital as well as in the sertão. The localities in which the ethnographic fieldwork will be carried out will be in the Jaguaribe river valley where the three most important state water reservoirs are located as are hundreds of smaller ones. Most likely the ethnographic research site will focus on three neighboring small towns, Jaguaribara, Jaguaribe and Morada Nova, located some 200 kilometers south of the state capital. The first, due to the construction of a reservoir, was transplanted in 2001 approximately 50 kilometers to the north of its original site. This transplantation almost completely transformed the community with regard to economic, social, and cultural life. The second community has an economy based on milk and cheese production, activities that are greatly water demanding. The third, besides milk production, has a large public irrigated perimeter in which rice is grown and which also requires substantial water supply. In these three villages, the majority of the population also cultivates rain fed beans and maize. The rural population of these three sites is considered to be highly vulnerable to variations in water availability (being therefore highly vulnerable to droughts), and local unions and associations are active members of the participatory water allocation activities. Jaguaribe and Morada Nova have also large agricultural entrepreneurs that rely on irrigation as well as a small number of industrial enterprises competing for water.

Since many aspects of the semiotic elements being studied exist outside verbal communication (e.g. spatial configurations, clothing, body communication and movements, etc.) tape recording will be substituted by video recording whenever the recording of images is necessary.
11.27.2002 – Mexico City, Mexico

Insights from political anthropology class, prof. Luis Reygadas, UAM-Iztapalapa

Geertz

Balandier: from the representations of power to the power of representations (staging).

Turner: political theory in anthropology – dialectics between the instrumental (functionalism) and the expressive (symbolism/semiotics - structuralism)

Resolution of conflict: Peircean phenomenology

Where are Bourdieu and Sahlins? They keep trapped in the problematic of structuralism.

Greimas: political analysis based in fairy tales.

Balandier: transgression, ambiguity as part of the theatricality of power -> but end up in conclusions similar to Gluckman’s (transgression rites -> carnival as valve to release pressure, or as simulation – but it is also rehearsal for revolution! There is a double meaning at the same time, what a remarkable challenge to Sausurre!

Anti-parsimony-an movement -> Deleuze and Gattari, On the line / Ryzome

Scott: Everyday forms of state formation (book)

Ambiguity: where is it located in the cognitive process of recognition? (Peirce) In the flow/continuity? In the time in between categorization/quantum of time before categorization?

Complexity as ambiguity: multiple agents acting at the same time – complex reality -> impossibility of categorization.

La Mala Hora, Garcia Marquez, constant negotiation in the act of making something obscure or invisible, boss knows about the worker that breaks the machine, “voiced secret”.

Colombian cartoon: bourgeois man says: “what I like most of the class struggle is that we have been winning it”

See concept map regarding structure of ideas for dissertation.

12.20.2002 – Fortaleza, Brazil

About the discrete and the continuous: if we saw in other ranges of frequency, the distinction of frontiers between solid, liquid and gas would be the same?

Influence of perception in the way categories are created – or in the existence itself of categories – or of structures/cognitive processes (and perception as the “cause” for that);
The cognitive processes that generate discrete symbolic concepts (or first of all, discrete iconic concepts) may have the teleology principle as ground/basis/source;

Tautology is the necessary complement to teleology, due to energetic limits (i.e. limits of memory and cognitive processing), besides limits of time, sensorial limits, etc. The circle “closes” due to circularity. (Projection of one half of an image to the other side, similarities – read Gestalt theory, perhaps they had done research about that);

Sabines’ song – “Eso mismo fue lo que yo le pregunte…”

How does that principle is applied to the comprehension of climatologic information?

Teleology: - intentionality
- religion
- transformation of the probabilistic in deterministic
- elimination of ambiguities

Are ambiguities eliminated through the use of tautologies?

Are these things metapragmatic operators? They can be, if applied to political situations.

If tautology is not induced, it manifests itself as esthetic appreciation – nature is conformed to mental patterns (satisfaction) – e.g. Fritjof Capra when he realized the existence of parallels between quantum physics and Buddhism.

Would all esthetic appreciation be the result of the tautology principle?

See definitions of tautology and teleology in Comitas’ Oxford Dictionary.

Eastern religions – distinct way of handling ambiguities – other logic (or modifications);

Teleology is the basic cognitive principle; tautology is what transforms the continuum in discrete, what fills the conceptual, cognitive, memory, and mental gaps, etc.

Teleology + tautology different than habitus – explore differences (That could be a new conclusion for the paper “From structure to game…”)

Ask Comitas if he heard about it before. Check Transactions and Semiotica.

See name of scholar working with perception of risk and statistics at Columbia on the last page of the book “Casa Grande e Senzala.”

Hegemony: rituals and narratives to solve the hegemony problem – Scott.
Hegemony is not total, yet how could we explain the case of clients that go to war and die for the patron, in feudal times?

Field research: how do scientists deal with the idea of ambiguity? If the principle of teleology/tautology is correct, how did non-teleological narratives appear? Are there non-teleological narratives?

01.23.2003 – New York, USA

Structures are created in practice, through action, according to a hidden agenda provided by language, narratives, language games, discourses, etc.

Semiotic habits

Conclusion for paper “From structure to game…”

Semiotic habits made collective identity may not correspond to language groups, or national identity, or religious group. The collectivizations are many, fluid, constructed through interaction (Goffman, ethnomethodology, phenomenology), sometimes not flexible (mostly due to semiotic regimentations and fixed narratives), sometimes a case of life and death, but changing according to discursive genres that are more or less associated with some practical and real aspects of life, and in dynamic connection with its material circumstances in the way these semiotic habits themselves are subject to change. The fractures and fissures in a supposed pervasive “culture” are so many that it would be better to avoid calling it culture – the pervasiveness is always relative and variable according to local circumstances (there is the need for huge collective movements towards iconization/semantic simplification for something visible as shared cultural traits to become apparent – like huge nationalist rallies (soccer games), etc. / and culture has meaning as a tool for differentiation, the use of the idea of otherness for political reasons or other).

“Actions could represent in social practices theories encoded in myths and enacted in rites – the realm of the political appears as practical versions of the cosmological.” (p. Cosmologies of Capitalism, p. 430, about Hawaii and Cap. Cook) – use of the concept of recursiveness for purposes not imagined by Gal and Irvine.

Nietzsche: “Blood and cruelty as the foundation of all good things”

Link it with iconization, pain/fear and semiosis, and Daniel+Taussig

System of mnemonics based in pain, it has to hurt to remain in memory (the oldest psychology of the world). +
Social contract over injury: perpetration of pain puts one in position of participating in the rights of masters.

Sahlins: “Cosmologies of capitalism”
Backwardness: western-bourgeois perspective (p. 415)
Criticism of world-system theory and its implications to anthropology.
“Of course the dependence on the world economy, which has its own reasons and progress, can render the local develop-man vulnerable over the longer run. But again, destiny is not history. Not is it always tragedy. Anthropologists tell of some spectacular forms of indigenous cultural change turning into modes of political resistance – in the name of cultural persistence.” (p. 415)
The world system is the rational expression of relative cultural logics, that is, in the terms of exchange-value.
“Just as Galileo thought that mathematics was the language of the physical world, so the bourgeoisie have been pleased to believe that the cultural universe is reducible to a discourse of price – despite the fact that other peoples would resist the one idea and the other by populating their existence with other considerations. Fetishism, then, is the custom of the capitalist world economy, since it precisely translates those real-historic cosmologies and ontologies, those various relations of persons and systems of objects, into the terms of a cost-benefit analysis: a simple chrematistic pidgin-language, by means of which we are also able to acquire social-science understanding at bargain rates. Of course, the capacity to reduce social properties to market values is exactly what allows capitalism to master the cultural order. Yet at least sometimes the same capacity makes the world capitalism the slave to local concepts of status, means of labor control and preferences in goods which it has no will to obliterate, inasmuch as it would not be profitable. A history of the world system, therefore, must discover the culture mystified in the capitalism.” (p. 416) (***)

02.13.2003 – New York, USA

Can an articulation between teleology and tautology show why the inhabitants of the driest and poorest areas do not migrate definitively from these areas?

“Comprendí que el trabajo del poeta no estaba en la poesía; estaba en la invención de razones para que la poesía fuera admirable”
Borges, El Aleph (Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1997 [1949]: 181)
“Once, in Madrid, a journalist asked me whether Buenos Aires actually possessed an Aleph. I nearly yielded to temptation and said yes, but a friend broke in and pointed out that were such an object to exist it would not only be the most famous thing in the world but would renew our whole conception of time, astronomy, mathematics, and space. ‘Ah,’ said the journalist, ‘so the entire thing is your invention. I thought it was true because you gave the name of the street.’ I did not dare tell him that the naming of streets is not much of a feat.”


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**02.17.2003 – New York, USA**

Ritual is not about social order. It is about ordering the universe. The social order is just a result of that – positions more or less independent from persons – but not completely.

It would be interesting to see how native groups have rituals in their everyday lives, and how urban people have everyday rituals too.

Dirks: criticism of the idea of order. Rituals may also be about resistance. Rituals may be the practice of creating order, imposed by authorities, etc. (see Rappaport’s book).

Ritual: defiance that ends up reifying the political model, defiance inside a conceptual framework (metapragmatic domination). Change of paradigm = revolution/terrorism.

Ritual constitutes a tremendously important arena for the cultural construction of authority, and the dramatic display of the social lineament of power - ***Ceará!***

Ceará’s water committees: creation of new rituals, creation of new forms of authority – “participatory” as rhetoric move.


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**02.25.2003 – Mexico City, Mexico**

Rainer Henrique Hamel’s class – Linguistic Anthropology, UAM-Iztapalapa

[Class:
- Deixis/deictic: me, here, now;
- Gumperz, Labov: Distinct cultural codifications inside the same language group;]
- Marxists criticized works of Symbolic Interactionism due to the second’s use of the idea of “negotiation” (which implies “market”).
- Symbolic interactionism: theory of action, established rules; vs. Ethnomethodology: construction of intelligibility.
- Bourdieu provided sociological basis for sociolinguistics. Study of the social conditions of possibilities for human action: Habermas in philosophy, Bourdieu in sociology. See Raymond Williams: Marxism and Literature.
- Bourdieu’s criticism to Austin: elocutionary power is OK, but it doesn’t clarify about legitimating issues, institutionalization, authorities, etc. Austin states that the key to efficiency of discourses is in the discourses themselves; Bourdieu believed that the authority comes to language from the outside (“skepticon”). Authority related dynamics exist previously to communication. That criticism applies also to Symbolic Interactionism: symbolism is not created inside the interaction, says Bourdieu (later changed this idea a bit). What anchors the acts of speaking is more important than what is spoken. Excessive focus on reproduction;
- Later: dialectic between reproduction and change. Ethnomethodology: things have to re-legitimize themselves all the time (focus in the micro in a radical way for some sociologists). Constructivism integrated with macro-sociology;

Methodology for dissertation:

Semiotics of change: beyond verbal communication (metapragmatics of non-verbal signs – explore it!)

Signs and commodification: which signs? Tropes, metaphors / rituals
- Tropes, metaphors;
- Metapragmatic strategies;
- Rituals (Juazeiro);
- Technologies as cultural manifestations
  o Forecasts: prophets;
  o Agricultural technologies.

Negotiation: how was that understood before seminars? Negotiation is the preparation for markets. Negotiation has different meanings: democracy / market. Unpredicted results: chaos factor. Before – X – After: process of change, different PLANS for history (agency). Chaos factor (lack of pervasiveness/ambiguities/conflict) and teleology: fragmented teleology?

Analysis of the use of the term “market” in economy, political sciences, anthropology, sociology. Starting with World Bank.
Overcorrection: adoption of borrowed schemas, legitimized by power configurations (tautology). Reflections in linguistic/semiotic behavior – how does that apply to our issues at hand?

Jacquemet: metapragmatic attacks;

Daniel: semiotic organization of the world, semiotic teleology – how do metapragmatic attacks work here?

What is the relationship between hegemony and metapragmatics? Metapragmatics moves as strategies to play the hegemony game – legitimization.

Which game? Maximization always?

Criticism to habitus: leader may be a “deviant” with metapragmatic power/skills (Obeyesekere, Cidade de Deus)

Neurosis of the powerful: the fear of loosing positions = hyperactivity;

Saliency/preponderance: one element is made more important than others. Narration vs. argument is an example – imposition of the structure of narration into an argument.

Symbolic capitals in conflict: each one plays with his capital and tries to manipulate the field in order to maximize it – importance of metapragmatics.

Different version of metapragmatic attack: fight for definition of the genre of the discussion/narrative (see Bakhtin). Taking advantage of times and pauses, knowledge of the structure of genres, etc.

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02.27.2003 – Mexico City, Mexico

Lecture by Charles L. Briggs (UC San Diego)

The ‘public’ is constituted in the processes of circulation of discourses – anchored in processes of construction/reproduction of authority and legitimacy; Public discourse is different from interpersonal interaction.

Indexicality: non-explicit contextual relationship;

How deep one can go in the elimination of stereotypes? How is it connected to the human cognitive limits, and with the limits of language as technology?

What did Wittgenstein said about stereotypes?

Bourdieu’s concept of field: ideological domination cause criticisms to be ‘shy’, or require criticisms to be much longer (enlisting evidences, etc), while supporting dominant ideology can be done with stereotypes and no effort.

Public discourses need to have more voices.
Teleology in the development discourse.
Counter pose a non-progressive, non-evolutionary, non-linear depiction of economic change dynamics taking place in Ceará. Present discourse on progress as part of a metapragmatic battle/domination.

Hegemony: review of the literature

Hegemony: - metapragmatics
- teleology / tautology
- habitus / semiotic habits

Backwardness (‘atraso’) rendered meaningful in the semantic field of ‘progress’.

Conceptualization of legitimate politics as the politics characterized by modern/democratic/representative paradigms – semiotic/metapragmatic regimentation as mechanism for exclusion.

Fight against exclusion implies exploring mechanisms through which excluding paradigms are legitimized / legitimize themselves and beyond. – Construction of counter hegemonic strategies in the metapragmatic level: questioning rules of discursive game.

Wittgessteinian solution for postmodern riddle: it is the play of the game that matters, a game in which the production of momentary and illusory certainties are strategic political moves (with obvious semeiosic-cognitive aspects);

Wittgenstein himself operating in a metalinguistic level.

Source/origins of individuals: question used to locate them in a typology organized according to a political economy of representations and distinctions (nordestino, italiano, etc.)

Iconization vs. lack of real/ultimate origins: behavioral/economic side of economic activity, semiotic habits, etc. – iconized.

Conclusion of text could be an analysis of the idea of third way (Giddens), and how it is associated with the question of hegemony, from a socio-semiotic point of view.

- against Bourdieu’s background.)
(**) Soccer, crowds, and metapragmatic control: tribunes as symbolic arena (why the crowd don’t rebel?)

Incompatibilities between metapragmatic domination and the idea of habitus, and also the focus on speech acts, etc.

“El significado de un enunciado solo puede definirse tomando en cuenta su carácter de acción” (Hamel, ‘Constitución y análisis de la interacción verbal’, 1982: 38).

Metapragmatics as the internal dynamics of doxa, or as the constitutive dynamics of Bourdieu’s concept of ‘field’.

Methodology: analyses of communicational exchange in water committees, in market places, in schools, in courts, in workplace, in churches, and compare it with newspapers, etc.

03.11.2003 – Mexico City, Mexico

How pervasive is a cultural code? Agents construct the appearance of homogeneity in interaction (Peirce’s teleology). Any verbal interaction for long enough show that there can be no complete pervasiveness. Communicative exchange is not exclusively verbal – construction of action according to presuppositions of metapragmatic rules and strategies.

Pervasiveness as constructed illusion: flexibilization of individuals’ semeiotic habits under pragmatic and metapragmatic constraints – sociological and psychological factors.

(*** ) Is culture constructed due to metapragmatic constraints?

(*** ) Use of language as chains of reification. Discourses as technologies to insert ambiguities and overwhelming complexities in these chains of reification. It works in conjunction with the material technologies of the world, which creates constraints in space and time (see Parker – The Continuity of Peirce’s Thought – on time).

Hamel: constitution, reproduction, and transformation present in everything.

03.11.2003 – Mexico City, Mexico
Water allocation seminars creates new leadership. The construction of the hegemony by the state involves the creation of a new group of middle ground leaders and opinion makers.

- How does it work?
- Who are these leaders?
- How does that impact: 1) institutional configurations; 2) power relations; 3) economic activities.

(****) How do subjects typify/characterize a certain information/datum? They do it inside relations of social exchange – which are processes of value creation also.

“Reglas son implicitas hasta el punto en que hay problemas, Ahí se hacen las reglas explicitas” Hamel. (Wrong. What is made explicit is a reified description of the processes, with the goal of having strategic advances in the language game being played.)

Organization of language: intercommunication, exchange in time – important points.

Reciprocity of perspectives: I know that you know that I know – always partial and fragmented, but necessary.

(****) Wittgenstein: we are in a language game without the possibility of defining its rules (infinite regression) – look for this reference.

Implicit cooperation: proved by Garfinkel (ethnomethodology) (Absurd Theater)

(**) Semiotic habits / habitus: the structure may exist only inside processes.

Argumentation, narration, description: schemas of communication. Improper forms: irony, etc.

(*** Methodology for Ceará: analyze other participatory meetings: structures, controls. How people understand a participatory meeting to operate vs. analysis of meeting.

Patterns of verbal interaction: assembly, debate – one framed inside the other.

How technocrats represent farmers, and how farmers represent technocrats?

Prestige spaces: conquer of these spaces guarantees or renovate power. Survival of language or cultural pattern depends on the conquest of those spaces.
03.13.2003 – Mexico City, Mexico

Reygadas – presentation of his book

Cultures as navigation maps to make sense of a fragmented reality. (Culture different from habitus, part of it; cultures are narratives?)

Culture used strategically for positioning oneself in the social world. Culture used to unite (Durkheim), divide (Marx), distinguish (Bourdieu), make jokes about distinctions (Bahktin).

Cultural projects (engineering) as efforts in processes of construction of hegemony + culture as providing elements for counterhegemonic discourses (jokes, Bahktin).

What is the arena of the conflicts? What are the strategies?

Yudice: culture constructed as new arena (and proposed solution) for old conflicts: economic, urban planning, socio-political (racial, etc.)

(***) Do the definitions of civil society work for Ceará? Bibliographical revision.

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Metapragmatic dimensions: planned or not, real effects – cultural experimentation: reality shows, etc.

Forun Universal para la Cultura – Olimpiada cultural – Barcelona 2004 – new arena for the competition for signs of hegemony.
(***) Idea of evenness / equality as important element in the construction of hegemony (fair play, etc.).

There are things that the multicultural discourse cannot absorb: Paquistanis suspects in jail in the US.

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03.14.2003 – Mexico City, Mexico

Yudice – UAM

Capital and subjectivity were made partners in the cultural turn that occurred in the civil society: culturalization of capital, capitalization of culture.

Media as medium for the existence of social movements: Zapatistas, MST, etc.

Cultural integration of Latin America requires strong coordination of civil society (social/cultural engineering)

Marked/unmarked: social movements in the US are based in identity groups. That is why they remain marked, while the nation remains run by a majority non-marked white population.

How do concepts of marked/non-marked are related to metapragmatics, and how it is related to political spaces/dynamics? Is sertanejo a marked quality?

Symbolization of indigenous groups as national symbols in Mexico is a powerful element of hegemony. Hard to create a metapragmatic attack.

Brazil: the same for blackness. Narratives on “mestiçagem” are strategies not to recognize racial identity barriers. Several social movements in Brazil are not grounded in ethnical/racial identity.

Danger in mediatization: the disappearance from media may lead society to the conclusion that a social movement died.

Polyglots of socialization: coordinators of social movements.

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03.19.2003 – New York, USA
Ceará scene:
Political culture of centralization and paternalism goes against liberalization. Elites will resist losing control.
Market short circuits political models of the population – accountability of government.

03.20.2003 – New York, USA

Comitas’ office
Historical analyses: before/after COGERH; Map crises and find well informed informants about each crisis. Plus: key moments of water use (who/what/when). When do water becomes important / when they forget about it?
Evidence: documents / verbal interaction / interviews
Rationale:
Seminar: - Pre-allocation of water (range of decision)
- COGERH’s control of activities
- Low relevance of the numbers being discussed
- Advertised as successful democratization

Seminars: rituals to construct COGERH’s hegemony, to link users to a centralized system of control, to tune everybody to the same language.
Weber described it, says Comitas – check reference.

KB: anthropology focus on one scale / political sciences focus on another scale – middle ground uncovered: document that, focus on the relationship between scales.
Plus: translations from one framework to another, imposition of ideas: what participatory means to the WB, to Ceará Govmt., to water users. Document that.

Water trading might become a pension-like thing in the hinterland.

03.21.2003 – New York, USA

Ceará:
Why politics is so strongly linked to lawyers and media? These are two social universes strongly linked to metapragmatic life.

Paper: why academia despises it (and NGOs have to learn about it the hard way)? Impact in development programs.

Verbal interaction as a game: strategies may be linked to the dynamics of the situation and not to the meaning of concepts (better stating: dynamics of situation created semantic fields with their necessary semiotic regimentation).

Every semantic field has semiotic regimentation devices inside of it, or associated with it.

How can committees be instruments in the construction of hegemony in Ceará? Every novelty in the political game reorganizes the game and causes reorganization efforts. During reorganization processes, the novelty is incorporated in the game. +

Discourse on necessity of incorporating the novelty vs. resisting to the novelty. How is the novel idea reframed into local imaginary? What is imaginary? Castoriadis.

Teleology + tautology: new way to approach the hegemony question.

Foi o PT que chegou ao poder, ou foi o poder que chegou ao PT? Hegemony: entrapped PT and changed its structure/culture/discourse. (political culture + rules of the game)

Estrutura política do Brasil (SP?)

População em geral vive semi-anarquica/pouca/nenhuma participação na vida política da cidade/bairro; sonegação de impostos+suborno de oficiais como mecanismos para desvinculação da máquina controladora do estado; obrigação do voto – legitimidade do sistema político construída de forma artificial e autoritária;

Obrigação do service military: replicação das classes sociais dentro da estrutura military, após a espetacular indústria do suborno que é a experiência de alistamento para as classes mediaalta e alta; imagem negative de funcionários publicos (exc. medicos e professores), em particular policiais. População alienada da justice.


Pais precisa ser construído, nunca o foi. Brasil foi sempre a ilusão das classes medias em narratives ufanistas-nostálgicas, sem o passado glorioso da Argentina de 1910.

PT cada vez mais se parece ao PSDB pre-FHC. PT necessita compartilhar menos as ilusoes políticas do mundo da política institucionalizada, e ser mais criativo. So existe uma forma: uma alianca forte com a sociedade civil.
Tautologia+teleologia: 4 campanhas à presidencia – resultado: PT formatado à cultura política institucionalizada. PT vítima da hegemônia, e não a hegemônia do PT.


04.28.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

One way to check the presence of government in the valley – check the statistics on the number of government employees in municipalities. Mostly judges/promoters, police officers, health agents, teachers. Calculate rate per inhabitant.
Tendler disconsiders that.

04.30.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Assis: being currently part of the Science and Technology Secretariat brings some prejudices towards the work of Funceme. As if it was the production of “theory”, in a world of pragmatic actions by technicians and engineers – only by having changed position in the government structure. Before: Funceme – Cogerh; now Funceme – Secretariat of Science and Technology – SRH – Cogerh: much more gatekeepers. Novelties run the risk of ending in files labeled “Sci&Tech”/theory.

04.30.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

If the sublime is not finding words for describing something in terms of esthetic appreciation, then the least educated linguistically the person is, the most sublime is the world (wrong: poetical function is the ability of combining words/worlds in order to express new things/things in new ways, create illusions, etc.)
If I speak English badly, New York populated with sublimities;
Religiosity and the educational level: are they linked? Is sublime behind the religiosity of the little and heavily educated? (e.g. Einstein?)
Would the sublime be the trigger for the teleological-tautological mechanisms? Or not? Would it be a limit of the teleological-tautological, one way it confronts reality? (or update itself?)

Semiotic habits are a smaller unit of analysis than culture. Discourses and narratives are organizing/structuring vectors of semiotic habits.

How could the Ceará case be an example of that? Water commodification? Relationship with environment/forecasts/rain prophets? What is marketable and what is not?
-phenomenology
-socioemiotics/ethnosemiotics
-ethnomethodology
-sociolinguistics/metapragmatics – semiotic operators (Gal/Irvine)

Mechanisms of social control in an environment classified as democratic: it is necessary that agents are inserted in the game, even if the game prevent them from speaking. Rio riots: example of actors excluded and out of control. In this sense, the “exclusion” discourse may be wrong: inclusion is indeed necessary for social control (in the Foucaultian sense).

Ideas and theories: used according to the political game. Pragmatic life of academic products; that is why there is importance in the metapragmatic question.

Approach idea: Peircian phenomenology (micro) +metapragmatics (macro) – how can the two things be integrated?
Is this part of what is called reflexive sociology?

The visible and the invisible: the limits of awareness (Silverstein), doxa (Bourdieu) + Merleau-Ponty.
There is the need of making from it all a dynamic totality, once it is not possible to assume the stable cultural configuration as a rule – even this way those mechanisms above exist, but in a dynamic form: visibilities and invisibilities are produced and undone all the time, visibilities/invisibilities are relative to mechanisms of revelation/explicitation: Parmentier calls it obviation (and when it refers to tropes involved, a thinking linked to metapragmatics, tropic obviation), Jacquemet metapragmatic attacks.

**There is the need to soften edges of this theorization: différend, iconization-recursiveness-erasure, metapragmatic attacks, even semiotic regimentation as**
associated with power domination is a hardened sense. Need to insert it all inside Peircean phenomenology and link it to the social life of meanings.

What are the stabilizing devices/factors? Economic factors more stable.

Communicational structure. Time fragmentation, inertia of material world in comparison to the linguistic universe.

State – police – law.

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**05.05.2003 – Fortaleza, CE**

Conversation with Paulo Miranda.

Why market? (water market). Why is the first world so worried about markets? First world wants to insert water in a market structure; they gain control of the means of production through the market structure.

Why Ceará? Poor, water scarcity, etc. This is the space to be exploited, vulnerable, fragile, fragile laws, do not take a market without disorganization but it happens. From this space it spreads to other places in the country, this is the intention (Ceará as experiment).

e.g. water tariff, done always with the intention of presenting the market as alternative.

An exercise is the materialization of a reality also (it creates the semantic field even as if as provisory, but after it the reality already took shape as a possibility, as an alternative). Jurisprudence, ideas regarding value, all comes inside the package (in Águas do Vale).

Financial compensation comes (attack) when the vulnerability is high (as in the land concentration patterns). It is not sustainable but the exercise generated the possibility, the expectation that it will happen.

Ceará is a laboratory, in PM’s view.

**Semantic shock**: radical destabilization of semantic configurations and preparation of devices to conduct semiotic flow during readjustments. E.g. market introduction. But I lack examples. Is there any good example in the Ceará case? Take care not to essentialize semantic configurations – result of successful semiotic regimentation processes for a certain period of time.

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**05.20.2003 – New York, NY**

The value of risk.
“modernity” + precision in water resources control in conflict with ultra-conservative local habits in relation to risk.

Describe models and conflict: more precise and probabilistic (90% reliability) management models, maximization of economic resource (water) with the use of stream flow forecast and climate forecast (both probabilistic), in conflict with anti-risk behavior of the vulnerable population.

Link between management models and economic models (time and space – capital and resources moving towards specific groups).

Link that with the idea of semiotic habits.

Assis believes that government has to keep control over part of the decision process in order to be able to use water as inductor of economic development and as public policy tool.

BUT:

Water management in the Jaguaribe Valley has been possible only through the participation of civil society. State does not have control mechanisms, nor diagnosis capability, nor action capability => decentralization, participativeness, collective education processes.

Assis idea is probably due to technocratic feelings (technocratic centralism), dichotomy “dotô” vs. “cidadão,” etc.

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05.23.2003 – New York, NY

Macro effects of behavioral patterns of individuals (chain result) may have very different characteristics and visibilities than those individual behaviors – but what is valued in discourses? The macro-chain effects (hard to see) or the small and visible individual behavior (easy to see)?

Isolated actions linked in chains producing effects in larger scales and that require distinct ways of description and analysis.

Metapragmatic effects of pragmatic factors of the applied epistemological activity (or how the scale of analysis induce to different conceptualizing ways and patterns):

1) limiting and inductive characteristics of the medium and of the message; language and media as technologies with structural qualities and limits;

2) dynamisms and flexibilities: political dynamics, social construction of reality, construction of hegemony, etc.

Criticize Bourdieu (habitus), Sahlins (theory of history) – analyze Ortner and Daniel Theory of practice + semiotics + metapragmatics
Implications for:
- political economy
- ecological materialism
- symbolic anthropology

Take Ortner’s “Theory since the 80’s” as basis.

05.26.2003 – New York, NY -> San Diego, CA

Thirdness may be a better explaining factor for rituals than the “tradition” or culture as a pervasive element. New converts and the late adoption of a new faith may be examples of how religion may be dependent on a cognitive principle (3rd-ness) besides powerful technologies (narratives, cosmology)

Capitalism produces the need for new ideas / technologies / narratives, in a way that peripheral narratives get sometimes their 15 minutes, most of times reframed into larger metapragmatic structures – like the entertainment industry in the U.S. (movies), etc.

Capitalism -> instability in the means of production -> instability in narratives -> recreation of new spaces all the time.

Who are the gatekeepers? (authority, legitimacy -> metapragmatic strategies)

In the long run, what does give stability to the system? Is the system stable?

06.05.2003 – San Francisco, CA -> São Paulo, SP

[From Tony Blair’s profile in the New York Observer] Certain group of persons have their self-esteem inflated during forming years (infancy, teenage years), e.g. Blair, Clinton, etc. Group of leaders who have the tendency to imagine society as a mix of subordinate groups, people under them. Get very surprised with a novelty that prove wrong their suppositions, but soon forget about it and are back to imagining themselves in the top of everything, of every social and intellectual hierarchies.

Limited vision of each individual: personal imaginary + habitus/semiotic habits + social technologies (material and immaterial, symbolic and non-symbolized in their quotidian existence) – e.g. various theories about complexity, chaos, etc. But phenomenology – a link between these technologies and the semiotic habits obviously exist (and depend on them to keep existing as social construction/illusion – semiotic habits reproduce illusions) – e.g. use of language already considers the flow of messages, etc (metapragmatics).
Social technologies are not systemic – fractured systems, incomplete, at least – see it as a system is already the manifestation of the teleological/tautological principle. See criticisms towards the idea of system, in Smith (1998).

Better use the root metaphor, or organizational ones – psychological factors + semiotic habits + complexities of the systems.

[Root metaphor as important element of the metapragmatic processes in the life of symbols]

It is possible to make an analysis of capitalism through this logic. Capitalism is an abstract idea, abstracted from a spectacularly complex network in which individuals act separated and individually, inside exchange flows that are different in each place, due to differences in semiotic habits and of local legislations. In this sense, the results of the commercial activities inside a capitalist universe are different in different scales of analysis. In a macro-generic level, characteristics are seen (supposedly the “global” qualities of the system) that are nothing besides the results generated by an immense series of actions inside a complex chain. As in the modeling of dynamic systems, complex system. Wallerstein’s World System is about that (see Sahlins, “Cosmologies of Capitalism” in Culture/Power/History).

But: there is always a small class of people with power over political and diplomatic tools to generate pulses of influence in these complex systems (e.g. current American trade legislation, American military and international policies, plans and activities of British/Spanish/Portuguese/Dutch officials in colonies in 18th and 19th centuries, etc.) – what is far from meaning that this class has means of modeling the system and exert control over all of it. This group base its actions in pragmatic criteria and in try and error, and universal history shows that no hegemony is stable (much less theoretically conscious and enlighten about the details about the functioning of the complex political and economic systems).

Derrida and Wittgenstein invite me to enter, show me the door. Inside I meet Peirce and Nietzsche. The exit is shown to me by Bourdieu and Deleuze.

06.08.2003 – Morada Nova, CE

Catholic Mass as a political event (or political event inside the mass).

3, 4, 5 people on the same motorcycle in movement: that is an index of a different risk assessment for sure. Maximization of resources? Different assessment of risk? The ethos of the cowboy (being the motorcycle the mechanical horse)?
Loud music, enormous speakers occupying the whole trunk of some cars, sometimes a tall pile of speakers over a cart – producers of the party, the power of turning an ordinary space in a party space – linked to monetary power, since speakers are expensive, as are cars in this area. Loud music defining the space of party – louder the music, the larger the space (even if it is empty of people).

Music has a metapragmatic power that goes unchallenged: the power to change social genre almost instantaneously.

Symbolic value of events linked to the economy of occupation of time: it is necessary to take in consideration the long periods in which nothing happens in a rural community (for instance), waiting times, boredom, in the way of understanding the collective attribution of value to festivals and parties and extraordinary events. This attribution of value has something symbolical, but is not necessarily linked to symbolic-interpretive contents of the event – both things go together.

Heat, sun – the value of shade. (applies to Nova Jaguaribara)

06.12.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Tim Finan: “bureaucracy keeps small farmer far from credit lines, even in programs created for them” (and mentions as example micro-credit programs in Bangladesh)

07.17.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Kenny Broad: vulnerability as a self-sustaining, self-fulfilling discourse: the state needs this kind of thing to maintain a certain kind of control.

State apparatus specially weak in Ceará, in terms of institutions. That’s why there is so much instability during government changes here. In the U.S. there is respect for the stability of institutions rather than personalism. Stronger economic networks make it easy to construct hegemony.

What is hegemony? Is the Ceará government inside the hegemony field of Brazilian national government? Even is the political style is different? (the scale makes all the difference. Complex network linking different scales, and same actors can play different games in different scales, from local to national. Social genres -> political styles)
Idea for paper:

Institutional structures, political relations, and sociability patterns in the participatory water management in Ceará.

Institutional structure organized around the division of agents in: civil society, users, and government officials. Which logic grounds this kind of division? How do discourses and politico-institutional mechanisms reinforce this logic? How does it impact differently the different sectors involved in the water management system?

Incompatibility between local political relations and patterns of sociability and the institutional model.

Artificial division of sectors. Curious fact: all water committee presidents are members of municipal governments in the hinterland. Why?

Reformulation of the law: imposition of a conceptual framework – conflict between personal leadership (centralized political style) and the formalism of the institutional representation -> difficulty in legitimize the participation of important local leaders -> need to create link between local leaders and formalized institutions to allow them to participate: but which one? People with multiple representations/entities/institutions, or none – mechanic solidarity present in a sense, more holistic social universe. Institutional model imposes fragmentation in the bureaucratic framework.

Pressure for institutionalization and formalization of civil society organizations, e.g. Pedregulho and the water pumping case.

CONERH resolution regarding the participation of civil society organizations and users – new criteria inserted: bureaucratic cage – necessity of explicitation of names of representatives in ‘atas’ (records) of elections of the entities – supposes that there are elections in all entities – but there is an incredible pervasive pattern of previous ‘articulations’ in all kinds of elections (what’s behind the idea of ‘articulation’? -> sociability patterns, political relations).
(artigo 6o of CONERH resolution: call for elections of committee have to be published in the official press of the state – Diário Oficial –; nothing from Medio Jaguaribe was published, according to André Mavignier)

Formalism was always imposed by João Lúcio’s team onto the hinterland population, regarding the activities of commissions and committees. But not exactly for elections. Attention on recording the discussions during meetings, not on the formation of committees/commissions. They were the bureaucrats who imposed a harsh formalism in the meetings as a form of control and education. Then new president (Izelda) comes and accuses them to be ‘disorganized’ (regarding use of funds and control of expenses).

08.07.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Internal colonialism in several levels (Darcy Ribeiro) – Fortaleza/interior – flow of natural resources and money. Inside the hinterland, there is hard resistance against the emancipation of districts. Morada Nova and Aracati have strange shapes, and it must be linked to revenue from taxes.

08.08.2003 – Fortaleza, CE
Sabotage as a method for political action. Attacks to the infrastructure, destruction of chains and padlocks, happen in a systematic fashion, in several levels. The government used sabotage against the metropolitan basin committee. Organization of Users Department: long sequence of micro-sabotages: strategic use of ambiguity regarding ideological differences between them and the Cogerh’s direction/SRH, regarding sabotage cases. See Lima Campos 5.ago.2003 (papers).

Morada Nova irrigators have a more or less clear idea about democratic participation, even if etiquette and communicational rituals insert class distinctions (and subvert it as well in specific occasions, up to a point). Use of strategic say: “I am illiterate and know nothing, BUT…” and develop their arguments.

The fact that there was no political violence during the dictatorial period may have an importance on the participation of peasants (confirm that – was there political violence in rural areas in the Jaguaribe Valley during the dictatorship?)

08.08.2003 – Limoeiro do Norte, CE

Committees: question of rhythm and not only of scale. Government imposes a rhythm and comes as a “rolo compressor”. Differend may be manifested also in performance, and not only in concepts.

Government centralizes the production of information: a model comes, makes a diagnosis, and creates discursive legitimating strategies of these diagnosis and actions (positive feedback).

Committees are actors or arenas? Metaphor: occupation of spaces.

Government -> arena -> “decided in the committee”
Vs. (conflict of representations)
Civil society -> body of actor -> “committee will do this”

Issue of taking some local institutions out of the status of permanent members: led to the conclusion that there are important and almost invisible political bottlenecks inside the local arena itself (let alone in Fortaleza) – electoral commission has the power to decide such important matters, being composed by very few people without representativeness (since few people want to participate in such commission).

Production of the invisible:
1) Conflict / sabotage: crowd actions (Nova Floresta, Orós, Lima Campos cases; Morada Nova gate damaged) -> becomes part of COGERH’s discourse as negotiation tool (e.g. Riacho Seco/Morada Nova case – “you’d better negotiate or more sabotage is likely to happen”, Giani)

State/society: representations/committees (Hidelbrando)

2) “articulation” and the legitimacy of the democratic space (see Bailey for that – brokered consensus)

3) what are the committees? Legitimating apparatus / hegemony construction strategy / spaces of voicing of civil society concerns – contradictions, arena, forum, body? (a space in which the definition itself is open for negotiation/struggle for control – are institutions both concept, materiality, normative rules, strategic and pragmatic rules, etc? Is the committee an institution?)

4) water scarcity and efficiency as discourses: the instability of inequality as self-fulfilling, self-sustaining discourse (“we are walking towards socioeconomic improvement slowly, but we need more political power, more control, more information, more data, more access to people’s lives, everyone needs to be inside the surveillance system, etc – Foucaultian nightmare) – water consumption in Ceará/Fortaleza/neighborhoods/sectors/kinds of consumption – “nouveau rich” of blue gold – irresponsible use of water, lack of memory of scarcity – official discourse as tool for that.

+ change in environment: Fortaleza current comfortable life makes the symbolism of drought be dislocated to stand for icons of another space and time. Symbols of drought, for not being updated through performance (so the social life of symbols require constant performances, be them rituals or fake rituals as rehearsals that are never staged as definitive - there are symbolic transformations in this – analyze! – See Dirks in Culture/Power/History) starts to fade away and become iconized (iconical symbols), as well as indexes of a different space (hinterland) and time (ancient people, the droughts of the past);

even if climate uncertainty brings instability to this symbolic configuration, there is effort – through wishful thinking, the myth of modernity as redemption, but also through public policies that privilege Fortaleza - to make it appear that way (drought=another place and time)

(Fortaleza, 03.25.2004 - Same can be said about Nova Jaguaribara and the Casa da Memória: objects located in the house once belonged to the everyday life activities and had its symbolic meanings inserted in the exchanges of that dynamics. When brought to the Casa da Memória, many symbolic transformations happened: 1) the symbolic complexity of those objects started to fade away and be replaced by iconicity (iconic symbols), something that happens at the same time the richness of the memories of the old town starts to disappear, fade away, simplified by the loss of memory details and by official discourses produced about the old town by the group of people in the Casa da Memoria/Associação de Moradores as well as by the Government. Even more to children that spent little of their lives in the old town.
At the same time, there is an interesting fact: children created a somewhat fragmented reproduction of part of the old town social structure through the way they present and explain the objects in the Casa da Memoria: important families have their objects there, as well as pictures of the family leaders (there was no censorship in the selection of objects – confirm this, how come? Not even a little?); there is a hall with pictures that is almost a genealogy of the important families of the old town, and of important persons, even if that is more linked to the popular imagination and to other areas that not strictly politics, power, and land (e.g. funny persons as the indian Teresa Biró, whom is also a kind of foundation myth in a very distorted way – she if from Amazonia but for those who don’t know about this she is a reminiscent of the Jaguaribara tribe, etc.); new leaders like Irmã Bernardete, who gained a lot of visibility in the conflict also has her space there. So the space works with an interesting mix of the political genealogy of the old town and the new imaginary constructed by/through new leaders along the conflict.

5) framing it all: metapragmatic attacks, e.g. the institutionalization of rain prophets, of the cowboy culture (Morada Nova museum, Dragão do Mar museum) – manipulation of discourses, use of discourses in the political game.

08.17.2003 – João Pessoa, PB

What is best: conflict (openness, chaos) or a law that frames everything (total closeness)?
Conflict resolution techniques in Ceará are also a work in the construction of the legitimacy of the law.

08.18.2003 – Recife, PE

DNOCS technicians arguing about land reform after we passed in front of a MST camp. Verbal interchanges -> teleological/tautological. Psychology. Rationality as political tool of affection.

08.18.2003 – Aracajú, SE

Latin: ri -> rio (river) / rivals: originally, populations located along the river and that used the same water were rivals, therefore the etymological roots of the word.
Paulo Paim: less laws and more negotiations.

Alaôr (USP): uniformity syndromes, masking of differences, one law for so many different realities. Ideology: the myth of an unified and homogeneous country (Brazil).

Fortaleza Metropolitan committee problem exposed, and negative reactions from Paulo Paim – inflexion point? End of a cycle? Beginning of a paper?

“Basin plan has to have an optimized, maximizing water allocation”, Dilma Seli Pena Pereira. But isn’t water allocation a political question? Classic technocratic position – science solves political problems.

“Navegar é preciso; viver, só se for navegando.” Claudio Antonio de Mauro.

A member of the São Francisco committee read in the press about the water transference from that river, and is afraid that the presence of the vice-president of the nation, José Alencar, in the meeting could be read as an approval given by that forum for the transference -> legitimization of state actions through the lack of political organization through political links (desarticulação), immaturity, and lack of agility of participatory groups (collegiate institutions).

Lack of “conscientização” of users: very specific and ideological use of the words conscience/“conscientization”.

Tocantins: regulatory agency is also a user, and giver of licenses (Zé Maria: “êta Brazilzão!”)

People look at me writing down my note – Levi-Strauss, Tristes Tropiques.

08.21.2003 – Aracajú, SE

“Unbalance” produced by field work: habitus. Lack of cognitive and biological comfort, strangeness, of a different place in which the inadequacy of habitus provokes a constant background ‘noise.’ Researcher look for relaxing device in drugs, and loosens balance. Fortaleza, CE: heat, poverty, engineerocratic environment, explicit political manipulations of government, child prostitution, sun, heat, heat, heat…

Researcher is pushed to the limits of his habituses, semiotic habits, culture, etc.

Conversation with Hugo: Preventive license (outorga preventiva) is problematic and dangerous. Parallel system created by top-level bureaucracy to the negotiated allocation. Part of the institutional pressure for government level cut agreements for industrial installation (fiscal wars). A preventive water license is created when government and
industry sign the contracts, and then the investment is made. Later the companies request COGERH a license as a fake formal step. COGERH will be pressed by SRH pressed by SEAGRI (Carlos Matos) to give the license. That endangers the legitimacy of negotiated water allocation – or better yet, shows clearly that the participatory water allocation has the explicit goal of being a very local conflict resolution mechanism (but if there is sabotage, what kind of resolution is that? It solves only the government – as actor on the process – problem, taking it out of the accountable agent). It is “uma questão cartorial”, according to Hugo. So the government itself does sabotage against the participatory efforts.

Totemism in local political life. Morada Nova is divided in two groups/families: the caborés and the corujas. Carlos Augusto, president of the Morada Nova’s SAAE, is linked to the Girão Family (Adler Girão is the mayor now), and therefore is a coruja. In another city the groups are cavalos vs. éguas. Almost always two families, two animals. In Limoeiro, the situation is more complex.

**09.10.2003 – Limoeiro do Norte, CE**

Water situation in Ceará, in terms of distribution of power between Fortaleza and the hinterland, can be described as internal colonialism. But the micro-mechanisms of new forms of colonialism are the novelties to be studied. This colonialism can only be maintained with a lot of energy being put in metapragmatic controls and semiotic operators. Negri and Hardt: empire; Yudice: the uses of culture; Deleuze and Gattari/Foucault; Mignolo: local histories, global designs; Davis: Late Victorian holocausts.

**09.15.2003 – Fortaleza, CE**

Local mayor as permanent members of the water committees: two readings – 1) increase in the power of the state institutionalized structure inside the committees, in comparison with the civil society participation; or 2) obligation of local mayors to get involved and updated in the important questions being discussed there, attack on the indifference of local politicians.

Indecision of SRH and COGERH in the few weeks before the National Meeting of Water Committee Members caused disorganization in committees and disincentives towards their participation: use of time and rhythm inside the bureaucratic institutional game to mold reality in a way that favors some groups rather than others. Use of financial argument - self-sustainability of COGERH – to justify these changes.
Agency question: that all was made with intent or not? Is it just conspiracy theory? What is the relevance of that? Or is it just the result of processes of a system in which people have no consciousness nor vision about those things?

Hyper-planning is closeness (see Deleuze and Gattari, on the line); lack of planning: openness, lack of balance, hurry at the end, and therefore no time to think about inclusiveness or equity; openness so that “articulation” can be made out of the system. “Articulation” -> out of public arenas, implication for the accountability concept.

09.16.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Conversation with Ana about Nova Jaguaribara:

Nova Jaguaribara and gender: division of actors by gender inside the local political arena. Castanhão engineers, masculine labor force (linked to the economic impact in the town), men dominate the local political life (“câmara dos vereadores” for instance) – in opposition to the fundamental role played by women in the resistance to the Castanhão project and the moving of the town (Sister Bernardete and other sisters; Célia from IMOPEC; religious community, with its intersections with the Casa da Memória group, even if led by Jeso). Different genders have their actions linked to different spaces: formal politics lead by men, women created their alternative space (e.g. Casa da Memória) but also participating in confrontations in the formal political arena (resistance to the moving of the town).

Casa Nova Jaguaribara: residing population ‘feminized’ due to migration, poverty, subjugation, but not passive – invasion, penetration, rape, violence, sexuality as metaphors (does it all work?) Water symbolism (unconscious) and of submerged city (Canudos), submersion as imposed, forced forgetting, “mnemonic violence” grounded in the technical/climatologic necessity, rhetorical wardrobe of an economic model structured to work as internal colonialism.

What other forms of mnemonic violence exist? What other forms are used by the state in the “soil preparation” for the “rolo compressor” of the economic development? Mnemonic violence as metapragmatic action, metapragmatic attack (or counterattack) as form of local resistance -> resistance against semiotic regimentation mechanisms, through semiotic obviation (metapragmatic attacks).

What about when it does not work? No tried? What are the limits/edges (epistemological/ethnomethodological/phenomenological) of this phenomenon?

Casa da Memória: objects in the casa have no link with the spaciality of the old town. There is no map, “maquete, foto aérea.” Collection of personal objects, attribution of value to the intimate and personal, little attribution of value to public structures and arenas. Families self-represent themselves through personal photos and donated objects; children in the casa dispute the attention of the visitor pointing to objects donated by their families. Quasi-genealogy (not visible to the visitor-outsider, and therefore not visible to the new resident that did not share the life in the old town, which are many) through the objects:
codified by memory, minimum shared memory of some (inhabitants of the old town) but not of all; code that divides the town in the “real (truthful) inhabitants” – there is a local discourse about the criminality that arrived with the ‘outsiders’ -> strange people=crime.

Sister Bernardete told Ana that the casa is not a museum because a museum is static, and memory is always changing. The structure of the house does not reflect temporization (sequence of events, time line, discourse structure around a time sequence), but rather an iconization of an idea of ‘culture’ through objects (Yudice’s The uses of culture). Timeless objects, or objects from which time as a dimension was extracted from them; temporality marked by the event founder of the necessity of the materialization of memory – trauma – construction of dam, flooding of the city. Material violence, necessity of materialization of memory -> construction of a memory iconographed in objects, materialized and referenced differently for inhabitants from old town or from somewhere else (outsiders). Palpability of culture, of memory. Need of institutionalization – Casa as “institution” (metapragmatic war also happening through the status of each institution -> materialization of institution as political move), “officiality” of house as political manifestation, in an arena dominated by political and governmental institutions (SRH, municipal politics, etc.)

But: dependency on state for cession of building, what never happened. Few people in the anniversary of the casa, no representative of the “official” local politics. Why is that? Resistance/counter resistance? Are the people in the casa putting themselves apart, or are they being put apart?

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09.17.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Why is subsistence always seen as something bad (in agriculture)? Metapragmatic frame that orders concepts: subsistence as something bad (= poverty, hunger, vulnerability), market as something good (= modernity, participation in the economy) -> Mike Davis show in Late Victorian Holocausts that the equation is sometimes reverse: subsistence = guarantee of food availability; market = hunger, if other variables (socio-politico-economic organization, concentrating/exploiting mechanisms) are added. This logic is applied in an analogous form to Ceará (see Castro Neves, etc).

Nova Jaguaribara’s Casa da Memória: Ana said that the theater presentation that we saw in the anniversary party of the casa is repeated every year (but with a new play every year). Pictures of old Casa da Memória (old town) and anniversary parties inside that casa – metamemory.

Market and land ownership, class divisions: drought in Ceará shortened inequalities while wealthy were also vulnerable (see Raimundo Girão). Market and development of infrastructure reduced the vulnerability of the wealthiest but not of the poor, generating a cycle of positive feedback that increased inequality between rich and poor.

(If capitalism accentuated inequality, what promoted previous equality?)
The suitcase: became an icon of the moving. Contrast of the suitcase with the other objects of the Casa: they are icons of past that is present through the myth of “roots and culture”, while the suitcase is an icon of the need for selection, what fits and what doesn’t fit in the suitcase (what fits went to people’s homes, what doesn’t fit went to the Casa da Memória?). Jeso had the idea of inserting the suitcase in the play, but also in the Catholic ritual before the play – suitcase and the “bumba meu boi” inserted in the Catholic ritual.

What does not fit inside the suitcase? This was the theme of artistic workshops with the children: photography workshops, a “diary of the move” they created and registered their thoughts and feeling during the change. Each street organized a goodbye party before the move, with food, music, etc. These street parties happened for over a month.

Likelihood that old town never really gets flooded – never-ending story (well, it did in 2004). – anxiety, sense of openness of wounds.

(Insertion of political elements inside the Catholic mass: impressive recurrence, like the mass during the Holy Spirit Festival in Morada Nova, in which the mayor and other politicians participated in the altar. Analyze it later.)

Hugo: his idea is to work the concept of territory as a field of forces. His idea has interesting links with my idea on metapragmatics and field of forces.

Article to be written jointly:

Analyze how a vertical political structure like those in the hinterland work in a horizontal environment (committees). System adaptation, manipulations by government -> committee leaders articulation group, sabotage in the metropolitan basin “posse”, etc.

Goal: evaluate the development of the system, perspectives for local political development (empowerment), for civil society, e recommendation of strategies for action for users and civil society.

09.18.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Market creates nets – new games – that put players unevenly prepared in confrontation (and change socio-economic configurations in demographic scale). Committees and water management systems create nets that put new players in contact, create a new political space (and arena), with new rules, and therefore creating a socio-political change in the region.

Local organizations created and grounded around particular subsistence strategies – as important part therefore of the clientalistic coronelistic relations (patron-client) -> participatory arenas are novelties in this panorama, deep impact, non-planned socio-political reorganization, and part of the poorest population may have had its situation worsened since horizontal structures break the deep accountability and reciprocity ties of
Clientalism-coronelism. Analyze conflict between what were the goals, what happened in reality, and how conflicts were solved.

Boelens & Doornbos article: local populations seek support in different normative bases: religious, tradition, democratic, technocratic, technical, common-sense, etc, according to specific characteristics of the situation in hand. In Ceará the situation is a little more complex since some actors – mainly state secretariat and some users that are politicians – have the power to produce or induce changes in the legal codes.

09.19.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Ruling power: combination of ideologically and violently coercive forms of domination, or morally persuasive, hegemonic leadership? Need for refinement of this model: part of reality taken as ontologically “natural” is structured with a great deal of violence made “invisible” (not to everyone). So persuasion makes use of what was made invisible before but is inherently coercive in a violent/physical way -> ruling power, if seen as ongoing construction in the game of politics, is constructed, maintained, defied, reproduced, in a complex and multi-scaled way. The net of ideological invisibility – “common mental universe” (Le Goff) – is so solidly structured sometimes, that revolution (violent or not) is the only way of making the doxa visible.

Non-class ideologies as important amorphous mass to be manipulated in struggle for power, turning them into politically charged issues through semiotic operators.

09.27.2003 – Limoeiro do Norte, CE

Observed pattern of verbal interchange when there a disagreement: one of the contenders takes the point made by the other one, says “I agree with X” (“tô de acordo com X”), but changes the point of the argument with subtle semiotic manipulations, or forcing a secondary interpretation, or pushing the argument to the limits of what logics can handle; but the importance of saying “I agree with you”, before the BUT that may or may not come, is the creation of link, “vínculo” between them, of being in agreement - what kind of agreement is this? The agreement is what they are trying to construct, by they are in agreement that the matter is important, that consensus is important (even if it is a forced or brokered consensus, or an imposed one in reality), or that they want to be seen as having good will in declaring been in agreement, and this display of good will is important, they don’t want to be seen as obstructing the decision making; but even more important, when they declare they are in agreement they have more metapragmatic space to try to gain control over the discourse of the other without having the other immediately ready to counterattack, once, at the end, it is being said that they are “in agreement”. So declaring to think alike may be also a metapragmatic attack, but a very subtle one, in which the tools
used are the control of the semantic web through a manipulation of time, space, the part of the reasoning being made central to the arguments, etc. Mixing up social genres (as in the case of Nixon, see Bailey 2001, politics+family values) is one strategy, but there are many others. It may also impact turn taking, once one is declaring been in agreement with the other, and may try to gain the right of speaking FOR the other too (specially if there are other elements that are not linked to the merit or content of the discussion, but to other elements linked to social hierarchies, like the control and fluency in sophisticated language (technical register in water resources or legal codes), or just using language in a sense that creates the indexicallity of social hierarchy and shuts the individuals of lower classes for showing the presence of someone from a higher and powerful group.

Being accorded, in agreement, shows also the importance of the personal relationship in the conversation, i.e. puts the personal links in an important level, despite the importance (or not) of the objective and rational things being debated. Conversation as social activity and therefore regulated by local social etiquettes of sociability, even if the content of the conversation is a commercial and economic matter – like in this meeting of the Frutacor that we witnessed, in which the expression “we are together” was used to mean, in a pragmatic level, “we all have to go in the direction we the few decide.” So why the need to manifest verbally the allegiances? Or partnerships, or agreements? How is that related to the history of sociability of the hinterland? (does it have to so with family wars, honor, loyalty to potentates, the need to verbalize clearly the allegiances in local political life, etc?)

When the person trying to manipulate the conversation is an important person, from a higher stratum, the manifestation of agreement or accord may be by itself something to be praised by the person from the lower stratum, what may cause this person to accept the manipulation in exchange for the alliance being created. This is a metapragmatic version of patron-client relationship, Clientalism/corolenism in verbal interactions, quantum-like ephemeral simulacrum of the exchange of the patron-client relationship, mainly protection.

Partners are ranked according to production. Best partner is Chico Marques, with 35 tons/week, declared 20 tons/week, and worst produces 1 ton/week. Bigger=better, smaller=worse.

09.30.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Macroeconomic models that guide public policies may have blind spots that keep part of the population invisible, and for that reason this population may be kept vulnerable even if the government make the effort to act upon poverty by creating social programs for the poor segments of the population. E.g. not considering multiple patterns of work and occupation: animals, irrigation, rain fed, daily wage work, moto-taxi, migrant – just one person, different places and times. The design of public policies, when grounded in the precise and unambiguous classification of occupation (e.g. through the filling of forms and official documentation, etc., if all this is part of the selection process that decides who are the targets/eligible for the benefits) -> do I have evidence of a case like that?
10.01.2003 – Fortaleza, CE


10.07.2003 – São Paulo, SP

Another example of semiotic regimentation: monetarism that invades and pervades the Developmentist discourse obscures the social relations that may be in the basis for underdevelopment. The reasoning is elaborated to get to the conclusion that the solution is to “distribute income.” There is the need to analyze sociological and anthropological micro-mechanisms that impede income distribution of happening, or even get to be proposed as real alternative.

There is the need of a middle ground between economic anthropology and economy/studies of economic development.

From Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Junior, “Palavras que calcinam, palavras que dominam”: drought became a national problem in the moment in which the regional economic crisis got worse due to lack of rains, and local elites were affected in a way that had no precedents. At the same time, the drought is made the battle horse of the elite that needs strong arguments to keep requesting its share, in the division of economic benefits and of political offices in the national arena (p. 120). Use of the suffering of poor people as rhetorical instrument for getting resources, and of climatic cause of problems to explain the inevitability and recurrence of the human suffering problem.

Castro Neves -> Thompson, moral economy

Paternalism: view from the top, totalized, linked to the concepts of culture and hegemony

Criticism: illusory stability, constructed and maintained through permanent social conflicts (the flow of conflict may be simplified and a structure is seen in the dynamics of facts -> theoretical move, conceptual regimentation in depth and scope)

+ bricolage, creativity
+ reality input (Peircean phenomenology)

⇒ Thompson, Scott, Peirce vs. Gramsci, Levi-Strauss/Durkheim (statistics victims), Bourdieu, Foucault (1st phase of each).
Dynamic stability (statistical/demographic) vs. pervasiveness of structure / culture / hegemony / etc.

Construction of hegemony of Ceará’s state government in the hinterland, inside the process of gaining control over water resources: it is also a statistical and theoretical illusion. What is the creation of hegemony inside the power relations in the hinterland? What is hegemony in those circumstances?

Micro-analysis of encounters which, in the long run, can give the impression of hegemony but that are partial aspects of a multiple scaled, distributed, diluted, broad, endless conflict. Nova Jaguaribara is only a nodule visible enough to call the attention even of the uninformed observer.

But: can I also say that there is no social order? Time -> no. Also: stability is a cognitive illusion (Peirce -> Thirdness), in the same way that time itself makes everything dynamic (see Parker on Peirce).

This all can be the dissertation’s introduction. How to frame theoretically the conflicts taking place in the hinterland? To criticize concepts of patriarchalism, hegemony, clientalism, domination, in the light of Castro Neves, Djacir de Menezes, Albuquerque Jr., Josué de Castro? What about patrimonialism, is it time of this concept to go through the same kind of criticism?

There is no social theory that is not heuristic. If it is presented as if not, what is going on is an attempt of rhetorical and semiotic manipulation.

How do discourses on the well-being of the community/population coexist with liberal discourses on markets? Analyze the middle-ground in which semiotic operations take place to present the liberal discourse as the well-being (welfare) discourse, or how one neutralizes the political efficiency of the other in concrete situations. Local politicians / bourgeoisie, business people, community leaders, etc.

10.08.2003 – São Paulo, SP

Cynthia Enloe, “The Morning After” -> redemocratization may shrink the political arena (mainly for women): semiotic domination: disappearance of visible motif for women’s organization, under discourse of redemocratization (need of enemy as making viable political space of joining forces of different / conflictive social movements; e.g. FMLN and unions dominated by men, tend to dominate political space after demilitarization, while demilitarization doesn’t enough attention to masculine ethos that created conditions for the rise of militarized violence.
Guns as icons of masculinity: how to deal with men inserted in this symbolic universe? In a perspective of demilitarization?

Diane Richardson and Hazel May, “Deserving victims? Sexual status and the social construction of violence”

Violence is socially defined; social definitions of violence revolve around culpability, victimization and what is deemed socially appropriate behavior in particular contexts;

Deserving victims based on ‘behavioral responsibility’ for risk avoidance + social contexts + social characteristics of the victim;

Naturalization of heterosexuality dehumanizes lesbians and gay men as “sexual pathology” -> semiotic operation;

Separation of public/private as a patriarchal construction (“gay is ok in private spaces”)

“Normalization” of certain forms of violence through gendered and sexualized notions of spaces and places, as well as victims and perpetrators -> semiotic operation; this is all invisible to laws and social policies generally.

Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco and Antonius C.G.M. Robben, “Interdisciplinary perspectives on violence and trauma”

Large scale violence takes place in complex and over-determined socio-cultural contexts which intertwine psychic, social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions.

Collective violence targets the body, the psyche, as well as the socio-cultural order;

Transgenerational work on trauma necessary;

Cultural formations (symbols, folk models, rituals) mobilized to inscribe, resist, and heal trauma (Ceará’s popular image of cangaceiros -> justice, accountability, transference, etc.)

Can outsiders understand the victim’s point of view? The work of forgetting is necessary for healing; need for processual, multi-leveled approaches;

Basic trust: reconstruction of trust in social institutions and cultural practices that structure experience and give meaning to human lives. Need for public rituals of accountability (see Borneman).

[Ambiguity and chaos not accounted usually in theoretical reconstructions of events and causes (of violence and trauma)]

Semiotic aspects/operators (a la Bauman): obedience to authority; learned disinhibition; ideological transformations, ritualizations in groups, technicality of things, psychological networks, righteousness about their causes, etc.

Cultural formation as mediation

Psychiatry may act as a mass technology to produce a collectivization of massive trauma (same diagnosis and treatment to different symptoms).

Melanie Klein’s “projection and splitting” theory -> demonization of the other.
Talal Asad, “Pain and Truth in Medieval Christian Ritual”

Physical pain in ordeal: body as sign in the construction of truth; in torture: spoken words as essential medium in the construction of truth. Now: pain only justified in its instrumental adequacy to given ends (war, criminology, animal testing, etc.)

Christine J. Walley, “Searching for voices: feminism, anthropology, and the global debate over female genital operations”

Either/or: cultural relativism and politically-informed outrage grounded both in a hardened view of “culture” and conceptualization of “us” and “them” (colonial view). Practice exists inside complex and dynamic social and cultural relations, and with social functions attached to it in some groups -> supporters and attackers in the same community; hardening of distinction between “modern” and “traditional”.

Female genital operation does not exist as a category, but it is a collection of diverse forms of practices lumped together.

Rene Girard, “Sacrifice” in “Violence and the Sacred”

Violence unavoidable so it has to find a surrogate victim in order not to direct it towards the self, i.e. towards the social order. Sacrifice is a way of dealing with violent impulses without threatening the social order.

Substitution is the basis for the practice of sacrifice (semiotic operation)

Victim has to be “sacrificeable,” i.e. in position of be sacrificed without loss for the social group (neither symbolic not material – see Garfinkel); degree of misunderstanding is necessary; victim has to be an outsider, pre-initiated individuals, or individuals in special places (e.g. kings)

Sacredness of victim: semiotic operation to enable sacrifice to operate its solidarity function; purpose of sacrifice is to restore harmony, to redirect violence to its “proper channels”

Judicial system operates in the same way: ritualizes vengeance and controls it, so it does not get out of control.

Rite of sacrifice has to be done in a way to polarize the community’s aggressive impulses and redirect them toward victims that may be actual or figurative, animate or inanimate, but that is always incapable of generating further vengeance;

The covert appropriation by sacrifice of certain properties of violence, particularly the ability of violence to move from one object to another, is hidden from sight by the awesome machinery of ritual. Only the transcendental quality of the system can assure the prevention or cure of violence: judicial systems borrow the signs from religion and keep the transcendental tone.

Deep necessity of semiotic operators that order symbols appropriately: bad blood, good blood, right victim, sacred victim, etc.
Anthony Giddens, “Modernity, Totalitarianism and Critical Theory”

Totalitarianism is a tendency of the modern state;

Social theory tends to disconsider the expanded role of surveillance and the altered nature of military power with the development of means of waging industrialized war;

Friedrich’s definition of totalitarianism: 1) totalistic ideology; 2) single party committed to this ideology and led by one man, the dictator; 3) fully developed secret police, and monopolistic control over a) main communications; b) operational weapons; and c) all organizations, including economic ones;

Totalitarianism refers more appropriately to a definite aspect of a society’s experience, e.g. Stalinism;

Bipolar characterization of in- and out- groups, attached to nationalism and racism, and linked to the charisma of the leader -> ideology of totalitarianism

Some level of popular support is necessary -> control over cultural production + use of terror as semiotic/communicational tool (“demonizations”)

Totalitarian rule is only possible with high level of surveillance (bureaucratic control, info production, etc.)

Elements of totalitarian rule:

1) Focusing on surveillance as
   a. Information coding, documentation of activities of population;
   b. Supervision of activities, intensified policing;

2) “Moral totalism”: fate of the political community as embedded in the historicity of the people;

3) Terror: maximizing of police power, allied to disposal of means of waging industrialized war and sequestration;

4) Prominence of leader figure: appropriation of power by leader depending not upon a professionalized military role, but the generation of mass support.

Leader trusted because of his authoritarianism, not in spite of it (Le Bon/Freud psychological theory of leadership -> identification on the basis of regressive features of personality)

Surveillance creates deviance (***)

The totalizing effect of symbol systems depend mainly upon how far they can be appropriated in such a way as to couple historicity with a hostile attitude towards ‘outgroups’

Dimensions of modernity:

- private property vs. public domain;
- surveillance (polyarchy)
- military violence / power / ind.war
- transformation of nature / created environment

Monopoly of control of violence -> surveillance in workplace, control of deviance (surveillance as result of the same semiotic transformation that generated ‘deviance’, and both concepts live in positive feedback relationship);

Modern social movements exist in the same arenas of historicity as the organizations they oppose;

Surveillance etc -> control of the day-to-day lives of the populace -> governability without clan compromise…

[and without the need of symbolic hegemony too: semiotic domination through exploiting the fragmentation of the world, visibilities / invisibilities, etc. ***]

Clausewitz not valid anymore

Marx: judge ideas not by their manifest content but by the practical consequences of their propagation

Comte / Marx: cognitive appropriation of history will eventually allow human beings to control their own destiny -> flawed concept: understanding of what is immanent does not guarantee its convergence with what critical theory may seek to actualize; an understanding of a particular feature of social life or of history, in becoming part of social life, may act to fracture the very forms of control it was introduced to achieve (***) -> criticism to power of metapragmatic analysis?

Seifert, Ruth, “The Second Front: the logic of sexual violence in wars”

Mass rapes -> destruction of physical and psychological existence of the women concerned, infliction of harm on the culture and collective identity of the whole group, ethnicity, or nation under attack -> war crimes against women have symbolic meanings, and therefore must be analyzed within the symbolic content of the nation and gender system;

Biology itself is a social construction and therefore cannot explain rape;

Torture/rape: annihilating culture, through destruction of language (self-extension) or the obliteration of the contexts of consciousness (pain destroys the ability of elementary perception and complex thinking and feeling) -> pain and semiosis;

‘Senseless’ of torture as apparent -> violence as power inscription in reality

10.10.2003 – São Paulo, SP

Social/political/linguistic dynamics create and destroy the systematicity of symbols, conscious or unconsciously. Psychotherapy may be a way of deconstructing the
systematicity of symbols; politically charged encounters also -> metapragmatic dimensions of stability of systems – explore this ***

Semiotics is tool for practice, part of it, but beyond representation there is a myriad of material chains of cause and effect influencing the dynamics of reality -> need to state where semiotics stands in conceptualization of social reality. Semiotic operators are not part of “representations”, but mechanisms that affect them deeply, and are importantly linked to practice

Giddens/Bourdieu for structure, apply the same idea for semiotics in social practice: double hand relation, structuring structure -> while practices/actions/performances enable and disable specific semiotic operators and operations, the effect of the semiotic operators enable and disable practices/actions/performances. -> insert metasemiotics in practice theory to see the result *****

Is there a way of defining a hierarchy? No. Nationalism may be a narrative that lead young people to engage in suicidal activities or may be content of jokes, seen with disdain. Hierarchies may be proposed for specific case analysis, but once again a shift in social genre, from political rally to carnival, may make the analysis invalid.

Is a semiotic operator a reification? What is the axioms of this theorization? Theoretical bottom line?

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10.10.2003 – São Paulo, SP

Carole Nagengast, “Violence, Terror, and the Crisis of the State”

Crisis of contemporary state -> differentially successful monopolization of power and the contradiction between it and the demands of peripherized peoples (Durkheimian, disconsiders creation of political realities though action/practices in non planned ways -> institutions as technologies/changed landscape)

“The refusal of multiplicity, the dread of difference – ethnocidal violence – [is] the very essence of the state” (Clastres)

Violence is often reified, what doesn’t help

State: powerful technology with deep semiotic action -> organization of power through organization of symbols (and habitus, etc – Stuart Hall)

Torture is unimaginable, so it is represented as fit into existing acceptable discourses: terrorism, communism, subversion, etc (*** it is easier to group iconized, reified and fear-provoking elements into few categories. That is why the other inherits all the demons one fears also)
Torturers: just doing their jobs (semiotic operator a la Bauman)
Subordinate groups vulnerable to physical and symbolic violence of all sorts;
Political semiotic regimentation: UN and international law use nation-state as unit of thinking, as proper scale for international politics (or human rights actions), what lives minorities invisible or under the tutelage of a nation.

Zygmunt Bauman, Introduction in “Sociology after the Holocaust”
Two ways to belittle the significance of the holocaust for sociology: 1) present it as something of Jewish history exclusively; 2) present the Holocaust as just an extreme manifestation of human aggressive instincts.
The Holocaust has more to say about the state of sociology than the opposite
(see more on the chapter)

10.12.2003 – New York, NY

Idea for article on semiotics and politics: exploring icons, indices and symbols linked to a topic, and how these signs are used and transformed inside the political dynamics (and the semiotic operators that make then relevant or irrelevant, etc.)
Possible topics for the Ceará case:
1 – change, economic development;
2 – modern vs. traditional;
3 – water;
4 – religion, religious icons;
5 – the Nova Jaguaribara case (Casa da Memória, etc.)
Exploration of variations and contextualization of signs in distinct circumstances (see Jarman, “Troubled Images”)

10.13.2003 – New York, NY

From Scheper-Hughes, “Death without weeping”:
Embarrassment in bringing racial issue to discussion in Pernambuco: break in politeness codes. How does politeness relate to the social production of visibility?
Revealing the doxa / politeness as consciousness of doxa borders? Or as cultural mechanism not to approach doxa borders?

Teleology/tautology -> cognitive aspects of the production of invisibility.

Is there a way to make (prove) a correlation between voting situations and sabotages?

Intense conflict -> no consensus -> voting (without legitimacy for loosers, perhaps) -> sabotage (hypothesis).

What does happen more? Sabotages against decisions imposed by government or sabotages against decisions done in participatory realm?

Government has the power to define sabotage against its decisions ‘crime’; do the other contenders see the thing in the same way, or have the capability of using the same artifices?

10.22.2003 – New York, NY

Theory:

Relationship between language and culture -> metapragmatics as linguistic thing, how can it be extrapolated to cultural or political processes -> mechanism to manipulate ordering, values, meaning, etc., in , linguistic exchange -> How does it go beyond language?

Language-culture as separate things -> wrong view; culture as a kaleidoscope of semiotic habits, language as part of it, tool, apparatus to deal with symbols; life as semiosis; individual as sign in the semiotic stream;

Where does power gets into the picture? Agency? -> Bourdieu: rules of the game, field, etc. (regimentations of symbols, and the heuristic acceptance of the existence of a material world)

What are the relation between Peircean semiotics and politics?

Gal/Irvine’s operators are rather part of cognition and/or use of language in general. There is no symbolic life without iconization -> coming and going from iconization to symbolization in the real (pragmatic) use of concepts.

See “Thinking like a state”, by Scott; see Levi-Strauss in general. Both depict things in a static way (Scott mainly). Try to do it in the flow of semiosis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of semiosis/</th>
<th>public arena</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of sign</td>
<td>(medium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(flow of signs, realm of signification, feedback cycles, etc.)</td>
<td>media (TV, newspapers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>political speeches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Describe how signs change their characteristics (icons, index, symbols, and other Peircean distinctions) through the communicative process -> how political factors affect the process (circumstances in which the communication takes place) -> political economy of categories and classifications (what’s behind that? Safety? Fear? -> does that make people conservatives if in place of power, and revolutionaries if devoid of it?)

-> Durkheimian theorization + Garfinkel + Girard + Marx, etc.

Methodology: gather communicational manifestations, line it up besides sequence of facts (careful with linearities…), try to establish correlations or patterns of circumstances in which semiotic operators are employed. Then: try to access in some way the level of consciousness people have about what they are doing / or bricolage patterns -> probably distinction of two levels of pragmatic use will collapse -> many levels of consciousness / unconsciousness in pragmatic moves across social levels/scales.

How to put together a taxonomy of scales that can be useful for the study?

1 – institutional political view, from local to national (international), and back;
2 – by occupation;
3 – by demography;
4 – by place inside the information flow / semiotic flow;

(Would a mapping of semiotic flow – spatialized – have anything to say?)

Where do things happen, in terms of political and actual activity that may affect the life of symbols/signs? Methodologies to map visibility of places, groups, sectors, activities => appearance in news?

What if the whole social scale question is part of the metapragmatic game? Part of the lenses through which reality is compartmentalized and regimentalized?

Yet: methodological-philosophical question – there can be no work done without getting into some trap (that’s the outside door of the postmodern dilemma -> if everything is bricolage from a realistic perspective, then old moral standards still exist, because people die and kill the same way => radical criticism towards European phenomenology – Heidegger, Husserl, Schutz -> Derrida, Sartre, Bourdieu, Giddens, ethnomethodology, Saussure) => Peircean phenomenology as alternative, because it incorporates some realism, input from outside world that solves the Bourdieu/Sahlins dilemma – see “From Structure to Game as Root Metaphor for the Social Sciences”

- >political life as part of semiosis (flow)
+ 

- > game (moves, metapragmatic moves in a bricolage sense)
+ 

- > networks of physical causalities changing the physical universe (institutional apparatus, ecological devastation, etc.)
10.24.2003 – Recife, PE => Fortaleza, CE

Metapragmatic domain may work as a buffer when conflicts in ordinary domain get too intense; in these situations, metapragmatic dynamics mat rearrange values, meanings, structures, in order to bring some degree of stability to ordinary use of language -> people’s consciousness about it may put it to work in political ways (and it may have political aspects all the time)

⇒ is myth part of this process? Is myth related to metalinguistic life?

⇒ Add teleology principle to that --> Thirdness, Peirce.

10.29.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

I am interested in the pragmatic dimension (political results) of the metapragmatic activity, or how the metapragmatic and pragmatic activities are inter-related. How does the results of metapragmatic activity affect the pragmatic level (and not-linguistic or non-verbal, therefore semiotic, of the symbolic activity)? E.g. jokes in which the person who tells it imitates the accent of someone from another place/nationality. What is the metapragmatic dimension of this? Humor makes use of this frequently – Chico Anísio, Tom Cavalcante, etc. – iconization.

11.03.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Assis: “Cognitive conflict can be solved by knowledge shock” – can it? “But that makes explicit where the political conflict is, so things become more clear”. Too optimistic, Habermas in view of knowledge.

11.04.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Water committee – participation of members: to assume that individuals will participate and behave in the committees as they behave outside the committees does not considers the theatricality of the situation / ritual / fact that the everyday life and the water allocation
seminar operate inside different genres (social, discursive), and therefore induce to different behavior-patterns of actions.

Is there any explicit contradiction between these two worlds? How does the relationship between then take place? What are the signs (icons, indices, symbols), and how do they exist and are used in a dynamic way, to maintain or to disrupt the relationship between seminar and everyday life? (=> social hierarchies and political rituals, in which social capital is being negotiated instead of decision-making plain and simple)

Alex Pfaff: “economists tend not to consider everything they cannot understand”. Analyze it inside the power relation of academia/development universe.

Validation methods: impositions of one discipline upon others (economics as the main meta-criteria for validating arguments inside the development universe)

Manipulation of the semantic field (the need to use economic terminology to be able to talk at all);

Teleology/tautology as strategies of how a discipline is formed (develops and shapes specific kinds of reasoning through time) and maintained.

⇒ analyze that in a sociology of knowledge paper.

11.05.2003 – Limoeiro do Norte, CE

Payment capability of users – is it a technical issue? Technicians establishing amounts of money a water user can pay => how was local micro-economy considered? How do producers organize their budgets, incomes, etc? How do producers conceptualize, understand, imagine, their financial lives? How does the imposition of a new cost impacts the local ways of understanding/living the local accountancy?

Imposition of a way of understanding/conceptualize the world over another.

Scott, “Seeing like a state”

The fact that economists tend to think in aggregate ways (averages, scale outputs, macroeconomic results), creates a kind of lack of sensitivity to local and circumstantial complexities. This framework, inside the realm of public policies, naturally penalizes marginal populations (economically, politically or semiotically marginal) and may increase their vulnerability (well, their invisibility is already part of it). There is little understanding among these populations about what is going on, what generates local explanations little articulated and without possibility to sustain any resistance effort. In this sense, the water allocation seminar is interesting. At the same time it created a new political space, it created also a ritual that generated a new way of understanding the water issue, and a new
way of understanding the role (and authority and legitimacy) of the state in the water management (and in the organization of society).

Methodology for analysis:

- users in the field (and their local groups – unions, associations, etc.)
- SRH
- COGERH
- Funceme
- NGOs
- Committees
- Water allocation seminar

Is the water allocation seminar a semiotic operator in a semiotic flow?

What about the rain prophets’ meeting?

(of course everything is, but are these two things intense and marked elements in this flow?)

How to represent it all as semiotic flow?

+ political game? (Bailey)

+ Peircean semiotics (Silverstein, Gal, Eco, etc.)

+ Ortner/Bourdieu

⇒ how to make it useful for NGOs and public policies?

José Carlos de Araújo: educational bill => it may make visible some important COGERH’s limitations.

Efficiency champions in the water game -> values aligned to metapragmatic structures;

Tariff in a conflict of visions: efficiency instrument or revenue generating mechanism that will filter demand and leave water for users with higher payment capability?

11.07.2003 – Fortaleza, CE
From Kim (Alex Pfaff’s wife): “you only optimizes up to the point to which it is optimum to optimize”

There is no way out of the teleological/tautological principle!

11.11.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Bailey, “Stratagems and Spoils”

What are the rules of the game in Ceará? Or even before that, what is the game exactly, for each stakeholder? How one defines/construct the idea of game?

Do people really see it as a game?

Do people located at different social/political/economic/cultural positions see the game differently? How is that?

Meta-insight: how does semiosis produce concepts/events/semiotic events (as concepts -> concepts as semiotic events): complexity of reality may be overwhelming, and we indeed need some degree of reification/conceptual simplification to be able to make our minds work semiotically – at least the digital part of it, or put another way, going from analogical to digital is a necessary technological/semiotic step to make thinking/feeling effective -> reduction in complexity to gain improvement in efficiency -> check the book “The Symbolic Species”, Deacon - + the mechanism of our cognition surely affects the social world, imposes distinctions and categorizations, creates enforcement mechanisms to keep these reifications going, in a word, indeed they reduce the entropic characterization of the world (do they?), or at least generate patterns that are stable, up to some degree.

In that sense, a scientific work is constructed upon reifications (as language and living in general is), but up to some degree social action forces reality into these kinds of reifications, and that is what makes scientific pieces like this one something else than absolute nonsense, but at the same time a rough and timed approximation (one does not need to have seen the real to have an idea of how clumsy one’s ideas/representations/models/theories are -> as Goedel and Wittgenstein have shown us).

Bailey, p. 6: “you have to learn the appropriate language and the rules of the game before you can play effectively” – yes and no, just a minimal requirement, BUT:

1 – this view assumes a degree of stability most political games don’t have;

2 – inequities need to be taken in consideration – in access to information, and power (define it in a working-effective way);

3 – everything is bricolage up to a point (but there is most of times the illusion of stability – so how does the bricolage idea remains valid?)

4 – there are metapragmatic battles over what are the legitimate rules of the game;
5 – there is always a degree of blindness in each player;  
So how is the stability of the rules/game constructed?  
Games: get definitions and analyze them: Barth, Bailey, Bourdieu, Ortner, Sartre, Schutz, Garfinkel, Giddens, Sahlins, Turner;

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New government in Ceará received an heritage (spoils) of the old -> investment in infrastructure, which involve certain ideological positions (on going construction works, for example – Castanhão, etc. – and there is the need for new explanations/versions/justifications for what is being done or will be done, what helps them to understand the political coherence of what they are doing.

Political rhetoric as part of the political bricolage, at every given moment. This bricolage activity is grounded/based in specific forms of production of idea/concepts/categories – discursive genres, generate specific discourses; the moment of asking a question is also the moment of the materialization of categories.

So, is there any actions that is not dependent upon categorizations? If categorization is produced in a specific moment of semiosis (moment of the elaboration of the question/questioning), what happens in the other moments/rest of the time? Is there any actions that is not categorizing/categorized? Or is it that categorization itself takes place at distinct levels? Peirce certainly has much to contribute on this, as Sebeioik, Eco, etc. (see Peirce’s description of the work of cognition).

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11.27.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

CONERH meeting: political ritual in Ceará: most important person arrives late, and define the moment in which the meeting will start. Usually the meeting does not start before his/her arrival, and after the arrival no one else is waited for. Substitutes are sit in back chairs, until the beginning of the meeting, when they take the seats of members not present – but not before, even if they know the main member will not come, since they communicate ahead of time.

Osni: “it all was accorded with users and society, via water committees…” Presentation of the project during committee meetings is taken as an “agreement”, even if no time is given for committee members to pronounce themselves, much less tools for a better understanding of the highly technical nature of the process.

Osni: manipulation of facts: use our presence in the morning meeting at Banabuiú to legitimize what he is saying (“they were there” as “they saw it is true”); “all meetings were
filmed and recorded”, which is not true; he also told me in the morning that the CONERH would approve only the industry and sanitation tariff, what was not true. 

Discussion between Zita and Edinardo: Zita is questioning the appropriateness of the way the tariff is being approved, according to the resolution; Edinardo is saying that the new resolution will change the old one (i.e. the new will change criteria for approving things AND approving the tariff plan), and Zita is questioning that. Edinardo trying to manipulate -> analyze the tape! Very rich in content!

12.06.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Language structure vs. pragmatic strategies in the use of language

Existence of the metapragmatic level
- e.g. Jacquement, Silverstein
  e.g. Ana, the use of “” – semantic analysis
  vs. pragmatic analysis
  e.g. attack to Avram Bornestein for use of “”
  -> metapragmatic attack?

Take Wittgenstein seriously:
  analysis of the strategies of the use of language in practical situations inside a well defined community, without universalizing pretensions.

Bailey + Irvine/Gal

12.10.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Meeting at the State Congress in Ceará (Assembléia Legislativa)

Powerpoint presentations, use of maps -> fetish linked to the spatial representation through maps -> why is that? Why the esthetical consumption of maps?

How are maps used in the official rhetoric? Map as icon, index, and symbol -> of what? Analize.

Edinardo: “Vou ser breve devido ao avançado da hora” – part of all his speeches. Why is that? Power to define when it begins and when it ends, or to impose a rhythm on activities, etc.

Pardaillan: civil society as client and beneficiary, state as executor + rhetoric of decentralization, grupo multiparticipativo created in a induced manner. What about the existing organized civil society? What does multiparticipativo means in this context?;
Pardaillan about Cristiano Maia: “ele é da área, ele é engenheiro” implying “he knows what he is talking about” -> discourse legitimation mechanisms: technical training + being born in the place.

Take a look at tapes 2 (end) and 3: considerations on the efficiency in the use of water, water and economic development, with numbers.

12.11.2003 – Fortaleza, CE

Vânia: problems of committees:
1 – high attendance but low levels of involvement of members ("pê-rapadas" associations of the hinterland) => what are the expectancies of representatives of small associations?
New political field, new space + political ritualism as an end in itself; iconization as objective, status, gaining or maintenance of political capital through political rituals, while effective and pragmatic decision making happens outside the political ritual arena.
Conflict: COGERH wants committees and seminars to be effective decision making mechanisms and conflict resolution arenas; local political structures sees that as a political ritual (in which challenges and disruption has to take place);
Bailey: normative vs. pragmatic -> too materialistic a framework. Where is symbolic capital involved? (semioticization)
2 – little “encaminhamento” of decisions (e.f. SEMACE technician who listens to denunciations against shrimp producers and does nothing);
3 – little consciousness of the importance of the role of executive secretaries of committees.
“Zaranza morreu de morte matada”

12.12.2003 – Limoeiro do Norte, CE

Dispute over interpretation of details of legal codes and regiments: see description and tape of this meeting (Baixo Jaguaribe, election of new board of directors) – very rich situation for interpretation and analysis ***;
Centralism taken as geographical: decentralization meaning people from different towns, as rhetorical move (instead of empowerment);
Vision that André, Vânia, etc., had about some actors (e.g. Martins/SRH), changed with the new government: from bad they went to good people. Interesting way to show that evaluation is always relative to circumstances.
“We will have to fight, even have to make use of voting…” – voting as extreme option.
12.14.2003 – Canoa Quebrada, CE

In the beginning (1987-1990s), the government assumed the role of educator and inductor of the civil society in what concerns participatory water management. Now the government does not want to recognize that a group learned how to play and want to act (Banabuiú, Baixo Jaguaribe).

01.04.2004 – São Paulo, SP

Glauber Rocha’s “Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol”

Mix of elements of the history of Canudos and Pedra Branca – Sebastião, the priest, makes reference to Canudos and to Pedra Branca, and he holds and used information and language in a way that is not realistic for a poor peasant -> Glauber, narration as pedagogy, engaged cinema;

Reified social types: priest, coronel, land owner, woman, cowboy – all with a clearcut well defined profile, while Manuel, the main character, is molding himself, adapting and being transformed according to the circumstances brought by the destiny;

Social networks impose the need of character molding himself to the situation he is living: beato (religious follower) or cangaceiro (bandit); but as a cangaceiro, Manuel takes the cross and disrupts the scene of the party; Corisco, whom had baptized Manuel ‘Satanas”, resists and orders Manuel to castrate the groom, which Manuel does. Rosa as observer, as a destabilizing element of the logic of situation (as in the attempt to bring Manuel to conscience in the fanatic moment with the priest), until she goes crazy in the cangaceiro moment;

Justice rhetoric in the speech of the cangaceiro – banditry and justice

Manuel: path on the search for justice, which he does not find neither in fanaticism nor in banditry (with bloodshed in both);

Corisco: blood washes injustices; Corisco frees Manuel.

Antonio das Mortes as Judas: they all fight for the same reason, for the same suffering; he wishes for a major war to be waged against injustice, and wants to kill Corisco as a way to bring this war.

Corisco informed by a blind man about Antonio das Mortes. Recurrent theme: all die, only Rosa and Manuel survive (happened before when there are massacres at Monte Santo and by cangaceiros).

Cangaceiros entrapped, Corisco goes wait for Antonio das Mortes -> suicide.
Manuel asks Rosa what to do. Rosa wants to bear a child.

Corsico: use of Christian imaginary;

Imaginary duality: ocean-hinterland (mar-sertão).

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**01.06.2004 – São Paulo, SP => Fortaleza, CE**

Methodological approach for the dissertation:

1 – Compare meetings of water committees with meetings held by other entities (Caritas, unions, etc – e.g. COF), and analyze the way knowledge, otherness, power, legitimacy for action are constructed differently. Main line: water and climate;

2 – Border thinking: try to map how the action of one sector (in meetings) are based in the knowledge/representation they have about another sectors, and how these representations circulate inside a market of representations (orientalism/occidentalism/cidadão-dotó/sertanejo-urbanita/etc.);

3 – Inside the characterization of meetings as rituals, verify the real implications of the results of these meetings for affected sectors; if implications are proportionally smaller than intensity of participation in the meeting, then the meeting has other functions (this may be obvious, but describe -> the fact that presidents are not all users may be a way of getting there).

4 – Political life outside the meetings: a) what is the role of sabotages? Direct action in opposition to verbal negotiation (*** remember that “bico” in Curu, and armed men taking care of it? *** Perhaps the sabotages are resistance by the big guys); b) patrimonialistic politics and ritual: study relationship through bibliography (hypothesis: ritual act as a reproducer of status and legitimacy, while political efficacy is materialized outside of the ritual, through direct action, outside public arenas.

-> public/private as political arenas, and the transformation of the political panorama with the introduction of the water committees;

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**01.22.2004 – Fortaleza, CE**

Climate Outlook Forum

Hélio Barros: we need to be careful, precision in necessary, rural worker is ‘exigente, cobrança maior, erros aumentam porque a distribuição da informação distribui também a expectativa.” (*** “Não será pela agricultura que teremos sucesso, o semiárido é pouco produtivo, e a equação fica difícil para os governantes. O PIB agrícola é caótico, com
variações loucas. Há que se partir para empregos não agrícolas.” => vulnerability of policy makers, linked to the vulnerability of hinterlanders – chain of vulnerabilities.

Brabo: methodology similar to those of prophets: getting similar years;

Silva (taxi driver) looks at the sky full of gray clouds and say: what a pretty sky! (as in Bonito pra Chover).

Eternal attempt to establish correlations between indices => projected semiosis, semiotic engineering, semiotical bricolage.

“Tá diferente mas não mudou” => the problem of probability: small variation in numbers that lead to huge variation in the interpretation of the information, in the process of turning the probabilistic in deterministic. In this process, change of error is 100%.

“‘Favorável a não atrapalhar’ é um abuso do idioma só pra não dizer seca, o que é compreensível”

“Como escrever isso aí vai ser uma coisa importante do exercício de hoje a tarde”

Paulo Nobre: climatic processes of short duration are hard to predict because of its short life.

Gandú: “as vezes par aver alguma coisa é necessário forçar a simulação”

Davi: “Dá um frio na barriga ver isso, né?... é pra seco mesmo.”

“Quando se fala ‘normal’, o agricultor já tem na cabeça que ele vai ter problema”

Divino: “previsão é ligada ao uso, à interpretação que se vai fazer dela. Agricultura de sequeiro, recursos hídricos, defesa civil. Linguagem da previsão vai muito do uso em si. A ‘linguagem’ tem que ser modulada pelos casos mais sensíveis, não para setores menos vulneráveis.” => he is aware of some of the semiotic processes that will take place, and thinks about them in a strategic way! “Timing da previsão é importante, en Janeiro a chance é melhor. A previsão depende do usuário. Plantou? Agora não adianta a gente vir com uma nova previsão daqui a duas semanas!” (*****)

Assis: in Ceará, indeed a cloudy sky is seen as a beautiful spectacle.

The media do not like press conference; they want Assis, Divino, Assunção to give them interviews in the television – Is the show more important than the information? Is the show a modulator of the information? The same with prophets?

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01.23.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Semiotic operators:
- Cognitive =>Peirce;
- Cultural (***)
01.25.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Paper “From Structure to Game…” – Portuguese, new introduction.

For dissertation: semiotic operators in action as a goal, instead of just exploring categories of operators as taxonomy. For a theory of semiotic operators in action, ethnological studies would be necessary, not just an ethnography. SO, methodologically for dissertation it will be necessary to add many other sources of data in addition to ethnography.

Habit may be a semiotic operator (**): things that become accepted through habit instead of through re-signification; example: *Eu, Tu, Eles*, and the Brazilian stereotyped idea that even the unacceptable can be accepted through closing eyes and letting social life go on. What are the micro-processes that enable this phenomenon to happen? Example: my mother talks about the corruption of Marta Suplicy in the case of the Daslu and the Rua Gabriel Monteiro da Silva stores, framed in the idea that “she’s just like any other politician, and they are all corrupt”. How such things become ordinary facts of life, and therefore are “accepted” as part of the naturalized world? There may be semiotic operators acting in such cases, and this is an interesting research agenda.

01.27.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Differential attention: habit and custom transfer frequent events to invisible/’naturalized’ fields in our minds/collective semiotic fields, and attention is focused on least frequent events. That is one possible explanation for the criminalization of minorities.

In the climate context/Ceará: attention is focused on wrong forecasts, not on right ones.

Forum Natureza e Sociedade: central circle of UFC.

Knowledge panorama has a more stable and solid center, and uncertain and unknown margins. This Forum will be productive if it explores dissentions, and not to echo consensuses.

Prof. Vieira: systematization of methods, analytical exploration of possibilities of action. Indicators for measuring sustainable development elaborated in an academic way, not considering local voices.

Currently only around 40-45% of the population in Fortaleza have access to sewage.

IBGE 2000:
Water source:  
- municipal service: 61%  
- wells or river heads: 20%  
- other sources: 19%

Sewage:  
- municipal infrastr. 21%  
- other ways: 54%  
- no sanitation at all: 25%

Garbage:  
- collected: 61%  
- other destination: 39%

responsible for environmental management:  
- government  
- private companies  
- community as a whole (responsible but without participation in planning?)

Lack of application and enforcement of laws: how is the interlocution with civil society important in this matter?  
Assis: “tem lei que pega, tem lei que não pega. Falta coersão.”

Prof. Suetônio Mota: Raquel Marques, wife of the mayor of Quixadá, current president of the Docas do Ceará company, carried out a research in Quixadá and concluded that 82% of the people attended by the sewage infrastructure of the municipality and with water service buy water from the “water cart” because it “tastes better”.

Environmental education has to happen in a double direction: society learns from government, government learns from society. There is a deep lack of humility by the state planners => Fortaleza consumes imaginary space, the hinterland is a big black spot filled with romanticized and discriminatory visions. But at the end, in the decision chain, the government suffers also from a profound lack of legitimacy and authority in the hinterland. Fractured hegemony. Myopic vision worsen the problem: government cannot see what is going on in all places all of the time, so there is no way of constructing a self-sustainable environmental universe without involving deeply the opinion makers of the hinterland, from all places and classes. That requires a reengineering of the way the government exists and thinks. (Government to serve people and not the opposite).
From one field to the other, the resignification of information is also a kind of semiotic operator. E.g. agricultural use of climate information is different from climatic use of climate information, different from governmental use of climate information. Field affects semiosis; translation is semiotic transformation (Walter Benjamim on translation).

Signification is not in the inner content of the message, but in the way it relates to other elements in the semantic field -> here lies one of the most important challenges of the translation.

02.01.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Speech act theory (specially illocutionary acts) have direct relationship with metapragmatic field (rules of the game) => analyze it!

02.05.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Metropolitan basin committee meeting
Namir presents forecast. Tomaz (president of committee) praises the presentation, but there are many recurrent questions:
1 – hard to understand by attendants the ideas of “normal” and “historical average”;
2 – When will Funceme have sophisticated equipment (and be infallible)? Also a recurrent question.
Namir makes reference to God: “Only God is infallible.”

How is the process of going from “there are no anomalies or ‘forçantes’” to “it will be normal/on the historical average”? Ethnomethodological construction? Wishful thinking (or the directing of research/initial hypothesis) fills the causal gaps => hypotheses are announced with more influence from cognition than from the order of the outside world, mostly where events tend to be complex/chaotic (teleology/tautology).

02.13.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Activity/existence of rain prophets: what is the sense of their existence, inside a panorama of disconnected temporalities? Analyze multiple senses of the existence and projection of prophets
Analyze semiotic activity linked to the climate – how do individuals relate semiotically with nature and the world?

Semiotic link between sky (rain) and earth (ecosystem) – distinct categorization:
Prophets => sky / earth
Meteorologists => atmosphere, temperatures, etc.
(obs: in Portuguese, sky and heaven have the same word, céu).

Distinct epistemology: when does one look when one wants to understand climate, and more important, what is the background information/content structuring reasoning?
Prophets: Divine will / appearance of starts and horizons (barras) / rain / dynamics of ecosystem (behavior of animals and plants)

⇒ the metrics of climate
⇒ the metrics of cordel (popular poetry)

Matematization of divine will + closed circle of natural cycles (not as a natural characteristics but as a quality of cognition)

Do everything walk toward a permanent third-ification?

See diagram of concepts, page 2

The phenomenology of epistemological disagreement
The phenomeno-epistemology of disagreement
The phenomenology of the epistemology of disagreement
The phenomenology of epistemological disagreement
Notes on the phenomenology of epistemological disagreement
“Tá igual mas mudou” – Notes on the phenomenology of disagreement

What kind of ritual/dramatization is used by prophets in the performance of their duty/task?
In the past? (use of modulated language, gestures, etc.)
In the present? (participation in public events and in which encounters take place, institutionalization => Quixadá, Sobral, Caicó)

Analyze using speech act theory + political metapragmatics

Similar to what was seen in Argentina: institutionalization is a semiotic operator that causes deep political transformations => agents change their comprehension of objectives, goals, nature, etc.
Valid for water and climate, in the modernization processes in the hinterland -> inclusion of the population in information networks and politico-socio controls. But there is the need for construction of legitimacy (hegemony).

*** Hegemony can be depicted as a state of the game rather than a configuration of power; even if there is always conflict, if the government wins the metapragmatic game, the conflicts will remain but the legitimate arenas will be established in a stable manner. So hegemony does not mean the disappearance of conflict, but their regimentation in a more or less stable way ***

Institutionalization: radical transformation of the universe that structures social practices. What models of institution come subjacent to the process? World Bank, left wing movements, bureaucracy, etc.

Transformation dynamics, in the metapragmatic level of political relations. Here we can see the importance of semiotic operators (Lyotard, Gal/Irvine, Silverstein, etc.) In this sense and in this dimension, there is nothing that is not bricolage.

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**02.16.2004 – Caicó, RN**

Marengo: 20 years since the last flood, the people forget about it, new people don’t know about it, mostly in areas with high levels of migration and poverty, and then the periodic flooding comes and there is a social disaster.

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**02.21.2004 – Fortaleza, CE**

“Para la tradición medieval, las imagines contribuyen a ‘la instrucción de las gentes simples, porque son instruidas por ellas como se lo fueran por libros. Lo que un libro es para quienes saben leer, lo es una imagen para el pueblo ignorante que la contempla’”
(Baxandall, 1986, p. 41, in Serge Gruzinski, “La guerra de las imágenes”, p.75)

See São Gonçalo do Amarante dance (in Bonito pra Chover): 3rd-ness can be constructed due to the will of domesticating reality => more than cognitive characteristic, a strategy for survival/politics/etc. Metapragmatics => there was always need for control (in what levels?)

Institutional models, technological solutions, paradigms, all come attached to concepts and ways of understanding of what the agent political, decision maker, is; how power is distributed, who and what are the individuals, beside even more fundamental concepts like what is a person, individual, natural resource, water, rain, subsistence, etc. (and sometimes the way the institution is organized leads to these conceptualizations, since most of times
pragmatic and economic factors constrain and regiment the semiotic process inside the institution – as in any narrative, ideology, discourse, etc. *******)

But semiotic operators and metapragmatic actions/moves transform meanings and conceptualizations. E.g. even if the media reproduces exactly what Funceme says, the transposition of the message to other environments is sufficient for transforming the content in semantic-pragmatic terms, something the transforms the content of the message as a whole.

Canclini: Communication-media are spaces where things are imagined and narrated, integral part in the construction of identities => what about the verbal communication in a political activity, does it work in the same way?

Rain prophets: narration and imagination, identity, etc.

Alternatives for political action can be multiple and diverse, or reduced, in other circumstances (Ortner/Sartre). Inclemency of climate may have reduced the amplitude of political field => fields gain or lose complexity (and amplitude, depth, etc.), and it happens in close connection to economic factors, food security, subsistence, privation: how does all that provoke crises in the social and political fields? (***)

Humor as the relativization of social norms, challenge to structures, but also solidification of stereotypes and preconceptions.

(Sociologists and anthropologists fear ambiguity as much as everyone else. Why not humor/carnival is just letting loose of everything for some time, with or without catastrophic results? It is the neurotic view on humor and carnival that sees it as something organized - not speaking about the production of the spectacle here, just the letting loose -. Why the need for functionalist/psychological reasons for everything?)

The media are social external synchronizers, responsible for inserting people inside a sociocultural time frame, and a time scale inside of people’s minds => semiotic operator, see Bonito pra Chover, p. 211.

A joke may be a metapragmatic attack, but may also be other things, see Scott and Bakhtin, see Carneiro (Bonito pra Chover, p. 277)

There is the need for an understanding of the semiotic stereotyping and discriminating dynamics and mechanisms, through semiotic operators and their pragmatic and metapragmatic functions.

See Alegre (Bonito pra Chover): politico-ideological sense of the Brazilian Romantic Indianism, and pragmatic use of the myth of the Indian => could we use a similar logic in the analysis of the category of “sertanejo”? (e.g. Alencar in “O Sertanejo”?)
02.27.2004 – Nova Jaguaribara, CE

Opening of the Castanhão “comportas” for the first time.

Marcleide Araújo Souza Cavalcante, Director of the local school (Liceu): “there was the compartmentalization of space, resulting in increase in distances, what also resulted in more individualism. (…) We end up being massacred when we invade the masculine space.” “Eu sou filha natural de Jaguaribara”.

Damiana, vereadora, 36 anos: “Mulher com mulher se entende mais, e elas procuram resolver os problemas, não fica só na pauta. As mulheres procuram mais as mulheres, porque… os problemas… mais íntimas, um trabalho também assim tipo social, e as mulheres gostam muito. (…) A vida política as vezes é passageira, né? … a comunicação é melhor com as mulheres, e as mulheres se aprofundam mais.” (what does it mean, ‘se aprofundam mais?’ => they are not part of the political ritualism, therefore more prone to effective actions ***) “Os projetos são cozinhados e articulados antes de serem apresentados formalmente na Câmara dos Deputados”

Prefeito Cristiano Maia: “Ele é filho de Jaguaribara, mas não mora aqui” => being born in the town as legitimating device for being mayor. The same was used by the local school director, once she lives in Jaguaribe. “Prefeito é empresário e trabalha na prefeitura como se fosse na empresa dele, paga direitinho e em dia” => objective administrator, in the Tasso style, and not patrimonialist. But he also pays the bills of those who cannot pay.

Jeso: in the Tasso years, the police used to come to town 4 days in advance, to “desarmar” the population, and wanted to see the banners prepared in case of any manifestation, and to know what would happen, how things were planned (and censored many things). There was a distancing, and Lucio Alcântara uses a different style, he is close of the people.

Jaguaretama has problems now, and when the Jaguaribara organization started, they used to make fun of Jaguaribara (there is a long tradition of rivalry between the two towns).

Jeso: “Graças a Deus tem mais mulher na política. Eu vejo que elas tem mais cautela, são mais simples, tem mais facilidade… a mulher, eu vejo uma abertura muito grande na política pela simplicidade e pela maneira de encorajar um trabalho, de discutir…”

“É muita seca, quando aparece água é uma alegria! Aqui o pessoal diz, o açude tal sangra, já é festa!” Jeso.

03.03.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Paper Fernando Briones:
A producer speaks: “antesm en la dictadura, era mayor, la democracia es marginalizacion. Antes, aunque se algo de dinero nos daban.” Icó-Lima Campos => the term “democracy” is here attached to the economic facts and factors of the circumstances, and not to theoretical models of political organization. (***)

So we can see that some contextual factors may function as a determinant element in the signification of a concept; semantic transformations suffered by a concept when it is transferred to a different context (semantic fields, internal organization through the regimentation of meanings in direct relationship to social and economic and religious orders).

That applies to political and technical concepts.

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03.04.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

From Bailey, S&S, p. 41: political brokers are important elements of pragmatic political life, even after having being made ‘illegal’ or ‘corrupt’ => who are the political brokers today in the water scene?

Is the reliance on COGERH’s technicians a desperate move in the new political arena where there are no political brokers, and therefore COGERH technicians have to do this job?

What are the pragmatic elements – areas not covered by laws? Actually, each task involves different brokers – Water allocation seminars enroll people that are not enrolled in other committee activities.

Could following up the activity of political brokers through time be a good methodological strategy? Changes in symbolic frameworks made brokering ‘immoral’, ‘illegal’, ‘corrupt’, and what was the reaction of the local activity towards the need for ‘brokering”? Lawyers? (indeed, lawyers are brokers).

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03.06.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Suggest to Assis the creation of a bi-annual journal called “Climate and Society” or something like that, with translation of works published in other languages, reviews, and original articles.

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03.07.2004 – Fortaleza, CE
Bailey, S&S: “core-based groups tend to be less able to make a rational adaptation to environmental changes, especially when they are brought into contact with more specialized political structures” p. 49, footnote: e.g acephalous societies. With some limits, the analysis can be applied to the sertão’s political structures.

Factions and disregard for ideological consistency: p. 52 (SRH?)

“Factions may arise when the environment provides some kind of political resource, which existing groups cannot exploit” p. 52

Lineages links to party agents or brokers to participate in state elections, and new set of morals in the new circumstances may look immoral from the orthodox lineage point of view.

Factions may become a core: p. 53.

“But every structure, whatever its ‘mix’, is in a process of continuous adjustment with its environment. If we are to understand why one ‘mix’ rather than another is found, then the answer must lie in the environment’ p. 57.

Rules (general) => semiotic regimentation => situations (particular)

But political actions also create realities in planned and unplanned ways.

Uncertainties as produced as political strategies (p. 60-61)

(+ Taussig on Colombia-Shamanism, on white’s illusions on opponents; see also Barros, “Confrontos Invisiveis”)

Normative and pragmatic rules as part of cognitive map of the situation (p. 61) – but not equally – pragmatic rules may be also result from bricolage (i.e. in this case not being a rule).

Committees as arenas where disagreement can be managed => political space is also a semiotic space (space of visibility, of symbolic exchange, of control, etc.)

Semiotic maneuvers: when leaders present themselves as referees (in the mask ball), or when they present themselves in other roles => political strategies.

Through Vania, members of the committee went to talk wit Celeste Cordeiro, the secretary for social actions of the state, and complained about SRH. Celeste went to the governor, who reprehended Edinardo. Edinardo called celeste and they had a fight. When Assis invited committee members to come to Funceme, Edinardo called Assis and made reference to the Celeste episode, as a form of making a covert threat.
Domingão shot a turkey in the head when a bank employee went to visit him about a debt; that made the guy leave the place without even mentioning the debt. Domingão is from the Diógenes family.

“People go in for political competition in order to win and not in order to have a quiet life” p. 63

“Leaders try to meet new situations by forcing them into the categories of familiar situations, or by making minimal adjustments to well-tried plans” => cognitive conservatism, teleology/tautology, etc. p. 69

⇒ dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity

Leaders guided by increase/maintenance of their political credit (Bourdieu’s political capital) – what if due to environmental changes the whole credit system is transformed? Adaptation with limited visibility ⇒ the blind’s bricolage in politics, or the illusion/wishful thinking that things are not so different, etc.

New strategies for seeing are required. Do leaders think about it? (Zé Maria and Hidelbrando).

When civil servants have more power than leaders: n1, p. 84 (JLucio/SRH)

Weak and strong leaders, size of the political pie, concentration of power/resources, political credit.

National honor, effectiveness, responsible leadership ⇒ symbolizations ⇒ crossing borders making practical needs moral commitments, shared ethics ⇒ powerful way of creating legitimation (e.g. Tasso’s campaign, modernity vs. tradition) p. 82-84.

03.08.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Contradiction of the impossibility of philosophy due to language and at the same time its dependence upon language ⇒ Nietzsche, Deleuze, etc.

⇒ Anthropology / language / semiotics ⇒ production of the invisible

All knowledge systems are produced from systems of visibility. So what about the invisible? See Foucault, “As palavras e as coisas.” ⇒ threat to knowledge systems.

Quantum-moment of the instability of meaning, of pre-cognition, of pre-semiosis, of fertile ambiguity, pregnant of possibilities.
Nietzsche (Foucault, Deleuze), Wittgenstein => anthropology as therapy => play the world’s game.

Levi-Strauss: too dependent on the visible (but wanting to get to the invisible, so the difference is the strategy, what is also marked by the historical moment).

Dialectics of the anthropology of the visible and its systems and certainties, and of the anthropology of production of the invisible as anti-anthropology (anti-matter as metaphor).

Semiotics as fundamental tool.

Viveiros de Castro: is the visible produced inside the Amerindian imaginary universe (and metaimaginary)? Research this.

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**03.09.2004 – Fortaleza, CE**

Paulo Miranda:

Barrel law (funnel): water is the limiting factor for economic development; to export water from one basin to another is the export of development capability also, and it conflicts with the idea that a basin is a unit of planning. Concentration in Fortaleza.

Water is the indicator of development, and also of demand. Water availability + allocation system => inducing demand in specific ways. BUT: it has been done in a disorganized way due to the lack of coherence and organization that mark the state’s actions.

Águas do Vale: debts not forbidden, indebted users did not receive licenses (outorgas). Carciniculture seen as environmental villain, so they have no negotiation capability => semiotic regimentation.

Luizinho Girão, Chico Marques: they did not pay and are “hidden” inside the DIJA, and there is no way to suspend DIJA’s license. [institutional configuration can be used as hiding places; strategic use of institutional design in pragmatic ways]

DIJA has 2000 ha, goes to 5-6000 ha, with anchor-company, Nolen. DIJA uses 1700/1800 l/s. Del Monte has 600 ha now, but growing.

There is a big “sumidouro” right up the Castanhão (Baixo Vale), in which water disappears. Challenge of Zaranza, now Giani’s, in finding this sumidouro (causes). (Invisibility in chains, chains of invisibility: they don’t know where the water goes, this does not come up in numeric data and reports, etc. ****)

+ Paulo Miranda cannot talk further without official authorization (produced invisibility).

Phone conversation with Martins (Icó): “it’s like a drought, the water took everything, and now we have a desert of water” => use of imaginary in different ways, combination of ideas, etc. (structuralism?)
“Presidentes dos comités estão servindo de cobaia do governo; a tarifa some, e o cabra trabalha de graça”

03.15.2004 – Fortaleza, CE


“Existe evidentemente una coincidencia entre las estructuras del mexicano inventando por la cultura nacional y las estructuras en que se basa el sistema sociopolítico. Ello permite ese efecto de similitud necesario para que la catarsis o purga tenga un efecto legitimador, de tal manera que una parte de la masa popular reconozca e la imagen de “lo mexicano” como una alternativa para expresar sus sentimientos. De diversas maneras, el pueblo reconoce, en el espectáculo de la cultura nacional, no un reflejo pero sí una extraña prolongación (o transposición) de su propia realidad cotidiana. Éste es un aspecto fundamental: los mitos nacionales no son un reflejo de las condiciones en que vive la masa del pueblo ni una diversión falsa (ideológica) de la conciencia. Los mitos políticos no son, fundamentalmente, conciencia social o ideología: como parte de la cultura son, digamos, la prolongación de los conflictos sociales por otros medios. En esta transposición se gesta el mito del mexicano, sujeto de la historia nacional y sujeto a una forma peculiar de dominación.” (p. 196-7).


“’Los mitos nacionales no son un reflejo de las condiciones en que vive la masa del pueblo’, si no el producto de operaciones de selección y “transposición” de hechos y rasgos elegidos según los proyectos de legitimación política.” (p. 177)

Bailey, S&S: Normative themes (e.g. acting honorably or in public interest) set the stage and tone for pragmatic maneuvering. Metapragnostic moves will try to act upon the normative themes. P. 101-102.

New political strategies, disruption of political arena, and fear (panic) => see p. 120 + Taussig + Daniel.

03.16.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

How do Ceará’s people live water?
Project for paper for multidisciplinary readership:
Symbols are enacted through performance (everyday life and in ritual)
Symbols are lived more than believed;
Signs (Icons – cognition / indexes / symbols – convention); symbols – iconic and indexical functions (see Jacobson)

Daniel:  
- affection: iconization (conservative thinking)
- symbolization: rational logics over impulses, comfortable situation (no: through training affection can be directed to/lived through symbolization – culture as technology)

Life is semiosis

Occupation of Ceará’s space: ecological equilibrium + relations of power-existence
Water induced occupation / cattle, cotton, milk, cheese / farms with tenants, sharecroppers;
Green, life – humid season / sand, dryness – dry season: cycles, pulses

Power structure: Portugal, Recife, Salvador – European monarchy, military – hardly adapted to the ecological environment (adaptation is never optimal – survival of one sector may happen at the expense of another, e.g. slavery)

Metapragmatic control / manipulation / transference in many different levels.
Use of a term change in the usage, fixidity of narrative, semiotic regimentation (lexicon)
Whole semantic field
Rules of grammar/syntax (iconization, recursiveness, erasure)

Writers create ambience in which the narrative is based, ambience influences semiosis and semiotic regimentation.

Syncretism: performance more than signification.

03.17.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Using Bailey’s mechanics to think in terms of semiotic-political processes. Bailey focus too much on political groups, on the actions of individuals and casts, although always considering the power of the environment and in the importance in the right use of the performance of symbols in creating/increasing political capital (“credit”).

Ceará’s political situation:
1) state government organized around bureaucratic institutions, a mix of centralism, technocracy, efficiency-based actions in some technical areas, with instability and fragility of institutions due to excessive dependence on the figure of the leader (governor). Very heterogeneous panorama. In terms of relationship with local
political structures, the state apparatus is the encapsulating structure (see Bailey, 1969, p. 151).

2) Local politics is organized around wealthiest families, land owners. This is the encapsulated structure. (e.g. the Diogenes in Jaguaribe, the turkey case, the Girão in Morada Nova, the Maia in Jaguaribara, the Feitosa in history (see Girão)). Use of violence as political tool, etc.

3) The encapsulating problem: state government has to take control over resources in the hinterland (water mainly) as never before for no previous reason – this is a historical novelty. Historically there was no encapsulation in practice: state politicians and local ones were connected through a network in which the rules of the game were the same/very similar. The distinction existed between national and state politicians (and therefore there was an encapsulating mechanism taking place) – increased between 1920 and 1964, decreased a little during military rule. 1986: Tasso era begins, chock in political game, creation of otherness and therefore of the need of encapsulation. Choice regarding encapsulation pattern: indirect rule. State could not afford not paying attention to local politics, since water resources were there; neither to act in a predatory or violent way, what would bring negative electoral costs and was against the image the group in power was trying to create for themselves (modernity, democracy). So the choice was an heterodox form of “indirect rule”, i.e. people could (should) keep their local political forms (associations, unions, etc.) but would have to play a new game in a novel political arena with new rules - committees.

4) mechanism is the creation of mid-ground political arenas that induce local stakeholders to engage in a political activity about their local resources that is radically different than what they are used to. Indirect rule, in the view of the state. Cheaper financially and politically (short term) to the state, but risky in a way. Did that represent an increase or a decrease in the size of the political pie?

5) Creation of a midground that links the previous unlinked political spheres – systems of domination, Foucault.

“The final posture is that in which the ruling power has taken the decision that [the encapsulated structure] must be integrated: which, in practice, means radical change, if not abolition. The basis of such a decision is likely to be compounded of many elements: moral repugnance for what goes on in [the encapsulated structure] is certainly one, often phrased in terms of the removal of iniquitous ‘feudal’ institutions and their replacement for socialist democratic institutions: allied with this goes another kind of moral attitude, that people in the [encapsulated structure] should devote their energies to a wider polity than their own parish pump. This is in fact a judgement that the costs of incorporating the personnel of [the encapsulated structure] into [the encapsulating structure] will be more than offset by the resources which they put into [the encapsulating structure]. This posture is adopted by virtually all the developing nations: they seek, with varying degrees of determination and success, to put an end to casteism or communalism or tribalism or regionalism and to make a united nation.” (Bailey, 1969, p. 151).

6) The fight for space: giving specific spaces political legitimacy / challenging other spaces’ legitimacy. This is a clear metasemiotic battle.
7) We should not take it as encapsulation pure and simply: local politicians gained access to central state government as never before. Change in the environment as beyond the state panorama: water discussions in Brazil (ABRH, ANA, CNBB, Caritas, etc.) put pressure on the philosophy of the state government. So the metaphor is limited in its validity. Local people: resistance (farmers) + counter acts (local technicians)

8) Political roles emerge, middlemen (p. 152) – generated by the incongruity between values of two structures (encapsulating and encapsulated).

9) Parallel contests take place, more or less connected to the main competition (p. 153). Central political dynamics create a semiotic eddy (redemoinho) that will put pressure on marginal smaller games to replicate the rules of the mainstream game. Usually it does not succeed in transforming the practices right the way, and the semiotic attack starts by re-framing concepts, the creation of moral dichotomies: from legitimate to backward, uncivilized, a thing from the “hinterland” and not from the capital. Justice is a case: pistolagem, murders for honor, etc.

“Many more examples of striking differences in world-view, in goals thought desirable, in standards of good and bad conduct and judgments of permissible and impermissible tactics in political competition could be adduced. These differences are important because their effect in that the people who work with the rules of [the encapsulated structure] and those who work under [the encapsulating one] have difficulty in understanding what they are each other doing and why they are doing it. Since they cannot understand they cannot communicate; insofar as they cannot communicate, if they become involved in a contest their mutual confrontations are likely to be crude and misunderstood, and to lead to the over-commitment of resources. In short, differences in culture bring about those conditions of uncertainty which inhibit political competition and cause political fighting. Very often this is to some extent a revolutionary situation: the State is trying to bring about a revolution in the villages, by changing fundamentally the rules which regulate political competition between villagers.” (Bailey, 1969, p. 149).

Bailey, F.G. 1988

Human condition is a combination of human nature and circumstances (p. xi). There can be a level of generalization in which a minimal degree of constancy can be seen, a framework to be used as heuristic tool for providing the questions needed for comparative investigation (p. xi). This is part of the fractured (non-reductive) dialectics of the singular and the general that is also the core of the anthropological game, in which theory and ethnography are played together, mutually influenced, and against each other endlessly. Visibility is gained and lost at each move of the game; as in the pragmatic use of language in general, theoretical points can only be made with the help of semiotic regimentation that works as a semantic organizer, in creating the contrasts and oppositions required by the way we deal with meanings. In political life the principle is the same: visibilities and invisibilities are created, sometimes as elements of the natural bricolage that is always part of any political field. No one sees and understands the whole field all the time and most of the actions are tries and errors – of course, successful and failed political moves are always narrated after the fact as fully planned; invisibility is not only hard to admit, it is hard to see
– we never know what is that we cannot perceive in a given moment. This is one of the main challenges of the present research.

“Widespread disenchantment, it might be argued, would mean the end of morality. It is better, therefore, to leave leadership as a mystery and instead of analyzing to pontificate about good and evil.” (p. xiii) – teleology, tautology, 3rdness – morality depends on invisibility, semiotic regimentation, wishful thinking.

03.18.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Peirce => 3rd, 2nd, 1st
Semiotic operations in => self, space, time

1 – Identity
Politician-people: “we are the same”, “we share history, environment, place, icons, etc” – indexicallity, erasure+iconization, différence;

2 – Otherness/alterity
discriminator-discriminated: “we are different” – iconization, recursiveness, erasure/différend;

3 – Invisibility through time/space
- Bureaucracy (Bauman) –space
- Rhythm – time (control)

4 – Insulation (scientific, moral, ethical, religious, etc.)
Other domains/discourses/narratives: politics

5 – Fear (Taussig, Schutz, Beavoir)

Objects of semiotic operators: the leaders, the people (in contrast to another one or in relation to a situation), the problem, facts, theories, values.
Sometimes the semiotic power lies in the role and not in the individual: e.g. when someone not fit gets there by mistake (Itamar Franco).
Differential attention, “a gota fora do pinico”

Why is the Baixo Jaguaribe committee so different from the others? Why the committee is a possibility of public office for locals, who fear confrontations with the government (in other basins). In the Baixo Jaguaribe, the situation is a little different both for the Icapuí group as for the agribusiness sector, with very specific interests. In other places, the risk of breaking up with government support is not taken, unless in extreme cases as Martin in Icô (who is loosing his patience), or Wilson (who became director of the national association of water committee members).

In order to insert all this in the dissertation, you have to tell the stories well-told.

03.19.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Saint Joseph’s Day: signs are enabled by ritual and/or performance – when put to work. Object-signs and contextualizing-signs.

Metapragmatic moves: using object-signs to change the balance of network of contextualizing-signs; or directing the move to the contextualizing-signs to affect the object-sign (metaphor and metonymy?)

See chp. 6 (T,S&S), Gandhi’s moves in direction to independence.

Ortner’s root metaphors.

Competition over optimal dimension of group’s imaginary: parochialism (reinforced through Ceará’s history) and the construction of one integrated narrative of economic development. The later is costly, never done in an integrated/full manner, and dissention is made invisible (through bureaucracy, negligence, etc.) or criminal. In this situation some semiotic habits, entrapped in a bubble, out of the historical change, are made criminal: use of water without licenses, selling wild animals. New legal framework goes straight against basic habits of the population. Difference between normative and pragmatic, and the way the government uses this difference.

- fetish of the legal instrument (“I created the law”) / not recognition of pragmatic challenge (invisibility produced by the seduction of power);
- creation of juridical space for the use of force;

Fighting over land, office, and family honor could get to the point of ‘pistolagem’/political murder. Water issues not. Why?
1 – water never fully considered a property (at least not when at DNOCS dams);
2 – DNOCS as gatekeeper (no direct ownership of large reservoir) => attentions directed to DNOCS, institutional firewall on this (see Borneman => accountability is also a semiotic construction ***)
- transference to COGERH
- trouble among equals => customary ways of dealing with that; “city people” more prone to appeal to justice and had money to pay lawyers (like agribusiness people);
=> fuzzy accountability => another kind of produced invisibility (pistolagem needs individuals as agents / bureaucracy + scientific insulation confounds the traditional framework, getting to desperate moves like the Chico Orelha’s random murders of 2003 / e.g. Morada Nova => COGERH took case to court)

03.20.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Bailey, T,S&S.

When things that are against the law are ‘statistically the norm’, ‘common knowledge’ (e.g. markets of votes in the U.S. and in Brazil).

“What weight should be given to a normative rule that almost everyone breaks?” In what sense can such a rule be said to exist? => legitimacy not as a thing, but as a process, as a relational quality of things.

In the eyes of Indians, Gandhi had more legitimacy in his law-defiance acts than the British rulers.

Environment has elements that define the level and intensity of application of the law (it is necessary to understand the history of the law too).

What is the relationship between that and ‘culture’? Semiotic habits? => semiotic operators may change the way a sign gets into the game/process of semiosis.

(Peirce’s cognition process: affective intepretants, 2nd step, ***)

Or legality may be seen as a ritual, not as a characteristic of things (look for that in discourses) – legality as rhetorical strategy, political move, etc. => definitely not a quality of actions and objects.

Visibility is a result of the way institutional processes unfold (besides the semiotic regimentation of academia/science, language, politics, rituals, etc.) => see Scott.

Social action (always more dynamic and fractal than institutional configurations) will fill out empty spaces with parallel political games (e.g. bureaucracy and informal markets/economy, see De Soto), or interpretations, etc.
These parallel fields may not be subject to the semiotic regimentation imposed by the institutionalization, presence and action inside the institution and its rules and game styles.

Chapter 12:
From one configuration of normative, strategic and pragmatic rules

\[ \Rightarrow \text{creation of ambiguity} \Rightarrow \]
Definition of a different configuration.

How are these ambiguities created? \Rightarrow What if chaos result? \Rightarrow a way back has to be known \Rightarrow making political use of comunitas (link to Turner).

Where does a law come from?
1 – politician had input from voters, organized civil society groups, etc. (legitimacy among population, or at least some sectors of it, but not all of them);
2 – entire novelty \Rightarrow technical need, when engineers create a law (lack of legitimacy among population). Of course some individuals are affected: engineers, consultants, bureaucrats, live and have personal contact with problems happening in other places and scales (spatially localized, without much visibility, etc.), and make that issue a priority for governmental control without working the public awareness about the important issues involved. E.g. Ceará law was copied/based in the São Paulo’s law.

03.24.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Casa da Memória: in the context they were put (a museum like environment), objects have their meaning changed. Complex symbolizations (i.e. the links between those objects and the socio-historical environment, through symbolizations, etc.) fade away, in a process of iconization. The semantic complexity of the objects goes through a simplification process, towards iconization (see Daniel). In that sense, the Casa da Memoria and the political process in which the institution came to life is a huge semiotic regimentation process.

The iconization has its internal dynamics, though. The children tell the story of the old town, and its social structure and processes, through photos in the walls; at the same time the old social hierarchies are re-enacted through the storytelling.

03.25.2004 – Fortaleza, CE
Rural life easier to be teleologized (Simmel and the anomie of cities) – see 08.08.2003.

03.27.2004 – Fortaleza, CE


“Hay un momento en que los *gestos* de ruptura de los artistas, que no logran convertirse en *actos* (intervenciones eficaces en procesos sociales), se vuelven *ritos*. El impulso originario de las vanguardias llevó a asociarlas con el proyecto secularizador de la modernidad: sus irrupciones buscaban desencantar el mundo y desacralizar los modos convencionales, bellos, complacientes, con que la cultura burguesa lo representaba. Pero la incorporación progresiva de las insolencias a los museos, su digestión razonada en los catálogos y en la enseñanza oficial del arte, hicieron de las rupturas una convención. Establecieron, dice Octavio Paz, “la tradición de la ruptura”. No es extraño, entonces, que la producción artística de las vanguardias sea sometida a las formas más frívolas de la ritualidad: los *vernissages*, las entregas de premios, y las consagraciones académicas”. (p. 44)

03.28.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Beira Mar : pornography -> reification / objectification of human beings in ways that are appealing to the psyche (eros); but pornographic element in the Beira Mar lies in the eyes of the anthropologist (or critical intellectual), who lives from the pretension of giving visibility to the invisible oppressions of the world.

03.29.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

In social theory, positive and negative feed backs may exist as helpful categories, even if they suggest totalized and closed social systems. All systems are evidently and ultimately open, but may exist for a more or less long period as if it was a “closed” entity if it does not suffer the influence of an external factor that is stronger than those factors that are operating the regimentation of the variable elements of the system itself. In that sense, tautology exists as a feature of all systems in which feedbacks are present. But once again, since all systems are open (what is the same as saying that no configuration is ultimately stable at all), the feedback and the seeming stability are only temporary (if not ilusory).

This is just a metaphor, important to be said that; and tautology and teleology remains fundamental qualities of the cognitive mechanisms involved in semiosis.
03.30.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

I wonder in doing this how many peaks of important pyramids of the past that were covered under so much theoretical bla bla I will be touching without having the vision and knowledge of their existence. In reading as much as graduate education requires one to do, ideas get scrambled; therefore I cannot assume all my insights are really mine. The good thing about having a senior anthropologist as advisor is that he made me aware that some theoretical points come and go, emerge and submerge, according to the waves of the fashions in academia, and all the regimentation of visibility they produce. So, if there is something like the conceptual death of the author, this little paragraph is the suicide of my authority.

Idea:

Structure, patterns, planned activities, etc.

↑

semiotic regimentation, transformations, etc. / teleology-tautology

↑

bricolage

So semiotic regimentation helps to give the results of bricolage the appearance of structure or plan.

04.01.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Paul Kay at Scientific American, April 4, 2004

Whorf’s essay, published posthumously in 1956: "we cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way, an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language."

Still, the manner in which languages can build up their color words is tightly constrained, suggesting the existence of universal constraints on semantic variation.

Although linguistic relativity does not apply to the naming of colors, Kay explains, there is no reason to rule it out in the naming of other domains--size, sharpness, degree of consanguinity or whatever. He also sees no reason why language may not shape the way we think about some aspects of color (other than its names): "There is a wealth of evidence
showing that what people treat as the same or as different depends on what languages they speak.

"Two key questions must always be kept separate," Kay adds. "One is, do different languages give rise to different ways of thought? The other is, how different are languages?" It is possible, he says, that the respective answers are "yes" and "not very."

Kay concludes that linguistic relativists may be correct that the languages people speak mold their thoughts. "But it is unlikely that the various languages of the world are so different from one another, in underlying conceptual structure, that the ways their speakers think are incommensurable."

I wrote “So we can see that some contextual factors may function as a determinant element in the signification of a concept; semantic transformations suffered by a concept when it is transferred to a different context (semantic fields, internal organization through the regimentation of meanings in direct relationship to social and economic and religious orders).” -> that brings the Marxist problem of infrastructure and superstructure. A solution for that is the breaking of units of analysis and the introduction of feedback cycles that can keep an ideological configuration in bad (i.e. neurotic, maladaptive, exploitative, etc.) terms with the material circumstances for a period of time, and vice-versa. There is direct relationship but no necessary hierarchy between symbolic and material levels => the split of the semiotic reality in two ‘levels’ is itself part of the problem.

04.02.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Imaginary (Castoriadis, the magma source of representations)
↓
semiotic operators/operations
↓
Discourses (Foucault, technology)
(explore how imaginary is transformed in discourse)

What about Durkheim’s social facts? What is their relation to ‘culture’? And to ‘structures’ (cognitive, politico-economic, metaphoric)?

04.03.2004 – Fortaleza, CE
(Cultural/semiotic/political/etc) homeostasis is nothing more than a tendency, but a tendency with high adaptive value. It’s part of its symbolic aspects representing itself as more than a tendency, but as a pattern, as culture, structure, etc.

Paulo Sérgio Barros: missionaries had the necessity of pacifying the natives (what included the end of the intertribal wars) to ‘aldea-los’. Good metaphor for current political situation in water in Ceará: SRH/COGERH need to ‘pacify’ users in order to gain control over water, through the construction of hegemonic rituals/performances/structures (hegemony as a performance), and water allocation seminar as a ‘pacification’ mechanism! (plus the regimentation of the arena in which water disputes can take place, through the control of time, space, rhythm, etc). p. 39.

Otherness of native groups in Ceará, in the Ibiapaba Hills, simplified under the idea that their demon-ness was result of the Protestant-Dutch and Jewish influence some native groups had when under Dutch control in Pernambuco. Aldeamentos as a strategy to reduce heterogeneity of natives through acculturation. Same logic can be applied to water committees.

What is the common idea in Ceará about Amerindians during the occupation of the territory?
- they were killed in battles;
- they were integrated as cowboys, and through miscegenation

Process is seen as simpler and straightforward than it was in reality. But there were invisible confrontations, see P. S. Barros.

Portuguese had to be seen as violent and powerful to keep indians ‘friendly’, i.e. to keep natives with openness to maintain relations going (once natives had tendency to change alliances very easily).

Violence as a political message, when violence is not an end in itself (i.e. when destroying the enemy is not the goal). E.g soccer stadiums => in the match there is a ritualized and theatricalized conflict, symbolized, creating identity frontiers (or making them easier to draw in a complex and fragmented world), but with strong regimentation (disciplinary control, rule enforcement, etc.); outside of the stadium, a different game, between police and low-classes young males, militarism and hooliganism, also as a theatricalized display, semiotic performances, the playing with the symbols of violence in order to avoid having to use it in fact but at the same time creating a self-sustaining discourse in which violence is needed => violence as a political message.

Agonistic play is a message, through play kids know who is stronger and dominant, as happens also among chimps. This is a cheaper alternative to the violent conflict; encounters of symbols and representations and narratives, rather than material encounters with material losses
Religious thinking points towards semantic simplification; scientific thinking points towards semantic increase in complexity (as wished Peirce; romanticized view of science naturally). But: hasn’t Gödel shown that there are always some possible logical questions that cannot be answered without the use of a higher level logical system? Cognitive limits put an end to the indeterminate increase in complexity in our representations.

Climate question with communication can be explored through the analysis of the diverse functions of language.

Practical difficulties in academic projects that make researchers abandon a site and change for another one (due to political instability in the first, for example, what might nullify the utility of technological tools – e.g. Ceará); but these difficulties are themselves part of the blind spots of the paradigms of the academic branch (discipline in question): while engineers feel nervous when local complexities make mathematical modeling difficult, anthropologists feel nervous when the engineer’s mathematical simplification oversimplify reality to the point of making it unrecognizable (to the anthropologist).

At the end, science walks in the way already described by Wittgenstein: creating reality on the way.

Assis proposed a model for the evaluation of the political panorama in which activities unfold in the Ceará’s water system. There is the tension between two different groups: the older one, concentrated around infrastructure construction activities, and the newer one, in which water/conflict management is the key activity.

The infrastructure group in interested in money, is deeply connected to the construction companies lobby (empreiteiras) in Brazil, which provides money for electoral activities (verbas de campanha), funding political campaigns. Inside this realm, few elements are at stake, power is centralized, clearly distributed among individuals in the small group in control, control of activities is easy, and the reproduction of power is clearly the goal. Izelda and Maia Júnior come from SEINFRA, the headquarters of this group; Edinardo and Tom Zé come from CAGEC, one of the main clients of the construction companies, and therefore connected to the groups and used to the logics that regulates its internal activities.
The conflict management group sprang from the union of academic and civil society individuals, and its members entered the government through the creation of agencies like COGERH, which was done basically by technicians not linked to the inner issues of the political life of the state, but were rather outsiders (officials of the World Bank, or consultants from other places working in the water resources domain). Individuals like Hypérides Macedo were the middleground between both groups, being himself a technicians with a history of political activity in the state.

According to Assis, when we look inside DNOCS we see the older technicians playing according to the construction lobby rules (Zita), and the newer ones playing in the conflict resolution paradigm (João Lúcio).

But the model of state in which it is the provider of everything and funds not sustainable activities and get indebted failed. In the financial crisis of the state, it reduces its size, is not able to fund economic development by usual means, and finds out that new activities like water management may be a source of revenue. Yet, they find out that the conflict resolution group has a considerable amount of power in the water management sector, after 10 years of intense activities. Also, due to the introduction of participatory approaches, the number of agents is now much higher, and therefore control is difficult. The goals of the group is also not the same: of course money and reproduction of power is part of it, but there is a strong ideological element present in this realm, which is the global campaign for water conservation, the environmental agenda (regarding pollution), and sociopolitical efforts to democratize decision making regarding water allocation, mainly in the hinterland. So this group plays the power reproduction game using these new elements, which are not easy to handle due to the high degree of technicality with which the technicians structured this new language game/semantic universe.

Construction companies adapt themselves to the idea of participatory management, acting in the localized infrastructure demands, which still exist but are (or will be one day) defined in participatory meetings.

So the question that remains is to understand why bother with the water/conflict management guys, and not with other groups. Paulo Miranda helped me to understand that – see the entry on May 7th, 2004.

I commented with Assis about the instability of the institutions in Ceará. He mentioned the case of CEPA (Comissão Estadual de Planejamento Agrícola), an agricultural planning agency created by Adauto Bezerra in the 1960s. This agency created the PAPP (Programa de Apoio à Pequena Produção), which was transformed in the Projeto São José under the Tasso’s government.

Tasso destroyed CEPA because it had a politicized technical body, and its bureaucracy did not submit to the rule of the government. Geraldo Acioli published a report with irregularities, in the beginning of the Tasso’s government, and angry Tasso ended CEPA. The 1st study of/about(?) COGERH was created by technicians of CEPA. The 1st president of COGERH came from CEPA.

An organized bureaucracy disturbs a centralized power. Well trained professionalism is independent, adopts other working criteria (usually more attached to efficiency and scientific standards), and acts outside of the norm of the “government of men” (and not of
institutions). The rule of the law is always under instability. CEPA was a precursor of COGERH. People to interview: Luis Carlos Pontes, Manuel Rego, Bráulio, Rosana.

I say to Assis that it may be a very interesting topic for a post-doc project, and he likes the idea very much.

04.10.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

If the general (theoretic) is a simplification of the particular (real), can the theoretical be used in the understanding of the particular? Is not there a tension?

Solution may be in the scale/level of analysis.

Contrast creation, engineered Gestalt, see Jakobson, p. 154-155.

Meteorology -> conventional symbols

Prophets -> iconic symbols (religious, ecological)

Dotô-cidadão

Government agencies are left without the requirement of understandability (arrogance of the centralized state power)

FUNCEME: different, there is the need for effective communication.

04.21.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Goal: to study the social life of fields, frames and framing that constitute it, and the role of metasemiotic operators in it.

Fields organized around their inner semiotic framing/regimentation.

Some social activities reduce the complexity of the environment and simplify the amount of elements: rituals, theatrical performances. If there is no overwhelming dominant ideology, or if this ideology is not pervasive among individuals taking part in the activity, then the activity may be an arena in which conflict of representation arise, and with it the internal semiotic organization of the field itself becomes an element of dispute, even if most of times agents play with it unconsciously (political-semiotic bricolage).

Metasemiotic operators are then used to play the game in this level. In cases of different ideological systems in contact, this friction is a force of mutual cultural influence, and in the long run (if the case is not of the overt militarized violence, and even in this case the symbolic domination is not straightforward) it is in the metasemiotic arena that symbolic domination will be constituted during the history of encounters.
That explains how semiotic habits/habitus can coexist with heterogeneous political configurations, political and cultural borderlands, and how the cultural transformation is played in a level that may not break completely the invisibility of the process (doxa?).

Conflict resolution rituals may be factors of social transformation due to the internal metasemiotic dynamics of encounter that take place on such occasions.

[you may try to use this framework to analyze the Sahlins-Obeysekere debate on Captain Cook.]

### 04.24.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Religiosity makes too many references to economic factors -> rain and harvest -> fields in which the rural folk feels in need of protection.

State legitimacy difficult to get: there was no social order providing social insertion ever created; paternalistic state is also inefficient (from a agriculturalist’s point of view), and changed from the inefficient paternalist to the absent/rhetorical/neoliberal/broken.

Conceptual framework that breaks down clientalism without substituting it for nothing.  
Modernization = commodification of everything, electricity, TV, etc.

Proletarization of rural life: increase or reduction of vulnerability?  
Economic expansion is not part of the historical rural imaginary, but in general the goal is simple reproduction (survival – see Schwartz, p. 89)

### 05.07.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Paulo Miranda (see April 8th, 2004): I asked him how come so much noise was produced inside the water management system if in theory there was continuity in power?

He said that with the state financially ruined, the money coming from the World Bank to the construction of Eixão became a disputed prize inside the government. So Maia Júnior, who has more power inside this government than he had in the previous one, wanted to transfer all construction activity to SEINFRA/SEPLAN (he is the secretary of planning now), what includes the Eixão construction. It seems that the World Bank said no. Then they planned to fuse CAGECE and COGERH, and once again the World Bank said no. Them they decided to bring people from those two areas to control the water management system, so Edinardo became secretary (SRH), coming from CAGECE, and Izelda became president of COGERH, coming from SEINFRA. These two came with the strong idea of revenue generation (concessionárias), and that immediately caused friction with those with a more conceptual ideology regarding creating an efficient and socially legitimate water management system.
Maia Júnior and Hypérides had many confrontations during Tasso’s last term. Since their party (PSDB) lost the national elections, therefore political power to act also in the state level, they thought that Hypérides, who is up to some degree detached from the core of the political group, would gain more power due to the good performance of his activities in the previous terms and due to the fact that indeed revenue from water started to come (from industrial use and sewage service). So they took him out of the picture, and the World Bank imposed Teixeira as someone to be put close to the top ranks. They accepted it but insulated Teixeira from the real decision making activity, mainly putting him to solve the worst problems of conflict while strategic decision was not being made at SRH, but was coming from SEPLAN.

Hypérides declared publicly that Assis and Teixeira were the important inheritors of his work, and tried to oppose Assis and Teixeira to João Lúcio and Paulo Miranda. All this was part of the confrontations between Hypérides and Viana, while the last was COGERH’s president. The relationship between the two was highly conflictive. Hypérides constantly tried to move people from COGERH to SRH to try to scramble Viana’s plans inside the company.

08.06.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

“Let us especially think about the formation of ideas. Every word becomes at once an idea not by having, as one might presume, to serve as a reminder for the original experience happening but once and absolutely individualized, to which experience such words owes its origins, no, but by having simultaneously to fit innumerable, more or less similar (which really means never equal, therefore altogether unequal) cases. Every idea originates through equating the unequal” (Nietzsche, 1965, Truth and falsity in an ultramoral sense. In The philosophy of Nietzsche, Geoffrey Clive (ed.), New York: Mentor, in Crapanzano, Vincent (1993), Text, transference, and indexicality. In Lucy, John (ed.), Reflexive Language – Reported speech and metapragmatics. Cambridge University Press)

09.19.2004 – Fortaleza, CE

Climate forecasts: How is the process of going from “there are no anomalies or ‘forçantes’” to “it will be normal/on the historical average”? Ethnomethodological construction? Wishful thinking (or the directing of research/initial hypothesis) fills the causal gaps => hypotheses are announced with more influence from cognition than from the order of the outside world, mostly where events tend to be complex/chaotic (teleology/tautology).
work in progress - ideas waiting to be organized