

## **On people and variables: the ethnography of a political belief\***

**Antonádia Borges**

Lecturer and PRODOC-CAPES researcher at PPGAS/MN/UFRJ. E-mail:  
<antonadia@uol.com.br>

### **ABSTRACT**

In the Brazilian Federal District (Brasília), the local government's distribution of lots encourages thousands of people to enlist on its housing programs. Applicants are required to provide documentary proofs; these are classified according to variables, which are then fed into an equation designed to calculate the 'quantum' of worthiness of each applicant. After being quantified, each applicant is duly hierarchized. Changes in government lead to alterations to the formulas used in this calculation, while changes in people's lives lead to alterations to their classification. In this article, I explore how these vicissitudes on both sides balance out on the basis of a political belief which is at once shared and unstable.

**Keywords:** Ethnographical Theory, Rituals, Anthropology of Politics

### **Introduction**

Ordinary reflections on life in the satellite towns surrounding Brasília abound in a series of terms that also pervade many of the sociological studies on political and/or electoral phenomena. Thousands of people are very often considered apolitical on the basis of their being shaped by clientelism. We know that, at least in the texts now taken as classics, terms such as clientelism, populism and oligarchy-sustained 'colonelism' contained a precise heuristic value because they were treated with extreme rigour, invariably used to refer to specific phenomena (for instance, Queiroz 1969; Leal 1949). The uncritical transposition of these terms to every kind of context indicates not just the theoretical imprecision of these using them in this way, but also reveals their preconceptions. Such moral (moralist and moralizing) assumptions remain closely linked to the sociological prejudices characteristic of this type of evaluation.

Made uncomfortable with this rhetoric oriented through a unifying view of politics I looked to understand how certain total social facts, so to speak – such as the State, government, elections –

\* The present article is a modified version of Borges 2004.

are experienced by people living in the satellite town of Recanto das Emas. In this article, I propose to compare and contrast ethnographically produced knowledge and this sort of formulation embedded in moral antagonisms by analyzing the implications of the systems - developed by the local government - in order to hierarchize the population on a scale of those deserving a housing lot. The people who apply become involved with the government employees in a dissonant form: the relationship established is not exclusively bureaucratic or personalist. Their meetings result primarily in documents, that is, graphic records, material proofs that make the alterations in the life palpable and present. The roles that each one carries on either side of the counter relate to a ceaseless process of transformation experienced by everyone: employees, governments and the general public.

Concerns over plots impregnate local sociality in every direction, appearing in both daily conversation and government programs. Looking beyond the widely recognized electoral uses of housing policy or the biographical incidents of a particular family of migrants, the ethnographic work conducted by myself in Recanto das Emas between 2000 and 2002 shows that the existence of this shared set of beliefs is most clearly expressed in the category of 'Tempo de Brasília.' It was only in the later periods of my research that I was able to understand that this concept refers (i) to a chronology of *years* spent in the federal capital (Time of Brasília) and also to (ii) a configuration of a particular habit, a particular rhythm (Tempo of Brasília), noted especially in the procedures adopted by residents and government employees in relation to the distribution of government benefits.

In order to demonstrate this association between the flow of the years and the acquisition of mores and expectations, I need to employ a narrative structure that reiterates the process of ethnographic knowledge I experienced myself. This aim in mind, I start by presenting an interview that makes explicit the obligatory social involvements shaping the life of the town's residents. I then seek to analyze a set of decrees (published in the Official Gazette) issued by successive and different local governments, relating to the regulation of lot distribution for the so-called low income population. These laws, part of a policy we could designate as social engineering, concern the mathematical equations used to calculate the merit of anyone requesting a piece of land from the government. This latter explored material, with its distinct, documental quality, is comprehended, however, by employing the same ethnographic cognitive approach that makes the interview intelligible.

Making use of two apparently distinct objects (a conversation and a set of documents), I present an analysis of the collective investment, widespread among the residents of Recanto das Emas, in a place to live. These symbols brought to light in my work can only be comprehended in consonance with other understandings on life in Recanto (Borges 2003). Between the interview with Dona Maria and Seu Vitória and the mathematical formulas, there is a precise link – the notion of 'Tempo de Brasília' – through which social experiences of completely distinct natures were able to be synthesized during my period of fieldwork in this satellite town.

### **Dona Maria: don't you want to interview us?**

I met them late afternoon. In the middle of the dusty street. The two women and I had come back from our day's work. They were daily cleaners in upper class houses (locally known as 'mansions'), but on that precise day they had visited homes in Recanto itself, where they performed readings from the Bible and talked with the most needy. My work also involved taking to the streets of Recanto das Emas, knocking from door to door. I did this everyday, especially since the people with whom I lived appeared anxious whenever I was slow in leaving the house in

the morning, concerned with the progress of my research. After all, I was there to produce a study and for this reason they were worried that I might be *wasting my time* staying and merely talking with them. To show them that I was also *making an effort*, I occasionally went out in search of an interview. Having spent two years in constant contact with the town's residents, already nearing the end of my fieldwork, I began to interview some of them. Curiously, these interviews took place only after I had engaged in countless conversations. That afternoon was no different. Dona Maria questioned me: don't you want to interview us?

I had arranged to do this earlier, without paying much real attention. Despite the playful spirit that typically marked the local conversations and moods, I was being admonished because, like some politicians and false people, I was failing to keep my promise. As always, I tried to argue that, in terms of the most important part of my research, the interviews were not that important. Insisting was useless. Accustomed to fulfilling and responding to every type of questionnaire for government agents, the residents of Recanto das Emas had learnt to speak the language of interviews. It was my duty to recognize this skill and not simply ignore it.

Forced to *make use of my time*, I accompanied Lourdes as she walked to another block where Dona Maria and her husband Vitório lived. Such unplastered brick house - a type of dwelling, which is neither a flimsy shack nor a house with a wall and closed gates - tells us of the average position and relatively stable settlement of this family in Recanto das Emas. Shacks tend to be the first type of housing for people arriving in the town. Those who continue to live in shacks, even on their own lot, generally end up selling their property to live somewhere further away and cheaper. The solid brick houses, on the other hand, enclosed by tall railings, indicate the desire to set down roots in the new town. Although no guarantee of permanence, these habitations reflect an investment in staying put. The couple who welcomed us was, therefore floating between these two poles: the mobile shack and the gated house.

Seu Vitório was taking advantage of the absence of clients in his barber's shop to pod some castor oil seeds he had collected from the town's outskirts. Recanto das Emas, although home to more than 100,000 inhabitants, is a recent administrative region, created in 1993. This immense urban settlement in the middle of the *cerrado*, called a city by its residents, is situated on the edge of the Federal District on the border with the state of Goiás. He had collected castor plant branches in the open fields circling the town and was now extracting the seeds from the fruits, which would later be roasted and crushed to produce oil. Why? I asked, but nobody had a reply. 'They say it's good.' Undoubtedly *a good way to pass time*.

Time for the residents of Recanto das Emas is a question of extreme importance in classifying their lives and, especially, their relationship with the local government. Losing or gaining time is a theme of many conversations, discussion and reflections on the world. However, it acquires a particular tone when the object or experience to which time refers is a public asset or a relationship between themselves and the government. For example, time lost in a queue at a health clinic is gained if a consultation is eventually obtained. When the wait to be seen is unsuccessful, time is lost. Time is also lost if, after the exam, the doctor discovers nothing. In sum, when something happens as planned or desired, time is gained; when expectations are confounded, time is lost.

In these ordinary, everyday situations we can see references to a manipulable time, which is alternately lost or gained, but which is above all exterior to the subjects. There is, however, diffused throughout Recanto das Emas, a conception of time distinct from this one: 'Tempo de Brasília.'

‘Tempo de Brasília’ involves everyone at a visceral level because, in elapsing, it inscribes itself in individuals, making itself part of them. ‘Tempo de Brasília’ to a large extent concerns what people are since it refers to what each person has experienced in the Federal District. Understanding the situations in which this concept is used allows us to comprehend the meaning of a ritualized series of attitudes that permeate the everyday life of these people, including taboos and avoidances directly related to ‘Tempo de Brasília.’

Across Brasília and its surrounding satellite towns, thousands of individuals dedicate themselves to collating material proof showing that they have lived in the federal capital for at least five years. They concentrate their energy on this task because it is through this minimal interval of time that the governments typically ascertain the merit of anyone wishing to receive benefits from welfare projects. The most highly valued of the different benefits distributed by the Federal District government to those requesting assistance – that is, the so-called low income population – is the lot (a plot of land measuring on average 75m<sup>2</sup>). This supreme asset, which the vast majority of people seek in different forms to obtain, is only offered to those who prove their ‘Tempo de Brasília.’ Consequently, in this case, linked to the private property of a plot, ‘Tempo de Brasília’ is perceived as a personal attribute.

Anyone wishing to apply to receive a government lot must fulfil this basic requirement. In addition to this demand, a *sine qua non* condition, a series of information concerning the individual and his or her family is also required. After registering, their name is added to a list in which all those awaiting the government benefit are hierarchized. Although the *wait* is the legal means of acquiring a lot, there are other forms for the population to try to speed up the slow bureaucratic process. One of these recourses is the invasion of public lands (Borges 2000); that is, the occupation of prohibited public or private spaces with the aim of provoking later removal to a settlement (although this rarely occurs, the more common solution being a violent military raid by the property’s security agents against the shacks erected under these conditions). The other strategy is to increase one’s ‘Tempo de Brasília’ with the extra points.

The official list in which those awaiting the lot are registered is structured according to a calculation of the obtained point, that is, qualities or ‘social specificities’ of the future beneficiary. The lots and all other benefits should be offered to those people who top the list, i.e. who have reached an unsurpassed mark or amount of points. While waiting for this day to come about, someone dreaming of a lot may occupy a space in a shack belonging to a relative or friend, build a shack on the lot of a relative or a friend, rent a room or a shanty on the lot where the person renting also lives, or rent a house occupying its own separate lot.

Seu Vitório and Dona Maria had previously lived in a region of country smallholdings. At this location, as well as looking after the smallholding of an acquaintance, they ran a small bar. Dona Maria and Seu Vitório were not part of a land invasion, were not paying rent and also did not live with family (the most common situations in Recanto das Emas), but lived in rural settlements in the surrounding region, that is, in a village located in the state of Goiás, but bordering the Federal District.<sup>1</sup> As a result, their case comprises another mode of waiting for and acquiring a lot, one somewhat different from the ordinary possibilities.

The extracts that follow were taken from the end of one of our many lengthy conversations. After a lot of casual chat, we arrived at what is generally the highpoint of the talk, or at least a frequent *topos* in Recanto das Emas: the particular way in which the person came to live in the town.

*Antonádia:* So how did you manage to acquire this lot?

*Seu Vitório:* She [his wife] applied (in her own name) in Brazlândia.

*Antonádia:* How did this application come about, Dona Maria?

*Dona Maria:* The application was as follows: I went regularly to Brazlândia because we had a bar and I had to go to buy *pinga* [rum]... I went to fetch whatever we needed for the bar. There was a guard, I don't recall his name, he was the guard at the CDS [Social Development Centre]. We always travelled together on the same bus... I left home and had to walk 40 minutes along the dirt road to catch the bus going to Brazlândia... Our trips always coincided... One day I was walking down the road and he called me over: *Hey Dona Maria, Dona Maria!*... I went to see what he wanted. *What's up Seu Zé?* He said to me: *Look, the application for lots is going to start tomorrow, come here so you can get a queue number and make sure you come earlier as there's going to be a load of people.*

In Dona Maria's account, we see the guard as a messenger, whose signal marked the beginning of the woman's pilgrimage in pursuit of her lot.

*Dona Maria:* When I arrived home I told him [her husband]. And he said: You're going? I registered too, but nothing ever came of it. So I got up early and I caught the first bus, at five in the morning. I was the first in the queue. I arrived there and registered. After, time went by: *you have to renew the registration* [i.e. re-register].

Seu Vitório had applied for a lot years ago, 'but,' in his case, 'it came to nothing.' Very probably, Seu Vitório would never have obtained a lot. The same criteria that kept Seu Vitório low down on the government's classification, lifted Dona Maria to the condition of a beneficiary: being a single woman, the mother of various children, with all her documents transferred to the Federal District and with means of proving her 'Tempo de Brasília' meant she combined the ideal conditions for 'deserving' a lot.

*Dona Maria:* I talked with a woman [from the CDS] and she told me: *If I was you, I'd take your spouse off [the declaration]. Take your spouse off and leave just the children; that way it'll be easier for you to get the lot.* I did what she said and eliminated him. I took him off... I mean, I appeared as a single mother with no husband...

Dona Maria did not have a close relationship with the employee from the CDS (the board responsible for processing and registering the families). It was not in exchange for any favour or bribery that the CDS employee advised Dona Maria about one of the variables included in the equation used to calculate an applicant's points: 'salary level, number of dependents, time living in Brasília, dwelling occupation status, age of the applicant and, finally, social specificities' (Gonçalves 1998:101). Just like the CDS guard, the woman decided to advise Dona Maria in a way diverging somewhat from the ideal bureaucratic procedure, 'formally equal for everyone' (Weber 1993:180-181) or the patrimonialist conduct usually associated with public employees in Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

There was no strong tie between them that personalized the 'tips' given to her by the two employees (the registration for the lot, the elimination of the spouse) and that obliged her to become indebted to them both. In each fleeting encounter, both people took the liberty of advising her on the forms they knew to manipulate 'social specificities.'

An applicant's 'social specificities,' if properly handled, can greatly speed up the process of someone waiting to be considered for a lot. In Recanto das Emas, everyday conversations are scattered with comments made in a jesting, admiring or even shocked tone about how someone or other was 'lucky' to have managed to gather the proofs needed to help him gain a government lot or, when the person being discussed is unpopular with those chatting, how this person had lied to obtain effortlessly a benefit that should have been granted to people who really need it and with 'Tempo de Brasília.'<sup>3</sup> Although the use of various subterfuges may be considered legitimate in the process of gaining a lot, some people are disdained because of their 'lies,' while others involved in equally illegal procedures (such as invading lands or falsifying documents) are admired for their 'know-how.' In these cases, disqualification does not stem from a universal repudiation of illegality or lying, but from the low level of social prestige held by the person who received the lot.<sup>4</sup>

By turning up extremely early to get her queue number, Dona Maria was slowly incorporating this new set of beliefs. Acting on the advice she had received, she appeared at all the re-registrations, reiterating what was becoming her main purpose, acquiring a lot:

*Dona Maria:* Whenever we had to renew [the registration], I rushed out to renew it. One day, I came to visit here in Samambaia, because he [her husband] has a sister who lives here. She said: *Heavens, Maria da Glória, they're transferring lots, transferring registrations to Santa Maria, or Samambaia, or Recanto das Emas, or wherever.* I replied: *What?* I didn't stay hardly a moment longer in her house.

The news given to Dona Maria by her sister-in-law ('they're transferring lots,' that is, the government's distributing lots, settling applicants) reached the ears of the residents of Recanto das Emas in various ways. The most common, though, apart from the newspapers, was the radio, which every morning echoed in the town's homes announcing the government's deeds and the latest public works set to be inaugurated by the then governor, Joaquim Roriz. Whether during formal occasions or in day-to-day events (like the queue to receive bread and milk, the queue in the bank to receive a benefit with a magnetic card or the queue to request something from the regional officer), government agents pass on information on prospective lot distributions to those present, who, for their part, propagate the latest news on lots throughout Recanto.

*Dona Maria:* Early the next day, I went home and told him [her husband], and he said: *Are you going again?* On the following day, at five in the morning, I ran there, to the former SHIS, which is now the IDHAB. When I arrived there – the door opened at 8 o'clock – the guard asked: *What do you want?* I said: *I've come to transfer my registration.* He replied: *You'll have to come back at 2 in the afternoon.* I asked: *What?* I had no more than a few coins in my hand, since the money for my bus fair was in transport vouchers. I think I had less than 20 cents on me. I thought: *Now I'm done for, I'm going to die of hunger.* So I wandered there on the W3 south [the avenue on the Plano Piloto (central zone) where the Housing Office is located], and I found a bakery where I bought some bread and stayed there, suffering, until 2 in the afternoon.

It is worth pointing out that at each new eventuality in the procedures relating to acquiring a benefit, personal contact is required between the person making the request and the government agents. They need to meet, the claimants must bring documents in support of their declaration so that the employees can hand them another piece of paper, certifying that the government was informed and that the new data are safely stored for a future calculation. This is why Dona Maria made the trip to the Plano Piloto, since it is in the South Commercial Sector, 'there on the W3

south,' that the centre of decision-making, the 'former SHIS, which is now the IDHAB,' is located.

When the government changes the rules, the applicant must stay alert and turn up at the relevant authorities in order to conform to any new parameters. Dona Maria shows that she is familiar with these alterations, to the point of remembering the former SHIS (Social Housing office), which was replaced by the Federal District Institute of Housing Development (IDHAB) at the end of Joaquim Roriz's mandate as the first elected governor of the Federal District (cf. Law No. 804, of December 8<sup>th</sup> 1994). This change took place during the same period in which Dona Maria devoted her time and energy to receiving a lot.

*Dona Maria:* There the queue of people just kept growing. When my turn came, I asked the girl: *Are there any for Samambaia?* My intention was to live near to my sister-in-law. *No, there are none left for Samambaia. But there are some for Recanto das Emas and Santa Maria.* I was bothered by the idea of Santa Maria. *No, I don't want Santa Maria.*

*Antonádia:* Why not?

*Dona Maria:* I don't know, I didn't want Santa Maria.

*Seu Vitório:* And she didn't know anything about Recanto das Emas.

[...]

*Dona Maria:* I'd never even been to Recanto. I'd no idea where it was.

*Seu Vitório:* I said to her: Look, make the transfer to Santa Maria, or wherever, but just make the transfer. If you come back here without this transfer, we'll going to row. And she said: Me, to Santa Maria, I don't want to...

*Antonádia:* You [the husband] wanted to go to Santa Maria?

*Seu Vitório:* Me, oh, I wanted anywhere.

*Dona Maria:* Ah, you thought I didn't want anywhere too?!

*Seu Vitório:* Can you imagine if she hadn't done it, if it had been to Santa Maria and she hadn't done it? When she arrived back home and said: *I managed to make the transfer to Recanto das Emas, I don't know where it is.* I said: *Thank God.*

*Dona Maria:* And did you know where it was?

*Seu Vitório:* No...

In describing this arduous day, Dona Maria and Seu Vitório discuss the 'choice' of the place to which they transferred their application, without, though revealing the town to which their initial application had been registered. It was the start of the 1990s and the 'girl' at the IDHAB presented them with the name of towns recently created through the *program for settling low income populations*. Dona Maria 'fretted' over Santa Maria and transferred her application to Recanto das Emas. In the couple's account, this decision acquires the traces of a choice, a kind of idiosyncrasy they allowed themselves when faced with a context full of external constraints.<sup>5</sup>

*Dona Maria:* So, every time they said: *Roriz is going to hand over lots in Recanto*, I travelled from Brazlândia and came. I made a photocopy of the application and handed it in, I found a way, put it into the secretary's hands. I think they became sick of me going to the SHIS so often and pestering them. I think they became fed up: *No, give a lot to this woman right away so we can be rid of her.*

It should be noted that Dona Maria's application only registered her desire to receive a government lot in the town of Recanto das Emas. For a number of years after, she had to remain alert. On some occasions, her assiduity meant she ended up in the audience for the governor's rallies, where she heard the latter say to the enthusiastic crowd that he was going to hand over more lots. Like Dona Maria, hundreds of people appeared at these ceremonies and left them comforted by the words of Joaquim Roriz, who always expressed his personal commitment to distributing lots to the population.<sup>6</sup> This encouragement made her more confident as she waited.

Whenever Dona Maria saw and heard the governor, she responded by looking to ensure her urgency would be realized; she 'made a photocopy of the application and handed it in, [she] found a way, to put it into the secretary's hands.' This procedure is fairly common. Politicians and government employees from the Federal District are used to being approached by people who hand over these sorts of papers to them.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes without any stamp or other official signs, written in pen, the result of endless registrations, these pieces of paper are carried like amulets, a species of sacred proof of the bearer's participation in the circuit of gifts in which the government and local population are involved.

The papers contain the name and number of the application, or, in other words, the code that provides access to the official register. The hope of the person handing in the paper is that the politician or employee appraise the points tally and, if possible, help the applicant to rise on the ranking. This long wait may end one day with the best news of all: the concession of a lot.<sup>8</sup>

*Antonádia:* And then one day your name was published...

*Dona Maria:* It wasn't a case of my name appearing in the newspaper! I more or less knew already. A neighbour had already spoken to me: *What's your name? I'm called Maria da Glória Alves do Nascimento.* She said: *No, Maria da Glória Alves* (remember, I wasn't married...). *My father said that the lots have been granted, there are loads of Maria da Glórias.* So I thought: *I trust in the Lord that one of them is mine.* I crossed my fingers in hope. Look how I've already got goose bumps thinking about it [she shows her arm]. *My Jesus will bless me with my lot.* And in all of this, there was a compadre who was completely sceptical, I did everything for him to apply and he didn't want to – who said that lots were only given to the rich. I said: *I've faith in God, I'm not rich, but I'm going to get this lot...* I went with this expectation: *I've got an inkling, I think my name is in that newspaper.*

*Seu Vitório:* I bought the paper.

[...]

*Dona Maria:* When he arrived back home, I went to open the door and remembered: *My God.* He said: *Yes, you clever one!* I replied: *What's up? The lot's been granted!* And I cried. I cried with happiness: *I don't believe it.* I grabbed my husband and went out hurriedly, in the dark, falling over myself, I ran to my compadre's house and said to him:



*Compadre, didn't I tell you? That lots aren't just given to the rich? I'm poor and I got one, thanks be to God.*

In Dona Maria's account, a fundamental part of her joy in receiving the lot resided in the possibility of *running to her sceptical compadre* and declaring: 'Compadre, didn't I tell you? That lots aren't just given to the rich?' In contrast to what her compadre had presumed, she had been right. Her wait had not been in vain, and, from that moment on, she herself would be able to propagate the system of beliefs in which she was involved. Carrying the trophy of the lot, Dona Maria ran to her compadre's house and showed how she had betted right, the successful rooting of a social belief that he had doubted.

*Dona Maria:* And I came back running. The next day I came here, no, not the next day. They arranged a week later to come to see it, you know? To receive the registration, the paperwork, the documentation, to take possession of the lot.

*Seu Vitório:* It was published in the Gazette on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, we came here to see the lot on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

*Antonádia:* When did you move to the lot?

*Dona Maria:* We did the move on the 21<sup>st</sup> itself. We paid for a freight truck from Brasília.

*Antonádia:* The 21<sup>st</sup>. You stayed here, built [the house]...

*Seu Vitório:* We left there on the 21<sup>st</sup> and I came here. Clearing the undergrowth and living hereabouts, but the actual move was later.

*Dona Maria:* And the fear? That someone might come and take over the lot? Because there was a wave of invasion going on.

After the publication of her name (her maiden name), Dona Maria soon received 'the paperwork, the documentation, to take possession of the lot.'<sup>9</sup> The lot that they received suited them both. Today the house forms part of a road and, turning the corner, one comes to Seu Vitório's barber shop. During our talk, Seu Vitório recalled that in the first months when he was camped on his lot, he cleared the ground and made a cesspit for the neighbours. Initially the move involved just his own physical presence on the lot. As time passed, these activities dwindled and with the '500 cruzeiros' that he had earned, he bought 'rum, some sweets and six cups.' Starting out from nothing, a few odd-jobs with the occupation of the lots allowed him to accumulate some basic funds. Slowly other new people began to arrive, the first customers for his new '*vendinha*' (bar). The rum would run out and he 'would rush to buy more.' Later, he started cutting hair: 'underneath any shade available, I would cut people's hair.' As neighbours began to settle there like him, some of them began to need his services as a barber. Seu Vitório stayed there alone until he was certain he could bring his children and wife to Recanto das Emas. While he waited for this day, he visited them 'on the other side of Brazlândia,' at weekends, 'on foot.'

Dona Maria's wish, when we talked, was to finish her house: 'May God let me have a good house, a nice one, with all my things nice and tidy. Because my dream is to have everything nice and tidy.' This declaration alludes to the aspiration to possess a cohesive set of beliefs that could never be upset by external doubts. Undoubtedly an unrealizable desire that, at the same time, is what comprises and sustains the current expectation of Dona Maria and Seu Vitório.

## Interregnum

The life of Recanto's inhabitants, like that of this couple, is full of indices pointing us to the governmental practices officially designated 'housing policy.' When asked about the lot, people like Dona Maria and Seu Vitório replied with a map for social navigation. Their accounts help reveal to the person who asks *and* the person who responds the trajectory followed until 'Tempo de Brasília' was achieved – or, put another way, how the sand in this 'Tempo de Brasília' ran and accumulated inside each one, as though each individual was an hourglass measuring itself.

The understanding of this 'mechanism' on the part of the residents of Recanto das Emas, such as Dona Maria and Seu Vitório, is not a *post hoc* fallacy.<sup>10</sup> In tracing the steps taken in her pilgrimage in search of a lot, Dona Maria highlights categories and procedures that are diffused 'horizontally' and 'vertically' (allowing ourselves this three-dimensional analogy of social spaces), not only *among* the residents of Recanto das Emas, but also among the government agents who in turn transmit them to the general public.

The sequence of the events highlighted in Dona Maria's account is not aleatory. The form in which she arranges the past facts obeys a set of premises known to everyone – even those who refuse to follow this path (like her 'sceptical compadre'). Neither a *sui generis* narrative nor a private saga, her account relates to a conduct common to all the residents of Recanto das Emas with whom I spent time. This practice is marked by a series of obligatory procedures: the early morning queuing, the registration, the periodic updating of the application, the gradual learning of the variables that 'count' in the formula which calculates each candidate's score, the adjustment between the data one has available and the data that should be presented to the government, the search for documents proving the veracity of what is declared, the anxious wait for the concession, interspersed with disappointed perusals of the *Official Gazette* and the newspapers, and, finally, one's name on the list – the indescribable emotion of this experience, the occupation of the lot, the construction of a shack and, once again, the wait for the title deed.

## The formulas

Brasília, as we know, was a grandiose invention of the Juscelino Kubitschek government. At that time, the government, after expropriation, divided into lots and sold the lands making up the current Federal District.<sup>11</sup> To do so, especially in the case of the working class lots, criteria were progressively established to define the potential beneficiaries of this state handout. In 1958, for example, the social service of Novacap indicated whether workers wishing to acquire a lot in the first satellite town (Taguatinga) were 'able' to pay their future instalments (Oliveira 1987:133), giving priority to the requests of *candango* workers, that is, those employed in civil construction (Ribeiro 1980).

Already in these early years, apart from mere financial solvency, criteria involving legitimacy and precedence were used to determine who would be the first beneficiaries of the government's housing policies. People who were not in Brasília working in formal jobs (for example, those linked to civil construction) could not buy a government lot. Banned from these first sales of lots, innumerable families led the first land invasion in the Federal District.

This mechanism has a similar effect on the concession of the government's housing benefits for public employees who wanted to live in Brasília. In 1961, Novacap calculated, for example, how much an employee deserved to become a tenant of a government property on the Plano Piloto

based on their time working for the State, the salary they received, their number of dependents and the post they occupied:

[...] each period of 4 months of full-time employment – 01 point ... Salary up to Cr\$ 15,000 – 01 point; from Cr\$ 15,000 to Cr\$ 25,000 – 02 points; over Cr\$ 25,000 – 03 points ... each dependent – 1/5 point ... head of department and head of cabinet – 03 points; head of division and head of director's cabinet – 02 points; head of services and head of section – 01 point.  
(Bertone 1987:55).

The invaders, ignored initially as they were neither pioneers or *candangos*,<sup>12</sup> also gradually became included in the government's classification scheme.<sup>13</sup> Innumerable calculations were proposed by social engineers to rank this vast portion of people who lived in the limbo of the invasions. Those who had 'Tempo de Brasilia' and demonstrated that they were more needy could compete for the distribution of lots and other benefits. The legitimacy of the state ranking system was established slowly through the use of categories recognized locally as defining a person's worthiness, the most prominent of which was *the time spent living in the new capital*.

The awarding of points for each set of attributes (years living in Brasilia, socioeconomic situation, and so on) was gradually improved until it became a simple matter to evaluate this merit by the means of equations. Making use of formulas, it was possible to calculate the *quantum* of deservingness of the applicants for the government's different welfare programs, a practice that eventually became standard.

The state power in question was not restricted just to conceding lots, but to classifying the population into those more and less suitable as prospective beneficiaries. As we have seen in the case of Dona Maria People who inter-related with the government through these welfare modalities had their name printed in lists. Receiving the lot depended – at least in theory – on the ranking obtained on the list, and this order, in turn, was established by calculating the total points attained by each individual.

Of all the equation's components, the time resident in the Federal District was given the most attention and value, as of life in the capital anointed certain people with a special quality, expressed through the category 'Tempo de Brasilia.' Anyone who had not been born in the federal capital – that is, who was not a 'child of Brasilia' – has to spend a *five-year* trial period living there in order to become worthy of the various benefits offered by the local government. This minimal time establishes a hierarchy to which practically all the 'low income' population is equally submitted.

A classificatory system that looks to rank the population on the basis of a set of merits (established and controlled by the government) makes sense especially when the item being offered by the government cannot be distributed in universal and equal form to everyone. As we shall see, each formula created possesses a set of variables that are intended to be as precise as possible in terms of calculating the degree of deservingness of the population in relation to the (scarce) assets made available by the government. The *raison d'être* of these formulas (to rank the applications for a limited asset) has continued the same over the years; however, their content has undergone a variety of alterations due to changes in the judgments concerning the set of merits considered to be the most revealing of qualities that determine some people as more deserving of 'handouts' that cannot be universally offered.

For this reason, I believe it is important to accompany the more sweeping modifications of these formulas that have taken place over recent years, as well as the categories that continue to function in all of them, so that we can ascertain which are the basic attributes demanded from all the prospective beneficiaries and which are the qualities that explain the reasons why the government enters into contact and remains close to a portion – and not all – of the population that demands public assistance in the Federal District.

### **First Formula: the general register**

A key item of legislation, dedicated to systemizing the criteria capable of calculating the length of residency and legitimacy of an applicant as someone deserving a government lot, dates back to the middle of the 1980s. The government of José Aparecido de Oliveira decreed on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1986 (Decree No. 10,056) the *general register* of applicants for housing in the Federal District, which replaced the old ‘Registrations System,’ unaltered throughout the entire period of the military dictatorship.

At the time, the body responsible for this area was the SHIS (Social Housing Office). To qualify for the competition, an individual had to meet certain ‘basic requirements:’ not be or have been the owner of a property in the Federal District, be over 21 years old, have all documents in order, complete the necessary registers and the set time periods and, a *sine qua non* condition, ‘be provenly resident and housed in the Federal District for more than *five years*.’ Since then, these five years became known in the official documents themselves, as ‘Time of Brasilia.’ When finally summoned, the individual must ‘provide proof of a minimum family income compatible with the monthly charge.’ The same decree (No. 10,056) sets out the adopted formula of classification:

$$P = (a + 2b + c)d + 4e + 8f$$

where,

P = total points obtained by the candidate<sup>14</sup>

a = age band of candidate (displayed in a table)

b = number of dependents

c = candidate with physical handicap

d = average age of family

e = time registered (under registration, the years living in Brasilia)

f = disabled dependent

Both the number of family members and their age can only be proven through official certificates; the physical handicap of any family member must also be demonstrated with an official medical certificate. After promulgation of this decree, concession of the lot was communicated to the registered candidate via official public notice. This form of proceeding (through standardized criteria applied to all candidates in a general register) slowly became

naturalized as a way of documenting, ordering and calculating events experienced in Brasilia by – and this is fundamental – both government agents and the population involved.

### **Second Formula: income**

After more than a decade of the government of José Aparecido, on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1997, the second elected governor of the Federal District, Cristovam Buarque, established another expression for classifying ‘candidates for settlement programs aimed at the low income population:’

$$P = C + D + M + T + I + N + F + R$$

The tables annexed to the decree showed how many points would be obtained for physical handicaps (C), number of dependents (D), housing status (M), average age (F) and family income (R), amount of time living in the Federal District (T), age (I) and place of birth (N) of the candidate. A candidate ‘occupying a sub-dwelling’ obtained 100 points, while a candidate occupying a tenancy obtained only 60 points. The table, which attributed points in inverse proportion to family income, varied from less than 1 minimum wage to 10 minimum wages – within this interval was located the ‘low income population.’<sup>15</sup> Someone who ‘had resided’ for just five years (the minimum time necessary for registration) in the Federal District received no points. In the table setting out the latter points, the maximum is attained by candidates who show they have lived for more than 30 years in the Federal District – in other words, 100 points for those who have been in Brasilia since 1967. The ‘natural’ candidate from the Federal District (i.e. someone born in Brasilia) received 100 points, while those from ‘other Brazilian Provinces’ acquired 20 points.

### **Third Formula: the clean list**

We can see that the basic categories remain untouched, the calculation complicated only by the use of the annexed tables. Immersed in the local logic that considers the time lived in the Federal District as an attribute that distinguishes residents from each other, this model indicates the rooting of these fundamental categories used by the government to rank the population. As one of the last actions of the José Aparecido government in the area of housing policy, on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1998 another decree (No. 19,074) instituted the ‘Living Legally Program – Clean List.’<sup>16</sup>

In an explicit allusion to the ‘dirt’ that polluted the IDHAB and its decisions thus far, a new formula was produced for ranking anyone wishing to acquire a lot or a home ‘offered’ by the government. The formula was designed to rank candidates in a list that was thereby ‘cleaned’ in the process. In this equation we have:

$$P = 5000.IT + 3000.IR + 1500.IM + 500.IE$$

where,

IT = index of the candidate’s *time resident* in the Federal District (years spent in Brasilia)

IR = *index of the per capita income* of the candidate (sic)

IM = index of the number of family members

IE = index of the *special status* of candidate (in other words, if person is over 60 years old or handicapped)

This formula signals an important change in direction in the government's schema of calculation. Without questioning the classification in itself – that is, the possibility of ranking the population desiring a particular benefit – this new formula reiterates this governmental power, conferring even more weighting to the candidate's 'time' in Brasilia. The 'time of residence in the Federal District' is elevated to the determining factor in the race for the benefit (multiplied by 5000).

#### **Fourth formula: the family nucleus**

In the last government of Joaquim Roriz (1999/2002), another change occurred. As a form of marking the differences between the governments, the IDHAB was replaced by the State Department for Urban Development and Housing (SEDUH). Under the aegis of a new government and a new department, not only the body responsible for housing changed its name and acronym; a new formula was also created:

$$P = Cnf + Ndf + Tdf + Ces + Min$$

where,

*Cnf* = *number of members of the family nucleus*. In a progressive table, we are informed that a family with one member receives 100 points and one with seven people 300 points, for example.

*Ndf* = *members of the family nucleus born in the Federal District*. Consulting the table, we discover that a family with seven members with this status receives 2400 points, for example.

*Tdf* = *time resident* in the Federal District; calculated in an even more complicated form, through the multiplication of the number of days (sic) by a factor set out in another progressive table.

*Ces* = *special status individuals*, where each family member fitting into this category adds 10 extra points to the overall calculation.

*Min* = arithmetic average *age* of the members of the family nucleus in question.

The new formula continued to make use of factors and progressions set out in annexed tables, a very complicated procedure for most of the residents of Recanto that I knew who were interested in calculating their 'Tempo de Brasilia.' This procedure was established gradually, therefore, as natural for determining the points and the consequent ranking of candidates on the lists. This difficulty became even more pronounced with the frequent visits to the relevant authorities needed to update the registrations – after all, each 'change in life circumstance,' such as the birth of a child, or, as time passed waiting, the number of years spent living in the Federal District, reconfigured the candidate's position in the list by adding or, sometimes, subtracting 'points.'

This apparently mechanical evolution of the equation indicates a significant shift in the form of determining the legitimacy or the degree of deservingness to be imputed to the prospective government beneficiary. The mere existence of a general index highlights the spreading of a conception according to which all candidates can be 'calculated' on the basis of a common parameter. What also calls attention in this formulas is the distinction that it makes between people born in the Federal District and those that have only lived in Brasilia. For the first time, we

can see a difference in the way those born in the Federal District are considered. Although the category of pioneers or *candangos* had sprung up with Brasília, this new variable relates to the generations who were born in Brasília, that is, in an already established city.<sup>17</sup>

As we can see, the ‘family nucleus’ now provides various bases for calculating the final points total and not just the applicant, as in the previous equation.

In this sense, the set of members of a family with their ‘Tempo de Brasília’ and their combined hardships, can raise the candidate for a lot, for example, to a higher position in the list of those waiting for a concession. However, to supply all the information concerning each member of the family or the ‘family nucleus,’ the applicant has to commit even more time and energy to gathering a set of authentic probatory documents. The plastic bags or cardboard boxes stuffed with documents, so common in Recanto das Emas, symbolize the control and the importance a particular individual has for the group of people surrounding him or her – their family – *and* the control and importance that the government has for this individual. Just as the ‘family nucleus,’ looking to prove its ‘Tempo de Brasília,’ by giving demonstrations of its unity, creates this unity, the government too, in giving and demanding repeatedly documentary proofs of its relation with the population, creates this creation.

### **The meaning of the formulas**

As well as these decrees collated here to illustrate the process, many others were issued, adding small changes here and there to the legislation and *pari passu* to collective conduct in relation to this phenomenon. What I intend to determine, based on the classificatory alterations promoted by the government itself, is the effect that this legislation has on local reality. On one hand, these transformations are implemented in response to the alterations in the ‘patterns’ of migration, residence and birth that are detected via ‘research studies’ conducted by the government itself through the registers completed by the public and through census data. On the other hand, the beliefs and conducts (that is, habits) of the population itself are strongly influenced by the legislation and local public policies – as we were able to perceive in Dona Maria’s trajectory.

By examining some of the equations created by the local government, we can gradually understand what is referred to in each part of these sentences (or each variable, in other words) and why these elements were picked out from the native classificatory repertoire in order to figure in a magical state formula, immediately becoming legal categories to refer to the population. This spiral movement, which brings state power in contact with the daily life of the population, and vice-versa, reveals the construction of the ‘syntax’ of this exchange relation in which time is exchanged for space, the years lived and suffered in Brasília for a lot – or, in the final instance, for a social place.

Therefore, rather than take the government formulas and concepts as a reference point, I think it is more revealing to focus on the meaning of the historical process to which these changes allude, that is, the alterations in the habits – of both the government and the population – that sustain this classification.

### **Conclusion**

As we have seen, ‘Tempo de Brasília’ does not just refer to the years lived in the capital, but the capacity to have supported, year after year, hardships of every kind and, furthermore, the ability

to prove these adversities by means of documents whose emblem and guarantee is, in turn, a paper with the registration number that everyone carries with them. In the conversation with Dona Maria and Seu Vitório, we saw how the formal alterations in bureaucratic rules are replicated in the concrete social experiences of the individuals applying for a lot or other benefits from the local government. We are presented with a ritual model of exchanges – between people working for the government and the people of Recanto das Emas – experienced daily through this distribution of government assets that guarantee the fixing of the population in previously non-existent settlements that, in this way, are gradually transformed and comprehended as spaces controlled by the State (Franco 1983).

As well as being a concept relating to a chronological phenomenon, that is, the ‘creation of intervals in social life’ (Leach 1974:207), ‘Tempo de Brasília’ refers to the configuration of what I have called, inspired by Charles Peirce, a community of belief (Peirce 1992:149).<sup>18</sup> For five years or longer, in various parts of the Federal District, thousands of people wait for this social metamorphosis, which will anoint them with the ‘Tempo de Brasília’ necessary to receiving a lot. During this wait, the very belief in the wait takes shape and with it the collective acceptance of a habit. While they wait for the day when they will have ‘Tempo de Brasília,’ the roots of this belief penetrate slowly and deeply into individuals.

In a land invasion, alongside other squatters, or in a shack, next to other shacks, while they wait, people see themselves reflected in their colleagues and neighbours. The wait of some reinforces that of the others and any doubts that surface tend to be pushed into the background. Without realizing, people like Dona Maria gradually acquire their ‘Tempo de Brasília’ as they learn to manipulate the formulas that the government presumes to be emblematic and reliable evidence of the population’s way of life. For many other people, though, the years run by without ever obtaining their ‘Tempo de Brasília’ and without managing to enter into this community of belief. However, it is not a case of the former being merely alienated subjects, manipulated by politicians. The power differential exists and is swayed heavily towards the government. However, as the illustrative experience of Dona Maria and her husband shows us, this link between the politicians and the people who vote for them is not explained merely by the exchange of routine or sporadic favours, but by the sharing of a habit, a set of beliefs. This is how power is exercised, not by the simple charismatic gifts of Roriz or any other politician, nor by the atavistic ignorance of a people marked by relations of subordination to their bosses, but by the gradual inculcation of the bureaucratic logic of governments in all our daily lives.<sup>19</sup>

The countless formulas and their endless alterations mean that anyone applying for a benefit (considered, paradoxically, to be public, even though not offered in a universal and equal manner) is forced to become constantly involved with government agents. As I once heard in Recanto, it is not a question of being a blind follower of Roriz, but an adept, that is, someone assiduous, continually present. It is through this visceral involvement with the government that the State is made present – and, literally, logically indispensable – in the life of people. Not because of a universalist, democratic notion of rights – as some like to argue – but because of a (socio)logical necessity. In Recanto das Emas, after initiating this link, after registering, any subject starts to think and act above all in relation to the government.

‘Tempo de Brasília’ primarily concerns the depth and scope of this mutual involvement between the government and people. Individually, many doubt whether the lots will be ceded and whether the wait is worthwhile. However, these doubts fail to shake the community of belief produced by the innumerable daily actions that place common people in contact with government officials, the former with their ever-changing lives and the latter with the most recent demands, the government’s latest classificatory criteria. More than an item in an equation established by social



engineers, 'Tempo de Brasilia' is itself a synthetic formula derived from life in this place, characterized by the government's presence in the day-to-day life of everyone.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Inhabitants from outlying regions frequently ask to borrow proof of residence from someone close who is a resident of the Federal District. Living in Brasilia, even fictitiously, helps in various processes, especially those relating to obtaining public benefits. Likewise, politicians from the capital nourish a special interest in these outlying inhabitants. A rumour spread in Recanto das Emas that a senator, the owner of a construction firm, had demanded that his employees have an address and electoral card in the Federal District, even if they actually resided in a town or city in Goiás, so that they could vote for him.

<sup>2</sup> Candido focused on investigating the career of 'an imperial bureaucrat who rose from nothing' (2002:13) to demonstrate the heterogeneity of so-called 'public functionalism.' The life history of Senhor Tolentino is, it seems, an exception to the widely accepted rule, which states: 'Our administrative tradition is Iberic in origin, where official posts retained the nature of an endowment – a tradition that is at heart closer to Eastern conceptions, which link the administrative act to benefices, rather than the Lutheran-inspired German conception of public service as a mission,' (Candido 2002:90).

<sup>3</sup> In Recanto das Emas it is very common for two or three dwellings to be built on the same lot. In these situations, it is generally necessary for an agreement to exist concerning the division of tasks related to water or electricity, for example, or even concerning the division of expenses with the material needed to make a *gato* or *gambiarra* (a clandestine hook-up to the electricity grid). This is usually a motive for disagreements. The arguments come to a peak with a threat to reveal the false nature of the information that the opponent presented to the government authorities. In a case registered in a local police station, a woman recalled her threat to expose a neighbour who was bothering her: 'you're here because you're a liar, I'm going to tell the IDHAB that you live alone, you have no family, so you'll stop this abuse.'

<sup>4</sup> Elias & Scotson similarly interpret the double bind of gossip. In 'Winston Parva,' gossip was welcomed when conducted by people with close ties. This was the so-called *pride gossip*. However, when belligerent groups made use of rumours, the latter were perceived as a form of defamation, that is *blame gossip*. Hence, gossip had 'the function of supporting people approved by the dominant opinion,' and that of 'excluding and cutting relations.' (2000:125)

<sup>5</sup> When described with antagonistic categories, an apparently univocal social process can reveal the paradoxes experienced by those involved. Among the sugarcane workers researched by Sigaud, two explanations were used to justify their dismissal: they were either 'given the sack' or they had left 'at their own wish.' Depending on the degree of asymmetry in the relationship with the boss, the worker could use either to express his 'hitting the *road*' (1979:197, emphasis in the original).

<sup>6</sup> In one of the rallies attended by myself, I was able to hear the governor declare: 'I'd have liked to have managed to get a very large lot for all of you. Brazil is the biggest country in the world. It's not right that everyone doesn't have their own little bit of ground.'

<sup>7</sup> Papers, in the lay sense, are also considered documents in this context (Peirano, 2006b), to the extent that paperwork of other kinds, such as receipts, for example, can serve as proof of the

person's time resident in the federal capital. In another area, relating to peasant-led land invasions, Hobsbawm depicts the importance of carrying small pieces of paper indicating the right to the land: 'Possessing *bits of paper* is very important to the Latin American peasant community. Real or forged, these are kept carefully, preserved and hidden from potential thieves since losing them would affect their rights in some form, even if one cannot say that the loss of the *bits of paper* would weaken their sense of existence,' (Hobsbawm 1974:125).

<sup>8</sup> At each new election and change of government, there is an enormous turnover in the staff. This change has a pronounced effect on the life of those who wander through the corridors with papers that provide them with the ranking needed to acquire a lot, or those that build their shacks in prohibited areas, waiting to be moved to a settlement. When the person with whom one dealt, and in whom one trusted, 'disappears,' everything may have to start again from scratch. In these cases, as well as being meaningless, this bit of paper representing the material proof of a link may frequently be looked upon with suspicion by the newly-elected regime, since it symbolizes the previous government.

<sup>9</sup> 'Although unpublished, the decree creating the Program [for Settling the Low Income Population] stipulated a time limit of 3 (three) days for favela dwellers to build their shacks and 45 (forty-five) days for tenants [the case of Dona Maria] to occupy their lots. After the deadline, where justified, an extension would be allowed, followed by repossession of the lots for subsequent redistribution' (Gonçalves 1998:101).

<sup>10</sup> 'The event inaugurating the possibility of a chronicle and the chronicle, although it may not be a history, provides the template on which the historical (and even a non-narrative history) can be written,' (Daniel 1996:50).

<sup>11</sup> 'Having expropriated the farms within the boundaries of the Federal District, and passed the lands to Novacap (the New Capital Urbanization Company), the State, as landowner, then divided the land into lots and sold them,' (Oliveira 1987:130).

<sup>12</sup> For an interpretation of the meanings of the terms 'candango' and 'pioneer,' see in particular Laraia (1996). In official documents, a pioneer is defined as someone 'became a resident or householder in Brasilia before 1970.'

<sup>13</sup> Joaquim Roriz's first government (during the military regime, when these posts were occupied by appointed governors, called 'bionics') saw the decree of the 'program for settling the low income population' (Decree No. 11,476, of March 9th 1989).

<sup>14</sup> In Recanto das Emas, the idea of being a candidate thus spreads beyond the universe of professional politicians. People put themselves forward as candidates for a lot or food handouts. If well placed on the ranking, they are elected. One woman, an electoral canvasser for Joaquim Roriz, declared that she had been 'elected for a job' when the latter was elected governor and she was appointed to a commissioned post.

<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note that during Cristovam Buarque's government, this ceiling was raised – 'A low income family, for the purposes of this law, is one where the combined earnings of its members does not exceed twelve minimum wages' (as stipulated in Law No. 2.130, of November 12<sup>th</sup> 1998) —, indicating that an increase in the spectrum of probable beneficiaries included not just the lowest income population.

<sup>16</sup> 'The "Legal Brasilia" program, by proposing an exaggerated legalism and violently preventing the working class sectors from occupying unused lands, ends up benefiting the wealthiest population, which appropriates the land and ensures, through the law and their teams of lawyers, easy profits, while the worker is removed by the police to distant localities or is simply left homeless,' (Gouvêa 1999:269).

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of the category 'child of the municipality' in other ethnographic contexts, see Peirano (2006a).

<sup>18</sup> 'Belief [...] is a habit of the mind essentially persistent for a time, and, being in large part (at least) unconscious like other habits, is (until it encounters something that surprises and starts to dissolve it) perfectly self-satisfying. Doubt [...] is not a habit, but the lack of a habit.' (Peirce 1998:337).

<sup>19</sup> While keeping in mind the due and important singularities of each case, it is not a mere coincidence that Strathern and others perceive in other areas (sometimes fairly close to academia) an analogous process that they denominate 'audit cultures.'

## **Bibliography**

BERTONE, L. F. 1987. 'O Estado e a urbanização do Distrito Federal.' In: A. Paviani (ed.), *Urbanização e metropolização: a gestão dos conflitos em Brasília*. Brasília: Edunb/ CODEPLAN. pp. 51-72.

BORGES, A. 2000. 'Os signos de uma invasão: espaço e política no Distrito Federal.' *Série Antropologia*, 283:11-26, Brasília.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2003. *Tempo de Brasília: etnografando lugares-eventos da política*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2004. 'A fórmula do tempo: notas etnográficas sobre o 'Tempo de Brasília!.' In: C. C. Teixeira e C. de A. Chaves (eds.), *Espaços e tempos da política*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará/NuAp. pp. 23-46.

CANDIDO, A. 2002. *Um funcionário da monarquia: ensaio sobre o segundo escalão*. Rio de Janeiro: Ouro sobre azul.

DANIEL, E. V. 1996. *Charred Lullabies: chapters in an anthropography of violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

ELIAS, N. & SCOTSON, J. L. [1965]. *Established and the outsiders: a sociological enquiry into community problems*. London: Sage, 1994.

FRANCO, M. S. de C. 1983. *Homens livres na ordem escravocrata*. São Paulo: Kairós.

GONÇALVES, M. da C. V. 1998. *Favelas teimosas: lutas por moradia*. Brasília: Thesaurus.

GOUVÊA, L. A. de C. 1999. 'Uma política habitacional de interesse social para o Distrito Federal.' In: A. Paviani (ed.), *Brasília - gestão urbana. Conflitos e cidadania*. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília. pp. 253-270.

- HEREDIA, B. & PALMEIRA, M. 1995. 'Os comícios e a política de facções.' *Anuário Antropológico/94*. Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro. pp. 31-94.
- HOBSBAWM, E. J. 1974. 'Peasant land occupations.' *Past and Present*, 62:120-152.
- LARAIA, R. de B. 1996. 'Candangos e pioneiros.' *Série Antropologia*, 203. Brasília.
- LEACH, E. R. [1955/1961]. 'Time and the false noses.' In: Hugh-Jones, S. & Laidlaw, J. (eds.) *The essential Edmund Leach. Volume I – Anthropology and Society*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. pp. 182-186.
- LEAL, V. N. 1949. *Coronelismo, enxada e voto: o município e o regime representativo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Nova Fronteira.
- OLIVEIRA, M. L. P. 1987. 'Contradições e conflitos no espaço.' In: A. Paviani (ed.), *Urbanização e metropolização: a gestão dos conflitos em Brasília*. Brasília: Edunb/CODEPLAN. pp. 125-144.
- PEIRANO, M. 2006a. 'Sem lenço, sem documento.' In: *Teoria Viva e outros ensaios de antropologia* Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar. pp. 121-134.
- PEIRANO, M. 2006b. 'A lógica múltipla dos documentos.' In: *Teoria Viva e outros ensaios de antropologia* Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar. pp. 65-153.
- PEIRCE, C. S. 1992 [1878]. 'The doctrine of chances.' In: N. Houser e C. Kloesel (eds.), *The essential Peirce volume 1*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 142-154.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998 [1905]. 'What pragmatism is.' In: N Houser e C. Kloesel (eds.), *The essential Peirce volume 2*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 331-345.
- QUEIROZ, M. I. P. de. 1969. *O mandonismo local na vida política brasileira (da colônia à primeira República)*. São Paulo: Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros.
- RIBEIRO, G. L. 1980. '“A capital da esperança” — Brasília: um estudo sobre a grande obra da construção civil.' Master's Dissertation, Anthropology Department/University of Brasilia.
- SIGAUD, L. 1979. *Os clandestinos e os direitos: estudo sobre trabalhadores da cana-de-açúcar de Pernambuco*. São Paulo: Duas Cidades.
- STRATHERN, M. (ed.). 2000. *Audit cultures: anthropological studies in accountability, ethics, and the academy*. London: Routledge.
- WEBER, M. 1993. *Economía y sociedad*. Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Received on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Approved on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Translated by David Rodgers.

Translation from *Mana* [on line]. Apr. 2005, vol.11, n°.1, pp.67-93. ISSN 0104-9313.