

## READING, LIBRARY AND FORMATION POLITIC OF READERS IN BRAZIL

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### ABSTRACT

The hunger of reading in Brazil comes, historically, skirting several obstacles. One of the most frequent is the inexistence of continuous public politics and libraries, as public as from schools, which contribute to the cultural improvement, to the insertion of the population to the citizenship. The deployment trajectory of the library, public or from school, in our country reflects today in the performance of the public politics of reading delineated throughout the history of Brazil and, to the same, presents the portrait of the reader we have today and, mainly, suggests the base to the improvement of the formation politic of reader which the public school should adopt. This article, result of thesis defended in 2006 by Unesp/Marília is structured in three distinct stages: the first reports the invention of the writing-reading and its close relation with the humanity development. Then, it presents the coexistence of the Brazilian society with the book, the library and the reading since the arrival of the Portuguese people to the country in the first decades of the XX century and afterwards, to the current Brazilian programs of reading incentive and to the reader formation.

**Keywords:** Reading; Public Library; School Library; Reading Politics; Readers Formation.

### 1 WRITING AND READING: FROM CAVES TO SKYSCRAPERS

The human being since the most primitive times, searched means to communicate. It is proper from his nature to share the lived, the frustrations, the dreams and the hopes, but for a long period of the human history, when it was not dominated the written code, the man used the drawing on the rock to represent his world.

From the registrations of what was observed, from the need of the daily routine, it was created signs and small pictures in a way to make it more practical and effective the process of “writing communication”. These symbols made it possible for the later generations to comprehend better the past of their ancestors, besides enlarging their own communication.

The writing brought a continuous transformation on its relation with the man: from the alphabetical writing to the press of Gutenberg in the century XV; from the feather of the metal from century XIX to the computer in the century XXI (BAJARD, 2001). As the society became more complex and technological, also the way of diffusion of the writing changed, besides the arousing of other technologies which conquered the man, among them the image conveyed by the video.

The reading is closely related to the appearance of the writing, which in turn, is connected to the human trajectory. And the man comes, historically, in search of effective alternatives to communicate and represent what he sees, feels and think. From the caves to skyscrapers, the transformations were continuous. Reading and writing co-exist in an interdependence the existing of one of them presupposes the existence of the other. Along with this technology named *writing*, the society could establish more satisfactory contacts, making the communications more effective and complete.

During the pathway, from the drawing to the alphabetical writing, our ancestors, according to the technological evolution of each time, they were found resources to maintain and improve the writing communication. Consequently, there were changes in the reading objects as well as the way of reading.

The western civilization has the genesis of its conceptual formation in the Greek-roman societies; to read in each one of these civilizations acquires a peculiar context. In the Greek case, the verb read, initially, indicates different meanings.

The many verbs used by the Greek to indicate the fact of “read” express nuances of different meanings, at least in the first stage of its semantic definition. Verbs such as *nemein* and its compounds (*ananemein*, *epinemein*) mean to read in the leading sense “to distribute” the content of the writing, implying therefore an oral reading; *anagignoskein* means to read as the moment of the “recognize”, of the “decipher” the letters and their sequences in

syllables, words and phrases [...] (CAVALLO; CHARTIER, 1998, p.12).

To the authors cited, the verbs (distribute, recognize and decipher) demonstrate the evolution in a society which respectively “changed from a reading practice “such as text distribution” made by a few alphabetized and few scholars, to a more widespread writing, regarded as direct “recognition” of the letters. From the Hellenistic period, even if ways of oral transmission remains, the book turns to perform thereafter a central role” in the Greek society (CAVALLO; CHARTIER, 1998, p.13).

Approximately in the beginning of the century II B.C. the roman civilization inherited from Greece, “certain practices of reading” and “from the centuries III-II B.C. the use of the book is expanded and this expansion is part of the changes undergone by the roman society” (CAVALLO; CHARTIER, 1998, p.13). The books from this period, according to the authors, were basically from Greek writers which the roman used as model to their literary production of the time.

After that, in the medieval period the reading practice, in the Latin part, according to the Cavallo and Chartier (1998, p.20)

[...] it was concentrated inside the churches, the cells, the canteens, the cloisters, the religious schools, sometimes from the court: readings, moreover, generally limited to the Sacred Scriptures and to texts of spiritual edification. Only inside these ecclesiastical spaces and in the monasteries flower poems which celebrate the glory of books, readings and libraries [...].

The historical route of the social appropriation of the reading in the western world passed for a long period of changes and adaptations to the social practices of each time. From the reading aloud to the silent reading, it was a long way, as Chartier (1996, p.82) presents to us:

Three periods would be decisive here: the ones from the IX-XI centuries, which saw the monastic *scriptoria* give up the antique habits of reading and of the oralized copy; the one from the XIII century, with the diffusion in silence in the university world and finally, the one from the half of the century XIV, when the new way of reading reaches, belatedly, the secular aristocracy. Gradually, it was installed then a new relation with the book, easier and agile.

As the society turned more complex, demanding, also the printed materials were changing and enlarging the circulation, as it happens in the Europe of the post-Gutenberg centuries. According to Chattier (1996, p.79),

[...] in the societies of the centuries XVI to XVIII the typographical materials (understood then the book) seem to have been more widely present and shared than it was thought for a long time. The circulation of the same printed objects, from a social group to another is, with no doubt, more fluid than what a very severe socio-cultural division suggested, which made from the scholarly literature only reading for the high classes and from the walking books only for the farmers.

The access to the book goes, gradually, enlarging and permitting more people to get to it, however in the earlier times it is restricted to determined conventions for this or that class, or this or that kind of reading to determined class.

The century XVIII is a period of optimism, of belief in the science as factor of transformation of the human being, to guide him to the progress, to the knowledge of all truths.

In this context, the child turns to have a new role in the society. The family should preserve the infancy and giving him cultural industrialized objects such as the toy and the book. Besides that, to prepare the child to life was one of the main goals and, for that, the school becomes mandatory. If the school was responsible for preparing the child to the world, then the book would be one of the main cultural objects of the century XVIII society to the formation of the little ones, as exposes Lajolo and Zilberman (1988, p.18).

In a society which grows by means of industrialization and becomes modern due to the new technological resources available, the children's literature takes, since the beginning, the commodity status [...] because the children's literature works on the written language, it depends on the reading ability of kids, it is meant, it is supposed they have passed by the school scrutiny.

The central role that the school has from then on, not only on the formation, as well as in the social valuation of reading, drove the appearance of libraries in England. According to Colomer (2003, p.24), it appeared a category which was worried about the readers' formation:

It was in the Anglo-Saxon area where it was initially produced this phenomenon. The traditional existence of an important and decentralized group of public libraries made it possible to appear a socio-professional category characterized by a cultural solid formation and by the direct contact with the recipients of the children and youth literature.

When the society started to value the writing and the reading as something good to the social life, little by little, the means for them were enlarged. Only from the century XVIII on “[...] the reading is revealed as a phenomenon historically delimited and circumscribed to a model of society which made use of that for its expansion” (ZILBERMAN, 1986, p.12).

Front of a society driven by the industrial and cultural revolutions of this century, of the gradual access to the school by the population, the reading becomes to be faced as a right and not privilege of the high class. The school was an essential mechanism on this trajectory of formation and permanence of readers. From then on the book was seen as “central instrument to the diffusion of knowledge and the mean through which one appropriates himself to the reality, endorsing its utility character and, at the same time, its emancipator nature” (ZILBERMAN, 1986, p.14).

It is from this context on that it happened, from 1750 on, the expansion of the public libraries in Europe, as Wittmann clarifies (1999, p.156-157):

In England, its number multiplied until 1801, according to the *Monthly Magazine*, to “not less than a thousand”. In 1761, the bookseller Quillan founded, on the Parisian street Christine, the first French stock library; the *louers de livres* were multiplied fast in the years 1770 and 1780. In the countries of German language, after the precursors in Berlin, they are documented the first libraries in Frankfurt and Karlsruhe, in the 1750 years, and, the latest in the years of 1780 and 1790, it was possible to find in the majority of cities and small markets at least a stock library.

The appearance of libraries made it possible that not only the bourgeoisie had access to the reading, but that other social segments could also enjoy it. On the other side, the access of the population to school and, consequently, the deployment of the school libraries and the Tale Time contribute to a greater circulation of printed materials.

From the XIX century on the population which lived predominantly in the rural area comes back to the city. The society becomes to be organized in urban spaces

and, therefore, it becomes essential to the people living there to have the necessary instruments for the individual to enjoy them. Among those instruments we find the school, the reading and the library (CAVALCANTI, 2002, p.47).

In the XIX century the school diffusion was greater, there was a public reader eager by the printed, serial, books, newspapers were already spread by the periphery of urban centers. The worry about the child, the school and the reading became constant. It is also on this time that in the USA it was reserved by the first time a space separated for the kids' reading, what would originate the children library (COLOMER, 2003, p.24).

Since then we live in a society which, gradually, uses the reading as one of the main guides to incorporate the individual to the social practice, to the citizenship. In order to become a citizen, the individual should dominate the urban language and, in this context, the reading is one of the necessary languages. In the cities, the urban standard is structured, basically, by the written code: signals, indications of streets, hours, parking, automated teller machine and, maybe, one of the most important, that is to read the subliminal "messages" emanating from its midst. So citizenship is inserted in a process of social construction and the one who does not read, will have his actions less appreciated, discredited (BORDINI; AGUIAR, 1993, p.11).

## **2 READING AND LIBRARY IN BRAZIL: FROM THE COLONY TO THE METROPOLE OF THE XVI TO THE XVIII CENTURY**

In this period Brazil was not emancipated politically, it was stuck to the Portuguese determinations and it could not accomplish, whatever they were, actions without previous authorization of the Court. The Portuguese colonialism prohibited the typography here, in a way to leave the country to the margin of the printed. According to Moraes (1979, p.1), until the first half of the XVI century, books practically did not exist here, once the "[...] rude settlers who demanded to Brazil were more worried about growing crops and cutting the pau-brasil than to read and study".

From the century XVI to the XVII, according to Hallewell (1985, p.5), “[...] the print industry was not administratively necessary neither economically possible”, due to the small and scattered population of the time. Allied to this, there was the Portuguese project to forbid the print in order to better control and maintain the colony under their yoke.

If the print of simple pamphlet was difficult, when we think about the book the situation was not very different. This cultural object was not popular on the lands of the colony in this period. It was for a few social lucky people, for that reason, from then on, its value would rise among the settlers. It was not easy to get a book, but who had it would enjoy some social prestige. Then, “[...] the books seemed to be factors of power and pleasure, being important in the private and public lives, defining networks of sociability”, as Villalta exposes (*apud* ABREU, 2002, p.185).

In the countries where there was the print of written materials, the reading did not developed of a sudden, because it was not enough only the equipment, as Almeida Júnior (1997, p.41) “[...] the public, who depended necessarily of literacy and of reading habits, should be formed, implying much broader and that exceeded the mere physical access to the book”. In Brazil, this period, the political and social situation jammed the development of the print and of the access of most of the population to school, to the print and, consequently, to the reading.

In order to have readers it is presupposed that it exists necessary conditions to establish a system, as Candido clarified (1993, p.23):

[...] the existence of a group of literary producers, more or less conscious of their role; a group of receptors, forming the different kind of publics, without the ones the work does not live; a transmitter mechanism, (in general, a language, translated in styles), linking each other.

Although the reference is made specifically to the literary reading, we believe it is possible to approach it to the own development of reading in the society, it is meant, it is necessary to exist circularity between production and reception (production, reader and writing). In this case, they are necessary instruments which allow the formation of system, as Candido stated, but from Brazil discovery to the XVIII century, the school in the country was for few, besides that, the typography was

forbidden in the colony, what made it difficult that the system of reading was established.

According to Moraes (1979, p.6), from the second half of the XVI until the XVIII century, the best and more complete libraries from the country were of the Jesuit schools and convents, opened to students and priests and also for who “made a competent order”, but with the expulsion of Jesus Company, many of these libraries were disassembled and disfigured on its collection, one of the biggest and most important existing in Brazil until the first half of the century XVIII and that, as Moraes complements, the “[...] books taken out from the Jesuit Schools would be piled in inappropriate places for years”, besides that, “almost all were dilapidated, robbed or sold as old paper to apothecaries to wrap ointments”.

In this century the libraries of the Convents made the role of former of the Brazilian intellectual elite, because there was not a librarian public system to the settlers and the “convent libraries were, until the second half of the XVIII century, the centers of culture and intellectual formation of the young Brazilian who used to complete their studies in Portugal” (MORAES, 1979, p.19).

In the colonial period the Brazilian population had a little contact with the library, with the book, however this situation suffered a slight change from the XVIII century on, because “[...] the implicit uses which may be inferred from the possession of books in the colonial society refer to the exercise of professions, to the relation with the sacred and the entertainment” (VILLALTA *apud* ABREU, 2002, p.200).

### **3 ON THE PATH OF THE METROPOLIS: FROM THE XIX TO THE XX CENTURY**

The second half of the XVIII century engendered several political and social changes in Europe. The French Revolution and the industrial development brought another perspective to the organization of the State and, afterwards, influenced changes occurred in Brazil in the century that would come.

In the XIX century, with the arrival of the royal family to Rio de Janeiro, there was the “need” to release the print. It was created the Royal Print, responsible by the



documents from the governments, posters, sermons, among others (HALLEWELL, 1985, p.20-46). In this time, Rio de Janeiro had the print monopoly in the Colony. After that, from 1821 on, with the abolition of the books censorship and the extinction of the Royal Print monopoly, the publications and the interest by the reading were enlarged, due to the growing interest in politics and in the country independence.

The arrival of D. João and his Courte to Rio, in 1808, “changed in part the commerce of books. The true bookstores appeared, selling not only the Brazilian publications, but also books imported from Europe” (MORAES, 1979, p.44), but the situation of the country was not comfortable at this aspect, because passed more than three centuries of colonization, the number of bookstores and public libraries was mediocre. For example, at the time, the country capital, Rio de Janeiro, had only two bookstores, but along with the arrival of the Portuguese Court there was “[...] a slow but constant growing, of the number of bookstores, which passed from two in 1808 to five in 1809, seven in 1812 and twelve in 1816” (HALLEWELL, 1985, p.33).

The installation of the Royal Family in the city of Rio de Janeiro brought benefits to the city, among them, the creation of the Royal Library (today National Library), whose collection had 60 thousand volumes (HALLEWELL, 1985, p.31-32). Even that it was not permitted the public access to the Royal Library its existence would come, indirectly, to restate the need of this institution by national lands.

If in the capital of the Empire the library was not public yet, in 1811 in Salvador/BA appeared the first library of eminently public character in Brazil, according to Moraes (1979, p.129), by a private initiative and not from the government.

In this century there was, at least in the biggest Brazilian cities, an intensification of the opening of spaces related to the reading, mainly in the case of the bookstores, subsequently in the structuring of libraries. If the first decades from the XIX century, from the arrival of D. João VI in 1808 until the Independence Proclamation in 1822, were marked by the censorship and, mainly, by the monopoly of the Royal Print, from then on the scenery takes another direction.

It is important to glimpse that the country, along with the Independence recently-instituted, lived a nationalist euphoria. The search of national parameters

becomes the order of the day. Besides that, as well as the liberty to print, there is the gradual growing of this activity and the ex-Colony was launched to the print world, mainly with the development of the press in the capitals.

#### 4 REPUBLICAN FLOURISH

In the last two decades of the XIX century, the Brazilian society presented more complexity in the social relations; on one side by the movement in favor of the Republic, on the other for the more urbanized structure, more literate than in the beginning of the century. In this context it must be already pointed out the book as being the most accessible object to a certain segment of the population, besides extending the publications and the schooling, according to Lajolo and Zilberman (1988, p.27):

Another leading factor in this period was the expanding and the solidification of the idea of books for kids, as well as school books as the ones of children's literature. Before the decade of 1880 of this century, "[...] circulated in Brazil, apparently, only the translations of, in Europe well-succeeded, Cônego (Christoph) von Schimd: *O Canário* (1856), *A cestinha de flores* (1858) and *Os ovos de Páscoa* (1860)". After the decade of 80, it happened the increasing of publications addressed to this public, because they circulated works adapted by Carlos Jansen and Figueiredo Pimentel such as: *Contos seletos das mil e uma noites* (1882), *Robinson Crusóé* (1885). Still in the beginning of the XX century, it is broadened the number of Brazilian authors who write to the children public, among them are pointed out: Olavo Bilac, Coelho Neto and Júlia Lopes de Almeida (LAJOLO; ZILBERMAN, 1988, p.29).

In this context, there was the expressive development of the book industry in Brazil, which had in Lobato one of the most enterprising representatives, according to Hallewell (1985, p.235-307). If the typographic structure of the country, so far, developed slowly, the sales points were concentrated in the big centers. Lobato, in 1918, when becoming owner of a publishing company, realized the difficult to the books distribution once that in that time there were a little more than thirty bookstores

in the country. It is from then on that he searched for alternatives to form the group of distribution of his books:

The next step was to write to all postal agents of Brazil (1.300 in the total) requiring name and address of newsstands, stationery stores, drugstores or groceries that could be interested in selling books [...] Lobato sent the famous circular whose terms, years later, he remembered to be about this: “your lordship has your business, and the more things you sell, more it will be your profit. Would you like to sell something named ‘book’? [...] If you sell such ‘books’ you will a gain of 30p.c; if you do not sell them, you may return to us through the mail, on our account. Answer if you accept or not” (LOBATO *apud* HALLEWELL, 1985, p.245).

Along with this strategy, Lobato formed a group of distribution of his publications; they were almost 2000 sales places that varied from drugstores to bakeries. Even today the Brazilian editorial market lacks enterprising initiatives as the one of Lobato, because the problem in the book distribution in Brazil persists. The publishing companies are kept in the big urban centers, which in a continental country like ours turns the book more expensive to get to the interior; the runs are low and, finally, it is made a circle of “disincentive” to the reading. According to Earp (2004, p.120):

It is inconceivable that, in a country in the size of Brazil, a shipment of books get out of São Paulo e have to go by truck until Acre. Along with the current technology, it is possible to start a print shop in other states, to send the samples of books by computer and print them in the place. It is a way to create jobs and to reduce the final price.

The technological changes were not still enough to change completely the Brazilian reality about the book and its distribution.

## **5 READING AND CITIZENSHIP: THE LETHARGIC FORMATION OF THE READER IN BRAZIL**

It seems inconceivable, today, to think in a society that is not mediated by reading, because with the domain of the alphabetic writing, reading became an extension of the human essence. Text and daily life are merged; they expand the comprehension of the individual about himself and about the world where he lives.

World and word complement each other. There are people who “read” the others by the way they dress up themselves, for what they have, by the places they go to, or by works read. Actually, we are always “reading” the world around us. And this reading is circumscribed to the relativity of the look, it is meant, it depends on the previous readings of the one who looks. If the understanding of the world is comprehensive, also its analysis will be broader.

The coexistence with all these resources of reading makes us more capable and open to the reading of the word. When reading a book, automatically, we are faced with similar and different to us, with the unusual, with the inhospitable of the human being. From then on, we establish relations with what we read, interconnecting it to our own experience or to others known, what generates our growing and maturation.

The reading, like the society, is an alive organism, not static, and for Chartier (1998, p.77):

From the antique roll to the medieval codex, from the print book to the electronic text, many greater ruptures divide the long history of the ways of reading. They bring into play the relation between the body and the book, the possible uses of the writing and the intellectual categories which assure its comprehension.

However it remains the speech of reading valuing in Brazil, the actions for it, almost always, are fickle and without integration with a national project of readers formation. This situation does not allow that our people have access to the literate world.

The results of the International Program of Students Evaluation (PISA) show that, out of the 32 countries which participated of the evaluation in reading, Brazil took the last place, below Mexico, for example. It was evident the difficult that our students have for reading, as we can check in the report (PISA, 2000, p.71):

The results of Brazil in the Pisa reaffirmed the difficulties of reading and of text production by our students, fact already proven with other Brazilian evaluations, as the National System of Basic Education Evaluation (SAEB) and by the National Exam of Medium Teaching (ENEM) [...] the results reflect, in good measurement, it is the situation, yet precarious of the work done with reading and text production in the Brazilian schools.

The PISA evaluated the reading and some physical conditions of the schools, the teachers' formation however we did not find references to the school library. It is possible that to the countries effective members of PISA to have libraries in the schools is something usual, but in Brazil this is far from coming true.

If reading is a cultural good undeniable to the insertion to the citizenship, this good still shows itself far from great part of the Brazilian population. Several are the barriers to mediate the reading; among them we could cite the high rate of illiteracy; the seasonal of the reading programs; the low index of public and school libraries in the country, and the cost of the book.

It is to be regretted that the rate of illiteracy in Brazil is still one of the biggest in the world. About 9% of the population, what corresponds to 16 millions of people, cannot read the basic information. It is as if in a same land coexisted people with patterns so dissonant: pre-historical, medieval and cybernetics. The *map* of reading in Brazil points to these emblematic realities which should be faced daily (BRASIL, 2004).

The reading becomes pre-requisite in the social coexistence, because it is one of the main vehicles of access to the citizenship, after all if the individual does not domain it, besides the difficulties of intellectual and cultural enrichment he will have difficult to be inserted in the work market. The consequence is that a citizen, who cannot comprehend what he tried to read, will have his actions less valued socially.

## **6 FIRST STEP TO THE NATIONAL POLITIC OF READING TO THE CHILD AND THE YOUNG: FROM THE FIRST DECADE TO THE 70 YEARS OF THE XX CENTURY**

As seen previously, the process of readers formation in Brazil, since the beginning, had to dribble the basic difficult: the lack of books, the prohibition for 300 years of typography, the book publication in Europe, the inexistence of public libraries, the lack of schools and many other factors. To have access to reading in our society became a privilege in our society since the beginning. Nevertheless, in

each time there were actions of people or entities that were worried about the reading development here.

From the XVI century until the first decade of the XX century, the actions for the reading development had constant participation of the civil and seasonal population when referring to the state. From the decade of 20 on, there is the flourish of the editorial industry in São Paulo and Monteiro Lobato is one of the precursors in this area, as well in the print as in the writing, in the worry with the problems of the country and mainly with the formation of reader children. Then, in 1921 he published the book *A menina do nariz arrebitado*. The work and the strength of Lobato in the editorial field would be base for the formation of the future readers and writers of our country, mainly the ones turned to the child and the young.

In 1936, along with the creation of the Culture Department of São Paulo city under the command of Mario Andrade, it was created the “Municipal Library, today Mario de Andrade, the Children Library, the Walking Library and an unexpected category: the Popular Libraries” (MILANESI, 1993, p.61-62).

As the popular libraries should attend to the periphery, it was necessary to create a division to the children service. With this there is the appearance of the “[...] group of children and young libraries of the city government” (MILANESI, 1993, p.63-64). But the intense and well structured work had short time of life, because with the arrival of the New State everything was interrupted; the team was disjointed and the proposal off. However, to Milanesi (1993, p.64) “[...] even in the limits of the city of São Paulo the done, even incomplete, was a lever which changed the intellectual overview of the country”.

Another fact that may be included in this trajectory of the book and reading promoting in Brazil was the creation in 1968 of the National Foundation of the Young and Children Book (FNLIJ), in Rio de Janeiro. According to Perrotti (1990, p.25), the foundation:

[...] not only searched to channel, since then, different national efforts in the area, becoming a center agglutinating and director of initiatives, but also changed itself in feeder of innumerable works, aiming to its initial objective: to promote the book, the reading and the children-young literature.

And the action of FNLIJ for about two decades was one of the main organs connected to the reading in the country, as well as for the promoting of events related to the area as in the distribution of materials, according to Perrotti (1990, p.25):

[...] during this period, they were accomplished their own projects and took part in projects of others; published several materials such as the IR (informative Reporter) noticed the appearance of texts of interest in the area, organized and took part of international seminars, congresses, workshops and exhibitions [...] created and distributed prizes; contributed to campaigns of reading material distribution, announced them, praise them; was born, grew up, was consolidated [...].

In the decade of 70, according to Bordini (1998), along with the expanding of the number of schools and the number of registrations, there was the expansion of the Brazilian editorial industry, mainly the one turned to the didactic book. In that time the official programs of the government were named Program of the Didactic Book to the Basic Teaching (PLIDEF) and Program of the Didactic Book to the Medium Teaching (PLIDEM).

## **7 GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN'S READING AND YOUNG; FROM THE 80 YEARS OF THE XX CENTURY TO THE CURRENT DAYS**

In the years 80, Brazil passed through a period of political transition, from the dictatorship to the democratic. The economy was not going well, economic plans and plans, high rate of unemployment, the increasing population living in the urban centers, mainly in slums. On the other side, the education goes gradually, reaching a higher number of the population however the quality did not follow the advance of the vacancy offers.

From the 80 decade until now there was intensification of the discussion about reading and its importance to the educational program of the country. Many were the actions (or their attempts), nevertheless they kept isolated or when they came by means of the State, they rarely continued. To each change of administration, also the referrals given to the reading were changed. This way, all indicates that we could have advanced much more in this perspective however combined to the seasonality of the programs it was its lethargic walking.

In the beginning of the 80s, the government substituted the official programs of the book promoting by a new program. *Reading Rooms*, managed by the action of the Foundation of Service to the Student (FAE), as states Bordini (1998, p.39).

Along with this, there was the consolidation of the editorial market turned to the children books which did not guarantee its price reduction, but established a consensus that the reading and the supplementary textbooks were essential to the development of the child that, in the previous decade had been *bombed* almost exclusively by the didactic book.

In the decade of 90, more precisely in 1997, there is the appearance of the National Program of the Library in the School (PNBE) which sent to schools the Basic Manual of the Library in the School, whose content of presentation is the following (1998, p.3, our emphasis):

The National Program Library in the School (PNBE) was born from the wish of the Ministry of Education and Sporty (MEC) to offer opportunities of cultural democratization, reducing the distance between the Brazil of the literate and the one of the excluded. With this goal, it is being donated to the public schools of basic teaching a collection composed by devoted work of the Brazilian Literature, and reference work, among others [...] Even if you think that your school does not have conditions to form a library, do not give up: in this manual you will find guidelines about how to **improvise the necessary** for that.

In this presentation I point out two aspects: the first which refers to the public reading politic to the schools, and the second, how to organize the library in the school. In the first case, there is the positive perspective of becoming law the school library. It is still pointed out the opportunity to offer culture to all and to reduce the distance between literate and excluded, for that, the State would send the collection; this would be its responsibility. However if the school had or not space for the library whose is the problem? Indirectly of the school. If the school did not have a library, it should improvise the necessary to form it. As we already stated before, there was not the political tradition in Brazil the valuation of the library. If we think that the Brazilian public schools are constructed, on its majority, without prediction, in the architectural project to the construction of the library, then, the schools would hardly ever have space to keep the books and, mainly, to make the environment pedagogically



adequate to the students. Then, it would be from the school the responsibility to provide, and not the State.

But the *Library Manual* (1998, p.12-13) still proposes as suggestion to improvise shelves:

**Problem:** THE SCHOOL DOES NOT HAVE SHELVES TO PUT THE BOOKS

**Solution 1:** Use bricks and pieces of wood to improvise a shelf and put the books.

**Solution 2:** In the lack of bricks, build a shelf with ropes and wood [...] on each piece of wood, make four holes (one on each end, passing through them ropes, with knots in the desired height to maintain the wood on the horizontal. Put as many pieces of wood as appropriate [...].

The previous recommendations followed illustrative drawings of the suggested shelf. It seemed inconceivable that MEC would send proposals such as these to the school, because they could become catastrophic to the physical security of the children, mainly the little ones. The child needs stable furniture which does not risk his physical integrity. Then, the suggestions from the *Manual* seemed incongruent to a children environment, because the proposal to put together bricks and woods ignored that the little child could bump into the furniture or, what is very common, to lean or even to climb. The second solution also did not offer stability and could be another gun if the child pushed the shelf to another child. And still, if it rocks a lot the books could fall. That was a situation that delineated well the content of the commitment of public politics of support to the reading.

From 2002 on, the National Program of School Library (PNBE) initiated the program *Literature at Home* and sent it to the school libraries and for the 4<sup>o</sup> and 5<sup>o</sup> degrees, a selection of 30 titles which were distributed in 06 different collections, containing 5 volumes, such as: poem, tales, novel, adapted classic work and play. The idea was that each student would take the book home and shared it with family and friends (BRASIL, 2006). In the following year, 2003, the *Literature at Home* sent books only to students from the 4<sup>o</sup> degree and, also to schools which had students in 2002 on this degree. However, so far, no plan to build libraries in the schools was proposed. It remained the idea of distributing books only and not a public politic of reading that had clear objectives to the readers' formation.

As we can see the reading politic in Brazil still remains with the same procedures, what is meant, to send books and more books, without at least questioning if that would not be more pedagogical to construct a library in the school, to invest on its collection, to expand the variety, to form teachers to the work with the reading and strategies for all the areas of the school to explore the library.

On October, 30, 2003 the Law 10.753 created the National Politic of the Book. Afterwards, in 2005, Brazil adopted the name *Vivaleitura* to designate the Year Ibero-American of Reading, celebrated here and in countries of America and Europe.

On March, 13, 2006, in São Paulo, the ministers of Education and Culture, respectively Fernando Haddad and Gilberto Passos Gil Moreira, released the National Plan of the Book and Reading (PNLL) whose main objective is: “[...] to improve the reality of reading in the country, with the involvement of all Brazilian society, so that it is possible to promote social and cultural inclusion and fair social organization” (BRASIL, 2006b, p.1).

Then the *Vivaleitura* would become in a broader program of promotion to the national reading. On August, 10, 2006, the Inter-ministerial ordinance Nº 1.442 established:

Art 1º - it is instituted the National Plan of the Book and Reading (PNLL), of triennial lasting, with the basic purpose to ensure the democratization of the book access, the promotion and the valuation of the reading and the strengthening of the productive chain of the book as relevant factor to the increasing of the intellectual production and the development of the national economy (BRASIL, 2006b, p.1).

The lines of action of the PNLL are divided in four axles: democratization of the access, promotion to reading and formation, valuation of reading and communication and support to the book economy. The scope of the Plan foresees since the deployment of new municipal and school libraries, besides the continuity of the program of book distribution to the schools; the programs of formation of reading mediators to the financing to printers and publishers.

To the triennial of 2006-2008 some goals were established, among the ones they may be pointed out:

- To increase the national index of reading in 50% (from 1,8 to 2,7 books per inhabitant/year);

- To deploy municipal libraries in 100% of the country cities;
- To implement and promote centers and nuclei turned to researches (BRASIL, 2006a, p.7).

Converting reading into State politic perhaps have been one of the main struggles of researchers, professors and of the society worried about this thematic, because they do not lack projects of incentive to reading in Brazil what, however, hardly ever continue. The projects fruit only for a period, after they are forgotten or changed into other strategies without, at least, to reuse what was already instituted. And this practice is not from the school, but mainly of the programs of public managers, the Education Department, either in the municipal, state or federal scope.

The PNLL is an ambitious plan, because its proposal searches to cover the reading, not only by the book distribution, but to expand the look to the chain which involves it: the library, the research and the formation of the mediator, besides the industry of the book. If this government Plan has merit, it is necessary to hope that the goals advance beyond the Law and come true.

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