

Public Policies to Promote Reading in Brazil: an analysis (1930-2014)

Maisa Barbosa da Silva Cordeiro¹

¹Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), Campo Grande/MS – Brazil

ABSTRACT – Public Policies to Promote Reading in Brazil: an analysis (1930-2014). This paper analyzes the trajectory of federal programs to promote reading and literature in Brazil. To this end, it investigates the period from the creation of the Ministry of Education and Public Health (1930) – the first governmental body to carry out reading promotion actions – until the establishment of the PNBE (1997-2014), the most comprehensive and expensive program for providing Brazilian public schools with literary collections. Our proposal is inscribed in the perspective that the book is not a neutral object (Chartier, 1990). Its curtailing, in a country marked by deep social inequalities, may point to interests of discourse appropriators (Foucault, 1996). The study of its history can therefore reveal these interests.
Keywords: **History of Reading. Public Policies. Literary Reading. PNBE.**

RESUMO – Políticas Públicas de Fomento à Leitura no Brasil: uma análise (1930-2014). Este trabalho analisa a trajetória dos programas federais de fomento à leitura e à literatura no Brasil. Para tanto, investiga o período que compreende desde a criação do Ministério da Educação e Saúde Pública (1930), que inaugurou as ações de propagação da leitura, até o PNBE, mais abrangente e dispendioso programa de envio de acervos literários às escolas públicas no Brasil (1997-2014). A nossa proposta circunscreve-se na perspectiva de que o livro não é um objeto neutro (Chartier, 1990). Seu cerceamento, em um país marcado por profundas desigualdades sociais, pode revelar os interesses de quem se apropria dos discursos (Foucault, 1996). O estudo de sua história é, portanto, revelador desses interesses.
Palavras-chave: **História da Leitura. Políticas Públicas. Leitura Literária. PNBE.**

Introduction

Arguments espousing the conviction that Brazilians do not read are commonplace. In a similar sense, it is easy to stumble upon discourses pointing out the innumerable and unsurmountable difficulties schools have in the formation of readers. Contradicting these two apparent certainties, Mirian Zappone (2017) analyzes the last edition of an important study called *Portraits of Reading in Brazil (Retratos da Leitura no Brasil*, Zoara, 2016), making it clear that, on the contrary, Brazilians have constant, daily reading practices. According to the author, the assertion that the Brazilian is not a reader is stereotypical and leads to faulty understanding of a real problematic: Brazilians' cultural habits and practices are directly related to their economic condition.

In *The Author's Hand and the Printer's Mind (A Mão do Autor e a Mente do Editor*, 2014), Roger Chartier argues that changing the ways a community reads is an extremely time-consuming work. In other words, a change of habits and practices (Chartier, 2014) always requires significant time. Characterizing the Brazilian as a nonreader by removing statistics from their actual context makes it difficult for the issue of reading and literary reading in Brazil to receive the attention it truly deserves. According to Pereira (2016, n.p., own translation), what needs to be emphasized is "the need to act in favor of the production of the future literary memories of thousands of Brazilians, represented by the 44% nonreader population that this study [*Portraits of Reading in Brazil*] reveals".

Converging with these recent data, a look at the history of literature in Brazil makes it clear that literature for children and young people makes a very late appearance in the country. While in the European context it dates back to the 17th century, here, the first productions of the kind arise at the end of the 19th century, with *Contos da Carochinha*, by the *carioca* Figueiredo Pimentel, and Carlo Jansen's adaptation of *One Thousand and One Nights*. It is only at the beginning of the 20th century that authors such as Olavo Bilac, Coelho Neto and Manuel Bonfim start writing children's books. Their works, however, had a strong nationalist character.

Marisa Lajolo (1986) points out that the first literary productions for children were associated with Brazilian modernization, during a historical period which coveted the image of a Brazil developing full steam ahead. Lajolo also notes that only in the 1920s was Brazilian children's literature reinvented, with Monteiro Lobato, whose themes, while related to the world of children, also led young readers to reflect upon and question more serious issues, such as the country's economic situation.

While the initial formation of a genuinely Brazilian literature ran in parallel to the country's modernization, its entire trajectory is marked by a close relationship with education, especially the school institution. Pervading the history of Brazilian literature, this relationship can in fact be historically verified at various moments. Regina Zilberman reinforces this notion by arguing that:

[...] a history of reading – and therefore, of its ‘right-hand man’, the history of literature – has to enter a conversation with the history of education. Through this association, it indicates how close literature is to teaching, the classroom and the teacher, giving up the aura that bourgeois society, via institutionalization, assigns to it (Zilberman, n.d., p. 47, own translation).

Considering the relationship between reading, literature and school, this work aims to develop a diachronic analysis of the main governmental actions for the propagation of reading, literature and the formation of readers. In order to fulfill this objective, the article is divided into three parts: in the first, the space of the book and of literature in the Brazilian legislation is discussed, to explain the history of the field’s governmental incentives. In the second, main governmental initiatives are discussed, starting from 1930, when the Ministry of Education and Public Health was created, until 1970, a period of dictatorship in which, at various points, government initiatives were marked by restrictive measures towards books. The reason for this periodization is that, at the time, actions to propagate reading were not yet addressed to children and adolescents. In the third part, we approach state actions undertaken since 1970, when literary reading finally entered governmental guidelines and gained momentum through effective practices, centralized in different programs and initiatives.

Books and Literature in the Brazilian Legislation

In its initial chapters, *The Name of the Rose* presents us with a sacred space, addressed to the protection of a knowledge that should be kept inaccessible to ordinary people. Eco’s representation refers to a historical context in which the book’s danger was well known: it could be used to question power relationships. It was necessary to restrict access to it. One of the ideas conveyed by the novel is that “The good of a book lies in its being read” (Eco, 1984, p. 234). This has a convergence with the perspective we defend here: that the book is a good that necessarily has to be propagated. In a developing country deeply marked by social inequalities, we need to think of ways to achieve democratization, which invariably runs through the solidification of public reading policies.

As a commodity, the book moves significant sums of money, and much of this money is under the responsibility of government initiatives focused on reader formation. Annual government purchases used to correspond to 34% of all books sold (Mello, 2012), and this lasted until 2014, when the National School Library Program (PNBE) stopped its annual dispatches of collections to public schools.

When it comes to providing incentives to the book market, there are aspects of the Brazilian legislation that are worth highlighting: for instance, we have no book taxes, while in most European countries the rate is nearly 5%. Article 150, item VI, paragraph “d” of the 1988 Con-

stitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil guarantees tax exemption for books (Brasil, 1988, own translation): “Art. 150. Without prejudice to other guarantees provided to the taxpayer, the Union, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities are prohibited from: VI – imposing taxes on: [...] (d) books, newspapers, periodicals and print paper.”

Not only its circulation, but also the production of the book benefits from tax exemption, according to Law No. 11033, from December 21, 2004 (Brasil, 2004).

Also benefiting book production and circulation, Law No. 10753, from October 30, 2003 (Brasil, 2003, p. 3, own translation), establishes the National Book Policy, determining the valuation of literary reading in the school. The law asserts that the Executive Power has a responsibility to develop – through nationwide partnerships and actions – projects for the permanence of the book and the development of the practice of reading in the school space.

Likewise, Decree No. 7559, from September 1, 2011, establishes the National Book and Reading Plan (PNLL) (Brasil, 2011a, own translation), defining important strategies for book propagation:

Art. 1º The National Book and Reading Plan (PNLL) consists of a permanent strategy for planning, supporting, articulating and referring actions aimed at the promotion of reading in the Country.

I – the democratization of book access;

II – the training of mediators to encourage reading;

III – the institutional valuation of reading and the increase of its symbolic value; and

IV – the development of the book market as a stimulus to intellectual production and to the development of the national economy.

Specifically, in regard to literature, the PNLL has other significant proposals: “Line of action 17 – support to the book creation chain and incentive to literary reading”; “Line of action 19 – greater presence of national literary, scientific and cultural production abroad” (Brasil, 2011a). The plan is, therefore, quite clear in recognizing the need for governmental incentives to book production and literary reading, as well as to the dissemination of Brazilian authors abroad.

In view of the above, it is clear that the legislation is inscribed in discussions regarding the importance of propagating reading and literature. Likewise, it clarifies the need to democratize reading, train mediators and symbolically value reading as a possibility for intellectual and economic development. In the same direction as Chartier (1990), this indicates that the democratization of books and reading has to be thought of in terms of cultural practices.

John Thompson (2013) advances an important reflection on the publishing world and how it constitutes a delimited field, given that “[...] the actions of any particular agent or organization are always parts of a larger whole, a system, so to speak, to which they belong, but over which they have no control” (Thompson, 2013, p. 10, own translation). As the

author points out, there are five types of capital required for book circulation: economic capital, human capital, social capital, intellectual capital, and symbolic capital. As such, book circulation requires the book to be valued throughout these five types of capital.

The simple access to reading materials has no direct, causal relationship with their use, since the propagation of information does not actually presuppose its appropriation. Reader formation is, first of all, a “historically constituted cultural action” (Britto, 1998, p. 84, own translation). For this cultural action to spread, reaching the different social strata, it is fundamental to consider an underlying political problem:

Two factors are crucial for the intense survival of this naive and pernicious conception of reading. The first is the masking of the political dimension of reading, which allows any kind of reading to be considered good. The second, directly articulated to the first, is the disregard of the very object on which reading impinges: when one considers the act of reading for itself, one ignores the fact that what is being read is a text, and texts are discourses that contain representations of world and society (Britto, 1998, p. 85, own translation).

According to Britto, thinking about reading as a political issue contributes to understanding the way in which policies for the distribution of book collections make an encounter between book and student possible. In terms of government policies, the fact remains that only in the 1980s, 50 years after the creation of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), reading actually entered the agenda of public policy. Even then, this insertion was sparse and received several criticisms concerning its management and the appropriateness of selected books.

In this sense, to this day, reading remains a weapon against societal normalization. In our country, kept from people because of insufficient public policies, the practice of reading continues to be the privilege of a minority. While in the historical and literary context present in Eco’s novel the library was understood and valued as a kind of treasure trove, i.e. something that should not be universally accessible, even our current historical situation is not entirely averse to this restrictive view on book accessibility.

Industrialization, Dictatorships and School Growth: reading promotion between 1930 and 1980

Government initiatives for reader formation began in 1930, with the state becoming interested in building an image of Brazil as a rapidly developing country. This also led to the expansion of the school network. The need to provide industry with a minimally qualified workforce also encouraged the expansion of both reading and the school network. In this context the goal was not, however, the formation of readers in itself, but rather to enable the acquisition of “[...] certain linguistic signs, essential to survival in specific workplace situations” (Caldas, 2005, p. 95, own translation).

This historical development contributed to transform the concept of the school: it ceased to be an extension of the familial, private and religious spheres, and became a place for building the idea of a modernized Brazil:

With different rhythms and intensity, in the urban space, schools cease to be an extension of the familial, private and religious spheres and, gradually, are integrated to a school network designed by municipal governments. This network supplanted isolated schools and established limits to the sometimes-abusive powers of school principals and inspectors. This change demanded intervening not only in the school's material attributes – involving the production of a new space, with buildings and didactic material pertinent to the new educational goals – but in symbolic aspects as well: since the desire was to make the new primary school more than a mere assembly of new desks, tables and rooms. The school was to be the groundwork for a new, *modern spirit* (Nunes, 2003, p. 374, own translation).

The changes, then, were not restricted to the school's physical space. They entailed, above all, new conceptions of teaching, which needed to be in sync with the ideal of the country to come. Along with the new ideas on how the school space should be configured, a certain homogeneity of pedagogical actions, contents and goals was necessary. This required direct governmental interference. The idea of modernity was achieved, among other means, through the reconstruction of the popular imagination – and the school was central to this purpose. As a product of industrialization, subject to market laws,

[...] the book starts to promote and stimulate the [institution of the] school as a condition to enable its own circulation and consumption. In this sense, the book's creation, aiming at a specific market whose characteristics it needs to respect and stimulate, adopts postures that sometimes are clearly pedagogical, and endorses bourgeois values in order to ensure its usefulness. The great impasse accompanying the entire course of evolution of the literary genre then emerges: literary art or pedagogical-commercial product? (Albino, 2010, p. 3, own translation).

The 1930s saw two events that were essential for the promotion of reading. The first was the creation of the Ministry of Education and Public Health on November 14, 1930, at the beginning of the Getúlio Vargas' government. The second was the legal recognition, by the new 1934 federal constitution, of education as a universal right and duty of families and public authorities. In this decade, the shift from an agrarian exportation economic model to an industrial one led an increasingly urban population to seek education, forcing government and society to turn their attention to the urbanization process.

The 1930s also saw the creation of the National Book Institute (INL), by Minister Gustavo Capanema, in 1937. As the first book propa-

gation organ, the INL was an important milestone in reading formation. The main tasks of the Institute were the preparation of a national encyclopedia and a dictionary, as well as the expansion of Brazilian libraries. In one of his speeches, Capanema espouses his view on the power of the book: "The book is undoubtedly the most powerful creation of human ingenuity. From any point of view, the influence it exerts has no match" (Capanema, 1937, own translation).

The INL was primarily responsible for controlling book diffusion: the collections it sent to public libraries went through a thematic analysis, limiting the contents that actually reached the target audience. Thus, although these policies represented the beginning of a new stage, with ample promotion of books and libraries, any works with ideas contrary to the INL's goals or political views were kept out of circulation.

The government's aim, therefore, was to curtail reading in order to suppress the danger of social revolt, given the threat to the government posed by ideas circulating through certain books. The commitment of the Vargas government to exert such control over publications was justified throughout the 1940s by an alleged need to highlight works that valued Brazil as "great power, homogeneous and unified" (Lajolo; Zilberman, 1986, p. 124, own translation). During the 1940s, libraries went through a process of expansion, in parallel to the generalized distribution of collections to public libraries. Works considered positive for the government's image were offered by the handful, molding the population's way of thinking.

The control exercised by the INL is maintained throughout the 1940s and 1950s, periods in which the book suffered harsh repression. Writers and publishers who confronted the censorship system were punished. Caldas (2005, p. 39, own translation) highlights the cases of the Meridiana and the Calvino publishing houses. They were objects of litigation due to publishing works "[...] considered 'forbidden' by the ideals of national paternalism."

Later, in the 1960s, the National Library Service (SNB) was created to organize libraries across the country:

It was an interesting initiative, aimed at exchanges between libraries and proposing a structured growth in the organization and functioning of public libraries. The public library system would become a kind of 'guardian' of knowledge, a deposit of learned culture. The SNB's educational incentive to reading, however, [was] still very timid (Caldas, 2005, p. 86, own translation).

The SNB sought to organize and regulate libraries in Brazil, promoting their growth. There were no actions, however, to stimulate the actual use of library spaces. In the 1960s, during the military dictatorship, there was a new bout of repression against the book, with the creation of the Technical Book and Textbook Commission (Colted) in 1966. The Commission was responsible, on the one hand, for the distribution of 51 million books; on the other hand, it strongly repressed the circula-

tion of works lacking government approval (Krafzik, 2006, p. 18, own translation).

Although it acted in favor of book circulation and the expansion of libraries, Colted strongly curtailed access to books, music and other 'unapproved' artistic manifestations. This reiterates, in our view, how important art is in stimulating the emergence of individual autonomy and the fight for social rights. It was their fear of autonomy and social unrest that led Brazil's dictatorial governments to exercise a serious control of artistic freedom.

One cannot deny, however, that the period's great expansion of the school network was immensely favorable to book circulation, especially for the school public itself:

There are several indications that recent Brazilian children's literature has embodied its pedagogical goals at different levels. At the external level – circulation – it benefits from legislation recommending its adoption: collections are disseminated directly to schools, marketing targets the teacher directly, and the visiting author, who debates with the students the texts previously adopted by that class, becomes a familiar sight (Lajolo; Zilberman, 1986, p. 174, own translation).

Turning their production directly to the school system, many publishers strengthened themselves, contributing to the consolidation of the market for children's literature and books in general.

In the 1970s, the book market assumed a greater focus on children and young people, starting from massive marketing in schools, as well as the insertion of themes related to the needs and desires of children and young people. While for the book market children's literature was a source of profit, writers who had their works restricted by strict control saw it as a way of avoiding censorship. This meant a new breath of life for children and young people's literature. Brazilian writers used it to criticize the lack of freedom, incite the population and, through metaphor, help young readers develop a critical consciousness of the country's situation. Important works by Ana Maria Machado, such as *Bento que Bento é o Frade* (1977), *De Olho nas Penas* (1981), *Era uma vez um Tirano* (1982), and Ruth Rocha, such as *O Reizinho Mandão* (1978), among several others, are from this period.

A significant initiative was the creation of the Book Development and Preservation Program (Prodelivro) in 1979, employing National Development Fund (FNDE) resources. The program was coordinated by the National School Material Foundation (Fename). Only in 1983, when the Student Assistance Foundation (FAE) replaced Fename, did the program change hands. It was replaced in 1985 by the National Textbook Plan (PNLD). This entailed important changes, such as "[...] the participation of teachers in the process of book selection; the end of federative units' financial participation; the extinction of the disposable book to allow its reuse. These were times of democratic transition in the country" (Brasil, 2011b, p. 18, own translation).

The revival of democratic freedoms took place in a period in which book circulation was strongly restricted and impacted by dictatorships. While there was a great deal of government encouragement to the expansion of libraries and their literary collections, as well as to the growth of the school network, this was accompanied by strong public supervision determining which books were offered to young readers. Only in the 1980s will this framework start to change, with the emergence of a scenario favorable to decreasing the barrier between the student and the book.

Formation of the Literary Reader: A Late Public Policy Concern

With the beginning of Brazil's redemocratization in the 1980s, literature entered the public policy agenda, and the need for its presence in the school environment was evidenced. In this context, the first initiatives towards the insertion of literature in the school system are executed. The first, the National Reading Rooms Program (PNSL), created in 1984 and extinguished in 1996, proposed the construction of reading rooms which would subsequently receive collections assembled and delivered by the program.

In the first three years of its existence – 1984, 1985 and 1986 – the PNSL delivered 4,131,049 titles to 33,664 schools. Already in 1988, its name was changed to Reading Rooms/School Libraries (*Salas de Leitura/Bibliotecas Escolares*). As the new name implied, with this change it started building school libraries as well. However, the necessary partnerships were only made with municipal administrations. Approximately 10,000 school libraries were created: “This program prioritized municipal education networks, consequently excluding state schools, which started being provided for in 1989, but at a low scale” (Cirino, 2015, p. 38, own translation). Despite its success in distributing a significant number of books and building a significant number of libraries, the PNSL was ended in 1996.

In 1992, another reader formation program was created. Implemented through a partnership with the French government, the Pro-Reading (*Pró-Leitura*) program focused on teacher training. According to a study published by Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais with the support of the MEC (UFMG, 2012, p. 3, own translation), “with its insertion in the educational system, the Pro-Reading program set out to articulate all three educational levels, involving, in the same program, students and teachers of elementary education, teachers-in-training, and researchers.” In this sense, besides the creation of libraries and reading rooms, the program had the goal of stimulating the actual use of dispatched book collections. However, four years after its inauguration, Pro-Reading was also extinguished.

Thus, the eight-year time span after the first federal initiative for reader formation saw three different programs of the kind. This shows a lack of articulation between political interest in the formation of read-

ers and the inaugurated programs. Terminated after a short period of time, they contributed very little to the propagation of reading.

Only as late as 1992, with the inauguration of PROLER through Decree No. 519 (Brasil, 1992), does a plan involving greater political mobilization appear. Still in force to this day, it has its headquarters in Rio de Janeiro and is linked to the National Library Foundation (FBN) and to the Ministry of Culture (MINC). With an annual investment involving an average of R\$ 200 million, it works via the establishment of committee partnerships throughout Brazil, with the priority of training reading mediators and promoting literary reading practices. PROLER's actions are, among others:

Formation of a national network to encourage reading; training courses for reading promoters; advising on the implementation of reading promotion projects; implementation of a policy to encourage reading in the Reading House [*Casa da Leitura*], with courses, lectures and other activities; creation of a reference network and documentation regarding reading; advisory services for the implantation of libraries for children, youth and adults; [implementation of] a system of monitoring and evaluation (PROLER, 1998, p. 18, own translation).

The program aims to build effective reading practices, presenting concepts that espouse reading and literature as cultural practices that go beyond the school's walls:

PROLER has thus become a program to contemplate the variety and diversity of Brazilian reading promotion practices throughout the country, reflecting countless years of experience and study by professionals working in the field. The project is, therefore, an articulated proposal by multiple partners who, at the national level, develop reading activities in different places (PROLER, 1998, p. 13, own translation).

Initially, PROLER worked with the school network to encourage the use of the literary book. This perspective continued until 2002, when, according to Pszczol (2009), political changes impacted the continuity of actions, which were only resumed in 2006. Despite these instabilities, PROLER was able to regain strength. From then on, with a direct link to FBN and employing a new coordination, the project sought to "[...] approach other programs and institutions, formalizing new cooperation ties to broaden its representation in municipalities and communities throughout the country" (Pszczol, 2009, p. 14, own translation).

The most recent federal initiative focusing on literature is the Literature for All contest (*Literatura para Todos*, Brazil, 2010), inaugurated in 2005. Promoted by the Department for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECAD) and employing MEC resources, the contest's goal was to launch literary works written specifically for young adults, adults and the elderly. Awarded works were reproduced and distributed in schools that had literacy and EJA (adult education)

classes. By means of public notice, Brazilians over eighteen years of age and nationals of Portuguese-speaking countries were allowed to participate in the contest. Each notice, available on the MEC website, selected ten works, of varying genres. Four notices were launched: in 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2010. It is worth mentioning that in its last year, 2010, the number of selected works decreased to only seven (Brasil, 2010). The Literature for All contest gave yet-to-be-legitimized writers the opportunity to have their work published. The graphic design was standardized and only the color of the book cover changed. Literature for All had a short existence: 2010 was the last edition of the contest.

Another important initiative was the Rural Libraries' Literary Ark (*Bibliotecas Rurais Arca das Letras*), by the Ministry of Agrarian Development. Still in effect, the initiative proposes:

[...] to enable access to books, encourage reading and cultural expression in rural Brazil. [...] The Literary Ark has been transforming the life and reality of thousands of small farmers throughout the country. Present in over 2,400 municipalities, the program has already reached more than 1 million families with the implantation of more than 11,000 libraries (Brasil, 2015, online, own translation).

A significant feature of the project is the training of reading agents and, where possible, the articulation of partnerships with libraries in rural schools. The program has already distributed more than 2,000,000 titles, having trained 19,000 reading agents (Brasil, 2015).

The largest program ever created in Brazil is the PNBE. Although it was inaugurated in 1997, its amplitude makes it worthy of discussing last. Established by MEC Ministerial Ordinance No. 4, from April 28, 1997, it promotes reading, literature and knowledge. It distributes literary collections to Brazilian public schools, in addition to providing pedagogical support material and professional qualification. Progressively, the PNBE started to contemplate preschool, elementary, high school, and adult education (EJA). It seeks to “democratize the access of students and teachers to culture, information and knowledge socially produced throughout the history of humanity” (Brasil, 2009).

The creation of the PNBE is associated with the state's guarantee of education to all, through the conception of literature as a “[...] cultural patrimony to which all citizens must have access [...] It is necessary to guarantee students and teachers of the public education system access to culture and information, stimulating reading as a social practice” (Brasil, 2009, own translation).

For Graça Paulino and Rildo Cosson (2009), only the perception of reading as a social practice can favor the creation of a reading community “[...] in which the circulation of the texts, and the possible difficulties of answering to questions emerging from their reading, are respected. This simple measure is important because it ensures the active participation of the student in literary life and, through it, his condition as a citizen” (Paulino; Cosson, 2009, p. 74, own translation).

As the largest federal program for the distribution of literary collections, PNBE was strengthened along its history and became responsible for inaugurating and nurturing various libraries and reading spaces. In order to show the dimension assumed by the program throughout its existence, we present a brief analysis of its trajectory.

Since its foundation in 1997, the PNBE has put a variety of strategies into practice. In its early years, the program's focus was the distribution of collections to school libraries. In 2000, it started dispatching professional qualification materials. From 2001 to 2004, it carried out the Literature in My Home (*Literatura em Minha Casa*) project, responsible for providing schools with collections of books that could be taken home by fourth to eighth grade students. The project was criticized and faced several difficulties, since many school administrators claimed that the school libraries themselves failed to provide students with good collections. Another issue was that sometimes principals failed to pass the books on to students, keeping them in the school's possession. Among the allegations made by school administrators to justify this failure, as Cirino (2015, p. 40, own translation) points out, was the belief that students would not take care of books because they did not value them: "[...] thus, we can see the overvaluation of the book as an object, and the lack of mediation and articulation between those responsible for the project, the reading mediators and the students."

In 2005, as a result of demands made by school administrators, PNBE went back to dealing with school libraries: "[...] This action meant the recovery of the library's value as a space that promotes the universalization of knowledge and also the universalization of access to book collections by the school's community" (Maciel, 2008, p. 11, own translation).

As of 2005, the program began a yearly expansion. Currently, it supplies several educational levels (preschool, elementary school, high school, EJA), sending schools educational support materials as well as professional qualification works; it also has selections in Braille, books with enlarged characters, audiobooks, and DVDs. The selection of such works contributes significantly to the democratization of reading, since it also considers students with special needs.

Significantly, the PNBE has gone through two governmental evaluations, which sought to verify its shortcomings and the use of collections throughout Brazil. The first was conducted by TCU (Brazil's General Accounting Office) in 2002. The TCU investigation involved 60 schools and found that books were often locked away by managers. In addition, few schools mentioned having knowledge of the program. Among school managers, only 27.6% stated that they were aware of it (Brasil, 2002).

To help solidify knowledge of the collection's works, the investigation indicated some necessary changes to the program:

- Monitoring and systematic evaluation of actions and results;

- Realization of actions for dissemination and training of teachers and librarians, with greater participation of education departments;
- Creation of a coordination group for articulating with other MEC programs;
- Incorporation of the principle of equity into the PNBE (Brasil, 2002, p. 12-13, own translation).

A second, later study reveals a continuation of the problems perceived in the 2002 assessment. Entitled *National School Library Program (PNBE) – a diagnostic evaluation (Programa Nacional Biblioteca da Escola (PNBE) – uma avaliação diagnóstica)*, it involved 196 schools, 359 students, 303 teachers, 200 principals, 5 librarians, 152 library workers, 37 school professionals and 31 parents, from 19 municipalities and 8 states (Brasil, 2002).

At this point, more school administrators were aware of the project and of the fact that the collections were being sent to their schools. However, the study found that the use of the books was rarely adequate. In this sense, the research determined that:

PNBE is expected to organize the follow-up and dissemination of goals and targets to the public education networks involved. Linked to this, teacher training is a fundamental measure, as a minimum guarantee that greater efforts will be undertaken, taking advantage of the existence of collections containing titles of literary and reference quality [...] (Brasil, 2008, p. 127, own translation).

Even after these evaluations and the publication of their results, no action was taken to increase PNBE awareness among reading mediators, nor to improve the reading practices developed in the school context. It must be understood that even the professional qualification works sent annually are not enough to train mediators in encouraging reading practices. Additional actions are necessary in order to enable mediators to perform their role in a dignified manner.

The PNBE moves significant figures (as shown in Table 1). Even from a qualitative standpoint, it is an extremely relevant program, due to the fact that its selected works go through an extensive evaluation process, via partnership with public university researchers all over Brazil. Through the annual dispatch of collections, it replenishes and fills the shelves of school libraries. It also helps public school students, children, young people and adults to appropriate the different representations present in the books, in dialogue with their own life histories.

Table 1 – National School Library Program – PNBE (1998-2012)

Program	Benefited Students	Benefited Schools	Number of Books	Budget
PNBE 1998	19,247,358	20,000	3,660,000	29,830,886.00
PNBE 1999	14,112,285	36,000	3,924,000	24,727,241.00
PNBE 2000*		18,718	3,728,000	15,179,101.00
PNBE 2001	8,561,639	139,199	60,923,940	57,638,015.60
PNBE 2002	3,841,268	126,692	21,082,880	19,633,632.00
PNBE 2003	18,010,401	141,266	49,034,192	110,798,022.00
PNBE 2004**				
PNBE 2005	16,990,819	136,389	5,918,966	47,268,337.00
PNBE 2006	13,504,906	46,700	7,233,075	46,509,183.56
PNBE 2008 (collections, EI)	5,065,686	85,179	1,948,140	9,044,930.30
PNBE 2008 (collections, EF)	16,430,000	127,661	3,216,600	17,336,024.72
PNBE 2008 (collections, EM)	7,788,593	17,049	3,956,480	38,902,804.48
PNBE 2009 (EI)	4,993,259	91,292	3,492,333	Un****
PNBE 2009 (EF, grades 1-5)	15,577,108	169,413	6,738,520	Un****
PNBE 2009 (EJA)	4,153,097	51,571	1,729,880	Un****
PNBE 2010 (EI, EF, EJA)	24,000,000	248,827***	10,700,000	Un****
PNBE 2011 (EF, grades 6-9)	12,780,396	50,502	3,861,782	44,906,480.00
PNBE 2011 (EM)	7,312,562	18.501	1,723,632	25,905,608.00
PNBE 2012 (EI)	3,581,787	86,088	3,485,200	24,625,902.91
PNBE 2012 (EF)	14,565,893	115,344	5,574.40	45,955,469.82
PNBE 2012 (EJA)	4,157,721	38,769	1,425,753	11,216,573.38
PNBE 2013 (EF, EM)	12,339,656	50,556	5,207,647	56,677,338.63
PNBE 2013 (EM)	8,780,436	19,144	2,218,884	29,704,045.58
PNBE 2014 (Childcare children's education)	1,731,572	32,820	4,209,150	17,730,630.46
PNBE 2014 (EI)	3,645,572	79,949	7,966,028	32,807,029.60
PNBE 2014 (EF)	13,226,845	104,745	5,599,737	31,616,454.48
PNBE 2014 (Adult education – EJA)	3,589,440	36,006	1,619,100	10,208,749.32

Source: Brasil (2017).

EI: Early childhood education; EF: Elementary school; EM: Middle school; *in 2000, educational materials aimed at the continuing training of teachers were produced and distributed; **2004: continuation of PNBE 2003's actions; ***Early Childhood Education (86,379), Elementary School (122,742) and EJA (39,696) public schools; ****Unavailable.

In 1998, there was an increase in the number of schools provided for. Yet it was only in 2008 that the program started showing a steady growth, supplying an increasing number of schools and different educational levels, through an increasingly significant financial investment. In 2010, for example, all public preschool, elementary and EJA schools were provided for. PNBE's website has no information on the investment necessary for supplying these schools with collections.

Regarding the selection of works, there were also important changes concerning students with special educational needs, with compositions in: "[...] ink; ink with enlarged characters; ink with audio CD; ink accompanied by CD or DVD in sign language; ink accompanied by Audio CD and CD/DVD in sign language" (Brasil, 2010, p. 1, own translation). Certainly, the inclusion of these works is of great value, contemplating readers with special needs.

In addition, it should be noted that the investment in the purchase of professional qualification works by Professor's PNBE, started in 2010, is high: its first edition had a budget of R\$ 59 million, for the acquisition of six million titles, distributed to all Brazilian states.

Furthermore, one of the PNBE's most relevant aspects lies in the fact that it went through several changes of government. If before the PNBE the majority of programs was terminated as governments changed hands, here, on the contrary, we notice a great expansion after the first change of government during the program's lifespan, in 2003, with the transition from Fernando Henrique's to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government. This expansion continued until 2014, in a nonlinear manner.

According to Cordeiro and Fernandes:

Another important point is that with each new edition of the PNBE, governmental notices broadened its target audience: from elementary school only to adult, early childhood, and secondary education. It is also noteworthy that the PNBE went through three governments – Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Lula and Dilma – continuing without interruption, in what constitutes a genuine state policy (2012, p. 327, own translation).

A diachronic analysis of the main federal programs for reading promotion shows, first and foremost, how unsubstantial their reader formation work was, especially when considering that Brazil is a developing country, and reading and writing are its main tools for building socially critical and participatory subjects. Without quality literary works available and put into use, student formation is inevitably mutilated.

The importance of the PNBE, the main Brazilian policy to promote reading in Brazil, lies in the fact that it serviced schools throughout the country, and in the fact that it was a state program, continuing independently of changes in government. In 2017, however, the PNBE was terminated¹. In 2015, there was no selection and distribution of collections, and there is still no governmental definition on whether there

will be a new program, or even a resumption of the PNBE. Thus, 2014 was the last year in which the government sent literary books to schools.

When in 2015 the PNBE failed to distribute its yearly collections, several entities signed a manifesto in defense of teaching, organized during the Paraty International Literary Festival (Flip) and entitled *Brazil, Reading Nation (Brasil, Nação Leitora)*. The manifesto involved organizations such as the Brazilian Association of Book Publishers (Abrelivos), the National Association of Bookstores (ANL), the Brazilian Chamber of Books (CBL), the Brazilian League of Publishers (Libre), and the National Union of Book Publishers (Snel). It defends the importance of books and literature in reducing social inequalities:

It is our understanding that the formation of readers, as well as the constitution of school library collections with literature books, must be priorities among the actions of the state and, therefore, of the Ministry of Education. Only then will we be able to realize the universal rights assuring the same quality of education to all Brazilian children and young people, regardless of the city where they live, their needs, and the social inequalities of each region (SIB, 2015, online, own translation).

It is important to note that since the 1980s, even with constant changes to book-centered programs, there has never been such a time gap as the current one, with complete absence of any public initiatives to send literary collections to schools. Since the PNBE was the only program doing this, it is certain that school libraries are not being supplied. Considering Brazil's social inequalities, the absence of distribution of collections to schools undoubtedly causes significant impacts affecting not only the book market, but also, and most importantly, the project of building a more just and egalitarian society. In this sense, we cannot but reflect on the ideological issues permeating the termination of this reading promotion program. Literary fiction is, admittedly, a stage for debate, questioning, representations, confrontations on various social or subjective issues. Literature is therefore a fundamental, deeply embedded component of the educational process:

[...] we have to recognise the great cleavages in what one might call the social appropriation of discourse. Education may well be, as of right, the instrument whereby every individual, in a society like our own, can gain access to any kind of discourse. But we well know that in its distribution, in what it permits and in what it prevents, it follows the well-trodden battle-lines of social conflict. Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it (Foucault, 1972, p. 226-227).

Thus, the treatment given to education in the discourse of public policies allows us to perceive how the discourses related to it are appropriated by the instances ruling it. The education system maintains or

modifies the appropriation of discourses not only in relation to divulged knowledge, but also to undisclosed knowledge. A system of teaching, then, is always a process of ritualization of the word, establishing roles and functions for the one producing the discourse. The failure to send literary and professional qualification books to school libraries shows how the educational discourse can be curtailed and altered. If the last *Portraits of reading in Brazil (Retratos da leitura no Brasil, 2016)* revealed that 44% of Brazilians were nonreaders, it is easy to see that, inversely, 56% of all Brazilians are readers and have a higher or lesser degree of literacy. Many were introduced to reading by literary books available in the school. By interrupting the distribution of literary works to schools, therefore, the government prevents people from exercising one of their most basic rights: contact with all kinds of discourse (Foucault, 1996).

Conclusion

In view of the above, this work, in proposing a diachronic analysis of federal initiatives to promote reading, sought to demonstrate that there were significant investments in the propagation of books, reading and literature. The figures invested into programs such as the PNBE and the PROLER indicate that financial investment, by itself, is not enough: actions need to be articulated, as pointed out by the TCU itself in its study on the use of PNBE services by schools (Brasil, 2002).

The retrospective provided by this article similarly clarifies that the investments in reading formation and book propagation programs are very recent, considering that the first book acquisition and distribution program to include literary books (the PNSL) was inaugurated in the 1980s. Added to this is the problem that most of the programs had a short existence.

Thus, we understand that even if temporary, the PNBE's suspension goes against the government's motto of constructing a "Brazil of readers." As the one and only program to send literary collections to public schools, its suspension prevents children and adolescents from finding qualitative works essential to their critical, aesthetic and inventive development.

Translated from Portuguese by Pedro Ribeiro and proofread by Ananyr Porto Fajardo.

Received on July 21, 2017
Approved on March 27, 2018

Note

1 News article. Available at: <<https://g1.globo.com/educacao/noticia/governo-federal-seguira-sem-entregar-novos-livros-de-literatura-para-bibliotecas-escolares-em-2018.ghtml>>. Accessed on: March 17, 2018.

References

- ALBINO, Lia Cupertino Duarte. **A Literatura Infantil no Brasil: origem, tendências e ensino**. São Paulo: Litteratu, 2000. Available at: <www.litteratu.com/literatura_infantil.pdf>. Access on: Feb. 7, 2018.
- BRASIL. Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, from October 5, 1988. **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, Oct. 5, 1988. Available at: <http://www.senado.leg.br/atividade/const/con1988/con1988_06.06.2017/art_150_.asp>. Access on: Feb. 17, 2018.
- BRASIL. Decree No. 519, de 13 de maio de 1992. Establishes the *Programa Nacional de Incentivo à Leitura*, PROLER, among other measures. **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, May 14, 1992. Available at: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/decreto/1990-1994/D0519.htm>. Access on: Jan. 23, 2018.
- BRASIL. **Avaliação do TCU sobre o Programa Nacional Biblioteca na Escola**. Brasília: Secretaria de Fiscalização e Avaliação de Programas de Governo, 2002. Available at: <<http://www.tcu.gov.br>>. Access on: Feb. 20, 2018.
- BRASIL. Decree No. 10753, October 31, 2003. Institutes the National Book Policy. **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, Oct. 31, 2003. Available at: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/2003/110.753.htm>. Access on: Feb. 5, 2018.
- BRASIL. Edital de Convocação para Inscrição de Obras de Literatura no Processo de Avaliação e seleção para o Programa Nacional Biblioteca da Escola – PNBE – 2010. **Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação**, Brasília, 2009.
- BRASIL. **Concurso Literatura para Todos**. Brasília: Ministério da Educação, 2010. Available at: <<http://portal.mec.gov.br/concurso-literatura-para-todos>>. Access on: Mar. 16, 2018.
- BRASIL. Decree No. 7559, from September 1, 2011, on the National Book and Reading Plan – PNLL, and other measures. **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, Sep. 5, 2011a. Available at: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2011/decreto/d7559.htm>. Access on: Feb. 5, 2018.
- BRASIL. **Avaliação das Bibliotecas Escolares no Brasil**. São Paulo: Edições SM, 2011b.
- BRASIL. Law No. 11033, from December 21, 2004. Alters the taxation on the financial and capital market; institutes the *Regime Tributário para Incentivo à Modernização e à Ampliação da Estrutura Portuária* – REPORTO; alters Laws No. 10865, from April 30, 2004, 8850, from January 28, 1994, 8383, from December 30, 1991, 10522, from July 19, 2002, 9430, from December 27, 1996, and 10925, from July 23, 2004; among other measures. **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, December 22, 2014. Available at: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2004-2006/2004/lei/l11033.htm>. Access on: Feb. 5, 2018.
- BRASIL. **Arca das Letras: 12 anos germinando boas sementes**. Brasília: Secretaria Especial de Agricultura Familiar e do Desenvolvimento Agrário, 2015. Available at: <<http://www.mda.gov.br/sitemda/noticias/arca-das-lettras-12-anos-germinando-boas-sementes>>. Access on: Mar. 5, 2018.
- BRASIL. **Programas do Livro: dados estatísticos**. Brasília: Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação, 2017. Available at: <<http://www.fnnde.gov.br/programas/programas-do-livro/biblioteca-na-escola/dados-estatisticos>>. Access on: Mar. 17, 2018.
- BRITTO, Luiz Percival Lemes. Leitor Interditado. In: MARINHO, Marildes; SILVA, Ceris Salete Ribas (Org.). **Leituras do Professor**. São Paulo: Mercado de letras, 1998. P. 61-78.

- CALDAS, Elaine Formentini. **A Trajetória dos Programas Oficiais de Leitura e da Biblioteca Pública no Brasil Durante o Período de 1937-2004**. 2005. 182 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciência da Informação). Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Campinas, Campinas, 2005.
- CAPANEMA, Gustavo. **Exposição dos Motivos para a Criação do INL**. Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Saúde, 15 de dezembro de 1937.
- CHARTIER, Roger. **A Mão do Autor e a Mente do Editor**. Traduzido por George Schlesinger. São Paulo: UNESP, 2014.
- CHARTIER, Roger. **Os Desafios da Escrita**. São Paulo: Editora da Unesp, 1990.
- CIRINO, Darciane Barros Leão. **Programa Nacional Biblioteca da Escola – PNBE: apropriação dos acervos nas escolas municipais de Ipameri-GO**. 2015. 186f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação). Universidade Federal de Goiás, Catalão, 2015.
- ECO, Umberto. **The Name of the Rose**. New York: Warner Books, 1984.
- FERNANDES, Célia Regina Delácio; CORDEIRO, Maisa Barbosa da Silva. Os Critérios de Avaliação e Seleção do PNBE: um estudo diacrônico. **Educação**, Porto Alegre, v. 35, n. 3, p. 319-328, 2012.
- FOUCAULT, Michel. **The archaeology of knowledge / The discourse on language**. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- KRAFZIK, Maria Luiza de Alcântara. **Acordo MEC/Usaid: a Comissão do Livro Técnico e do Livro Didático – Colted (1966-1971)**. 2006. 151f. Dissertação (mestrado em Educação). Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2006.
- LAJOLO, Marisa. Circulação e Consumo do Livro Infantil Brasileiro: um percurso marcado. In: KHÉDE, Sônia Salomão (Org.). **Literatura Infantil-Juvenil: um gênero polêmico**. Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, 1986. P. 43-56.
- LAJOLO, Marisa; ZILBERMAN, Regina. **Um Brasil para Brianças: para conhecer a literatura infantil brasileira: história, autores e textos**. São Paulo: Global, 1986.
- MACHADO, Ana Maria. **Bento-que-Bento-é-o-Frade**. São Paulo: Abril, 1977.
- MACHADO, Ana Maria. **De Olho nas Penas**. Rio de Janeiro: Salamandra, 1981.
- MACHADO, Ana Maria. **Era uma Vez um Tirano**. Rio de Janeiro: Salamandra, 1982.
- MACIEL, Francisca Izabel Pereira. O PNBE e o CEALE: de como semear leituras. In: PAIVA, Aparecida; SOARES, Magda (Org.). **Literatura Infantil: políticas e concepções**. São Paulo: Autêntica, 2008. p. 7-20.
- MELLO, Gustavo. **Desafios para o Setor Editorial Brasileiro de Livros na Era Digital**. Rio de Janeiro: Economia Cultural, 2012.
- NUNES, Clarice. (Des)encantos da Modernidade Pedagógica. In: LOPES, Eliane Marta Teixeira; FILHO, Luciano Mendes de Faria; VEIGA, Cynthia Greive (Org.). **500 Anos de Educação no Brasil**. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2003. P. 371-398.
- PAULINO, Graça. COSSON, Rildo; Letramento Literário: para viver a literatura dentro e fora da escola. In: ZILBERMAN, Regina; RÖSING, Tânia (Org.). **Escola e Leitura: velha crise, novas alternativas**. São Paulo: Global, 2009. P. 17-40.
- PEREIRA, Marcos da Veiga. Transformar o Retrato da Leitura no Brasil – um desafio da sociedade brasileira. In: ZOARA, Failla (Org.). **Retratos da Leitura no Brasil**. Rio de Janeiro: Sextante, 2016.
- PROLER. Programa Nacional de Incentivo à Leitura. **PROLER: concepção, diretrizes e ações**. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Biblioteca Nacional; Ministério da Cultura; Programa Nacional de Incentivo à Leitura, 1998.

PSZCZOL, Eliane. **À Guisa de um Balanço – PROLER: concepções e diretrizes**. Rio de Janeiro: Programa Nacional de Incentivo à Leitura, 2009. Available at: <<http://www.bn.br/proler/images/PDF/cursos3.pdf>>. Access on: Feb. 8, 2018.

ROCHA, Ruth. **O Reizinho Mandão**. São Paulo: Pioneira, 1978.

SIB. Sociedade dos Ilustradores do Brasil. **Brasil, Nação Leitora**. Paraty: SIB, 3 jul. 2015. Available at: <<http://sib.org.br/tag/camara-brasileira-do-livro>>. Access on: Mar. 17, 2018.

THOMPSON, John. **Os Mercadores de Cultura: o mercado editorial no século XX**. São Paulo: Unesp, 2013.

UFMG. **Programa Nacional Biblioteca da Escola: análise descritiva e crítica de uma política de formação de leitores**. Belo Horizonte: Faculdade de Educação; Centro de Alfabetização, Leitura e Escrita (Ceale). Available at: <<http://portal.mec.gov.br/dmdocuments/pnbe.pdf>>. Access on: Jan. 11, 2012.

ZAPPONE, Mirian Hisae Yaegashi. **As Dificuldades da Leitura no Brasil**. Online: Grupo de Estudos em Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea. Available at: <<http://gelbcunb.blogspot.com.br/2017/04/as-dificuldades-da-leitura-no-brasil.html?spref=fb>>. Access on: Mar. 16, 2018.

ZILBERMAN, Regina. **A Leitura no Brasil: sua história e suas instituições**. Campinas: Unicamp, s.d. <<http://www.unicamp.br/iel/memoria/projetos/ensaios/ensaio32.html>>. Access on: Feb. 20, 2018.

ZOARA, Failla. **Retratos da Leitura no Brasil**. Rio de Janeiro: Sextante, 2016.

Maisa Barbosa da Silva Cordeiro is a Literature professor at Centro Universitário da Grande Dourados (UNIGRAN), holds a PhD in Literary Studies at Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), and a MSc in Literature and Cultural Practices at Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados (UFGD).

E-mail: maysa_bdasilva@yahoo.com.br

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International. Available at: <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>>.