

An introduction to research in an undergraduate course: public libraries and the development of readers

Introdução à pesquisa em um curso de graduação: sobre bibliotecas populares e formação de leitores

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ABSTRACT

The present paper reveals some of the results of a study developed in the early stages of a group of students' undergraduate studies at a public university in the state of Rio de Janeiro, whose theme was public libraries and the development of readers. In the first stage of the study, we investigated the history and the current operating system of public libraries within the city of Rio de Janeiro so that we could develop an investigative attitude on the part of 28 students who were distributed among eight public libraries in the various neighborhoods of the city. Aside from the theoretical and methodological references related to the concepts of library, reading and the history of reading, we also introduced for the first time concerns regarding ethnographic research and investigation in the field of human sciences.

Index Terms: research, undergraduate studies, public libraries, development of readers.

RESUMO

Neste trabalho busca-se apresentar alguns resultados da pesquisa desenvolvida nos períodos iniciais em turma de graduação em uma universidade pública no contexto do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, cujo tema refere-se a bibliotecas populares e à formação de leitores. Na primeira fase retratada neste trabalho, levantaram-se o histórico e o modo de funcionamento atual de bibliotecas populares situadas na Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, de modo a construir atitude investigativa por parte de vinte e oito alunos, distribuídos em oito bibliotecas populares nos diversos bairros da cidade. Além dos referenciais teórico-metodológicos relacionados aos conceitos de biblioteca, de leitura e de história da leitura, foram introduzidas as primeiras noções relacionadas à pesquisa de natureza etnográfica e à investigação na esfera das Ciências Humanas.

Palavras-chave: pesquisa, graduação, bibliotecas populares, formação de leitores.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to present some theoretical reflections and methodologies related to the construction of a study about the network of public libraries in the city of Rio de Janeiro and the development of readers, conducted with a group of undergraduate students, primarily education majors, at a public university located in the state of Rio de Janeiro.¹

Recent studies concerning the literacy level and development of readers, particularly among the youth and adult population, have pointed to statistics that considerably influence social indicators of quality of life. On the one hand, according to the 2000 IBGE census,² there are 17.6 million people in Brazil who are ten years of age and older who do not know how to read or write. In 2002, there were 14.6 million illiterates (11.8% of the population 15 years of age and older) and the country had 32.1 million “functional illiterates” (IBGE, PNAD, 2002). On the other hand, regarding students that attend school, the prognostics are not promising. The results of a study conducted by INEP/MEC³ in April 2003 demonstrated that the

¹ This study is a curricular component of the Research and Practical Pedagogy course, lasting six semesters whose objective is to bring the students together during the first semester of their Pedagogy course into a research group that will develop a study based on a theme of their choosing. During the second semester of 2005 (note: the Brazilian school calendar is March-June and Aug-Nov) – the period analyzed in this paper – 28 students took part in the study, distributed among eight public libraries in the city of Rio de Janeiro (the Public Library of Penha – Álvaro Moreira, the Public Library of Irajá – João do Rio, the Public Library of Bangu – Cruz e Souza, the Public Library of Engenho Novo – Agripino Grieco, the Public Library of Tijuca – Marques Rebelo, the Public Library of Santa Teresa – José de Alencar, the Public Library of Botafogo – Machado de Assis and the Public Library of Grajaú – Clarice Lispector).

² IBGE = Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

³ INEP = The Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies and Research. MEC = Ministry of Education.

“reading and math levels of the majority of students are critically [low]. The majority of the students do not learn to become readers to complete basic daily activities, to integrate themselves into a complex globalized society and fully exercise their citizenship. This is the conclusion of the study conducted about fourth grade students”.

Apart from the data extracted from these studies, the results of the Ribeiro study (2003) in regards to the *National Indicator of Functional Literacy* (INAF) reveal that basic reading and writing skills are unequally distributed among the Brazilian population. In addition, the *Portrait of Literacy in Brazil* study (CBL, 2001) presents interesting questions about reading, such as the fact that the vast majority of Brazilians like to read books. Why, then, is it believed that Brazilians do not read and that access to books is very restricted in our country?

We believe that this picture of the Brazilian literacy landscape cannot be analyzed in isolation, since in Brazil, literacy is closely linked to various indicators of social exclusion: income, health, nutrition and access to cultural goods that are collectively produced but that only benefit a minority. We thus verify the necessity of a study specific to the networks of access to the democratization of literacy that can form the basis for public and social policies related to reading acquisition in our country.

2. The methodology and theoretical framework of the study: some considerations

In the perspective outlined above, our initial objective was to investigate the network of public libraries in the city of Rio de Janeiro located in a wide variety of neighborhoods:

Bangu, Ramos, Botafogo, and Irajá, among others, totaling at the time 28 units, with the most recent being the Maré Complex Public Library,

founded in May 2005.⁴ This network was part of the Municipal Secretary of Cultural and includes the General Department of Cultural Documentation and Information. The study focused on one area of the human sciences – education – and requires listening to, hearing, and observing as much reason as emotion, in hopes of not losing site of history and the experience of those involved. In this way, the qualitative study is based on the approach that most allows for understanding the subjects that are part of the study, without silencing or neutralizing them.

In order to develop this ethnographic study, we planned complementary methodological strategies: semi-structured interviews – individual and collective – with the intention of better capturing the thoughts of the social actors involved, in an environment that facilitated narration and the exchange of experiences, apart from careful field observations that aimed to develop familiarity with the life contexts and the ways of thinking and behaving of the researchers and the social groups studied (cf. FERREIRA e AMADO, 2002; MINAYO, 1992, 2003 e OLIVEIRA, 1998.).

Keeping in mind the nature of the study, we opted for the distribution of the researchers into small groups among the various libraries, using the criteria of geographic proximity to their place of residence or easy access to determine where they would conduct their work. To do so, we had to modify the study's initial objective, adopting an investigative mode that contemplated the study of 28 researchers distributed among eight libraries. This was the feasible systematization to conduct the first phase of the study, whose focus was on a survey of the history of these institutions and their current operating system.

⁴ Data collected in partnership with the Municipal Secretary of Culture of the City of Rio de Janeiro in July 2005.

Some questions were reflective of the theoretical and methodological framework of the study about the history of the selected libraries: What is a public library? How did the public libraries of the city of Rio de Janeiro come about? How do we relate historical data to current operating practices? For Milanesi (1983), an author that accompanied us during a large portion of the initial investigation, a public library should present a certain profile:

...[E]ach library serves a specific public. The more heterogeneous this public is, the more diverse its collection should be – which is the case of the public library. The user may be an adult that is learning to read or a geneticist who has a professional interest in following step by step the scientific advances in his field (p. 14)...Science is cumulative and the library's purpose is to preserve memories – as if it were the brain of humanity – organizing information so that every human can enjoy it. This applies to libraries built for those learning to read and libraries that cater to the man of science. (p. 15)

However, the libraries selected and analyzed in the testimony of the researchers present a very diverse configuration of the ideal form presented by Milanesi (1983):

With the intention of studying the public libraries of the city of Rio de Janeiro, we decided to visit the Public Library of Engenho Novo, which was founded in 1960 in a mansion on Silva Rabelo Street and named Serafim da Silva Neto, with a collection of 8,500 books. Today, this library is called the Agripino Grieco and serves more than 150 people per day, the majority being students that live in the Méier, Engenho Novo, Lins, Riachuelo and Engenho de Dentro neighborhoods. (FIGUEIREDO, MARTINS, CRISTINA e BRITO, 2005, p.1)

The organization of the Penha – Álvaro Moreyra Public Library...We discovered that the typical reader lives in Penha, is young and is a public school student that goes to the library to complete school assignments and research. It is interesting to note that when asked about the joy of reading, these readers always reply that they are only doing research, or in other words, they are not interested in reading a book out of pure curiosity or pleasure. (LOURENÇO, MONTEIRO e CRISTINA, 2005, p.5)

Cruz and Souza Public Library (Bangu). The public is mostly made up of public and private elementary and middle school

students of the region. At the end of the year (exam time), the number of visitors reaches 100 per day and some schools conduct guided visits to the library. (DIAS, NOGUEIRA, DUARTE E MOREIRA, 2005, p.8)

In the transcribed testimonies presented above, some interesting observations are made when confronted with definitions of a theoretical nature: the presence of young readers, the majority of whom are students, interested in developing strictly scholarly research. These corroborations distance themselves from the studied theoretical definitions. Recall that for Milanesi (1983), “The more heterogeneous the public, the more diverse its collection will be - which is the case of the public library,” aside from its function as a space for the organization of knowledge so that every person has access to information.

Facing these previously constructed notions, it is not surprising that the researchers were taken aback by the profile of the student reader because of the restricted interest in scholarly research and assignments; what this, among other determinants, reveals is the indispensable articulation between theory and practice in the process of the production of knowledge. We understand, however, the necessity to counter the theoretical readings of the fieldwork data. How do we do so, with a numerous group that is new to the university and new to researching?

We chose a methodology that took into consideration, on the one hand, the deepening of theoretical works that treat public libraries and their functions, which can be observed in Silva (2004), Milanesi (1983) and Lindoso (2004); on the other hand, we were attune to the urgency of refining the outlook of data collection and sensitizing it. It is interesting to perceive what is said and what is not, what appears to us to be evident when faced with what is actually revealed. This exercise was made possible, at least initially, by way of reading literary texts that indicate an accurate observation in relation to what is real and the capacity to speak to a person’s

imagination. Observe a literary text that made us reflect on the movement of what is real and the acuity necessary for the eye of the researcher:

Reading a wave

The sea is barely wrinkled, and little waves strike the sandy shore. Mr. Palomar is standing on the shore, looking at a wave. Not that he is lost in contemplation of the waves. He is not lost, because he is quite aware of what he is doing: he wants to look at a wave and he is looking at it. He is not contemplating, because for contemplation you need the right temperament, the right mood, and the right combination of exterior circumstances; and though Mr. Palomar has nothing against contemplation in principle, none of these three conditions applies to him. Finally, it is not "the waves" that he means to look at, but just one individual wave: in his desire to avoid vague sensations, he establishes for his every action a limited and precise object.

Mr. Palomar sees a wave rise in the distance, grow, approach, change form and color, fold over itself, break, vanish, and flow again. At this point he could convince himself that he has concluded the operation he had set out to achieve, and he could go away. But isolating one wave is not easy, separating it from the wave immediately following, which seems to push it and at times overtakes it and sweeps it away; and it is no easier to separate that one wave from the preceding wave, which seems to drag it toward the shore, unless it turns against the following wave, as if to arrest it. Then, if you consider the breadth of the wave, parallel to the shore, it is hard to decide where the advancing front extends regularly and where it is separated and segmented into independent waves, distinguished by their speed, shape, force, direction.

In other words, you cannot observe a wave without bearing in mind the complex features that concur in shaping it and the other, equally complex ones that the wave itself originates.⁵ (CALVINO, 1994, p. 7 - 8)

This excerpt in which Ítalo Calvino constructs a character contemplating nature – the movement of a wave – with the intention of describing it, studying it from its multiple dimensions, is a good example of our (research) exercise, with the goal of introducing our thoughts concerning the conducting of research in an undergraduate course. *Reading*

⁵ English translation provided by <<http://des.emory.edu/mfp/calvino/calwave.html>>.

a wave, in particular, permits riveting discussions about the perception of the production of knowledge in its historical and dialectical character, replete with contradictions.

Thus, perceiving the dynamic of the operations of public libraries, within the horizon of this study, implies looking beyond appearances, beyond previously defined objectives, beyond statistics about reading and readers distributed by government organizations. It means assuming the field of investigation as a “wrinkled sea” that so surprised the character of Palomar. In addition, it indicates a disposition towards observing the libraries as a wave in motion, without it being possible to isolate one fact and describe it, while not considering its relationship to the motion of other aspects that make up this totality.

We understand, therefore, a necessary condition for the development of this study: never lose sight of the small pieces of evidence as well as a global perception of reality. Another account by the researchers can illustrate this understanding:

Since its inauguration in 1956, the Botafogo Public Library was worried about stimulating and promoting the habit of reading... It is interesting to observe the importance that the community has in the context of the library and its participation, in turn, in the context of the institution, revealing interaction as crucial for life in this social game. The public space of the library shelters the masses and lived culture...that expands and shrinks amidst the conflicts and contradictions of the society in which we live. (MENDES, MONTEIRO, LIMA, SILVA, 2005, p 26-28, emphasis added)

Next to the theoretical studies about the construction of method, designating the subject as the one who organizes and constructs the experience (OLIVEIRA, 1998 and PÁDUA, 2004), we utilize the strategy of contemplating films, which exercise the critical and sensitive eye of the researcher and the comprehension of study beyond the field of restricted investigation. To study access to reading from this perspective is to put into play the field of culture and history, as well as public and social policies.

The film *Narrators of Javé* illustrates this perception well:

The film tells the story of a fictional people (Javé), on the brink of being flooded due to the construction of a hydroelectric power plant. To avoid a catastrophe, the inhabitants resolve to write their history and possibly transform the city into a historical heritage site to be preserved. The only literate adult in the community is chosen to collect the stories about the Javé people and record them on paper, raising them up to the level of science. Biá is wonderful at embellishing stories, demonstrating an incredible capacity to expand them and modify them, in the same way that the various narrators chosen to tell the stories do. While attempting to record the various versions, it is strange that Biá, in the end, presents a blank book to the community. We can read this gesture as the impossibility of registering the variety of all of the social discourses in play. Even more curious is her final gesture: she continues walking with her back to the community, observing the past be destroyed by progress, by the novelty that the hydroelectric power plant can represent. It is, perhaps, an ultimate gesture of resistance. (SILVA, 2004b)

This story could certainly rouse other interpretations on the part of the spectator; the transformation of this backcountry would irremediably drown the memory, culture and history of the ancestors or, on the contrary, just as the characters were able to create different versions of the Javé history, history shows that memory can be inscribed in monuments, in the remembrances of those who survived the catastrophes, aside from the many other versions, according to the imagination of multiple social spectators.

The debate about the film, to which reviews have added, made possible in particular reflection about the concept of reading. We confirm the necessity of the reader to dialogue with the elements of the work, with the intention of the author, since reading presupposes an always active attitude on the part of the person reading, in selecting the elements of the text and giving them new meanings. Delineated in this way, the concept of reading permits us to break with the monolithic and homogenous idea that is commonly held about its process and is taken to be natural. In aiming to serve as the basis for the systematization of the concept, theoretical readings

were also of great value, especially the studies of Freire (1998), Martins (1996), Silva (2004) and Zilberman E Silva (1991).

The concept of history as a possibility for the changing of facts that have transpired and from a perspective to re-tell them in a singular fashion, is based on another important contribution derived from the dialogue transcribed above from the film *Narrators of Javé*. From this perspective, we chose to read two anthological studies by philosopher Walter Benjamin: *The Narrator* and *About the Concept of History* (BENJAMIN, 1987). In the former, among the various topics addressed, we will highlight his concern with the loss of experience in modern man. In analyzing the second, we extract in particular a critical understanding in relation to the evolutionary conception of history. Present, past and future need to be thought about, according to the original theses of philosophy, as intertwined camps.

Apart from this, in order to investigate the history of public libraries, we recovered a significant portion of the studies related to the history of reading, in a theoretical and methodological perspective appropriate for cultural history. As a result, the analysis category *appropriation*, put forth by Roger Chartier (1990, 1996) in his studies about the history of the reader, reading and its aids, has guided the way in which we approach the historical sources related to public libraries.

According to the history of reading instruction, when the supports are modified where texts are registered, the relationships and the forms of appropriation between the reader and the printed material transform considerably (SILVA, 2004a).

In such a way, the concept of reading practices, even when taking into account a certain time frame and space, which is the case of this excerpt

from the study,⁶ is not limited to a homogenous body. Chartier adds interesting thoughts on the topic:

...[E]ach reader, based on his own references, individual or social, historical or existential, gives a more or less singular meaning that is more or less distributed among the texts that he reads. To find this outside of the text is difficult, as common confidences among readers about what they read is rare.

(CHARTIER, 1996, p.20)

3. The dynamic of public libraries

Regarding research tools – keeping in mind our initial intention was to learn the history of public libraries – the field book was a crucial device for the recording of evidence. For example, it was possible to collect data extracted from official documents – government acts and decrees – newspaper clippings (which included speeches from the time of each library’s founding) and testimonies of people who were in some way connected to the history of public libraries.

Next, we highlighted relevant data extracted from various consulted documents,⁷ with the intention of mapping out elements related to the history and the current mode of operation of the libraries studied:

⁶ The study in question covers three stages: the first is the history of public libraries and the current mode of operation, the second is the modes and gestures of reading configured in these spaces and the third is the organization, circulation and (the public’s) reception of the (libraries’) collection. The process that involves these three stages is scheduled to be developed between 2004 and 2007.

⁷ Federal District, Resolution N° 2, 5 January 1945. Twenty public libraries are opened in the Federal District. Federal District, Decree N° 13. 455, 31 January 1957. Regulation of public libraries approved by the Secretary General of Education and Culture. State of Guanabara. Decree 1594, 25 March 1963. Organization of the Secretary of Education and Culture. Rio de Janeiro, Decree N° 15, 23 May 1975. The arrangement of the organic structure of the Municipal Secretary of Education and Culture and determination of its role and responsibilities. Rio de Janeiro, Law N° 1598, 30 August 1990. Authorizes the executive branch to bestow names of authors of Brazilian literature upon the public libraries operated by the municipality. Rio de Janeiro, Decree N° 10.205, 18 June 1991. Arrangement of the naming of the municipal public libraries.

The Public Library of Bangu – Cruz e Souza. Founded on December 18, 1981 and serves readers from the Bangu, Santíssimo, Realengo, Valqueire, Senador Câmara, Padre Miguel and Deodoro neighborhoods. Daily circulation averages around 100 people. The following activities are offered: a comics library, a toy library, story time and workshops.

The Public Library of Botafogo – Machado de Assis. Founded on January 20, 1956. It is housed inside a neoclassic building from 1929, built by the Castro Maya family as their residence. In addition to Botafogo, the library serves adjacent neighborhoods such as Flamengo, Largo do Machado,

Laranjeiras and Cosme Velho. Around 150 people visit the library daily. The main activities are: social gatherings for senior citizens, “Meet the Poet,” classes and workshops, and an entire section dedicated to newspapers.

The Public Library of Engenho Novo – Agripino Grieco. Founded on November 22, 1960 in a mansion on Silva Rabelo Street, under the name Serafim da Silva Neto and with an initial collection of 8,500 books. It serves roughly 150 visitors per day, the majority of who are students who live in the Méier, Engenho Novo, Lins, Riachuelo and Engenho de Dentro neighborhoods. The following activities are offered: a comics library, a toy library, a section dedicated to film and story time.

The Public Library of Grajaú - Clarice Lispector. Founded on February 26, 1974, it was created as the result of a suggestion by Mr. Diofrildo Trotta, principal of the Francisco Campos Municipal School. For its initial collection, it received books that belonged to the school’s library. It serves about 50 people per day, the majority of whom are students from Grajaú, Vila Isabel e Andaraí. The main activities are: a toy library, a section dedicated to film and story time.

The Public Library of Irajá – João do Rio. Founded on July 16, 1959, it was the first library in the network to be housed in a building built for the purpose of a library and it moved into that building on December 18, 1992. About 100 people visit the library on a daily basis and the majority of them are students from Irajá and other nearby neighborhoods such as Nilópolis. The following activities are worth nothing: a comics library, a toy library, workshops for senior citizens, games, a video section, multimedia, internet access and a newspaper section.

The Public Library of Penha – Álvaro Moreyra. Founded on November 16, 1978. It was the second public library to develop a Braille section and the only one designed for cordel

literature,⁸ with research and contests about the genre. It serves about 100 patrons per day, most of who are students from all of the neighborhoods of Leopoldina and the surrounding municipalities. Activities: a comics library, a toy library, a cordel literature section, lectures, workshops, expositions and a newspaper section.

The Public Library of Santa Teresa – José de Alencar. Founded on October 15, 1971. Since June 6, 1996, it has been located in the Laurinda Santos Lobo Cultural Center. Daily attendance averages 60 people, most of who are students from the Santa Teresa, Centro and Catumbi neighborhoods. Activities: a comics library, a toy library, story time, workshops and classrooms, lectures and internet access.

The Public Library of Tijuca – Marques Rebelo. Founded on September 29, 1960. It has been at its present address since March 12, 1979 (61 Guapeni Street). It serves about 100 readers per day, the majority of whom work in the Tijuca neighborhood and live in other neighborhoods. Activities: a newspaper section, classes and social gatherings for senior citizens.

The libraries studied were founded throughout the 1950s, 60s, 70s and beginning of the 1980s. This was a historical period that was substantially restrictive in regards to access to culture goods, since the country was ruled by an authoritarian regime that was one of the most violent in Brazil's history. It is possible to observe that the majority of the activities were organized based on what they designate by toy library (which normally meant a collection of educational games), comics library and story time. The historical conditions surrounding the implementation of these activities must have been determined for the development of primarily fun, playful activities. Activities of a more reflective and analytic nature, such as lectures and classes, even though they were part of the libraries' programming, proved to be rare occurrences. On the other hand, the fact that only 50% of the selected libraries have made available daily newspapers for

⁸ Cordel literature refers to popular, inexpensive booklets or pamphlets that discuss primarily folklore, music and poetry. These are particularly common in the Northeast of Brazil.

visitors to read is stunning, according to what can be deduced through observation of what is designated as the *newspaper section* of the library.

How does the public have even minimal access to information if it does not have the opportunity to consult daily newspapers or other equivalent sources of information, such as magazines that detail recent events in the contemporary world? In addition, the hypotheses regarding the profile of the reader determined by the researchers on their initial visits was confirmed. Considering the daily traffic at the eight libraries studied, varying from 50 to 150 people, the vast majority were elementary and middle school students. Nevertheless, we take care to see that the selected data is relevant and our task is not neutral. In the study of the human sciences methodology, it is necessary to choose what needs to be recorded, what could end up excluded. As Chauí affirms, arguing about the illusion of neutrality in science, “When a scientist chooses a certain definition of his object [of study], he decides to use a specific method and hopes to obtain certain results and thus his activity is neither neutral or impartial, but rather conducted according to deliberate choices (CHAUÍ, 1994, p. 281).

In addressing research in the field of human sciences, we recall another consideration to be taken into account; in this case, research involves humans, who become the subject and object of scientific investigation (cf. OLIVEIRA, 1998 e PÁDUA, 2004). This precaution is evidenced by many of the accounts shared at the end of the course, developed by the researchers about the network of public libraries in the city of Rio de Janeiro and the development of readers. We highlight one of the testimonials that illustrates the attitude described above:

Understanding the library, beyond the steel of the bookstands, the Formica of the tables, the silence, the sometimes scary feel of the rooms, put us in a context of scientific maturation that was significant and stimulating. *We had the privilege of meeting, confronting and conversing with the people that differently from “working at the counter,” repeating the unease of someone removed from the peace and security of a*

public institution, instead welcomed us with care and dedication; these are very subjective words to explain our admiration for their work from Sunday to Sunday, but there aren't better ways of expressing our sincere gratitude for their hospitality and willingness to answer our questions (so many questions). The Machado de Assis Public Library reserves a small portion of the world, is part of the world and holds the joys, contradictions and uncertainties of our times. (MENDES, MONTEIRO, LIMA, SILVA, 2005, p. 35-36, emphasis added)

4. Final thoughts on the libraries studied

The uniting of a collection of relevant data provides pathways to an initial systematization:

- a) According to the collected indicators, from the 1950s until the beginning of the 1980s, the public libraries in the city of Rio de Janeiro that were selected for this study were founded. Despite this common historical period, each library was built in unique ways and followed its own movement. In such a way, we attempt to relate the historical period to the most relevant data so as to not erase or ignore the singular movements of each investigated space.
- b) Many of these libraries appeared to operate as extensions of public schools, evidenced by the constant presence of young public elementary and middle school students at the following libraries: Engenho Novo, Grajaú, Irajá, Penha and Santa Teresa. However, there is a level of precariousness in regards to the collections of public school libraries within the city of Rio de Janeiro, particularly when referring to reference books and scientific works that tend to be the foundations for academic research. The articulation of this result with data extracted from the investigation of operating school libraries and reading rooms in public schools in the city of Rio de Janeiro might indicate a topic area worthy of future study.

- c) At certain times in history, decrees were issued that endowed the libraries with names of illustrious writers, which can be observed in the following libraries: the Penha Public Library became Álvaro Moreira Library; the Santa Teresa Public Library because José de Alencar Library; and the Grajaú Public Library became Clarice Lispector Library.⁹ However, in informal conversation, the regular patrons and employees had the habit of identifying the libraries merely by the name of the neighborhood in which they were located. This evidence indicates above all that the decrees could be annulled when confronted with the memory of the community.
- d) The public activities offered activities considered *cultural*: story time, workshops, film screenings, and lectures for senior citizens, among others. It would be left to later research phases to investigate if in fact these activities dialogue with the local culture.
- e) It is worth highlighting the development of this study, whose topic refers to public policies and the formation of readers in an undergraduate course at the beginning of the students' studies, which, apart from considerably favoring the collective exercise of the production of knowledge, permitted the transit of students between instruction and research, which is one of the fundamental purposes of higher education.

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⁹ To collect this data, two key documents were consulted: Rio de Janeiro, Law N° 1598, 30 August 1990. It authorizes the executive branch to bestow names of authors of Brazilian literature upon the public libraries operated by the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro and Rio de Janeiro. Decree N° 10.205, 18 June 1991. Allows for the naming of the municipal public libraries.

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