



Federalism and education in the republican Brazil: dilemmas of the educational organization (1889-1930)

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ABSTRACT. The article deals with the relationship between federalism and education in Brazil during the First Republic period (1889-1930). The objective is to follow the discussion about public school in the country, in an environment influenced by the new system of government. It also tries to understand how education was 'accommodated' after the formation of the Brazilian federation, starting with the publication of the Republican Constitution of 1891. The major Law provided continuity to the principles signed by the Additional Act of 1834. Thus, the responsibility for the primary education along the First Republic 'oscillates' around the discussions about centralization and decentralization. Therefore, such considerations require reflections about the concepts of federalism and education, in the ambit of relations which the State establishes with the members of the federation (states or municipalities), resembling a kind of Brazil-like federalism.

Keywords: federalism, education, centralization, decentralization.

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RESUMO. O artigo analisa a relação entre federalismo e educação no Brasil durante a Primeira República (1889-1930). O objetivo do texto é acompanhar o debate sobre a escola pública no País, em um ambiente marcado pelo novo sistema de governo, buscando compreender como a educação foi 'acomodada' após a formação da federação brasileira, a partir da promulgação da Constituição republicana de 1891. Essa Lei Maior dará continuidade aos princípios da descentralização firmados pelo Ato Adicional de 1834. Dessa forma, a responsabilização pela instrução primária, ao longo da Primeira República, 'oscila' em torno das discussões sobre centralização e descentralização. Tais considerações requerem, portanto, reflexões sobre os conceitos de federalismo e educação, no âmbito das relações que o novo Estado estabelece com os entes da federação (estados ou mesmo com os municípios), configurando uma espécie de 'federalismo à brasileira'.

Palavras-chave: federalismo, educação, centralização, descentralização.

Federalismo y educación en el Brasil republicano: dilemas de la organización educacional (1889-1930)

RESUMEN. El artículo analiza la relación entre federalismo y educación en Brasil durante la Primera República (1889-1930). El objetivo del texto es acompañar el debate sobre la escuela pública en el País, en un ambiente marcado por el nuevo sistema de gobierno, buscando comprender cómo la educación fue 'acomodada' tras la formación de la federación brasileña, a partir de la promulgación de la Constitución republicana de 1891. Esta Ley Mayor dará continuidad a los principios de la descentralización firmados por el Acto Adicional de 1834. De esta forma, la responsabilización por la instrucción primaria, a lo largo de la Primera República, 'oscila' acerca de las discusiones sobre centralización y descentralización. Tales consideraciones requieren, por lo tanto, reflexiones sobre los conceptos de federalismo y educación, en el ámbito de las relaciones que el nuevo Estado establece con los entes de la federación (estados o incluso con los municipios), configurando una especie de 'federalismo a la brasileña'.

Palabras clave: federalismo, educación, centralización, descentralización.

Introduction

This research intends – having some acknowledged limitations for deepening the

approached categories –, to revisit discussions which permeated the debates upon the binomial federalism/education in Brazil during the First Republic. So, it is important to go through the

context of the end of the nineteenth century, because the Empire to Republic transition, as a system of government, led to the need of some adjustments of a legal framework which was in process from 1889 to 1930. It was partly because some countries affected by the Principles of the Enlightenment had to deal with modern theorizations of the State during some revolutionary moments, which were difficult to transpose to the particular situations of each Brazilian state, generating great heterogeneity. Also because until the 1850s the elite were mostly consisted of bureaucrats who were educated in Coimbra, influenced by the Portuguese State. This formation constituted a minimum consensus in these elite regarding the political options adopted to achieve the Empire State. Homogeneously educated according to the Lusitanian Absolutism tradition, these elite, participating in the State bureaucracy, reiterated the strength of the State towards its hegemony, not only as political value, but also as legitimate material interest. According to Raimundo Faoro (2008), although being bureaucrat, the aristocracy was not only consisted of

[...] civil servants; but this working class is its basis, which adheres, due to alliance or dependence, to all the upper layer of the Brazilian society (Faoro, 2008, p. 447).

In a context in which slavery was predominant, the material relations of force were regarded as ordinary, the exploitation was carried without subterfuges, and the non-enslaved would relate guided by favor more than force: liberty support. The Liberalism was incorporated into the practice of favor due to personal interests, permeating the ideas that supported the relations between these free men:

There is a close and necessary connection between the political and the jobs careers, and the State affords the resources, for the internal game of exchange of benefits (Faoro, 2008, p. 447).

The Imperial social scene was also consisted of slaves, who provided the State with economic-financial support, because the slavery-based exportation agriculture was its main source of income, collected through taxes. Curiously, if slavery provided the arms demanded by tillage, it reinforced the international division of labor in the nineteenth century, i.e., it enabled the presence of Brazil among civilized nations; and such incoherence produced the impossibility of political participation. This lack of participation happened, for instance, through the prohibition of some social groups to vote:

As a social duty before a right, voting was granted the ones who the society believed they could trust its preservation. Both in the Empire or the Republic, the poor (either due to the income, or the literacy demand), the beggars, women, minors, the 'praças de pré' (low-ranking soldiers) and religious members were excluded. The great majority of the population did not participate in politics. The illiterates' exclusion given by the Republican Constitution was particularly discriminatory, because at the same time the government's obligation to provide primary education was removed, which was present in the imperial text. A quality that only the social right of education could provide was demanded for the political citizenship and, simultaneously, this right was unknown. It was a liberal, but deeply anti-democratic attitude, resistant to efforts of democratization (Carvalho, 1987, p. 44).

It is important to highlight that this elite's presence acknowledged as the most capable class to successfully build the modern State had some problems upon the type of dominance to the time. There were conflicts between sectors of rural property that led to discussions about Land Act and slavery abolition, probably in order to avoid a threat to the power system. Following this logic of domination and control, restricted to a layer,

[...] there is not, however, even when the democratic principles are not established, the isolated government, absolutely unaware of the people: the reciprocal influx between the majority and minority, even in the cruelest tyrannies, answers for the political systems stability (Faoro, 2008, p. 107).

That is because the idea of State presumes personal purposes, which achievement is given by the alignment with other institutions and other groups that have some control, also with personal interests, such as the Catholic Church. This way, some political nuances permeate into the formation of the Republican Brazilian State and they provide base to understand both how national wide matters reverberated through primary school in the states and also the contribution of education to grant a new state of affairs.

Political Ambiences of the First Republic

Similarly, moving from Empire to Republic brought some divergences in the political relations. At that time the politics was strengthened as an ideology field of work: rational reasoning of power organization, classic tool established by the political systems constituted in the modern world. In this respect, there is a search for 'fixing ideas' and

achieve the leadership of the new system, at least, among three political chains: the American liberalism (in which the government interferes the citizens' life the least); the French Jacobinism (in which the government is mediated by the direct citizen's participation) and the positivism, for "[...] the three chains intensely fought against each other at the first years of the Republic, until the first one won, around the turn of the century" (Carvalho, 1990, p. 9). The dispute among the groups exposed several interests and divergences regarding the way to organize the Republic. Still according to this author, the ideological reasoning had elements that pursued to exceed the discursive plan through the focus on the scientifically demonstrable and thinking about models of republic and ways to organize the society. The Jacobinism chain idealized the classic popular sovereignty, the direct democracy utopia, the government through the direct participation of all citizens; it was an

[...] allusion to the radicals towards the humble mass in the French Revolution, such as Silva Jardim and Lopes Trovão, supporters of a popular and widely democratic republic (Lopes, 1997, p. 14).

The liberals idealized a society consisted of independent individuals whose interests would be given by the invisible hand of market; in other words, it was the government's role to interfere the least in the citizens' life. Whereas, the positivist, coordinated among names such as Silva Jardim and, mainly, Benjamin Constant, influenced great part of the Brazilian army in the end of the nineteenth century. Their ideas, from France, proposed a centralized and 'harmonic' Republic. Imbued with these conceptions, they presented purposes to change the unfavorable education framework and provide conditions for the economic and political development of the country, i.e., include it in the group of nations regarded as the most civilized ones. The presence of the positivists, in the Brazilian political-educational context in the end of the nineteenth century, is highlighted by Rui Barbosa (1947, p. 189), in the 'reports' of 1882/83, emphasizing that

[...] the positivism, away from being an unproductive doctrine or a principle of abstract formulas, could support the scopes of a wide philosophy of reality, useful both for the government and for the science men.

For Luiz Roberto Lopes, the liberals won the dispute, for the republican signatories of the 1870 manifest, Saldanha Marinho, Quintino Bocaiúva, Rui Barbosa among others, wanted a

Liberal, federalist Republic, without social laws, representative of the rural oligarchy, mainly the coffee one. After the initial riots, the hegemony of the liberal, oligarchic, civil and federalist group would be installed (Lopes, 1997, p. 15).

According to Carvalho (1990), this model was really victorious in the Constitution of 1891, because it converted its principles towards the landowners' interests, whose power was based in influential provinces such as São Paulo, Minas Gerais e Rio Grande do Sul – the most important, not by chance. Boris Fausto (1997, p. 245) empowers this idea:

The political representatives of the ruling class of the main provinces São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul supported the idea of the Federative Republic, assuring some level of autonomy to the regional units. They would differ, however, in other aspects of power organization. The PRP (The 'Paulista' Republican Party) and the 'Mineiros' politicians supported the liberal model. The base of the Republic would consist of citizens, represented in the State management by a president who would be elected by the congress. The 'Gaúchos' republicans were positivist.

If, as it is possible to infer through this passage, the federalism was the most meaningful change that the elite envisaged in the republican system, it also showed that, even after abolition, some 'deep inequalities' and the 'concentration of power' by a few and in a few places still lasted; that is why the liberalism has "[...] a character of inequality consecration, sanctioning of the law of the strongest" (Carvalho, 1990, p. 25).

In this context it was necessary to enhance the Executive Power of the Republic, but not excessively, so that there was not the risk to cross a more or less prolonged period of dictatorship. According to Boris Fausto (1997, p. 246), the

[...] autonomy of the provinces had a suspicious meaning, not only because it served the interest of major landowners, but also because it incurred the risk of fragmenting the country.

Although the Constitution of 1891 had established political nuances favoring the states autonomy, the federal government was not completely powerless. The idea of ultra federalism supported by the 'gaúchos' positivists and fought by the military and 'paulistas' was a risk that, due to several reasons, these sectors did not want to run. This power was aligned with the hegemonic force of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, not only in the high-ranking of military, but also in economy and politics, due to the coffee oligarchy, whose actions

could have contributed towards the political, economic and social hegemony of the states of the First Republic.

The problem of federalism in Brazil

According to Carlos Roberto Jamil Cury (2010a, p. 152), the meaning of federation and federalism “[...] means agreement, alliance, union, the act of joining through alliance and also believe, trust”. If it is like this, the definition of federation moves the idea of grouping the autonomous states for defense and attack without the Union, although being sovereign and representing everyone, affording virtually absolute powers upon citizens and federate states. On the other hand, if the federal State has some characteristics that differs it from other types of State, we should presume that it presents a certain decentralizing feature which reverberates in the behavior of the ones who live in this State. In this respect, according to the political reasoning in Brazil,

[...] the idea of federalism was understood as a constitutional arrangement in which the provinces could ensure their interests. [...] the idea that the federalism was an institutional arrangement, that allowed the provinces to take care of their ‘internal businesses’ is in the root of the republican movement that erupted in Rio Grande do Sul. At the core of this movement, we find the economic situation of the province and the establishment with the power centralization within the province’s president, named by the central power (Coser, 2009, p. 108-109, author’s emphasis).

The idea of federation in the Empire assumed autonomy of provinces to manage internal subjects, such as the tax control. This federalist thought viewed the decentralization as something favorable to the competitions environment between the provinces, something that, in certain limits, could become an element of progress. The federative issue

[...] had always been on the front line of debates [...]; more than that, it imposed itself [...] even before the transition of the centralized and centralist culture of Monarchy to the federative decentralization of the Republic (Cury, 2002, p. 46).

Concerning education, in the decentralization derived from the change of monarchic to republican State, the historical background portrays a transition of a culture the Empire viewed as Unitary and centralist and that the Republic legitimate as federate decentralization. Regarding its political organization, the State can assume several ways of being present in its territory such as “[...] guardian of the greatest and

general interests, above the private dimensions and private interests” (Cury, 2002, p. 32).

The federation was present in history with the aspirations of the first republicans, as in Rui Barbosa’s interventions, amending the article 1, decree 510, 22/6/1890, which was the original proposal of Constitution for Brazil to guide the works of the Constituent Assembly (Cury, 2001). From the legal point of view, the nation should adopt the federative Republic as a system of government - established by decree 1, November 15, 1889 – which is constituted “[...] through perpetual and indissoluble union of its old provinces, in United States of Brazil” (Brasil, 1891, p. 1).

According to Cavalcanti (1983, p. 124), the nation suddenly moved from the simple, unitary, monarchic State, in which had been organized

[...] for more than two thirds of the century, and working under the parliamentary system, for the composed system, and the most decentralized of all: the Federal-State or the Federal Presidential Republic.

For Coser (2009, p. 91),

[...] federalism is a system of government in which Power is divided between the central government (the Union) and the regional government. The federalism is defined, according to its positive sense, as a mean between a unitary government, with powers exclusively focused on the Union, and a confederation, in which the central power would be none or weak.

In the federation, the central government has power upon the citizens of each state that composes the Union. But this situation is different from the one experienced by the territory units in the unitary State, whose central government is prior and superior to the local instances and whose power relations follow a hierarchical and ‘pyramidal’ logic. The federations enhance the principles of government autonomy and sharing the legitimacy and the decisive process between federate entities of the local state power:

[...] actually, a similar division does not matter, a share of the sovereignty, it involves, and could not stop involving, co-participation of the private States in the exercise of it (Cavalcanti, 1983, p. 74).

In the same perspective, Duverger (1986, p. 469) adds:

Internal federalism, for which the federal State consists in providing political organization to the intermediate frameworks, to the regions and provinces, constituted in real States within the State

itself; international federalism, that intends to group State-nations in wider communities.

A lot of effort was made in order to consolidate the new structure of the federative Republic, because it was not the calm and simple action it seemed to be. The elaboration of the final text of the Constitution of 1891 was characterized by the presence of multiple and distinct amendments, conflicts and controversies involved in the debate, which ended up inserted in the final version (Cury, 2001, p. 141). This Letter has some dispositions to restructure the government under the new system and prescribe the intervention of the Union on the states so that, according to the article 6,

[...] avoid foreign invasion or from a State to another, keep the federative republican system, reestablish the order and peace in the States, the request of the respective government; ensure the performance of laws and federal sentences (Brasil, 1891, p. 1).

The substantial question concerning the organization of the states appears on Title II of the Constitution of 1891. Although each state has “[...] its own Constitution and laws [...]”, they should be “[...] loyal to the constitutional principles of the Union [...]”, visible in the article 63; on the other hand, the article 64 reserved mines and public land in its respective territories (Silveira, 1978, p. 62). In this respect, Fonseca (1981, p. 123) claims that the republican federative system

[...] relies on the union of collectivities politically organized, under a general authority, also with own powers, being performed automatically, since they do not collide with the cardinal principles established on the Federal Constitution.

As it is possible to infer, the change from provinces to the states created some stir, since such change, arranged on behalf of the federation, presented ‘one’ side of the situation to be defined: the state organization:

[...] the idea of federation with greater autonomy of the States was clear, given what happened in the Empire, the juridical version that materialized this idea was object of great polemics (Cury, 2001, p. 142).

The model provided some sovereignty to the Union and autonomy to the states, mainly around the division of tax income, the unity or duality of the magistracy and the Congress representation.

In this respect, the federation would prevent the sovereign power and the states would receive the autonomous power from the Union, subordinate though. If that was like this, it would be reasonable

to say that there was not an only way to guide the federations; even other federative countries have historical heterogeneity, then the solutions need to suit the specificities of each federate state. In short, the federative system presumes diversity.

In this reasoning, some institutional arenas should be instituted to ensure three factors to the federal and sub national government: political representation, mutual control among them and public spaces for deliberating and negotiating. As several problems of collective action cannot be solved at a single governmental level, the action developed through federalism has to be arranged in order to ensure the coordination among all the states. Thus, opting for federalism meant a complex decision-making movement and of legitimation, as the number of representatives in the legislative instances was growing, something that made it more and more difficult to adjust and keep the ‘arrangements’ between the several political groups. Such institutional conformation, however, has some democratic potentialities, such as the approach of government and their communities in a decentralized way, the respect towards the peculiarities of each area and the adoption of the principle of bargain and negotiation as the beacon of the political process. According to Vitor Nunes Leal (1997, p. 98),

If the basic principle of federalism is the decentralization (political and administrative), it would be perfectly logical to extend this decentralization to the municipal extent. There would not lack, in the Constituent, and even later, who would support the idea that the relation of municipality-State is the same as State-Union.

This passage enables us to understand that the federalism starts existing as the political factor gets centralized between the other dimensions, be them economic, social, cultural, etc. The new fact would be the republican federalism instead of the imperial centralism; i.e., the state governor instead of the Province president. The president – the reliable man of the ministry in the Empire – did not have his own dominance neither conditions to build his power base in the Province – as he was, for many times, lay about his presidency; he could, at the most, ‘prepare’ his election for deputy or senator, because

[...] it was convenient to empower the State with the necessary elements to, within the scope of municipalities’ management, prevail the general interests over the local ones (Leal, 1997, p. 102).

In fact, these characteristics opposed to the federalism fundamentals, of a central government – the federal State – that has jurisdiction over the

federation territories and the Union – the unified states –, to which are distributed the powers, functions and competencies, rights and duties, that build their autonomy and power this way.

According to Bobbio (1998, p. 332), organizing the State supposes facing the problem of centralization – “[...] authoritative and governmental power – and of decentralization – [...] liberal and constitutional power”. In fact, these defining attributes apply to the European context, but in the Brazilian scenario, such categories would be established according to some peculiar variations, i.e., according to characteristics that would vary from state to state and features the local governments have concerning the nature of their powers and duties, the organizational structure and the forms of control which they are subjected to. However, there is a common denominator: the duty that is attributed to them as a tool of governmental decentralization and centralization – therefore, of presence of public power all around the countries.

If the political centralization assumes a unitary character and prevails in the territory sphere, the decentralization enables the states autonomy and their independency. More than that, according to Bobbio (1998, p. 334), “[...] decentralization causes the existence of a plurality of decision levels performed autonomously by organs which are independent of the center”. Furthermore, the idea of decentralization, according to Mello (1986, p. 797),

[...] explains the persistence of the municipality institution through the times and its current renewal, because dealing with complex issues that demand their focus and which cannot be delegated to other spheres and issues that are predominantly of local interest are getting more and more difficult for the central government of a country. This way, the division of governmental work is imposed, on behalf of the public power efficacy, at least. In turn, the possibility of political participation, inherent to the idea of local government, also contributed not only to the continuity of municipality institution but also to the big number of units of local government in many countries. [...] acknowledging the necessity of autonomous municipality does not happen, however, without struggling between the centralizing tendencies from several inspirations and the decentralizing ideas that search for, with greater community participation in the government, what is immediate interest.

Although Victor Nunes Leal (1997) is referring, in this passage, to a later period than the one we are analyzing, he notes the change process and points an innovation adopted for the administrative organization in order to enhance efficiency in the

municipalities, for instance, in the Provisional Government post-1930, in the

[...] ‘department of municipality’, state organ, whose name would vary, but within important attributions it was included: technically assisting the municipalities, coordinating their activities in function of state plans (Leal, 1997, p. 104, author’s emphasis).

In other words, the municipalities were like a unity of local government because the districts in which they are subdivided are new municipal administrative divisions and not units of government themselves. If it is the municipality duty to monitor the elaboration and implementation of the budget of administrative measures, it was the duty of

[...] this organ, directly dependent on the interventor, to exercise the comprehensive protection that current legislation grants the state government over the administrative life of the municipalities (Leal, 1997, p. 104).

Thus, leaving a centralized system and advancing towards another, decentralized, the Republic would adopt a federative model, whose duality foresaw greater powers to the states, although they were submitted to the Union and a reduction of its power, compared with the later period. Since they were federal members, the states would be able to exercise their legislative autonomy in the context of an asymmetry of economic, social, political and military categories. And that is why we can say that, in the First Republic, the federation was born in another direction: the decentralization one, that emerges as a representation of organization capable of providing the federate entities with more autonomy than the Empire did for the provinces. It is important to emphasize that, however, with a greater decentralization there were more inequality, raising the challenges that emerged with the new system of government.

Education as a problem in the Brazilian federation

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the debates about the necessity of educating the lower class were enhanced, especially upon the conviction that the public school would be essential to form the citizen. According to Marta Chagas de Carvalho (1989, p. 7), school was, in the

[...] republican imaginary, a sign of the new order establishment, a weapon to perform the Progress. [...] it was about shaping the amorphous country, turning the inhabitants into nation, vitalizing the national organization, building the nation.

The political ideals of the Republic at the beginning of its organization were subjacent to these debates: positivist chains and the liberalism, that exalted the nationalism and the formation of a new man adjusted to the reality and the new necessities of that moment; and that imposed for once with the implementation of the republican system of government. These republican formulations were forged in the political-educational scenario of the monarchic period, in which the problems regarding education were increased.

Apart from the political changes and the social conflicts since the first years of the Brazilian Empire, there was the formalization of laws to rule education; and the break between publishing a law and another was permeated by projects and proposals aimed at minimally providing the necessity to spread the institution, evidencing the educational policies of a moment characterized by contradictions on the power relations. That is because, after independency, the political changes did not alter the general lines of the economic structure and the relations of power of the colonial period.

Nevertheless, according to José Gonçalves Gondra and Alessandra Schueler (2008), during the nineteenth century, some fundamental elements emerged in order to establish a modern governability, as the schooling process, in which different mechanisms articulate: school legislation and educational policies; construction of a technical and bureaucratic apparatus of inspection and control of instruction services to recruit and employ, creation of a power net and know how to develop a political economy of education; in short, production of statistical data to know and produce representations of the State and its population. The schooling process asserted itself by little, and the State was in charge of mandatorily offering elementary education upon

[...] a process of normalization, in which the relations between the process of the State organization and schooling education are evident. In some Empire provinces, [...] the elementary instruction was regulated through provincial laws, mainly after the Additional Act of 1834 (Gondra & Schueler, 2008, p. 34).

The additional act of August 12, 1834¹ created 'regency una' and altered the Empire political and

administrative organization, providing more autonomy towards the provinces. According to what Saviani (2008) emphasizes, if the proposition of the laws of schools of first letters (1827) had been accomplished, the establishment of elementary schools in the cities, villages and hamlets whose inhabitants consisted of a significant population, as it was suggested, a national system of public instruction would have been originated. But the non implementation of this system could not be attributed to the additional act, which released the central government from taking care of the primary and secondary schools, transferring such duty to the province government. Vieira (2008), however, understands that this legal document originated several obstacles concerning the education organization, although it is not a tool of educational legislation itself. As it is possible to realize, this matter is controversial and we should be watchful about it, as Saviani (2008, p. 129) points:

The Additional Act of 1834 had only legalized the central power omission in this subject. Therefore, oppositely to a frequent tendency in the educational historiography, we cannot attribute the responsibility for the non accomplishment of the educational aspirations of the nineteenth century to the Additional Act. Especially because, for that, it would be necessary that the competence given the provinces regarding the primary and secondary school were private.

According to Newton Sucupira's claims (2005), the beginning of the educational decentralization process conducted by the additional act was not complied without conflicts neither criticism: jurists, educators and politicians, among other intellectuals, questioned the central power elimination in the primary and secondary school. It was necessary to know whether the education concerned the provincial assembly or if it was private:

Apparently, according to the parliamentary understanding, at the first years right after the Act promulgation, it was about a concurrent jurisdiction (Sucupira, 2005, p. 61).

This situation derived from the indifference with public education, not specifically due to the administrative organization intended by the Additional Act, although

In fact, with this legal tool, the announcement of an oscillating movement is explicit, which will be present along the education history in Brazil, in

¹ Approved by law 16, August 12, the Additional Act of 1834 was the only amendment in the Constitution of 1824. It established significant changes, especially in the fifth chapter of the Constitution, extinguishing the province general counsels and creating the provincial legislative assemblies with powers to legislate upon economy, justice, education and other areas; in the latter, it claimed it would be the assemblies' duty to legislate upon the "public education

and private establishments which provided it, not including the Medicine colleges, the Juridical Courses, existing Academies and any other education institutions that could be created in the future" (Costa, 2002, p. 22-23)

other words, the centralization and decentralization conflict (Vieira, 2008, p. 42).

The national debate upon public education in the republican period, permeated through centralization and decentralization categories, reverberated in the local sphere, as in several areas of the Country, the municipalization of primary education and its effects should follow the same principle: the primary education would be in charge of the municipality more than the state, although the responsibility upon its offering would be shared. However, we should emphasize that, although they had autonomy in the educational sphere, they could not

[...] assume a local capacity to generate a major project with ramifications in several sectors, as a systemic proposal of popular instruction would be (Gonçalves Neto, 2012, p. 31).

Furthermore,

It is noteworthy that the moment indicated for the emergency and support of this autonomy principle in the state constitutions is the one that succeeds right after the Republic, more specifically after the Federal Constitution promulgation. It is exactly this moment we deal with in this investigation about the pedagogical municipality. At this moment it is possible to demonstrate the emergency of a local power with ability to define principles, elaborate laws and try to implement a teaching municipal 'system', supported by the legislation that produces the wide discussion of the representative colleges and that allows the pedagogical municipality some space for their manifestation (Gonçalves Neto, 2012, p. 31-32, author's emphasis).

Back to the Empire times, it is noted that the actions of each area and the intention of the Additional Act of 1834 of cancelling some difficulties from initiatives disconnected from local reality and enhancing the provincial power did not bring the desired effect in the public education sphere; for instance, did not arouse in the provincial assemblies the awareness of the democratic-liberal imperative of universalizing the elementary education. According to Cury (2001, p. 306),

[...] the education fulfillment as a citizenship right will be in charge of the federate States, which will determine the nature, number and coverage of the public education.

That is why it could be said that the Additional Act was constituted in a significant moment of the education politics, although the State duty had been barely noticeable in the education offering; because in the Empire, the education was provided for few, and the Act attributed protagonism towards the

provinces that will be reached – partially – only in the later condition of republican states, with the “[...] offering of elementary and secondary public education” (Vieira, 2008, p. 44). More than that, it would not be improbable to think that, when empowering the provinces to legislate upon the primary and secondary education, the Additional Act made room for discussions and proposals for education that set the stage for more substantial education renovations in the first decades of the twentieth century.

After the Republic proclamation, there was an attempt to reorder the society and install a true nation was believed to be, something that the Empire could do. According to Wenceslau Gonçalves Neto (2002), in these moments of transition, there would be the possibility

[...] of building something absolutely new, a new society with an original project; of promoting ‘mends’ and a structure that does not intend to be changed within its essential elements; or of working with a copy of the new, searching to reproduce models that are perspective in other countries that, as expected, can be transplanted to the reality in change. In Brazil, in cultural terms, our ‘visionary’ did not look beyond Europe or the United States that seemed paradigms, referring to the third option (Gonçalves Neto, 2002, p. 138, author's emphasis).

These and other circumstances complicate the effort of education organization at the beginning of the Republic, rebounding even upon the work of the constituents and the Constitution of 1891 itself, which is neglectful concerning the popular education, implicitly referring this responsibility to the different states. According to Vanilda Paiva (2003, p. 91-92), more important than the possibility of popular education diffusion,

[...] it seems to have been the principle that should guide the republican organization: the federalism. Facing it, the maintenance of the decentralized administration system of elementary school is understood.

The Republic inherited an inefficient and disorganized school system, and the State's intervention in the education became a polemic issue to be managed, also having to consider the decentralization of this action prescribed by the additional act of 1834 and continued by the constitutional federalist principle of 1891. The importance of the State to spread the public education was proclaimed, as an element of progress and formation of Brazilians, but the course of this matter was very hard, due to the competencies

transferred to the federate entities and the weaknesses of the current elementary school system.

As shown, the federalization process of the Republic had some consequences which were greatly felt with the impossibility of formation or consolidation of a national education system, although it existed as a political desire or reverberated through a universal tendency. However, according to Anaete Schelbauer (1998, p. 140), in the Brazilian case, the

[...] integration was a local issue, that could be and was solved through a local intervention, too, reassuring the thesis that the basic education, in this context, did not have a national function.

Maybe that is why, Saviani (2008), from Anaete Schelbauer's claims, defend an examination of the obstacles towards the achievement of a Brazilian system of education at that moment, to

[...] know why the Idea of a national system of education, which had been achieved in the main countries in the nineteenth century, had been kept in Brazil, in the group of the 'ideas that were not fulfilled' (Saviani, 2008, p. 166, author's emphasis).

More than that, this examination could show that the obstacles which were imposed to consolidate the public education – mainly the primary school – also imposed on the consolidation of the states federation as entities capable of presenting alternatives to solve the weakness of primary education, expressed by a teaching body mainly consisted of lay teachers and by the lack of regular schools (training for teaching); by a secondary education characterized by the predominance of a limited number of courses, which were sporadic and without a serial and content hierarchical organization, by a higher education reduced to few colleges, which were isolated and focused, specially, on the preparation of self-employed people.

Such framework made it clear for the legislators and managers at the beginning of the Republic: it was necessary to expand the public primary education and form qualified teachers to dominate the new pedagogical methodologies; but doing that demanded financial resources in large scale, which neither the central government nor the decentralized states would have. However, Nagle (1977) claims that the lack of a national education policy and also, of a national system of education was a

[...] problem that could not be solved during the First Republic, due to the argument that any effort made in this sense would damage the federative

principles covered by the Constitution (Nagle, 1977, p. 266).

Nevertheless, the fervor of issues related to education and the desire for the country progress and development characterized the states performance, because the Republic needed to enable the heritage from the first disseminators of this cause, characterized by the ideological fervor and by the systematic attempt to evangelize in order to promote a triad of inseparable categories which were indicators of the country redemption: 'democracy, federation and education'. The Republic to be implemented had received a wide collection of principles and proposals to think and rethink a doctrine that would support an education program in which

[...] the precepts of secularity, public funding, social regulation, obligation of frequency, educational and juridical equality were enhanced as basing foundations of the public education in the formation of a civil society (Araújo, 2011, p. 2).

Education appeared in the scenario, having the mission of people's regeneration – who were abandoned to illiteracy and ignorance – and the nation's consolidation.

However, even with all the enthusiasm that characterized the beginning of the Republic, education did not become the central target of government preoccupation, because the proclamation of Republic did not adequately change the power structures, which was reinforced in each federate state and in the areas that were part of it. The ones who did not belong to the ruling layer or did not develop actions favoring the Republic started to be targeted (to be co-opted, something that became evident through the great number of last minute 'republicans'), driven by the govern machine, that did not admit contesting the current power. The education universalization and the consequent illiteracy eradication were not the Union priorities, which exempted from this duty: after all, as mentioned before, if in the imperial period, the basic education was in charge of the provinces, during the First Republic, it was in charge of the federate states. In the first republican Constitution (1891), "[...] some federalist principles are registered, which contribute to enhance the power and autonomy of the old provinces that are now States" (Vieira & Farias, 2007, p. 75), then, each one would be able to build the educational system that they would like to (although one could not interfere on the action of another: their action were independent and, many times, different). According

to Cury (2010b, p. 90), this power of states and government was connected to

[...] a considerate influence in the first years of Republic, [...] both through imminent representatives in the State, and in organizations of the civil society.

After consolidating the oligarchies in the several states, they start to create and search for the hegemony of projects of educational organization, through reforms, although they are most often based in studies and perspectives focused on education. Besides the reforms, in the end of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth century, the creation of multiple forms of school within the states was processed, as an attempt to spread education to fight illiteracy, considered as a synonym of incompetency, of lack of encouraging initiatives towards development and progress; i.e., education would emerge as an aim of a civilization project and society modernization favoring its development. According to (Nagle, 2001), reducing the 80% illiteracy rate would demand some government politics which were innovative, supported by the conceptions of school that were in the educational context, both in Brazil and abroad.

More than that, the movement of ideas and pro-educational reformist initiatives can be understood as an attempt to homogenize the – republican – culture, given the consolidation and diffusion of a consensus of national unit promoting principles, for which education – the schooling instruction – would be the key-element, when offering a minimal teaching, in other words, an elementary education of primary instruction. As the amount of illiterate alarmed the governmental authorities, it was necessary to make efforts in order to provide the population with tools, to prepare them to supply the necessities of the social-economic scenario which was going through a change, especially with the process of industrialization and urbanization, which was intensified in the 1920_s. This reformist movement led Nagle (2001) to acknowledge this decade as a moment of ‘pedagogical optimism’, characterized by the attempt of substituting a schooling model by another, in which underlined the belief in new theoretical-pedagogical proposals.

An important reference of this context of strong discussions upon national education was the creation of the Brazilian Association of Education (ABE). Founded in Rio de Janeiro by a group of intellectuals, in 1924, the ABE aimed to – according to Carvalho (1998) – sensitize the public power and the educators concerning the educational problems; it also represented an ideological struggle that would

cross the time and was presented as a restructuring element of the control mechanisms of urban population, reinforcing this way, the ‘old’ instead of the ‘new’. According to Marta Carvalho (1998, p. 39, author’s emphasis), “In ABE, a group of intellectuals had self-represented as ‘elite’ that had self-attributed to organize the country”. The – liberal – idea of equality for all, highlighting the spirit of equality and the participation in favor of the country development, was deployed. With this ideal, the association was spread around the country through civic speeches that searched for achieving the progress through education, with the argument of national unit. According to Carvalho,

Condensing the wrongs of the country into the metaphor of an indolent and sick Brazilian and the hopes of eradication of these wrongs in the action of an ‘elite’ that has demiurgic powers, the civic speech of the ABE is a prophylactic one erecting the sanitary issue as a metaphor of the national situation and the educational work as a work of sanitation (Carvalho, 1998, p. 39, author’s emphasis).

In this context of reforms and the creation of ABE, it is even possible to recognize a dilemma to be overcome: offering education focused on providing collective proposals or keeping the right of each one of freely choosing their own way inviolate. Such dilemma gave direction to matters discussed as proposals of a liberal project; and more, it characterized the connection between social change and educational change postulated by liberalism: education as a right and a citizen’s duty.

In the liberal reasoning, education was a key-part of a future to be built and edified by the image of a civilized citizen; a future characterized by the emphasis on education as a duty and concretization of nationality:

In this project, the generalization of primary education is conditioned to the quality of the education provided (its subordination to what was understood as ‘civic formation’) (Carvalho, 1998, p. 39, author’s emphasis).

This ideal of education and man, remarkable in the claim of an educational politics in the decade of 1920, was articulated with the elaboration of a project of cultural homogenization and authoritarian moral that would be concretized by school, through spreading values and the formation of patriot attitudes.

That is why the First Republic is inserted in the historiography of education as a moment when some attempts to consolidate the public education began, through elements of support of liberal principles – democracy and citizenship – and

precepts of positivism, then elements of consolidation of a new order, that established school as the driving force of a country development, of a nation; of a civilization.

Final considerations

The Republic emerges in the end of the nineteenth century, a period characterized by substantial changes in the country history: the government system, the Constitution, the politics, the society, the economy, the connections between the State and Church, the value of education and the administrative structure that assumed a new model. Its proclamation not only represented the rupture with the monarchic system, but also the search for a new pattern for the public-politic administration, which demanded other political ideals and other relation of internal power: the federalization; in other words, the formation of states, with more autonomy, instead of the provinces. Elements of liberal inspiration would help to spread civil, order and progress ideals.

The First Republic will allow the empowerment of the federation units, especially of representative states of politically important regions, for instance São Paulo and Minas Gerais. These federative units contributed towards the decentralization of power and to accomplish educational reforms, mainly in the first decade of the Republic and in 1920 and 1930, an important political period. In this respect, it would be plausible to say that the republican time that is mainly about a period of proposals of educational changes, result of discussions that overestimated its role in the culture, political and economic renewal, among other spheres of society. Following the liberal spirit of the so-called 'enthusiasm for education' and 'pedagogical optimism', the reforms of the twentieth century not only worried about the enlargement of educational opportunities, but also about the pedagogical renewal the introduction of educational methods and procedures, for instance the adoption of the intuitive method, which became protagonist of the modern primary education.

The relations between centralization and decentralization permeated such renewal because decentralizing meant allowing the states to constitute school systems at the same time as a federal system – the latter limited to the secondary and higher education. But, it is worth mentioning that, when decentralizing the primary education, the federalism did not provide the states with mechanisms that would allow them to improve quantitatively and qualitatively this level of

education, exactly when the percentage of illiterate people was kept around 80% and when illiteracy was seen as an obstacle for the social and economic development, something which was not compatible with the formation of a republican citizen.

However, this incoherence was connected with the way the republicans defended education, as a way of integrating people to the nation and a school organized according to the interests of a new political order. On the other hand, school should be extended to all the segments of society to consolidate a modern view of education: the one resulting from the emergence of the new school movement, which aimed to adapt the scientific and rational teaching for all Brazilians. It was necessary to modify the current school basis, a proposal that the new school movement intended to accomplish, especially debating in conferences and publishing texts in newspapers and magazines in order to spread and take their thought towards the school sphere.

If educating people was a way of integrating them with the nation, it was also a way of merging society and coopt the population to take part into the republican project of developing the country. And the educational feature of this project was deployed in several states, whose governors searched for programming reforms in the public education through a modern educational tool to promote the popular education. In general, the legal provisions gathered the liberal principles of education, establishing the obligation and gratuity of the primary education, the secular character of teaching and the formal commitment of public power with increase of educational opportunities through the dissemination of schools and, consequently through the growth of the enrollment numbers. The states – the public powers – began to be more committed with the funding for the school functioning, mainly with the construction of school buildings or rents funded by the State.

Trusting the power of school became a widespread and shared representation in the society; and the primary education was attributed with several aims and wide expectations, such as shaping the children's character – future workers –, inculcating values and moral virtues in them, as well as civility standards. The school was in charge of helping consolidate the Brazilian nation, spreading civic-patriot values that founded the development of next generations and evoked love for the country. It is noteworthy that this school organization got different frames and projections in each state, i.e., according to the conditions in other spheres, which impacted on the school consolidation.

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