

# Current Overview On The Relationship Between Human Rights And Psychology<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract:

**Background:** The article aims to report and discuss the scientific production on Human Rights and the relationship between Psychology and Human Rights and its importance.

**Materials and Methods:** This study has an exploratory character and a qualitative approach. In order to obtain an overview of the current status of discussions on human rights and Psychology, the following online databases were chosen for the selection of papers: SciELO, BVS – Psi, PePsic and CAPES periodicals Portal.

**Results:** 51 papers were selected from relevant databases in order to obtain an overview of the current state of the discussions on human rights and Psychology. An even distribution was observed between papers before and after 2020, the year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mental health and psychology became widely discussed topics in Brazil due to the impact of the pandemic, reflected in the selected papers addressing issues linked to Human Rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a landmark in the promotion of rights. In the Brazilian context, the discussion about human rights and its relation to psychology has intensified, especially since the National Plan for Education in Human Rights (PNEDH).

**Conclusion:** The analysis of the papers revealed trends, advances and research gaps in this interface, highlighting the importance of ethical commitment and the promotion of human rights in the field of Psychology.

**Key Word:** Education; Formation, Research.

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## I. Introduction

Human Rights and social rights are historical constructions, and Psychology is guided by Human Rights, divided into two stages: before and after the second world war, considering that the first stage experienced moments of terror and violation of rights. Today, rights are based on the principle of universality, with some being more important than others and organized by hierarchy. “Universality, dignity, identity and non-discrimination are central concepts in terms of human rights, as they apply to all fields”<sup>1</sup>.

In 1948, at the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed, which instituted a set of rights with the purpose of promoting peace in the post-World War II context. The means for achieving the purposes presented, according to the Universal Declaration itself, is education<sup>2</sup>. Basic rights continue to be disregarded and unknown, despite being contemplated by the Brazilian Constitution of 1988<sup>3</sup>.

With the end of the Second World War, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed in 1948, when human rights began to be present in the international agenda in an effective and constant way, considering that it began to cover not only the citizen of a state or another, but of all men and women.

The core of the 1948 Declaration is the recognition that all dimensions that relate to a life with dignity make up the scope of human rights – therefore, in law, any contradiction, or hierarchy, or “succession” chronologically or supposedly makes no sense. Logic between the values of freedom and equality. From a legal point of view, human rights began to configure a universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated unit<sup>4</sup>.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, represents the unification and expansion of rights, and should be understood as a historical product and the result of this process is the improvement of human conditions; does not mean that it has generated a peaceful coexistence, considering the exclusions, discriminations, inequalities and violence, still present today, to reflect on human rights is to understand that they are not finished, but under construction and in search of effectiveness.

In order to promote a reflection on the teaching of Human Rights in undergraduate Psychology courses, it is necessary to consider the national guidelines for human rights education. Launched in 2006, the National Plan for Education in Human Rights (PNEDH) consists of a document that aims to disseminate the culture of human rights, promoting clarification on the possibilities related to the interweaving between Education and Human Rights<sup>5</sup>. From the launch of the PNEDH, discussions on educational projects, their modifications and reflections on social commitment and human rights and the training of psychologists based on these projects gained strength<sup>6</sup>.

Since Psychology is an area of knowledge that holds a high sense of responsibility and social commitment, its intertwining with Human Rights and their themes, with regard to teaching, is essential. In addition, the ethical commitment and assumptions related to Human Rights must guide, whatever the field of action, the exercise of Psychology, the promotion of Human Rights must be thought of in each action aimed at psychological intervention, and the practices, critically thought in the in order to promote the guarantee and realization of these rights<sup>7</sup>.

It is noticed the significant presence of works published after the period of social isolation, the amount of previously published works is even greater. This observation indicates the need for further development and deepening of studies on human rights and psychology in the Brazilian context. Based on this information, this article aims to analyze the selected works, presenting an overview of the thematic areas of Human Rights addressed and discussing the evolution of these themes in the Brazilian scenario. The systematic analysis of the works will allow understanding the main trends, advances and research gaps in the interface between Human Rights and Psychology.

## **II. Material and Methods**

In order to obtain an overview of the current status of discussions on human rights and Psychology, the following online databases were chosen for the selection of papers: SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online/Biblioteca Eletrônica Científica Online), BVS – Psi (Virtual Library of Saúde - Psicologia Brasil), PePsc (Electronic Journals in Psychology) and of CAPES periodicals Portal.

The descriptors chosen for the search for the papers were: Human Rights Psychology and Social Rights Psychology. Such terms were used because they are associated with Human Rights issues. The authors carried out the searches separately in the same databases and with the same chosen descriptors, during the months of May and June 2023. After the search was carried out, the results were compared, which produced a final analysis list that, in turn, was evaluated by a member of the team.

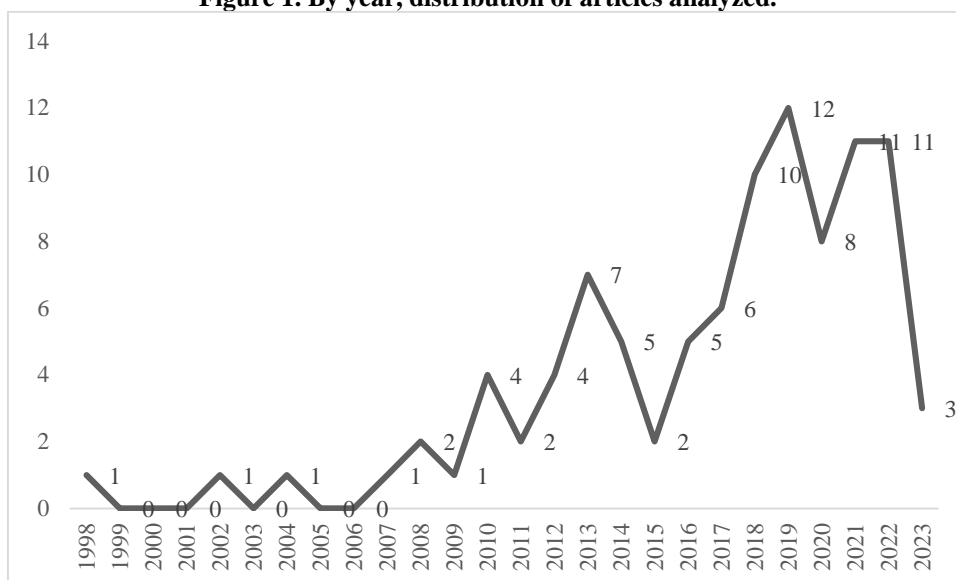
As an exclusion criterion, we used repeated works that do not address the interface between Psychology and HDs as their main theme. For data analysis, the articles were read in full and the results were presented in a systematic way, including: a) title of the article, b) year of publication, place of publication and f) thematic area of human rights. Thematic areas were namely (1) children and adolescents, (2) dignity of human life, (3) social inclusion, (4) gender perspective and (5) relationship between Psychology and Human Rights<sup>8, 9</sup>. We emphasize that the classifications were exclusive, that is, the materials were classified only in one area.

## **III. Result**

Among the 94 works selected for analysis after the exclusion criteria, we can highlight the almost equal presence of works published before (27 works) to the year 2020 and later (24 works) to it, the year that started the global pandemic by COVID -19, and themes such as human and social rights gained great prominence and discussions emerged daily.

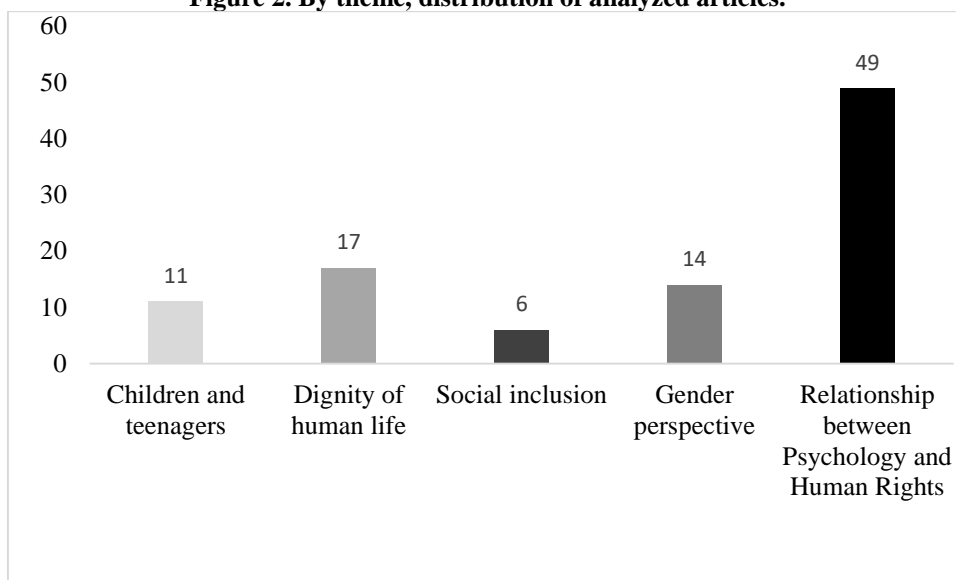
In Figure 1, it is possible to observe that there was an exponential increase in works from 2017, reaching the highest number in 2019. This data answers the central question of the present work, which was to observe whether there had been a permanence and increase in the interlocutions between psychology and human rights. In recent years, 2020 has seen a decline in publications, which indicates that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil also impacted academic productions, as there was a need for social isolation and redirection towards attempts to remedy emerging demands. related to measures to prevent and treat cases of COVID-19.

**Figure 1. By year, distribution of articles analyzed.**



Among the thematic areas found in the selected articles, Figure 2 shows the predominance of the theme of Relationship between psychology and human rights.

**Figure 2. By theme, distribution of analyzed articles.**



#### IV. Discussion

In Brazil, in addition to the issues of access to health and education, mental health, as well as Psychology in its entirety, became subjects that were treated on a daily basis, from the moment that social isolation and the loss of people close to the COVID-19 has hit mental health and psychologically shaken many people. Thus, one can observe the progression of the themes Human Rights and Psychology in the Brazilian scenario in this period. However, the number of works published before the period of social isolation is even greater when compared to works published later.

The theme of Relationship between psychology and human rights encompasses a greater possibility of relationships and interfaces that psychology can perform with the search for the guarantee of human rights. Within this area there was the presence of works related to education in human rights through psychology <sup>10, 11, 12, 13, 14</sup>.

There was also an important presence of articles presenting the importance of the interface between public policies and the various social-cultural and historical contexts to understand and seek the possibilities of guaranteeing human rights <sup>15,16,17, 18</sup>. The analyzes also showed works that discussed how certain psychological

practices could be developed from a perspective of guaranteeing human rights, such as psychological assessments<sup>19, 20, 21</sup>, acting in the prison system<sup>22, 23</sup>.

The second thematic area with more publications was the dignity of human life, the works of this theme presented discussions about the performance of psychology allied with human rights to guarantee the mental health of people in psychological and physical suffering, people in situations of social vulnerability, groups ethnicities and social representation of LGBTQIAP+ people, victims of prejudice<sup>24, 25, 26</sup>.

Next, the gender perspective area appears, with works aimed at guaranteeing people's human rights based on dialogues with gender and sexuality. The works presented discussions about the depathologization of homosexuality, as well as the confrontation with LGBTIphobia. There was the presence of works that presented the importance of looking at gender violence from a racial logic, to think about the health of black women and also discussions that covered the importance of a performance in psychology aimed at confronting violence against women. The role of psychology in discussions about sexuality and gender is essential to face prejudices and stigmas that LGBTQIAP+ people experience.

In the theme of children and adolescents, the works presented the importance and possibilities of psychology's performance with policies aimed at children and adolescents to protect and guarantee their rights. In the theme of social inclusion, the works presented discussions about how disabilities are taught in psychology courses, what are the discourses about this population in undergraduate courses in psychology, what social models that psychology has adopted to study and produce knowledge about disabilities. Concomitantly, works were observed that presented interfaces between disability and sexuality, interfaces between psychology and the search for the defense of rights of indigenous peoples and other social groups.

There is not only one look at the search for the guarantee of human rights, there are a plurality of sciences involved and psychology is one of them. The results showed that for the discussions to reach a practical effectiveness, psychology must carry out dialogues with education, with the ways of making policies, its practices and knowledge must always be analyzed from a social and historical context, so that they do not become normalized knowledge and practices already carried out, but which currently no longer understand the complexities of the phenomena, as already mentioned about the view of psychology that was once pathologizing about the LGBTQIAP+ population, or a view about deficiencies.

## **V. Conclusion**

After carrying out the readings and analyzes of the journals selected among the pre-established criteria for carrying out the present work, it was possible to observe the low number of publications related to the themes of Human Rights and Psychology, even after the end of the pandemic period, in the which, in an intense and daily way, it can be observed in the reality of the Brazilian population a lag in several areas of human rights and the growth of mental illness.

Even though these topics are relevant, the number of publications on the topic discussed was not significantly increased, and the reason for the low production may be linked to several factors such as the repression that the academy faces in relation to certain topics, mainly when demonstrating the precariousness in various areas of public service. It is worth noting that the political scenario was polarized at this time of the pandemic. Another factor is related to the urgency of demands that the pandemic has brought. Scientists and health professionals were almost fully immersed in developing methods to combat disease and the high demand of sick people. Psychology professionals were faced with a large number of people getting sick and at this moment, apparently, discussions about the subject of human rights were elective and not a priority.

It is therefore up to us, psychology and health professionals, to raise debates and publications about the themes that constantly come to the fore and bring with them a load of possible discussions and publications in the area. Human rights are directly intertwined with psychology and must be discussed, as gaps in different areas are observed on a daily basis.

In this way, to advance in the protection and promotion of human rights, Psychology plays a crucial role, through investment in research, professional training, practical intervention and awareness, it is possible to contribute to the improvement of living conditions and the guarantee of human rights. fundamentals of all people. Therefore, engagement in this cause is an ethical and social responsibility that requires the continuous commitment of professionals and students in the area.

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