

Year V, v.2 2025 | Submission: 02/11/2025 | Accepted: 04/11/2025 | Publication: 06/11/2025 A historical evolution of the rights of people with disabilities, a look from the psychology of special needs.

A historical evolution of the rights of people with disabilities, a look from the psychology of special needs

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Summary

This study aims to investigate and understand the historical undervaluation, prejudice, and social exclusion of people with disabilities, as well as the process of achieving their rights in Brazil and the role of psychology in inclusion and special needs. It is a qualitative literature review based on previously published material for conceptualization and contextualization of the topic, using databases such as the CAPES Periodicals Portal, SciELO, and Google Scholar. The methodology chosen was the inductive method and a literature review that considers the importance of recognizing the laws implemented that refer to disabilities and the role of special needs psychology. Data collection involved exploratory reading, selective reading, and recording of information from the sources (authors, year, method, and results). Data processing and analysis were interpretive. From the collected data, three interpretive axes were constructed for the analysis.

The historical undervaluation, prejudice, and social exclusion of people with disabilities, and the achievement of disability rights from a psychological perspective.

Keywords: People with disabilities. International classification of diseases. Biopsychosocial models. Psychology.

Abstract

This study aims to investigate and understand the historical undervaluation, prejudice, and social exclusion of people with disabilities, as well as the process of achieving their rights in Brazil and the role of psychology in inclusion and special needs. It is a qualitative literature review based on previously published material for conceptualization and contextualization of the topic, using databases such as the CAPES Periodicals Portal, SciELO, and Google Scholar. The methodology chosen was the inductive method and a literature review that considers the importance of recognizing the laws implemented that refer to disabilities and the role of special needs psychology. Data collection involved exploratory reading, selective reading, and recording of information from the sources (authors, year, method, and results). Data processing and analysis were interpretive. From the collected data, three interpretive axes were constructed for the analysis: the historical undervaluation, prejudice, and social exclusion of people with disabilities, and the achievement of the rights of people with disabilities from a psychological perspective.

Keywords: People with disabilities. International classification of diseases. Biopsychosocial models. Psychology.

1. Introduction

Given the changes in society regarding roles and the recognition of identity of

For people with disabilities, studying the topic is necessary to develop practical strategies.

to improve quality of life, promote human dignity, reduce prejudice and enable

that people with disabilities can be part of our society under the conditions that are provided.

necessary for true inclusion.

The topic will be addressed with a conceptualization of the terms and contextualization of the trajectory of People with disabilities from Ancient Rome to the present day, demonstrating, through the studies presented,

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How was it possible to achieve the rights already acquired, and what is the progress of...

the realization of rights that remain under discussion, as well as the role of psychology in assisting with inclusion.

This study addresses the topic of the rights of people with disabilities.

This has been discussed and explored throughout history. However, the goal is to seek to understand it. the lack of historical appreciation, prejudice, and behavior related to the social exclusion of people People with disabilities, as well as the process of achieving their rights, are a relevant topic. since a gap in understanding is evident in the production of scientific knowledge. of the lack of appreciation and the behavior related to the exclusion of people with disabilities.

The methodology chosen for the development of this study was a review.

A qualitative bibliographic study, that is, research based on already published material so that The issue can be understood. The inductive method was used, so that after the analysis of cases In particular, the analyses were constructed. This literature review addresses the importance of Recognition of the laws implemented that relate to disabilities.

To investigate it, a literature review was conducted using databases such as... CAPES Periodicals Portal, SciELO, and Google Scholar were the selected descriptors. based on the keywords: people with disabilities, psychology, psychosocial models, International Classification of Diseases and Inclusion.

The first step was to conduct a survey of national publications in the field.

in order to verify the viewpoints of the authors, derived from books, scientific articles,

dissertations and theses. To constitute the data collection, exploratory reading and selective reading were carried out.

and the records of information from the sources (authors, year, method and results).

The treatment and analysis of the data were conducted in an interpretive manner. Based on the The data collected were used to construct three interpretative axes for analysis. The non-historical appreciation, prejudice and social exclusion of people with disabilities, and the achievement of rights of the disabled.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Historical Context

The word "disabled" comes from the Latin " *deficiens* " and refers to imperfection, insufficiency, lack, among other synonyms, according to lexicographer and Portuguese teacher Débora Ribeiro (DICIO, 2009). Other terms are also commonly used to refer to this group, such as "special people". "People with special needs," "disabled," "defective," among others. Despite the Changes, all refer to pejorative images and discredit the subject (MOTA, 2021).

According to Corrent (2016), the term was attributed to people outside the social norm when

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Over the years, from minor alterations to cases of greater aesthetic dissatisfaction, and people with

These changes were handled differently in each nation and period of history. In addition to...

Physical changes, cognitive and behavioral abnormalities were also discriminated against and

marginalized. In some societies, they were referred to as bandits, incapable of living.

in society or insane and left on the margins of society, as corroborated by França (2013) in previous work.

According to Article 1 of the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
As approved by the UN General Assembly, article 1, persons with disabilities are those who

They have long-term impairments of a physical, intellectual, sensory, or mental nature.

which may hinder their full interaction in society on an equal footing with others.

people (MORAGAS, 2022).

In Egypt, disability was not seen as a factor that devalued its citizens and was accepted as an individual condition that demanded attention and, in some cases, compassion. The subjects People with disabilities were included in jobs according to their abilities, in order to offer them opportunities. conditions for maintaining coexistence in society as ordinary citizens and who could move forward by different hierarchical social classes (GUGEL, 2015 apud CORRENT, 2016).

In contrast, in Greece, the culture was one of overvaluing beauty and aesthetics, and that...

This can be observed through the works left by the Greeks over the years. Their deities

They also clearly represent the importance of appearance, physical strength, and the power that comes from it.

of these characteristics (SCHMIDT, 2011).

According to Corrent (2016), in ancient Rome, the disability identified in children at the time

From birth, their destiny was defined: sacrifice or abandonment in rivers so that families of the common people could take them away.

They raised them. Many of the recovered children were sold into prostitution and circuses that

They used them in acts where they were ridiculed.

From antiquity to the Christian era, mental suffering – known as madness – has been viewed by different perspectives, sometimes with a mythological-religious focus, other times as a conception concrete psychological symptoms, and others such as somatizations (RAMMINGER, 2002).

As Hippocrates, known as the "father of medicine" (460-377 BC), stated, "madness"

It was associated with organic factors, and he was a pioneer in interpreting diseases or deficiencies based on... in biological manifestations and origins (PESSOTI, 1997).

Hippocrates stated that:

Delirium was a hallmark of insanity, with intellectual disturbances being the main condition for diagnosing madness. Thus, in 1801, psychiatry was inaugurated as a medical specialty based on the Medical-Philosophical Treatise on Mental Alienation written by Pinel (FIGUEIRÊDO; DELEVATI; TAVARES, 2014, p. 124).



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Throughout the 16th century, methods emerged to exclude individuals considered different.

or those who did not follow the rules. The "Ship of Fools" was used, a vessel designed for

To navigate with "madmen" and "lepers" through the calm waters of Europe's rivers and canals, aiming to remove them.

from the streets and use them as objects of study, in addition to placing them in specific boarding houses and hostels.

for this purpose (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 12).

The shift in perspective regarding people with disabilities began in the Middle Ages (476-

1453), when disability began to be seen no longer as a mark of uselessness or as

a "badly made" baby, but as a punishment or chastisement from God employed so that the

The subject lived "paying" for his sins. In this way, the person with a disability has a function.

Human beings were essential to their place in society and also served as examples for other members of society.

At that time, people suffering from mental illness were cared for in hospitals and asylums (MARTINS et al.)

al., 2021).

According to the same author, prejudice related to people with disabilities is...

This was intensified by the religious factor, because in addition to not being useful for activities in society, they were also not useful.

necessary for the group's maintenance, they were "marked by sin" and continued to be.

victims of isolation and various forms of violence, living on the margins of society.

2.2 Contextualization within the scope of health and public policies

At the beginning of the 19th century, Philippe Pinel, considered the founder of psychiatry,

He managed to introduce a change in the concept of madness, characterizing it as an illness.

mental and, later, as a mental deficiency. Pinel established the importance of allowing

that the individual expresses themselves according to their way of being, thus freeing these people with disabilities from confinement.

intellectual and indicating specific locations for treatment with appropriate incentives. Still in the 20th century.

In the 19th century, asylums were built that eventually became mental hospitals. At the turn of the 19th century

In the 20th century, there was a concern with the linearity of the manifestations of disabilities, the

categorization and accounting of intellectual disabilities according to their functionalities

(CAMARGO, 2023).

According to Caponi (2009),

In Brazil, the first asylum/psychiatric hospital was created in 1852, in this case, the Dom Pedro II Asylum in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In 1912, the first Federal Law on Assistance to the Mentally III was enacted, followed by the granting of autonomous medical specialty status to psychiatrists, increasing the number of institutions dedicated to the mentally ill. We can see with the creation of this asylum structure, the concern with the creation of spaces of disciplinary power through specialized hospitals or clinics (p. 96).



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Fourteen years after the enactment of the first law aimed at people in distress.

mental so that the Brazilian League of Mental Hygiene could be created, opening space for the creation of The second federal law for this population, "designating the psychiatric hospital as the only alternative." of treatment", which led to an excessive increase in these institutions and hospitalizations, often based on questionable criteria (RAMMINGER, 2002, p. 114).

As Martins et al. (2021) and Goulart (2006) point out, it was after the Second World War that the People with disabilities began to be included. Many war survivors returned to their homes with some physical or mental disability resulting from the confrontations and the Questions about the methods used for treatment up to that point intensified.

The emergence of this reform in Brazil began almost thirty years later, between 1970 and 1980. with the establishment of the Mental Health Workers Movement (MTSM) which denounced the precarious working conditions within psychiatric institutions and the violence committed against patients (FIGUEIRÊDO; DELEVATI; TAVARES, 2014).

In the same decade in which debates about mental health policies intensified in

In Brazil, the UN was drafting the Declaration of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and raising awareness...

All nations recognize the urgency of implementing policies aimed at these people. In Brazil, this issue was...

addressed in the middle of the following decade (MARTINS, 2021).

It was only in 1985 that people with disabilities truly gained a voice and

They managed to participate in the process of the National Constituent Congress that would update the

The Brazilian Federal Constitution, approved three years later. They achieved inclusion through much struggle.

of their demands in the text of the Brazilian Constitution. The following year, in 1989, it was regulated.

Law No. 7,853, which provides for support for people with disabilities.

The recognition of special education for people with disabilities did not take long to...

It arrived and, in 1996, Law No. 9,394 - the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education - was enacted.

(LDBEN). According to the FHC Foundation, on November 8th and December 19th, the following laws were enacted: respectively, Laws No. 10,048 and 10,098. According to the first of these, people with disabled people, the elderly aged 60 or over, pregnant women, breastfeeding women, people

Those with infants and obese individuals will receive priority service.

Law No. 10,098 is considered the first effective advancement in Brazilian legislation regarding... to accessibility, as it establishes general standards and basic criteria for promoting accessibility. for people with disabilities or reduced mobility, through the elimination of barriers and obstacles in roads and public spaces, in street furniture, in the construction and renovation of buildings and in transportation and communication (2022).

In Brazil, until the approval of the 1988 Federal Constitution, the terms used were...

"Exceptional" and "disabled" are used when referring to people with disabilities. However, since it is a

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Due to its limited and even pejorative definition, the term "attention to people with disabilities" was adopted.

in some parts of the CF-88, and "Person with a disability". In 1990, with the signing of the

The Caracas Declaration, a document that proposed a reorganization of psychiatric care,

expanded, seeking to understand the subject in an integrated way within their context.

The rights of people with disabilities began to be established as public policy.

(PAHO/WHO, 1990).

The need to create public policies in Brazil led to the creation of the Statute of

Person with Disability, which was established based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

UN Deficiency Act and its Optional Protocol, ratified in accordance with Article 5 of the Constitution.

Federal. Starting in the 2000s, the concept of disability began to be perceived in a different way.

The concept of disability originates from national and international regulations focused on people with disabilities, among these we have the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education No. 9394/1994; the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination enacted by Brazilian Decree No. 3956/2001; Accessibility Decree No. 5296/2004; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006); the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (MEC, 2008); the World Report on Disability (WHO, 2001) and the Law that establishes the Statute of Persons with Disabilities, No. 13146/2015.

In 2015, Law 13.146, known as the Brazilian Inclusion Law, was enacted.

People with Disabilities, which stipulates that the rights of people with disabilities are guaranteed according to their specific characteristics. Furthermore, they must be based on the principles... of universality and solidarity. To this end, the State is responsible for providing the conditions minimum requirements for people with disabilities to truly integrate into society with participation. full and effective, in which it is possible to live with independence and dignity (BRAZIL, 2015).

The same law guarantees that the responsibility for inclusion lies with the State and the population, that is, Adaptations to the physical structure to accommodate people with reduced mobility, the blind, the deaf, and the mute. or those with other disabilities can move around with the same ease as people without disabilities.

Laws have guaranteed communication for blind people through Braille and for deaf and/or hard of hearing people.

Mutes, through Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS).

2.3 Mental Health and Disability

Psychology initially contributed to exclusion by adopting a model of

Disability was based on the idea that people with disabilities were "abnormal" or "defective," and

Therefore, they needed to be treated differently (PEREIRA, 2018). But social movements

The inclusion of people with disabilities has gradually led to changes in how it is...



Year V, v.2 2025 | Submission: 02/11/2025 | Accepted: 04/11/2025 | Publication: 06/11/2025 understood and addressed, becoming a partner of the movements.

This occurred, in part, due to the emergence of new theoretical currents in psychology, such as the social model of disability, which emphasizes the exclusion and discrimination of people with Disabilities are the result of social barriers and not of the injury itself (DINIZ, 2007). In Brazil, this History is intertwined with the struggle for the rights of these people and for social inclusion (SANTOS, 2020). This paradigm shift has had a significant impact on how people with Disabilities are addressed, and psychology plays a role in this field.

The social model, in turn, highlights that society creates barriers and difficulties for... people with disabilities, making it necessary to change the physical, attitudinal and social structures to to guarantee the inclusion and participation of these people (DINIZ, 2007). One of the main criticisms of The medical model is due to the fact that it places the responsibility for the difficulties faced by People with disabilities are seen exclusively as a result of their condition, ignoring the influence of structures. social (GESSER et al., 2019). Recognizing that disability is a result of this interaction means to realize that it is not an individual problem, but rather a social issue (DINIZ, 2007).

The social model of disability approach considers disability as a result of interaction between a person with a specific condition or characteristic and the way society It is organized and constructed (DINIZ, 2007). It was developed from a critique of the biomedical model. of disability, which was understood as an individual and medical problem that should be treated or corrected (GESSER et al., 2019).

Initially, psychology, and specifically educational psychology, was developed to to operate within mental asylums, becoming a laboratory for comparative research with a standardized education, where psychology was heavily criticized, in which its activities were focused on the development of children's learning, their experiments promoted theories, psychological techniques and tests, where the child was blamed for their difficulties, disregarding other factors. such as historical, social and economic factors (MORI, 2016). Over time, the field of psychology, It became more visible, transforming into new discussions, marked by social movements. constituting a new psychology. It is

worth emphasizing that Psychology, as a science and profession, is always guided by a

This practice goes hand in hand with Human Rights, as it breaks away from hegemonic practices. Paradoxically, it respects differences, but views them as equals. It is important and

It is essential to always keep this understanding in mind as a professional in the field, regarding the fundamental principles:

it is essential to always keep this understanding in mind as a professional in the neid, regarding the fundamental principles.

The psychologist will base their work on respect for and promotion of the freedom, dignity, equality, and integrity of the human being, supported by the values that underpin the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. II. The psychologist will work to promote the health and quality of life of individuals and communities and will contribute to the elimination of any form of neglect, discrimination

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Exploitation, violence, cruelty, and oppression. III. The psychologist will act with social responsibility, critically and historically analyzing the political, economic, social, and cultural reality. (CFP, 2005 p. 8).

According to CFP Resolution No. 010/05, which approves the Professional Code of Ethics of Psychologist, it is the professional's responsibility to: Provide quality psychological services, under safe working conditions. dignified and appropriate to the nature of these services, using principles, knowledge and techniques recognized as being grounded in psychological science, ethics, and professional legislation.

Article 8. To provide non-occasional care to a child, adolescent, or legally incapacitated person, the

The psychologist must obtain authorization from at least one of their guardians, observing the following:

provisions of current legislation; Article 13 In attending to children, adolescents or legally incapacitated individuals,

Only what is strictly essential to promote measures in their [position/service] should be communicated to those in charge.

benefit. (FEDERAL COUNCIL OF PSYCHOLOGY, 2005, pp. 12-13).

The work of psychology in education is based on theories such as that of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), Belarusian psychologist who conducted several studies in the field of development of learning and the predominant role of social relationships in the teaching and learning process.

According to Bock, Furtado and Teixeira (2002), the practice of the psychologist as a professional of Health is about contributing to a child's search for personal and group identity, which responds to... more authentic and just demands from the community, not only with regard to the child, but also taking into account the The task is to work with the entire society in which this child is embedded.

3. Materials and Methods

The methodology chosen for the development of this study was a review.

A qualitative bibliographic study, that is, research based on already published material so that

The issue can be understood. The inductive method was used, so that after the analysis of cases

In particular, the analyses were constructed. This literature review addresses the importance of

Recognition of the laws implemented that relate to disabilities.

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The first step was to conduct a survey of national publications in the field.

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Year V, v.2 2025 | Submission: 02/11/2025 | Accepted: 04/11/2025 | Publication: 06/11/2025 historical appreciation, prejudice and social exclusion of people with disabilities, the achievement of Rights of people with disabilities and the inclusion of a psychological approach to special needs.

4. Results and Discussion

Analyzing the contexts from Ancient Rome onwards, it is possible to make some inferences to Regarding the levels of acceptance and inclusion, or lack thereof, of people with disabilities in civilizations. Each Society deals with differences according to its priorities, values, and needs, while maintenance of the collective. Likewise, the individual contexts of the civilizations presented in In this study, we can relate the naturalization of people with disabilities in Egypt to the a large number of incidents that caused some kind of injury, total or partial, such as, for example, the case of blindness caused by sandstorms, a common event at that time and in that region. (CORRENT, 2016).

In Ancient Greece, wars were frequent, and displaying physical strength and endurance was a common practice.

A common strategy to discourage other nations from entering into conflict with it. When it wasn't

It was possible to avoid confrontation, but health and strength were necessary to win (SCHMIDT, 2011).

Meanwhile, in Ancient Rome, trade, enslavement, prostitution, and the exploitation of these people...

Entertainment in circuses and haunted houses was common, as it was more profitable.

better viewed than the murder of the disabled person itself (CORRENT, 2016).

With the advent of Christianity, the social function of this minority was to serve as an example for to manipulate the behavior of society at the time, since disability was presented as God's punishment for sins, deviations from what the doctrine preached (DE ARAUJO; NOGUEIRA, 2023).

In Brazil, in 1903 with the founding of the Barbacena Colony Hospital, and in some other countries...

From the northern hemisphere, such as the United States and England, tests and experiments with bodies...

These people's arguments were based on the premise that they sought the development of science.

while what actually happened was torture and murder (OLIVEIRA, 2020). Currently, in the face of due to the non-existence of mental asylums, technological advancements, and adaptations promoted by laws of guaranteeing the rights of people with disabilities, they came to be seen as a workforce, as potential for profit and, in some cases, a positive marketing strategy for companies that...

They call them inclusive (DE ARAUJO; NOGUEIRA, 2023).

Society continues to develop and alters the social roles of groups.

the maintenance of the existing system. Violence itself is necessary, as Foucault (1979) states.

for the balance of society. Therefore, the role played by people with disabilities today can – and

This is what is sought through the creation of increasingly specific laws – undergoing transformations over time.

of time. The laws aim to guarantee a life with increasingly higher quality, with conditions that

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Year V, v.2 2025 | Submission: 02/11/2025 | Accepted: 04/11/2025 | Publication: 06/11/2025 enable access so that people with or without disabilities can walk side by side, whether in education, in the job market, in social life, or in any of the spheres in which one moves, always respecting its uniqueness.

The role of Psychology is not merely to issue reports or administer psychological tests.

but rather to make their techniques available to adapt to the special needs student with a view to their socialization.

Final Considerations

Just as it was five thousand years ago, in ancient civilizations the relationship with people was...

Disability was directly related to the contexts of society itself, and today the standards are...

They maintain. Accessibility has facilitated the entry of these people into regular education and the job market. work, with new reading mechanisms, with Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS), support specialized and exclusive professional in schools, digital tools, motor adaptations, among others. other possibilities.

The changes achieved and implemented today are the fruits of seeds planted more than a hundred years ago, a little Gradually deepening research on the subject was one of the drivers of change, along with the struggle of organized groups that not only produced studies, but also took to the streets to demand that people People with disabilities should be treated with humanity.

When discussing the importance of specific laws, it's because it's already known that the conditions

They are not the same; opportunities don't always reach people who are outside the norm.

socially encouraged. For this reason, in addition to the guarantee on paper, it is essential to promote campaigns.

Raising awareness and educating the population so that the inclusion of these people is effective and efficient.

Despite laws guaranteeing access for people with physical disabilities to all...

In the context of societal environments, holding the state and the population accountable, few companies...

They put ramps at the entrances, install handrails or even tactile paving. Even less is the quantity.

of people who know sign language.

Without raising awareness and educating the population, even with existing laws, there will be no solution. Inclusion and participation of these people. After all, how do you interview a person with a disability?

What happens when a company is located on higher floors and the building does not have a ramp or elevator?

Or conducting a job interview with a blind person when the company doesn't even have the capacity to...

Interested in having tests or exams in Braille? Brazil has been developing a lot, in practice,
when we talk about mental health or intellectual disability, however, when the subject is disability

In physics, much remains to be put into practice for people with disabilities to live with the full potential of their lives.
same comfort as people without disabilities.

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