

# Theoretical supports and reflections on ethics in educational research in Brazil: brief analysis and mapping of doctorate's theses

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**ABSTRACT.** The article aims to examine the ethical criteria established in Brazilian legislation that guide research with human beings, in the theses defended and approved between the years 2017 and 2019, of the Graduate Program in Education of a public university located in the southeast region of the country with high evaluation by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* (CAPES)). The research was based on bibliographic and documentary analysis. The work was organized in three parts: 1) it proceeds to a brief discussion on ethics in academic research in Brazil; 2) it addresses the regulatory mark of ethics in education research in Brazil and 3) it examines the ethical procedures used in doctoral theses in Education - object of the investigation. In the analysis and treatment of the data collected, it could be found that, of the 154 theses examined, 107 met the ethical and legal criteria established in national resolutions. Of this amount, only 71 theses were submitted to the university ethics committee; 36 theses presented the need for submission and were not submitted. In this generic analysis, it is concluded that ethical research procedures demand greater diffusion in the academic environment related to research in Education. In this sense, we recognize and defend the importance of feeding and deepening the debate on research ethics, in order to build specific regulatory marks for the Human and Social Sciences and, particularly, for the Education area, respecting their singular methodologies and objects of research.

**Keywords:** research ethics; ethical procedures; education research.

## Aportes teóricos e reflexões sobre ética na pesquisa em educação no Brasil: breve análise e mapeamento de teses de doutorado

**RESUMO.** O artigo tem como objetivo examinar os critérios éticos estabelecidos na legislação brasileira que orientam a pesquisa com seres humanos, nas teses defendidas e aprovadas entre os anos de 2017 e 2019, do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação de uma universidade pública localizada na região Sudeste do país com elevada avaliação pela Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES). A pesquisa foi baseada na análise bibliográfica e documental. O trabalho encontra-se organizado em três partes: 1) procede a uma breve discussão sobre a ética nas pesquisas acadêmicas no Brasil; 2) aborda os marcos regulatórios da ética nas pesquisas em Educação no Brasil e 3) examina os procedimentos éticos utilizados nas teses de doutorado em Educação - objeto da investigação. Na análise e tratamento dos dados levantados, identificamos que, do total das 154 teses examinadas, 107 enquadraram-se nos critérios éticos e legais estabelecidos nas resoluções nacionais. Desse quantitativo, apenas 71 teses foram submetidas ao comitê de ética da universidade; 36 teses apresentavam a necessidade de submissão e não foram submetidas. Nessa análise genérica, conclui-se que os procedimentos éticos de pesquisa demandam maior difusão no meio acadêmico relacionado à pesquisa em Educação. Nesse sentido, reconhecemos e defendemos a importância de alimentar e aprofundar o debate sobre a ética na pesquisa a fim de construir marcos regulatórios específicos para as Ciências Humanas e Sociais e, particularmente, para a área da Educação, respeitando suas singularidades de metodologias e objetos de pesquisa.

**Palavras-chave:** ética em pesquisa; procedimentos éticos; pesquisa em educação.

## Contribuciones teóricas y reflexiones sobre la ética en la investigación educativa en Brasil: breve análisis y mapeo de tesis doctorales

**RESUMEN.** El artículo tiene como objetivo examinar los criterios éticos establecidos en la legislación brasileña que orientan la investigación con seres humanos, en las tesis defendidas y aprobadas entre los años 2017 y 2019, del Programa de Posgrado en Educación de una universidad pública ubicada en la región sureste del país con alta evaluación por parte de la Coordinación de Perfeccionamiento del Personal de Educación Superior (CAPES). La investigación fue basada en el análisis bibliográfico y documental. El trabajo está organizado en três partes: 1) procede a una breve discusión sobre la ética en las investigaciones académicas en Brasil; 2) aborda los marcos regulatorios de la ética en investigación en la educativa en Brasil e 3) examina los procedimientos éticos utilizados en las tesis de doctorado en Educación - objeto de investigación. En el análisis y tratamiento de los datos relevados identificamos de las 154 tesis examinadas, 107 cumplieron con los criterios legales establecidos en las resoluciones nacionales. De esta cantidad, sólo 71 tesis fueron presentadas al comité de ética de la universidad; 36 tesis presentaron la necesidad de presentación y no fueron presentadas. En este análisis genérico se concluye que los procedimientos éticos de la investigación exigen una mayor difusión en el ámbito académico relacionado con la investigación en educación. En este sentido reconocemos y defendemos la importancia de nutrir y profundizar el debate sobre la ética, a fin de construir marcos normativos específicos para las ciencias sociales y, particularmente para la educación respetando su singularidad de metodologías y objetos de investigación.

**Palabras-clave:** ética en la investigación; procedimientos éticos; investigación en educación.

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## Introduction

The article deals with ethics in the field of Human Sciences and its specificities in the area of Education. The analyzed data had 154 theses defended and approved in a Graduate Program in Education at a public university located in the southeastern region of the country with high evaluation by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES-*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*), between 2017 and 2019 to verify whether such research complied with the ethical procedures provided for national legislation.

The regulation on research ethics in Brazil follows the guidelines of the National Health Council (CNS- *Conselho Nacional de Saúde*) in Resolutions 196 (Brazil, 1996), 466 (Brazil, 2012), and 510 (Brazil, 2016). We know that there are divergences and limitations in the field of research in Education. Given this, we chose as an object of study to investigate the Doctoral theses to elucidate their ethical aspects, within the aforementioned period.

This work was inspired by the literature on ethics in research and the theoretical discussions developed on the subject in the Doctorate Course in Education of the Graduate Program in Education at the State University of Ceará (PPGE-UECE).

The texts selected for the preparation of our article are from research carried out at the doctoral level. From the total of 154 theses, we highlight the approach to ethics in the sphere of research carried out in the Doctorate in Education course, that is, which used ethical procedures in the university field to submit analysis techniques and investigations of the respective research.

The analysis was developed based on the survey of keywords and the following descriptors: 'ethical procedures', 'ethics committee', 'resolution', 'commission', 'authorizations', and 'certificates', found in doctoral theses in Education. To identify the answers to the guiding questions, we began the examination by reading the abstracts of theses, presented and approved, to compile those that used research and methodologies that explicitly investigated human beings. We found implicit information in the texts that were consulted in full.

This research on ethics is also verified and identified in the appendices and annexes of the analyzed theses: 1. Opinion of the Research Ethics Committee of the University in question (COEP); 2. Informed Consent Form (ICF); 3. Data collection instruments.

The article intends, in the first place, to situate the reflection within the context of a concrete experience of analysis of scientific production in Education or even of the elements common to educational research. Then, reflect on the contributions of authors who discuss ethics in research in Education, relating them to the ethical procedures proposed in Brazilian legislation. Finally, we exposed the survey of data from theses analyzed within the scope of the doctorate in education, the object of our investigation.

In this exhibition, we hope to demonstrate some problems related to the social, political, and ethical commitment of researchers and reflections necessary for the training process of researchers in education, as highlighted, for example, by Gamboa (2018).

For Carvalho and Machado (2014), academic concerns about care and responsibilities in the knowledge elaboration process materialize in two elements: ethics and research integrity. According to the aforementioned authors, research integrity concerns the researcher's conduct in data processing and research publication. At this moment, they define the guidelines and norms that seek to avoid fraud such as plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication and/or data segmentation, and undue authorship, among other ethical dilemmas.

The examination of these postures and attitudes leads us to the question about the ethical elements implicit in them since there should not be a separation between the production of science and ethical values, even if the supposed objectivity of scientific methods and the axiological neutrality of the researched (Gamboa, 2018).

From the perspective of positivism, what makes research scientific is not the reason for carrying it out, but how it is carried out, according to Shavelson and Towne (2002). According to this vision of science, it is possible to describe the physical and social world scientifically, although the study of the ethical aspects that involve these fields requires a specific approach for each one of them. What matters is the form and not the content or, ultimately, the ultimate ends of the scientific act do not matter, since it is pure science that exhausts its ends, describing the laws of nature. It is a fallacy, in which the researcher's supposed neutrality exempts him/her from his/her political role in society. Moreover, it confuses the nature of scientific phenomena in general with social phenomena, whose nature is different, as these are historical phenomena that cannot be explained only by natural causality, but concern human intentionality. Ultimately, treating human beings as natural being is only possible if they are reduced to biomechanical beings, therefore, in this realm, there is no history, ethics, or intentional transformation of reality, but only evolution and mechanical changes.

In the commission of the Department of Education of the Organization of Education Research and Improvement (OERI), of the United States of America (USA), the researchers affirm that research in Education is a form of knowledge production that can contribute to a unique way to the understanding and improvement of the area. According to that organization, the interaction between the principles of science and the particularities of Education makes scientific research in this field be characterized as specialized research (Shavelson & Towne, 2002), but, paradoxically, can contribute to all scientific fields, because all science needs to be taught.

The researcher's ethical behavior is formally regulated by external mechanisms such as professional codes of conduct and committees of human beings (Cuba & Lincoln, 1994) and is immanent to the act of investigation, choice, and methodological conduct of researchers. For Gamboa (2018), cognitive interests in educational research are products of the methodological, evaluative, and political choices of the research subject. They express different ways of assimilating the reality of the object and the relationship established between the researchers and the world that they take as an object. At the epistemological and philosophical levels, they refer to the motivations, interests, and values that command and guide the process of knowledge in its epistemological and ontological assumptions related to the view of reality implicit in the research.

The research adopted bibliographical and documentary analysis as a methodology. The text is organized in three parts: 1) it makes a brief discussion about ethics in academic research in Brazil; 2) it deals with the regulatory frameworks of ethics in research in Education in Brazil and 3) it addresses the ethical procedures in doctoral theses in Education of the Graduate Program in Education of a Brazilian federal university.

## **Ethics in academic research in Brazil: theoretical contributions and reflections**

The search for knowledge is a key element for human beings from their constitution as social beings. With the advent of class society, there is a greater dispute for power and knowledge becomes a constituent part of these relationships. There is now an unequal division not only of socially produced wealth but also of access to and control of knowledge produced by social groups. Therefore, functions linked to productive activity and control, and knowledge begin to be occupied in a differentiated way within the social body. In this direction, any reflection on ethics in research also permeates the understanding that scientific investigations are developed in a society full of contradictions and conflicts.

Ethics in academic research in Brazil should not be limited to obedience to a certain formal protocol, as there is an inherent need for human beings to respect certain norms and rules of conduct to guarantee their

existence as human and social beings. In this sense, the importance of the discussion on ethics in research on and with human beings must be broader and go beyond the formalities of national laws as expressed in Resolutions 466 (Brazil, 2012) and 510 (Brasil, 2016), seeking to anchor in the philosophical foundations that support it.

For Oliveira (1993a), science is closely linked to the fate of human life in society, as it has acquired great relevance in human life since modernity. In the last centuries, the specificities of the human being, and its possibilities, began to be strongly marked by the domain of science. It seems that man is increasingly dependent on science for the fulfillment of his humanity.

Therefore, it is clear that human development and its socialization needs require constant and fundamental ethical reflection to guarantee human existence. This consideration must be placed on the agenda because doing science implies the possibility of acting not only directly on nature but also on other human beings, according to Oliveira (1993a).

If a man is not a fixed human being, but the conquest of himself, which becomes effective as he builds his historical worlds, which configure the fundamental 'relations', which constitute his being, if his potentialities are called to realization to that he is, then it is man's 'original responsibility' in himself that raises the question about the criteria of his action in the world. Therefore, it is based on the responsibility for his being that Brazilian men today raise the ethical question of scientific activity (Oliveira, 1993a, p. 154, emphasis added).

Therefore, we understand that the requirement of ethics is a necessary presupposition for scientific activity in our historical time, as such activity should always turn to human beings, or rather, to human society, whose specificity is its ability to freely choose between alternatives only an ethically oriented activity can guarantee. In this understanding, it is also important to remember what Oliveira (1993b) highlights in the work *Ethics and sociability*:

One of the characteristics of our scientificity civilization is to have atrophied, in the common conscience, the 'problem of ethics': the questions that were previously questions of ethics are now taken up by the different human sciences (Oliveira, 1993b, p. 11, emphasis added).

For the philosopher, the same perspective that led the ancients to thematize the ethical problem in human life disappears from view, better explaining, "[...] the awareness that man is a being that is not guaranteed in advance his being, but he must conquer it through the commitment of his freedom" (Oliveira, 1993b, p. 11). This question is particularly important nowadays since science is dominated by instrumental logic, in which first causality and human and historical intentionality are, in practice, largely obliterated.

For Hermann (2019, p. 17), "[...] ethics is a field of philosophical knowledge that studies the values concerning good and evil and a normative order instituted in society and culture, which guides human action [...]", that is, ethics is a human, historical and social construction necessary for the guarantee of human society. Thus, we understand that it is impossible to think of a form of human sociability without the presence of an ethical reflection that constantly guides men's scientific and daily activities. Then, Hermann (2019), inspired by Hegelian and psychoanalytic reflections, points out:

Broadly, we can say that ethics is established in the search for justified guidelines for actions that result in a certain balance between the irrational drive and its dominance by reason. Thus, it is located in this space of ambiguity between human frailty with its passions and the limit imposed by norms of coexistence that are beyond the particularity of the self. In this construction of his freedom, man establishes limits, and fights against the most impulsive passions, that is, *ethos* elevates him beyond *physis* (nature) and this is accomplished through education, which led Hegel, in the modern era, maintaining the tradition that begins in Greek antiquity, stating: "[the] ethics is done in the second birth of children, the spiritual, – their education to become autonomous persons" (Hegel, 1999, § 521, p. 497) (Hermann, 2019, p. 17-18).

According to Oliveira (1993a), for us Westerners, talking about ethics means recovering one of the fundamental dimensions of human existence, repressed by the instrumental rationality in force in the last centuries of the civilizing process:

[...] it is, in the first place, about rediscovering man not only as a being who intervenes in nature, transforming it according to his purposes but about discovering him by inserting him in a process of cultural traditions that transfigure what he experiences in his 'world' since everything is situated in a context of linguistically structured meaning (Oliveira, 1993a, p. 174, emphasized).

Consequently, since science is also a production of man capable of directly modifying the outer and inner nature of man, ethics is presented as an essential need in the production of scientific knowledge.

Because of the recognition of the importance of ethical discussion, especially in scientific activity, it is important to remember that, in Brazil, there is only one regulation regarding research with human beings, including one based on principles of biomedicine, which guide two major areas of knowledge: Biomedical and Social Human Sciences. Such principles do not contemplate the human being in his breadth of historical and social being, except if reduced to his biomechanical manifestations governed by natural causality. Ultimately, it does not contemplate a human ethic, since in the natural world the choice between alternatives is very limited. It is a space where we can talk about needs, but not about freedom, desires, and intentions of the social and cultural being that is the human being.

Although Resolution 510, of April 7, 2016 (Brazil, 2016) considers that ethics is a human, historical, social and cultural construction, ethics implies respect for human dignity and due protection to participants in scientific research involving human beings. We understand that such a resolution lacks in the sense of limiting the debate on ethical requirements in research involving human beings, in its objectivity, but also its subjectivity.

In our understanding, the biomedical model, adopted in Resolution 510 (Brazil, 2016) is unable to meet the specificities of the area of Human and Social Sciences (HSS). Therefore, it is necessary, as highlighted by Guerriero and Bosi (2015), to build specific guidelines for HSS, including the struggle process of researchers in this area so that documents go beyond the hegemonic model, that is, the positivist-inspired biomedical model.

For Carvalho (2018), the issue of research ethics in Education has been increasingly relevant not only for the area but also for the set of human and social sciences in Brazil. The aforementioned researcher also asserts that this attention on the subject is due to the conflict surrounding the regulation of research, as the very activity of knowledge production intensifies in the country.

In Brazil, research-related policies gained momentum in 1951 with the creation of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES- *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq- *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico*). During the civil-military business dictatorship (1964-1985), there was a great incentive for graduate programs, given the idea that science was a determining factor for the development of the country. On this issue, Goergen (2015) pointed out:

Aware of the potential of research, the military promoted Graduate Studies aimed at training higher-level researchers and professors, disconnected from the practical-professional limits of the already existing specialization courses. The first master's course was created at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, in 1965, in a departmental format, inspired by the United States, replacing the old chairs of European tradition (Goergen, 2015, p. 302).

Pressured by the ideological discourse of progress and modernization, the civil-military regime adopted the reform of higher education and the implementation of the National Graduate System (SNPG- *Sistema Nacional de Pós-Graduação*) as political-economic actions for Education. Thus, in our country, postgraduate programs have been established, from that period until today, as the main sites for the production of scientific knowledge and research development. The conception of university shifts from the strategy centered on training senior staff for public service, inspired by the French university model, to training researchers, more in tune with the German and Anglo-American model of university higher education.

Graduate programs stand out in the Brazilian educational system due to the level of quality, the significant contribution made to the development and systematic and institutionalized dissemination of knowledge, as well as the training of new generations of researchers (Goergen, 2015).

It is very relevant to observe what happens in Brazilian universities if we want to carry out a contextualized discussion on ethics, given the centrality that it assumes about the production of scientific knowledge. It is also worth mentioning the indispensable role that CAPES has played in monitoring, evaluating, and classifying *stricto sensu* graduate programs.

If for a while public policy assumes the university in its complexity, as well as the social phenomena that reverberate in it, on the other hand, more recently the pressures suffered by this institution in the neoliberal context of the organization of capitalist society are evident. In this framework, the university is compelled to:

[...] assuming the role of ensuring competitiveness and economic instrumentalization, whether training competent professionals or producing and disseminating useful knowledge, the university gives precedence to dictates coming from the market (Goergen, 2015, p. 308).

Therefore, in CAPES, there is the same tension inherent to the interference of market dictates in the functioning of the organization. It is notable that from the 1980s onwards, concern with productivism has risen, which often leads to a decrease in the quality of research and academic production. On this issue, Goergen (2015) warns that, currently

Even public universities align their research and teaching activities with the interests and expectations of the market to the point of constituting a space today called a semi-market. Productivity, efficiency, and usefulness are concepts naturally inherent to the meaning and status of academic research. It is the transfer, direct and without mediation, of a central concept from the world of production, market, and business to the world of academia, disregarding the distinct nature of these two spaces (Goergen, 2015, p. 307).

We understand that the existence of marketing characteristics at the university directly interferes with the research carried out there, and may greatly impact the ethical aspects related to it. Thus, the debate about ethics in research, in addition to focusing on regulatory issues, should also be dedicated to discussing what knowledge is being elaborated in this research, considering the social and political function of this production.

This sensitivity to the issue of ethics is expressed in all spaces in which academic and scientific life takes place. It does not happen only in the philosophical dimension, under the solitary concerns of isolated scholars. It gains resonance in the most varied cultural and institutional places, producing repercussions and inducing measures that impact the daily life of communities, since what is at stake affects all people, without exception (Severino, 2014, p. 200).

Thinking about ethics in research from a broad perspective creates “[...] opportunities to jointly discuss fundamental political issues, such as the hierarchization of forms of knowledge; the recipients of the knowledge produced; the purposes and ethical aspects of scientific work before society” (Carvalho & Machado, 2014, p. 214). Therefore, the ethics of research lies, then, in this “[...] process of dialogic integration between particular research projects and the ethical dimension of the social Common Good” (Goergen, 2015, p. 313). Highlighting that there is no pure ethics in research, since, like science, it is historically, epistemologically, and politically motivated in permanent elaboration and interaction with the social needs that drive it.

## Notes on ethics in education research in Brazil: regulatory frameworks

Regarding a specific norm focused on the Human and Social Sciences, the legislation in Brazil on ethics in research is quite recent, as we can see in Resolution 510, of April 7, 2016 (Brazil, 2016), of the National Health Council (CNS-*Conselho Nacional de Saúde*), which includes ethics as:

[...] a human construction, therefore historical, social and cultural; whereas research ethics imply respect for human dignity and the due protection of participants in scientific research involving human beings; considering that the researcher's ethical action demands conscious and free action from the participant; considering that research in human and social sciences requires respect and guarantee of the full exercise of the participant's rights, and must be conceived, evaluated and carried out in a way to foresee and avoid possible damages to the participants (Brazil, 2016).

The resolution also brings a reflection on the complexity of the Human and Social Sciences, characterizing their specificities in the research concepts and practices, since “[...] a pluralist meaning of science prevails [...]” which resulted in the adoption of several “[...] theoretical-methodological perspectives [...]” in the way they deal with attributions of meaning, practices, and representations, without direct intervention in the human body, with specific nature and risks (Brazil, 2016).

Despite the relationship between integrity and ethics in research, concepts normally related to the veracity of information and adequate procedures for data collection, as well as actions aimed at combating fraud, plagiarism, and self-plagiarism, which “[...] has come to be called Ethics in Research specifically covers the procedures for protecting research participants from the risks of research involving human beings” (Carvalho & Machado, 2014, p. 211).

The regulations in force in Brazil regarding the Human Sciences are part of the broad field of ethics in academic research and deal exclusively with the implications of investigations related to human beings. It is worth noting that the very term ‘involving human beings’ is under discussion in the various fields of knowledge since there are relevant differences between research procedures ‘with’ human beings and ‘in’ human beings.

Another important aspect to be considered is that thinking about ethics in research in Brazil is paradoxically based on legal frameworks based on bioethics, not considering the elaborations of the Human and Social Sciences on this theme for the creation of norms. National resolutions are guided by the Principlist Theory exposed in the work *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, by Tom Beauchamp and James

Childress, published in the first edition in 1979. In this book, the authors presented the guiding principles of the bioethical model: autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence, and justice.

Resolution number 1 of the National Health Council (Brazil, 1988) is the first initiative aimed at regulating research ethics in Brazil, but it is only through Resolution 196 (Brazil, 1996) that the guidelines for the creation of the National Commission of Ethics in Research (CONEP-*Comissão Nacional de Ética em Pesquisa*) and the Council of Ethics in Research with Human Beings (CEP- *Conselho de Ética em Pesquisa*) are elaborated, “[...] forming what is conventionally called CEP/CONEP system, responsible for regulating ethics in research with human beings throughout Brazil” (Fare, Machado & Carvalho, 2014, p. 258).

While Resolution number 1 (Brazil, 1988) aims to standardize research in the health area, Resolution 196 (Brazil, 1996) now requires “[...] that institutions create and maintain their Ethics Committees and that all research projects involving human beings, before being executed, be examined and approved by them, under this ethical perspective” (Severino, 2014, p. 202). Also, we highlight the compulsory requirement for all fields of knowledge on the use of the Informed Consent Form (ICF).

We recognize the importance and advances in favor of human rights and against possible abuses historically known and masked in the scientific research process; however, other aspects must also be considered. The fact that regulations on research ethics are drawn up by the National Health Council raises questions raised in the field of Human and Social Sciences that the

[...] the transposition of the biomedical research model to the epistemological, methodological, and procedural bases of the Human Sciences has proven to be ineffective and often an obstacle to conducting research (Carvalho & Machado, 2014, p. 212).

Therefore, the authors point out that:

Maybe the most eloquent argument that has emerged as the origin of the malaise in the Human Sciences concerns the positioning of the biomedical model as representative of the nucleus of truth and scientific validity which, in this condition, would be the basis of all science. This premise underlies the expansion of this model as a basis for the regulation of the entire scientific field, which will impact, in addition to the regulation of ethics in research, the financing of projects, the evaluation of courses, productivity rates, etc. We are dealing with the Brazilian context; however, it is important to emphasize that this process of expanding codes of conduct based on Natural Sciences, added to the productivist logic and demands for market-oriented knowledge, is increasingly globalized (Carvalho & Machado, 2014, p. 222).

In addition to the rejection of the hierarchy of sciences, with a strong positivist bias, as well as the reductionism seen in the resolutions when considering the problem of ethics in research only in its procedural sphere, consideration of the specificities of the objects and methods developed in the research of the Human and Social Sciences. “Some disciplinary spaces defend their regulation mechanisms and do not consider the participation of specialists from other disciplines in the review processes of their projects necessary” (Fare et al., 2014, p. 266).

For these and other particularities, within the field of Social and Human Sciences, rich debates have been developed on ethics in research, as well as on the need for new methodological strategies in its performance. In this context, the Brazilian Association of Anthropology (ABA-*Associação Brasileira de Antropologia*) stands out, which develops an “[...] intense debate on ethics in research and the social and political responsibility of researchers with the populations in which they are involved in their field” (Carvalho & Machado, 2014, p. 218). In Anthropology, researchers often need to integrate into researched communities; this type of research practice finds few references in the resolutions of the National Health Council.

In Education research, ethical demands are equally heterogeneous and are not limited to the need to apply the IC, or how data collection and processing mechanisms are applied. In Education, qualitative research is common, in which the separation between subject and object is not applied in the same rigid and mechanical way as in the field of Natural Sciences. As Kant (Castañón, 2007) has already highlighted, the emphasis on quantitative judgments that characterized naive inductivism in the search for universals from the analysis of singular and particular cases must be complemented by the search for qualitative judgments, whether to affirm or deny a reality; by judgments that scrutinize the type of causal relationship involved between phenomena, as well as how they exist or are necessary. Such a perspective expands methodological diversity and overcomes the myths of positivism, just as it has already demarcated, even from a reading of subjective idealism, the false opposition between quantity and quality. About this methodological diversity, Carvalho and Machado (2014) warn that,

Life stories, open narrative interviews, in-depth or semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and ethnographies are frequent procedures in social research methods. However, these tend to be strange when faced with the parameters of scientific objectivity, valid sampling, and generalization of results, for example, for those who work based only on an experimental-statistical model (Carvalho & Machado, 2014, p. 228).

Thus, “[...] the broad set of issues that can be reflected in the regulation of ethics in the field of educational research demand to problematize a broad and complex social space” (Fare et al., 2014, p. 267). Thus, the challenge is to broaden the discussions on the ethical implications of researching in Education and assume a position in the area of national regulatory frameworks. In this context, the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPEd-*Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação*) has become one of the main spaces for dialogue and debate on.

It is important to point out that the field of education historically brings about dense discussions about ethics, and researchers are not strangers to this debate, but we have to recognize that we lack the socialization of questions and the systematization of local solutions and the consequences of particular experiences that the relationships between research, application, and formulation of public policies have entailed in the field of research ethics regulation (Carvalho & Machado, 2014, p. 217).

Among ANPEd's actions that reaffirm its commitment to the constant improvement of research in Education and the issue of ethics in research, its 36th Annual Meeting, held in Goiânia, in 2013, stands out, in which the special session ‘Ethics in research: principles and procedures. In October of the same year, ANPEd was invited to participate in CONEP's Working Group on Human and Social Sciences (WG of HSS) in charge of elaborating a complement to Resolution 466 (Brazil, 2012), referring to research in Human and Social Sciences. The actions of this WG culminated in the approval of Resolution CNS 510 (Brazil, 2016) after numerous clashes between members of the HHS WG and CONEP (Mainardes, 2017).

In addition, in 2013, ANPEd joined the Forum of Associations of Applied Human, Social, and Social Sciences (FCHSSA-*Fórum de Associações de Ciências Humanas, Sociais e Sociais Aplicadas*), which has developed various activities on research ethics to create its ethical review system, separate from the Health area. Also, the creation of a Commission in charge of fostering discussions on research ethics (2015) and a space on the ANPEd Portal for information on the subject (National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education - *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação*, 2019).

Resolution 510 (Brazil, 2016) is the result of the demand for more adequate guidelines for the Human and Social Sciences and, although it represents progress, it still has serious limitations. This resolution establishes that the implementation of protocols, such as the need to apply the ICF, for example, is adequate to the level of risk represented by the research, resulting in specific completion for the Social and Human Sciences. However, the form is still under construction.

Regarding the submission of projects to the Research Ethics Committees, the aforementioned resolution emphasizes that these must have an equal representation between representatives of the scientific areas. Mainardes (2017) analyzed that it was possible

[...] to understand in this process that the HHS area does not have autonomy within the CEP/CONEP system and needs the endorsement of CONEP, mostly formed by representatives associated with the biomedical view of ethics in research and its review process (Mainardes, 2017, p. 164).

Thus, “[...] in addition to concerns about the norms and procedures of ethical review, it is considered essential to conceive ethics in research as a training issue” (Mainardes, 2017, p. 167). Therefore, the strengthening of spaces for discussion and elaboration on ethics in research in Education is a necessary action. The creation of a specific code of ethics for research in Education, or even internal regulations of each institution are some alternatives put up for debate.

## Research result: theses analysis elements

During the analysis procedure of the theses found, we used the following guiding topics: 1) how many and which theses fit the criteria for research with human beings?; 2) how many and which theses do NOT fit the criteria for research with human beings?; 3) how many and which theses present proof of submission to the university's COEP and CEP/CONEP? What kind of proof?; 4) how many and which ones DO NOT present proof of submission to the university's COEP and CEP/CONEP? And; 5) how many and what are the ethical procedures of both groups? Were they mentioned in the thesis as a whole, in addition to supporting documents, is there a section in the body of the text that deals with ethics in research?



Initially, we surveyed the Sucupira Platform. Then, we performed the analysis of the following elements of the papers: abstracts, summaries, appendix documents, and annexes. The following keywords were used: 'ethical procedures', 'committee', 'resolution', 'commission', 'authorization', and 'certificates' to identify the theses in need of submission to the University's Ethics and Research Committee public, as well as CEP/CONEP, as these are studies with human beings.

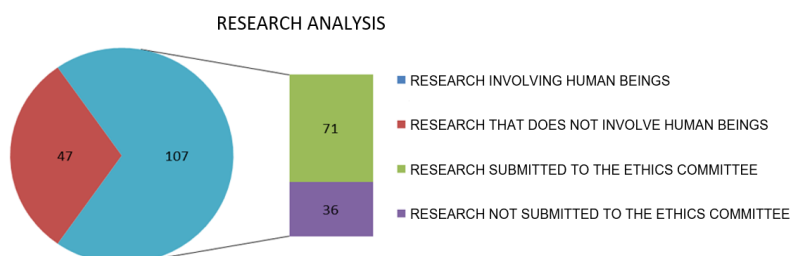
Also, we investigated the introduction of the works and the sections on research methodology so that we could verify the theoretical and methodological procedures used, the types of research, and the data collection techniques were chosen to carry out the research.

## Quantitative and qualitative analysis

In Brazil, the issue of ethics in research is regulated by the guidelines of the National Health Council. Among the main legal frameworks are Resolutions 466 (Brazil, 2012) and 510 (Brazil, 2016), which deal with the submission of research projects with human beings to the ethics committee of the educational institution, as well as the application of the ICF. These resolutions present important contributions regarding the specificities of the Social and Human Sciences but still lack operational mechanisms. It is noteworthy that qualitative research is based on the interpretative perspective centered on understanding the meaning of the actions of living things, especially human beings and their historically located institutions (Sampieri, Callado & Lucio, 2013).

In our analysis of the ethical aspects of Doctoral research in Education, we focused on the theses, defended and approved, belonging to the Postgraduate Program in Education well evaluated by CAPES of a Brazilian university in the southeastern region of the country, available in the institutional repository of the university in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The aforementioned university has a single Research Ethics Committee for all programs, made up of professors representing all areas, including HHS and Education. To this end, we started the process by sorting the works, separating them into two groups: 1) those that match the criteria of resolutions 196 (Brazil, 1996), 466 (Brazil, 2012) and 510 (Brazil, 2016) requiring approval by CEP/CONEP and; 2) those that do not fit the criteria established in these resolutions as they are not research involving human beings and, therefore, without the need for submission to CEP/ CONEP.

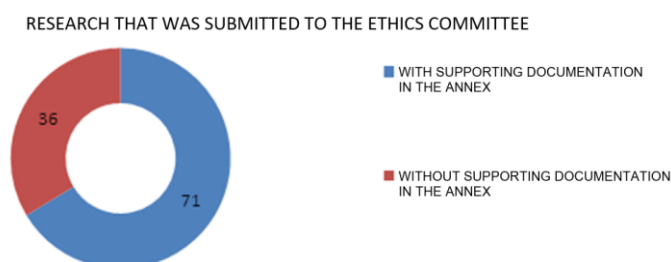
In Figure 1, we organize the number of theses that were carried out with and without human beings and those that needed or did not to be submitted to the Ethics Committee.



**Figure 1.** Quantitative of theses analyzed by needs.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Thus, during the research, we adopted the following procedure: 1) we read the abstracts and chapters on the methodologies that were used in the theses; 2) we checked the appendices and annexes to identify the characteristics, the type of research developed in each of the investigations to locate the presence of mention of the ethics council, the CNS resolutions, the ICF and, also, other considerations about the ethical elements of the research. Figure 2 shows the submission process, based on the documentation, according to the number of theses.



**Figure 2.** Research submitted to the Ethics Committee.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

After the meticulous analysis of the theses, we verified that 107 of 154 theses demand submission to CEP/CONEP, according to the criteria established in Resolutions 466 (Brazil, 2012) and 510 (Brazil, 2016). Of this total of 107 theses, only 71 submitted their research to CEP/CONEP. Therefore, 36 theses (34%) were not submitted to CEP/CONEP. For a better understanding, we prepared Table 1 to illustrate the findings described above.

**Table 1.** Theses in need of submission to CEP/CONEP.

Theses in need of submission to CEP/CONEP	
107	
Submitted theses	Theses not submitted
71	36

Source: Our elaboration is based on the Theses analyzed.

However, only 25 of these 36 theses elaborated and used the ICF, and 11 did not provide any information about the research's ethical procedures. As we can see in the indications in Table 2:

**Table 2.** Theses have not been submitted to CEP/CONEP.

Theses not submitted to CEP/CONEP	
36	
Theses that elaborated and used the ICF	
Total	25
Theses without consideration of ethical aspects	
Total	11

Source: Our elaboration is based on the Theses analyzed.

We also verified that 47 theses did not need to be submitted to CEP/CONEP, since they used the following methodologies: 17 theses – documentary research; 29 theses – bibliographic research, and one thesis – interview. Finally, five theses were not analyzed, because according to the Sucupira Platform, we found the following information: 'The work does not have authorized disclosure', Table 3 systematizes this information:

**Table 3.** Theses are without the need to submit to CEP/CONEP.

No need to submit to CEP/CONEP		
47		
Documentary	Bibliography	Interview
17	29	1

Source: Our elaboration is based on the Theses analyzed.

Thus, based on the analysis of the 36 theses in need of submission that were not submitted to CEP/CONEP, we can conclude, according to Nunes (2017), that it is necessary to move forward in the debate on ethics in research education, as Graduate programs must prioritize the quality and reliability of research. In education, there is only one regulation of ethics in research with human beings for the two main areas: 1) Biomedical and; 2) Human and Social Sciences. It is important to emphasize that, in Brazil, the issue of ethics in research involving human beings is regulated exclusively by the guidelines of the National Health Council, a reality that has been the object of numerous criticisms, especially by researchers in the field of Human and Social Sciences. The main legal framework was Resolution 196 (Brazil, 1996), already revoked by Resolution 466, of December 12, 2012 (Brazil, 2012), which provides for the Guidelines and regulatory norms for research involving human beings and also revoked Resolutions 303/2000 and 404/2008. All of them deal with the submission of research projects with human beings to the ethics committee of the teaching institution. These laws are based on the main international documents and establish procedural criteria, as well as cases in which there is a need to apply the ICF.

On the occasion, we recognized the important contributions already achieved through resolutions 466 (Brazil, 2012) and 510 (Brazil, 2016) regarding the specificities of Human and Social Sciences. We also know that Education constitutes HHS, but due to the specificities and particularities of this complex, we claim a space for the construction of a specific debate in this area of knowledge, since the biomedical model does not meet the demands arising from education research.

## Final considerations

We admit, based on our analysis, that the ethical research procedures, in the legal determinations of Resolutions 196 (Brazil, 1996), 466 (Brazil, 2012) and 510 (Brazil, 2016) demand greater dissemination in the academic environment related to research in education. The researchers' central problem refers to the bureaucratic nature of ethical review in Brazil, with uniform rules and procedures for the area of biomedical research and research in human and social sciences.

We also highlight that, although they do not demand ethical procedures within the limits addressed in the CNS resolutions, the themes and problems addressed in the academic works permeate a discussion on ethics in research, as they deal with themes permeated by conflicts and disputes of interests. Among these themes, we exemplify teaching working conditions in basic education; pedagogies for the female body; right to education; disputes within the programs for more education, questions about repetition and failure, as well as indigenous women's practices, knowledge, and leadership.

Furthermore, we warn that all types of research require an ethical posture by the researcher, just as the understanding that the results of the work must be linked to social responsibility, this process results in science as a public good and accessible to all, providing for the development of human beings and society as a whole.

Therefore, the need for specific regulatory frameworks for the Humanities and Social Sciences and the area of Education is important, respecting their particularities of methodologies and research objects. Ethical demands, necessary for the very existence of human beings, go beyond filling out forms and obeying bureaucratic procedures.

Thus, we defend, without hesitation, that the reflection on ethics in research with human beings must be constant and go beyond the mere filling out of forms and bureaucratic procedures. Ethics needs to be a theme present in academic everyday life and enable, above all, an ethical performance by the researcher throughout the research process and also in social life. Unlike what positivism thinks, we understand that the possibility of transforming reality in the ethical horizon is inherent to the human condition of being a historical social being, because without the possibility of change, of choosing between alternatives, there is no place for ethics.

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