


# Methodological foundations for emancipation: a revolutionary praxis for psychology in schools

**Fundamentos metodológicos para emancipação: uma práxis revolucionária para a psicologia na escola**

**Fundamentos metodológicos para la emancipación: una praxis revolucionaria para la psicología en la escuela**

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## Highlights

The theoretical frameworks provide solid methodological foundations for a critical practice of school psychology.

Law 13.935/19 presents challenges to the professional training and practice of psychologists in schools.

For school psychology to contribute to student development, an ethical and political stance is necessary.

## Abstract

In the context of Federal Law 13935/19, the discussion about the presence of psychology in schools raises debates about the role to be developed by professionals. We start from the argument that psychology in schools must be anchored in a liberating praxis. For this, it needs well-defined methodological foundations for constructing the psychologist's work critically and responsibly. Given this need, these foundations must constitute an epistemology anchored in the historicity of concrete reality and in the subject's protagonism in the construction of knowledge, implying a professional ethical-political stance. This paper is a theoretical-methodological essay that aims to articulate three methodological foundations: Historical and Dialectical Materialism (HDM), Participatory Action Research (PAR), and Qualitative Epistemology (QE), which guide the liberating practice of psychology in schools involved in transforming reality. This connection gives the work and research within the school setting a critical and emancipatory character.

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## Keywords

School Psychology. Critical Psychology. Critical Pedagogy.

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## **| Introduction**

After more than 20 years of struggle by professional categories, Federal Law No. 13,935 (Brazil, 2019) was enacted, establishing the presence of psychology and social work professionals in public basic education networks<sup>1</sup>. The legislation states that:

Article 1. Public basic education networks will have psychology and social work services to meet the needs and priorities defined by education policies, through multidisciplinary teams.

§ 1. Multidisciplinary teams shall develop actions to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process, with the participation of the school community, acting in the mediation of social and institutional relations.

§ 2. The work of the multidisciplinary team must consider the political-pedagogical project of the public basic education networks and their educational establishments.

Despite the victory, it is necessary to consider that the approval of the law indicates challenges with other contours for the effective professional practice in an ethical manner and compatible with the guidelines of the Brazil's Psychology Councils System (Federal and Regional Councils) (CFP, 2022, 2019), such as the different conceptions about the role of psychology in schools, the work model adopted, and the professional profile required for this. With the enactment of Law No. 13,935 (Brazil, 2019), many questions arise for psychology, and, in response, various proposals for action are presented that do not always yield satisfactory results. It is the danger of scattered intervention actions that confuses teachers and students more than it actually helps them to face and overcome difficulties.

Many aspects of the law's implementation remain to be discussed at the state and municipal levels, including the hiring of these professionals. A reality that already existed before federal legislation is the simple transfer of professionals from the Health and Social Assistance Secretariats to Education, resulting in a primarily remedial and individualized approach (Cunha & Betini, 2003).

The more concise a piece of legislation is, the more necessary it is to provide a more comprehensive clarification of the functions, profile, and professional training required for the position. This is the case with the aforementioned law, which requires clarification on how these professionals will work with the team of educators.

In this context, a more specific definition is required in job postings for psychology positions, with the requirement for specialized professionals or those with experience in the field, a position endorsed by the Psychology and Social Work Councils in a guidance document on the implementation of the law (CFP, 2022). In

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1 For more details on the implementation of the law, its history, and the duties and responsibilities of school psychology work in schools, please refer to the Brazil's Ministry of Education (MEC) document "Subsídios para a implementação da lei 13.935/19" ["Subsidies for the implementation of Law 13.935/19"] (Brazil, 2025).

addition to this guideline, we argue that, in order to work in schools, psychology professionals need to have a clear understanding of the instrumental nature of their work, as well as a critical reading of the space in which they will operate, distancing themselves from the role historically occupied by psychology, which is one of control, adaptation, and pathologization (Patto, 1999; Parker, 2014).

The school, a place of education and development, is a privileged space for a psychology committed to the struggle for the emancipation of a historically oppressed population to operate. As a space for the formation and education of individuals, the school must educate for emancipation, assuming a political position for psychology in the school (Guzzo, 2020).

If psychology aims to contribute to processes of human emancipation through its work, then this intention must build strategies consistent with its desired horizon. According to Guerra (2014), instrumentality is a property and/or capacity that the professional category builds as it achieves its objectives in accordance with its intentionality. Perez (2023) seeks to understand the concept of instrumentality, originally discussed by social work, within the scope of psychology. The author argues, based on an analysis of professional guidelines, that our technical references lack elements to support the instrumentality of the profession, that is, how psychologists can actually transform material and subjective conditions into working tools.

Therefore, we understand the need to base ourselves on theories that support the practice of psychology in schools. For this, well-defined methodological foundations are needed, so that it is possible to construct what *to do*<sup>2</sup> from a psychological perspective in this context, critically and responsibly. We agree with González-Rey and Martínez (2017) that theories are constituted by the construction processes involved in research and professional practice. We argue that the role of psychology in schools also involves investigating the objective and subjective reality in which we operate.

This unity between theory and practice guides professional action based on the concept of *praxis*. The concept expresses an essentially human activity, as it considers that human beings are ontocreative (creating reality), that is, they understand the power to act on reality as part of the human vocation. This vocation enables individuals to become active agents in their own history, promoting change in conditions of oppression and exploitation through a continuous process of criticism and reflection. In this way, it has an emancipatory character for human beings. This unity yields a dialectical synthesis between theory and practice: theory provides a critical understanding of social, economic, and historical conditions, while practice is the concrete action that seeks to transform them. Praxis, therefore, is not merely an application of preexisting theories, but a dynamic process in which theory is continually revised and enriched by practice (Kosik, 1963/2002).

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2 Term used by Martín-Baró (1996), which refers to an ethical-political commitment that requires the psychologist to adopt a critical and engaged stance, aimed at the liberation of the popular majorities and the construction of a more just and humane society. It is not merely the application of psychological techniques, but a commitment to transforming the oppressive conditions that alienate individuals and communities.

With this in mind, this paper aims to articulate three methodological foundations: Historical and Dialectical Materialism (HDM), Participatory Action Research (PAR), and Qualitative Epistemology (QE), which guide the liberating and decolonizing practice of psychology in schools involved in transforming reality. This theoretical and methodological framework has been developed hand in hand with the professional practice of the ECOAR<sup>3</sup> Project (Espaço de Convivência Ação Reflexão [Space for Coexistence, Action, and Reflection]). This extension project, initiated in 2014 by the present research group, articulates the three pillars of research, teaching, and extension, based on the articulation of psychology in schools with the research developed by the research group (Guzzo et al., 2019; Guzzo et al., 2021).

## **Historical and Dialectical Materialism**

Historical and Dialectical Materialism (HDM) is a methodological, theoretical, and analytical approach that has evolved, primarily through the contributions of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who articulated a materialist account of the analysis of history and capitalist society. It became the basis for the revolutionary and critical social theory developed by the authors and continued by other Marxist theorists (Paulo Netto, 2011).

This approach considers the social, cultural, and, above all, economic context as determinants of human existence. Using concrete reality to explain the world and its social transformations, placing this premise at the foundation of understanding human beings. The central idea of the Marxist method breaks with the prevailing idealist conceptions of the time, which served as ontological and epistemological foundations for understanding human existence in society (Gomide & Jacomeli, 2016).

Historical and Dialectical Materialism (HDM) breaks with Kantian<sup>4</sup> and Hegelian<sup>5</sup> idealism by focusing its analysis on material conditions and social contradictions. In contrast to Kant, who emphasized universal mental structures, and Hegel, who saw history as the development of the Spirit, Marx proposed a critical perspective anchored in class struggles and relations of production as the driving forces of history. This approach aimed to understand and transform social reality, especially in the context of the inequalities of 19th-century industrial England (Marx & Engels, 1845/2007).

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3 The aforementioned project aims to demonstrate that the articulation of methodological foundations did not occur solely on a theoretical level, but also emerged from the daily practice of professionals in the school context. Although this article is a theoretical essay, it cannot be detached from everyday praxis or from the modes of theoretical-methodological knowledge construction that underpin the project. For more information about the project, visit: <https://gep-inpsi.org/psicologia-escola/projeto-ecoar/>

4 Kant argues that knowledge is mediated by mental structures that are limited to phenomena conforming to the forms of intuition and the categories of understanding. The "world in itself" remains inaccessible, and theory investigates a priori conditions that make experience possible (Kant, 1781).

5 Hegel proposes an absolute idealism in which thought and reality evolve dialectically throughout history. It treats categories as fixed and a priori, yet defends their dynamic nature and their interaction with reality. This process reflects the joint development of consciousness and absolute spirit (Hegel, 1807).

HDM proposes that we perceive concrete reality through the constant changes that occur in the subject's daily life, which is in constant interaction and transformation with the subject and their environment. The subject's consciousness of the world arises from experiences and interactions with reality: "It is not consciousness that determines existence, but social existence that determines consciousness" (Marx & Engels, 1845/2007, p. 47). This does not occur in a unilateral and deterministic way, but rather is anchored in a dialectic that gives the subject the role of a transforming agent of their reality, while at the same time being constantly affected by it. This view presupposes a dialectical relation and rests on the fundamental idea that the world is not a complex of finished things but rather a process of complexes in constant dialectical movement, created by the historical process (Gomide & Jacomeli, 2016). The dialectical method views the concrete social reality of human beings as contradictory and mutable processes (Elhammoumi, 2015).

Dialectics, present in reflections on human existence since the dawn of the species, is based on the understanding that environmental, social, and cultural changes continuously impact subjectivity. This perspective recognizes the historical nature of human processes, situating them in specific time and space (Ollman, 2003). Starting from the premise that we are in constant transformation poses a conceptual challenge: how to understand human existence in a world constituted as a complex of unfinished processes?

For this reason, the totality is put forward as a category of analysis, which is not merely the sum of its parts. It is the complex interconnections among its components that generate outcomes that enhance individual outcomes (nexus<sup>6</sup>). Reality is constantly changing, necessitating the revisitation of assumptions about what is seen as a whole. If dialectics understands that there is a moment when the whole can be seen, it would deny itself, that is, a synthesis in a given space and time will never be enough to learn it completely, since it is always changing (Konder, 1997). Such understanding does not preclude the possibility of rationalizing and understanding human phenomena within this totality. According to Kosik (2002), totality refers to reality, understanding it as structured, dialectical, and in constant change and creation. That said, understanding totality as a category of analysis does not mean seeking to exhaust the possibilities of knowledge about it, exhausting the understanding of its aspects, or simply aggregating facts and more facts about it and the human interactions within this fabric. This observation does not diminish the importance and relevance of successive syntheses of totality, which are conducted with consideration of the social, cultural, and economic dimensions of each era.

According to Konder (1997), social contradictions can be identified through the analysis of reality and the links among its components. This category refers to internal conflicts and oppositions that exist within social and economic structures, and which drive change and historical development. Metaphysical thinking brought about the idea that the only contradiction that exists is a logical contradiction.

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<sup>6</sup> Society is a whole where the various aspects are interconnected. The connections among parts of society form an integrated system in which changes in one area can affect others.

Logical contradiction implies a flaw in reasoning, but is that all that constitutes a contradiction? The dimensions of human reality go beyond this; therefore, contradictions are not mere flaws, they are necessary.

Dialectics recognizes contradiction as the basic principle of the movement by which beings exist. Dialectics does not oppose logic, but goes beyond logic, exploring a space that logic cannot occupy (Konder, 1997, p. 49, our translation).

What Marx's method brings us is the possibility of placing dialectical movement at the center of investigation, since, according to the author, it is only possible to construct knowledge about man and their processes based on an ontological elaboration of social being that understands the constant movement of his existence (Tonet, 2013). Dialectics is a method of analysis and a philosophical principle that seeks to understand reality in its totality, through the contradictions and changes that occur within it. Dialectics, in contrast to a static and fragmented view of the world, emphasizes the interconnectedness and continuous transformation of phenomena (Konder, 1997).

This perspective breaks with the hegemony of science guided solely by positivist reason, which seeks to understand phenomena by isolating them from human sociability. In this view, limits are established for the possibilities and procedures of analysis, discarding the dialectical movement of historical reality that surrounds human existence.

Given this, the HDM is configured as a revolutionary project, built in service of the working class and its long history of oppression (Netto, 2011). It is fundamental to the research method, since understanding it as procedures determined *a priori* is not understanding the main point of Marx's method. It presupposes an ontology that guides the understanding of the world and society, the way it impacts the daily lives of individuals, and how it is constructed by them (Tonet, 2013).

To base a method on HDM is to direct the researcher's gaze beyond immediate appearances, beyond empirical data. Immediate appearance is part of this process; it is one level of reality, but not the only one, nor is it the final point of analysis. The goal is to grasp the essence of the phenomenon, capturing its structure and dynamics, reproducing the concrete at the level of thought.

From this perspective, when school actors call on school psychology to intervene, it is necessary to distinguish between what is on the surface and what lies at the core of the phenomenon, so as not to engage in superficial actions that only reinforce the hegemonic view. Common examples include frequent complaints of "learning difficulties," which, if viewed only superficially, can point to a clinical diagnosis, often already announced by the school. However, when investigated in depth, they mostly point to aspects of the teaching-learning process, vulnerable communities, and the students' school history (author, author, suppression).

To this end, analysis and synthesis are employed to understand the contradictions that exist in the totality at a given historical moment. This movement raises the



implication of the subject with the object of research itself, since the researcher is not alien to society or to the social dynamics that shape it (Paulo-Netto, 2011). In seeking to develop our work in schools, using HDM as a methodological foundation, we advocate for an immersion in the field that allows us to be present in daily life in order to understand reality as it presents itself. A contextualized view of the concrete reality of school actors makes this understanding possible.

## **| Participatory Action Research**

Participatory Action Research (PAR), within the broader field of Action Research, is based on the collective construction of knowledge from significant everyday issues. According to Reason and Bradbury (2008), all strands of Action Research share a commitment to the formation of participatory communities, in which engagement, curiosity, and problematization emerge from within lived reality, and not from outside of it.

Montero (2000) argues that specific characteristics of the Latin American context make PAR a methodology that distinguishes itself from others. Its precursor was the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda (1925-2008), and it flourished in response to the needs of Latin American peoples facing a history of colonization and oppression. In the context of the 1950s, several researchers in Latin America pointed out the need to abandon the supposed "neutrality" of science, which contributed to distancing researchers from the very reality they sought to study and, consequently, did not contribute to effective social change.

The author argues that scientific research should serve the population by restoring the unity between theory and practice, a connection that has been lost in the *quefazer* of positivist science. From this perspective, the researcher is understood not to be neutral and must assume an ethical-political position in the face of the challenges and human suffering inherent in social inequality and dominant power relations. Action, according to the principles of PAR, involves people and social contexts, focuses on social justice and the transformation of concrete reality, and works actively with and for communities (Fals-Borda, 1987; Guzzo & Kawamura, 2021).

We highlight 3 aspects that we consider fundamental to PAR for the role of psychology in schools: (1) Collaborative construction of knowledge, (2) Social participation, and (3) Transformation of reality.

Regarding the first aspect (1), collaborative construction of knowledge, we begin by noting that it is not for psychology alone to provide ready-made answers to school reality; rather, it must be developed with the community. This aspect synthesizes two points that are very important to PAR: overcoming the researcher-object hierarchy, markedly present in positivist research, and respect for popular knowledge. A horizontal approach is adopted, whereby the researcher is also a subject of research, while participants serve as co-researchers in the investigative process.

In PAR, the goal is not to change the other person, but to build transformations together with them. The research takes on a dialogical character, recognizing participants as protagonists in the production of knowledge and in confronting the contradictions of reality. This implies valuing popular knowledge, welcoming people's stories, and breaking with the hierarchical logic between researcher and researched (Reason & Bradbury, 2008; Montero, 2000).

For this movement to be possible, another fundamental aspect is (2) social participation. Fals Borda (1987) argues that the core of the concept of participation lies in the rupture — voluntary and through experience — of the subject-object asymmetry, which is closely related to the aspect discussed earlier. From this perspective, promoting spaces for participation entails strengthening individuals' free expression, problematizing concrete reality, and moving beyond the hegemonic ideology imposed on social collectives. Only in this way will it be possible to build knowledge relevant to the real needs of the Brazilian population: by creating collective spaces where we can discuss and seek answers together to situations that affect people's daily lives. This position challenges existing power structures, placing individuals at the center and opening up possibilities for more profound transformations of reality.

In this way, through participation, we seek the effective (3) transformation of reality. PAR seeks to promote radical changes at the social, political, and economic levels, aiming to combat structural violence through reflection and action processes with communities in the territory (Guzzo, 2020). We understand that for transformation to be possible, the process of developing critical consciousness must occur, coupled with action as a central element. In reality, this means that these processes are intertwined: for conscientization to exist, the subject must actively engage with their reality, and, at the same time, it is through action that this process becomes possible.

We refer to Paulo Freire's (2015) concept of conscientization, noting the ontological alignment between the authors and their shared commitment to overcoming forms of oppression. For the author, becoming conscious is the presentification of the object to consciousness, understanding, and recognizing its existence based on reality. It is the starting point for conscientization, which, in turn, implies a deeper and less naive reading of reality, a critical consciousness.

It is important to highlight that this process will only promote critical consciousness when achieved collectively, because, as the author himself states: "The conscious person knows that it is possible to change the world, but also knows that without the unity of the oppressed, it is not possible to do so" (Freire, 2015, p. 236). Based on this discussion, it is possible to affirm that PAR has an emancipatory character, as it seeks to guide people to develop, strengthen, and improve their resources and tools to defend and exercise their rights and, in this way, be able to negotiate with dignity and assertively with those in dominant/powerful social situations (Montero, 2000).



Thus, from this perspective, psychology holds that interventions with horizons of change derive from the reflective exercise between theory and practice, thereby promoting participatory spaces and provoking the process of developing critical consciousness (Guzzo, 2020). Even through micro-practices of participation, it is understood that people increase their capacity to make sense of their reality and to act upon it effectively (Reason & Bradbury, 2008).

In everyday school life, this theoretical and methodological foundation translates into practice through ongoing questioning of the importance of democratic management in schools and through actions that encourage the ongoing participation of educational agents and students in our activities. It also manifests when school psychology takes a stand against oppression and the blame is placed on marginalized individuals, consistently seeking to get closer to the community and encouraging the school team to reflect on the importance of this movement in building an emancipatory education.

## **| Qualitative Epistemology**

Qualitative Epistemology proposes an ontological and epistemological break with the foundations of hegemonic psychology, marked by the appropriation of models from the natural sciences<sup>7</sup>. According to González-Rey (2020), this psychology fragmented theory, research, and practice, prioritizing the application of instruments and the decontextualized description of phenomena. In doing so, it replaced subjects with data, producing depersonalized conclusions and denying the centrality of human subjectivity. The false neutrality of the researcher, evoked by empiricism, erases their involvement in the scientific process and reinforces a detached and reductionist logic of knowledge.

For the author, the empirical method adopted by hegemonic psychology is based on three central premises: the belief that empirical data alone contain all the information necessary to understand a phenomenon, disregarding the subjectivity of the subjects; the refusal to interpret, restricting itself to description as a form of knowledge; and the distancing of the researcher, whose experience is excluded from the analysis in the name of supposed scientific neutrality.

Thus, QE aims to go beyond a merely descriptive method, seeking a theoretical model that begins to be constructed throughout the research process: in the researcher's action in the field, in the application of instruments in a contextualized manner (with the researcher actively participating in this reality), in the treatment of the information obtained, and in the analysis of the data (González-Rey, 2020).

González-Rey (2020) proposes an ontological conception of subjectivity that integrates, inseparably, the symbolic and emotional processes of the human being. Emotion, thought, memory, and motivation are not seen as separate instances, but as interconnected dimensions that constitute subjective configurations—organizing

<sup>7</sup> This criticism of psychology is also made by Vygotsky (1927/1997) in a very thorough manner. However, for the scope of this work, a conceptual delimitation was made regarding the methodological aspect of González-Rey's work to avoid theoretical superficialities.

cores of experience. It is based on these configurations that subjects guide their experiences. As a result, the analysis goes beyond merely descriptive approaches, seeking to construct theoretical models that critically illuminate the meanings underlying certain phenomena.

It is through different partial constructions (the indicators) that it will be possible to integrate them into a more generalized theoretical model. Understanding the dialecticity of human existence, it is important to understand that theoretical models will not provide knowledge about the phenomenon that is contained therein, presenting themselves as absolute truth, but rather "the best construction of knowledge about what is being studied, in that context" (González-Rey, 2020, p. 6).

It is the syntheses that refer to different levels of totality that we propose to understand, which enable the construction of endless knowledge about the phenomenon, clarifying what changes and what remains within a historical time frame. The different syntheses obtained from participants' distinct subjective configurations enable the generalization of knowledge about the phenomenon, encompassing not only what these syntheses have in common (as occurs in other methodologies) but also what differentiates these subjective contents (González-Rey, 2020). By denying differences, we deny the unique character of each subjective configuration that the subject constructs in their existence.

Thus, in Qualitative Epistemology, information is not simply collected, but transformed into indicators that express meanings produced by subjects in their daily experiences. These indicators are articulated in the construction of a theoretical model — a synthesis that makes explicit what can, in fact, be understood from the investigated perspective. It is a process that is not limited to immediate or obvious expressions, seeking to reveal contradictions and understand the meanings that permeate the experience. This requires continuous, committed action by the researcher, whose dialogical interaction with participants promotes critical consciousness and the emergence of new subjective configurations that might not otherwise develop under others everyday conditions (González-Rey, 2020).

It is the constructive-interpretative process of the researcher and the professional that converts dialogue into a privileged process of knowledge production in the social sciences, as well as knowledge into a dialogical tool. [...] Dialogue allows for the necessary engagement with the other, which simultaneously transforms research into knowledge production and a process of subjective development (González-Rey, 2019, p. 36).

In this way, QE also offers possibilities for transformation and development for the individuals who participate in this construction of knowledge. Ultimately, if the dialogue process allows not only the production of knowledge but also the emergence of new emotions, meanings, and, consequently, subjective configurations, it implies a real transformation of the subject and their concrete reality (based on their own action upon it). The proposal for ontological, epistemological, and methodological changes to psychological science suggests a search for a science that enables real transformations in the concrete reality of

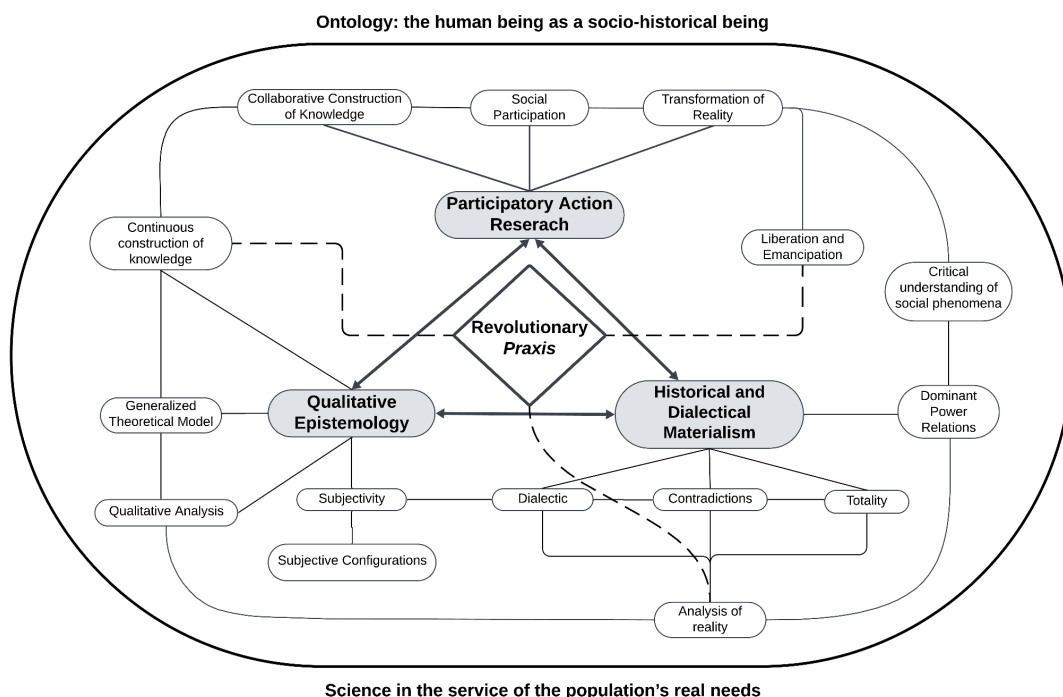
participants' daily lives — and, by adding these transformations together, a change in society as a whole. This premise enables understanding of the ethical-political character that guides QE, thereby aligning it with the methodological foundations presented here.

## Articulation between the foundations

The conceptual map "Methodological Foundations for a Revolutionary Praxis" aims to synthesize the paper's main theoretical and methodological foundations, highlighting their articulation around a critical, historically situated understanding of reality. By connecting central concepts shared among the fundamentals, the map outlines the basis for a praxis that values the subject's protagonism in social transformation and knowledge production. The following are the key concepts that underpin this articulation: (1) Analysis of reality, (2) continuous construction of knowledge and (3) liberation and emancipation.

**Figure 1**

Methodological foundations for a revolutionary *praxis*: articulations



Source: created by the authors.

The (1) analysis of reality constitutes an initial and central point for understanding concrete materiality. The HDM offers a robust theoretical framework for understanding social and historical transformations, grounded in the dialectic of totality and the connections between its parts. The materialist nature of this foundation provides psychologists with a basis for analyzing the concrete realities of the daily lives of the subjects with whom they intend to work. It is from this analysis, and considering the subject as one who constitutes and is constituted by this reality,

that it is possible to envision social change. This dialectical conception of reality, therefore, aligns with the revolutionary vision of social transformation.

QE, in turn, situates subjectivity as a central concept in the construction of this concrete reality, which cannot be achieved without an understanding of the historical and cultural context of this process. Like HDM, it provides a solid foundation for the critical analysis of reality, grounded in the contextual interpretation of human phenomena.

PAR, on the other hand, requires this critical analysis of reality to be effective and transformative. The material reality presented in HDM, which constitutes consciousness, should be the basis for the conscientization process discussed by PAR. Thus, the process of raising critical consciousness cannot occur in isolation, but must be intrinsically linked to reflection on everyday life and the intersections in the constitution of subjects. Therefore, this type of analysis is fundamental to ensuring that the proposed interventions are truly relevant and aligned with the needs and contexts of the individuals involved. By understanding the structures and processes that constitute reality, PAR can develop actions that address the underlying causes of social issues, rather than focusing solely on decontextualized understandings.

These foundations acknowledge the impossibility of achieving a static truth due to the dialectical nature of the whole. HDM, based on the view that reality is constantly changing and that knowledge is historically conditioned, is related to QE, which emphasizes the richness and complexity of human phenomena and highlights subjectivity and social interaction in the construction of this knowledge. By conceiving knowledge as a (2) human and continuous construction, the connection between HDM and QE is established, since it is impossible to separate subjectivity from this construct.

Based on generalized theoretical models, QE seeks to capture and explain the complexity of human phenomena through broad and flexible categories. Because they are dynamic and adaptable, it is possible to incorporate new information and connections as they emerge, reflecting the constantly changing nature of knowledge and social reality.

PAR also recognizes that knowledge is dynamic and situated, shaped by the historical and social contexts in which it is produced and by the producers. It argues for the need to give voice to subjects who, from a hegemonic perspective, are studied from a subject-object dominance relationship. It advocates the construction of knowledge for subjects and by subjects—that is, the collaborative construction of knowledge. Therefore, knowledge construction is defended as an emancipatory and continuous process, placing the subject as the protagonist of this construction, which, like human beings, is constantly changing, making it impossible to have a static understanding of human reality that does not consider historical, economic, and sociocultural dimensions.

Finally, the concepts of Liberation and Emancipation (3) reflect an ethical-political stance towards the construction of knowledge and professional practice. When aiming for a Revolutionary *Praxis*, these principles envision the transformation of reality in pursuit of the liberation and emancipation of individuals. From a dialectical perspective, liberation and emancipation are understood as historical processes arising from the struggle against the contradictions and inequalities inherent in society. HDM emphasizes the importance of material conditions and social relations in shaping consciousness and transforming social structures. The emancipation of individuals is seen as a result of changes in social and economic conditions and the overcoming of historical contradictions. To overcome this, it is necessary to look at who constitutes this reality: the subjects themselves.

PAR emphasizes the importance of a societal project that seeks to transform concrete reality, questioning where we are going and how we can effectively promote change. Thus, it is understood that everyday "micro-practices" are necessary for individuals to gain a greater understanding of their own reality and, from there, refine their ability to act and transform it. These are not isolated, one-off actions but recurring, everyday actions that enable real, concrete change across the whole. This is closely related to the laws of dialectics that govern the HDM, since transformations in the totality do not happen immediately or passively. The whole changes only in the face of countless changes in its constituent parts: the more changes there are in the quantity of the parts, the sooner a critical point is reached at which there is a change in the quality of the whole (Konder, 1997). QE complements this vision by valuing subjectivity and social interaction in the transformation of reality, giving prominence to the subject who acts in reality dialectically, transforming it and being transformed by it continuously.

Thus, the articulation of these key concepts contributes to a revolutionary praxis of psychology within the school context. In this view, psychological action contributes to an educational project and takes shape according to the theoretical and methodological stance through which school life is interpreted and transformed. From the perspective of action for emancipation, education should be oriented towards social transformation and the promotion of humanity, as proposed by the HDM. To prevent the reproduction of capitalist structures, it is essential to prioritize an education that not only transmits knowledge but also critiques and questions existing social conditions. In this sense, education must align itself with a transformative horizon that reflects an ethical-political position, as advocated by the PAR. It is therefore up to school psychology to prompt the school team to reflect on the meaning of school and to contribute reflections relevant to the concrete reality in which students and their families are situated, always encouraging closer ties among school actors.

Qualitative Epistemology (QE) contributes to this perspective by offering a detailed and contextualized approach to understanding the reality of subjects. QE values the richness of human experiences and subjective interpretations/meanings, providing a deep understanding of the social conditions and everyday practices that shape reality. This qualitative approach is crucial for developing critical consciousness, as it enables education to reflect the complexity and uniqueness of individuals'

experiences and to propose a process of social transformation. These fundamentals demand a constant struggle between alienation and conscientization. Alienation, a state of separation, distancing, and the naturalization of social and production conditions, must be overcome to promote the process of critical consciousness, which is the conscious and critical reintegration of individuals into their social reality, thereby translating into a process of consciousness-raising. It is necessary to experience and understand alienation to chart a transformative path.

## **| Conclusion**

Psychology has historically responded to the needs of the dominant class in society, often being used as a tool to maintain the *status quo* (Parker, 2014). It does not engage with the so-called *quefazer* of the psychologist and illustrates a historical process of exclusion, oppression, and domination.

In this new historical moment for school psychology, with the approval of a specific federal law on working in basic education settings, and several states and municipalities beginning to implement psychology in schools, it is necessary for the profession to reflect on what kind of work we want (and should) build.

Given this scenario, we advocate for the daily presence of a psychologist on the school's technical team, supported by solid theoretical and methodological foundations that guide their work. Being in common areas facilitates effective interaction with students and supports the development of actions committed to dialogue and to understanding the meanings individuals ascribe to their school and extracurricular experiences.

Dialogue is an essential tool for accessing the subject's perspective and building knowledge from the daily experiences of those who experience a particular phenomenon, especially when we aim to study and understand them in research. However, the construction of knowledge is not limited to this: dialogue not only enables but also precedes the process of becoming conscious of dimensions of concrete reality, especially those that cause suffering and distance the individual from processes of strengthening, liberation, and emancipation.

Therefore, the discussion of methodological foundations for a revolutionary *praxis*, from this perspective, will hardly be separate from the construction of knowledge, and vice versa. To defend this *praxis* as well as an ethical-political position is to distance oneself from the false neutrality historically advocated by the human sciences and to seek transformations of reality that aim at social justice through the strengthening of individuals.

This approach, in itself, does not confer the much-talked-about empowerment. It is the recognition of subjects in their concreteness, the belief in their capacity to give meaning and act upon the world, and the construction of strategies that tear the fabric of alienation. For this to happen, we need a psychology that is not content with simply describing suffering, but that stands alongside those who experience it, producing knowledge with them and not about them. In times of empty reforms and



generic public notices, this project is indeed a theoretical and methodological insubordination—and that is what makes it ethical and revolutionary.

In this way, psychology, always working alongside the school team, contributes to an effective and strengthening transformation by promoting a conscientization process, aligned with the guidelines and principles of the HDM of PAR and QE.

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## Resumo

No contexto da Lei Federal 13935/19, a discussão sobre a presença da psicologia nas escolas levanta debates sobre a atuação a ser desenvolvida pelos profissionais. Partimos do argumento de que a psicologia na escola deve estar ancorada em uma práxis libertadora, e para isso, necessita de fundamentos metodológicos bem delineados, para a construção do quefazer do psicólogo de forma crítica e responsável. Diante dessa necessidade, os tais fundamentos precisam representar uma epistemologia ancorada na historicidade da realidade concreta e no protagonismo do sujeito para a construção do conhecimento, implicando um posicionamento ético-político profissional. O presente trabalho é um

ensaio teórico-metodológico, cujo objetivo é articular três fundamentos metodológicos: o Materialismo Histórico-Dialético (MHD), a Pesquisa Ação-Participação (PAP) e a Epistemologia Qualitativa (EQ), os quais guiam a prática libertadora da psicologia na escola implicada com a transformação da realidade. Essa articulação confere à atuação e à pesquisa dentro do campo escolar um caráter crítico e emancipatório.

**Palavras-chave:** Psicologia Escolar. Psicologia Crítica. Pedagogia Crítica.

## Resumen

En el contexto de la Ley Federal 13935/19, el debate sobre la presencia de la psicología en las escuelas suscita discusiones sobre la actuación que deben desarrollar los profesionales. Partimos del argumento de que la psicología en la escuela debe basarse en una praxis liberadora y, para ello, necesita fundamentos metodológicos bien definidos, a fin de construir el *quehacer* del psicólogo de forma crítica y responsable. Ante esta necesidad, dichos fundamentos deben representar una epistemología basada en la historicidad de la realidad concreta y en el protagonismo del sujeto para la construcción del conocimiento, lo que implica una postura ético-política profesional. El presente trabajo es un ensayo teórico-metodológico cuyo objetivo es articular tres fundamentos metodológicos: el Materialismo Histórico-Dialéctico (MHD), la Investigación-Acción Participativa (IAP) y la Epistemología Cualitativa (EC), que guían la práctica liberadora de la psicología en la escuela implicada en la transformación de la realidad. Esta articulación confiere a la actuación y a la investigación dentro del ámbito escolar un carácter crítico y emancipador.

**Palabras clave:** Psicología escolar. Psicología crítica. Pedagogía crítica.

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