

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 IN HUMAN RIGHTS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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Abstract: Alongside with the ongoing growth of the pandemic of COVID-19 and all the abrupt changes it has been causing worldwide, it is possible that there has also been a transformation in people's understanding of Human Rights. To test this hypothesis, investigating the perceptions on the impact of the Pandemic on Human Rights came as natural as necessary. Considering the importance of the theme, this article seeks to analyse the perception of residents in the city of Rio de Janeiro aged 16 and over. The study focuses on 5 selected rights within 2 dimensions. Dimension 1: civil and political rights such as Freedom of Movement and Vote; and Dimension 2: economic and social rights which includes Education, Health, Work and Income. Results are pretty much as expected, although still preliminary, such as the dissatisfaction with the government's performance, the belief that the proposed rights were limited during the covid-19 pandemic, except the right to vote and that they are complying with the rules of social isolation, but the others are not.

Key-words: Human Rights; Pandemic of COVID-19; Rio de Janeiro; Web-survey; Snowball

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, Brazil has seen a rise in the polarization of the population in multiple aspects, one of them are the Human Rights. With more and more people picking sides and knowing less about their own rights we continue to witness a growing wave of violation of these rights, most notoriously in the big cities such as Rio de Janeiro.

The ongoing growth of the pandemic of COVID-19 and all the abrupt changes it has been causing worldwide, it is possible that there has also been a transformation in people's understanding of Human Rights. To test this hypothesis, investigating the perceptions on the impact of the Pandemic on Human Rights came as natural as necessary. Before, attitudes deemed as normal such as walking on the street or celebrating with friends began to be seen as risky, irresponsible and even immoral. Living in society and in face of this unusual aspect highlights how relevant people's perceptions really are.

In this context, investigating the perceptions on the impact of the Pandemic on Human Rights came as natural as necessary. The perception of each individual about their own rights, the belief that this right is being violated and if this violation is deemed justifiable or not are what will ultimately be the reason why an individual is led to feel that it is justifiable to not abide by the set of rules imposed to control the spread of the coronavirus.

Recognizing the importance of the theme, a survey is being carried out by students and professors at the National School of Statistical Sciences – ENCE/IBGE and the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro – UERJ, as part of The Institutional Scientific Initiation Scholarship

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Program (PIBIC) supported the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). This article seeks to analyse the perception of residents in the city of Rio de Janeiro aged 16 and over. The study focuses on 5 selected rights within 2 dimensions. Dimension 1: civil and political rights such as Freedom of Movement and Vote; and Dimension 2: economic and social rights which includes Education, Health, Work and Income.

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The survey was carried out by students and professors at the National School of Statistical Sciences – ENCE/IBGE and the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro - UERJ as part of The Institutional Scientific Initiation Scholarship Program (PIBIC) supported the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

Data collection was carried out by self-response, i. e., asking respondents to fill out a questionnaire accessible through an Internet link. The approach is well known as web survey, web-based survey and internet-based survey (Dilman, 2007; Couper, 2000). The adoption of this mode of collection aims to ensure the integrity of interviewers in times of pandemics and, at the same time, ensure better coverage and response rate with the available resources.

Survey was conducted on a non-probability sample of the target population. In addition to the advantages related to operationalization, lower cost and ease of reaching a larger number of respondents (Fricker, 2012), this approach can provide good results to opinion surveys. Although probability samples allow the calculation of error measures of estimates thus having a comparative advantage over non-probability, it is usually costly and requires a frame, which is neither available nor can be built at low cost.

A snowball approach (Berg, 2006; Goodman, 1961) was adopted to spread the invitation to take part of the survey. At first, all students and professors at the National School of Statistical Sciences, students and professors at the University of State of Rio de Janeiro, as well as the contact list of the authors. Invitation was first sent by e-mail, WhatsApp and Facebook and it is likely to have been resent by the same means.

The questionnaire includes 21 questions divided in 5 sections being them, general characteristics of respondent, conception of Human Rights, limitations of rights, government evaluation and social isolation. It is an ongoing survey and these preliminary results refer to data collected from March 1st to March 9, 2021.

RESULTS

The preliminary results correspond to 613 respondents, 304 women and 257 men. Women are mostly white (75%). Brown and black are 16% and 8%, respectively, while Asian and indigenous are represented by only 1 respondent of each thus under 1%. Men's distribution by colour/race is smother, but still mostly white (63%). Brown and black are 29% and 7%, respectively, while Asian and indigenous are represented by only 2 (1%) and 1 respondent, respectively.

We selected 5 questions, as the most relevant for the theme: “Which right(s) below do you consider Human Rights?” (Q1), “Which right(s) below do you consider that were limited during the Covid pandemic” (Q2), “How do you evaluate the government's performance to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic of Covid-19?” (Q3), “Do you believe that you are complying with the rules of social isolation?” (Q4), “Do you believe that the other residents of the city of Rio de Janeiro are complying with the social isolation rules?” (Q5).

These questions seek to provide an evaluation on the perception of respondents in relation to the pandemic, focusing on the understanding of Human Rights and its relationship with the pandemic. The questions address this by treating individuals as protagonists during the pandemic,

by caring for themselves and others, and as victims of the health crisis. They also seek to know the opinion of individuals about the performance of the government.

In the following figures, we chose to represent the results of the answers to the 5 questions mentioned separated by sex and colour/race as we believe they are the most relevant variables given the type of sample and previous studies on the subject. The questions were not applied one after another in the questionnaire, but the general order that they appear was maintained.

Figure 1 indicate that men and women tend to answer in a similar way to what right they consider Human Rights, and the number of answers also indicates that among the 294 women who answered this question, most of them chose to mark almost all of the rights below as being considered human rights, same is the case with the 250 men who answered this question. Moreover, when analysed separately, the responses between men and women tend to be proportionally similar when divided by color/race, even though they are slightly different when separated only by sex.

Figure 1 - Which right(s) below do you consider Human Rights? (Mark all that apply)

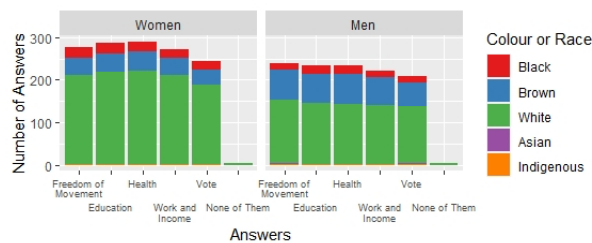
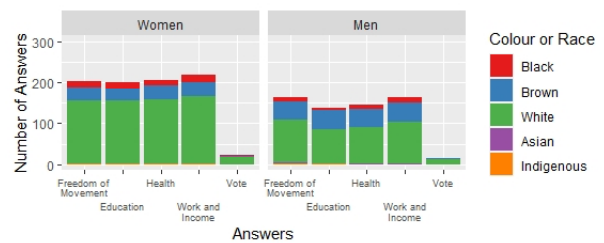


Figure 2 - Which right(s) below do you consider that were limited during the Covid pandemic? (mark all that apply)



Comparing Figure 2 to Figure 1, a decrease in the total number of answers in relation to question Q1 is noted, what is accompanied by a decrease in the total number of respondents to this question, being now 261 women and 203 men, an absence of 80 respondents. The decay also indicates that in the case of Figure 2, the majority of respondents do not consider that almost all of these rights were limited during the pandemic, this behavior becomes clearer when looking at the amount of people, regardless of sex, color/race who do not consider that the Right to Vote was limited during the pandemic.

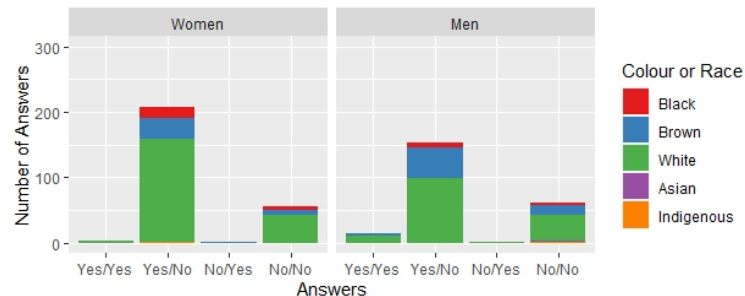
Figure 3 - “How do you evaluate the government's performance to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic of Covid-19?”



Most of the respondents evaluated in a negative way the efficiency of the Government in relation to the pandemic, regardless to sex and colour/race. With 270 women and 234 men responding to this question, an increase in the question engagement happened when compared to

most of the previous questions, which can indicate bigger relevancy of this question to the respondents (Figure 3).

Figure 4 - Answer to the questions: “Do you believe that you are complying with the rules of social isolation?” / “Do you believe that the other residents of the city of Rio de Janeiro are complying with the social isolation rules?”



The apparent similar behaviour of respondents, regardless the sex and colour/race, in the tendency to believe that they are complying with the rules of social isolation and that others are not (Yes/No), can be explained by the smaller number of respondents of this sex. If the number of men and women were the same, the difference could be more visible. It is important to emphasize that these 268 women and 231 men answering these two questions (Figure 4).

FINAL REMARKS

This study aimed to identify and analyse if and how residents of the city of Rio de Janeiro believe that Human Rights were impacted during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Results are pretty much as expected, although still preliminary, such as the dissatisfaction with the government's performance, the belief that the proposed rights were limited during the covid-19 pandemic, except Vote, and that they are complying with the rules of social isolation, but the others are not.

It is also important to highlight that most respondents recognized the selected rights as Human Rights and consider that most of these rights were limited during the covid-19 pandemic. Because the understanding of these rights influences the perception in relation to their restriction. Also as expected, respondents believe they are complying with social isolation but the others are not. If considering a close population such a result is a contradiction, but it is expected once the survey is about opinion.

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